



**City of Old Town
Special Council Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2023**

Council convened September 18, 2023, in the City Hall Council Chambers, 265 Main Street

Council present: Council President McLeod, Councilors: Chris Pushor, Stan Peterson, Tim Folster, Carol May, David Wight and Mike May

Administration Present: Bill Mayo, Danielle Berube, Laura Engstrom, Travis Roy, Irene Pehrson, EJ Roach, David Smith, Scott Wilcox, April Buchanan, and Cassandra Pool.

Others Present: Tim Pease (City Attorney), and six residents Old Town.

Council President McLeod called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes

Resolved, the Old Town City Council hereby approves as presented:

September 05, 2023, Regular Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Councilor Peterson, seconded by Councilor Wight.

Approved, 6-0, 1 abstain, as President McLeod was absent for this meeting (motion passed)

Petitions, Communications, and Citizens' Requests

- Two residents spoke with questions and concerns over the 2023 property revaluation that was done on their properties and the increase to the tax bills.

Reports

A. Council President

No Report

B. Standing Committees - Administrative Services, Economic Development, Finance Services, and Public Services.

No Report

C. City Councilors

- Councilor Carol May updated the Council about the upcoming Riverfest weekend Sept. 22nd – 24th.

D. City Attorney

No Report

E. Special Committees

No Report

F. City Manager Bill Mayo, updated the council on the following items:

- Downtown traffic light projects still moving ahead and had a slight issue on bolt patterns, it is resolved and will be completed on the time schedule set.
- Fourth Street former Waterworks buildings abatement and razing is done. The City will be reimbursed through our Brownfield grant for the expense.
- Taxi Way B at the airport is complete, just needs some loam come spring 2024.
- Pre – construction meeting with Sargent’s took place on the approved Apron Expansion at Dewitt Field Airport.
- Fourth Street sidewalk repair project is scheduled to start on September 25th.
- Local Landfill Committee that includes, Ralph Leonard, Peter Dufour, and Ted Shiner, are looking into the current trash status as it stands right now, with Perc not being open. Ralph has been meeting with Representative Jim Dill on creating some legislation that finds some type of solutions for the 170 towns that this is impacting on not being operational.

VII. Consent Agenda

None

VIII. Public Hearings and Second Reading of Ordinances

1. The City Council conducted a Public Hearing on the First Reading of the Order approving the issuance of bonds and notes in amounts not to exceed \$3,800,000 for the purpose of financing all or a portion of the cost of the acquisition, design, construction, reconstruction, renovation and repair of (1) structures and related facilities located at 122 Penny Road, Old Town, Maine, and (2) facilities, equipment or both functionally related and subordinate to the foregoing.

Council President McLeod, Opened Public Meeting: 7:06 , resident of Old Town asked if this was for the Global Secure Shipping building and the reply was yes from Bill Mayo, City Manager. Closed Public Meeting: 7:08.

Motion made by Councilor Peterson, for dispensing of the order, seconded by Councilor Mike May.

Approved 7 -0, (Motion passed)

Resolved, The City Council hereby approves scheduling for Second Reading, and consideration of final approval on October 02, 2023, of the Order approving the issuance of bonds and notes in amounts not to exceed \$3,800,000 for the purpose of financing all or a portion of the cost of the acquisition, design, construction, reconstruction, renovation and repair of (1) structures and related facilities, located at 122 Penny Road, Old Town, Maine, and (2) facilities, equipment, or both functionally related and subordinate to the foregoing.

Motion made by Councilor Mike May seconded by Councilor Wight.
Approved 7 -0, (Motion passed)

2. The Old Town City Council conducted a Second Reading and considered final approval on a proposal to amend Chapter 21, titled Welfare, Appendices A, B, & C (Food, Housing & Heat Assistance Limits) of the General Assistance Maximum amounts for the period October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. This amendment is a requirement of the Department of Human Services in compliance with Title 22, M.R.S.A. §4305(4).

Council President McLeod, Opened Public Meeting: 7:11 pm, no public comments, Closed Public Meeting: 7:12 pm.

Resolved, the Old Town City Council hereby approves a proposal to amend Chapter 21, titled Welfare, Appendices A, B & C (Food, Housing & Heating Assistance Limits) of the General Assistance Maximum amounts for the period October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024, as presented in attachment # 2.

