



GARDINER CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET



Meeting Date		Department	
Agenda Item			
Est. Cost			

Background Information

Requested Action	
City Manager and/or Finance Review	
Council Vote/ Action Taken	
Departmental Follow-Up	

<i>City Clerk Use Only</i>	1 st Reading _____	Advertised _____	EFFECTIVE DATE _____
	2 nd Reading _____	Advertised _____ w/in 15 Days	
	Final to Dept _____	Updated Book _____	Online _____



**Gardiner City Council
2025 GOAL SETTING WORKSHOP
SUMMARY REPORT**

Saturday, February 8, 2025

8:45 am to 1 pm

Prepared by
Jane Lafleur, Jane Lafleur Consultants
Camden, Maine

Purpose:

On Saturday, February 8, 2025, the Gardiner City Council, Mayor, Finance Director, and City Manager met to discuss the Council's priorities for 2025. This workshop was facilitated by Consultant Jane Lafleur.

Attendance:

Debra Kimball, District 1

Veronica Babcock, District 2

Shawn Dolley, District 3

Gay Grant, District 4

Russell Greenleaf, At Large

Marc Cone, At Large

Timothy Cusick, At Large

Pat Hart, Mayor

Robert Peabody, City Manager

Denise Brown, Director of Finance

Jane Lafleur, Facilitator

Agenda

The following agenda guided the meeting discussion.

8:45 (15 Minutes)	Arrival and refreshments
9:00 (15 Minutes)	Opening and introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayor Pat Hart: Welcome and opening remarks• Facilitator Jane Lafleur: workshop format and simple ground rules• City Manager and Council: Introductions and “What is one good thing about this City Council?”
9:15 (15 Minutes)	Best Practices for High Functioning Boards and Councils (pages 16-18)
9:30 (20 Minutes)	Revised Meeting Guidelines Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handout, discussion and what is missing?
9:50 (30 Minutes)	Review 2024 Goals (A through H) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Final City Council Goals, Objectives and Strategies from 2024 with updates by City Manager.• Discussion by all on progress and priorities.
10:20 (15 Minutes)	Brief Break
10:35 (45 Minutes)	2025 Goal Ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion by all on new ideas for 2025, in the categories from 2024 as well as any new ideas or categories (Goals/Objectives/Strategies)
11:20 (40 minutes)	Dot voting to prioritize 2025 Goals, Objectives and Strategies
12:00 (25 Minutes)	Lunch

12:25 (20 Minutes)	2025 Goals – Conclusions and Prioritizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources are needed for each Objective/Strategy? • Which committee takes the lead? • Does the prioritization change, given this information?
12:45 (5 Minutes)	Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Councilor committee assignments
12:50 (10 Minutes)	Closing Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on the Day
1:00	Adjourn

Discussion Summary

I. Opening Comments: Good Things about the Gardiner City Council

After introducing themselves, each participant noted at least one good thing about the Gardiner City Council. Comments included:

- ✓ Everyone works on behalf of the whole team and the city
- ✓ Everyone comes together to help
- ✓ All can have differing views, and we are always respectful
- ✓ We are like a family; we can call on each other for help, we come to agreement; City staff is second to none.
- ✓ Thankful for the time people commit to the City Council for the City of Gardiner
- ✓ Annual goal setting is a good thing, it is a breath of fresh air
- ✓ There has been an evolution in the City Council - it is now focused, shows leadership and is efficient
- ✓ We are different councilors and with one vision; we agree on what we are doing
- ✓ The Council walks the talk; Council members are involved in the City with clubs and services, helping people
- ✓ We are a functioning organization with good leadership.

II. Best Practices for High Functioning Boards and Councils Review and Handout

The group discussed the Best Practices handout and highlighted those items that resonated with them. See appendix (pages 19-21) for the handout on Best Practices. It was noted how many of the Best Practices are also those that were highlighted above.

III. Meeting Guidelines Review

Two amendments were made in 2024 and in 2025. These include deleting the provision for remote meetings of the City Council and noting that the agendas for City Council meetings will be available on Thursday/Friday and if Councilors have a question on the agenda, those questions should be submitted to the City Manager by Sunday. This, of course, is not intended to limit questions or discussion at the meetings. See appendix (pages 22-23) for revised Meeting Guidelines which will be posted on the city website.

IV. Review 2024 Goals

Former Acting City Manager Denise Brown presented a status report and update on all the priorities from the 2024 City Council Workshop. Those slides are shown below.

