

MEETING NOTICE

The regular monthly meeting of the Ellsworth City Council will be held on Monday, May 15, 2023 at 6:00 PM in the Ellsworth City Hall Council Chambers

Meetings will continue to be broadcast live on the City of Ellsworth, Maine Facebook page and YouTube Page; as well as recorded and made available live on Spectrum Channel 1303.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ellsworthme>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/CityofEllsworthMaine>

AGENDA

1. Call to Order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Rules of Order.

C. Hanson motion to remove #16, second by M. Beal, passed 6-0

4. Adoption of the Ellsworth City Council minutes from the following meetings:
 - March 20, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - April 10, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - April 25, 2023 Special Council Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by M. Beal, second by G. Lyons, passed 6-0

5. City Manager's Report.
6. Committee Reports.
7. Citizens' Comments.
8. Presentation of Awards.

- Jason Ingalls for 15 years with the City of Ellsworth as the Information Technology Director
- Proclamation Pride Month
Motion to accept the Proclamation by C. Hanson, second by M. Beal, passed 6-1 (G. Lyons opposed)
- Proclamation for National Public Works Week May 21-May 27, 2023
Motion to accept the Proclamation by C. Hanson, second by T. Mote, passed 7-0
- Presentation by Lori Roberts and Bobbi Roberts to Cruz Coffin of HCTC for his service as an Intern in the Code Office

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT AGENDA: All items with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member so requests, in which event, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the Agenda.

NEW BUSINESS (** denotes backup material included)

9. Public hearing and action on the issuance of Business License (s):

- ✚ Shinbashi Inc. d/b/a Shinbashi Restaurant, 139 High Street, for renewal of a City Class C License (Victualer and Liquor) and renewal of a State Restaurant (Class I, II, III, IV) Malt, Spirituous and Vinous Liquor License. **

Motion to approve by G. Lyons, second by C. Hanson, passed 7-0

- ✚ Giri Ellsworth Inc., d/b/a Ramada by Wyndham Ellsworth, 215 High Street for renewal of a City Lodging License **

Motion by G. Lyons, second by C. Hanson, passed 7-0

- ✚ Brian Langley d/b/a Union River Lobster Pot, 8 South Street, for renewal of a City Class C License (Victualer and Liquor) and renewal of a State Restaurant (Class I, II, III, IV) Malt, Spirituous and Vinous Liquor License. **

Motion to approve by G. Lyons, second by C. Hanson, passed 7-0

- ✚ Douglas J. Kiehm and Racheal E. Wallace d/b/a Homestead Motel and Cottages, 143 Bucksport Road, for renewal of a City Lodging License. **

- ✚ Cresswell Investments LLC d/b/a Airline Brewing Company, 173 Main Street for renewal of a City Class B (Victualer, Liquor and Amusement) and renewal of a State Restaurant (Class II and IV) Malt and Vinous Liquor License. **

Motion to approve by G. Lyons, second by C. Hanson, passed 7-0

- ✚ Crazy Sumo LLC d/b/a Crazy Sumo, 75 High Street for a renewal of a City Class C license (Victualer and Liquor) and renewal of a State Restaurant Class A Restaurant/Lounge. **

Motion to approve by G. Lyons, second by C. Hanson, passed 7-0

- ✚ Wedge LLC DBA The Breakroom, 248 State Street for a renewal of a City Class C license (Victualer and Liquor) and State Restaurant Class I, II, III and IV Liquor license. **

Motion to approve by G. Lyons, second by C. Hanson, passed 7-0

- ✚ Ellsworth No. 1 LLC, DBA Hampton Inn, 215 High Street for a renewal of a City lodging license. **

Motion to approve by G. Lyons, second by C. Hanson, passed 7-0

- ✚ Twin Hill cottages of Acadia, 210 Twin Hill Road, for a renewal of a City lodging license. **

Motion to approve by G. Lyons, second by C. Hanson, passed 7-0

- ✚ Manny's Greek Grill, 248 State Street, for a renewal of a City Class C License and renewal of a state liquor license Class I, II, III, IV. **

Motion to approve by C. Hanson, second by G. Lyons, passed 7-0

10. Public hearing and action on repeal and replacing the City of Ellsworth Code of Ordinances Chapter 33 Floodplain Management Ordinance with updates through December 31, 2022 and effective date of June 1, 2023. **

Motion to approve the change to Chapter 33 by G. Lyons, second by C. Hanson, passed 7-0

11. Public hearing and action to amend the City of Ellsworth Code of Ordinances Chapter 31 Recreation Commission Ordinance to modify the number of members from 8 plus an alternate to 7 members to be effective immediately. **

Motion to approve by G. Lyons, second by C. Hanson, passed 7-0

12. Council Order #052300, Request of the Public Works Director to enter into an agreement with Haley Ward for the construction phase inspection for the Christian Ridge Road project. **
Motion to approve the request by C. Hanson, second by T. Mote, passed 6-1 (S. O'Halloran opposed)
13. Council Order #052301, Request of the Fire Chief to accept the \$1,239,537.50 FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Regional Grant Program for the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters. **
Motion to accept the FEMA Grant as requested by C. Hanson, second by G. Lyons, passed 7-0
14. Presentation to update the City Council and public on the recent work of the City's Broadband Committee.
15. Review, Discussion and possible action to send the municipal budget to the voters (Sponsored by O'Halloran)
16. Presentation on Maine Big Night (Sponsored by Hanson)- removed
17. Discussion to broadcast Finance Committee Meetings (Sponsored by Hanson)
18. Adjournment.
Motion by Hanson, second by Mote, passed 7-0

City Council Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2023

Dale Hamilton

May 15, city of Ellsworth council meeting first order of business is the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dale Hamilton

Item three rules of order. We follow Robert's Rules of Order and other rules that are adopted by the council along the way.

Casey Hanson

Yes, I just I want to make a motion to remove item 16, which I was sponsoring because the person who was going to present tonight couldn't make it so we'll have to take that off the agenda.

Dale Hamilton

Is there a second?

Michelle Beal

Second.

Dale Hamilton

All those in favor? Unanimous item is removed.

Dale Hamilton

should note that all counselors are present. Counselor Mote will be here shortly.

Dale Hamilton

item four adoption of the Ellsworth city council minutes from the following meetings March 20 2023 Regular meeting minutes, April 10 2023. regular meeting minutes and April 25 2023 Special Council meeting minutes.

Michelle Beal

So moved.

Dale Hamilton

Motion. Second.

Gene Lyons

Second.

Dale Hamilton

Any discussion? All those in favor? Unanimous.

Dale Hamilton

Item five city manager's report manager Moshier.

Glenn Moshier

Just a few quick announcements. First off, just wanted to let folks know that Harbor Park and the marina open today. Also construction began at the dam for our temporary repair which hopefully will be wrapped up tomorrow. Next week, starting at May 22 Franklin Street between Main Street and store Street will be closed in preparation for the Franklin Street Parklet. And that's hopefully we'll be all up in setup for Memorial Day weekend. The restrooms at Knowlton Park are open and the splash pad will be operational for Memorial Day weekend. Absentee balloting for school budget validation begins tomorrow on May 16. And if you believe you've signed a petition recently for the No Labels party. That was not a petition, but a change in your enrollment to that party. So if you have any questions about that, please see the clerk's office during normal business hours and they can check with your enrollment status. On just finally City Hall will be closed Monday, May 29 for the observation of Memorial Day.

Dale Hamilton

Thank you. Questions, comments. All right. Item six committee reports any committee attendance at any of the committees.

Jon Stein

you see a van full of rec commissioners, roving the streets tomorrow the rec commission will be on a field trip inventory mapping some of the city's recreational parks and activity and arts facilities. Looking at playgrounds, sports field, trails, arts and music locations, building a list of our assets in the city and also talking about goals and future priorities for the city. We usually have meetings third Tuesday's of the month but we'll be rolling but next month come join us public is always welcome. Communications Committee meeting be welcoming a new staff member who's part time or half of the staff members time will be in Outreach and Communications and PR. Correct. So we will be meeting as a committee June 12 at 5:30pm here in the council, talking about how to incorporate the staffs position into the committee's goals of transparency, communication and gaining input from citizens. Again communities welcome please attend share your thoughts. Solid Waste committee will be launching an application for citizens to join we're looking so far one member from the Ellsworth Green Action Team as well as a student member from Ellsworth High School. So be on the lookout through the city website for the application which should go live fairly soon. That's there's a steering committee meeting or you have something to share. Okay, the Comprehensive Plan steering committee this is my last one will be on the 22nd which is next Monday at 5:30pm here in the chambers as well. We're looking for input for public engagement As we continue to play in the steering committee, comprehensive plan, that's all I got. Thank you.