Motion made by Councilor Carol May seconded by Councilor Pushor.
Approved 7 -0, (Motion passed)

3. The Old Town City Council conducted a Second Reading and considered final Approval on a proposal to amend City of Old Town Ordinance in Chapter 19 Article XIII – Stopping, Standing or Parking Prohibited in Specific Places to read: **Stopping, standing or parking in places which could cause hazardous conditions or traffic congestion.**

SS 19-335 Section a) The traffic engineer is hereby authorized to determine and designate, by proper signs, places in which the stopping, standing or parking of vehicles would create an especially hazardous condition or would cause unusual delay in traffic.

Parking on Roadways in a manner that blocks driveways is prohibited.

adding SS 19-338 Section a) No person shall park a vehicle upon any roadway in a manner that blocks clear entry and exit from a driveway.

Council President McLeod, Opened Public Meeting: 7:14 pm, one resident asked questions regarding this change, Closed Public Meeting at 7:26 pm.

Resolved, the Old Town City Council hereby approves the proposal to amend the City of Old Town Ordinance in Chapter 19 Article XIII – Stopping, Standing or Parking Prohibited in Specific Places to read:

Stopping, standing or parking in places which could cause hazardous conditions or traffic congestion.

SS 19-335 Section a) The traffic engineer is hereby authorized to determine and designate, by proper signs, places in which the stopping, standing or parking of vehicles would create an especially hazardous condition or would cause unusual delay in traffic.

Parking on Roadways in a manner that blocks driveways is prohibited.

adding SS 19-338 Section a) No person shall park a vehicle upon any roadway in a manner that blocks clear entry and exit from a driveway.

Motion made by Councilor Wight seconded by Councilor Carol May.

Approved 6 -1, Council President McLeod, opposed (Motion passed)

IX. Old Business

None

X. New Business

1. The Old Town City Council considered waiving all late fee interest on FY 2023 – 2024 property taxes, until June 30, 2024.
Councilors discussed this and resolved that it would not be good for the City's budget to waive the fees for that long.

Motion made by Councilor Folster, seconded by Councilor Mike May.

Motion failed unanimously, 0 – 7.

Amended motion made by Councilor Peterson, seconded by Councilor Carol May.

Approved all in favor, 7 – 0. (Motion passed)

The Old Town City Council considers waiving all late interest fees on the 1st half of the FY 2024 property taxes due on 09/29/2023, until November 01, 2023.

Resolved, the Old Town City Council hereby waives all late interest fees on the 1st half of the FY 2024 property taxes due on 09/19/2023, until November 01, 2023.

Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Wight to adjourn at 7:31 pm, seconded by Councilor Pushor.

Approved all in favor, 7-0 (motion passed)

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Engstrom
City Clerk



**City of Old Town
Administrative Services Committee Minutes
September 18, 2023**

Administrative Services Committee members convened September 18, 2023, in the Old Town City Hall Council Chambers, 265 Main Street.

Committee Members Present: Councilors, Michael May (Chair), Chris Pushor, Carol May, and Council President Linda McLeod (ex-officio)

Other Councilors Present – David Wight, Tim Folster, and Stan Peterson

Administration Present - Bill Mayo, Danielle Berube, Laura Engstrom, Travis Roy, Irene Pehrson, EJ Roach, David Smith, Scott Wilcox, April Buchanan, and Cassandra Pool.

Others Present – Tim Pease (City Attorney), and six residents Old Town.

Councilor Mike May called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Assistant City Manager Travis Roy updated the Committee on the questions and concerns asked by Old Town residents at the last City Council meeting on the expanded archery deer hunting permits for within City limits on City owned property. They were worried about the safety of residents at their homes and walkers on the UMO trail systems. They also had concerns that a deer garden had been planted by a resident to attract deer.

Travis reached out to Mark Caron (Maine biologist that oversees the hunt) and Warden Rideout (Local game Warden) about the above referenced questions/concerns. Mark Caron will be conducting a revaluation on the deer population and any problems that may exist with the hunt. He will report back his findings to the City. Mark said as of this date, no reported issues have ever been received to the biologist department. Warden Rideout and Travis will be meeting to address the “possible” deer garden at a resident’s property.

Travis will present the information that is received to the Council in an October Council meeting.

Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Carol May to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Pushor, at 6:06 p.m.

