



**GARDINER CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**



<b>Meeting Date</b>	03/04/2020	<b>Department</b>	City Council
<b>Agenda Item</b>	4.4 Consideration and Possible Adoption of 2020 Goals and Meeting Guidelines from February 1, 2020 Council Workshop		
<b>Est. Cost</b>	n/a		

**Background Information**

On Saturday, February 1, 2020, the City Council held a workshop to discuss progress on the 2019 goals, new goals for 2020, and also received training on freedom of access. Facilitator Craig Freshley put together the attached summary of your meeting. Council will now discuss and debate these goals and meeting guidelines.

<b>Requested Action</b>	'I move to approve the 2020 Council goals and meeting guidelines, as described in the attached document.'
<b>City Manager and/or Finance Review</b>	The City Manager recommends the above action.
<b>Council Vote/ Action Taken</b>	
<b>Departmental Follow-Up</b>	

<b>City Clerk Use Only</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading _____	Advertised _____	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> _____
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading _____	Advertised _____ w/in 15 Days	
	Final to Dept _____	Updated Book _____	Online _____

Gardiner City Council  
**Workshop Highlights Notes**  
Saturday, February 1, 2020, Gardiner Public Library

## Objectives

- Clarify, revise, and affirm our Meeting Guidelines.
- Review progress on previous Goals and establish new Goals for 2020.
- Clarify committee roles and priorities.
- Understand our obligations and expectations under the freedom of Information Act.

## Ground Rules

- Always seeking agreement
- All views heard, one at a time
- Listen to understand
- Assume best intentions
- No decisions today
- Themes and conclusions now and later

## What I've Learned on this Council

- Very engaged community.
- How complicated City Government is.
- Humility.
- Just because you're not speaking doesn't mean you're not doing your job.
- We work well together as a team.
- Best to listen, reflect, take time to react.
- This is a great Council – there is respect in the meetings.
- Quality and dedication of City Staff.
- Welcoming – invested.

# Meeting Guidelines

## *Review Questions*

1. Which guidelines have we implemented the best?
2. Which guidelines have not been implemented so well?
3. Why did we do well and why not-so-well?
4. Any revisions?

## *Implemented well*

- Clear and swift agenda items.
- Adjourn meetings on time.
- Each view heard once.
- Instant feedback to colleagues – hear, hear.
- Handle conflict respectfully.
  - Kept cool.
  - Consistent and clear about roles and expected behavior.
- Open-minded attitudes (even when someone has a point of view).

## *Implemented not so well*

- Public participation.
  - There should be a required level of civility.
  - With the current set-up, the public can't see the screens and they seem lost some times.
- The amount of time that someone talks – requires some discretion.
- Conversations get started but not finished.
  - Sometimes constituents are invested.
- Once a decision is made, it's unclear how much time should pass before it's appropriate for the decision to be revisited.
  - Related: adjustments to the budget.

## *Comments and Observations*

- Provide guidelines for speakers.
  - What

- Time limits.
- Ask for respect – refrain from profanity.
- Be tolerant and understand that coming before Council can be hard for some people.
- How
  - On the back of the agenda.
    - Note on the bottom of the agenda that there are guidelines on the back.
  - A card at the podium.
- If you think a conversation has been dropped or not completed, any Council member can ask the Mayor to put it on the Agenda.
- Consider what Robert’s Rules says about revisiting prior decisions.
- Provide every Council member with a copy of Robert’s Rules (newly revised, in brief).
- Before we have a discussion, make sure there is a motion on the floor.

### *Revised Guidelines Based on Comments*

Here, Craig has prepared a revised set of Guidelines base on our discussion. He revised the Guidelines in three ways:

- Speaker Guidelines should be printed on the back of every Council Agenda.
- Past “dropped conversations” can be put on future Agendas by any Council Member.
- Make sure there is a motion on the floor before beginning discussion.

### **Revised Meeting Guidelines**

#### **Honor Roberts Rules of Order**

Since we are a small group, we can be informal yet honor the spirit, especially:

- Everyone understands the process and has equal access
- Deal with one thing at a time
- Put motions in writing
- Make sure there is a motion on the floor before beginning discussion

#### **Clear and swift agendas**

- The Chair should move deliberately through the planned agenda with support from all Council members.
- At the Mayor’s discretion, we might not take up new agenda items after 9pm.
  - Such agenda items that we don’t get to are taken up at a meeting the following week.

- Agenda items started before 9pm are completed no matter how long they take.
- If any Council Member thinks that a past issue or conversation has not been completed or has been dropped, you can request that it be put on a future Agenda.

### **Each view heard, once**

- Hearing the same fundamental point of view, even if expressed differently each time, is inefficient. If you develop a new view, share it, but no need for repetition.
- Be self-restrained.
- Signify agreement with a point of view with nods, thumbs, and “hear-hear.”
- When it’s clear that points of view are being repeated, call for a vote or otherwise move on.