Michelle Beal

Finance Committee, the finance committee meets every Friday morning at 715. And we this last Friday, we looked at all of the discussions that we have had to this budget process, and discuss different plans, financial plans that will help us with the next budget season, we're already looking at next year's budget. And some of the things that we had talked about was creating a capital improvement plan. And that includes looking at roads and sidewalks and more deeper, more deeply into facilities and other projects that could be happening in the city and is looking not only at listing what we need, but also looking at the different ways that we can finance those types of needs. Well, speaking of financing, we're looking at the opera fund, there's some money left in that that needs to be designated. So we'll be looking at our funds, and hopefully the county maybe to try to get a few of these projects done in the city that has been several years in the making. And we're also be looking at our debt service plan. And I think that is it for now.

Dale Hamilton

And I would just mention, our budget workshops, we have what we think will be the final workshop, we won't promise. But that will be next Monday at six. If you haven't attended or you missed any or you're interested, all of the workshops have been they've been live streamed on and you can find the recordings on our YouTube page, if you have any issues in terms of finding them just call the city and they'll direct you to the right place. And if you have any interest in terms of just understanding where the budgets had what we're thinking, please tune in or show up and it is not we're not voting on the budget, it still will be a workshop. The actual vote will take place at the next council meeting in June. But we're we should be far enough along that Monday. We should be wrapping up. Anything else?

Dale Hamilton

All right, Item seven citizens comments. This is a portion of the agenda where citizens can comment on any items they wish. If you want to just go to the podium, state your name and say whatever you'd like to speak on. If there's an item that's on the agenda that you want to talk about, you can use this time to do so or you can wait till the agenda item comes up and then at that time, you'll have an opportunity to speak specifically to that. But that's it. I'll take it away. But I

Gordon Workman

Gordon workman resident of Ellsworth. Recently I saw it posted about an event that's possibly going to happen at the park Knowlton park called rocks and roots. And they're talking about having a mobile bar and what have you and as you know, with bar and alcohol comes other stuff. The park isn't made for that the park was a child's park at Children's Park. There's signs posted, drug free zone alcohol free, safe zones. Were asking for a can of worms if this happens. Plus parking. That's an issue. You've got 60 spaces. That's 240, if four people per car. Where's everyone else is going to park the better venue for something like that a large event even the Ellsworth pride events got so big. A better venue would be the ball field of the high school where you have vendor areas in the back of the ball field as well as offsite parking be a much better than you. One lady commented back to the rocks and roots about when I posted the signs. They said well that's just about control. That's not about usage. Rally. So this is the mentality you got to have in that park is in a residential area surrounded by four streets with residential house is not a good fit, large events should be in a larger area away from residential is President's plus, the park is used on weekends with children. That's why it's made for hands all the equipment. That's just my opinion. Thank you.

Dale Hamilton

Thank you. And just I just want to be clear, so the public is not doesn't misunderstand the not everything on the internet is real. So the event is posted. But the at this point, if there's applications will need to be filed, if there's going to be more than 250 individuals, you have to have a special permit. If you're going to have food or or serve alcohol, you have to have a special permit. None of that has taken place at this point. So I just don't want the community to think that this is something that's gone through the process and has been approved at this point.

Gordon Workman

Well, the other issue is okay, if alcohol is is been waived. Wasn't that open container in the public? Would they have to drink outside of the fence? I'm just saying there's a lot of issues. Yeah, no.

Dale Hamilton

And I hear I hear your concerns about I just wanted everybody to be clear that hasn't gone through the process yet. It's not something that is an absolute. So

Gordon Workman

I'm just, you know, I think the ball fields a much better place. That's all I'm saying. Yeah, it's a big area, easier parking, easier offsite parking. There's no issues about running through the streets, people's backyards. Like last year, the Ellsworth Pride was a huge event. I had people run into my backyard trying to park in the driveway. It's just it's not it's gotten to the point where things like this gets so big. I think the pride pride fest right now is looking at 12-1500 people possibly. That's a lot of people. So, you know. Alright, thanks.

Steven O'Halloran

Can I comment on? I'd be happy to listen to any ideas, but let's not, let's not make maybe maybe the venue is wrong. Maybe it needs to be more, but let's start rain on something new for Ellsworth. Maybe it does need to go someplace else. But let's not, let's not crowd this idea down. Because maybe there is a venue somewhere that wants live Music Bank or waterfront concert. So I'm not suggesting we do that. But let's not crowd this idea into the dirt. You know, maybe there needs to be some tweaking and moving and shoving. But I don't want to crowd the idea down. Let's listen to everyone's interest.

Gordon Workman

No, I get that. I'm not saying get rid of the idea. I'm just saying the venue may be a bad place. That's all I'm saying.

John Linnehan

Name is John Linnehan citizen of Ellsworth. I have a Bible with me tonight. It's called the founders Bible. In its regular Bible, like you're all used to talking about it's also got quotes in historical venues from the founding fathers. I'm a historical buff. So I find it very interesting where our nation was founded how it came from, in the background of the spiritual connection with our Constitution. I want to read you just a verse or two here tonight. In Second Timothy verses, chapter three, verse 16, says all scripture, All Scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in

righteousness. And I'll just paraphrase it in my own words, it teaches you what's right, what's not right, how to get right, and how to stay right. And I looked on the agenda for this week. And I noticed that there's a proclamation for Pride month coming up. And I've been a Christian since I was 26 years old. I'll be 75 in another few months. So I'm very familiar with what the Bible has to say. And I'm not I haven't been to Bible school. I'm very familiar with I read it every day and I studied every day, read through it every day for about 40 years now. And according to the Bible, homosexuality, lesbianism, are wicked and evil sins, they are condemned in God's Word. Now, in fact, the occasions of homosexuality do exist in nature. They're always apparitions, rather than than norm. homosexuality is a violation of God's moral law. God's moral law started with the 10 Commandments in Exodus, chapter 20. The Moral Law of the scriptures is set forth by God himself became the basis of what the Western world called the Common Law, which was incorporated into the US Constitution. In the Seventh Amendment. As signer of the Declaration, John Witherspoon affirm the 10 commandments are the sum of the moral law. Moral Law is simply the listing of God's timeless, unchangeable and universal rules of writing wrong, they do not change. And they apply equally to individuals, families and governments, is just as applicable to lives today as when it was first delivered approximately 3500 years ago. So I encourage the city council, I believe there's a lack of emphasis on the moral and we've replaced it with the immoral, especially from a biblical spiritual perspective. And I'm against the the proclamation for for Pride Month. And I looked it up just for fun tonight. So what's the opposite of pride and that shame? And I think if Ellsworth approved, that, in my opinion, and I hope other Bible believing Christians in the community we're going to be looking at is proclamation for shame month in Ellsworth and very clear as what the scripture said. And I'm a firm believer in saying, Thus saith the Lord, what does God have to say on issues and I try to base my life everything on biblical principles like that, which are also constitutional principles. So I encourage the city tonight, please don't let the city of Ellsworth be renamed the SIN-Y of Ellsworth, Because homosexuality lesbianism immoral acts like that, that clearly defined by God as sin. And I think we should take a stand against it as a city. And it appears the council to do that as well. nothing personal against individuals is not about that three minutes is principles from God's Word. You're at three minutes, but thank you very much. Appreciate. Thank you.

Dale Hamilton

Would anybody else like to speak?

Dale Hamilton

Hello, my name is Rachel. I'm a member of the Ellsworth community and I'm gay. I got engaged in front of the library. I'm married to a woman, I'm the granddaughter of a pastor. And I would like to feel safe and welcome in this community. I believe in morals. I believe in ethics, I believe in the freedom of religion. And I believe it's my freedom in this country, based on this constitution, to live here and live within my own morals not defined within your founders Bible. So I implore the city council to consider the existence of myself and other members of the LGBTQ community here and to officially recognize us so that way, we do have a sense of safety and pride in this community. Thank you

Dale Hamilton

Item 8 presentation of awards. First presentation.

Dale Hamilton

The city of Ellsworth proudly presents a certificate of service to Jason Ingalls in recognition for 15 years of service as a systems administrator for the city of Ellsworth your devotion to duty and loyalty to the community of contributors from the city of Ellsworth presented this 15th day of May.

Dale Hamilton

All right, I have two proclamations. What I'm going to do is I'll read one at a time. And then if the council, if there's a motion to accept will vote on that, so we'll take each one separately. First one Pride Month in the city of Ellsworth 2023. (see packet for copy of proclamation)

Casey Hanson

move to accept the proclamation.

