



SACO CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES **MARCH 9, 2026 - 6:30 PM**

CITY HALL AUDITORIUM

1. CALL TO ORDER

On Monday, March 9, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. a City Council meeting was held in the City Hall Auditorium.

2. RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jodi MacPhail recognized the members of the Council and determined that the Councilors present constituted a quorum. Councilors present: Douglas Edwards, William Doyle, Jeffrey Onnen, William Gayle, Tricia Huot, and Nathan Johnston. Councilor Joshua Parks was excused this evening. City Administrator Ryan Pelletier was also present this evening.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. GENERAL

A. Junior Theater Festival Performers-Recognition and Performance

In January 2026, Saco Parks and Recreation's Twin City Theater Academy traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to participate in the Junior Theater Festival (JTF), an international, three-day celebration of musical theater. Thirty performers, ages 11--18, proudly represented Saco and surrounding southern Maine communities alongside thousands of dedicated theater students from around the world.

Twin City Theater Academy presented a 15-minute adjudicated performance from Disney's *The Lion King Jr.*, the result of months of focused rehearsals from August through January. Their hard work paid off in a big way. Thornton Academy students Cameron Abbe and Jack Jones were named JTF All-Stars for their outstanding performance work and were invited to attend exclusive workshops and an intimate panel with current Broadway stars. Biddeford High School student Harvey Giddings earned a Tech All-Star award and had the rare opportunity to work backstage and assist at the lighting and sound stations in the festival's 8,000-seat theater. In addition, the group was honored with the Excellence in Dance award for their performance, recognizing the exceptional choreography by Emily Dube.

This year's group included 12 first-time JTF participants alongside 18 returning students. Throughout the process, students demonstrated remarkable dedication, teamwork, and kindness. Veteran performers helped guide new participants, nerves were met with encouragement and support, and the group rose to the challenge together. Adjudicators offered high praise for the group's work, and students left the festival feeling proud, accomplished, and inspired. Beyond the stage, the experience strengthened bonds among students and families alike, creating a close-knit community built on shared effort and joy.

JTF is a rare and meaningful opportunity for young people who are passionate about musical theater. There is no other event quite like it, offering this level of access to professional learning in such a positive, youth-centered environment. Twin City Theater Academy is one of only two programs from Maine selected to attend, making this experience especially significant for our region.

This experience would not be possible without the leadership and dedication behind the program. The City of Saco extends sincere thanks to SPR Director Ryan Sommer, SPR Assistant Director Steve Brown, and TCTA Program Administrator Lauren Schuyler Giddings, whose ongoing support of youth arts programming makes opportunities like this possible. We also proudly recognize Twin City Theater Academy staff, Creative Director Ann Guiney, Choreography Director Emily Dube, and Technical Director Mary Hyde, whose vision, instruction, and commitment guided students from the first rehearsal through their successful performance on the national stage.

This journey was further supported by dedicated families who committed countless hours to rehearsals, fundraising, and travel, as well as by the greater community, which showed its support through fundraising efforts and attendance at the group's Friends and Family send-off performance.

Saco is incredibly proud of these students for representing our community and the state of Maine with excellence, enthusiasm, and heart. Their success at the Junior Theater Festival reflects not only their talent, but also the strength of arts education and community support here in Saco.

The students performed some scenes from the Lion King to a standing ovation from the Mayor, Council and audience.

5. COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL

- Councilor Huot - The Dyer Library is doing a Community Clothing Swap. Drop off can be done from March 16th - March 19th. On Saturday, March 21st from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. is when the swap will occur.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people chose to speak:

- Trinity Miller, 24 Garfield Street, Unit #1
- Rev. Robert Henry, 24 Pheasant Road
- Rodney Champagne, 17 Clayton Drive
- Sarah Gardner, 17 Pine Haven Street
- Sarah Gardner on behalf of Gary Gardner, 17 Pine Haven Street
- Lisa Desrochers, 18 Pine Haven Street
- Hope Lambert, 14 Pheasant Road
- Barb Thomas, 2 Meserve Circle
- Sarah Belanger, 5 Sparrow Drive
- Karen James, 60 Pheasant Road
- Kathy Dobbins, 28 Meserve Circle
- Richard Bryant, Jensen Baird - Attorney for Owner of Blue Haven Mobile Community
- Phil Hatch, 19 Evergreen Drive

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilor Edwards moved, Councilor Doyle seconded, to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2026, City Council meeting as written. The motion passed with six (6) yeas.

