



GARDINER CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET



Meeting Date	03/20/2024	Department	City Manager
Agenda Item	5. Department Head Reports		
Est. Cost			

Background Information	Please see the attached Department Head Reports		
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Requested Action	N/A		
City Manager and/or Finance Review			
Council Vote/ Action Taken			
Departmental Follow-Up			

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

Monthly Report for: Economic Development

Department Head: Melissa Lindley

Month/Year: February 2024

Summary of Month in General Terms:

Grant "season" continues to be in full swing with funding opportunities in abundance, and I am always on the lookout for programs that could potentially support economic development growth as well as general support for the City of Gardiner. I am sharing opportunities with department heads, committees, and the city council and will support or formulate the application process for programs we decide to pursue.

I attended the Maine Real Estate & Development Association's annual Forecast Conference. Along with learning more about real estate and development current conditions, forecasts, and trends, I also met others working in economic development and real estate across the state. Networking in events such as this is always helpful to learn from one another and create relationships which are beneficial for Gardiner's economic development growth.

Current Progress on Projects/Plans:

Brownfields Assessment Grant: A contract has been signed with Sevee & Maher Engineers as the qualified environmental professional for Gardiner's Brownfields Assessment grant. Work started back up right away with beginning the process of a Phase II investigation for 279 Water Street. We also have been discussing possible solutions for the implications of soil disturbance and removal for the potential development on the former TW Dick Brownfields site at 1 Summer Street. Buildings that might have been contaminated from the December flooding event might benefit from Brownfields investigation, and we will continue looking into this possibility.

Libby Hill Business Park: Both Lot 12 and Lot 25 are listed for sale, and we continue to work with our realtor Dennis Wheelock to sell the properties.

1 Summer St: Mastway Development has signed a purchase option agreement with the city for this property as they prepare plans for a large affordable housing development for the property.

Arcade Parking Lot Improvements: Improvements and redesign for this location were identified as a priority in the Downtown Master Plan. We received two bids from the RFP for engineering and design for Arcade lot improvements. The quoted costs were \$84,130 and \$123,740. There was \$25,000 of TIF funds identified for this use in the FY24 budget. With this huge pricing gap, we need to take a second look at the priorities for this project and consider those when forming the TIF budget for next year to see if this work is within the city's needs and budget.

Any other noted updates, concerns, items for City Council to be aware of:

Economic and Community Development Committee: parking continues to be a discussion with the committee and Johnson Hall has been involved with this topic. We plan to develop a downtown parking map that can be used to share public parking locations for those coming to Gardiner downtown for events, or for general use to make planning for parking clearer for everyone. The committee continues to review priorities and action items for implementing the downtown master plan and aligning economic development priorities with potential funding options.

Downtown Sidewalk Committee: MDOT has hired Fuss & O'Neill as the project manager for the downtown sidewalk project. The committee has developed the area boundaries for the scope of the project, basic design components have been reviewed, and are discussing areas of concern to factor into the design process. March's meeting will include historical considerations in creating a design appropriate for Gardiner' downtown, and members of Gardiner's Historic Preservation Commission are invited to attend the meeting.

City Parks Committee: The committee held its first meeting this month. Identifying city-owned land and the public park locations, how the parks are used and their maintenance needs, and environmental resiliency were topics of discussion. The waterfront surfaced as a park to prioritize for the committee. Robert Abby was voted to chair the committee.

With the December 17-21 severe storm declared a disaster, assistance programs for homeowners and businesses are available from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) as well as Economic Injury Disaster Loans for businesses from the Small Business Association. This information has been shared on the City's website and Facebook account, the Gardiner Current App, and also by Gardiner Main Street. [The deadline to apply for assistance is April 1. More information can be found at \[DisasterAssistance.gov\]\(https://DisasterAssistance.gov\) and \[sba.gov/disaster\]\(https://sba.gov/disaster\).](#)

Monthly Report for: Gardiner Fire & Rescue

Department Head: Chief Rick Sieberg

Month: February

Year: 2024

Summary of Month in General Terms:

Total CFS (calls for service): 289

EMS: 269

Gardiner:	93
West Gardiner:	25
Richmond:	27
Farmingdale:	31
Litchfield:	24
Pittston:	25
Randolph:	20
Chelsea:	21
Other:	3 (Bowdoinham, Bowdoin, Whitefield)

Fire: 20

Current Progress on Projects/Plans/Problems:

- Planning on how to best use the new space created in the old building and grounds area.
- Preparing South Gardiner Fire Station for regular FD use.
- Became affiliated with our local Options liaison. (Help for patients with addiction problems etc.)