Michelle Beal

Second

Dale Hamilton

motion is second, any discussion? All those in favor? All those opposed? Motion passes.

Dale Hamilton

The next proclamation. National Public Works week proclamation May 21 through May 27, 2023, (see packet for proclamation)

Casey Hanson

Move to accept the proclamation.

Tammy Mote

Second,

Dale Hamilton

motion second, any discussion? All those in favor.

Dale Hamilton

And the last presentation of award I want to turn it over to Lori Roberts.

Lori Roberts

We were approached in the fall of last year to see if anybody wanted to have intern from HCTC. We raised our hands and said send them our way. And we were able to get Cruz Coffin. Two days a week, an hour and a half each day and he is digitizing our files and we have quite a few file containers and it's going to be a while he's about 11% through at this point, we it takes a long time to take all the properties and all the stuff that he has that has to be digitized and we're looking at probably being able to finish the project by next June and that would be with Bobbi and I digitizing through the winter time and doing that and helping out and hopefully getting another intern next year is nice as Cruz but for right now I want to thank Cruz he's been a pleasure and we were very grateful to have him

Lori Roberts

thank you very much for for doing that. For to have young people interested in getting involved in community and and stepping in to make a difference. You just heard in terms of you know that 11% would have been a lot of staff hours all right.

Dale Hamilton

Item nine or new business item nine public hearing and action on the issuance of business licenses. Madam Clerk, all these licenses in order or

Toni Dyer

with the exception of the fourth license for homestead motel, they have gone out of business so that would need to be not taken up.

Dale Hamilton

So we will remove that. Okay.

Dale Hamilton

(For complete list and motions see page 1 of the minutes)

Steven O'Halloran

Could I just publicly say thank you for all of these businesses that choose to be in Ellsworth. Thank you.

Dale Hamilton

Item 10 public hearing in action on repeal and replacing the city of Ellsworth code of ordinances chapter 33 floodplain management ordinance with updates through December 31 2022 and effective date of June 1 2023.

Lori Roberts

Lori Roberts with the code enforcement office and there are times when the floodplain ordinance is updated. And so to stay on board with them with updating our ordinance, along with their updates is all this is in the front page of the part in your packet tells you what was changed. And it within that ordinance. And what I'll do is after it's approved, I'll have her certify two copies and I'll send that off to the floodplain ordinance section of the state.

Dale Hamilton

Any questions before we open the pope here?

Steven O'Halloran

What what does this do to somebody wanting to come to Ellsworth, what I mean what is this? So similar sequences for this

Lori Roberts

since 1975 We have been part of the floodplain ordinance the city of Ellsworth, if we weren't part of the floodplain ordinance, nobody in Ellsworth that is in the floodplain can get insurance. So this offers that availability, although it's very expensive. At least they have that availability to happen.

Steven O'Halloran

So there's no downside to Mr. And Mrs.

Lori Roberts

no downside. There's no change to them whatsoever. Thank you.

Dale Hamilton

All right. This is a public hearing. So we'll open the public hearing. Public Hearing is open. Anybody would like to speak on this and we do so. If not, I will close the public hearing. Public Hearing is closed.

Gene Lyons

Move to approve.

Casey Hanson

Second.

Dale Hamilton

seconds. Any discussion? All those in favor? Unanimous

Dale Hamilton

Item 11 public hearing and action to amend the city of Ellsworth code of ordinances chapter 31 Recreation Commission ordinance to modify the number of members from eight plus an alternate to seven members to be effective immediately.

Matt Williams

Matt Williams, city planner and staff liaison for the Recreation Commission. I have a request tonight from the Commission requesting that the chapter 31 be amended to reflect the commission consisting of seven full members as opposed to the eight full members and one alternate. This has kind of been a saga. I'm just kind of trying to conclude, Councilor Hamilton I feel speak to it a bit with his experience with the Rec Commission. But over the past year and a half or so they've had to cancel eight of their past 16 meetings or reschedule them due to a lack of quorum. The as far as I've heard that there's been advertisements for the to fill remaining positions. But right now we're about six like committed members who show up regularly to all the meetings. But sometimes during busier times of the year, as of two of them can't make it they can't have a quorum and the meeting gets canceled and so on. And this condition is larger than most of our other city bodies which are seven members. So the request is just a lower total a membership to make the core more manageable.

Dale Hamilton

Any questions, comments before we do that public hearing will open the public hearing? Public Hearing is open. Anybody like to speak? Seeing men close public hearing.

Gene Lyons

Move to approve.

Casey Hanson

Second.

Dale Hamilton

Any discussion? All those in favor?

Matt Williams

Yes. Thank you.

Dale Hamilton

Item 12. Council order number 052300. request of the public works director to enter into agreement with Haley ward for the construction phase inspection for the Christian Ridge Road project.

Lisa Sekulich

Good evening counselors. I'm here tonight to continue hopefully our agreement with Haley ward for construction phase support. The Thursday March 10, of 2022 of the opening was held for engineering Christian Ridge Road between Bucksport Road and grant street. At that point in time the council approved the cost proposal to do the engineering phase of the project. I'm here tonight to hopefully continue our agreement to the construction phase of the project. We are at this point estimating it will take about I think it will be less but we have right now are saying 13 weeks of inspection. Some of it full time, part time depending on what operations are happening out there. During closed drainage and paving. I want full time inspection during driveway culverts and that kind of thing. I don't necessarily need full time inspection. We obviously will only pay for what time is used. So I'm asking to continue that agreement and have them do our inspection for us.

Dale Hamilton

Questions, comments?

Steven O'Halloran

I saw where this is \$98,000? Yes. Were there any other bids or any other process that

Lisa Sekulich

the RFP that we put out back in 2022, included construction phase inspection. So there were two bids at that point in time. And we opted to go with this company. And so we're just adding at that point in time, we just did the engineering phase of it, just to split the money up because we didn't necessarily have to have all that money at that point in time. So we split it up into the engineering phase and now the now the construction phase.

Steven O'Halloran

And this is something that you feel you couldn't do.

Lisa Sekulich

Oh, I absolutely do not have the time to be out there full time no. I mean, I will supplement but don't to I have the ability. Yes, I came from that world. But I don't have the time or the staff at this point in time.

Dale Hamilton

Anybody from the public speaking on this topic.

Casey Hanson

Moved to approve the request to the public works director to continue our agreement with Hailey ward for the Christian Ridge Road reconstruction, construction administration and inspection phase services to be provided for an estimated amount of \$98,000 and to be funded from the local roads budget.

Dale Hamilton

I have a motion.

Tammy Mote

Second.

Dale Hamilton

Second. Further discussion. All those in favor? Aye. All those opposed? Motion passes. Thank you.

Dale Hamilton

Item 13. Council order number 052301 request of the fire chief to accept the \$1,239,537.50 FEMA staffing for adequate fire and emergency response safer regional grant program for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters

Scott Guillerault

I sent you a packet with the breakdown of the safer award and and the budget that goes with it. Back on January 2022. The council approved my application to FEMA for a safer grant for the volunteer recruitment or detention of firefighters. This goes back to an ongoing problem that we you've had in the surrounding area, not just the city of Ellsworth with recruitment or retention of volunteers. When we went through my hiring phase, it was one of the large, largest topics during my interview process was, what were we going to do to reinvigorate the volunteer basis for the Ellsworth Fire Department. I've been by ourselves, because we're predominantly career, Ellsworth would not have been able to do this and achieve a safer grant by ourselves. So we decided to do a regional grant, which is what you approved my application for. And the gentleman said in the back represent all the fire departments that are involved in this grant, which would be Trenton Lamoine, Hancock, Mariaville, Orland. And Ellsworth. I know what I got. Ellsworth, there's seven communities total involved in this. Two weeks ago on Thursday, we were notified by Representative Golden and Senator Collins that we were going to be receiving this grant. And I was noted by notified by FEMA The following morning, which you have a copy of that, that letter, it's for \$1.2 million. This is a reimbursement based grant some monies that are expended or reimbursed based on the budget and the criteria, and the funding opportunity. This is not a disbursement where we get a lump sum, and we work from there. So the request from us is for all seven communities that you approve us as the host and accept the grant for the \$1.2 million to allow us to rebuild the volunteer base.

Michelle Beal

I have a couple questions. So when I was reading through this, so I'm assuming we're administering this grant. Does that mean that we're putting the money out there and getting the reimbursement? Are

we doing it all on Ellsworth? Is that all on Ellsworth to do that to pay all the bills and then get reimbursement?