Note: PS = Public Safety; CSO = Combined Sewer Overflow; WW = wastewater; KVCOG = Kennebec Valley Council of Governments

2024 COUNCIL GOALS

1. Economic Development

2. Infrastructure

3. Resiliency Planning & Preparation

4. City Services & Taxes



ALSO DISCUSSED

Develop and Implement a Transportation Plan

Update the 2014 Comprehensive Plan

Activate the Housing Committee

Evaluate and Prepare for the Impacts of Immigration

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development staff work with the Economic & Community Development Committee and other local and regional groups (ex: Gardiner Main Street, KVCOG) to address initiatives supporting economic growth, and identifying funding opportunities to support these strategies.

Objectives:

1. Support Johnson Hall, Boys & Girls Club and Gardiner Main Street
 2. Maintain the Budget Committee
 3. Implement the Downtown Master Plan
 4. Business Park
- Econ Dev Director attends Gardiner Main Street meetings, and collaborates with them on events, initiatives, business relations
 - Downtown Master Plan:
 - ✓ Inventoried parking spaces in downtown area, collaborated with Johnson Hall for parking during events, and created a parking map
 - ✓ Began Arcade redesign/improvement project
 - ✓ Climate Vulnerability Assessment to address downtown infrastructure
 - ✓ Grant funding to support Dearborn Park improvement project
 - ✓ DOT Downtown Sidewalk project design near completion
 - Iron Heights Housing Development at TW Dick Brownfields site
 - Business Park – lot 25 sold for \$49,900. Final city lot #12 is pending sale.

INFRASTRUCTURE

City staff continue to work towards infrastructure improvements. A strategic plan was started in 2024 to list and prioritize the many needs of the City. The City contracted with KVCOG to assist with grant writing.

Objectives:

1. Fix what we have before funding new
2. Gain Public Support
3. Seek Grants

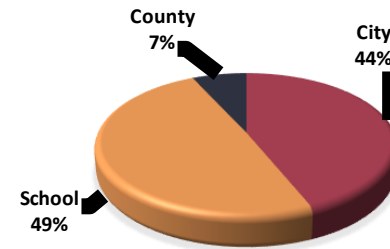
- Reactivated the City Parks Committee
 - ✓ Dearborn Park Project– near final design
 - ✓ City to budget for landscaping of all parks
 - ✓ Next up is concentration on Waterfront Park
- Libby Hill Business Park paving Phase I done in 2024 Phase II to be done in 2025
- FEMA awarded funding for Harrison Ave Engineers are at design stage for repairs and mitigation
- The City hired a contractor to update the CSO Plan to determine the needs and future projects for the Sewer Collection System
- Storm Drain issues and culverts are taken care of as paving projects happen per priority
- Hoyle Tanner is working on the design of the Phase II WW Project potential CDS funding will determine the extent of the project (applied for a \$1M Grant to Northern Borders should hear in Jan.)
- Both Downtown Ornamental and areawide streetlights were a focus and a plan was made to stay current
- Facility Study – next steps to find a PS site
- Energy Efficiency Heat Pump throughout City facilities (applied for \$75K should hear in Jan.)

RESILIENCY PLANNING & PREPARATION

The City applied for and received a \$50K Grant from the Community Resiliency Partnership for a Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

This assessment will focus on critical community and waterfront infrastructure, with particular attention to the effects of sea level rise, storm surge, and flooding along the Kennebec River.

CITY SERVICES & TAXES



Maintain and improve city services and keep taxes to a minimum:

- No City services were cut during 2024. Buildings & Grounds crew were absorbed into the Public Works Department and we re-activated the Chief WW Operator Position.
- The City had a .50 tax rate increase – 55% of which was due to the recognized need to increase wages in order to retain and recruit staff.
 - ✓ County taxes went up 32.3% for Gardiner which added an additional .40 on the mil.
 - ✓ MSAD11 increased 8.6% for Gardiner adding yet another \$1.00 on the mil.

Note: pie chart shows Total Budget of the City of Gardiner

The City Council thanked the Acting City Manager for her update on the 2024 priorities. Members were pleased to see such good progress over the past year.