Personnel Updates (promotions, absences, needs, etc.):

- All Staff completed PEPP (Pediatric Emergencies for Prehospital Providers) recertification.
- All Staff completed the 2024 Maine EMS Protocol update.

Any other noted updates, concerns, items for City Council to be Aware of:

- Space at Central Station remains a challenge.
- Working toward staffing all three rescues.

Monthly Report for: Front Office/Finance
Department Head: Denise Brown
Month/Year: February 2024

Current Progress on Projects/Plans:

February Activity					
436	MV Transactions	86,897	Permits		
350	Tax Payments	44,815	1	Building-Business/Commercial	130
94	Sewer Payments	198,980	5	Building-Residential	622
30	IF&W Transactions	2,082	1	Demolition	25
30	Vital Records	456	0	Home Occupancy	0
15	Ambulance Payments	2,581	0	Excavation	0
99	Dog Transactions	2,271	2	Sign	50
1	Victualer/Liquor License	10	0	Street Opening	0
8	Notarial	40	2	Driveway Entrance	50
2	Marriage	50	0	Plumbing	0
10	General Assistance	9,242	0	Septic	0

The quarterly sewer billing was prepared and received in the citizens mail during the first week of February. As a reminder, this billing reflected the recently approved 30% increase.

Personnel Updates (promotions, absences, needs, etc.):

Despite being contracted, the City's Assessor, Curt Lebel, is an unbelievable asset to the City and a vital part of the Front Office! Curt has worked for the City for 19 years. Thank you for your service to Gardiner Curt!

City employees enjoyed a SuperBowl Luncheon on February 9th. There was football trivia, team spirit, and tasty potluck options!

Financial:

Budget research, meetings, and preparation continue. The State released their FY25 Revenue Sharing projections and Gardiner's distribution is currently slated to decrease by \$119,675. This is an early projection and I will continue to monitor the State Treasurer website. I also continue to monitor the legislative activity through the weekly Legislative Bulletin email for items that may have a financial impact.

I attended a workshop via zoom to learn about the law Governor Mills signed for the creation of a paid family and medical leave program (ME PFML). This law provides up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave which will be paid by employer and employee premiums that begin Jan. 1, 2025. The combined premium is 1% of wages (subject to increases each year starting in 2028) and will be split between the employee and the employer. Though the deductions will start Jan. 1 of 2025, claims will not begin until May of 2026. The City will budget ½ of a percent of all wages for half of FY25.

Any other noted updates, concerns, items for City Council to be Aware of:

Nothing to report at this time.

Monthly Report for: Gardiner Public Library

Department Head: Dawn Thistle

Month/Year: February, 2024

Summary of Month:

February was busy. Programming continued at a steady pace and attendance of Story Time and our home-schooling groups have only increased. The meeting “pod” has been incredibly well utilized and appreciated by a variety of users, from remote workers to case workers and clients to test-takers and tutors. We were short-staffed for a couple of weeks due to some planned vacations and some unplanned illnesses, but we weathered it well along with some much-appreciated help from City Hall. We are well into planning spring events and programming.

Current Progress on Projects/Plans:

Town Meeting season is about to begin. We will be holding an open house for Farmingdale residents on March 26th. Limited progress was made on putting the Archives back together, as we were short-staffed, and I was ill for a week. However, we do have a plan and I have an experienced volunteer ready to help. We have done a lot of moving and shifting of book cases and spaces since welcoming the “pod”. With help from the Buildings & Grounds crew we have almost completed it all and are looking refreshed in a number of ways.

Any other noted updates, concerns, items for City Council to be aware of:

Long time library staff, Ginni Nichols, is retiring at the end of March. While it was anticipated that she would likely retire soon, this did come as a surprise that it would be so soon. We are quickly planning a proper send-off for her. She has been with the library for over 27 years.

Monthly Report for Gardiner Police Department

Department Head: Chief Todd H. Pilsbury

Month: February 2024

Summary of Month in General Terms:

Calls for Service:	387
Accidents:	0
Arrests/Criminal Cites:	20
Traffic & Parking Tix:	34

Current Progress on Projects/Plans/Problems:

The Gardiner Police department continues the process to become MLEAP certified. (Maine Law Enforcement Accreditation Program) As stated in prior reports, the process takes approximately three years to complete but I hope to have the process completed in approximately two years if all goes well. As of the end of February the process continues to go well and I still hope to complete the process early.

As noted in previous reports and will be noted in future reports, within the next two years we will need to go to a new or upgraded records management system as Central Square/IMC (current dispatching system) is slated to be discontinued. We currently are in a two year contract with our dispatching service (RCC) and they may not be offering service utilizing our current system (IMC) beyond the two year contract. We currently are in the beginning phases of exploring other options for this service to include a mandatory upgrade or replacement to our current IMC system and dispatch services.