Scott Guillerault

Correct. So the surrounding communities will also pay their will pay their bills, but they will submit a request for us to do a reimbursement. Because we're the grant manager, we will do the reimbursement request from here so that we're being fiscally responsible, and we don't have too many hands on the pot. Okay. So

Michelle Beal

we're not responsible for paying out all of the money ahead of time and then being reversed each town,

Scott Guillerault

each town will do their own, they'll submit a request to us for reimbursement, and then we'll submit on a set schedule to FEMA for a reimbursement back.

Michelle Beal

So my second part of that question is, so if there's other monies here, is that administrative, I just was wondering if the city is going to be reimbursed because if we administer a grant, especially when that large request special attention in an audit, and then the hours of asking for reimbursement and maintaining the grant, do we get reimbursed for any of that? Or is that? Is there any administrative money in there?

Scott Guillerault

I'm not really we have a there's a position in there for a grant manager to assist me with the grant. So But typically, most of that will fall on on me to do the management of the grant. I do have experience with that. That's what you guys hired me from I was managing the same identical grant down south. And it was a it was a relative. Obviously, our experience with Grant it's there's a lot of data and and paperwork that goes with it. But once the process is set up, it's relatively easy to do our performance requirements and our reimbursement requests.

Steven O'Halloran

Of the 1.2 million. What do you see the benefit coming to Ellsworth

Scott Guillerault

of the 1.2? It's being able to bring volunteer back right now. I think we've had this discussion about there are four firefighters on shift. This used to be a city that was the firefighting force was volunteers, and it was supplemented by career firefighters. Now we flipped the balance and we have majority of career and we've lost our volunteer base. So to be able to have this kind of funding and put it back there, we'll be able to hopefully, rebuild that volunteer contingent that will help offset the career firefighters.

Steven O'Halloran

Let me ask it a different way. But maybe I wasn't clear. What kind of financial benefit is coming to Ellsworth monetarily of the 1.2 million. Some of that is going to be in other towns,

Scott Guillerault

right, but it's not broken. It's not a piece of the pie. This is one big, huge collaborative program. And so what Orland spends what Dedham spends what Ellsworth spends? It's still coming out of that it's not parted out in one in sevenths. So it's one lump so if I bring in 10 firefighters and they bring in three, we benefit because we brought 10 firefighters in but they also get compensated at the same time for bringing in their three. So, again, it behooves us to do an aggressive recruitment or retention, and utilize those funds, but it's not just equally dispersed into sevens across all seven fire departments.

Glenn Moshier

So I think maybe, if I may try to answer your question I think a little bit more specifically is the funds are specifically donated for equipment costs. So their turnout gear, which is the gear they wear protective gear is four or \$5,000 for each firefighter. So if you bring in a volunteer firefighter, you have to provide them that year. So this grant would have would afford that. So we wouldn't have to pay for from some from city dollars, in addition to that the training costs are included in this grant fund. So in training, medical workups, for the volunteers, so that these are things that are required through the process. And those are all those are all expenses that ordinarily to bring a volunteer on board, the city would have to pay for those things. But this grant would fund those. And in addition to those sorts of savings for the city, the grant focuses a lot on establishing social media, social media, radio, ads, all sorts of efforts to try and get the word out and get the word to the community that we need volunteers. And if you're interested, this is

Steven O'Halloran

So basically, it's that's the amount and it's to be dispersed among the community outside, that you have reciprocal agreements with etcetera. So it's not Orland wouldn't be limited to just a portion of this abroad rock. That's all I was.

Jon Stein

What does a successful recruitment look like in terms of numbers of volunteers, who stick around?

Scott Guillerault

Well, he during the application phase, we polled each fire department, what would be the ideal number for each department, whether it's eight additional firefighters on top of their force, whether it was 10. And so each department has a different max number of firefighters that they can handle. So it's going to vary like for the city of Ellsworth, I know that I can effectively manage 10 additional volunteer firefighters, just from a cost perspective, because at the end of the grant, I'm still I still have 10 firefighters. So it's gonna vary from each department. So between that we were looking for, I think we were looking for a little over 80 firefighters retained over the next four years.

Jon Stein

And final question for me, what do you think the biggest barriers are currently, manager Moshier mentioned gear costs was difficult. It could be advertising or housing.

Scott Guillerault

So there's a lot of things. So from a retention standpoint, or from each community standpoint, monetary becomes a big, big financial burden to what we can handle. You know, as he said, The physicals, what they cost, the gear, the training, and education, all that stuff, and then maintaining those over the period of time, smaller communities can't necessarily afford to take on 10 additional firefighters without some sort of support, or ask their communities to give them that additional funding. So from there. The other part, besides the monetary part is just the commitments that come to those. So from a retention standpoint, a lot of people are interested in volunteering. But being able to hold them isn't sometimes the city's fault or the fire department's fault. It becomes life where people, you know, two people at home are working time commitments, family commitments. So there's there's always been a lot of interest in from my own experience recruiting before, I would wind up with a whole big contingent of people that were interested in being on fire service and that get there and then the time commitments with home and they didn't realize how much commitment was involved. So it is a balancing act, when we're trying to bring these people in is how can we get them in? How can we get them trained? And how can we work with them, to keep them because they are an important part, especially for the outlying communities around us. It's their only support. It's their only firefighting force and for us. We need to balance out our volunteer and career base so that we're not, you know, overworking the guys downstairs. And what we have right now for a volunteer force, we're starting to age out

Casey Hanson

well, the volunteers also be first responders or do they get trained to be first responders or EMTs? I can't. Yeah, yep. So will. The volunteers will also be able to help you with responding to costs,

Scott Guillerault

right, each community medical costs, each community is going to be different. So, you know, we're each going to have our own policies, when it comes to the, there are just some things that it doesn't make sense for someone to be leaving their place of work to respond to a medical call that the downstairs crew is going to handle in 15 minutes. That would be an unreasonable request for somebody here in the city of Ellsworth, but for the outlying communities that are part of this grant, that's an important part of it. If they have the ability to leave and manage those calls, it's extremely important.

Tammy Mote

So I know you'd be hiring a full time volunteer recruitment and retention coordinator for what you need. Is that going to be a temporary position and after the four years, it's not going to be employed anymore?

Scott Guillerault

Well, I mean, that's that's one of those things to see, we'd have to make a decision later on down the line, if that's something that we want to maintain. Or if another community wants to take, take that on and it doesn't, doesn't necessarily mean Ellsworth need to in the budget. And just from my own

experience, having dealt with it in past doesn't need to be a full time employee. It's it's budgeted as a full time employee. But if it fit needs to be a part time employee, they can be a part time employee. The funds that are there is what is allotted to pay up to for that position. And that's what they the position I was in before that's exactly what they did is it was a full time position. But they couldn't, couldn't manage it. So it wasn't they wanted me in a part time position.

Glenn Moshier

But there isn't any requirement in the grant. Like cops grant where you have to carry it on for three years after the three year grant, there isn't. So at the end of the four years on the grant, money has gone essentially

Scott Guillerault

similar to the firefighter staffing grant that would do the career firefighters at the end of three years, if it didn't continue on, then you're not obligated to hold them.

Dale Hamilton

I think it's it's a great way to try to enhance our workforce without having to take on new costs of hiring. And we know hiring is difficult anyway. So if this is becomes effective over the four years, certainly will be a benefit to the city and surrounding communities.

Scott Guillerault

And I think the big thing for even for me is to remember that there are six other communities that are tied into this that are here to help us there are the ones that when we have something going on here in the city. That workforce is the one that's coming in here to help us so this benefits Ellsworth in two ways.

Casey Hanson

Move to approve, accepting the 1,239,537 and 50 cent FEMA staffing for adequate fire and emergency response regional grant program for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

Gene Lyons

Second,

Dale Hamilton

motion a second, any further discussion? All those in favor? Very much.