V. 2025 Goal Ideas

Top Priorities by dot voting: Each Councilor and the Mayor was given 3 dots to dot-vote on large Goals from 2024 with the addition of “City Charter” for 2025. Top Goals were as follows:

- City Services and Taxes – 7 dots
- Infrastructure/Transportation – 7 dots
- Economic Development/Housing – 6 dots
- City Charter – 2 dots
- Comprehensive Planning – 1 dot
- Resiliency Planning and Preparation – 1 dot
- Immigration – 0 dots

VI. Priority Setting: Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Resources Available, Lead Committee

2025 Goals	Objectives	Strategy	Council Priority Votes for Strategy	Resources Available	Lead Committee
City Services & Taxes					
	Grow and maintain a strong tax base	Consider regionalizing fire, public safety and services	6	Fire department; ideas for services	City Council
		Forge relationship with School Board	1	Time, people, recall question in charter, mediators	City Council/ City Manager
		Forge relationships with State and County leaders			City Council
		Evaluate and consider underperforming/ underutilized properties for higher benefit to the City			City Council/ Economic Development Committee
		Improve public information about how taxes are spent			City Council/ City Manager
		Increase library funding			City Council

2025 Goals	Objectives	Strategy	Council Priority Votes for Strategy	Resources Available	Lead Committee
Infrastructure and Transportation					
	Prioritize new facilities for City Hall, Public Works, Public Safety, Police and Fire	Fund a study of current conditions of these facilities; galvanize public support; activate a facilities committee; use grants, federal money, TIF funds and bonds to fund new facilities.	10		City Council
	Create a walkable and bikeable city	Develop a city-wide sidewalk and trail plan; add to Comp Plan and implement plan	3	Staff, DOT Planning funds, implementation funds, /Planning Board, Public Works Committee, Downtown Sidewalk Committee, Consultants, FEMA, MEMA, congressional delegation	City Council
		Activate the Downtown Sidewalk Committee			City Council
	Fix what we have before we fund new	Get FEMA funding to fix Harrison Street			City Manager
		Determine where storm drains go in South Gardiner			Public Works
		Develop a paving plan and publicize it			Public Works

2025 Goals	Objectives	Strategy	Council Priority Votes for Strategy	Resources Available	Lead Committee
Economic Development & Housing					
	Expand tax base beyond residential taxes	Create an economic development plan and include in Comp plan	7	Economic Development Committee; Board of Trade; Ordinance Review Committee; KVCOG; Volunteers; Staff; Consultant	City Council, Economic Development Committee, City Manager
		Evaluate Economic Development and Emergency Preparedness Communications staff responsibilities		City Manager	City Manager
		Create Real estate study/program		Economic Development Committee	
		Insure Downtown masterplan includes resiliency and flood provisions			
		Implement downtown masterplan			
		Maintain allocation for and support of Johnson Hall, Boys and Girls Club, Gardiner Main Street		Staff time for Gardiner Main Street	

2025 Goals	Objectives	Strategy	Council Priority Votes for Strategy	Resources Available	Lead Committee
		Request reports from Johnson Hall, Boys and Girls Club and Gardiner Main Street	2		
		Support expansion of housing in rural/planned development districts			
		Prepare for challenges and opportunities under new federal administration			
		Support affordable housing projects and developers	2		
		Activate housing Committee			

2025 Goals	Objectives	Strategy	Council Priority Votes for Strategy	Resources Available	Lead Committee
City Charter					
	Update the Gardiner City Charter to bring City into compliance with State Statutes; address recall and roles and expectations		7		
		Assign priority to new City Manager		City Manager	City Council
		Assemble a committee to address the Charter update requirements		City Council	City Council
		Hold elections for Charter committee			City Council/ City Clerk
		Propose required edits/city wide vote			City Charter Committee
Comprehensive Planning					
	Update the Comprehensive Plan	Begin Comprehensive Planning Process	7		
		Obtain grant funding; release RFP; hire consultant		consultant; KVCOG	City Manager
		Recruit Comp Plan committee volunteers			City Manager/ City Council
		Find money for community meetings			City Manager

2025 Goals	Objectives	Strategy	Council Priority Votes for Strategy	Resources Available	Lead Committee
		Develop and implement a housing plan, a transportation plan, and immigration plan, and a city-wide sidewalk and trail plan		KVCOG; grantors, CH&S; volunteers, consultants	Comp Plan Committee; city manager
Resiliency Planning & Preparation					
	Better prepare City for emergencies and roles of elected officials and staff	Complete Federal requirements for Emergency Preparedness	3	County Emergency People	
		Current Emergency Plan copies to City Council			

VII. Committees

Mayor Pat Hart presented the list of City Council Committee assignments and accepted additional volunteers for City Committees.

