

MEETING NOTICE

The regular monthly meeting of the Ellsworth City Council will be held on Monday, February 12, 2024 at 6:00 PM in the Ellsworth City Hall Council Chambers

The meeting will 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.
4. Adoption of Ellsworth City Council minutes:
 - ❖ 1/8/2024 Regular Council Meeting.
 - ❖ 1/24/2024 Special Workshop- Key points summary**Motion to approve by Casey Hanson, second by Tammy Mote, passed 7-0**
5. City Manager's Report.
6. Committee Reports.
 - Request for an additional appointment as an alternate from Council for The Historic Preservation Commission
7. Citizens' Comments.
8. Councilor Comments.
9. Presentation of Awards.
 - Ellsworth Arbor Day Proclamation
 - Meghan Stubbs for achieving the Milken Family Foundation excellence in teaching award.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10. Discussion and action on Chapter 56 violations of Maine Organics regarding a consent agreement.
Motion to table by Patrick Lyons, second by Casey Hanson, passes 7-0

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.

11. Council Order #022400 Request of the City Clerk for Approval of Wardens and Ward Clerks for the March primary election
Motion to approve by Tammy Mote, second Nancy Smith, passed 7-0
12. Council Order #022401 Request of the City Clerk to approve polling place opening time.

NEW BUSINESS

13. Public hearing and action on the issuance of Business License (s):
 - Atlantic Coast Inn, 200 High Street, for renewal of a City Lodging House License.
 - ETC LLC, dba Dyons, 35 Eastward Lane for renewal of a City Class C and state liquor license
 - Colonial Inn LLC, 321 High Street for renewal of a City Lodging House License.
 - Ell Gov's, LLC d/b/a Governor's Restaurant, 253 High Street, for renewal of a City Class C License (Victualer/Liquor) and renewal of a State Restaurant (Class III and IV) Malt and Vinous Liquor License.
 - Siam Sky LLC d/b/a Siam Sky 2, 78 Downeast Highway for renewal of a City Class C License (Liquor and Victualer) and renewal of a State Class III and IV Restaurant Malt and Vinous Liquor License.
 - Sanjeeva Abeyasekera d/b/a Serendib, 2 State Street, for renewal of a City Class C License (Victualer/Liquor) and renewal of a State Restaurant (Class III and IV) Malt and Vinous Liquor License.
 - The Grand, 165 Main Street, for renewal of a City Class B License (Victualer, Liquor, and Amusement) and renewal of a State Other (Auditorium/Theatre) Class III and IV Malt and Vinous Liquor License.
 - Casa Jalisco, 205 High Street for renewal of a City Class C license and renewal of State Restaurant Class I, II, III, IV) liquor license.
 - Provender, 112 Main Street, for renewal of a City Class C license and renewal of State Restaurant Class I, II, III, IV liquor license.
 - The Fusion Buffet, 200 High Street for a new City Class C license and new State Restaurant liquor license.**Motion to table until March by Tammy Mote, second by Casey Hanson, passed 6-1 (O'Halloran opposed)**
14. Promotion of Alternate Planning Board member Michael Hangge to full member.
Motion to accept by Patrick Lyons, second by Casey Hanson, passed 7-0
15. Appointment of Vince Messer and John Califano as alternate members on the Planning Board.
Motion to accept by Patrick Lyons, second by Tammy Mote, passed 7-0
16. Discussion and update regarding the Comprehensive Plan process from the City Planner and Berry Dunn.

17. Discussion and potential action to approve a request of the Fire Chief to use ARPA funds to purchase a diesel exhaust direct capture system
18. Presentation about To Warm a Winters Night by Downeast Community Partners (Sponsored by Hanson)
19. Discussion on FY25 budget workshops and processes for this upcoming year (Sponsored By Hanson)
20. Executive Session pursuant to 1 MRSA § 405 paragraph 6F “Discussions of information contained in records made, maintained or received by a body or agency when access by the general public to those records is prohibited by statute” to review an abatement of real estate taxes due to hardship or poverty in accordance with MRSA title 36 Chapter 105 §841 section 2E.
Motion to come out of Executive Session made by Patrick Lyons, second by Jon Stein, passed 7-0
21. Discussion and action on the executive session if necessary.
Motion to approve by Tammy Mote, second by Patrick Lyons, passed 7-0
22. Adjournment
Motion to adjourn by Nancy Smith, second by Tammy Mote, passed 7-0

City Council Minutes February 12, 2024

Michelle Beal

Call to order the regular monthly meeting of the city council. Monday February 12, 2024. Item number two Pledge of Allegiance.

Michelle Beal

Item number three the Rules of Order- city council meetings are conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise provided for and adopted by the city council at their annual organizational meeting in November.

Michelle Beal

Item number four, adoption of the Ellsworth City Council minutes.

Nancy Smith

Move to approve.

Tammy Mote

Second

Tammy Mote

Do we typically approve minutes for workshops?

Michelle Beal

Any other discussion?

Tammy Mote

Those workshop minutes will be available under the minutes section of the website.

Michelle Beal

if we approve them, they will be. Matt had some separate minutes to those on the website.

Matt Williams

I'll send them to you all.

Michelle Beal

Thank you. Any other discussion? All in favor? Unanimous.

Michelle Beal

Item number five city manager's report. The city manager is not here today. But he left me some notes. The first is absentee ballots and now available online and at the City Clerk's Office for the presidential primary election. Property tax bills are due Thursday, March 14 2024. City Hall will be closed next Monday, February 19. An observation of Presidents Day there is no change to the curbside trash collection schedule. The USDA section 504 home repair program, known as the single family housing repair loans and grants program may be eligible to Hancock County homeowners who are property damaged as a result of the December 17. To December 21 2023 Storm, USDA contact information is available on our website with links to the program. And I'm sure you don't have the web. If you'd like to call City Hall, you can get the information I'm going to assume. And congratulations to the Ellsworth High School cheerleaders for successfully defending their class B state championship over the weekend. I also heard our wrestling team came in third in the States, northern Maine, we came in fifth fifth in northern Maine and the swim team. And diving I think also, boys came in first came in for the boys came in first I think they were runner up, but I just read it in the hills of American. So congratulations to all of us sports teams.

Michelle Beal

And you also have a tentative schedule for the budget workshop. We're going to talk a little bit more about that later in the meeting Anne's here to talk about it. But if you would look at that schedule and just look at dates, the schedule that Anne provided, has the other things that are happening in City Hall at the same time. So if you would look at those and let me know what your plans are, I think from this tentative we're going to need to move it around a bit, have a few more meetings. Usually we try to do a few weeks where we have two meetings a week just so that we can get ahead of it especially for the school department because that needs to be scheduled in time for the elections. So it's a little it's a little more compact than I think is on there but that's this is just a tentative that and put together for us so that we can have an idea of what's going on. Right.

Michelle Beal

Item six committee reports. I'm going to start with There's a request by the historic preservation commission for an additional appointed appointment for an alternate from the Council for the historic preservation commission. Is there anyone else that would like to participate in that? If you decide that you would like to if you'd just let me know, send me an email, and then I'll, I'll take care of that.

Casey Hanson

I can report from the arbor commission that met this week. So you may remember that this is a relatively newly reformed Arbor commission. And so kind of three things to report. One is that the arbor Commission gave a presentation to the Comprehensive Plan steering committee, so it was really helpful. And they are working on completing the application for the project canopy grant. And then they are I think I've already submitted the budget proposal for the commission. Some of it was like figuring out where does Arbor commission and tree stuff fit and I think it's under the Department of Public Works, right. That's it.

Casey Hanson

Report on the road committees, we had a meeting last week, the majority of the meeting was focused on the drainage contract and work that Woodard and Curran has been doing and preparing and it was

a very comprehensive review of all the work that our drainage systems need done for the city and focusing kind of on the highest priorities. And they will be we have scheduled I believe, a workshop on the fifth of March for the council. And so the full council will get an update on where that's at. A lot to consider for the council and timely for considerations, as we're coming up on budget season as well. So, but the city staff did an excellent job, all the different departments that are involved in coordinating with water, and Kern and city manager and planning and all that. So I think they'll be prepared in March to give us a good overview of where we're heading with that.

Tammy Mote

Communications Subcommittee met last month, I don't think we've reported since then, the communication survey came in. And it was very helpful, informed discussion of the committee and how we're going to allocate the communication funds. Many of you recorded, you receive information from the city via word of mouth, from Facebook, from the city's website through email as requested, as well more access to newsletters and such. So you can actually go on our website, we're modifying it, or I should say, now we're in the communications department is updating it as often as possible, putting things on the calendar, like when our public meetings are, how to find the minutes, as well as links to sign up for the newsletter. And stay tuned. We're gonna keep pushing communications as much as possible this year. The Rec commission met as well, starting to plan tentatively a 2025 Winter Festival, which the commission is excited about some more to come there as figuring out what that's going to look like. The Council last budget season requested a more defined budget from the rec commission, especially their outside organizations like the YMCA that takes the lion's share of that budget, and hadn't necessarily reported as specifically as the council have requested last year. So expect a more definitive and explanatory budget from the recognition and they're outside organizations this year. And lastly, solid waste committee is having a meeting on Thursday, February 29. At 6pm. There are two of us on that committee and we're looking for one more council member it's an ad hoc committee. I think we met once last year. So it's not very often but it is. It is exciting. We talk trash. And we're going to be looking at recycling and traditional waste pickup systems and everything else.