I have been in contact with Sheriff Ken Mason of the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office where I have inquired whether they will be including Gardiner PD in whatever system they decide to go with whether it be the upgrade to IMC or the Spillman System and was assured that we will be included in all meetings/discussions reference dispatching services. Another caveat to this new system is that there will be some extra costs associated if we stay with Kennebec SO, or any other entity I would imagine, as we have been running on their system for many years to include utilization of their IT persons and have not contributed any payment for these services. We currently run our dispatch software under Kennebec SO licenses and, at a minimum, will have to possibly obtain our own licenses because of upgraded security with the systems. I have no concrete numbers as we are in the initial stages.

Personnel Updates (Promotions, Absences, Needs, Etc.):

Officer Zachary Reynolds has decided to put in and accept a conditional offer of employment with the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office. As of the writing of this report I have heard no further from Officer Reynolds as to if he has been given a final offer of employment.

Due to staffing issues I have returned Officer Scott MacMaster to patrol functions with the City of Gardiner and have pulled him from his duties as MSAD's School Resource Officer. He will return to his SRO duties once all patrol shifts are filled.

Officer Michael Caputo completed his Field Training Program and has been assigned a night patrol shift. He is working the 6:00pm to 6:00am shift.

Staffing is still a concern especially with the possibility of Officer Zachary Reynolds going to the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office. With Officer Caputo finishing his FTO and Officer MacMaster returning to a patrol shift we currently have one (1) open patrol shift, two (2) if Officer Reynolds leaves. This leaves three or four open positions (One or two in patrol, a detective and an SRO). We have had one application which was followed up on but the candidate did not work out and another candidate brought in decided that he was going to stay at his current department. We continue to recruit through several social media outlets as well as word of mouth.

Overall, officers used a total of 37.5 hours of vacation/comp time during the month, and 38 hours of sick leave.

Any other Noted Updates, Concerns, Items for the City Council to be aware of:

Nothing up to this point warrants noting.

Monthly Report: Public Works Department

Director: John A Cameron Sr.

Month: February 2024

Summary of Month in General Terms

Highway Department: this month has been a very unique with very light snow storms the winter operations have gone from what used to be a very busy month in February fighting snow and ice to where we are taking care of our equipment and maintaining stuff which will help out in the long run to make stuff last because of the minimal snowstorms. We have had time to do a lot of brush cutting along the roadsides and even rented a bucket truck to get some of the higher limbs that get weighted down and interfere with the city streets. We have been out replacing road signs that have gone missing, vandalized, or just faded out.

Buildings & Grounds: the buildings and grounds crew have been busy picking away at a lot of small projects, one being clean the arcade stairway scrubbing all the oils and contaminants out of there from the flood. Worked inside City Hall stripped and waxed the hallway floor brought that back to life nice. Along with helping whether it is a lot of other small task for the library in City Hall getting things rearrange any new storage area out in the far bays.

Current Progress on Projects/Planes/Problems: we were able to get a new set of solar flashing lights for the crosswalk that goes from the Big Apple over to the common this will help make things a little safer for the pedestrians.

Any other noted updates, concerns, items for City Council to be aware of. none currently.

TO: Andy Carlton, City Manager
FROM: Chuck Applebee, Interim Wastewater Director
DATE: March. 12, 2024
RE: Wastewater Activity Report February 2024

February 2024

We are happy to report that there were no CSO's (Combined Sewer Overflows) in the month of January and all permit limits were met.

The replacement parts for the automatic bar screen at Main Avenue have arrived and been installed thus the auto bar screen at Main Avenue Pump Station has been working correctly.

We continue to await for replacement transducers that indicates wet well level located at Main Avenue. This item was damaged as part of the Christmas Day Storm. In the meantime an alternate transducer is being used.

The smallest pump for the plant water system has failed and been replaced. The worm gear and drive auger have failed on the primary clarifier and a replacement has been ordered and received. We are now preparing and plan on changing this gear on Friday the 15th of March.

As soon as the primary clarifier is back to 100 percent normal wastewater operations will resume.

The CSO Master Plan is currently due for update. The city will be meeting with the Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection to help determine requirements going forward. In general the wastewater collection system will need to continue to improve.

All alternative funding options are being reviewed for the financing of Phase II and the city continues to work with Hoyle Tanner to prepare for Phase II of the wastewater upgrade.

I appreciate the opportunity to work with Manager Andy Carlton, Public Works Director John Cameron and the Gardiner Staff to serve the community on an interim basis.