

**REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
GARDINER CITY COUNCIL
At BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2014
REGIONAL SUMMIT 6:00 P.M.
COUNCIL MEETING 7:30 P.M.**

6 pm. - REGIONALIZATION SUMMIT

ROLL CALL – All Councilors Present

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

Public Hearing and Consideration of Gardiner Sportsman Bottle Club Renewal

Motion to approve by Pat Hart

Public Hearing and Consideration of Refinance Bond

Denise Brown and Chuck Applebee spoke about three bonds that can be refinanced through Rural Development . Councilor Johnston asked if it was more advantageous to go with commercial loans? This is a subsidizing program. It will free up money for another bond—win, win. Motion to approve refinancing bond with the Maine Municipal Bond Bank; unanimous vote.

Public Hearing and Consideration of General Assistance Amendment

Motion to approve the GA amendments; unanimous vote

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation of FY13 Audit

Denise Brown, Finance Director, introduced Kathy Tyson and Josh Kochis, our auditors with RKO. There was not a lot to cover, which is good! There were only 3 journal entries that needed to be done. Tax collection rates went down which means outstanding balances of taxes were up in 2013. The refinancing of bonds was good. Councilor Philip Hart asked if there is any concern of Fraud. RKO said no, but the auditors were not looking for that specifically. Kathy thanked Denise for all her work.

Discussion of FY15 Budget / Direction to City Manager

City Manager Morelli said that a previous budget presentation in October was the reason for the regionalization meeting held earlier in the evening. The revenue projections are worse than predicted. This will be the first year we have to account for COLA in the retirement account. URIP is down 10%. We expect to be turning some money back to the fund balance at the end of the year. The past two years we have not increased taxes. Need direction from the Council about how to cover the cuts in revenue. Councilor Johnston said it is our job to come to provide services in Gardiner. We cannot cut our way out this year and would support a tax increase up to 10%. Councilor Pat Hart asked what management would need for the process. Department heads would have their requests in to City Manager in February. The City Manager would make recommendations in March. City Manager Morelli would like to maintain services but it would need to know what Council would like him to look into more. Councilor Phil Hart is concerned that people cannot afford an increase and does not want the increase the mil rate past 19 and does not want the school to force the city to cut services because of school and county budgets. Mayor Harnett said no one on the Council want to see anyone not pay taxes. The State is making our mil rate go up. The reason is because the promise made by the Legislature is not happening. We are not doing something wrong, we are doing things right. City Manager Morelli reminded Council that there are ways to help those that can't afford their taxes-tax relief, poverty abatements. Councilor Berry said we need to look at cuts but prepare residents that there is going to be a tax increase. Councilor Pat Hart agreed. We have to manage this for our citizens. WE want new people to move even though mortgage holders tell them to look elsewhere. The reality

is our mil rate is high. Councilor Williams said we can't cover this by raising taxes. We need to manage this by cutting first. Councilor Phil Hart would like to look at all the organizations that we support to make sure we pay our fair share.

Consideration of Deputy Fire Chief/Code Enforcement Officer Proposal

City Manager Morelli told Council that we currently have two positions open that have a chance to be combined together. Combining the Fire Chief position with the Code Officer position is a way to save money in the current budget. This position would become a Deputy Fire Chief that would report to Police Chief Jim Toman, who would oversee both departments. If we don't look into saving costs in ambulance, we could lose communities. Councilor Phil Hart asked why Northeast doesn't collect uncollectables. Chief Minkowsky said Northeast does transfers which brings in income. They have part time employees, not full time. Northeast does not provide the same level of service as Gardiner Ambulance. Councilor Heath is concerned that combining the two positions would be spreading things too thin. City Manager Morelli stated that combining the positions is a direct result of the impact the revenue sharing is having on our budgets. It is forcing us to look at how we provide services. Councilor Heath wants to make sure that public safety is not compromised. Chief Minkowsky stated that the union supports the plan and Chief Toman. Councilor Johnston asked if it is possible to share a CEO. There is a concern about work loads and training issues. Councilor Pat Hart asked if we looked at two part time jobs rther than combining. She is concerned that we don't even have a Planner and would now be losing a full time CEO. Councilor Berry said that we don't know if this will work if we don't try it. Councilor Phil Hart said that we have done this before with Public Safety and Wasteater/PW. It doesn't work and we won't take back the salary once we increase it. Councilor Barron does not want to increase taxes but is in favor of trying to save money. We could always go back. Mayor Harnett supported the proposal. He is very concerned about saving Fire and Ambulance. Nate Rudy stated that his department would be affected but we need to maintain fire services. George Trask, resident, said we have done this before and it doesn't work. Rich Kinderlan, resident, said he is not opposed to the is but need to look at the uncollectables and see what we can do. He disagrees with the Police Chief getting a raise to save money; Gardiner has saved by having the Fire Chief go on calls. Rick Sieberg, employee, said we need to do something soon. If we lose towns, the ambulance funds 80% of the fire depart so the Fire Department will go too. Councilor Pat Hart has a problem with the proposal. Public Safety has to do Public Safety and Codes has to do Codes and Planning.

Councilor Johnston made a motion to table this discussion. Unanimous Vote

Consideration of Boundary Agreement with Christ Church

This is agreement does not change the line with OC Woodman lot, it just clarifies the boundary line between the church and the house. Motion to approve by Councilor Pat Hart, second by Councilor Heath. Unanimous Vote. Councilor Johnston did not vote, he is a trustee of the Church.

CITY MANAGER UPDATE

Thank you to city staff for going to the State House to testify in favor of revenue sharing.

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

Councilor Pat Hart thanked Scott for setting up the regional meeting. Mayor Harnett also thanked Department Heads for their testimony in favor of revenue Sharing.

ADJOURN
