

Town of Ashland
Regular Town Council Meeting
April 15, 2026

Present: Chairman Sherri Calhoun, Kevin Robinson, Gerard Raymond, James Risner and Manager Alicia Burby.

Absent: Tyler Michaud

- I. **Call meeting to order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Calhoun. Chairman Calhoun asked if there were any objections to add two items: under New Business #1a Certified Ratio and under Old Business #2 Van Purchase.

II. **Public Comments:**

Dave Shrout would like to have better supervision on Wrightville Road when the logging starts back up again so the loggers don't tear up the road. He is also concerned about the use of jake brakes at 1:30 a.m. – 2:00 a.m.

III. **Consent Items:**

1. Review, approve, and signed minutes from March 4, 2026, Regular Town Council meeting. A motion was made by Gerard Raymond, seconded by James Risner, to approve March 4, 2026, minutes. No discussion. Motion carried.
2. Review, approve and signed minutes from March 17, 2026, Organizational Meeting. A motion was made by Gerard Raymond, seconded by James Risner, to approve March 17, 2026, minutes. No discussion. Motion carried.
3. Review, approve and sign treasurer 2026 warrants 8V, 9P, 9V, 10P, 10V, 11P, 11V, 12V, 12P, 13V, 13P, 14V, & 14P. A motion was made by James Risner, seconded by Gerard Raymond, to approve the noted warrants. No discussion. Motion carried.

IV. **New Business**

1. Josh Berry, Municipal Consulting Group of Maine representative, who does our Code and Assessing, gave a brief explanation of the Personal Property Abatement for Maine Flame, LLC which was an oversight by his company. This company brought in a lot of equipment which was BETE eligible. Maine Revenue Service is going to honor the BETE reimbursement for Ashland for half. Chairman Calhoun asked Josh can you explain what a BETE exemption is. Josh gave another brief explanation on what qualifies for BETE exemption, which is a Personal Property tax credit. A motion was made by James Risner,

seconded by Kevin Robinson, to approve the Personal Property Abatement as presented. No discussion. Motion carried.

2. Manager Burby gave an overview of the Supplemental Tax Warrant for account #438, the owner would like to take an acre out of tree growth. A motion was made by James Risner, seconded by Gerard Raymond, to approve Supplemental Tax Warrant as presented. No discussion. Motion carried.
- 1a. Manager Burby let Josh Berry explain the Maine Revenue Certified Ratio estimated for 2026 tax year which is coming in at 80%. In tax year 2025, the ratio came in at 73% but the Council approved to increase the 2025 valuation to get the certified ratio to 100%. Josh recommended making the same adjustment on the valuation again for 2026 year as well as a little adjustment each year thereafter. The certified ratio affects homestead exemption. There is no need for a motion until sometime in May.
3. Manager Burby stated the TAN last year's interest was 7% and this year's was 4.63%. Manager Burby is recommending going with Katahdin Trust for the 2026 TAN. A motion was made by James Risner, seconded by Kevin Robinson, to approve the 2026 TAN agreement for \$500,000. No discussion. Motion carried.
4. Review Aroostook River Fish & Game Club Bottle Club Registration Application. James Risner made a motion, seconded by Gerard Raymond, to approve the Aroostook River Fish & Game Club Bottle Club Registration application. No discussion. Motion carried.
5. Review Aroostook River Fish & Game Club application for Special Amusement Permit for Dancing and Entertainment. James Risner made a motion, seconded by Kevin Robinson, to approve the Aroostook River Fish & Game application for Special Amusement Permit for Dancing and Entertainment. No discussion. Motion carried.
6. Manager Burby gave an overview of what Gateway Communities and Friends, formally Friends of Ashland, would like to hang veteran's banners along Main Street to Station Street. The plan is for them to raise funds to purchase the necessary materials and to use volunteers to hang the banners. They will have full responsibility in hanging the banners, replacing the banners, and removing them at the end of the season. Chairman Calhoun asked the question regarding the Town's liability. The discussion was on the hardware, and which poles the veteran's and the 250 anniversary banners will be hung on. They are requesting permission to hang them from Memorial Day to Veteran's Day. Manager Burby checked with Code and there are no ordinances or regulations that would affect the request. The Group asked about liability waiver. Councilor Raymond asked Manager Burby if she was going to seek legal advice and she stated yes just on the liability. James

Risner made a motion, seconded by Kevin Robinson, to give permission to Gateway Communities and Friends to hang the banners. No more discussion. Motion carried.