Tammy Mote

I think also we're looking for residents, if they're interested in being on the committees they can submit an application I believe that might be online. If not, I would call City Hall and see if they can fill out an application. I know there was one on there before when we were looking for

Tammy Mote

any type any other councillors want to be on that ad hoc meeting reached out before. The 29th of February Thursday 6pm. Public are welcome. Yes.

Michelle Beal

Here in the chambers. That's right.

Tammy Mote

the finance committee will on this Friday, February 16, the school department would be coming to the finance committee to provide a presentation of the school budget just a brief presentation and status

update or where they are this year. The public is welcome to attend the meeting start at 8am. Or you can watch online once the video has been posted.

Michelle Beal

Item number seven citizen comments, this time in the meeting that we invite residents and non residents of Ellsworth to step up to the podium and make any comments that you'd like. The only thing we ask is that if it's about something on the agenda that you wait until the agenda item, and that you keep your comments to three minutes. So anyone that would like to speak.

Douglas Frank

I'm being coached to go first. Hey, know, what a beautiful building and beautiful council chambers. I speak to a lot of them. This is one of my favorites so far. My name is Doug Frank, Dr. Douglas G. Frank, I'm known as the Johnny Appleseed of election integrity. I traveled the country working with grassroots teams all over the country. And I've been invited by some of your citizens to be here for a few days working on it. I hate to tell you this, but Maine has the second dirtiest voter rolls in the country. And your own county is not immune. You have about 47,000 voting age people in your county and you have 49,000 of them in your voter rolls. So that gives you an example. You have more people in your voter rolls and you have people that's a problem. And that's just the start. The next big problem is that your election equipment that you're using is all hacked. And what do I mean by that? You the DS 200 system you use we've proven in court and multiple courts already around the country are equipped with modems. ess has been required by the Election Assistance Commission, which is the federal agency that regulates that has been required to admit in public multiple occasions that your machines have modems in and they're not supposed to hope they don't even qualify for federal certification. So that's a problem. I've testified now before multiple legislatures around the country at their invitation at their request, including Pennsylvania, Kansas, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and you could see a lot of that testimony. I've offered to meet with Shenna bellows, in fact, one of your citizens drove me up there to meet with her, but she won't, she refuses to meet with me. So anyway, we're here to work on a grassroots movement, grassroots effort will expose fraud in your county that'll be coming up. And as we bring those cases of fraud to you, then you're gonna be faced with the decision as a council, you're gonna have to say, Gee, are we going to continue to use these machines then, and the systems that are disenfranchising our citizens from their constitutional rights, or we're going to step up and do something about it. And I am not just here to tell you that you have problems, I have real solutions to help you I've helped hundreds of counties around the country make that transition. Basically, the core problem is, I don't know you, but I already trust you more than a centralized state system. And I don't know who your county election clerk is, or your county election official is, but I already trust them more than I trust Shenna bellows. So what my goal would be for you and my recommendation would be would be that you take back control local control of your elections, you know, who's died and to remove from the roles, you know, who's moved away, and you can remove them from the roles, you should be controlling that. And with a small of a county and smaller cities as you have, there's no reason for you to use electronic machines. All you do is end up giving away information to people who want to do you harm. And if you say, Well, yeah, but we're just a small county. Nobody cares about us. I agree. But that should be all the more argument to to not give away your ballots to the state. Why would you want to use a system? Why would you want to support a system? That basically disenfranchises you from your constitutional voice, your statewide voice, your national voice? Maybe it's not a problem in your city itself, but the system that you're using in your state is basically disenfranchising your citizens and

their constitutional right Right. So you have every every justification to nullify any state policy, because violating your constitutional rights. So anyway, that's what I do. I come in, I help your citizens learn how to expose fraud that's actually happening here. You know, somebody, if I hand you a glass of water, and it looks all clean, you want to drink a lot of that. But if I hand you a glass of water, and it's really dirty, you don't want to drink out of that. Your voter rolls are like that. And not only do you have like one of the dirtiest voter rolls in the country, you also have one of the highest turnouts. So you're drinking a lot of water, that's really dirty. So that's what I'm here for to help you guys with that. I don't charge for my services. I'm not selling anything. I'm here to help you. I believe in the American founding values of our country, and I want to help us get back to free and fair elections. That's what I'm here for. I'm happy to discuss any questions you might have. I think, you know, the DS 200 Use was proven in court. It's got modems in it, so I could show you that stuff. Like afterwards. I know that John Lenahan is, would be hosting me here tonight. And if you would like to come to his house afterwards, he had he told me to invite you if you wanted to come talk and more detail or anybody, anybody in the public. I'm sorry, your three minutes? Yes, thank you. I figured that was gonna happen. And but thank you for your time. And if you want to discuss more about your service, thank you. Thank you.

John Linnehan

Good evening, councillors. John Linnehan 157 Shore Road, I just want to take a few minutes to just add on to what Dr. Frank had to say. He didn't know he was when speaking he's actually gonna be speaking in Bangor, Machias and Augusta next two days, he just landed at three o'clock. And before we got to my house, I text him says council meeting tonight, would you mind just taking two or three minutes explaining what you does? He is a nationally known speaker that goes around and speaks everywhere. He's spoken. I've heard him at Constitution Hall. He's been here in the state of Maine, two or three other times. It's a two and a half. I was taught and he has represented, he shows you the facts and the figures, not the conspiracy theories that everybody talks about. He'll give you the numbers. It'll show you exactly what it is. And he'll be at my house tonight. If any of you guys want to come up there tonight. I'm pretty sure he have time to dig out tonight. Exactly what else's numbers were if I'd known he was going to be here in time to speak I would have had him bring brought you Ellsworth with numbers. But when you just stare 49,000 people and you only have registered only 47,000 in the county that I'll tell you right now you've got a problem. We've got a problem. And I'm interested to see myself what else was specific numbers. Because I'd like to know every town in Hancock County. I'll be running for the City Council again this fall. I'm also running for the House of Representatives again, this fall. And election integrity is going to be one of my primary things. So I'm very interested in it. You guys are more than welcome to come to my home tonight. I have coffee, whatever you guys need, you want to come up. He's a wealth of information you very seldom gonna get a chance to hear Dr. Douglas Frank, and I encourage you just come up spend a few minutes with him like that, pick his brain questions and put it right to make him prove it to you like that. I've sat through at least two presentations two and a half hours long. So I've heard him he's got the facts and the credentials to back things up. Thank you very much. And let me know if you want to come to the house. Just come on. 157, Shore road Ellsworth.

Michelle Beal

Item number eight counselor comments. Councilor Smith?

Nancy Smith

Thank you. I wanted to take a minute. Sort of a public service announcement for the public. On the homestead exemption. The deadline is coming up on April 1. And just wanted to raise awareness as we've been talking about the homelessness crisis about the affordability of housing property taxes factors into that the deadline for the homestead exemption is April 1. The city will be putting a public notice in the Ellsworth American in March and this is another public announcement. The application is available online or you can come in to City Hall. The Homestead Exemption is a \$25,000 reduction in your valuation. This year, that translates into a \$432.50 cent reduction in your property taxes. It's available for any Maine resident. And relevant here is for anyone living in Ellsworth, there's an additional \$6,000 exemption for veterans. There are other programs and called the Maine deferment program. That's a bit long to get into tonight. But if you're interested in looking for opportunities to reduce your property taxes on your home, as a resident in Maine, reach out to the assessor's office. There is a one year waiting period one to move into a town before you can claim it. However, if you have been claiming it in another main community sold that house to move to another town, you are still eligible, you don't need to wait for that one year. So it's a chance to give people an opportunity look at your property bill. And you'll see I think it's on the right hand side and evaluations, you'll see whether that \$25,000 reduction in the valuation is on your property tax statement. And if not, you can apply by April 1, and you'll be eligible for it. Next year. I want to thank Larry gardener, the city assessor who gave me information to make sure that I'm giving the correct information out to the public. And invite people to check and make sure if they're eligible, if you have questions or whether or not you're eligible, then reach out to the City Hall, as well to get that clarified. \$432 is real money. So hopefully folks can take advantage of it. Thank you.

Michelle Beal

Thank you very much. Anyone else have any comments?

Steven O'Halloran

I just like to throw out two comments. I received many phone calls many communications in the last year about the rude tax bills that people received last year ranging from 17 to 18% increase over the year before. As we go into the budget season, I would hope that we would not repeat such actions as that that we could find ways to not send such a rude increase that the citizens received last year. And secondly, I received a call from Mr. Peter mceldowney This week, and he wanted me to know that he is mad about the cost of stickers for the bags of garbage. So now you know

Michelle Beal

I hope he's doing well haven't seen him at all. Any other comments? Okay.

