

GARDINER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, November 18, 2015
Gardiner City Hall

Mayor Thom Harnett called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present for the meeting were Mayor Thom Harnett, Councilors Terry Berry, Phil Hart, Richard Heath, Maureen Blanchard, Patricia Hart, and Jon Ault. Scott Williams was absent. Also present were City Manager Scott Morelli and City Clerk Lisa Gilliam.

Executive Session Per 1 MRSA 405(6)(C) - Proposals for Lot Sales at Libby Hill Business Park:

Motion by Councilor Phil Hart to go into Executive Session Per 1 MRSA 405 (6)(C); motion seconded by Councilor Heath. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Executive Session ended, the meeting opened to public and was called to order at 7:14 p.m.

PETITIONS, PUBLIC HEARINGS (Public comment for anything not on agenda):

Mayor Harnett asked if anyone present would like to speak to the Council. Hearing no comments, Mayor Harnett closed the public hearing.

Consent Agenda:

New Business:

Second Read of Land Use Ordinance & Zoning Map Changes:

CEO Barb Skelton and Planning Board Chair Debby Willis were present to give a brief presentation on the proposed changes. Motion by Councilor Patricia Hart to approve the second read of the Land Use Ordinance & Zoning Map Changes as presented, approve the Board Order and waive the publication of this item in the local newspaper; motion seconded by Councilor Berry. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Discussion on Consultant's Level of Service Review - Library:

Helen Stevens, Chair of the Gardiner Library Board, was present to brief the City Council on the services provided by the Library. Along with books and DVD's being used by the patrons of the Library they also provide computer services, genealogy, as well as access to newspapers and magazines to name a few. The Library currently serves six communities and has an average of 61,000 visitors per year. Ms. Stevens remarked about the Library being understaffed and that it has become an issue for patrons who want access to different areas of the library that are closed off when there is a staff shortage; it was also noted that it's a safety issue for the employees as well as those visiting the Library when there is a staff shortage.

Dennis Doiran who is the President of the Gardiner Library Association was present to speak to the Council about the Library. He spoke to the Council about the MRI Report that covered the functions of the Library and said he felt the report gave a fair representation of the current status of the Gardiner Library. Mr. Doran also spoke on the Library's interior and exterior physical condition and that some issues regarding that would need to be addressed in the future.

Several residents addressed the City Council and stated their support for the Library services including Melanie Hardy who read a letter of support for the Gardiner Library. Isabell Files, a younger resident,

spoke briefly about the services that the Library provides not only for her but for other younger residents her age. She stated that she currently volunteers at the Library and that she sees first hand the need for the services that are provided.

Robert Abbey, who is a member of the Gardiner Library Board and also works with the archives, spoke briefly on the exceptional leadership, staff and resources the Library provides. He requested the City provide the funding necessary for providing a Children's Librarian and archives director. Debby Willis spoke in favor of the Library services. She said it is common practice for her to refer people to the Library for education research and computer services.

Tom Abbott, a West Gardiner resident who is a member of the Gardiner Library Board, said that 32% of West Gardiner residents have a Library card. He spoke highly of the services the Library provides and that the Town of West Gardiner is proud to be one of the communities that are partnered with the Gardiner Library.

Mayor Harnett introduced Library Director Anne Davis and also congratulated her on her recent honor as State Librarian of the Year. Discussion followed. Councilor Ault spoke on the importance that the Library served to him personally when he first moved to Gardiner. Councilor Ault said he would not want to see any services cut that are provided by the Library. Discussion followed. Councilor Blanchard expressed concern with the requests from the Library vs. the needs of the City's public safety. Councilor Blanchard feels that the neighboring communities should pay per person the same amount that Gardiner residents are currently paying. Councilor Heath noted that the surrounding communities are subscribers and the fees they pay would be less for that reason. Councilor Heath said that his family have truly benefited from the services provided by the Library. Councilor Williams also spoke highly of the Gardiner Library and what they can provide to the patrons. Councilor Williams also stated that services provided by the Library should not be compared to the services provided by public safety, these are two very different services. Councilor Patricia Hart addressed the hours that the Library is open to the public, she also spoke about the funding provided by neighboring communities and that they should shoulder more than they currently are. Discussion continued. Mr. Doran joined the conversation and stated he felt the association should look into the supporting communities contributing more than they currently do.

