

GARDINER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday December 2, 2015
Gardiner City Hall

Mayor Thom Harnett called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Roll Call:

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

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

David Boucher wanted to speak briefly about a sewer abatement. It was noted that this subject will be addressed later on the agenda.

Consent Agenda:

None.

New Business:

Consideration of Selecting Winning Bidder for TW Dick/1 Summer Street Redevelopment Project:

Manager Morelli gave a presentation on the history of this property and the parcels involved in this redevelopment. The Manager is requesting the City Council award the contract and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Developers Collaborative for the project. Discussion followed. Mike Line from Developers Collaborative gave a brief summary on the building that will be built for MaineGeneral and the addition of a 30-35 housing unit either for affordable or elderly housing. Mr. Line said there is also a possibility of looking forward to expanding their projects into the downtown area. The Councilors and Mayor all spoke on the presentation that was made by Developers Collaborative and how impressed they were with their proposal. Rick Albert from MaineGeneral said they were interested in building on this site due to the high volume of traffic that passes through that area; he did say that parking is always an issue no matter where you build, but they hope to be able to address any issues with that too. Motion by Councilor Heath to authorize the City Manager to enter into MOU with Developers Collaborative for 1 Summer Street property; motion seconded by Councilor Patricia Hart. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0. Motion by Councilor Berry to authorize the City Manager to sign agreement with creditors; motion seconded by Councilor Heath. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0. Motion by Councilor Berry to authorize the City Manager to use \$27,500 from sale to go towards the city's required match of grant funding received; motion seconded by Councilor Heath. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

First Read of Land Use Ordinance:

Mayor Harnett opened the Public Hearing. Planning Board Chair Debby Willis and Code Enforcement Officer Barb Skelton were present to discuss this issue. It was noted that the changes involved commercial signs. A brief discussion followed. With no public comment, Mayor Harnett closed the Public Hearing. Motion by Councilor Patricia Hart to approve the first read of the Land Use Ordinance; motion seconded by Councilor Ault. A brief discussion followed. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Discussion on Consultant's Level of Service Review – Police:

Manager Morelli gave a brief summary of the report and said tonight would be the Council's opportunity to review this with Police Chief James Toman who was present for the discussion. Mayor Harnett opened the discussion up for public comment.

- David Beaulieu spoke on the need for a fully funded Police Department based on all of the recent break-in's in the area of Fountain Street and Harrison Avenue; he also noted a lot of vandalism in that area. He said there has been an increase of crime and drugs in the City that require quick action by the City Police and he would hate to see this contracted out to the Sheriff's Department.
- George Trask who lives on the Libby Hill Road spoke on this issue. Mr. Trask said he feels the Police Department is currently understaffed and needs to be fully funded. He said the City has a very good Police Chief who has a department that is consistent. Mr. Trask said he had a family member that recently died of a drug overdose and that he's concerned about the drug issues the city faces. He went on to say that the Police Department always treats people fairly.
- Debby Willis spoke about the importance of the Police Department saying that she would hate to see any cuts made to this department.
- Mary Ann Johnson from School Street spoke in support of the Police Departments funding. She said this is a very important part of the City's budget that needs to be maintained. She also expressed concern with public safety services being contracted out and the delays that people would face during an emergency situation. She also said the Police Department should have more than one officer on duty at a time
- Phil Barter from Brunswick Avenue spoke in support of the Police Department and said he did not want to see their services cut.

Councilor Ault thanked the residents for attending in support of the Police Department and thanked the Police Chief for the great job that his department does. Councilor Heath also spoke in favor of the great reputation the Police Department has in the City. Councilor Ault commented on the increase in drugs and crime in the City. Discussion followed. Chief Toman said there has been a steep increase in crime reports and arrests as compared to this time last year. Chief Toman said that police calls have increased in almost all categories including property crimes, which is up 30% as opposed to last year. It was also noted that the City of Gardiner provides mutual aid to the State Police and the Sheriff's Department when requested. Councilor Blanchard expressed her concern with the department being understaffed. Chief Toman spoke on the value of the Public Safety Officer and the importance of her work in the downtown area, animal control and as the harbor master.

Councilor Patricia Hart made a public apology to Library Director Anne Davis who she felt was grilled at the last council meeting when the Library services were up for review. Councilor Hart also spoke on the significance of the Police Department being properly staffed and their response time when their assistance is requested as opposed to other communities who have a lengthy waiting response from the State Police or Sheriff's Department. Councilor Ault spoke on the importance of the Public Safety Officer and the value she brings to the downtown area and businesses. Chief Toman spoke on the increase in calls that the Public Safety Officer handles.

Mayor Harnett thanked Police Chief Toman, Fire Chief Al Nelson, Public Works Director Tony LaPlante and Library Director Anne Davis for going through this process following the report done by MRI and the follow up that was done with the City Council over these past few weeks.

Manager Morelli felt it would be appropriate if the Council made a motion for the Police Department to file their vacancy. Motion by Councilor Ault to authorize the Police Chief to hire and fill the current vacancy within the Police Department; motion seconded by Councilor Heath. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

At 8:10 p.m. Mayor Harnett stated the Council would take a brief recess.

At 8:15 p.m. Mayor Harnett called the meeting back to order.