Michelle Beal

Item number nine presentation of awards. The first award is for Megan Stubbs for achieving the Milken Family Foundation Excellence in Teaching Award. This is long overdue. Yeah. So, four states the city of Ellsworth proudly presents a certificate of achievement to making stops for being honored with the Milken Educator Award by the Milken Family Foundation. Megan's dedication, as a career and

technical education CTE teacher at Hancock County Medical Center has not only positively impact the lives of our students, but also stands as a testament to our innovation, achievements and exemplary leadership in shaping the next generation of educators. presented this was supposed to be continued January 2020. Congratulations.

Michelle Beal

Okay, and the next item is an official proclamation that I'm going to read from was this for also the Arbor Day Commission's Okay, whereas in 1872, the Nebraska BOARD OF AGRICULTURE established a special day to be set aside for the planting of trees. And whereas this holiday called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska. And whereas Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, and whereas trees can be a solution to combating climate change, by reducing the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cutting, heating and cooling costs, moderating the temperature cleaning the air producing life giving oxygen and providing habitat for wildlife. And whereas trees are a renewable resource, giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires and countless other wood products. And whereas trees in our city increased property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community. And whereas trees wherever they are planted are a source of joy and spiritual renewal. Now, I now therefore I counsel Michelle, Beal Mayor of the City of Ellsworth, do hereby proclaim April 26 2024, as Arbor Day in the city of Ellsworth and I urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands. And further I urge all citizens to plant trees to gladden the heart and promote the well being of this and future generations to did this 12th day of February 2024?

Michelle Beal

Okay, so the next item is on our consent agenda 11 and 12. The following two items 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 read will be removed from the consent agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda. Would anyone like to Well, I'm sorry, council order or 022400 requested the city clerk for approval of warden and Ward clerks for the March primary election. And item number 12. Council order number oh 022401 request of the city clerk to approve polling place upon opening time. Would anyone like either one of these removed from the agenda? Consent Agenda? What is your wish?

Tammy Mote

Move approval of the consent agenda.

Nancy Smith

Second.

Michelle Beal

All those in favor? Unanimous.

Michelle Beal

God, sorry. I missed one. I apologize. And actually, okay, so discussion and an action on chapter 56 violations of maine organics regarding consent agreement. The consent agreement is not ready yet. So I'm asking that we table this until the next council meeting in March , all those in favor?

Michelle Beal

I apologize for that. Turn my page too quickly. Okay, so item number 13. Public Hearing in action on the issuance of business licenses. I'm also asking for this item to be tabled. There was a mixup on inspections, and some other paperwork. And we apologize to the businesses that this has happened. But asking that these be tabled until the next meeting in March, the next council meeting in March, all of the all of the licenses are will be extended. So there won't be any negative effect to the businesses.

Steven O'Halloran

Have as the city reached out to each one of these businesses, yes. Yeah. And they're in agreement with that, yes. How's

Matt Williams

that we couldn't get in touch with everybody on the shortness that we had. But we did reach out. And we'll reach out again tomorrow to let them know that this won't impact their operations but for giving them the extension so that they continue to operate as they are.

Steven O'Halloran

What's the holdup?

Matt Williams

Again, there was a issue in the process for getting the inspections done. We're still trying to figure out exactly why it happened. But this is our remedy to make sure that these businesses can continue to operate and not have this affect them

Steven O'Halloran

and they get something in writing Yes, they will

Matt Williams

to do a letter tomorrow do it

Tammy Mote

there was one new business included as well.

Matt Williams

Yes, but yeah, they turns out they probably weren't even ready to get theirs tonight anyway so they're in contact with them to help guide them through the rest of the process. They weren't ready tonight. Anyway

Steven O'Halloran

I'm a little unclear but one thing I heard that all the businesses had been contacted and then I heard that not all of them have been contact

Matt Williams

or they have been contacted but we weren't able to actually talk to someone directly we reached out but then err backward didn't they didn't pick up the phone so we'll continue that tomorrow.

Tammy Mote

Move to move to table. Okay,

Casey Hanson

second.

Michelle Beal

All those in favor. All those against

Michelle Beal

Item 14 promotion of alternate Planning Board Member Michael Hangge to full member.

Matt Williams

Yep. So recently we've had two members of the planning board. Leave the board. Patrick betrayed me in the greatest way possible. So as such we have we put out a call for volunteers to serve on the board. We had two spots to fill we had two applicants turn in their application. So going through this process, there was an alternate who was on the board already, so as a senior member, he becomes promoted to a full member. So that's what our number 14 is about. So Michael Hangge was previously the fire inspector for the city for many years. He was an alternate for a handful of months on the board, but he knows how the operations go. And he's part of the discussions pretty regularly. So we're asking you to have been promoted to a full member, or the planning board is recommending that he be promoted to a board member.

Casey Hanson

I got to serve under his terrible reign with and Mike's great he was the fire inspector for the city for a long time. He has a wealth of knowledge. And he cares about the community and he does a great job contributes well to the planning board. So I fully support his promotion to a full member of the planning boards. Said a motion. So moved.

Casey Hanson

second.

Michelle Beal

Any further discussion? All those in favor. Thank you. Item number 15 appointment of Vince Messer, and John Califano. There's alternate members on the planning board. As

Matt Williams

I said, we had two spots to fill to applicants turned in letters of interest. I'll just go through the qualifications for each events. He's lived on the island for over a decade now. But he recently moved to Ellsworth. So he's been here for about a year and a half, maybe two years. He's interested in getting more involved in the Ellsworth community. He serves on a couple area boards. He's on the board of Mount desert hospital. And he's also on the board of healthy Acadia. So he has a lot of experience in just, you know, board functions, that sort of thing. And he just also saw this as a way he could get back into his volunteer time to the community. So he's interested in serving on the planning board and learning doesn't really matter if he's also the neighbor of one of our planning board members. So I think that's how we heard about the opening. And so he has a teacher who was willing to help them learn the planning board process also. And then Mr. Cap, Dr. California, is a doctor in town. He recently got his real estate license, and he just has an interest in development and helping guide elsewhere through smarter development, but also being development friendly. So again, he saw this as an opportunity to get back to the community that he serves as a doctor already, but an additional role.

Michelle Beal

Questions.

Casey Hanson

Just so to speak. I serve on the Board of Health Acadia with Vince Messer. I have now for five years, and I think you'd be an excellent addition to the planning board. He's smart, he's thoughtful, and yet he really cares about the community. And he's only been in Ellsworth a short while but he's already really you could see him getting involved. So I think you'd be an excellent addition to the planning board.

Michelle Beal

Thank you. Do we have a motion

Casey Hanson

move for the appointment of Vincent Messer, and John Califano alternate members of the planning board.

Tammy Mote

Second,

Michelle Beal

further discussion. All those in favor

Michelle Beal

discussion and update regarding the Comprehensive Plan process for the city planner from the city planner and very done.

Matt Williams

I feel like the last time I was in front of the full council for this was maybe March or February of last year. So it's been a while so just kind of touching base. Perry from Barry Dunn is on Zoom. She has a presentation that she'll help give and I'll throw in some commentary as we go along. But we'll turn the

floor over to Carrie to kind of give an update on the work we've been doing over the past several months and where we're headed to continue the work

Nancy Smith

we want to see the spring yes that's great.

Berry Dunn

So good evening. Here to give you an update on the comprehensive plan projects. burnin briefly go over the where we are in the project timeline will give an overview of what has been done for community engagement. Talk about the inventory analysis process and findings from that and then give you highlights from the engagement of the back what has led into the vision statement assets hasn't been drafted

Matt Williams

before you go further. I think your screen that you're showing is your presenters view and so the actual slideshow Got a small, there's a way to expand that.

Berry Dunn

All right, and then we're going to leave some time for questions as well. So we began this year the inventory and analysis phase last spring in April, and are just now wrapping up the visioning phase. So we're, there's a lot of outreach and engagement done from the spring into the fall. And we've been working with a steering committee and staff to collect that and then analyze that feedback and develop efficiency and then based on that information, to model a draft ready to share shortly. So we're now jumping into Phase Three policy and strategy recommendations and working through an initial draft of recommendations with the staff to be reviewed more broadly, and then discussed with the steering committee subcommittees and the public. And then next phase is implementation plan and final time looking to have that completed in October of this year. So for community engagement, as Matt said, haven't spoken to this council in a while. So in June, we held a public kickoff event of a photo of that they're open to the public, we had a good number of people stopped by who's some who knew about the project and some who really didn't know. So I think that was a good, a good way to reach reach people in the community. We held a public forum in July in coordination with business attraction plan, process, with discussions some some great discussions on housing, transportation, child care and economic opportunity. There are additional discussions through subcommittee meetings on the subcommittee's broken out by the chapters of the comp plan the topic areas required by the state and this took place in August in September of last year. And then Matt and and Elizabeth attended a number of community events, through the summer into the fall of share information about the projects, direct people to survey and other online engagement opportunities. And the survey was conducted in the fall, a mailing went out as well as paper copies of that survey as well for in different parts of the city to to reach, reach people in different places and get good feedback from a number of folks. And then throughout the process, there have been we've maintained the project website to share information about what this process is, and give people an opportunity to provide comments and respond to the survey as well. Matt, is there anything you wanted to add related to the engagement?