Ambulance Advisory Committee

Tim Cusick
Rusty Greenleaf
Mayor Ex Officio

Budget Committee ad hoc

Tim Cusick
Gay Grant
Pat Hart

Downtown Sidewalks

Gay Grant

Economic Development

Shawn Dolley
Pat Hart

Facilities Committee – ad hoc

Rusty Greenleaf
Pat Hart

Library Board of Trustees

Mayor, Ex-Officio

New Mills Dam Committee

Denise Brown
Rick Sieberg
(does not require councilor)

Ordinance Review Committee

Rusty Greenleaf
Pat Hart

Parks and Public Spaces

Veronica Babcock
Shawn Dolley
Debbie Kimball

Public Works (has not met)

Tim Cusick

Solid Waste Committee

Tim Cusick
Marc Cone

Union Negotiations – ad hoc

Tim Cusick
Pat Hart

Local or Regional Representatives

First Park

Marc Cone

Gardiner Main Street

Board of Directors

Mayor, Ex-Officio

Kennebec County Affordable Housing Committee

Kathy Brown

KVCOG

Melissa Lindley
(We could add a councilor)

Please note: Councilors, like the public, are welcome at any committee meeting.

Members noted on this list are voting members.

VIII. Closing Comments

Each Councilor, the Mayor, the Director of Finance, and the Manager reflected on the workshop as part of the closing comments.

- This is a great process; it should be mandatory for Department Heads; as a City we are dealing with minimum staffing levels
- I am optimistic: the new City Manager has a wealth of experience and a new opportunity to get work done
- It is overwhelming; we have lots to do; it is exciting; we have a dedicated group
- I am grateful; we have had productive, respectful conversations
- I am grateful for Mayor Pat Hart; this has been informative; I have learned a lot
- I appreciate the teamwork, the collaboration and the fact that we have the same priorities
- I am excited about what we can accomplish; we are on similar pages for our top priorities
- I feel focused, looking forward to seeing what is ahead
- I am thankful for the new City Manager, the Mayor, people we serve with, the work of volunteer groups can not be ignored, they are our greatest resource
- This has been an inciteful discussion.

IX. Next steps

The meeting was concluded with the next steps:

The final report will come to the Council and public input will be requested at a public meeting. The Council will then entertain a motion to adopt these priorities and the final report.

APPENDICES

Simple Ground Rules for this workshop:

- Listen actively, stay focused
- Contribute your ideas
- Respect different views
- Don't interrupt
- Speak concisely
- Stick to the Agenda
- End on time!

Best Practices for High Functioning Councils and Boards - 2023

Why it pays to be a good leader

High functioning municipal leaders, boards, and committees aren't that way by accident, they work at it. They invest in themselves. They are continually looking at their behaviors and attitudes and deliberately making improvements. And the investments pay off.

Here are just some of the rewards that come from professional, competent, deliberate leadership.

Attract and keep good people: Good leaders attract good people. Highly competent leaders attract good thinkers and doers. Good leaders and high functioning groups attract good staff and have low staff turnover. Dysfunctional leaders and committees repel good people and attract people with, well, nothing better to do.

Get stuff done efficiently: One reason good leaders attract good people is because they don't waste people's time. "Want something done? Ask a busy person." Busy people who get stuff done hate inefficiency and don't have time for it. Leaders and groups who invest in self-improvement don't waste time and money, or cause frustration.

Valued and praised by constituents: It's fun when you are getting positive encouragement. When people seeing you trying hard – trying to implement best practices for the good of the community – they are not so inclined to through stones "from outside the circle." Good leaders and competent boards and committees are not always "in battle" with constituents and defending their actions.

Fun and rewarding to be part of: When a team gets good stuff done – when a team is winning – it’s a fun team to be on. Participating or “having to go to meetings” is not a burden, a dread, a source of tension,

Make good decisions that serve their people well over time: Isn’t this really why we are serving? To help our communities? We want to make good decisions that will work well over the long run. Decisions aren’t always being revisited when they are made well in the first place. Good decisions reduce conflict and increase efficiency.

Serve as a good example for other groups: Good leadership is contagious. People in the community are watching community leaders; and copying their behaviors and attitudes. High functioning leaders and groups are not modeling, promoting, condoning unhelpful behaviors and attitudes. Rather they are modeling good behaviors and attitudes.

What good municipal leaders do

Clear roles and responsibilities: High functioning leaders and groups establish well defined roles and clear responsibilities. Each person knows what they are supposed to do and what not to do, who the got-to person is for each topic, and the next step in every process. The best way to ensure shared understanding of roles and responsibilities is to 1. Write them down, and 2. Enforce them. Enforcing them means paying attention, calling things out, and when things are out of alignment: either correct the behavior or amend the role or responsibility.

Do what you say: The most effective way to build trust is to say that we will do something and then do it. The most effective way to erode trust is to act in ways that are out of alignment with our words. For policies to have any effect, they need to be acted on. All talk and no action is just talk. Good leaders can be counted on to keep their word. And they are extremely careful about the commitments they make; what words they use.