Approved all in favor, 4-0 (motion passed)

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Engstrom
City Clerk



**City of Old Town
Financial Services Committee Minutes
September 18, 2023**

Finance Committee members convened September 18, 2023, in the Old Town City Hall Council Chambers, 265 Main Street

Committee Members Present: Councilors, Chris Pushor (Chair), Tim Folster, Stan Peterson, and Council President Linda McLeod (ex-officio)

Other Councilors Present: Carol May, Mike May, and David Wight

Administration Present: Bill Mayo, Danielle Berube, Laura Engstrom, Travis Roy, Irene Pehrson, EJ Roach, David Smith, Scott Wilcox, April Buchanan, and Cassandra Pool.

Others Present: Tim Pease (City Attorney), and six residents Old Town.

Councilor Pushor called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

1. Danielle Berube, Finance Director updated the Committee on the following:

- Started June 30th year – end audit this week.
- Updated the Committee on the August 2023 financials.

Adjournment: Motion made by Councilor Peterson, seconded by Councilor Folster to adjourn, at 6:14 p.m.

Approved all in favor, 4-0 (motion passed)

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Engstrom
City Clerk



**City of Old Town
Committee of the Whole Minutes
September 18, 2023**

Committee of the Whole: Council President Linda McLeod, Councilors - Stan Peterson, Carol May, Chris Pushor, Mike May, Dave Wight, and Tim Folster.

Administration Present: Bill Mayo, Danielle Berube, Laura Engstrom, Travis Roy, Irene Pehrson, EJ Roach, David Smith, Scott Wilcox, April Buchanan, and Cassandra Pool.

Others Present: Tim Pease (City Attorney), and six residents Old Town.

President Linda McLeod called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:14 pm.

1. Travis Roy, Assistant Manager and April Buchanan, Assessor spoke to the City Council and discussed frequently asked questions concerning the revaluation of the City of Old Town's property owners.
Attachment of questions and answers is included with the minutes for reference and this workshop is recorded and available to the public on the City of Old Towns Website.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Engstrom, City Clerk

City of Old Town – Real Estate Valuation Information - 2023

Municipal Valuation FAQs – Questions asked of staff.

1) How do I question my real estate valuation with the City?

All taxpayers have 185 days from commitment date to question their assessed value.
Please refer to the attached flow chart to see the process.

2) What parts of the valuation process can I challenge?

- The first step is to meet with the assessor and communicate any errors in the data on your property card. This is typically things like there are too many bathrooms listed, or we tore down that shed years ago, etc.
- If you are not satisfied with the results of this conversation you can file for abatement. This application will ask what you think the value should be and will require you to submit proof of this market value assertion.

3) Why did the City decide to do the valuation updates now?

State law required at least partial revaluation every ten years, to maintain proper certified ratios.

The last full revaluation was completed in 2007, and minor adjustments were made as needed by former assessors.

The City had identified the need to update values in 2019.

The City started negotiating with the contractor in the Fall of 2019.

Just as we were close to an agreement in early 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic brought a halt to the start of the updates.

In the Fall of 2022, the City renewed the conversation with the contractor and hired them to produce updated cost files to be used in the City's TRIO software system that creates the valuations.

4) How much did the City budget go up this year? About 3.8%

5) Is this because the mill closed? No, the mill was open on April 1st, so they received a full tax bill for this year.

6) Why the increase then?

It is a shift of tax burden onto the residential real estate because the residential real estate market has increased sharply, while commercial increased a minor amount and industrial was flat.

While we anticipated some shift, we did not know that it would make this large a shift.

7) Is my value raised because of the sale price that I just bought it for?

No, we do not raise individual property values to the most recent sale price.

Municipal valuation is developed through mass appraisal procedures which looks at overall sales-to-assessment ratios for all properties in a specific group.

8) Why is my neighbor's new garage not on their assessment?

Thankyou for letting us know, but the most likely answer is that they started to build it after April 1st or they do not have a permit. We will review their file.

9) The City has three bedrooms listed for my house and I only have two, will this change my assessment?

No, bedrooms do not have a specific dollar amount associated, they are accounted for in the overall living area of the home.

10) The City has my house listed for three bathrooms, but I only have two bathrooms, will this change my assessment?

Yes, bathrooms are adjusted at a specific value amount in the system.

11) I called three days ago, and I have not heard back from the Assessor, why?

Assessor April Buchannan has received and is responded to over 150+ contacts from homeowners. There are two other staff members that are assisting her in the process as time allows.

12) Will I lose my right to question my valuation because I have not heard back from the assessor yet?

No, all taxpayers have 185 days from the commitment date to question their assessment.

The deadline to question this assessment is March 1, 2024.