Dale Hamilton

Item 14 presentations to update the city council and public on the recent work of the city's Broadband Committee. Thank you

Janna Richards

Good evening councilors. I'm Janna Richards, the economic development director and I'm here representing the city's Broadband Committee. Other staff that are on the Broadband Committee include city manager Moshier, Jason Ingalls, who's hiding in the backroom, but also trying to get this on camera. And then we have John Doherty, who's here from Mission broadband, who's also been

working with us through this process. The last time we were here before the council was in August, and there's been quite a bit of changes in the broadband landscape, which therefore has changed some of the next steps of the committee. So we wanted to inform you of what those updates are and what the changes have been in the past nine months. And so we figured what better way than through a quick presentation, I promise I'll try to be quick. So we go to the next slide. So I'm just gonna give you a brief overview of who the committee is and what we've who is comprised of Um, for the benefit of the public and also counselors that are newer, we're going to talk about the first year of our work. And we'll go through that a little bit quickly, just because it's it's old news at this point. And the new news is what's been happening from October 2022 Till the present day. And that will help inform some of the next steps and then we'll leave some time for questions, comments and feedback from the council. So the Broadband Committee, like I said, there's some city staff on there. There's some counselors, we have representation from some of the businesses that reside in Ellsworth including Jackson lab, First National Bank, Northern Light, and we have the school. There's a new Director of Information and Technology. There. Frank Rapp he joined our committee. And we have a resident Tracy Sheckle, who works our lives on Park Street also works for the Ellsworth American. So there's some representation throughout the community. There. This was formed in the summer of 2021. It was a requirement of the the Connect Maine planning grant now the main connectivity authority that we still have. But we wanted to have one anyway, it wasn't just because it was requirement that we put one together. It helps inform a lot of the work that we're doing, to see what the vision and the goals are for broadband in the greater Ellsworth community. So you're one, we formed the committee. We submitted a grant and we were awarded the grant through the then connect Maine planning, Canadian connect Maine authority. It was a planning grant. So it all had to do with how we can plan for broadband expansion here in the city. We drafted and sent a postcard out to every home and business in the city of Ellsworth to take a survey. There were it was digital, it was also paper copies, we were trying to figure out what the take rate was, and elsewhere. So what people were looking for in terms of speeds how many people they have using Internet and broadband in their household if they actually had a connection, what they pay a host of different items and data that was collected. We also held a meeting with stakeholder groups throughout the city to figure out what broadband needs were and how having a stronger broadband connection and a better fiber in the city would improve their functions. And so all of that got rolled into a city of Ellsworth broadband roadmap and strategic plan that was finalized in August by the committee and we held a workshop with the council at that time to go through the results of that strategic plan. It's available on the city's website, I have a hardcopy in my office, anyone is welcome to review it and look at it and ask questions on that document. And that plan was basically the deliverable that we had put forth for phase one of our grants. So we had grant dollars to help with the survey and things of that nature. So like I said, in August, we came forward to the council. And we asked to move forward at that time with a request for proposals to see what sort of proposals that we would get on expanding broadband within the city knowing that our goals were 100% coverage of the city as well as an affordability component. So we were moving forward with that. At the same time, there was a new city councilors that were assigned to the Broadband Committee, we began drafting the request for proposals. And about October, November, we started learning about quite a bit of Internet Service Provider investments in the city. So we put a hold on moving forward with the request for proposals. And as the committee we met and came for fourth with a an what we call an interim plan at the time just given the changing landscape. So we decided that we would have a subcommittee of the fuller committee that would re meet with the internet service providers that had plans for the city of Ellsworth, and ask them some

pretty pointed questions and get answers back that we could then summarize and put into a matrix which is provided for you in in in the packet to try to understand the primary goal was to try to understand where the gaps would, would be in the city if these plans were fully executed by the Internet service providers. So we drafted questions and set up the interviews with five Internet Service Providers during late February and early March. And I'll go through some of that in a minute. We also met with the Maine connectivity authority to tell them about the changing landscape here in Ellsworth. And we asked, it's not really a grant extension, the grant was contract was through June 2023. We just said that our deliverables would be delivered before then. So we told them that there's all this changing landscape going on in Ellsworth. And they were fine with the fact that the deliverables that we had said that we would put forth in phase two may not come through to fruition just because of what was going on here in Ellsworth. So we have the ability to amend the deliverables of phase two should we need to after determining our course of action moving forward. And we have the ability to either accept or deny the remaining \$2,500 In awarded funds. So we were ultimately given 5000 total, we've utilized 2500, and there's 2500 remaining. And the last piece here is that while all of this is going on, the state basically designated that they wanted to have a state digital equity and inclusion plan. And the way that they're going to come up with a statewide plan was to have regional plans that then roll up into a statewide plan. So we found that we were part of the Hancock and Washington county regional plans, and that the island Institute was the partner with the state that was basically facilitating the regional plan for us. So we started to reach out to them to see how our Broadband Committee could be integrated into the regional planning process. Okay. So the bigger I guess the meat and potatoes of all of that were was the interviews that we conducted with the internet service providers. So we met with five Consolidated Communications, Fidium fiber, Spectrum GWI premium choice and go netspeed. So out of those five, three fideism spectrum and premium choice have existing plans for Ellsworth in the near future. And with those plans, broadband coverage in the city would be close to 100%, which is the coverage goal of the committee. Aside from just asking them what their plans were, we asked what the type of technology would be. We asked what their customer service was like we asked what their pricing was like. We asked if they would have any interest in sponsoring digital equity and inclusion type programs or projects here in the city of Ellsworth. So if you look in your packet, the vendor summary sheet is a summary of of those interviews and the different questions and topic areas that we covered with them. So currently, there were two out of those three internet service providers who were going to give us real information so that we are able to really understand where there are now gaps, but there are very small gaps in coverage. And with those plans, really, before before they came forward and said that, you know, they had these plans, there were quite a few pockets of Ellsworth that could be considered unserved or underserved. And a lot of the grant dollars that are out there right now are for that eligibility. So if you are unserved or underserved. Those grant dollars can help your community expand. Ellsworth with these plans for expansion would more than likely not be considered unserved or underserved. And so therefore, those grant dollars probably would not be available to us. But there are other sources of grant funds that could be available. The Maine connectivity authority has a new program out called reach me, which is basically if a internet service provider and a municipality partner together and go to them incentivizes going that last extra mile to to cover those gaps. And then there's also county ARPA funds and John Doherty has been working with the county on they've already designated \$4 million out of the county's ARPA funds to go toward broadband projects. So we could potentially pitch a project to them that would help minimize our coverage gaps. And I wrote in here that there is still the ability for the city to consider public ownership of a broadband utility district, however,

the city would most likely need to work with neighboring municipalities that are not, that are considered underserved or unserved in order to pursue that concept, because that's where the grant dollars are at. And then, okay, I'm gonna go quickly through this. So, you know, one of the goals of the Broadband Committee is also the concept of having an affordable program. So we want to still like, in conjunction with the 100% coverage, we also want to pursue an affordability goal. And so digital equity inclusion is the way that we can pursue that goal. So we met with representatives from the island Institute are working on the digital equity and regional plan for Hancock and Washington counties, they're being rolled up into a statewide plan, the state will then be eligible to receive federal funds. And with those federal funds, it's our understanding that municipalities and even nonprofit organizations that would contribute toward digital equity projects in the city so like if friends and action or the library or the more community center are these different entities that are in Ellsworth, wanted to host digital equity and type education, programming, they would be eligible to apply and get grant funding through this program. So I'll talk about this in next steps. But our idea is to have the Broadband Committee to also have a subcommittee that will be formed to continue exploring digital equity inclusion planning and then implementation here in the city. And that's part of the next steps. So our next steps are to fully determine coverage gaps in the city and understand what funding sources and partnerships could be pursued to fill those gaps form the digital equity inclusion subcommittee and follow back up with the island and Institute to understand the status of Hancock County's Digital Inclusion regional plan. Work has a committee to digest that plan and how to potentially implement at the local level. I figured this was probably a good time to put another plug out there for the affordable connectivity program, if you or anyone that you talk to is not aware of it, there is the ability to get if you're eligible to get a discount of up to \$30 per month, or a one time \$100 Discount toward a laptop, desktop computer or tablet through this program. A lot of the internet service providers that we talked to actually have a plan that is \$30. So if you take this \$30 credit, essentially, your broadband connection is free. So I definitely want people to pursue this and see if it's something that works for them. And then we are going to follow back up with the Maine connectivity authority to discuss our next steps and the usage of the grant funds before the contract end date. Okay, I tried to be quick, I'm sorry.

Dale Hamilton

Questions, comments?

Jon Stein

mentioned the possibility or discussion about public partnership partnering with another municipality? What would that look like? Or where are we in that stage of that conversation?

