

City Council Meeting
May 4, 2026
Council Chambers, Auburn Hall, 60 Court St

Mayor Harmon called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Student Representative Abdulahi was absent.

I. Consent Items

1. ORDER 38-05042026 – Accepting an Asset Forfeiture from the State of Maine Criminal Courts to the Auburn Police Department from an incident dated February 6, 2024.
2. ORDER 39-05042026 - Appointing Auburn’s Representatives to the 2026-2028 MMA LPC. Motion for passage by Councilor Walker, seconded by Councilor Platz. Motion passed 7-0.

II. Minutes – April 21, 2026 Regular Council Meeting

Motion to adopt the minutes by Councilor Walker, seconded by Councilor Cowan. Motion passed 7-0.

III. Communications, Presentations and Recognitions

Arbor Week Proclamation was read by Mayor Harmon
City Manager Crowell welcomed Eric Cousens to the microphone who introduced DeCarlo Brown, Planning Director

IV. Open Session

None.

V. Unfinished Business

1. ORDINANCE 07-04212026 -- Amending Chapter 2 “Administration” of the City’s Code of Ordinances regarding Article VIII. “Citation System of Code Enforcement”. Second reading/public hearing. ROLL CALL VOTE.

Councilor Cowan moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Duvall. This item was opened for public comment. There was no comment.
Motion passed 7-0 on a roll call vote.

2. ORDINANCE 08-04212026 – Amending Chapter 14, “Business Licenses and Permits”, of the City’s Code of Ordinances regarding penalties and violations. Second reading/public hearing. ROLL CALL VOTE.

Councilor Walker moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Cowan.

This item was opened for public comment. There was no comment.

Motion passed 7-0 on a roll call vote.

VI. New Business

1. ORDER 40-05042026 – Adopting the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget of the Auburn School Department. Passage requires majority vote.

Councilor Walker moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Duvall.

This item was opened for public comment. There was no comment.

Motion passed 6-1 (Gerry).

2. ORDER 41-05042026 – Authorizing the City’s general obligation bonds in the principal amount not to exceed \$11,200,000 to reconfigure the Auburn Middle School (AMS) to construct an addition and other renovations and improvements to accommodate Grade 6 classrooms and other education space. First reading. ROLL CALL VOTE. Passage requires five (5) affirmative votes.

Councilor Platz moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Butler. This item was opened for public comment. There was no comment.

Councilor Platz addressed several emails received from constituents regarding this bond.

Councilor Platz clarified this is a tax-neutral event not impacting the debt service.

Councilor Cowan and Councilor Randall spoke in favor of this item as it is tax-neutral.

Councilor Gerry spoke against the item. Councilor Walker spoke against the item.

Councilor Butler thanked the school department and spoke on the process of this item.

Representative Edwards stated this item was one of the most needed in the school department. Mayor Harmon addressed the wording of the bond does not specifically state that it is tax neutral hence some of the confusion over the anticipated impact by the public.

Councilor Duvall spoke in favor of the item.

Motion passed 5-2 (Gerry, Walker) on a roll call vote.

3. ORDER 42-05042026 - Authorizing the City's general obligation bonds in the amount of \$11,776,000 to finance the City's FY27 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). First reading. ROLL CALL VOTE. Passage requires five (5) affirmative votes.

Councilor Cowan moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Platz. Mayor Harmon opened the item for public comment. The following spoke:

John Cleveland, Davis Ave

Councilor Platz acknowledged the work of the city manager and departments on this CIP proposal; stated this bond replaces the existing debt service and will not support additional debt service on next year. Councilor Cowan noted a large amount of this is for road and sidewalk repairs. Councilor Walker spoke against the item. Councilor Gerry spoke against the item.

Motion passed 5-2 (Gerry, Walker).

4. RESOLVE 02-05042026 – Adopting the 2026-2027 Appropriations Resolve (Municipal Budget). Public Hearing & First Reading. ROLL CALL VOTE. Passage requires majority vote.

Councilor Walker moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Cowan.

Mayor Harmon opened this item for public comment, the following spoke:

John Cleveland, Davis Ave

Councilor Duvall thanked the city staff for their work on the budget. Councilor Cowan stated they didn't look at 7.5% as it was too much, supports the proposed budget.

Councilor Platz stated his support for the item and the process that was followed.

Councilor Randall spoke in agreement and in favor of the item. Representative Edwards thanked everyone for their work on the budget.

Motion passed 6-1 (Gerry).

5. ORDER 43-05042026 – Amending the City's Master Fee Schedule to add existing Home Occupation permit fee and Code Enforcement Citations and Civil Penalties. Passage requires majority vote.

Councilor Walker moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Cowan. Mayor Harmon opened the item for public comment. There was no comment. Motion passed 7-0.

6. ORDER 44-05042026 - Adopting the PY2026 CDBG & HOME Consortium Consolidated Plan and HOMEARP amendment. Public hearing. Passage requires majority vote.

Councilor Walker moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Gerry. Mayor Harmon opened this item for public comment. There was no comment.

Motion passed 7-0.

7. ORDER 45-05042026 – Granting Lotus Restaurant Auburn Inc D/B/A Lotus Restaurant, 279 Center Street, an on-premise Class A Restaurant license for Beer, Wine & Spirits. New owner. Public hearing. Passage requires majority vote.

Councilor Gerry moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Walker.

Mayor Harmon opened this item for public comment. The following spoke:

Lijun Lin, Lotus Restaurant

Motion passed 7-0.

8. ORDER 46-05042026 – Approving the Casco Bay Trail Interlocal Agreement. Passage requires majority vote.

Councilor Platz moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Butler. Mayor Harmon opened this item for public comment. There was no comment.

Councilor Walker asked if this would cost the City anything in the future; Mayor Harmon responded there may be but there is no other additional cost as action of this order. The City Council would need to authorize any future funding for the trail.

Motion passed 7-0.

9. ORDER 47-05042026 - Granting a business license fee waiver request in the amount of \$500 from the American Legion Post #31/Alden M Gayton, 426 Washington St N. Passage requires majority vote.

Councilor Cowan moved for passage, seconded by Councilor Duvall. There was no comment.

Councilor Platz asked if the Council has received a request like this before. City Clerk Carrington responded this is the first request from this organization but other fee waivers have been granted in the past for other non-profit organizations.

Motion passed 7-0.

VII. Reports

a. Mayor's Report – Attended Scrabblefest 2026 and served as a judge and recapped the event with a City and School team participating. Provided an update on the Comp Plan Committee. Attended the annual CMCC annual awards banquet; Community Partner of the Year award was granted to the City for the PAL Center.

b. City Councilors' Reports – Councilor Cowan attended the Salt & Light Community Center had their ribbon cutting. Councilor Platz shared that he took his daughter to 7 Jam Kitchen in the Mall and supported a new local business.

c. Student Representative Report – EL has prom Saturday, and this week is Teacher Appreciation Week; sports are going well and Model UN team will 14 days left for Seniors and graduation on May 30th.

d. City Manager Report – Lobster Fest will be May 16; orientation held today for new hires, we welcome three critical positions for the City – city electrician, mechanic and planning director.

e. Quarterly Finance Report – Presented by Kelsey Earle, Finance Director. Councilor Walker moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Platz. Motion passed 7-0.

VIII. Open Session

___, Auburn – spoke on traffic and speeding concerns and police coverage at Washington Ave and Minot Ave

IX. Executive Session

X. Adjournment

Councilor Walker moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Platz. Motion passed 7-0.

Council adjourned 8:05pm.