13) When will the mill rate be adjusted?

The mill rate is set at commitment time each year, which is usually in early August.

Old Town's rate history –

FY2019 - \$22.86/\$1000 in value

FY2020 - \$22.86/\$1000 in value

FY2021 - \$22.86/\$1000 in value

FY2022 - \$21.70/\$1,000 in value

FY2023 - \$21.00/\$1,000 in value

FY2024 - \$17.70/\$1,000 in value

14) What is the quality rating of this current assessment?

The quality rating on this ratio study is 17

15) So, if the mill rate has been in the \$20's and now it in the \$17 range, what will it be next year?

The mill rate is calculated by dividing the overall approved budget, which includes all expenses to the City for City, County and School operations by the overall taxable value of the community each year.

This is why there is a certain date, April 1st that the assessor focuses on to determine what value may have been added or subtracted from the community. The Assessor then spends the summer inspecting properties and recording the data into the assessing software.

With so many variables there is no way to predict a mill rate a year in advance.

16) What about the seniors that were supposed to have no tax increase?

Any homeowner that was qualified and approved for the Tax Stabilization Program was billed the same amount as their tax bill last year, or less if they had any changes in their property. Any additional tax amount from this year is billed to the State of Maine and will be reimbursed to the City 100%.

The Maine Legislature has repealed the Tax Stabilization program.

17) When will interest begin on these tax amounts?

At the September 18th City Council meeting, the Old Town City Council will consider suspending all interest accrual on the FY2024(current tax bill) tax amounts. This step is being considered to allow for some extra time for residents to plan for and pay the increased amounts.

18) What does the City plan to do with the "windfall" of extra tax money?

There is no "windfall" of extra tax revenue.

The majority of the change in residential tax bills is due to a shift in the tax burden.

Residential property values have increased at a much higher rate than commercial and industrial properties. Thus, when we set out to adjust all classes of properties to be taxed in a fair and equitable manner the residential properties took on more of the overall amount to be raised by property taxes.

Historical Area Tax Rates

Fiscal Year	Old Town	Orono	Bangor	Brewer	Hampden
2024	\$17.70	\$23.40	\$19.15	\$20.10	\$19.25
2023	\$21.00	\$23.80	\$20.40	\$21.90	\$20.70
2022	\$21.70	\$23.75	\$22.30	\$22.30	\$20.70
2021	\$22.86	\$28.09	\$23.20		\$20.40
2020	\$22.86	\$26.45	\$23.00		\$20.40
2019	\$22.86	\$27.00	\$22.95		\$19.60
2018	\$22.35	\$26.00			\$18.40

Old Town Sales 4/1/2023 - 9/15/2023

Address	Sale Date	Sale Price	New Assess.	New To Sale Price %	Previous Assess.	Prev. Assess To Sale Price %	Comments
89 Brunswick St	4/4/2023	\$115,000	\$109,700	95%	\$66,800	58%	
98 Sixth St	4/11/2023	\$225,000	\$165,700	74%	\$102,000	45%	
459 Bennoch Rd	4/21/2023	\$250,000	\$288,000	115%	\$183,500	73%	
81 Pine St	4/26/2023	\$100,000	\$144,600	145%	\$96,300	96%	Will not qualify for government financing
30 Elm St	5/5/2023	\$52,250	\$184,100	352%	\$125,200	240%	Short Sale
76 Front St	5/10/2023	\$88,000	\$129,300	147%	\$81,500	93%	Needs cosmetic upgrades and updates.
867 Bennoch Rd	5/19/2023	\$249,900	\$190,100	76%	\$141,700	57%	
300 Bennoch Rd	5/22/2023	\$249,900	\$249,500	100%	\$161,500	65%	
21 Dartmouth St	5/26/2023	\$205,000	\$176,200	86%	\$112,300	55%	
12 Gray Ln	5/26/2023	\$80,000	\$91,900	115%	\$68,900	86%	
74 Perkins Ave	5/26/2023	\$226,000	\$132,800	59%	\$104,100	46%	
646 Main St	5/30/2023	\$184,000	\$223,300	121%	\$133,700	73%	
1222 College Ave	6/12/2023	\$290,000	\$187,400	65%	\$148,100	51%	
45 Bowdoin Ave	6/13/2023	\$165,000	\$106,500	65%	\$74,700	45%	
41 Leonard Ln	6/14/2023	\$270,000	\$206,000	76%	\$139,800	52%	
91 Middle St	6/16/2023	\$221,000	\$120,600	55%	\$81,300	37%	
61 Pine St	6/16/2023	\$158,000	\$128,700	81%	\$83,400	53%	
12 Union St	6/16/2023	\$135,000	\$90,800	67%	\$72,000	53%	
1207 Main St	6/20/2023	\$30,000	\$122,000	407%	\$82,800	276%	House has mold and needs to be torn down.
367 Poplar St	6/21/2023	\$230,000	\$277,800	121%	\$174,500	76%	
159 Lincoln St	6/23/2023	\$172,500	\$103,600	60%	\$77,700	45%	
115 Pine St	6/29/2023	\$235,000	\$173,800	74%	\$111,300	47%	