Janna Richards

So the public private partnership would be more so us partnering with so like, I'll just give a real like an example. As we all know, fidium fiber is here. You see their trucks everywhere, they're having a full on expansion in the city. So basically, the reach me grant program would be a public private partnership with for us to go after grant funds to then incentivize them to go the extra mile if you will, to be able to fully build out the city of Ellsworth. So that's the public private partnership piece. The other piece is the broadband utility model, which is essentially the city owning its own infrastructure to be able to be able to deliver broadband to the public. There are these broadband utility districts you may have heard of, in Baileyville Calais area, they were one of the first ones in Maine. Really, you know, that model is

more so in areas where there's either no internet service providers or very limited internet service providing, you know, maybe like a few miles or something of of internet service here in the city of Ellsworth. Now given all of the results of the plans from a lot of the internet service providers to own our own utility we'd be basically competing against those internet service providers. So they take what they call the take rate, which is like, how many people are we going to be able to get on, on our service? Probably declined because most of the people, they're already being served by by an Internet service provider at this time. So those are the two different models, though. So, you know, you either have an Internet service provider who's already existing, who continues to build out and we get 100% coverage that way, or we're pursue an option of a utility district where you try to have you have the same goal. It's just

Jon Stein

there's you don't think there's a world in which Ellsworth municipality could offer that as a utility more cheaply to people that

Unknown Speaker

So one of the one of the conversations that we always have, because there is a, you know, certainly a interest in utility districts in the state, across the United States, because of the big bad evil service providers that have been out there for so many years and haven't done anything and lots of money been invested in that's not there. But the challenge is the reality, it costs money to build, right, there's a return on investment issue, and that's why it hasn't been built. So this capital money that's coming into, into Maine, I'll say it across the United States, the money we're working with right now is the money already kind of million dollars for every state plus a multiplier, the new money that was up there was called bead, that's going to be another \$250 million coming to the state 42 and a half billion across the United States. So that got everybody, you know, kind of fired up about how they want to do it. The utility districts started to show up a little five or so years ago, more than that, it was a good idea, you know, where there wasn't anything or nothing was getting built, and they weren't doing 100%. What has changed in this landscape, just in the time that we've been involved is these service providers, and now seeing the money coming, they're also investing their own capital. And so they're building it out. So the challenge comes in the take rate, right? Yes, you could build it, I forget what the numbers were, you know, for a city of this size, but you know, call it \$30 million, you'd have to figure out how to pay for that bond, or whatever it may be, then you got to pay it back. And that's usually done through tape grades through your your monthly cost, right. So it costs money to operate a network. And that's what we try to get across to people. So it's not just capital, then you got to operate it. So everybody thinks, Okay, that's great, we'll loan it will operate, it will provide internet, everybody will take it for you know, 30 bucks a month, you can't run the network on 30 bucks a month, then there's, there's where the challenge comes in of owning and operating, it's doable. Don't get me wrong, it'd be a model, it'd be a business model, but the feasibility study together and all of that. But the challenge comes in the ongoing operating costs, and trying to maintain that from, you know, ongoing basis. And so you know, your, your cost to the end user is usually at par or a little bit higher than what's already available from a larger company that can take that loss longer. So

Dale Hamilton

I would also point out that if you look at the map, when this first started in terms of where the gaps were, the map was there was a lot of gaps along the city. If you look at that map, now, when you talk about the gaps, we're talking a very small part of two roads,

Janna Richards

two roads that we're aware of at this point in time, and one of them might even just be a mistake. So yeah. So I mean, before we were like, Oh, we could get a lot of grant dollars that could come in to help offset some of that the infrastructure costs. But at this point, he works with a lot of towns that are unserved or underserved, and others that aren't and they put in for some of the grant funding through the Build me program and found out the hard way that really the ones that got funded, are ones that are unserved or underserved.

Unknown Speaker

So truly no internet. Yeah. And that's, that's the goal of this money from a federal perspective. It's not, I don't like my internet service provider. So I want money to compete against them. It's truly a dot on a map that's a rooftop, it says they either have the ability to get it or they don't. And that's it. Those are those are your two choices.

Jon Stein

The access is definitely important. I just worry about the privatization of something that is increasingly essential for people to work from home using reason that water and seasons private.

Unknown Speaker

You know, and Ellsworth is going to be in pretty good shape at this point since we started this project because you actually have to wander around offering a high percentage. A third one that's coming in a little bit more. And you also have your union river river that is a call. If this had they have success, they may continue to build down through as well. So you're, you're in pretty good shape as as compared to two years ago. How's

Dale Hamilton

Questions, comments?

Gene Lyons

So, Fidium, where are they? What are they doing? I just go on every road or

Janna Richards

pretty much everywhere. 90%. Yeah. And I've received emails and calls from the public asking me, Hey, I live at such and such a road, am I going to get on fidium? Or am I going to be served, and we just send those numbers, the addresses along to the different internet service providers, and they get back to us, like instantly, honestly. And so we're happy to do that. I've worked with a lot of people on Happytown and WInkumpaugh Road who didn't know if they were going to get included in the video and build out. And for the most part, so far, every single address I've asked is, is a yes. So that's impressive. And we know, you know, we know, the Affordable program is not going to be around

forever. And but I think every state understands that and all the municipalities understand that. And so I think there's a an effort statewide to try to figure out a way of federally, federally

Unknown Speaker

Feds know that that that needs to stick. Yeah, it needs to stick because it's, you know, is it available? Great. Is it adequate? And which has been the biggest problem? As well as affordability, right. But this digital equity, right is people adapting to it didn't even know how to use it. They have a device. Right? So how do you talk about aging in place? Well, if you have it in there, but you don't know how to use it, that doesn't help you age in place, right? Education is the same way. So there's a lot of things that are tied behind this digital equity program, and they call it a covered population that federally nationalization, say they're really trying to target. And that's what's happening with the real estate, because it's tied into how do we get the beat money. So

Janna Richards

we are fortunate that we have a representative from Northern Light on our committee. And so the Telehealth is a huge concern and aspect, especially in in Ellsworth, getting people to the hospital, to be able to go to appointments, and they have an uptick in telehealth but to be able to do telehealth, you have to have a good connection. And so he's made recommendations to us of you know, I was like so if you had all the money in the world, what would you do to be able to solve that problem. And so he has great recommendations and suggestions that we can then put into this regional plan that hopefully will go to the state and they can understand like the rural areas and how we have to deal with rural health.

Casey Hanson

Is there some data collection about not only where the internet service exists, but how many people can afford it or not understand how to use it, to sort of get to that thing that you were just saying, which is

Unknown Speaker

not in one place, I'll say, there's definitely maps that are coming out, that's gonna give us a better coverage idea. But usage, it gets to be private data. And affordability is definitely private. So those those numbers aren't necessarily out there,

Janna Richards

we're able to say like 30% of your population is at a, you know, that poverty rate or or, you know, low income, let's say, even something like 30% is a high enough number to say, Wow, we should have a plan for how we can provide at least hotspots and things like that to be able to get the community that can't access. So there's ways of planning for it not on a household by household basis. But, you know, if we're able to do something up in North Hills where something you know, throughout our geography that could then help those populations then that's what we could strive for.

Janna Richards

Thank you, thank you.

Dale Hamilton

Item 15 review discussion of possible action to send the municipal budget to the voters. Councilor O'Halloran

Steven O'Halloran

Thank you. When I joined the Council a year and a half ago. It was I have a question why the school department goes to a referendum, the budget process and municipal side didn't. And I learned that the school department that's mandatory, and the municipal side is an honor. And I would like to suggest that we put out both the municipal and the school budget to the citizens to vote on, not just the school. Maybe there's a downside I'm unaware of, but I would like to think that we would vote on a budget and then get it ratified by the citizens, the people that are paying the bill. Now, I realize we're a long ways into the process here, but 23/24 budget, it would probably be a dumpster fire to get it done this year. But I certainly would like to look forward to doing it for 24/25 unless it can be done. We could ask the clerk.

Dale Hamilton

So I don't know if clerks are ready. Just I understand the reason rationale behind it. I think in terms of what you said, I do have a question about? I don't think it's as simple as just the seven of us if we all were in agreement to do it, I don't think we could. The process is outlined in the charter. So I think we would have to the charter would have to change, I also think the government structure would also have to change. This form of government has the process by which a council puts forward the budget and is tasked with it, as opposed to a town that operates with a different governmental structure. And they have select people that are elected, and then they have the town meeting, and they do public votes in that context. So those are my questions. I don't know if that bears out, but I think those are real issues that would would, would need to be answered in order to do it legally.

Steven O'Halloran

I'm fine with that. Just a, if we can do it for the school side, I would like to find a way to do it for the municipal side. So that when it goes out in this case, it was what June 29 that we go out with both maybe there's a lot of mechanisms that need to be refined in that process. But it would be a good chance to get the public's input on the budget, like we do the school. Now if the school doesn't pass, correct me if I'm wrong, it comes back and goes through the process again. Correct. Right. So I would like that opportunity for both sides. And again, I realize trying to put it through in this budget is a dumpster fire. But I think it's something that the council should consider for 24/25 budget. Just floating the idea, I'm not asking you to vote on it. I'm just floating that idea that I think it would be good for the citizens to have a say like they do in the school department.