V: **Old Business:**

1. James Ryan, from Prentiss & Carlisle, gave a forestry update which included last year 1,064 cords were cut with a net profit of \$7,500. This year's projection profit revenue will be \$6,600. The forestry market is very low, and the forest has a lot of hardwood which has the lowest value of all the wood. His recommendation is to hold off until the end of the year or do nothing for this year. He stated this will allow the forester to review other wood lots. James Risner made a motion, seconded by Gerard Raymond, to do nothing this year so the forester can work on boundaries of profitable wood lots. No discussion. Motion carried.
2. Manager Burby discussed the purchase of a new van. She stated that currently there is a local van for \$36,995 and all departments would be able to utilize the van. The van would be purchased by using the budgeted amount of \$20,000 capital expenditure, the Whole Tree Grant endowment \$9,553 and the remaining will be from the New Equipment Reserve Account. James Risner made a motion, seconded by Kevin Robinson, to approve the purchase of the van. No discussion. Motion carried.

VI: **Manager's Report:**

1. Manager Burby handed out March financial statements along with an updated February financial statements.
2. Manager Burby gave an update on the overhead door replacements. All the doors ordered have been installed with a broken window and will need to be replaced once it comes in.
3. Manager Burby gave an overview of the rate increase from GWI (Great Works Internet), which is the Town's telephone provider. The increase tripled the monthly invoice. The new monthly rate is around \$900 per month. The main reason was that companies are moving away from copper lines and transitioning to VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). Manager Burby has been checking with other providers. Some of the providers were less than \$900 a month but wanted a five-year contract. Council has agreed to let Manager Burby continue to research and let her make the decision on the provider.

4. Manager Burby gave an update to the scheduling workers/volunteers at the Library. Her and the Librarian have been working on re-adjusting the working schedule, so the library hours of operation do not change.
5. Manager Burby gave an update on Recreation issues. The first issue is the toilets are constantly backing up. Manager Burby recommends looking to upgrade toilets to a commercial grade. The second issue is that there was a ceiling tile that fell in the exercise room. Manager Burby is looking to have a energy audit completed and is looking at grants that will fund any upgrades. Manager Burby mentioned that the Recreation department is doing a fundraiser and has raised \$1,500 of the \$3,000 to purchase mountain bikes.
6. Manager Burby gave an update on the surrounding town's subsidies. She stated that Masardis, Garfield and Portage warrants passed, and Nashville annual meeting is not until the fall. Her and the other town are having monthly meetings to discussion challenges and to close the gap of communication which have been working very well.

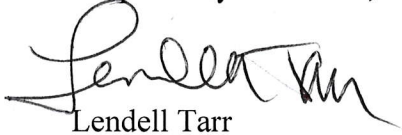
VII: **Council Items:**

1. Council Risner has announced that his last day will be Friday, April 17, 2026, to serve on the Town Council. He would like to thank the Council, Budget Committee, Planning Board, and Cemetery to allow him to serve. Council Raymond asked what the next step is to replace Council Risner. Manager Burby stated you have 30 days to appoint a Councilor.

VIII: **Adjournment:**

A motion was made by James Risner, seconded by Kevin Robinson, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

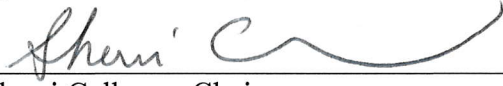
Respectfully submitted,



Lendell Tarr

Substitute Recording Secretary

Tyler Michaud



Sherri Calhoun, Chairman

James Risner



Gerard Raymond



Kevin Robinson