### **Public participation expectations clear**

- Verbally clarify for the public:
  - That their input is encouraged regardless of what others say
  - What topics are appropriate at what times in the meeting
  - How long they should expect to speak for
  - That public input is not a time for discussion with Council members. Don’t expect an immediate response.
  - Public comments should be not more than 4 minutes and should not be repetitive.
- Provide Guidelines for Speakers on the back of every Council Meeting Agenda.
- Council members should show gratitude and validation of public comments but not respond or engage in discussion during a Council Meeting.

### **Handle conflict professionally**

- If you feel attacked it’s okay to say so. Best not to attack back in a public setting but rather offer to talk privately.
- Have private conversations to resolve conflicts and always start with a question. Work to clear up misunderstandings first.
- Don’t take or make things personal.

### **Open-minded attitudes**

- Withhold judgment until you have worked to understand all information and opinions.
- Ask questions with genuine interest in hearing the answer, not as a means to make your point or intimidate.
- It’s okay to change your mind based on changing circumstances or new information.

## 2019 Goals Review

### *Review Questions*

1. What was achieved?
2. What wasn't achieved?
3. What was "in the way" and what "success factors" contributed to the goals we achieved?

### *Review Comments*

#### **1. Explore increased support for city staff.**

- What
  - Explore staff retention strategies.
  - Explore increasing the number of staff.
  - Do succession planning for key positions.
  - Show appreciation on ways other than pay.
- Who was responsible for this?
  - Amy Rees
  - Christine Landes
- Review comments
  - City Manager has done a great job.
    - She never asks anyone to do a job she's not willing to do herself.
    - Staff respect the City Manager.
    - Show appreciation by making hard decisions about employees.
  - We have not been able to increase staff.
  - We are cross-training employees to help with succession planning.
- Going forward
  - Councilors show appreciation for staff.
    - It means a lot.

#### **2. Sidewalks**

- Who was responsible for this?
  - Jon Ault
  - Tim Cusick
  - Pat Hart
- Review comments
  - We got new sidewalks!
    - We have done several new sidewalks.

- We've gotten several positive comments.
- Success factors
  - Council made a commitment – voted on a bond.
    - There was a matrix of priorities before the bond was voted on.
  - The need was great.
    - Lots of public support.
  - Changed the plan
    - Once we saw what “patchwork” looked like, we made a new plan.
    - Had a way better outcome as a result.

### **3. Bridges**

- Who was responsible for this?
  - Pat Hart
  - Christine Landes
- Review comments
  - We have two new bridges underway.
  - 23 meetings.
  - There have been hiccups but it has all unfolded remarkably well.
- Success Factors
  - Communications
    - Christine keeping us up to date.
    - DOT representative on site all the time.
  - Planning
    - DOT made an extensive plan in advance.
  - The state paid for most of it
    - And there were not conflicts about this – they just did it (including the environmental clean-up).

### **4. Ongoing invest in infrastructure**

- What
  - Cobbossee Trails
  - Roads
  - Sewers
- Who was responsible for this?
  - Appropriate committees
  - Council
- Review comments
  - Roads
    - Good successes in paving.
    - Council ensured we spent the paving money.
    - Major arteries improved.
    - Tim did a good job stewarding the paving projects.

- Sewers
  - Haven't gained much.
  - We know what the problems are.
  - Did some sewer work on Washington.
  - Sewer treatment plant improvements.
- Trails
  - No progress on trails this year.
  - Some public improvements were done by private groups.

## 5. Affordable taxes

- Who was responsible for this?
  - Christine Landes
  - Council
- Review comments
  - Did really well.
  - Taxes are under control.
  - Kudos to the Finance Director – provided quick, accurate information.
    - Provided instant forecasts/implications of various scenarios.
  - There was a small increase.
    - But there were a lot of things that we had no control over.
    - We cut taxes the previous year so had to do a small increase this year.
  - Managed dispatch challenges very well.
  - Some residents don't seem to be concerned about taxes right now.

## 6. Waste disposal

- What
  - Explore trash and recycling collection and disposal.
- Who was responsible for this?
  - Amy Rees
  - Jon Ault
  - Terry Berry
  - Solid Waste Committee
- Review comments
  - The Solid Waste Committee met a couple meetings but there wasn't a lot of enthusiasm for a city-wide collection system.
  - Contractors were solicited but the reaction was lack-luster.
  - Jon reported that he was unable to contribute as he intended.
  - Discontent about how the Troiano site at Libby Hill has been handled.
  - There seems to be very little leadership from the State of Maine.
- Going forward
  - At some point, Gardiner is going to have to address this.



