



**GARDINER CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**



Meeting Date	01/19/2022	Department	City Council
Agenda Item	4.i) Review of the 2021 Gardiner City Council goals		
Est. Cost			

Background Information	<p>Gardiner City Council will review 2021 goals and begin discussion for setting 2022 goals at a meeting scheduled for 1/26/2022.</p>		
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Requested Action	This is a discussion item and requires no vote.		
City Manager and/or Finance Review			
Council Vote/ Action Taken			
Departmental Follow-Up			

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

Gardiner City Council
Workshop Highlight Notes
Saturday, February 6, 2021, Online

About the Workshop

Attendance

- Mayor Pat Hart
- Councilor Berry
- Councilor Rees
- Councilor Frey
- Councilor Rines
- Councilor White
- Councilor Sargent
- Councilor Cusik
- Craig Freshley, facilitator

Objectives

- Clarify, revise, and affirm our Meeting Guidelines.
- Review progress on previous Goals and establish new Goals for 2021.
- Clarify committee liaisons.
- Become more comfortable working with each other on Zoom and in general.

Ground Rules

As in years past, the workshop was professionally facilitated by Craig Freshley of Good Group Decisions. At the start of the workshop Craig explained the following ground rules:

- Take charge of your screen
- Show what you think
- Chat on the side only
- Public access and the public record
- Let Craig call on people and manage the discussion
- Facilitator fidgets
- Notes now and later

Planned Agenda

- 8:50 Optional: Get Acquainted with Zoom
- Join early and chat with Craig about any questions you might have.
 - He will show some simple tips and tricks.
 - A great opportunity for some quick and useful training.

- 9:00 **Opening**

- Mayor Pat Hart will welcome the Council and offer some opening remarks.
- Facilitator Craig Freshley will explain the workshop format and some simple ground rules.
- We will do some quick introductions.

9:10

Review and Clarify Meeting Guidelines

- As we have been in the habit of doing at every annual workshop, we will review our Meeting Guidelines to make sure everyone understands them and to discuss if they should be revised.
- This year we will focus on the following questions:
 1. How should the Guidelines be revised in light of COVID?
 2. How can we encourage Committees to adopt similar practices?

10:00

Break

10:05

2020 Goals Review, Successes, and Challenges

- We will take a quick look back at goals set by the Council on February 1, 2020 and talk about what worked well and what didn't.
- In cases where we didn't achieve our intentions we will look at why and we will discuss how to improve chances of success going forward.

10:35

2021 Goals - Ideas

- What special projects does the Council wish to achieve in 2021? What does the Council want to be known for? What are the most important near-term goals?
- We will begin by looking at the 2020 Goals to see what might be deleted or refined for 2021. We will also ask for any new ideas from Council members for 2021 goals.
- With a longish list of potential 2021 goals before us, we will do a do a straw poll exercise to help us pare it down to a shortish list that's prioritized. The ranking will be pretty simple. Craig will explain.

11:00

Break

11:20

2021 Goals – Conclusions

- During the break Craig will analyze the results of the straw poll and report those results to us.
- We will discuss and come to a conclusion about goals for 2021.

11:40

Closing Comments

- This is a chance for each person to make a last comment, perhaps a reflection about the retreat or perhaps a specific hope or concern for the future.

11:50

Adjourn

Opening Remarks

Mayor Hart welcomed everyone and made the following open remarks.

- Thanks to each and every one of you.
- We have faced many COVID-related challenges.
- As City Councilors you have had much patience with shifting to Zoom.
- Thanks for supporting City employees.
- Greatly appreciate your civility and respect in the meetings.

Meeting Guidelines

Craig reviewed the Guidelines that were generally agreed to at last year's workshop.

Clarifications and Comments on the 2020 Guidelines

- Love Roberts Rules.
- Love Hear! Hear!
- Thanks to the Mayor, and the City Manager for making Council meetings so efficient.
- Concern about participating in Council Meetings from home with angry people on zoom and our addresses are known publicly.
- Reminder that when you are in a public meeting people can see everything in your home behind you and there's a recorded public record of that.
 - Put your best self out there.
- The City Manager has been doing training on Zoom techniques
- When councilors ask questions or respond to public comments, such Councilor responses or questions should stay to the topic brought by the person.
 - Clarified that Councilors can make comments on any topic at the end of each meeting.
- Roberts Rules reminders:
 - Discussion is limited to the motion on the table
- A motion needs to be seconded before it can be discussed.
 - It's okay NOT to second any motion if you don't think it should be discussed.
- Executive sessions on off-weeks has worked really well.
- Try to be more sincerely open minded and curious.
- Zoom Stuff
 - Helps when people mute themselves when not talking
 - Professional naming in all public meetings
 - People can change names themselves or the host can change names
- Let's not publicize Councilor's home addresses in any public meetings.

