

Town Council Meeting 2/24/2026

Open Town Council Meeting: Councilor Lugdon acting as Town Council Chair opened the Town Council Meeting; all members were present. Also present was Town Manager Melissa Doane and Fire Chief Eric Gifford.

Review of Minutes: Councilor Lugdon made a motion to accept the February 10, 2026 Town Council meeting, seconded by Councilor Wade, a note was made that the word trail should be trial, vote 5/0.

Citizens Request: None

Manager's Report: Melissa reported that she attended the court hearing regarding 114 Cram Street on February 12, 2026. The Town presented a proposed settlement agreement to Mr. Wing in the amount of \$6,500, contingent upon his relinquishment of his life estate interest and vacating the property. Mr. Wing responded by requesting that the among many other things, the Town pay his rent for the remainder of his life. Melissa stated her belief that no reasonable monetary offer would be acceptable to Mr. Wing. She increased the offer to \$10,000 if he did the requested in 30 days, \$8,500 if done in 60 days and the \$6,500, he still refused. A representative from Mr. Wing's criminal public defender's office was present and attempted to explain that the Town's offer was fair and would provide him with the opportunity to secure housing with basic utilities, including heat, electricity, and water. Two attorneys appointed and paid by the State in connection with the Town's case were also present and advised Mr. Wing that the Town has already obtained a judgment against him. They further explained that proceeding to trial would likely result in additional attorney's fees and fines being assessed against him. Mr. Wing stated that he did not care and would not make any payments, and further commented that the longer the matter continued, the more it would cost the Town. Melissa described Mr. Wing's behavior during the hearing as loud, disruptive, and unreasonable. She requested that the public defender's office pursue a medical evaluation to determine Mr. Wing's competency to proceed to trial, she has not received notice if this will occur. Mr. Harrow, who participated in the settlement discussions, suggested that the Town explore whether Mr. Hayden, the property owner, would consider transferring ownership of the property to the Town. While such a transfer would not extinguish Mr. Wing's life estate or his legal right to occupy the property, it could potentially provide leverage in encouraging acceptance of the settlement offer. Melissa requested that Rudman review the legal feasibility of this option. In response to a question raised at the prior meeting regarding legal expenses, Melissa reported that attorney's fees incurred to date for the current case total \$25,111.01. The Town currently holds a 2012 judgment in the amount of \$37,594 and a 2024 judgment in the amount of \$14,633.74. Melissa also noted that she has contacted a Penobscot County non-profit organization to inquire whether assistance may be available to Mr. Wing, requesting that her involvement not be disclosed. Councilor Lugdon asked whether the Town should consider issuing additional notices of violation for documentation purposes and whether there is any legal mechanism by which the life estate could be revoked. Councilor Hatch inquired about the trial date; Melissa indicated that a date has not yet been set. Councilor Wade suggested that legal counsel provide guidance regarding the Town's responsibilities should ownership of the property be transferred to the Town. Discussion continued regarding the ongoing challenges and frustration expressed by municipal leaders in resolving the matter.

Melissa reported that she met with a representative of the Land & Water Conservation Fund regarding potential grant funding for the ballfield project. The grant program requires certification that the Town will commit to a 50% matching contribution. Grant awards may be as high as \$1,000,000. Melissa noted that the preliminary ballfield and walking trail cost estimate prepared by students totaled \$264,200; however, she believes this figure is likely understated. She advised that a professional engineer would be needed to develop a more accurate project cost estimate. Prior to moving forward with the grant application, Melissa requested guidance from the Town Council regarding its willingness to commit to the required 50% match. Councilor Hatch expressed concern about whether a newly constructed ballfield would be utilized by Bradley residents or if there would be sufficient use. Councilor Lugdon suggested that, given the magnitude of the required matching funds, the matter should be brought before the voters for consideration.

Melissa presented the survey results to the Town Council regarding the Cram Street Safety Demonstration Project. She explained that the original survey platform required a subscription and did not capture responses; therefore, she recreated and redistributed the survey using Google Forms. A total of 42 responses were received. Melissa noted that the results were somewhat difficult to interpret due to mixed responses. When asked whether respondents supported temporary traffic calming measures, 33.3% indicated they were opposed, 14.3% strongly opposed, and 31% supported. In response to the question regarding installation of the three gateway features, 28.6% strongly supported the proposal, 31% supported it, 16.7% strongly opposed it, and 11.9% opposed it. Overall, 73.8% of respondents indicated support for temporarily testing the project in some form. Melissa also stated that written comments reflected a range of opinions. As the survey results were distributed to the Council earlier that day, she suggested members review the information and table the discussion for the next meeting.

Melissa reported that the Planning Board will hold a public hearing on March 3, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. regarding the proposed development of the Viola Rand School property. The meeting will not be livestreamed due to her scheduled vacation; however, members of the public are encouraged to attend in person. Melissa further noted that Dean has worked extensively with Mr. King on the application and has conducted a thorough review to ensure compliance with applicable ordinances. Melissa stated that she has reviewed the materials submitted to the Planning Board and anticipates no issues with the application moving forward.

Melissa reminded the Town Council that she will be out of the office beginning tomorrow through March 4, 2026. She also noted that she will be in Augusta on March 5, 2026, attending a Maine Municipal Association Executive Committee meeting. Melissa stated that she will remain available via email should any issues arise during her absence.

New Business: None

Unfinished Business: Councilor Hatch inquired whether the alewife harvester had made contact with the Maine Forest and Logging Museum. Melissa reported that he had reached out to the organization's president. The Museum has requested that the harvester, Melissa, and representatives from DMR attend its March meeting to discuss the matter further.

Melissa reported that the proposed municipal budget is currently \$4,154.26 below the self-imposed budget cap following several adjustments.

Revenue Adjustments:

- Increased Tree Growth reimbursement revenue from the State of Maine from \$30,000 to \$50,000. The Town received \$60,000 in the current fiscal year.
- Increased projected interest income from checking to \$45,000. January marked the first full month utilizing the sweep account, which generated \$4,300 in interest.
- The State of Maine has provided updated projected revenue sharing figures estimating Bradley's allocation at \$251,656. Based on current year receipts, Melissa anticipates revenue sharing to be closer to \$277,000.

Expense Adjustments:

- Increased dues by \$300 to reflect the 2027 assessment provided by BACTS.

Miscellaneous:

- Melissa provided a spreadsheet illustrating the impact of removing the County tax from the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) calculation. The Town Charter permits the municipal budget to increase by the COLA. Historically, the County budget has been included in that calculation; however, removing it provided information that the municipal budget consistently remains below the Charter limitation.

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

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

Online Comment: Residents expressed concern regarding the potential transfer of ownership of 114 Cram Street to the Town. The Town Council agreed that legal counsel would be required and that the matter would warrant careful and thorough consideration.

Adjourn: Councilor Wade made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 4/0.