## 7. Improve public safety

- What
  - Increase fire department and ambulance service capacity, via improved regional cooperation and/or increased staffing.
- Who was responsible for this?
  - Tim Cusick
- Review comments
  - Funding wasn't available to increase fire safety capacity.
  - Established a committee to explore how to improve staffing (including how to fund).
    - Meeting once a month.
  - Gave a fire truck to CATC for training.
  - We purchased new vehicles.
  - This is the most difficult topic to talk about in public.
    - It's very difficult to question the department in public.
  - Gardiner has the mentality of being a big city.
    - We are a small community that tries to act as a big city.
  - We took over the fire tower from the federal government.
  - We invested in improving public safety communications.
  - People don't understand actual levels of protection in the city.
    - Levels are lower than most people perceive.

## 8. Economic/Community development

- What
  - Business development.
  - Improve housing stock.
  - Goal setting with new Economic Development Director.
- Who was responsible for this?
  - Shawn Dolley
  - Maryann White
  - Pat Hart – Ordinance
- Review comments
  - New downtown developments with the help of Gardiner Main Street.
  - Workforce housing program opened.
  - The new Economic Development Director is a great hire.
  - Comprehensive Plan implementation, including new ordinances, has gone very well.
  - The Planning Department has excelled in the past year.
    - The value of permits is substantially increasing.
    - Looking out for the safety and welfare of the residents of Gardiner.
  - Economic development has worked well in large part due to:
    - Manager
    - Mayor
    - Gardiner Main Street

## 2020 Goals

### *Question*

What goals does the Council wish to achieve in 2020?  
In other words:

- What does the Council want to be known for?
- What are your most important near-term goals?

### *Top Priorities*

#### **1. Economic and community development**

- General growth of business/commercial activity.
- Focus on:
  - Boys and Girls Club
  - Downtown
  - Bridge replacement
  - Libby Hill
  - 201
- Focus on community development too – help neighborhoods.

#### **2. Improve/maintain services while keeping taxes affordable**

- Another great balanced budget.
- Design and implement a public works/buildings and grounds project management system.
- Better support City Staff.
- Union contract positive outcome.

#### **3. Improve fire/ambulance safety**

- Increase staffing.
- Improve the facility.

### *Also Important*

#### **4. Assess/evaluate needs of public buildings**

- Inventory maintenance needs.

#### **5. Improve conditions for low income people**

- Awareness and access to services.
- Attention to distressed housing.

## **6. Council better connected to School District**

- To understand their challenges.
- Perhaps a rotating system.

## **7. Wastewater treatment improvements**

- Make a plan for investment.

## *All Ideas*

- Improve/Maintain Services – Keep Taxes Affordable
  - Maintain or increase services/projects while keeping taxes in mind.
  - Maintain services while keeping taxes “reasonable”.
  - Improve city/social services without over-burdening taxpayers.
  - Balanced budget keeping taxes affordable.
  - Another great budget.
  - Hold budget. Taxes.
- Economic Development
  - Continue increase development.
    - Business
    - Special projects
  - Support development projects.
    - B&G Club
    - Dingley Block and donations
    - Bridge replacement
  - Continue to promote growth.
  - Continue economic develop.
    - Libby Hill
    - Rt. 201
  - Grow Gardiner economically.
- Fire Safety
  - Fire Department staffing.
  - Fire Department staffing.
  - Increase emergency personnel/building.
  - Put plan together for new Public Safety Building.
- Project Management System
  - Establish a transparent/project management system for Building & Grounds/Public Works (ticketing system, etc.).
  - Look into a Council Member on School Board.
  - Support City Manager and City Staff.

- Create a plan to “refresh” distressed residential properties.
- Boys and Girls Club
  - How can we support Boys and Girls Club and not break the bank?
  - Determining appropriate level of B&G Club support.
  - Support of Boys and Girls Club and their new facility.
- Public Buildings
  - Start planning on city buildings.
  - City infrastructure.
- Bridge Project
  - Manage bridge project with minimal public disruption.
- Union Negotiations
  - Positive outcomes for Union negotiations.
- Access and Awareness to Services
  - Ensure low income have access to the resources they need.

## Freedom of Access Act presentation by John Pottle

- The Act deals with Records and Meetings.
- The Act is always interpreted in favor of transparency.
- A record is anything that can deduced into some form of writing.
  - Content of a phone conversation is not a public record.
  - Text messages can be a record.
  - Needs to deal with the transaction of public business.
- Rule of thumb: if you don't want something to be in the paper, pick up the phone.
- Exception can be communications with an attorney when there is pending or anticipated litigation.
- There are many, many exceptions to public records.
  - You can search the statutes and rules of evidence to find them.
- Public proceedings
  - Notice is required for a meeting of three or more public officials meeting to discuss business of the city.
  - The length of advance notice is not specified but needs to be reasonable and in keeping with customary practice.
  - Media need to be notified.
- The City needs to have a Public Access Officer.
  - It works well to have a single point of contact for the public.
- When there is a request it needs to be acknowledged in 5 days.
- People do not have the right to come to an employee and look at their computer.

