



CITY OF HALLOWELL, MAINE

Web Site: <http://hallowell.govoffice.com/>

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026 AT 6:00 PM

IN-PERSON AT CITY HALL IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

ZOOM WAS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR THIS MEETING

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor George Lapointe called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. On behalf of the City Council, Mayor Lapointe extended birthday wishes to Councilor Gagnon. The Mayor then reviewed the meeting guidelines.

2. COUNCILORS PRESENT:

Walter McKee, Scott Cooper, Karen Knox, Michael Frett, Benjamin Coolidge Gagnon, Danielle Obery and Lauren McPherson.

Also present: City Manager Ross McLellan, City Clerk Lisa Gilliam, Code Enforcement Officer Sarah Moore and several residents were also in attendance.

3. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

Motion by Councilor Knox to add into Other Business, a Parade Application for the Mardi Gras event; motion seconded by Councilor Gagnon. Motion carried by unanimous vote 7-0.

4. COMMENTS/QUESTIONS IN PERSON FROM THE PUBLIC CONCERNING MATTERS NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA BUT GERMANE TO CITY BUSINESS:

Judy Feinstein of 15 Maple Street addressed the Council regarding ongoing misuse of the North Bay Recycling Center dumpster at Public Works. Public Works Director Tom Goraj has suggested removing the dumpster but deferred the decision to the City Council. After brief discussion, Mayor Lapointe stated he would consult with city staff to determine a resolution.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Parade Application for the Mardi Gras Parade to be held on Saturday, February 14, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. This event is sponsored by Vision Hallowell. The Parade route will be north from 191 Water Street to 1 Winthrop Street. Public Safety issues were briefly discussed and it was determined that the Hallowell Fire Department would cover the event. Motion by Councilor McKee to approve the Parade Application for the Mardi Gras Parade on Saturday, February 14, 2026; motion seconded by Councilor Frett. Motion carried by unanimous vote 7-0.

6. UPDATE ON DANGEROUS BUILDING LOCATED AT 8 PARK STREET IN HALLOWELL:

Code Enforcement Officer Sarah Moore provided an update regarding the status of the building and the property owner. She reported that the owner has vacated the residence and is now living at a new location. With the property now unoccupied, the Code Enforcement Officer recommended that the building be secured by locking and restricting access. A discussion followed regarding key control and authorized access.

Councilor Frett moved to securely lock the property located at 8 Park Street, Hallowell, and to provide keys to the Code Enforcement Officer and the Police and Fire Departments. The motion was seconded by Councilor Knox and carried unanimously (7-0). Councilor McKee then moved that the Code Enforcement Officer follow up with the City Attorney regarding the development of a waiver for individuals requesting access to the property; motion seconded by Councilor Frett. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

7. DISCUSSION ON PERMIT FEE UPDATES PROPOSED BY THE CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER:

Code Enforcement Officer Moore presented the Council with a proposed permit fee structure, which she recommended based on research comparing permit fees in other municipalities.

Motion by Councilor McKee to adopt the Permit Fee Updates proposed by the Code Enforcement Officer; seconded by Councilor Frett. Discussion followed.

During discussion, Councilor Cooper expressed concern about whether permit fees are necessary, noting that revenue could instead be generated through taxation. Discussion continued.

Motion by Councilor Cooper to amend the proposal so that projects with projected costs of \$10,000 and under would be permitted at a \$40 fee; **seconded** by Councilor McPherson. Motion carried 4–3, with Councilors Frett, Obery, and Gagnon opposed.

Further discussion followed regarding the proposed fees. Mayor Lapointe recommended that the matter be tabled until March to allow for additional review.

Motion by Councilor Cooper to table the Permit Fee Updates proposed by the Code Enforcement Officer until the next Council meeting in March; seconded by Councilor Obery. Motion carried 5–2, with Councilors McKee and Gagnon opposed.

Additional discussion continued. City Manager McLellan reminded the Council that the Code Enforcement Officer has presented this proposal to the Council on two prior occasions.

Motion by Councilor Cooper to refer the proposed Permit Fee Updates to the Finance Committee for further discussion; seconded by Councilor McKee. Motion carried unanimously 7–0.