Old Town Sales 4/1/2023 - 9/15/2023

Address	Sale Date	Sale Price	New Assess.	New Assess. To Sale Price %	Previous Assess.	Prev. Assess To Sale Price %	Comments	
681 Main St	7/7/2023	\$248,000	\$210,900	85%	\$142,300	57%		
407 Main St	7/13/2023	\$199,900	\$200,600	100%	\$121,100	61%		
405 Stillwater Ave	7/18/2023	\$123,832	\$167,300	135%	\$117,100	95%	No additional information found	
697 Main St	7/19/2023	\$209,000	\$178,700	86%	\$130,200	62%		
60 Gilman Falls Ave	7/20/2023	\$250,000	\$138,800	56%	\$95,300	38%		
13 Bachelder Dr	7/21/2023	\$310,000	\$245,800	79%	\$154,800	50%		
391 Main St	7/21/2023	\$225,000	\$228,000	101%	\$138,100	61%		
190 Woodland Ave	7/28/2023	\$410,000	\$273,100	67%	\$206,500	50%		
536 Brunswick St	7/31/2023	\$207,500	\$147,500	71%	\$98,200	47%		
17 Bowdoin Ave	8/7/2023	\$189,500	\$110,600	58%	\$86,200	45%		
14 Union St	8/11/2023	\$160,000	\$135,800	85%	\$82,500	52%		
22 Fourth St	8/14/2023	\$540,000	\$345,100	64%	\$243,500	45%		
71 Seventh St	8/17/2023	\$280,000	\$184,000	66%	\$116,600	42%		
2074 Bennoch Rd	8/24/2023	\$252,350	\$122,800	49%	\$105,600	42%		
43 Highland Ave	8/24/2023	\$233,000	\$132,600	57%	\$86,700	37%		
242 Poplar St	8/25/2023	\$395,000	\$382,000	97%	\$271,800	69%		
545 Woodland Ave	8/29/2023	\$500,000	\$276,300	55%	\$212,900	43%		
2688 Bennoch Rd	8/30/2023	\$238,000	\$143,600	60%	\$98,800	42%		
41 Colonial Dr	8/31/2023	\$440,000	\$443,000	101%	\$282,500	64%		
Average Percentage							66%	

Listings As Of 9/15/2023

Address	List Price	New Assess.	New Assess. To List Price %	Previous Assess.	Prev. Assess. To List Price %	Comments
114 Sixth St	\$89,000	\$103,000	116%	\$77,100	87%	
2600 N Bennoch Rd	\$250,000	\$186,400	75%	\$131,200	52%	
1850 Bennoch Rd	\$179,900	\$115,600	64%	\$92,700	52%	
305 Bennoch Rd	\$193,000	\$207,300	107%	\$156,200	81%	
44 Bowdoin Ave	\$142,900	\$117,400	82%	\$79,200	55%	
9 Cedar St	\$187,000	\$125,900	67%	\$93,500	50%	
136 Front St	\$240,000	\$171,400	71%	\$121,600	51%	
109 Lincoln St	\$155,000	\$81,800	53%	\$57,000	37%	
119 Lincoln St	\$150,000	\$96,300	64%	\$71,300	48%	
4 Oak St	\$250,222	\$190,700	76%	\$120,900	48%	
81 Pine St	\$139,000	\$144,600	104%	\$96,300	69%	
881 Poplar St	\$389,900	\$328,300	84%	\$215,400	55%	
2 South Spring St	\$142,500	\$181,800	128%	\$121,700	85%	
77 Southgate Rd	\$109,500	\$91,800	84%	\$76,200	70%	
463 Stillwater Ave	\$150,000	\$192,200	128%	\$125,300	84%	
Average Percentage			87%		62%	