8. ACTION ITEMS

A. Repeal of Emergency Ordinance for Temporary Moratorium on Mobile Home Park Lot Rental Increases

Councilor Johnston moved, Councilor Onnen seconded, Be it Ordered that the Saco City Council finds that there is no longer a need for the Emergency Ordinance for Temporary Moratorium on Mobile Home Park Lot Rental Increases, and therefore, the City Council repeals the Emergency Ordinance for Temporary Moratorium on Mobile Home Park Lot Rental Increases with effective date of repeal as March 9, 2026. Further move to approve the Order. The motion passed with four (4) yeas and two (2) nays - Councilors Doyle and Gayle.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Mobile Home Park Lot Rent Stabilization Ordinance Options

Deputy City Administrator Emily Cole-Prescott in the packet provided a sampling of some of the ordinances the city is looking at from various municipalities in the area. The city is looking primarily at Old Orchard Beach, Waterville, and Westbrook ordinances, with specific focus on the Westbrook program which has been in place for many years. The primary research right now is on Mobile Home Park rent stabilization on lots specifically.

Deputy City Administrator Prescott addressed councilors questions.

A Workshop will be set up in the near future to look specifically at Mobile Home Park lot rent stabilization to include information on what the structure of the board would look like, how it is working in other communities, what level of burden this places on municipal staff if any, mechanics of enforcement, the cost of an entity who owns the park, the real world numbers, and to hear about the Waterville Appeals Board what kind of level of work that board has been seeing.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

City Administrator Ryan Pelletier provided administrative updates.

Councilor Huot - Has T.A. and the City of Saco come to an agreement regarding the contract that is going to expire on June 1st? Administrator Pelletier - To my knowledge that has not happened yet. Mayor MacPhail - That would be through the School Board. We can reach out to Superintendent Ray. We have a School Board meeting this week, and there may be an update. I can find out and provide an update to the full council. I know they have started the negotiations. Where they are at this point, I do not know.

11. COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND COMMENT

- Councilor Gayle - Just a quick note for one of the comments that I was struck by how eloquent that 1st presenter was and I really encourage every young person to come out and express their concerns. Public speaking is very difficult as I feel all the time I speak, but especially in this type of setting where everyone is staring at you. So, I just really appreciate her commitment to make her voice heard and hope that we can address her comment satisfactory.
- Councilor Doyle - I just want to point out that I agree with Councilor Gayle. Trinity Miller came forward from Garfield Street and really presented a strong public comment about the sidewalk conditions and as we are getting into the budget time, get ready because sidewalks and how they get plowed, cleared and taken care of all comes down to dollars right. How much dollars we put into a certain account so that Public Works came go ahead and do that. I think the long-standing policy has been a mile from school is where the plows will go, and or downtown Main Street and some down to Beach Street. So, it is a policy we should look at overall but just remember it all comes down to dollars and cents. Mayor MacPhail - With that we were appreciative of Director Moore earlier in the winter did provide council and the residents an overview with a map of how it was done. It certainly was a huge help, especially for me to help understand the process.
- Mayor MacPhail - I would like to send a shout-out. Yesterday was International Women's Day, and I would like to thank all of our staff, committee members, and councilors for just an amazing job. Thank you. Also, I believe today was the last day of the official dredging. I believe we are doing the clean-up now. It has been a little over a week now that Camp Ellis looks amazing, completely different. If you have an opportunity to go down, you have fresh sand to start the summer with if there are no additional storms in the next couple of weeks. Then we have the Army Corp project starting in conjunction with that as well. But they should be finalizing that up in the next few days.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilor Doyle moved, Councilor Edwards seconded, Be it ordered that the City Council enter into executive session, pursuant to [M.R.S. A. Title 1, Chapter 13, Subchapter 1, §405 (6)]: (C) Real Estate-Economic Development-Credit Enhancement Agreement Request, and (E) Consultation between the municipality and its attorney-Construction Loan Agreement-The Ecology School, Lucia Kimball Health Trust Matter, and Commercial Abatements. The motion passed with six (6) yeas. Time: 8:05 p.m.

EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor MacPhail, and City Councilors: Edwards, Doyle, Onnen, Gayle, Huot, Johnston, and City Administrator Ryan Pelletier were all present.

Councilor Doyle moved, Councilor Edwards seconded to exit executive session. The motion passed with six (6) yeas. Time: 10:10 p.m.

13. REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilor Johnston stated there was no report.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Edwards moved, Councilor Huot seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with six (6) yeas. Time: 10:11 p.m.

Attest: _____

Michele L. Hughes, City Clerk