- The City can charge \$15/hour after the first hour for fulfilling requests.
- Public record disputes don't get litigated very often, but it does happen.
- Municipal officers need to receive FOAA training.
  - A certificate can be obtained at Maine.gov.
- Stamping something "private and confidential" does not automatically shield it.
- Best practices
  - Read the statute.
  - Always retain public records.
  - Keep city business items and personal items separate.
    - It's a lot easier to fulfill requests this way.
  - Use the phone when you get an "uh-oh feeling".
  - Be aware of resources available such as the Public Access Ombudsman, City's Public Access Officer, and the City Solicitor.

## City Committees

### *Questions*

1. Which ones should be eliminated or merged?
2. Which Council member will serve as liaison to each committee?
3. What should be the top priorities of key committees?

### *Review Comments*

\* = In Ordinance

#### **Boards**

- Ambulance Advisory Board
- Board of Appeals\*
- Board of Assessment Review\*
- Cobbossee Watershed District Board of Trustees\*
- Gardiner Public Library Board of Trustees
- KRDA/FirstPark Board\*
  - Terry is lead
  - Maryann is the alternate
- Kennebec River Rail Trail Board of Supervisors\*
- Merrymeeting Trail Board of Supervisors\*
- Planning Board\*
- Quimby Board of Trustees\*

- Need to clarify the members of this committee
- Wastewater Advisory Board
- Water District Board of Trustees\*

### Commissions

- Conservation Commission
- Historic Preservation Commission

### Committees

- Ad Hoc Age Friendly Committee
  - AARP will provide support
  - Let's try to find people to join and lead this committee
- Audit Committee
  - Pat will ask Amy if she wants to stay on
  - Council Liaisons
    - Maryann
- Bridge Committee
  - This was a DOT Committee and the work is done
  - Can be eliminated
- Brownfields Advisory Committee
  - This is an important committee to keep
  - Need to clarify the membership
- Cobbossee Corridor Trail Committee
  - Leave it as is
- Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee
  - Convene
  - Take stock of what has been done
  - Move forward from there
  - Council liaison
    - Pat
- Dog Ordinance Committee
  - This committee should met and finish its job
  - Council Liaisons
    - Marc
    - Maryann
- E911 Committee
  - Active – leave as is
- Economic Development Committee
  - Convene the committee – get it started up again
  - Convey Council priorities
    - Economic and Community Development priorities  
AND
    - Assess/evaluate needs of public buildings

- Economic Development Committee should play an active role in leading this committee
  - Council liaisons
    - Terry
    - Tim
- Façade Committee
  - Active – leave as is
- Fire Prevention/Codes Working Group
  - Can be eliminated
- Housing Committee
  - Hasn't met recently
  - New appointees
  - Council Liaison
    - Terry
- Marijuana Task Force
  - Let's eliminate this one
  - Their work is done
- New Mills Dam Committee
  - Very important Committee with a role to manage the water level
- Ordinance Review Committee
  - This committee is good
- Parking Committee
  - No one appointed yet
- Parks & Recreation Committee
  - Council liaisons
    - Marc
    - Colin
- Recycling & Solid Waste Advisory Committee
  - This committee is stable right now
  - Council Liaison
    - Amy
- Sidewalk Committee
  - Need to clarify the membership of this committee
    - And it has too many Councilors
  - Need to make sure these meeting notices are good
- Technology Advisory Committee
  - The initial purpose was to look at municipal broadband, then infrastructure review
  - They either want a clear directive or they want to dissolve
  - Perhaps merge this into a state or regional committee?
    - Christine will look into this
  - Leave the fate of this Committee on hold for now
- Tree Committee
  - Set up in November but hasn't met yet

## Closing Comments

- Really impressed with the Council that we have. We function well as a team and show respect for each other.
- This was a good day. We are working well in harmony.
- Was really interesting to see the goals develop.
- Enjoyed this very much.
- Important to grab ahold of and not let go of this enthusiasm.
- Thanks to all of you for listening to me.
- Enjoyed this today.
- Think we did great with last year's goals.
- Thanks Craig. Good job.
- Great day. Good to see everyone's goals.
- Meetings like this are always really valuable.
- Good to think of the work ahead in little chunks. Makes it manageable.
- It makes a difference who facilitates these.
- Last year's goals were 80% accomplished.
- We work well as a team.
- Thank you all.
- It was great to see what we've done.
- Yay to the City Manager and City Staff and colleagues.
- It was good to review all the committees and realize how many people are serving the city.
- We want to be known as a respectful and responsive government and City Council.