Matt Williams

I don't remember exactly when we did them. But we also did focus groups for staff during the initial inventory analysis stage, then we did focus groups for community groups as well for certain topic areas just to get a more targeted idea of what the issues for each chapter that have to be in the comp plan are within the city. So it's like an initial step to kind of guide to get very done kind of quick view of what's going on in the city already. But also, again, to reach out to people let them know this is going on. Stay tuned for more. So I think that was probably may or somewhere between May and July of 2023.

Berry Dunn

So for the inventory analysis, we met with city departments, understanding operations and challenges, collected and analyzed data, reviewed past planning documents, reports, regional plans, a lot of information from from the city. And then as Matt was saying he had held those focus group meetings with some different stakeholder groups, including people from the business community, service providers, and nonprofits. So that giving us a bit of a different perspective from residents and from from city staff as well. So I wanted to talk about key findings from the inventory analysis, some lengthy document, there's a lot of information. So I hope you all have had or will have the time to to look through that in detail. In the interest of time, I'm not going to go through each of these bullet points individually. Want to save some time for questions. So we'll give highlights of what we've heard and to hopefully have some conversation after that, just a note on the data. So we had an initial draft that was completed last fall. In December, there was updated American Community Survey data for 2022. So that was updated within within the document. So that's what is in the current revised draft now. And that data is collection of data points from 2008 2018 to 2022. That's a five five year estimates. So it's a lot has changed over the course of that time with the COVID. So within the data within the the narrative of the document, there are some challenges with the data. But what what the data shows and what people understand to be current, the current situation and there's some, some discrepancies there. So keeping that in mind, were made some assumptions or predictions based on what we've heard from, from the city and from key stakeholders that what's happening on the ground. Looking from 2021 data to 2022 data, I think a lot of our assumptions were confirmed, but that there are some some limitations to the data that we're using. Just the best that is available. So generally, big picture for demographics, the population is growing just from 2020 to 2022, increased 4%, and is expected to grow over the next two decades. There are some some communities in the surrounding area in a state that are expected to decline just based on the aging population and lack of immigration in certain places. Ellsworth is growing. So that is nice to see that in development patterns. It's also aging, so roughly 30% of the city's population is over the age of 60. And that's expected to based on county projection was expected to continue to increase for the next 20 years. Conversely, the US population has declined in some cohorts and public school enrollment is 3.1% lower than in 2019. And then related to changes in the city median income has increased and coverage rate is lower than that of the state and the county. Natural Environment. I know you all know, wonderful natural resources within the city. Just the big note, the growing concern about water quality surface water, water quality and water quality, especially looking at some of the changes that are happening, warmer weather, more significant rainfalls so Graham Lake and also carbrook are listed as impaired waterways by name DDP. So thinking as we're thinking about planning and development, looking at considerations for protecting continuing to protect and improve those those waterways as well as other other surface waters in the city.

Berry Dunn

Land use and zoning. So the last comprehensive plan was started in 2004. And since then, of course, there's been quite a bit of development. Most commercial development focused along the high street route monitored three corridor and that's still the majority of the city's land is open space, forest, agricultural land, rural rural areas, some some residential in there as well. In thinking about the highly belts, commercial orders, just thinking about the looking at that regionally. from a regional perspective, especially looking south towards towards the islands and how what's happening what will happen or what is happening in Ellsworth will have impacts on on surrounding communities I'm looking at especially transportation concerns that we've heard quite a bit about. Housing, of course, one of the biggest issues for the city that we we've heard major points related to how housing, there is an increase through an increase in housing units. That seems like it's continuing to grow based on the number of permitted units and under construction units. But at the same time, housing in the city is becoming more less affordable. And more quite a few more households were unable to afford the median home price until 2022. Compared to years prior may know that those numbers are continuing to go up. related to housing concerns, changing demographics and aging population and looking at the bottom points, the 60% of Ellsworth residents live alone. So just thinking about the different needs of of housing needs of residents, as as they transition to different life stages. And then approximately 25% of housing units are vacant with the majority of those being for seasonal use. So Airbnb is our second, second home, vacation homes. And that's, that has gone up a little bit in recent years.

Berry Dunn

The economy, retail is a largest industry, followed by health care, social services and accommodations and services. Overall employment has declined during the pandemic in 2020, and then increased a bit but not reaching 2019 pre pandemic levels. And then related to that labor force participation rate is, is higher than the county, the state but has been declining. So that's the percentage of adults over 25, who are either working or looking actively looking for work. And that lower labor force participation rate is reflective of an aging population. And as economic development is very tied to housing, just looking at the percentage of employees who live in Ellsworth percent of people who work in Ellsworth, who also lived in Pittsburgh, that's decline just related to the number of people who are not no longer able to afford to live in house worth. We're moving further out, not anecdotal, anecdotally, we've heard from a number of employers. So that went from 31% to 23%. In 2021. What is the I think the biggest concern we heard from survey respondents was about infrastructure and maintenance of roads. So in moving forward to the next phases, being about fiscally responsible maintenance of roads, and then how to develop in a way that's not increasing the burden on the public works department, and thinking about those how those needs are changing over time. Additionally, the number of people passing through the city and how that has has changed, after effort request, significant drop in 2020. big increase in in the following years with visitors to Acadia and then looking at social services visit a sign of big increase in general assistance requests from 2020 to 2023. I don't believe there was data earlier than that, but based on other discussions from other city departments, police and fire increasing calls and what's happening in the region I don't think that's an anomaly that seems like a trend for for what was happening and what's going to continue to happen in the city. And then finally, arts, culture and recreation. Just what we've heard from the community there are there are so many great assets, arts, cultural recreation assets, and there's there's a strong interest in maintaining and also improving those as well as promoting promoting the city as a as a destination and in leveraging those those resources.

And looking at ways that the city can partner with with nonprofits to really enhance enhance those resources and share them share those with the community. So you So these are the themes that came out of the community engagement that was done, including all of the community meetings and events and focus groups and survey, not in any particular order. But going through all of the survey data and open comments. These were the these were big themes like that we saw repeatedly. So looking at expanding recreation and educational opportunities, diverse and affordable housing options, so diversity of housing types, sizes, and affordability, as well as how that relates to attracting a stable workforce. supporting a year round economy and balanced tourism. So we have a lot of comments about increasing tourism and taking advantage of people who are passing through Elsworth and as well as some comments that we're wanting to see that controlled to some to some extent concerned cerned about trafficking growth related to that. Also supporting arts and promoting the city's cultural history, minimising the tax burden on property owners lots of concern about taxes and growth through increased costs related to that, protecting natural resources and open spaces for long term community benefit. improving public infrastructure facilities, so including means of infrastructure, but also in enhancing the the amenities and infrastructure that the city has expanding transportation options and improving walkability. Related to Blue structure. There's interest in having warmer sidewalk connectivity in and around downtown. And then also addressing traffic congestion. And also one of the the top comments that we've we've heard and answered, enhancing downtown is a your own destination. A lot of the comments related to downtown really address the waterfront as well. So looking at how to enhance connectivity to the waterfront and using that as an amenity to help increase and attract people to downtown. And then finally, supporting health, wellness and community involvement. So the health services as well as opportunities for community engagement, and recreation, and how all those things tie together to create a healthy community.

Berry Dunn

Next steps, as I mentioned, we're working on policy and strategy recommendations. And that will be review reviewed with the committee's and feedback from the from the public as well as as subcommittees. And then the next step after that would be developing an implementation plan. So looking at how that how those watch those policies and actions will actually be implemented.

Nancy Smith

have a couple of questions on the data. It's interesting to look at the percentage growth in the age cohorts of residents. But I'd love to know the breakdown for the overall population, for instance, you know, 60 plus for age has a significant increase, but is it currently 5% of the population or 40% of the population. And if there's that, in particular seems to be an age range 60 Plus, where maybe a further breakdown the 60 to 64. It's funny in my in my day job, often we talk about seniors as people who need help people who will need surface services, they are also often still working, if they're not working, or if they are they have the time to volunteer because their kids are out of school and out of the house. So just differentiating 60 Plus is like saying from five to 40. Like, well, that's a big range. So anything that can be helpful in particular, the percentages can be funny, it's like a percentage of what if it's a percentage, so knowing what the numbers aren't, what the current breakdown of population is, I think would be helpful in there. The other thing I want to clarify it must have been the median household The income is 61,000. Because a median income of 61,000 is pretty darn good. But then you had the

median weekly wages was only 871. So is that median household income? Yes. That's the only thing that was going to make sense. But I wanted to be sure. Thank you.