- We expect the Committees to follow these guidelines.
- Provide a write-up of basic “how public participation works” for all Committee Chairs
- Just like in face-to-face meetings, participating in City Zoom meetings under the influence is not appropriate.
- Clarified that when roll call votes are taken the Mayor decides the order and will often go last so as not to influence others.

2021 Proposed Meeting Guidelines

Based on the discussion, Craig proposed revising the Meeting Guidelines as follows (changes from last year are in red):

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
- **Discussions should be limited to the motion on the floor**

Clear and swift ~~agendas~~ leadership

- 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.
- **Clarified that when roll call votes are taken the Mayor decides the order and will often go last so as not to influence others.**

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.
 - If/when councilors ask questions or respond to public comments, such responses or questions should stay to the topic brought by the person.
 - Clarified that Councilors can make comments on any topic at the end of each 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.

Zoom Considerations

- Helps when people mute themselves when not talking.
- Professional written names should be used in all City meetings.
- Just like in face-to-face meetings, participating in City Zoom meetings under the influence is not appropriate.
- Home addresses of Councilors should not be stated in m meetings.

Committees Too

- We expect the Committees to follow these guidelines.
 - The Mayor will provide guidance to Committee Chairs, especially with regard to public participation in meetings.

2020 Goals Review

We reviewed last year's Council Goals (in green and black). Comments are in red.

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.

How we did

- In light of the pandemic, we did pretty well
 - Boys and Girls Club almost reached its goal
 - Bridge replacement completed – smooth and fast
 - Libby Hill – lots sold
 - “Economic development found us”
 - 201 Healthcare facility and other buildings – a success
- The downtown took a hit
 - COVID
 - Bridge replacement (there was less traffic this year due to COVID)
- Need to focus on community development and neighborhoods
 - Need to do better at getting communities involved in development projects early on

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.

How we did

- We did well to avoid a tax increase
- Balanced budget
- Union contract went well
- Helped support City staff
- Hired new public works director
 - Once he gets settled in the job, he will design and implement project management
- We were able to increase base pay for City Staff and we also changed the schedules of the Fire Department employees
- We made several good decisions to keep our staff safe

3. Improve fire/ambulance safety

- Increase staffing.
- Improve the facility.

How we did

- Heard from the Fire Chief about increasing staffing, but in light of the pandemic we had to table this.
- No progress on a facility, although we know there is a need.
- We added a position to Fire and Rescue.
- Did mold remediation on the Fire Department.

Also Important

4. Assess/evaluate needs of public buildings

- Inventory maintenance needs.

- Haven't done much on this
 - We need a long term capital improvement plan
- 5. Improve conditions for low income people**
 - Awareness and access to services.
 - Attention to distressed housing.
 - Summer Street Apartments opened
- 6. Council better connected to School District**
 - To understand their challenges.
 - Perhaps a rotating system.
 - Good communications between the Mayor and School District
 - Resource officers have helped the school
 - The school has served as the place for elections and distribution of tests and vaccines
- 7. Wastewater treatment improvements**
 - Make a plan for investment.
 - We have a plan

General comments about goals

- It would be good to actually write goals AND specific steps AND lead responsibilities
- Going forward, perhaps we should make plans/guidelines to be prepared for other disasters
 - Especially helpful to provide guidance to mom and pop stores
- For the facilities assessment, need to establish from the start: What can we afford and how far can we asses?
- Make it a new normal: Constant communication between the Mayor and the School Department
- Make sure the budget and resources are focused on our priorities
- Make sure we don't lose sight of the community

2021 Goals

Ideas

Building on our review of the 2020 Goals, Craig asked how the goals should be changed; what new ones should be added, or which should be merged or deleted.

We arrived at a list of potential goals as follows:

- A. Focus on our neighborhoods
- B. Improve/maintain services while keeping taxes affordable
- C. Fire Department Staffing
- D. Assess/evaluate needs of public buildings
- E. Focus on Housing
- F. Food - Need to make sure people get the food they need
- G. Council better connected to School District
- H. Make a plan for how we do business after the pandemic
- I. Focus on tax acquired properties – clean them up and sell them
- J. Improved communication among Councilors and Mayor and between us and the community

Craig asked Councilors to do a straw poll whereby each council ranked their top five priorities, with results as follows:

	A	B	D	C	E	J	I	F	H	G
Councilor Tim Cusick	8	6	9	10			7			
Councilor Maryann White	10		8	7			9	6		
Councilor Marc Rines	9	6			7	10			8	
Councilor Colin Frey	9	8	10	7	6					
Mayor Patricia Hart	10	9	7	8	6					
Councilor Penny Sargent	9	6			7	10		8		
Councilor Terry Berry		10	9	8		6	7			
Councilor Amy Rees	10	6	8					9	7	
Totals	65	51	51	40	26	26	23	23	15	0

Conclusion

After discussing the straw poll results, there was general agreement on the following priority goals for 2021.

