

Town Council Meeting
January 27, 2026

Open Town Council Meeting: Councilor Lugdon acting as Town Council chair opened the Town Council meeting. All members were present except for Councilor Ketch who was excused. Also, present was Town Manager Melissa Doane and Fire Chief Eric Gifford

Review of Minutes: Councilor Lugdon made a motion to accept the January 13, 2026 Town Council minutes as presented, seconded by Councilor Wade, there was a change noted that the Chief was referred to as Chief Hatch, the change will be made, vote 3/0 (Hatch was excused 1/13/26).

Citizens Request: None

Managers' Report: Melissa provided the Town Council with copies of the three responses received to the Alewife Harvest RFP. She stated that the proposals were very similar, with estimated pricing at approximately one-third of the value of the fish sold. Due to the similarity of the proposals, she indicated that she was unable to make a recommendation. Melissa noted that she had spoken with proposer Barrett Proulx, and that proposer James West had conducted a site visit with her. Mr. Proulx was in attendance and asked who would be responsible for long-term upkeep of the stream, including issues such as beaver removal. Melissa stated that in the past this work had been handled by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR); however, as the harvest process moves forward, this is an issue the Town will need to address in coordination with the harvester. Melissa added that the contract is intended to be for one year only, as this is the first time the Town has participated in an alewife harvest. Once the process is established, it is the Town's intent to pursue a long-term relationship. Mr. Proulx asked whether it would be possible for the harvest to occur at an alternative location. Melissa stated that the RFP allowed for this; however, securing an agreement with a different landowner would be the responsibility of the harvester. She further noted that the ideal site would be at the Maine Forest and Logging Museum, which is also preferred by DMR, although she has not been successful in communicating with the Museum. The Town Council will discuss the RFP again on February 10, 2026.

Melissa stated that she received notification from the Community Resilience Partnership Manager that the Town of Bradley was not approved for the \$75,000 grant submitted for the development of the Ball Field. She explained that the application was denied due to a high number of competing proposals that more closely aligned with the program's climate change mitigation goals.

Melissa reported that she participated in an unexpected Zoom meeting on Friday, January 23, 2026, regarding the ongoing court case involving 114 Cram Street. The purpose of the meeting was to address the State's refusal to pay for two attorneys to represent Mr. Wing. The newly appointed attorney, Seth Harrow, stated that he has been unable to speak with Mr. Wing. He reported that he has submitted a written request for a meeting but has not received a response. It was determined that Mr. Harrow will provide mediation services pro bono. The mediation was scheduled for February 2, 2026, at the courthouse. The court and the Town's attorney plan to request that the court-appointed attorney from Mr. Wing's criminal case be present at the mediation. The judge believes that the presence of that attorney, and possibly a representative from the District Attorney's Office, may help Mr. Wing better understand the importance of reaching a mediation agreement. Melissa stated that she does not believe it would be in the Town's best interest for her to attend the mediation, as her presence tends to aggravate Mr. Wing, and she would like to see the matter resolved.

Melissa reported that she will be on vacation from February 28, 2026 to March 4, 2026.

Melissa presented a proposed demonstration project to address speeding concerns on Cram Street as part of the BACTS Safe Streets initiative. The proposal calls for the installation of six freestanding flexible posts at three locations along Cram Street, extending from just after Highland Avenue to just before Deer Run Lane. At each location, posts would be installed along both road edges with one post in the center, effectively narrowing the roadway to reduce vehicle speeds. Signage noting a change in traffic pattern would also be installed. Melissa noted that an alternative option involving speed bumps was considered; however, installation and ongoing maintenance costs would be the responsibility of the Town. The proposed flexible posts are temporary and would be installed seasonally from May through November. The project will include a community engagement component, although details of that process have not yet been provided. Councilor Lugdon noted that speeding concerns have also been raised on Highland Avenue. Melissa stated that Highland Avenue was likely excluded from the proposal due to budget constraints but requested that it be included in the project. Councilor Lugdon also noted that the proposal requires the Town to monitor the flexible posts. Melissa stated that she travels around town at least once a week and does not anticipate monitoring to be an issue. She also noted that she believes residents would notify the Town if problems with the posts arise. Councilor Lugdon asked about anticipated public response to the project. Melissa stated that she was unsure, noting that the only feedback she has received thus far related to the installation of physical speed bumps, and that flexible posts had not been specifically discussed.

Melissa also stated that the quarterly Municipal WasteHub meeting is scheduled for tomorrow at 10:00 am in Hampden. Attendees may also participate virtually; however, registration is required.

New Business: Councilor Lugdon expressed his appreciation for the quality of the contractor's road plowing, particularly considering the most recent storm. Melissa stated that she has received positive feedback as well, including an email she enclosed with the contractor's payment. Additional discussion noted that the contractor performs the plowing work independently.

Melissa presented the proposed municipal budget for fiscal years 2026–2027. She noted that the Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) is 2.8 percent and, in accordance with the Town Charter, the overall budget increase is limited to \$22,953.76. She stated that this constraint presents a significant challenge, particularly given that the County budget is projected to increase by approximately \$53,000. Melissa also reviewed expense and revenue line items reflecting increases of \$5,000 or more. She noted that the budget will be discussed at each Town Council meeting leading up to the final public hearing scheduled for April 21, 2026. Following the public hearing, the budget will be submitted to voters at the annual referendum on June 9, 2026.

Unfinished Business: None

Municipal Warrants: Councilor Lugdon made a motion to approve the municipal warrants as presented, seconded by Councilor Wade, vote 4/0.

Next Meeting: The next meeting was set for February 10, 2026.

Online Comment: Audrey Wilcox expressed concern regarding speeding on Boynton Street. Louis Magoon asked what budget reductions might be made to offset the anticipated County tax increase. Kimberly Shaw commented “yikes” in response to the possibility of another tax increase. Councilor Lugdon stated that speeding is a concern throughout the Town and that the Council continues to explore ways to address the issue. He noted that it is difficult to ensure compliance with posted speed limits; however, the Town will continue to make its best efforts to manage speeding. Regarding tax increases, Councilor Lugdon stated that the Town Council will continue to review the budget and consider potential adjustments. He noted that it will be extremely difficult to make the necessary reductions due to cost increases that are beyond the Town’s control.

Executive Session: Councilor Lugdon made a motion to enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A § 405 6a to review the performance of the Town Manager, seconded by Councilor Lugdon. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to exit executive session, seconded by Councilor Wade.

Adjourn: Councilor Wade made a motion to exit executive session, seconded by Councilor Clemons.