Matt Williams

Nothing else.

Casey Hanson

Just quick question on now that we move on to the policy phase? And how do you anticipate using this information and advising on the policy stage, Matt, or

Matt Williams

I can start in theory, if you want to add anything. So I mean, this data is supposed to be a bounce and collect are between the quantitative and the qualitative information that we've been gathering so far. And, you know, taking into account the qualitative data, what the community says, And anecdotally, it says it needs or wants, but then looking at the actual trends and being like, well, that doesn't quite bear out sometimes, or yes, the community does see this happening in their day to day lives. And the data also bears it out. And taking it and taking a look at what the city has already has going on. And so not to detract from the work that's already being done too much. And putting together a plan of if we want to see like acts as a goal, or the policy changes to our ordinances or just to city behavior that can happen. And then similarly, like the implementation plan will be more action based just outside of policies on general policies or ordinance changes that the community can take as a whole. So it's really just the basis to support again, like this is why we're taking this action, it's actions in the plan, there'll be something in the inventory analysis, the data that we can point to and say, This is what we collected. This is why we brought this board. I think that carry

Berry Dunn

just one example of that is related to housing, affordable housing, we have heard comments about the need for housing and affordability. But a lot of the survey respondents are people who live in house or people who own their home, in the city. And so that's generally less of a concern for people who own their housing on their home. So really understanding the bigger picture of who might want to live here or who who might want to live here and work here. And, and having that that data to back that up, even if it's not something that maybe the majority of residents or community members are saying that is needed.

Matt Williams

The majority of committee members who participate in the survey are in the focus groups. Because there's a whole population of people that are harder to reach that don't participate in those sorts of things.

Tammy Mote

Do you expect the main force of the implementation of all this to be through ordinance ordinance review ordinance changes or other?

Matt Williams

Probably not, I mean, a lot, it's more action items, in terms of policy and recommendations of policy side will be probably more important in space. But when you get to the implementation phase, it that's like a comp more concrete action items that most of the matrix you saw on the business attraction plan, where it's tasks that either staff or community members or community groups will have to do to get there.

Tammy Mote

I think you remember, I remember you saying that a steering committee would stick around for some amount of time to

Matt Williams

Yeah, well, my I call it the steering committee, but maybe like the comprehensive plan implementation committee or something like that, that will meet probably not monthly, but on a quarterly or more regular or semi regular basis to just check in and be like, alright, staffs working on this, you know, if they successfully complete these implementation actions and like, what's next and like, listen, kind of communicate with city staff, get feedback from them, get feedback, you know, things change as a 10 year plans, over 10 years priorities in the community might change if something monumental happens. So just a way to make sure the comp plan can stay up to date. And that action items, the priority lists. It has input from the community throughout the 10 years.

Michelle Beal

Any other questions? Thank you very much. It was incredibly interesting.

Matt Williams

All right. Thank you. We'll

Michelle Beal

get a lot done. Thank you,

Tammy Mote

the city's going places and tell you what

Michelle Beal

I know. It really is and looking at those numbers. It's it's like you said it needs to be a little clarification on some of them. But it's it's actually very exciting, what you're, what you're finding out and what we're going to be able to use. It's great. Thank you.

Michelle Beal

Okay, item 17 discussion and potential action to approve a request to the fire chief, to use ARPA funds to purchase a diesel exhaust direct capture system. So I spoke with the fire chief today, it's not quite ready to bring this to the council, he is a little bit more information gathering. So I am asking to table this item indefinitely. And we're not positive how this is if it's going to come back to the council will go through budget or what's going to happen. So,

Nancy Smith

question? Sure. In my recollection, when you table something indefinitely, it dies. I think you'd simply mean to table it.

Michelle Beal

I can't table it to a specific time. So that's what I'm saying is it means did what it's tabled? I was called it indefinitely. But

Nancy Smith

you know, legislature, if you table something indefinitely if I'm recalling it's dead. So

Patrick Lyons

I'm definitely table?

Michelle Beal

Definitely. I don't think it well, I don't know why we've never done it that way here. But I can tell you

Nancy Smith

what to make sure we don't we're not killing it. Because that isn't the intention.

Michelle Beal

I mean, even if I kill it, he can bring it back. So but not shut me out.

Steven O'Halloran

Is the issue I mean, they've they've gathered a lot of stuff that we've seen before is the issue, rather than put it in their budget or ask for funds is that part of the challenge that's going on?

Michelle Beal

It is it's a bit of education, because we have two new counselors. The last time that this came before the council was before they came on to the board. And the gentleman that made the presentation before no longer works for the fire department. So there, he's moved back to the southern part of the United States. So there was a little bit of additional information here, we'd like to be able to present some more discussion. So

Tammy Mote

move to indefinitely table it, aka kill it, I guess. definitely postponed postponed. Anyways,

Nancy Smith

I know we tabled some other things earlier tonight without using the word indefinitely. So

Michelle Beal

those were those were two next to the next meeting. Those are specific. And so in nature, can we just just say, table and we will bring it back? Just don't. What I'm trying to do is not have it automatically on the next agenda. Okay. So

Nancy Smith

table to a future date?

Michelle Beal

They undetermined

Casey Hanson

future date.

Jon Stein

Definitely second.

Michelle Beal

Would you like that word since it was motion?

Tammy Mote

I will accept any of these friendly amendments to undetermined

Michelle Beal

to an undetermined date. Thank you.

Nancy Smith

Second.

Michelle Beal

Anybody. Second. Thank you. discussion.

Jon Stein

If there's any way we can help to move it, or I'm I remember the discussion months ago, it's seemed like, you know, it's something they're going through every day. But it's also a dangerous carcinogenic situation. Absolutely. Everybody down there, whatever we can do to help that process.

Michelle Beal

So and that's what I mean, that was just there needs to be a little more information about our funds and what we're doing with them and some other things. And I think he's I don't think he's coming to the going to be asked to come to the Finance Committee to also talk about, you know, other ways of funding and then whether or not it should go through the budget process, or if we do something like this separately, so. Any further discussion? All those in favor? Names.

Michelle Beal

Okay, item 18. presentation about to warm awinter's night by Downeast community partners sponsored by Councillor Hanson. Yeah.

Casey Hanson

So I'll let Sharon Cadus come in. Am I saying your name last name right.

Sharon Cadis

I shattered my ankle at the end of the summer. And I'm still coming back from that. complications. So for any of you who don't know me, Hi, I'm Sharon. You got it? exactly correct. And I am the Development Director for Downeast community partners. And if you don't know who Downeast community partners is, I hope you do. We are the CAP agency or the community action program that serves both Hancock and Washington County. But right here in the city of Ellsworth last year, we provided services to the value of over \$2 million to Ellsworth residents and given the The presentation that we just saw by Barry and done I guess it was, you know that that actually I did the quick math. And that would amount to about \$250 per Ellsworth resident is the type of aid that we are, are giving and to our neighbors. So I'm here actually to talk, you know, I was here last year. And I quite frankly, did not envision being here. Tonight. I did not envision being here this year. I asked Ellsworth last year to step in with \$1,000 donation to the thought fund. And specifically, we're having a fundraiser on February 24. For that fund. The thought fund stands for the heating and warmth fund. And it is a crisis fund. You have to you know, have less than an eighth of a tank of oil or, you know, the equivalent wood or pellets or whatever it is that you use as a primary heating source. And it is only 100 gallons or again the equivalent because we're trying to serve as many people as possible. The FDA fund is solely donor funded. So it is not it has no type of you know, state or federal support. Which means that there isn't an extensive application process. We do vet those who are coming to us for that help. But it means that I can step in, or we as Downeast community partners can step in and help an Ellsworth resident who say, common scenario is a couple in their 80s. Who, you know, obviously they've left the workforce quite a while ago, when they were in the workforce, the chances that their job came with a 401 K, or some type of retirement plan were very slim. And so they're living off of a fixed income. And as we know, so many of the things have gone up in price. And yet your fixed income Social Security money maybe has not kept quite the pace with that. And Mainers are proud, they don't want to ask for help. And so they often wait till it's almost too late. In fact, till they've exhausted their tank and it's been empty for months is what I hear. So thus the need for this fundraiser coming up less than two weeks. It's Saturday, the 24th at the Grand across the street. And there will be three amazing bands including the crown Vics which so many folks here in Ellsworth know Chris Ross, who is a singer out of Hancock, and golden oak, which is a Western maine band of national they toured nationally. And we have an amazing, you know, we're really, so privileged to have three presenting sponsors, and all kinds of community support. We have a silent auction that will be going that night, and there are incredible items. But my Ask is to consider again, donating at the \$1,000 range to support this event. And I will tell you that last year when folks came through the lobby, and they saw that the city of Ellsworth was on that poster of people supporting the fundraiser. They were like, yes, my town, my city. We they're they're in it with us. And I think that that's important recognition. I get that, you know, approaching you and off. budget cycle, again, did not intended to be here. There were two reasons why I'm here that they brought me here this year that I hadn't foreseen. The first was that the funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program was cut by over 50%. That that's the first the second is an email we got on February 1 from main housing actually. Specifically main housing authority regarding the heating or Home Energy Assistance Program applications, so that email detailed that as of March 1 2024 at five PM that that's basically when they're saying the funding is going to run out entirely for this program year, we will continue to accept and process applications. But they will not be moved forward for benefit payment for HEAP assistance. It will act as a waiting list. So they in the event of leftover funds, we can work through paying additional application in the date order that they were received. So that's a