8. UPDATE FROM THE GREATER AUGUSTA UTILITY DISTRICT:

Brian Tarbuck, General Manager of GAUD, attended the meeting to provide an update on recent activities at the Water District. He discussed the current sludge treatment process and shared information about potential grant funding for a planned pipeline project. No motions were made, and the Mayor and City Council thanked Mr. Tarbuck for his update.

9. UPDATE FROM THE HALLOWELL WATER DISTRICT REGARDING PFAS LEVELS:

Zachary Lovely, Superintendent of the Hallowell Water District, provided an update regarding PFAS levels in Hallowell's water supply. He noted that a PFAS-free water spigot is available at the Hallowell Water District for residents to use. Mr. Lovely also outlined the steps being taken to address the issue, with a projected resolution by 2028. He further announced that the Water District's Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for March 11 will be held in the City of Hallowell auditorium to allow for greater public attendance and to provide updates on efforts to remove PFAS from the drinking water supply.

10. FIRST READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE RELATING TO SHORT TERM RENTALS (CHAPTER 9, §647 SUB § 1):

Motion by Councilor Gagnon, seconded by Councilor McKee, to approve the First Reading of the proposed Ordinance Relating to Short Term Rentals (Chapter 9, §647, Sub §1). A brief discussion followed. Maureen AuCoin of Lincoln Street asked that the Council or the Ordinance Rewrite Committee also review the issue as it relates to residential properties. The Council noted that a Public Hearing will be scheduled for the proposed ordinance change. Motion passed unanimously, 7–0.

11. PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES TO CHAPTER 7 SUBCHAPTER IV DIVISION A RELATING TO TRANSIENT SELLERS AND SALES ON PUBLIC PROPERTY, PRIVATE PROPERTY & FROM VEHICLES:

Motion by Councilor McKee to send the proposed changes to Chapter 7 Subchapter IV Division A to the Ordinance Rewrite Committee; motion seconded by Councilor Knox. Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

12. DISCUSSION OF THE CITY PURCHASING POLICY WITH SUGGESTED CHANGES SUBMITTED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Councilor Cooper reviewed the suggested changes to the Purchasing Policy 2017-01. Motion by Councilor Frett, seconded by Councilor Oberg, to approve the City Purchasing Policy with the changes as submitted by the Finance Committee. Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

13. DISCUSSION OF THE REGIONALIZATION OF SOME CITY SERVICES, CONCEPTS AND WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIPS:

The Council briefly discussed creating an Ad-Hoc Committee for discussing Regionalization of City Services. The Mayor will propose a list for the committee and will discuss this at next month's Council Meeting. No motions were made.

14. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. City Council Meeting Minutes: January 12, 2026
- b. Roll of Accounts for January 2026 in the amount of \$601,890.25
- c. Department/Office Reports: Treasurer, Public Works, Code Enforcement Officer

Motion by Councilor Cooper to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, motion seconded by Councilor Knox. A brief discussion followed with Councilor Knox referring to a correction she's requested for the Minutes of January 12th. The City Clerk said that she would make the requested change. Motion carried by unanimous vote 7-0.

15. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

City Manager Ross McLellan reviewed his report with the City Council. Topics discussed included the upcoming FY2027 budget, updates on grant applications currently being prepared, and the TIF rewrite which will require future Council consideration. Discussion followed. Councilor McKee moved that the City Council withdraw the TIF Application submitted to the State in February 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilor Frett. Motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

16. CONSENT AGENDA – PRESENTATION OF COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS AND OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. Age Friendly Committee
- b. Conservation Commission
- c. Historic Hallowell Committee
- d. Hubbard Free Library
- e. Tree Board

Motion by Councilor Obery to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; motion seconded by Councilor Cooper. Motion carried by unanimous vote 7-0.

17. MAYOR'S REPORT & APPOINTMENTS:

The Mayor discussed the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States on July 4, 2026, commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In recognition of the occasion, the City of Hallowell will display the City's copy of the Declaration of Independence at City Hall. The document is normally preserved at the Maine State Archives and will be made available for public viewing for this special event.

The Mayor briefly discussed the upcoming Kennebec County budget meetings. While the schedule has not yet been determined, he will keep the Council informed as dates become available.

18. ADJOURNMENT:

Councilor McKee made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Councilor Obery. Meeting adjourned by unanimous vote 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Lisa J. Gilliam, City Clerk