Jon Stein

I wanted to know, this was done elsewhere in Maine. And I didn't have very much time. But what came up first and preliminary searches were participatory budgeting, which I found interesting. It's not very common. But in the States and a little bit in Canada. It's happened in several dozens of instances at the county city, district and school district level. And it's sort of a combination of municipal budgeting through a council and sort of what you're describing. But in the instances I found they use. They put discretionary funds up for public voting. So the process looks like first there's a public idea collection

and volunteer recruitment volunteers go out they sort of like the comprehensive planning committee is doing is sending volunteers out to get public thoughts and opinions second stage, that the ideas go to delegates who work with city departments to formulate these ideas into actual proposals. And then the residents vote so it'd be just discretionary funds and ideas coming from citizens would go through the city to be created in these packages of let's take this amount of money into this project with and then people would vote if it passes then they're enacted and evaluated through the years.

Gene Lyons

And then my instances they didn't vote on the budget, they just voted on certain sections.

Jon Stein

Exactly. of the budget. Yeah, just a chunk of money. And what's the that?

Gene Lyons

I feel I don't know if that's the case. But if you put the, you know, you put the school budget up for vote, and everybody while we want to support the school, school budget passes, if people ain't like, what their tax bills gonna be, there's no way that I mean, I bet you would find, you'd find at 500 People go and vote and down the municipal budget, because they don't want to pay for everything in there. And then you'd be back here and back here and back here. I mean, we know we've been through two months of listening to everything that's needed. So everything is needed with the city, we've vetted. A lot of people think that we just come here and sit and do nothing, I guess. But we have vetted everything that's in that budget. And I think we've taken good mindful thoughts about it. And that's why people elected us to come here. So if we put it out the vote, they say, No, we spent another two months going through everything, all the departments lose money, because I mean, employees definitely go. Because that's where, like, at the school 91% was fixed amount. So and that's not what we're talking about. So the municipal, how many percent it's fixed around close to

Toni Dyer

Close to 87? I think

Gene Lyons

Well, you're gonna do, you're gonna get rid of people, because the other stuff has to be done. I feel that I feel it would be a waste.

Steven O'Halloran

I don't want to beat this to death. But I'm not afraid of a report card from the public.

Gene Lyons

And I don't want one every day,

Steven O'Halloran

it's a bad thing. I think it's a consideration. Ellsworth doesn't have to follow suit to everybody, or every other town, we can blaze a trail and, and maybe this is a mistake, but I think Diems looking at, because the people that are paying the bill need to have a voice in what they pay.

Gene Lyons

They have seven voices, you hear that the elected to do the job.

Jon Stein

So it's a balance of efficiency. And as close to true democracy as you can get right. Does everybody say their pitch and work together and come up with a budget? Or does it have to get funneled through a few people who can talk about it?

Gene Lyons

we've looked at how many people watch every meeting 40 or 50 people. So people are more interested in us doing our job that they elected us to do. And when I'm just hoping that we've spent enough time here in the last two months, going over everything, picking everything apart. Looking at cutting everything that's possible in the last 10 years. That's what they don't cut, cut, cut, cut, cut, come to the point where you have to pay and I feel like we've vetted everything as good as we could

Steven O'Halloran

about other people just we could hear other people's opinions on it, because if it has no traction, it has no traction. But if we could at least get everybody's input that would be helpful to me to know if we bring it forward. Another time or it's not worth talking about. I just again, I'd like to hear from everyone. But I think I think we should offer that to the citizens of ultra

Tammy Mote

I personally am not in favor of it going to the voters just because I do feel that we've been elected to handle that. I feel like we provide a ton of information out to the public. All of this stuff is televised, they can go back and watch it if they're not available at the time of the meetings. I also think there's issue because it states in our charter and the type of government that we have this council, city manager, type of government that it may be disallowed. Does that mean that we can't look into it? Absolutely. So I don't, you know, but personally, I'm not in favor of it at this point. So

Michelle Beal

I agree with Tammy. This is a representative form of government. And, you know, it's, so I grew up in a town that had a town meeting, and which were actually a lot of fun. But the problem is, people come. This is a lot of fun. No, I mean, I actually, I grew up from 30 to 50, in this in this form of government, but the problem is, you know, in a small town like Lamoine where I grew up, it's much easier to break apart a budget. But in Ellsworth, how would we educate people? We have a budget that's several inches, probably six inches thick? And how do we educate those people who come for one vote on one day, and said, you know, well, I think we should cut a million dollars out of the budget. I think it's really easy for Ellsworth to kind of million dollars out of the budget. You've seen that budget, can you cut a million dollars out of that budget? You know, you're asking without consequences to the actions. And you know, and that was one of the things that was that was asked on candidate night was just that same question. And we can say, you know, what, we need to cut the police department by three or four officers. What happens if that if we do that, yeah, we'll save some money. But we'll have officers out there in danger, because they're going to situations where there should be two or three of them. And

there's one because no one's on duty with them. And, you know, there's in the same thing with the fire department, well, why can't we just have a volunteer fire department. And you just heard that we can't get volunteers, we have a hard enough time getting career officers. So people can say that very easily. But they don't know. They don't have a good understanding of what they're saying. They you know, they can cut recreation, they can cut all of these different things. But you need to be thoughtful about what you cut and how you cut it, which is what we do over a two or three month process. We have we understand the consequences, we could cut a million dollars at a local roads. But we'll have an awful lot of people mad at us, because even matter at us because the roads can't be fixed, because there's no money to do it. So that's why I personally think that Ellsworth as large as it is, whether it's a service center, it's really has a lot of responsibility for itself and the surrounding towns, we provide a lot. And so we need to be thoughtful about our budgets, and about how we spend our money. And you can't do that by showing up to vote, because you're mad because your taxes are gonna go up \$100 and voting down a budget. That's not a thoughtful way of doing it. The only way that we could do it as if we spent and had everybody in this city, attend that's going to vote, they can vote, attend these meetings with us and have a good understanding of that budget. But that's, that's, again, my opinion.

Casey Hanson

I just echo the the same things. I think we're too big a city to have a town meeting type decision. Also just based on how much work the budget committee meetings are. And it doesn't seem like the citizens are banging down the doors to be a part of that. So I guess to me, that speaks to the idea that the citizens want to hire us to do this hard work or hire. Left us to do what this is what this hard work is. And I think that's what we're elected to do.

Steven O'Halloran

So obviously, there's not traction for that. And I respect that wholeheartedly. I just think that if we can do it for the school, we can do it for the municipal side. I know it's not a five minute process, but we're offering the citizens to vote on the school budget. I would like to offer the same to the citizens on the municipal side. Obviously, there's no attraction for that. I respect that wholeheartedly. I just think that it would be a good gesture. Thank you for listening.

John Linnehan

There's a public comment on this. John Linnehan from Ellsworth, I agree with Councilor O'Halloran, that we should put it out to the public. I believe that this is your charter commission that's working on a chat Right now charter review or I thought I heard that one of the council meetings that that was going to happen. I think it probably is a charter situation that has to take place. I don't know. I haven't read it, but I will. But I think that has to come through the charter, Steve to make that happen. I'm behind it. 100%. I believe you can cut money. I think you guys work hard on the budget. Don't get me wrong. It's just a disagreement on how the money should be spent. That's all I disagree. I'll vote no on the school budget, because I think there should be cuts in that area. And I'll vote no, if it came to that on the city budget? Well, it's just a matter of my opinion, versus somebody else would be on the mat about it. We'll have we'll have coffee, we can discuss it. But I think it should be. I think it should go to public both. I think the schools should be just shouldn't be a separate budget should be another part in the charter committee. Just another department. It's the largest expense that we had in the city of Ellsworth, yet it's

a standalone thing. I think part of the chatter should be the school should be another department within the city budget as part of our charter overall. Just my opinion. Thank you very much.

Dale Hamilton

Isn't that part of the vote this year? So on the ballot, there'll be two questions. One is Do you are you in favor of the school budget, but there will also be a separate question is do you want to continue The validation to validation or not? So potentially, depending on how that goes to school budget may not go back out to vote next year? Correct.

Casey Hanson

So we as a city make that decision. And that's part of the charter, we as a city make that decision every three years whether to keep voting.

Toni Dyer

State Department of education.

Casey Hanson

Okay. Yeah. That's good to understand. Thank you.

Steven O'Halloran

To clarify, I was told that it had to go out to receive funding. Is that not correct?