problem. Because we know as Mainers who live right here, in Ellsworth, that it's cold for quite a while after that date. In fact, you know, we don't plant our crops here until late in May, for the very reason that it's going to be cold. And we're going to have frost straight through in till May. So, again, I had not intended to be here for a second year in a row. But those are the two reasons, the two main reasons why I'm here. When you cut or reduce funding to the Home Energy Assistance Program, it puts stress on any other form of assistance. So we have residents of worth, Ellsworth residents who have already exhausted their benefit. they've exhausted if they qualified for ESA, which is a emergency crisis intervention, energy crisis intervention program, that funding which would maybe be as much as \$800, it depends. But so there's no supplemental funding this year, the benefits have been cut. Esa funds are reduced. It's creating a perfect storm. And we are getting to that point where we've exhausted every other way we can to help folks. So that makes this fundraiser, incredibly important. And so I thought I'd come on the off chance that you'd be willing to support us one more time.

Michelle Beal

So if I can interrupt you, yeah, so we budgeted \$2,000 for this program, in this year's budget? Have you requested that from the finance office? Because you have \$2,000, from us for this? For

Sharon Cadis

the \$2,000, I thought was for your overall third party request?

Michelle Beal

No, no, when we pass that in the budget, it was specifically for this probe, okay, that you wouldn't have to come back for this request? Because it does. If the thing is, and I know how important it is. And I know I mean, we have our own fund here also that we help citizens. But there are a lot of agencies and Ellsworth that are just as important. And they go through the budget process. And if we start allowing people to come back for additional funds, or for a request that isn't as a planned event to begin with, and was part of the budget that you requested for, it just starts creating a precedent that how do we say no to them? And yes to this person? Because we have so many, but we did specifically budget \$2,000 for the for your approval. So

Sharon Cadis

it was it was my understanding that that 2000 is the third party request, and you've asked for it to go towards thaw. Is that correct? That's

Michelle Beal

exactly we specifically stated. That was what it was going to was for your your thaw fund. Okay. So to be a sponsor, so

Sharon Cadis

Okay. All right. I'm not sure if you mean, and so I just turned in our application for this year for third party funding and the ask that we were told that we could ask and, and no more was 2000, even though we give over 2 million in aid to Ellsworth residents. So that's

Michelle Beal

another whole discussion. we pass the budget. Okay, specifically stated it was four years. Okay.

Sharon Cadis

So is that and forgive me for I'm trying to just wrap my head and understand. So is that in addition to the third party funding, or is it the third party don't

Michelle Beal

know how much we gave in the budget, how much we funded in the budget? I can't remember. I thought it was the \$2,000. And it was just those \$2,000

Jon Stein

for I had in my notes that was for standard services, but I'm not sure if that was the increase from 1000 for the previous fiscal year. I'm not sure if it was the increase was for standard services or if it was standard services with an increase for the thawfundraiser.

Michelle Beal

So my notes and I think that we gave that to you too, didn't we Anne that that was specifically the money was to go to this

Anne Laine

program I got for budget just has been a number

Michelle Beal

It took about 15 minutes. So the other meetings because I know that's what we're

Casey Hanson

supposed to do today, because I also didn't remember that we have we're specifying that

Sharon Cadis

So what we received from the city of Ellsworth last year was 2000, for the for the third party request. And part of that increase from 1000 to 2000, is the fact that everybody eats, which is works with food insecurity here and Ellsworth became a program and official program of DCP. So rather than ask you twice, asked you, as everybody eats, ask you as Downeast community partners, we combined that ask, so the third party funding ask went from 1000 to 2000. And so the 2000. That's, that's our third party asked, that goes towards, you know, the 2 million that we provide in value of services to Ellsworth residents. We received an additional \$1,000 last year for the thought fund. So what I can do in the future is just increase our third party ask rather than have to appear and you have to consider something out of budget cycle, but then I would ask to increase our ask. And you

Michelle Beal

you're more than able to do that through the through the process? So you didn't know that that that that was increased \$1,000 for the thaw fund?

Casey Hanson

Well, that she's saying that was the extra one that we voted

Sharon Cadis

for. Last year, we received a total of 3000. From the city of Ellsworth towards at last year, it was even more in services, actually.

Michelle Beal

So this is a planned event. It should be on your budget request. Okay. Okay. Yes, everybody eats. I didn't know that. We combined that last year either, but it was left December.

Sharon Cadis

Well, and quite frankly, we did not envision having to do this, again. This this fundraiser we didn't. Last year, I did it for the first time as DCP. And because I guess in future years, it had been done by like the Kiwanis Club or some club. And then Downeast community partners was one of the the beneficiaries of that. Last year was the very first time Downeast community partners did an event like this for that fund. And instead of somebody else doing it, and anyway, we kept it to a little over 3.5% overhead, and raised quite a bit for this fun, which is super important. Anyway, it was out of necessity last year. I mean, you saw the figures where the general assistance requests went from, like 22 to 127. Yes, we experienced that too. And in fact, Downeast community partners is a huge part of keeping folks off general assistance. So the the increase last year in with the price of fuel was why we did the fundraiser last year, it was just astronomical, the price of fuel. So I did not intend to be here this year. I did not intend to run this event again.

Casey Hanson

No, I was just gonna say, Yeah, my understanding is Downeast community partners offers a lot to the community. We know we've heard sort of your general operations and last year and this year, I think of this event as kind of outside of that as a separate event that is like it's a benefit to the city to have these awesome bands playing at the grand and it's also a benefit obviously to the city people who are vulnerable to the city. So I guess to me, I understood how it came out of outside of the budget season because I didn't think it was part of your regular budgetary realm. I understand that like what if what if we say yes to this Do we have to say yes to other organizations? And my thought about that is if another organization wanted to host an event downtown in Ellsworth that brought bands brought people out for a good cause I would want to sponsor that also. I haven't seen any other organizations do that. So to me, this feels a little bit outside of the why forget you guys have a special name third party or something or other that you were support any organizations that this is actually an event in and of itself, a, whatever we decide tonight, I'm happy to hear about it. I'm happy that whoever is listening and watching today can hear that this is happening in a couple of weeks. I think it's really important and really cool and a good way for the community to come together. But yeah, I guess I kind of see it differently from the budget.

Sharon Cadis

Well, and again, we didn't predict, truly, that the funding for the Home Energy Assistance Program would be slashed by such a significant amount. So yeah, I really, truly did not envision standing here tonight, and asking again, because

Steven O'Halloran

you have a very worthy cause. I I share some of the feelings with the other counselors about when you say to one, you say to all and you need to be prepared to give everybody \$1,000 That comes forward from this point forward. And I, I struggle with taxing people to give to certain causes. And I've always struggled with that. What I would ask you to do is tell us while you're on live television, how does the citizen if they choose to vote? Tell us, excuse me, if they choose to give to this? Cause? Could you just say how we could do that?

Sharon Cadis

Yeah, absolutely. I'd be happy to thank you. And I also want to thank you and Councillor Lyons, for having a really great discussion with me. I came and spoke before the budget committee a couple of weeks ago. I think it was and it was a wonderful discussion with you. Yes, well, I understand that there may be other organizations that might want to approach you. I, I would wonder how many nonprofits are providing over \$2 million in value but to the city of Ellsworth residents. But anyway, to your point, you can purchase tickets to this event through the grants website. And we'd be absolutely delighted to have you there. It is truly a warming event. It warms your hearts and it will warm people's homes. You may also go to Downeast community partners website and donate directly to the thought fund. It's [www dot Downeast community partners.com](http://www.Downeastcommunitypartners.com). Yes, we write it all out. And I realized that's a long, long name. But we would also love to have you there at the grant because it will restore your faith in humanity. It really well. People come out to keep their neighbors warm. And they're they're bidding on the silent auction items that have been donated by community members from Blue Hill to bucksport. To to you know, all up and down Main Street here and Ellsworth and, and further afield as well. So the tickets are \$29 apiece, if you'd like to attend 25 of that does go directly to the thought fund the other \$4 Go to the grant to help that wonderful landmark across the street. stay viable. We know it's a historic landmark. And we all enjoy it. So anyway, I thank you for your consideration.

Steven O'Halloran

Could you just state an address to mail a check it out?

Sharon Cadis

right. You're right, Steve, thank you so much. Thank you. I appreciate that. Yes, send it to the make the checkout to the thaw fund or to Downeast community partners and right in the notation the thought fund, send it to 248 bucksport Road. Ellsworth 04605

Jon Stein

Sharon DCP does work are these communicate with Ellsworth GA? General Assistance?