Top Priorities

1. Focus on our neighborhoods

- Improved communication between City staff, the Council and the Public. - 26
- Find out how the City can help neighborhoods be better for our residents
- Do a better advance job of engaging residents in development projects
 - We need to keep in mind that the biggest thing people fear is change
 - Development and planning is very complex

- Re-focus on Heart and Soul Vision and Values
- Consider sidewalks
- Follow rules of open government and be proactive
- Do a better job in communicating with neighborhoods
- Do many things to help the neighborhoods

2. Improve/maintain services while keeping taxes affordable

3. Assess/evaluate needs of public buildings

4. Fire Department Staffing

Also Important

5. Focus on Housing

- Reconvene a committee
- Access money to help distress properties with clean up, repairs, weatherization
- Access federal money to upgrade housing inventory
- Connect City staff with Kennebec regional effort and then see what priorities emerge (how Gardiner can be most helpful)

6. Improved Communications

- Among Councilors and Mayor and between us and the community

7. Focus on tax acquired properties

- Clean them up and sell them

8. Food

- Need to make sure people get the food they need

9. Make a plan for how we do business after the pandemic

10. Council better connected to School District

Closing Comments

- Thanks to Craig
- This was better than expected
- This Council works well together
- Thanks to the City Manager and the Mayor for organizing this
- Craig, your communications skills are through the roof
- Props to the Mayor
- Manager says she looks forward to working with the Council on their goals
- Mayor says thanks to the City Manager

2021 City Council Meeting Guidelines

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Committees Too

- We expect the Committees to follow these guidelines.
 - The Mayor will provide guidance to Committee Chairs, especially with regard to public participation in meetings.

Gardiner City Council Top Priorities for 2021
DRAFT Performance Report

1. Focus on our neighborhoods

- Improved communication between City staff, the Council and the Public. - 26
- Find out how the City can help neighborhoods be better for our residents
- Do a better advance job of engaging residents in development projects
 - We need to keep in mind that the biggest thing people fear is change
 - Development and planning is very complex
- Re-focus on Heart and Soul Vision and Values
- Consider sidewalks
- Follow rules of open government and be proactive
- Do a better job in communicating with neighborhoods
- Do many things to help the neighborhoods

Performance:

- The City made good strides in codifying neighborhood involvement in planning decisions. The Ordinance Review Committee, Planning Board and Council worked to adopt several improvements to Land Use Ordinance to require public notification and workshops for development projects. Council approved updates to Tiny Homes/Accessory Dwelling Units ordinances to expand opportunities for housing.
- COVID continues to limit group gatherings for conducting a Heart and Soul refresh. Downtown Master Plan Committee conducted community input session with more than 70 people attending to provide input.
- Several residents including Mayor Hart and Rep Harnett continue to engage with the Orton Family Foundation and sister Heart and Soul towns
- Council approved a \$500,000 contribution to the Boys and Girls Club, this will help attract and retain families in the city and provide a new place where people can convene and recreate

2. Improve/maintain services while keeping taxes affordable

- Assess/evaluate needs of public buildings
- Fire Department Staffing

Performance:

- The City Council, Department Heads, and Staff were all successful in continuing to keep taxes steady and predictable for homeowners and businesses while providing top notch services.
- Department heads created preliminary list of needs for facilities
- Chief Seiberg has developed a plan with input from Ambulance Advisory Committee and Council and is meeting with partner communities to get their input and buy-in

Also Important

5. Focus on Housing

- Reconvene a committee
- Access money to help distressed properties with clean up, repairs, weatherization
- Access federal money to upgrade housing inventory
Connect City staff with Kennebec regional effort and then see what priorities emerge (how Gardiner can be most helpful)

Performance:

- Mayor Hart has served on the Kennebec County Affordable Housing Coalition
- Mayor Hart served on the Working Communities Challenge grant workgroup facilitated by KVCOG, the group was unsuccessful in its second-round grant application
- Lack of staff/consultant capacity continues to hinder progress on this issue

6. Improved Communications

Among Councilors and Mayor and between us and the community

Performance:

- City Council and Acting City Manager Davis made good progress on this goal – holding executive sessions on the weeks in between regular meetings and posting agendas as early as possible.
- The Mayor voted last during roll call votes on Zoom and when a Councilor is on the phone, so she would not influence anyone's vote.
- Returning to Council Chambers for meetings in August 2021 was a welcome change for many.
- Councilors continue to serve on committees – Economic Development, Ambulance, Gardiner Main Street, Library Trustees,

7. Focus on tax acquired properties

- Clean them up and sell them

Performance:

- The Tax Collector and the City was successful in working through the tax acquired property process on 5 properties that came to Council and 8 buyback agreements. These included two properties with many years of unpaid taxes.

8. Food

- Need to make sure people get the food they need

9. Make a plan for how we do business after the pandemic

10. Council better connected to School District

Performance:

- City Council waived fees for the new turf field
- School hosted elections in June and November
- Mayor and School Board Chair communicate frequently