Transparency: In a high functioning organization each participant knows how things work. Each person has access to information. Knowledge and information is not used to have power over you but rather used to empower you to be more effective at helping the group. Things are written down and available. When information can’t be available, an explanation is provided.

Group first attitude: Good leaders are more interested in success of the group than in personal success. My job as a good team member is to help my teammates look good. A simple test for integrity? Is my behavior or attitude good for the group or is it good for me? If I act in self serving ways I am likely acting without integrity. Good leaders are not so concerned with credit or blame, only with what’s best for the group or community. And it is the special leader who goes beyond assuming that “because I think it’s good, it must be good for my community.”

Respect: Good leaders demonstrate a basic amount of respect for every person in every situation, no matter how strong the disagreement or the dislike. When I show respect, I get respect. And without a basic level of respect, we can't work together. And just because I disagree with you on one thing doesn't mean I won't work on another thing.

Humility: Good leaders are not afraid to call out a good idea when they see it; even if it's not theirs. Good leaders are not afraid to say "I don't know" rather than fudge an answer with what they do know or sort-of know. Good leaders are not afraid to admit mistakes and/or apologize. It's rarely the mistake that gets a leader in trouble, it's the cover up.

Think strategically and regionally: Good leaders, boards, and committees get stuff done day-to-day but they also take time to think long term and big picture. They recognize that their community is part of a larger community and so although it takes time, they meet and make collaborative plans with other leaders and other communities. They also recognize their role as "stewards" in a long line of stewards who came before them and who will come after them.

Development: Good leaders, boards, and committees take time to invest in their own development. They take time to do strategic planning. They take time to learn new things about the economy, the environment, demographics, and social trends. They take time to learn new techniques for meetings, conflict resolution, and communication. They ask their constituents about how they can do better, and they pay attention to the answers.

The board acts as a whole: Members of high-functioning boards recognize the limits of their individual authority and recognize that true authority lies with the board as a whole; the corporate board. Members give individual opinions but do not speak for or decide for the board as a whole. Town and city managers and administrators report to boards, not individuals.

Craig Freshley, 2023 Gardiner City Council

Meeting Guidelines

Revised by City Council on February 18, 2023, February 3, 2024, and February 8, 2025 at Goal Setting Workshops.

Meeting Format

- City Council and City Committee meetings will be held in-person
- City Council, Planning Board, and Board of Appeals meetings will be live-streamed
- Council and Committees will allow for public comment as appropriate

Honor Roberts Rules of Order

Following past practices, City Council will seek to follow the spirit of Roberts Rules of Order

- Council will take up one motion at a time
- There must be a motion on the floor before beginning discussion
- Discussion should be limited to the motion on the floor

Clear and swift agendas

- Meeting agendas will be available the Thursday before the City Council meeting.
- Questions about the agenda items that require research should be shared with the City Manager by Sunday before the meeting. The City Manager will prepare written responses by Tuesday before the meeting.
- The Chair should move efficiently through agenda allowing focused discussion and limiting digressions.
- At the Mayor's discretion, the meeting may be ended by 9pm.
 - Any agenda items started before 9pm will be completed
 - Undiscussed agenda items may be taken up at a future meeting.
- For roll call voting, the Mayor will vote last.
- Councilors can make comments on any topic at the end of each meeting.

Each view heard, once

- Hearing the same fundamental point of view, even if expressed differently each time, is inefficient. If you develop a new view, share it, but no need for repetition.
- Be self-restrained.
- Signify agreement with a point of view with nods, thumbs, and “hear-hear.”
- If Councilors become repetitive in their remarks, call for a vote or otherwise move on.

Public participation expectations clear

- Public participation expectations:
 - Council encourages public input.
 - The beginning of each meeting has time for the public to speak on topics that are not on the agenda.
 - Public comments should be no more than 3 minutes and should not be repetitive.
 - Public input is not a time for discussion with Council members. There will be no immediate response to the public comment.

Handle conflict professionally

- Councilors will keep comments focused on the topic and avoid making personal or disparaging comments.
- If a Councilor feels attacked or if comments seem to disparage others, call for a point of order. Resolve conflict in private.

Open-minded attitudes

- Seek to understand all information and points of view before forming an opinion.
- Ask questions with an interest in hearing the answer, not as a means to make a point or intimidate.
- Councilors are encouraged to keep an open mind and be willing to change opinions based on changing circumstances or new information.

Committees

- City Committees will follow these guidelines.