

CITY OF ELLSWORTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date: April 20, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: City Hall Council Chambers

1. Call to Order: Chair Lyons called the regular monthly meeting of the Ellsworth City Council to order.

2. Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Rules of Order: Chair Lyons noted the Council follows Robert's Rules of Order. He requested that all citizen comments be directed to the Chair and limited to three minutes. Councilor O'Halloran questioned if comments could be directed to the whole council; Lyons clarified this would be addressed during the citizen comments section.

4. Adoption of Minutes: The Council considered the minutes from the March 9, 2026 Special Meeting, March 16, 2026 Regular Meeting, and March 26, 2026 Special Meeting.

- **Motion:** Moved to adopt the minutes as presented.
- **Moved by:** Councilor N. Smith; **Seconded by:** Councilor Martineau.
- **Result:** Passed Unanimously.

5. Presentation of Awards

- **Volunteer of the Year:** Awarded to Rain Perez for her dedication to the Ellsworth Public Library, Rainbow Girls, and Ellsworth Pride.
- **Volunteer Business of the Year:** Awarded to Franklin Savings Bank for their deep commitment as a community partner.
- **Citizen Award of Merit:** Presented to Jaxon Mansfield by Captain Ben Freeman for his heroic and decisive actions following a serious vehicle rollover on March 20, 2026.
- **Arbor Day Proclamation:** Chair Lyons proclaimed April 24, 2026, as Arbor Day in the City of Ellsworth.

6. City Manager's Report: City Manager Pearce, joining remotely, praised the local spirit of volunteerism. He highlighted the Moose Lodge for their beautification efforts and noted that Chief Guillerault was recently recognized in a national firefighting publication.

7. Committee Reports:

- **Recreation Commission:** Councilor M. Smith reported meetings have moved to the fourth Tuesday. Upcoming events include a Dog Park workshop (April 30), a roadside cleanup (ends April 25), and the Card Brook cleanup (May 9).

- **Arbor Commission:** Councilor White announced a panel discussion on Ash trees scheduled for Earth Day at the Moore Center.
- **Cemetery Commission:** Councilor N. Smith reported a cleanup day for Juniper and Bayside Cemeteries on May 9.

Appointment: The Council considered the appointment of Meghan Doherty to the Recreation Commission (term expiring 6/30/2028).

- **Motion:** To appoint Meghan Doherty as a full member of the Recreation Commission.
- **Moved by:** Councilor Shea; **Seconded by:** Councilor O'Halloran
- **Result:** Passed Unanimously.

8. Citizen's Comments:

- Casey Hanson: Supported the budget item for an invasive pest management plan to protect the city's ash trees from the emerald ash borer, citing the historical loss of elms to Dutch elm disease.
- Gordon Workman: Raised concerns regarding a business license renewal process he believed was handled incorrectly. He also strongly opposed using taxpayer funds for a dog park, suggesting the proposed land be sold for commercial development.

9. Councilor Comments: Councilor O'Halloran and Chair Lyons praised the IT department (Jason and Nate) for their cheerful and effective service across all city departments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10. Council Order #032607: Knowlton Park Playground Replacement (Phase 1): Parks & Recreation Director Roddy Ehrlenbach requested the Council acknowledge GameTime as the preferred vendor to allow design and fundraising to continue without an immediate financial commitment from the city. Councilors discussed the proprietary nature of playground equipment and the RFP process.

- **Public Comment:** Philip Heasley questioned the validity of the RFP process if a vendor had already been selected.
- **Motion:** To acknowledge GameTime as the preferred vendor and authorize continued project development and budgeting.
- **Moved by:** Councilor M. Smith; **Seconded by:** Councilor Martineau.
- **Result:** Passed 6-1 (Councilor Shea opposed).

CONSENT AGENDA

11. Council Order #042600: Appointment of Election Workers: Appointment of wardens, ward clerks, and election workers for the June 9, 2026 election.

- **Motion:** To approve the appointments as presented.
- **Moved by:** Councilor White; **Seconded by:** Councilor Shea.

- **Result:** Passed Unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

12. Public Hearing and Action on License Renewals and New Licenses:

- **Renewals: Ellsworth Hampton Inn, Ellsworth Moose Lodge #2698, Twin Hills Cottages of Acadia, Acadia Provisions, and Thaiconic.**
 - **Motion:** To approve the renewals as presented.
 - **Moved by:** Councilor N. Smith; **Seconded by:** Councilor Martineau.
 - **Result:** Passed Unanimously.
- **New Business License (M-Ville):** Application for a new medical cannabis dispensary license at 71 Main Street.
 - **Public Comment:** Applicant Frank Berenyi (M-ville) discussed the safety and testing of his products. City Staff and the City Attorney recommended denial as the use is not permitted in the downtown zoning district and the prior "grandfathered" status had been allowed under unique and non-recurring circumstances. The applicant's representative noted an email from a city official they claimed supported the transfer.
 - **Motion:** To **deny** the license for the grounds discussed (zoning).
 - **Moved/Seconded:** Unspecified/Unspecified
 - **Result:** Motion to Deny Passed 4-2-1 (Councilors O'Halloran and Shea opposed, Councilor White abstain).