Toni Dyer

Yes. The school budget will be on the ballot to approve the funding. But every three years there's an additional referendum to ask the voters if they want to continue approving the funding. If they vote no. The council would approve the school budget at this table

Dale Hamilton

for three for three years. Three years back out to vote.

Gene Lyons

So it could keep leapfrogging one three.

Michelle Beal

For the RSU. It never went to vote.

Tammy Mote

Because it was just the council.

Michelle Beal

That was a that was a new in the RSU. situation came out through Governor Baldacci. That was that was part of what that legislation before that the city council always voted for the school budget.

Casey Hanson

I see ya. So it's not a charter issue at all for the school. It's just a state thing.

Toni Dyer

So if you vote no on question two, the city will no longer hold the validation election for the school budget. It'll just be approved by the Council for the next three years,

Steven O'Halloran

but the state will still fund their portion of it.

Tammy Mote

the charter is also voted on by the people. So if we were to change it would have to be approved.

Steven O'Halloran

All right. Thank you

Dale Hamilton

Item 16 discussion to broadcast finance committee meetings?

Casey Hanson

Yeah, this is a requested this in the in the fall, the finance committee meeting seems so important. And I often I sometimes have felt inadequately educated because of because I met work during those meetings. And so we've been audio recording them. But it's so clunky. It comes to me a few days later, and I have to download it on my computer and sit next to my computer to listen to it. It's really awkward. Um, and it seems like a really important committee. In terms of communicating to the public, a lot of important conversations happen during that time. I would really appreciate being able to go to work early. Watch it before my first patient comes on my first meeting. So I'm just remaking that request.

Glenn Moshier

So the drawback to that doesn't require staff. Yeah,

Casey Hanson

I understand that. That's the thing.

Gene Lyons

How do you record it? How do you record it?

Glenn Moshier

It does it. We just record the voice.

Gene Lyons

Because I couldn't look at it either. I'm not that I wanted to listen to it, and I feel like barely here. They probably just my, my tea stuff, not very good.

Tammy Mote

I was just wondering if you'd be able to call in before you see first patient. So you'd feel more connected? Like there are a few times that I've had to drive to Bangor. And I just called in and listened or and participated during the meeting? So I don't know if that's a possibility for you, as well as you,

Gene Lyons

how would you call in we'll just explain what you're talking.

Tammy Mote

Like, it's a conference phone. So you could just call in, right. And they can have as many people calling in,

Gene Lyons

what number due to call, Glenn could provide that for you.

Casey Hanson

That would definitely be beneficial, better than it would still like if I had an eight o'clock meeting, I wouldn't if it were if it were the way the other meetings are, that would be ideal. I could listen to what I listened to me catch up on what I missed. But what you're saying is definitely better than what I'm doing

Gene Lyons

You know, like, you call you listen, you know, participation rate.

Casey Hanson

I don't particularly need to participate.

Gene Lyons

Oh, that's pretty good, though. I mean, for? Can you get that number for everybody?

Steven O'Halloran

I think in this day and age, when we've had many conversations here at this table about communication, communications with the people paying the bills, I would think that we could step it up a notch and publicize those much like we do the council meetings, that's an important committee, we do workshops, I realized as an adjustment in staff to do that. However, again, in this day and age and trying to open the transparency to the people of Ellsworth, I would think it's time we stepped up and you said it requires staff, so maybe an hour a week, or what have you, I realize there's a cost to it. But being open to the public, I think is a great plan of support,

Casey Hanson

could you adjust, so that whoever has to come in early leaves early on Friday,

Glenn Moshier

I'll talk to it about it. Again, not didn't say it couldn't be done. I'm just saying that's the, that's the one Achilles heel is we don't have anyone in here at seven o'clock in the morning to operate the equipment that requires so.

Michelle Beal

So the only the only thing is, number one, we do have transparency, because we actually just sent the recordings out to someone in the public that wanted to hear a couple of our meetings, and we sent them to her and she was fine. So there is transparency, it's recorded, the only, I just hate to ask it to do that, because they do do an incredible amount of evening meetings as it is. And there are times where there is nothing to discuss. Or, you know, there's, there's only one of us here or managing motion is gone. And so we have a 15 minute meeting, and you know, we signed a warrant, we kind of go through the agenda items very quickly, because there's nothing on them. And then they leave very rarely to the meetings go past eight o'clock. Because I mean, we all have to get to our jobs to and volunteering. So it's a very long winded way of saying we could do that and spend the money to have a person come in here just so they can record it. And it may be you know, there are quite a few times that it's just not worth it. It'd be a 15 minute meeting. So and it's only three Council and there's no decisions made. It's just discussion. So it's not like a council meeting with the workshops or things. It's really just sometimes there are some great things and I am actually hoping that we're going to have some really good discussions that we but we everything that we do and discuss will come to the council, because that's what our whole purpose is, is to make to have those discussions and bring recommendations to the council or help staff bring recommendations to the council. And maybe I could be a little more clear on the at the council meetings when I report on the finance committee or or showing the council that this has been vetted? Or if the if I want to say that because we don't really bet, but we have had conversations with staff about certain things. And it is the finance committee's recommendation to do this or to not do that. And we haven't done that. And we have, we haven't been really good about that even through the budget process. But I think there are some ways that we could definitely get the information to the council. Rather than ask it person to come in at 7am, every Friday morning.

Casey Hanson

Well, I guess if, if you could ask, and someone said, Yeah, I would love to come in at seven and leave an hour early. And that worked.

Jon Stein

probably a middle ground. If you talk to it, I bet that they could format the audio in a different way and make it more easily accessible to the general public popped up on the website. So it's worked for them, but later in the day, so they can take your audio recording? Yeah,

Casey Hanson

there's a way to make an audio that because when you have a meeting, people can be watching this. That's what I would just love to be able to participate at the moment and not like, Oh, let me find time in my weekend. Now to add that, in.

Steven O'Halloran

When I was speaking, I wasn't speaking necessarily about the council being able to see it, I'd like to see every citizen have the same opportunity to see it. And they may choose not to, that's fine, but I would think it would be an option we should offer.

Dale Hamilton

So I think what I'm hearing is this, there's no, there's no opposition to moving in that direction. I don't think anybody's saying Don't do it. It's a matter of practicality. We have to have staff in order to make that happen. So if you can explore that, see if it's if there's an option there. And then if not, we can have a discussion. Next meeting, as well to see what other solutions. That sounds reasonable.

Casey Hanson

Sure. In the meantime, will you send that dialing number? Or maybe it's dialed? Unless I'm already supposed to know that number somehow? No,

Glenn Moshier

It was it was the sole source of communication before COVID. But once COVID and zoom and everything. We haven't used that phone except for Tammy calling in two weeks ago was the first time that in fact, nobody even knew the number I had to get Jason had to go into his back computer somewhere and find what the number was because it's been so long since and when it used it. So we have the number now.

Dale Hamilton

And as you say that one of the things question, I don't know if it's possible. So zoom, we can do, we could set that up and make that work. And you can record a zoom. I wonder if that's an alternative. It wouldn't be live, but it would be recorded. And then they could the question is, could we do that? And could then they post the zoom as a link? So it's not real time. Right? But it would be people could watch it after the Zoom real? Well, that the recording wouldn't be so people that didn't it unless you call into the Zoom and say you can't turn on public TV. So yeah,

Glenn Moshier

I can I can explore multiple options for that. and report back. Excellent.

Casey Hanson

So can you just make it enough an agenda item again next month?

Dale Hamilton

Councilor Comments

Jon Stein

So here you go. Thank you. We, we breezed through the Pride Month declaration which in its own way, it was awesome. But I just wanted to say how proud I am to have been able to vote for that. So you know, I'm not more of an Old Testament kind of guy. So I wanted to find some context from John Witherspoon who contributed to the Bible you're holding, tried to look for quotes in the brief time I had

but mostly it was lectures that were whose famous lectures against abolition of slavery. Of course, he was a slave owner himself. I'm not trying to dig into you. I just want to talk about The fact that we've changed a lot since you know some of the good old days and that's what it means to progress. And that's what it means to be a community. So we've had pride events in town, we've had a rainbow crosswalk, we haven't seen fire and brimstone, but we have seen some people in the community feel slightly safer. So I think we've done our job here. That's all I have to say about that. Thank you.

Steven O'Halloran

I'd like to thank this young lady. What is your name? Rachel, I'd like to thank you for the courage that you had to get up and speak and tell us about your life. That was that's very important to hear that what your life is like, Thank you.

Dale Hamilton

Any other council comments?