



SACO CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES **JUNE 15, 2026 - 6:30 PM**

CITY HALL AUDITORIUM

1. CALL TO ORDER

On Monday, June 15, 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, Joshua Parks, Jeffrey Onnen, William Gayle, Tricia Huot, and Nathan Johnston. Councilor William Doyle was excused this evening. City Administrator Ryan Pelletier was also present this evening.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. GENERAL

5. COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL

- Councilor Edwards - It was brought to my attention that our one of the groups I'm a liaison for Age Friendly Saco is preparing a project that will essentially happen in November. But I wanted to let the public know about it because there'll be a point where they need to reach out to people to see if they need this. It's a windowdresser.org. They make these builds and they are something that you can put in your window that cuts off the draft and can save up to 8 1/2 gallons of oil, heating oil a year. You'll probably hear more about it in the future. I'll probably say something up here again, but I just wanted to let you know as you'll probably be asked to measure your windows or there'll be someone that comes into your place to measure your windows if you could do something like this.
- Mayor MacPhail - Yes, those window dressers just recently did the Dyer Library 2 years ago. So, if you want to get an idea, it's the inserts and it is a wonderful program and it does save quite a bit of money.
- Councilor Edwards - I did have one more thing. I just remembered I should have led with this. This Saturday starting at 9:00 is the Art Festival here on Main Street. It'll be back on Main Street. I think it goes until 3. Come and bring your family, bring some money so you can buy some artwork and fine food from the vendors, and the businesses are open on Saturday.
- Councilor Huot - This Saturday as well is the kickoff for summer reading at the Dyer Library and it is open to all ages, even adults. So, it's a great program. Definitely come check it out.
- Councilor Johnston - Wasn't sure if I was going to put this here or at council comment, but I think it's probably best to get out of the way. Just an update for council and the public as far as TA contract negotiations and followed by a brief statement. The trustees of TA have approved the final language. The Saco School Department negotiation team met this afternoon, and we also went over the final contract language and collectively have come to terms with the contract. We'll move forward to the School Board tomorrow evening for an acceptance vote. Just statement wise I mean for those that don't know for the better part of 3 years I've been on this negotiation team and through that process I found it difficult to remain silent but that was what we agreed upon. But I do think it's important I say a couple things and I would appreciate if my comments are for the record. The team, the negotiation team was tasked with negotiating a contract that was in the best interest of all of our 9th through 12th graders while also being cognizant of the increasing demands of the taxpayers of Saco. I want to express that TA is our high school. I am class of 2002 alum myself and at no time did I ever believe that the intent of either party was for the long-standing relationship to end. Much like in our own lives, sometimes family members have disagreements or different goals. It doesn't mean we don't still care about one another. This contract in my opinion while not achieving all that the team had sought should if applied how I envision strengthen the relationship between Saco and TA. I do want to thank the members of the negotiation team, former Councilor Phil Hatch, Councilor Parks, myself, School Board members Prebble, Roche, Johnston, Woronoff, community member and steadfast advocate Carrie Woodcock, Superintendent Jeremy Ray, Assistant Superintendent Meg Parker, and Director of Operations Christopher Indorf for their countless hours and commitment over the last 3 years. Equally, I want to thank the members of the TA board of Trustees and Headmaster Mr. Menard. Things may have come contentious at times, but in the end, we collectively came together to achieve a contract that supports our students. Additionally, I want to thank the students and community members that came out to show love and support for their TA school community. While I wish it

was under different circumstances or narratives, it was impressive nonetheless, particularly the student comments. I personally want to thank Superintendent Ray for his steadfast leadership during this process, which was not easy at times. Criticism comes with the position, but in my time as an elected official, I have not experienced a more professional, intelligent, fiscally responsible, and caring administrator than Mr. Ray. He is someone who doesn't just say he cares deeply for students and the community members of all backgrounds, but it shows with his actions. In my opinion, some of the personal attacks on him last Wednesday evening and throughout the week on social media are not supported by reality or facts and were profoundly inappropriate. While I fully believe it's healthy to disagree or have different perspectives, Mr. Ray and his family are members of this community, and they deserve to be treated with respect. Lastly, I would like to thank Mayor MacPhail for her leadership overseeing last Wednesday's schoolboard meeting and think she showed real professionalism in navigating a contentious subject yet being fair to the public participation while also ensuring that decorum and respect was upheld in these chambers.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

7. CONSENT ITEMS

Mayor MacPhail read the consent agenda items.

Councilor Parks requested that item #A Confirmation of the City Administrator's Appointment of Sean McCarthy as City Assessor be moved.

Mayor MacPhail noted that moving item #A from Consent, will now be item #A under Action Items.

Councilor Johnston moved, Councilor Edwards seconded, to approve consent agenda item # B as follows:

B. Confirmation of the Mayor's Reappointment to the LPC (Legislative Policy Committee) - Tricia Huot - Be it ordered that the City Council confirm the Mayor's reappointment of Councilor Tricia Huot, to the Maine Municipal Association Legislative Policy Committee. Further move to approve the order.