13. Council Order #042601: Affordable Housing TIF Annual Reports: Approval of annual reports for Leonard Lake, Oriole Way, and Oriole Way Senior districts.

- **Motion:** To approve the annual reports for the tax year ending March 31, 2026.
- **Moved by:** Councilor N. Smith; **Seconded by:** Councilor Shea.
- **Result:** Passed Unanimously.

14. Council Order #042602: General Assistance Ordinance Update: Request to repeal the 2024 GA ordinance and replace it with the 2025 MMA updated version.

- **Motion:** To repeal Chapter 36 (2024) and replace it with the updated 2025 ordinance.
- **Moved by:** Councilor Martineau; **Seconded by:** Councilor N. Smith.
- **Result:** Passed 6-1 (Councilor O'Halloran opposed).

15. Council Order #042603: Bayside Road Municipal Partnership Initiative: Proposed \$1.5 million funding (50/50 match with MaineDOT) for Bayside Road engineering and construction.

- **Public Comment:** Councilor Martineau noted the road's poor condition and high traffic.
- **Motion:** To authorize the City Manager to secure \$750,000 in financing for the municipal share, to be paid via TIF revenues.

- **Moved by:** Councilor White; **Seconded by:** Councilor M. Smith.
- **Result:** Passed Unanimously.

16. Council Order #042604: Wastewater Project DEP Grant Funds: Public Works Director Mike Harris requested acceptance of additional "match-free" grant funds from the DEP.

- **Motion:** To accept amended principal forgiveness funding of \$1,172,020 for dewatering upgrades.
- **Moved by:** Councilor Shea; **Seconded by:** Councilor White.
- **Result:** Passed Unanimously.

17. Council Order #042605: Adult Use Cannabis Overlay Zone:

- **Public Comment:** Raymond Williams challenged the item, asserting that the public notice did not meet the required 13-day legal standard stated in Chapter 56.
- **Motion:** To table the item until proper notice can be confirmed.
- **Moved by:** Councilor Martineau; **Seconded by:** Councilor N. Smith.
- **Result:** Passed Unanimously.

18. Council Order #042606: Sale of Vacant City-Owned Lot: Staff recommended no action as Public Works currently utilizes the lot for storage of materials like ledge and boulders.

- **Result:** No action taken.

19. Council Order #042607: Budget Reallocation (Facilities): Request for a reallocation from the Capital Reserve to cover facilities overages.

- **Motion:** To table until the June meeting pending a cash flow analysis.
- **Moved by:** Councilor Shea; **Seconded by:** Councilor Martineau.
- **Result:** Passed Unanimously.

20. Council Order #042608: Fairground Road Dangerous Building Demolition: Reallocation of funds to cover the costs of a dangerous building demolition.

- **Motion:** To reallocate \$19,360.35 from the Capital Reserve to the Code Enforcement Violator Enforcement Fund.
- **Moved by:** Councilor Martineau; **Seconded by:** Councilor N. Smith.
- **Result:** Passed 5-2 (Councilors O'Halloran and Shea opposed).

21. Council Order #042609: Striping and Pavement Markings Proposal:

- **Long Line Striping:**
 - **Motion:** To award the contract to Lucas Striping LLC for \$25,921.
 - **Moved by:** Councilor Shea; **Seconded by:** Councilor N. Smith.
 - **Result:** Passed Unanimously.
- **Pavement Markings:**

- **Motion:** To award the contract to K5 Corporation for \$53,689.
- **Moved by:** Councilor White; **Seconded by:** Councilor Martineau.
- **Result: Passed 5-2** (Councilor O'Halloran and Shea opposed).

22. Council Order #042610: Courthouse Road Letter of Intent: Consideration of a pre-agreement for the future acceptance of Courthouse Road.

- **Motion:** To approve the pre-agreement and intent to accept the road upon completion to city standards.
- **Moved by:** Councilor White; **Seconded by:** Councilor N. Smith.
- **Result:** Passed 5-2 (Councilors O'Halloran and Shea opposed).

23. Executive Session: Personnel matters.

- **Motion:** To enter executive session.
- **Moved by:** Councilor N. Smith; **Seconded by:** Councilor White.
- **Result:** Passed 6-1 (Councilor O'Halloran opposed).
- **Motion:** To exit executive session.
- **Moved by:** Councilor Martineau; **Seconded by:** Councilor M. Smith.
- **Result:** Passed unanimously.

24. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned following the executive session.

- **Motion:** To adjourn.
- **Moved by:** Councilor Lyons; **Seconded by:** Councilor Shea
- **Result:** Passed Unanimously.