Manager Morelli noted the concerns brought to him by Councilor Patricia Hart; Councilor Patricia Hart said she had been approached with concerns from residents who are walking in the community and have

concerns with speeding vehicles. Resident Judy Dorsey spoke in agreement with these concerns. Ms. Dorsey suggested a committee be formed for residents to brain storm ideas before bringing this issue to the Police Department. Chief Toman wanted to be clear that this issue was in no way a burden to his department. Manager Morelli felt it would be best just to discuss this issue prior to forming any committees. Discussion followed. Resident George Trask spoke about the speeding issues on the Libby Hill Road and his concerns with safety in that area. Robert Abbey spoke on the benefit of the speed sign and extra patrols in his neighborhood which he felt had made a difference in his neighborhood. Patrick Wright from the Economic Development Committee said the style of the roads and how they are built that also needs to be taken into consideration when these issues are discussed. Discussion followed. Councilor Patricia Hart suggested that the residents meet together and discuss ideas and suggestions before bringing this back to the Council. Manager Morelli said that the Police Chief and Public Works would be open to meet with people who have suggestions. No motions were made on this issue.

Consideration of GMS Proposal to Create Historic Walking Path:

Patrick Wright and Robert Abbey were present to brief the Council on this issue. Mr. Abbey gave the Council a visual presentation of where the signs would be placed and the significance of the signs to the location each would mark. Mr. Wright said to have the signs installed it would roughly cost about \$12,000. Mr. Wright said at this time they are looking for an endorsement from the City Council to move forward with the project. Councilor Blanchard suggested this group consult the Public Works Director to make sure the signs don't obstruct vehicle traffic. Mayor Harnett also suggested the signs be viewable for those who may be handicapped. Councilor Ault and Councilor Patricia Hart both stated their pleasure knowing these signs will be placed around the community for people to enjoy. Motion by Councilor Ault to approve this proposal as presented; motion seconded by Councilor Patricia Hart. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Consideration of Designating a Temporary Location for Merrymeeting Trail:

City Manager Morelli briefed the Council on this issue along with Merrymeeting Trail Committee Member Tom Reeves. A brief discussion followed. Motion by Councilor Heath to approve the temporary location; motion second by Councilor Ault. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Sewer Abatements:

Wastewater Director Doug Clark was present to review the abatements being presented to the Council. Motion by Councilor Patricia Hart to approve List B as presented; motion seconded by Councilor Phil Hart. Discussion continued. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0. Councilor Phil Hart expressed concerns with excess water use and if there is any way that it could be monitored by the City. Mr. Clark said there is a way to monitor this, but it would be very costly to buy the technology.

Discussion Regarding Public Work's Purchase of 10-Wheel Dump Truck:

Manager Morelli and Public Works Director Tony LaPlante gave a brief review of this item. Manager Morelli noted this item was purchased following its approval in the budget. A summary of how many vehicles of this type are being purchased by other municipalities was also presented. Discussion followed. Resident George Trask spoke about his concerns with the vehicles used by Public Works and the lack of maintenance provided by the City for these vehicles. Personnel issues were also discussed and as was the proper procedure to follow if a complaint is made about a city employee. Discussion followed. No motion was made by the Council on this item.

Consideration and Approval of City Council Minutes:

Motion by Councilor Patricia Hart to approve the minutes for June 17, 2015 and July 1, 2015 as presented; motion seconded by Councilor Berry. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0

Consideration of Appointment to DOT Bridge Advisory Committee:

Dan Bailey has volunteered to be appointed. Motion by Councilor Berry to appoint Dan Bailey to the DOT Bridge Advisory Committee; motion seconded by Councilor Phil Hart. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0

City Manager Update:

- On December 23rd newly elected councilor Shawn Dolley will receive orientation. All Council is invited to participate.
- Apostolic Church requirements are now complete.
- Wreaths Across America will be on December 12th. If you want to volunteer you can contact Robin Plourde.
- The demolition at 235 Water Street is almost complete. The building will be completely removed with fencing being placed along the sidewalk for pedestrian safety.
- Police Officer Norm Gove was promoted to Sargent.
- Manager Morelli will be meeting with the Library to discuss options concerning the level of services they provided. This will be brought back before the Council on the December 16th meeting.
- The Buidling & Grounds Departmetn were acknowledged for their great work in the downtown area.

City Council Update:

- Councilor Heath – Wanted to acknowledge the Public Works Director for working on a Sunday at the Park measuring the gazebo for Christmas lights.
- Phil Hart – Appologived for the conversation with George Trask getting out of hand.
- Councilor Blanchard – Thanked Tony LaPlante and Doug Clark for the work they do and the difficulty they face every day and how they maintain composure during difficult situations.
- Counilor Ault – Thanked City Manager Scott Morelli and Librarian Anne Davis for working together on the Library level of services. He also said the downtown Christmas tree lighting ceremony was well attended.
- Councilor Patricia Hart – Also thanked Public Words for the great job decorating the downtown and with this years tree lighting. She also reminded everyone that the Holiday Parade is on Saturday. The Rotary Club is selling trees and the money raised stays in Gardiner. Councilor Hart also said she would like to sponsor an item for the Ordinance Review Committee to see how other communitys prioritize projects and how they get processed through their municipality. Councilor Hart also recommended the City adopting the Roberts Rules of Orders for City Council Meetings, she felt it would bring order to the meetings.
- Mayor Harnett – The Artwalk will be tomorrow night, followed by a concernt at Johns Hall. The Tree lighting ceremony was great; there were lots of people present for the ceremony. Reminder that the Christmas Parade will be on Saturday. The Mayor also encouraged people to check out the Gardiner Main Street's Facebook Page which has a lot of information about the community and upcoming events.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:15.

Respectfully submitted by,
Lisa Gilliam, City Clerk