Councilor Berry said the staffing issues should be made by the Librarian and not the council. Councilor Phil Hart stated he had great faith in the City Manager and the Librarian working together to see if there is any way there could be some reorganization of staffing to help with budget constraints. Councilor Phil Hart said the Council should allow for the hiring of some part time staff to help with the current restraints until staffing solutions can be made. Councilor Hart also noted that public schools are cutting back on school libraries and those students now rely more on the use of the public library. Discussion followed. Anne said that when people start cutting their personal budgets that's when the Library begins to fill those needs.

Mayor Harnett thanked all those who were present for the meeting, he also thanked those who had called and emailed him with their support for the Library. Mayor Harnett said the library does a wonderful job with limited resources; he also stated that staffing and library hours should be determined by the Librarian. Councilor Phil Hart again said that any suggestions for reorganizing staffing and hour for the library should be discussed by the Librarian and the City Manager; maybe together they could come up with some solutions. Mayor Harnett also said the report from MRI clearly stated that a Children's Librarian should be hired. Manager Morelli said that this evening's discussion should provide some direction for what the Council would like the Library to move forward.

Motion by Councilor Phil Hart to authorize the City Manager and Library Director to look into the reorganization of staff and report back to the Council, in the meantime to allow Anne the budget necessary to hire part time help until decisions for staffing can be made; motion seconded by Councilor Blanchard. Discussion followed. Councilor Ault understands the motion that's been made, but is not in

agreement with it. Anne stated she would prefer waiting before hiring part time help, stating it would be more difficult to hire a limited position instead of hiring a full time person. Discussion followed. Councilor Heath said that he would be supportive of hiring a full time children's librarian and also noted that the City is facing this issue along with many others due to the state cuts made to Municipal Revenue Sharing. Discussion followed. Councilor Patricia Hart said she would be in favor of the current motion and that this might be a good time to look into the benefit of exploring a reorganization of staffing.

Councilor Berry asked if a children's librarian could be hired per diem while the reorganization option is explored. Councilor Berry and Librarian Davis agreed this would be a better option than hiring a part time position. Mayor Harnett asked if Councilor Phil Hart would amend the motion to include a timeline; Librarian Davis and the City Manager said this could be worked out over a three week period. Discussion followed. Councilor Hart amended his motion to the following have the City Manager and Librarian report back to council no later than January 6th and that funds be provided to the Library to cover part time workers; motion seconded by Councilor Blanchard. Councilor Heath said he would not be in favor of this motion. Councilor Ault said he understands Councilor Heath's view, but will be voting in favor. Motion carried 7-2 with Mayor Harnett abstaining and Councilors Heath and Williams opposed.

Meeting breaks at 10:10pm.

Meeting back in session at 10:15pm

Consideration of Enrolling TW Dick & 18 Dennis Street Sites in DEP VRAP Program:

Mayor Harnett and the City Manager did a conference call with an EPA representative for this discussion. Councilor Berry asked if there were any downside for the City; the Council was told no, that it would provide liability protection for the City. Discussion followed about the clean up process. Motion by Councilor Heath to authorize the City Manager enter into the VRAP program; motion seconded by Councilor Ault. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Public Comments on and Consideration of the City of Gardiner's "Business Friendly" Certification Application to the State:

Manager Morelli said this item has been postponed indefinitely.

Consideration of Establishing Revolving Line of Credit Program:

Economic Development Committee Chairperson Geri Doyle and Gardiner Main Street Director Patrick Wright were present to discuss this issue. Mr. Wright said they have between \$60,000 and \$70,000 saved to put towards economic development. He has requested a revolving line of credit as opposed to a capitol loan. He said that as funds become available they would be used as part of this revolving loan. Tonight they are requesting the council approve the concept and then the staff would work on the development of applications, loan guidelines, etc. Discussion followed. Mayor Harnett, Councilors Patricia Hart and Ault all agreed this would be low risk to the City. Councilor Ault moved to approve item as presented; motion seconded by Councilor Heath. Discussion continued. Councilor Phil Hart said he would vote against this item because he feels these funds could be used to pay down current city debt. Motion carried 7-1 with Councilor Phil Hart opposed.