The motion passed with five (5) yeas and one (1) abstention - Councilor Huot.

8. ACTION ITEMS

Due to Consent Agenda Item #A being moved to an Action Item, all other Action Items will be renumbered.

A. Confirmation of the City Administrator's Appointment of Sean McCarthy as City Assessor

Councilor Parks moved, Councilor Johnston seconded, Be it ordered that the City Council confirms the City Administrator's appointment of Sean McCarthy as City Assessor. Further move to approve the order. The motion passed with six (6) yeas.

B. (One Reading) Request for Utility Easement from the City of Saco for Map 97 Lot 2-1 off Buxton Road

Councilor Edwards moved, Councilor Parks seconded, Be it ordered that the Saco City Council authorize the City Administrator to grant an easement for utility connections and associated infrastructure for Map 97 Lot 2-1 to Ben Graffius with the following conditions: a public water connection be used (not any private drinking wells) and the easement is only for purposes of residential home construction. Further move to approve the order. The motion passed with six (6) yeas.

9. NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

A. Short Term Rental Ordinance

Deputy City Administrator Emily Cole-Prescott presented background information on the Short Term Rental Ordinance. In 2024 there were roughly 300 short term rentals in the community which were a combination of seasonal rentals that were registered and rentals happening outside the Seasonal Rental Ordinance.

We are currently reviewing ordinances from Old Orchard Beach, South Portland, Scarborough, Portland, and Frye Island.

The city will be expanding and updating the Ch. 173 Seasonal Property Rental Ordinance with expanded registration provisions outside the seasonal rental area and inspection requirements with a shorter time period than what they are on now, and re-order & clarify existing provisions. The city will also be look toward implementation of an online tracking and monitoring system for enforcement processes and work toward online permitting/licensing options for these registrations.

I will be working with the Code Enforcement and Fire Department to draft an ordinance that will be e-mailed to council within 4 weeks.

Deputy City Administrator Cole-Prescott addressed Councilors questions.

B. Emergency Preparedness Policy Updates

Fire Chief Hamel provided updates on the city's Emergency Operational Plan. This plan works with the County, State, and Federal on how we respond to and prevent some of the larger incidents within the city.

A memo was provided to Council outline the key updates. The goal of the update was to look at emergencies and what are best practices and are we in line with the best practices.

A draft will be provided in the next few weeks.

Chief Hamel address Councilors questions.

C. Proposed Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 60 Ambulance Service to Provide for an Annual Educational Funding Allocation and Annual Ambulance Division Equipment Reserve Fund

Deputy City Administrator Emily Cole-Prescott noted this was an update to the ordinance to allow reserve funds for different needs of the Fire Dept. and is a great idea and good use of the ambulance funds.

Fire Chief David Hamel - Really kind of the update we're looking for really doesn't change the wording in the ordinance. Really what we're looking for is really it's kind of two folded. The 1st is really to have sustainable money to send people to Paramedic School. Paramedic School it's pretty lengthy. It's pretty expensive. Eight - ten years ago most of the folks we are hiring came through the door with a Paramedic License and that's just not happening anymore. So, now to send a couple folks a year to Paramedic School really does take a large chunk of our training budget.

So, the thought would be to have funding set aside annually to send 2 people to Paramedic School and 2 people to EMT Advanced School and to have some money for continuing education because once they become licensed they have to maintain those licenses through continuing education training. So, that's the 1st part of it.

The 2nd part is really the Ambulance Reserve. There are items that come up throughout that really weren't on the budget radar for us in February or March that may come through later after the budget has passed, and we're not looking for capital items, but more a piece of equipment that breaks down or something that we need to replace. The thought was, you know, could we set aside or have pre-approved funding set aside and then work with a City Administrator if something happens and kind of work through that process. Again, kind of falls within the line of the current wording in the charter, but the hope was really just to kind of facilitate the process a little bit.

Chief Hamel addressed councilors questions.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

City Administrator Ryan Pelletier presented administrative Updates.

11. COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND COMMENT

- Councilor Johnston - Just briefly, kind of a public service announcement, I guess. School lets out this week. With that, we're going to see more kids out, more people out. Tourist season is upon us really already. Just kind of asking that all drivers be aware of pedestrians, the neighborhoods you're all cutting through, and kind of cognizant of the travel times and congestion. I always find this seems along with the heat seems to add towards the road rage that I witness pretty regularly. So, just kind of putting a plug out there, if we kind of make a conscious effort towards being mindful of safety, we probably can have a safe and enjoyable summer.
- Councilor Huot - I just want to thank the School Committee for coming close to an agreement with Thornton Academy. I want to commend everybody that turned out for the meeting, both the School Board that sat here till after 11:00 at night to listen to everyone, to the Mayor, the way she handled this. It was amazing. And especially to the students and staff that turned out in the middle of finals week. The bravery that some of these young people showed sharing their vulnerable stories. It was really amazing. And hopefully these kids learned a lot about democracy and will get involved when they have the chance.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Edwards moved, Councilor Huot seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with six (6) yeas. Time: 7:09 p.m.

Attest:_____

Michele L. Hughes, City Clerk