Sharon Cadis

Yes. All the time. I'm told all the time. Yep.

Jon Stein

Just like to consider just to the missing piece for me when we had sent some emails back and forth was the two pieces of information you told us which is one the the low income Energy Fund cut by 50%. That's a state or federal funds.

Sharon Cadis

So the trajectory of that funding is that it's congressionally appointed funding. So Congress voted to reduce the the funding, then it flows to the state for that particular program for the Home Energy Assistance Program, or a lot of people have known it previously as LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. So it's a, it's the trajectory of the funding as fed to state to the CAP agencies that help you that help the state really, that everybody, you know, gather all everyone's documents, set up appointments, which we were doing from the moment that we could in July. So the main housing also kind of tells you when you can begin to accept applications, and you can't do it before then. And so it is quite a process. Unfortunately, when you go to apply, it can be six to eight weeks, it's quite a process, because you've you've got to apply, you've got to have all of your documents, and then it goes to, you know, we look it over and send it on to the state and then the state can can take a few weeks to to decide the benefit amount and then contact that beneficiary

Jon Stein

state also sounds like cut funding the main housing authority.

Sharon Cadis

Well, they they reduced, so main housing reduced the benefit amount based on what was coming from the feds, based on the slash in congressionally appointed funding. So both,

Jon Stein

you couldn't have really known we're coming as of last year's budget cycle. Right. So I mean, as we get into this year's budget cycle, which I agree that it is essential that outside organizations appeal for appropriations during the budget cycle, just because we couldn't possibly keep everything organized. I also think it's important to consider what DCP does as a service to Ellsworth and its citizens and like some departments that snow plows break, and we need replacement immediately because it's snowing out. This is sort of an immediate thing that's come up for a service that's really a service for Ellsworth citizens, and you know, there's a chance we could consider it as this is something we didn't foresee in the budget cycle. It's this emergency funds city has an opportunity to fund this service, which it really is, I mean, to make \$1,000 go to how much was raised last year for fundraiser. Oh,

Sharon Cadis

from this fundraiser around a \$90,000. And we we ended up awarding because of the fundraiser being able to award over \$200,000 in thaw funds for the first time ever, because the cost of fuel was so high. You know, you weren't you weren't getting very much for your your 100 gallons or your you know. Yeah, and in fact, yeah, anyway.

Jon Stein

I see, I see both ways. I mean, obviously, we want to keep things in budget cycle. But if it's considered this emergency, something that happens during the year that we can fix with some cash. Consider talking more about it, but I don't feel the need to fight about it.

Patrick Lyons

Is there a way if this Council were to vote to provide \$1,000 to the fund? Is there a way to ensure that money goes towards Ellsworth residents?

Sharon Cadis

Absolutely. Absolutely. Yep. Roughly 100 gallons is running about 404. I think it's \$404 was the most recent but yes, we will definitely keep it to Ellsworth residents. We were fortunate last year to get some funding for the thaw fund from the Hancock County Commissioners and the Hancock County Sheriff's charity and they specified we wanted to stay in Hancock County understandably. So we totally did exactly that and then reported out on where you know, here's See the dates. And we're, you know, we don't give out addresses of homes obviously or anything like that. That's private information. We protect our the neighbors that we serve, we protect their information, but happy to demonstrate that that money went to Ellsworth.

Patrick Lyons

Good follow up in for individuals. If I wanted to donate to the Thaw fund, could I specify go towards Ellsworth, you

Sharon Cadis

absolutely can. And in fact, at this point, we pretty much have a fund for each of the municipalities that we serve.

Michelle Beal

I would just like to add, I understand what you're doing. But the the city in our staff do fundraisers all year long for our own fund that would that goes directly to Ellsworth residents for fuel, and wood and pellets. So if you're going to do that, I would really urge you to support our staff and all their efforts with silent auctions and things to to ensure that our residents have fuel.

Patrick Lyons

so how's that different from this?

Michelle Beal

It's it's a direct fund that that the city has the it's you take care of it, Tina?

KaTina Vanadestine

Yeah, the city of Ellsworth has a specific fund to the emergency fuel fund account. And it's all donation based. So we do a silent auction every year to help replenish that fund. And throughout the year, we have anonymous donations that come in, that goes strictly into that fund. And actually, don't wear a tie.

Michelle Beal

Just did just as additional information if you wanted to go just to Ellsworth can give you a link directly to that. Counselor.

Tammy Mote

So Tina, are they still doing the cans for food? Yeah, that's exactly that's a separate thing. But that's for heating as well,

KaTina Vanadestine

the CANS themselves are strictly for Christmas for Kids program, the backpack program. And then we have a separate account for the emergency heating assistance. But we also have a policy for that too, which

Sharon Cadis

is food for thought I will just say that there are folks who don't come to their town hall or their city hall, because they don't necessarily want to be seen as asking for help from the town. And those are our folks that that we see at DCP. So just just as food for thought. They're afraid that word will get out. And it's probably not as as as much of an issue in a larger city. But so often in our smaller communities, folks come to us definitely first, because they just don't want to walk into their town hall where they also go to vote. And they also go to, you know, pick up trash stickers or whatever. So just just food for thought. I do have some lovely little fires about the event. And that I would love to distribute to you. And and if you know of a place that you don't see one hanging, if you would, oh, and see

Nancy Smith

I wanted to, I guess pick up on a couple of points. Yeah, I hear extenuating circumstances that this wasn't a normal. This isn't a normal event that should have been budgeted the cuts that came from the federal level. I attended last year it was a blast to keep with the theme. I came home with a rug that I really like keeping it away from my cats. I also pay into the silent auction at Christmas time at a town office and have been successful there as well. I liked what Councillor Hanson said about drawing people downtown that there's an advantage to this event getting people to agree on some money to the ground. And I just also want to in this conversation I benefited from LIHEAP for years while we were farming and it is a rigorous process of collecting last year's your income statements how you you know what you spent on fuel where it goes I'm sitting in the office and asking for help is a leap that you have to take to get there and then you do because you have to. So I appreciate the work that you're doing. It sounds like we're not leaning towards a vote. I already had this on my calendar, I will certainly attend and bring my my credit card with me to be able to support it in that way. And again, if people are listening tonight would you like to mention who your sponsors are? You said you have significant sponsors who have been helping.

Sharon Cadis

Not everyone could hear you're right here in Ellsworth. We have three presenting sponsors and they are darlings Auto Mall and GMC Buick and Machias Savings Bank and the Reny Charitable Foundation, which is you know, the it was Reny's store right here and Ellsworth that forwarded it on to their corporate office and said, Look, this is really something that's important and folks are suffering.

We really feel like you should support that. There are many more other sponsors at different levels. The Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce, and in fact, PJ Keenan will be live auctioning a woodstove last year was a woodstove this year. It's a heat pump donated by Dave's world here in Ellsworth. So PJ Keenan will be live auctioning that off if you want to see her be an auctioneer, it's a great time to capture that moment. We know she'll carry it off wonderfully. But every you know, we're just grateful for those who have donated items for the silent auction and have sponsored us at any level from, you know, gosh, \$100 on up. So that's, that's the deal. And we hope you come out. And if you do not decide to support this tonight, I would like to submit a different ask of the Ellsworth City Council than what we've already asked for. I would like to increase that ask because we asked for the \$2,000. And that we had asked for the year before. And actually last year, you ended up giving us three because of the two plus the one for the fundraiser. Again, did not plan on being here. So I would like to be able to increase that if you decide not to support this event. I do think there is an element of import in that, that folks, when you enter, see that big sponsorship poster, and having the city of Ellsworth and smack dab in the middle as a prominent logo? You know, I think it means something. So but I thank you for your consideration. Thank you for all you do when you work, you know, and then come to a council meeting. That's important. You're serving our community. And thank you.

Casey Hanson

Thank you, I actually would like to make a motion to sponsor the event for the reasons that I talked about. And also I'm really, I think it's a great event. I think it's a different separate thing. I'd like to see the city on the marquee for it or on the poster for it. I don't think there needs to be. I mean, I know. I know how these different organizations work together, our general assistance department and all of these other organizations that also help there's no shortage of people who need help. So I don't think we're in competition. Anyway, motion to approve \$1,000 to benefit the thought fund.

Nancy Smith

Second,

Michelle Beal

further discussion. All those in favor? All those against motion passes.

Tammy Mote

Congratulations. Thank you. Thank you.

Michelle Beal

Okay, item 19 discussion on FY 25 budget workshop and the processes for the upcoming year.