Consideration of Location of Snow Dump:

Manager Morelli briefed the Council on this item. Public Works Director Tony LaPlante was present and is in favor of this item as presented. Councilor Phil Hart moved to accept the proposal and to try and minimize excess noise; motion seconded by Councilor Berry. Gardiner resident Ronald Condon spoke on this item and said noise created by the large vehicles is a big issue for those living in this neighborhood. He also said there was concern of well contamination from the snow dump. Manager Morelli said the city had received a letter of approval from DEP to continue using this site for the snow dump. Manager Morelli said the city would be open to other suggestion for a snow dump area if they wanted to make any change. Councilor Phil Hart asked for the Public Works Director to look into other options. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Consideration of Appointments to DOT Bridge Advisory Committee:

Those to be appointed are: Tom Reeves, Jack Skehan, Scott Patrick, Dennis Wheelock, Mayor Thom Harnett, Diane Morabito, City Manager Scott Morelli and Councilor Patricia Hart.

Motion by Councilor Phil Hart to approve appointments to the DOT Bridge Advisory Committee; motion seconded by Councilor Berry. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Approval of a Disposition of TAP Bid Form and Set Minimum Bid:

Motion by Councilor Blanchard to approve disposition of TAP Bid Form and to set a minimum bid; motion seconded by Councilor Patricia Hart. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Consideration of Use of Fund Balance to Purchase Wreaths for City Cemeteries:

Motion by Councilor Phil Hart to approve the purchase of 10 wreaths to be distributed fairly; motion seconded by Councilor Ault. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Consideration of Special Event Permit for Artwalk Gardiner:

Consideration of Special Event Permit - "Days of Light:"

Consideration of Special Event Permit - MaineGeneral "A Celebration of Lights:"

Motion by Councilor Berry to approve all three Special Event Permits; motion seconded by Councilor Ault. Motion carried by 7-0 with Councilor Heath abstaining.

Executive Session Per 1 MRSA 405(6)(C) - Lot Sales at Libby Hill Business Park:

Motion to enter executive session by Councilor Patricia Hart; motion seconded by Councilor Berry. Motion carried 8-0. Executive Session began at 11:15 p.m. Executive Session ended at 11:36pm. Motion by Councilor Berry to authorize the City Manager to sell lots 22 and 23 with direction the City Council has given him; motion seconded by Councilor Patricia Hart. Motion carried 7-0 with Councilor Heath abstaining.

Discussion Regarding Signing 5 Year Agreement with Hatch Hill:

City Manager Morelli recommends the City not enter into a 5 year agreement. Motion by Councilor Berry to enter into a one year contract with Hatch Hill; motion seconded by Councilor Ault. Motion carried 7-0 with Councilor Heath abstaining.

Consideration of Request from Kennebec Savings Bank for the City to Take Second Position on Revolving Loan:

Manager Morelli briefed the Council on this item. Artdogs is looking to refinance the current mortgage that she has. The City of Gardiner has a 2nd mortgage behind the bank mortgage as part of the revolving loan fund program. The original Bank of Maine/Camden mortgage was for \$45,000 and the City loan was originally \$75,550. The new mortgage the city is proposing will be for \$46,000, their current balance is approximately \$31,000. The property is tax assessed by the City for \$176,700. The City Manager said he is requesting the City agree to sign a subordination agreement to allow Kennebec Savings Bank to have a first mortgage on the property. The City of Gardiner will remain in the 2nd mortgage position as they currently are. Discussion followed. Motion by Councilor Phil Hart to approve the authorization for this revolving loan as presented; motion seconded by Councilor Williams. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

City Manager Update:

None

City Council Update:

- **Councilor Blanchard** – Said she attended the presentation on opiate drugs that was presented by the Gardiner Police Department and that they did a wonderful job.
- **Councilor Ault** – Spoke about the toy drive being done on Facebook. People can drop off gifts at businesses located on Water Street.
- **Councilor Patricia Hart** – She spoke about the tough discussion on the library. She said she was not presuming a particular outcome, but looking for an opportunity to make things more efficient for that department.
- **Mayor Harnett** – He mentioned the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Craft Beer Store; he said there was a large turn-out for the opening. Tomorrow he announced there will be a ribbon cutting at the meat processing center in the business park.

Motion by Councilor Phil Hart to adjourn; motion seconded by Councilor Heath. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Meeting adjourned at 11:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Lisa Gilliam, City Clerk