Anne Laine

so there's a lot going on this year with budget. It's my first year of doing budgets, so bear with me. Just throwing it out there. So I put a calendar in front of you tonight. That has the budget workshops are proposed, I sat down with the city manager before he left. And we kind of inked out a tentative schedule. The green boxes are open days that it's my understanding that a lot of this, when you did two a week, it was Monday and Wednesday. Obviously, we can do Thursday and Friday, or Thursday. Okay, so we'll also on this calendar are some of the other events that go on at City Hall. So I know you guys are on committees or you just want to attend, you definitely don't want to miss my local roads

presentation on the fourth of March. So basically, I've just started getting, actually I've got probably most of the budgets, I'm in the process now translating to the new chart of accounts, which has been an odyssey all by itself. But because Caselle is here this week. So we've actually really ramped it up in earnest for in anticipation of budget season starting. So my only way that I know to make a budget is to hash it out. At each one of the workshop meetings, I'm trying to make it very streamlined, very straightforward. So you're seeing exactly everything by department. That's my goal. So if you will go through this calendar. If it stays that we proposed a budget workshop can't be here for some reason. Let me know as soon as you can.

Michelle Beal

There's a way that if there's a way that we could talk about this at finance, and if everyone could give us their schedules, because I think we need to take into consideration as I said, the school department, we need to understand what our deadline is for the budget so that it can go to our elections.

Anne Laine

We reached out to them to help us with this. But we hadn't heard back from them by the time well, it's

Michelle Beal

it's the city clerk that has to give us the time the deadline, okay, because she takes care of the elections. And you said that the school department's gonna be there tomorrow. Friday, right? Yeah. So there's, I think there's a few things. And personally, I would like to have a little more time for discussion. Because if you just sit through presentations, and then wait till the very end, to do it to have any discussion it you forget what the administration did, because you're six weeks later, and just finishing up capital improvements. So I'd like to this year if we could have some presentations, and then have a night of discussion, and presentations and discussion so that we're having a better understanding and trying to have all the discussions at the very end. So like to week? Well, and it doesn't always have to be to we I mean, last year, we really did have to Yeah, and it was like discussion, discussion. It was no discussion, it was presentations. And so I don't think we have to have two a week because we get done pretty early last year. But we had to do a lot up front because of the school department. So the select to have that. If you would just give your thoughts to Tammy, and what you're thinking, looking at this and this tentative schedule. And knowing what happened last year, or what you think we'd like to do this year, I think it would be good. And then we can

Anne Laine

Can I add one more thing. Another thing that I've tried to do to make this process go more smoothly and get you all more information is that we have a budget page now on the city website. And that's going to have our capital plan. I'm having to rework the numbers because we got sort of a retroactive requirement for Baba and some of our really big projects, which is by American. And they changed the rules. Well, after we were in planning phase, so we're trying to work that out. We had a meeting with Woodard and Curran about this last week. So that's the way that we we have a lot of different funding resources right now, from the drinking water, which we talked or clean water, which we talked about the 8.6 and now we're on the primary and the backup list for drinking water. So we're gonna have money. It's just a matter of allocating it and the requirements of whoever's giving us the money, whether it's EPA or who knows northern borders or do tea. So that'll be also in that plan. The other thing that's

going to be in there is this calendar. So it'll be interactive to you guys. If you log in, if you need help getting login credentials for it, just let me or more or anybody here, know, and we'll make sure that you get that so that you can look at this stuff at your leisure. Because I know right now is not your leisure, this is the end of the after working all day for most of you. I know for me, I'm like, What? No, I have any idea what's going on. But I'm trying to put everything in front of you. So you have a little more time to think about it. So we're not you're not spending the whole evening here and workshops, having things thrown at you that you haven't seen before.

Casey Hanson

So but we'll still get the budget binder,

Anne Laine

you'll get something like that. Yeah. Okay. My plan is to have it more streamlined. So that it's a lot easier to work through in terms of the worksheets, we have many fewer accounts, that things are organized differently. So I think it'll be it should make it more efficient and quicker for you guys. And then combine that with having some of the bigger spends, and the details of that available to you all the time to look out whenever you want. And that will have details of financials in there. And photographs and drawings.

Michelle Beal

And we'll get those binders in time. Yeah. Because like the 28, there's, there's no way we could get a binder and have an ability to look through it before the first meeting. But if we're not going to have the 28, then we'll, if we could have it at least a week before our first budget meeting. That would be great. Okay, so we'll look at that for timing to on the schedule. Okay,

Anne Laine

thank you. I'll just plan on having it first week of March, the first meeting and then you'll hopefully have that by I should I can't imagine why it couldn't have it to you by the end of February. That would be great. I mean, I haven't have should have all retranslation to the new chart of accounts done

Michelle Beal

this week. That's and has the city manager looked it over. For the hit the city managers, he had a chance to look over the budgets

Anne Laine

he's got copies of them. I haven't spoken with him directly about it. But we've both acknowledged that we've received them. And right now my short term goal is to translate that, that that has to happen before we do anything. Otherwise we enter a budget with wrong account numbers. And it's just a mess. And I don't want to have that.

Tammy Mote

I believe that one of the finance committee meetings that Glenn did say that he'd been meeting was the department heads on their budgets.

Michelle Beal

Any other questions?

Casey Hanson

too? Well, to one thought one question. And one thought is just related to I hadn't even really thought about this until we talked about ARPA funds again. And I wonder if should that somehow be? In this full pack? We're always like Ha ARPA funds, how much do we have left? How much time do we have left? What are we using it for? And then we think we're going to talk about later and we don't so I wonder if this within the context of budget workshops will be it'll be tender, just talk about that. It'll

Anne Laine

be in your budget book. That'd be great, along with all of the other anticipated funds that we'll have outside of tax revenue.

Casey Hanson

Great. And then my question, this is just gonna be a question that shows my ignorance about financial stuff in the city, but whatever. I know that in the past. So this is my third year going through this. And in the past, Dale has said, well, one of these things, one of the things that makes it hard is we keep going off budgets, like when we're comparing this year to the last year we're going off the budget instead of off the audit. If we were going off the audit, we will be able to compare what we want to spend with what we actually spent last year. Am I understanding that correctly? Yes. And so in, I don't actually understand 100%. Like, I know, we're caught up one more year of the audit, but maybe not the last year of the audit. And I just was hoping you would explain like how we fit those things together?

Anne Laine

Well, as far as last year's budget, and this year's budget and the audit was 18 months of no account. That's why everything's backed up in audit. So, theoretically, now that we have this new software system, and we have a new chart of accounts, and we're about to have a new Deputy Finance Director, I anticipate that this won't happen again. I mean, that's my plan. It's not going to happen again.

Casey Hanson

You mean this year are you mean like this year, we're still playing catch up in next year, it should all be caught up. So

Anne Laine

23 audit, which 23 ended. What? end of June. By the time that came along, we were already behind. So I think 22 audit came out three or four months late. So 23 audit is supposed to be done by the end of March. But as far as looking at year before, which would be fiscal year 24? I mean, I would have, I wouldn't even have preliminary numbers till the end of this year. So looking at 23 alleged we're going to have them by the end of March. And I'll give you an update on that next time in finance committee,

Michelle Beal

but you can give us an audit on audited actuals. Right,

Anne Laine

I can give you some of them. I payroll hasn't been translated into the new accounts yet.

Michelle Beal

No. I mean, when you give us the when you give us the the draft budget for 2025, that just that they haven't been audited, but you can give us what I would like is the 2025 request, the 2024 budget and the 23 and 22 actuals.

Anne Laine

Yes. Okay. But because what I'm trying to say is that, in order to do that, I have to have those everything translated to the new chart of accounts, which is what and that's what's kind of taking time, and so it's a pretty mammoth undertaking. So, but my accountant assures me that I will have those things, I found him, morning, noon and night. So

Steven O'Halloran

sort of to clarify, by May, we are going to have actual expenses aligned with the budget.

Anne Laine

Okay, it's just gonna look different than your book last year, that's things are gonna be moved around, but the

Steven O'Halloran

actual expenses, rather audited or not. Those are the expenses, maybe they're miscategorized or something

Anne Laine

that we want, but going forward, that the long term goal is to get it clean, concise, accurate, precise, everything. So you know, in order to get there, it's slowing down some of the things that we want in the short term, but we will get what you need for a budget for sure. Yeah,

Casey Hanson

I think I was confusing. There's like, we know what we spent last year guess is one thing. And then the audit is this like thing that needs to happen to make sure that we got it correct. So the audit actually doesn't matter as much as the actual number.

Michelle Beal

Any additional questions? Thank you very much. Sure. Okay, item number 20 executive session pursuant to one MRSA subsection 405 Paragraph six F. Discussions of information contained in records made maintained or received by a body or agency when access by the general public to those records is prohibited by statute to review and abatement of real estate taxes due to hardship or poverty and according to mrsa, a title 36 Chapter 105, subsection A four one section two E.

Patrick Lyons

Second

Tammy Mote

second

Michelle Beal

Alright, thank you for your patience out of Executive Session, item 21 discussion and action on the executive session

Tammy Mote

I'd like to make a motion move to approve the abatement of the 2022 taxes lien cause an interest as presented during Executive Session.

Patrick Lyons

Second,

Michelle Beal

any further discussion? All in favor?

Michelle Beal

Item 22 adjournment I make a motion All in favor? No. No