

Town of Ashland
Regular Town Council Meeting

July 8, 2025

Present: Chairman Tyler Michaud, Sherri Calhoun, Christopher Bessey, Gayle Burby, James Risner and Town Manager Alicia Burby.

Absent: None

I. **Call meeting to order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Michaud.

II. **Public comments:**

Fire Chief Don Bouley said the fire department got the equipment they ordered.

Wrightville Road resident Dave Shroat said when he moved onto Wrightville Road years ago it was a tared road and now it's a dirt road. With all the new houses and ATVs on the road the traffic has made bad potholes. What is the 5-year plan to fix it? Resident John Kelley asked if the town could take down the 40 mile per hour sign and make the speed limit lower. He feels cars are going way too fast and making the road worse. Chair Michaud said How can we fix the road without spending a lot of money.

Many Ashland citizens came to the meeting with concerns about the library. One of their concerns were the library was going to close. Residents think Librarian Hilary Moore is doing a great job and that the library is moving in the right direction with the programs she's adding. For full comments see the video on the Town Website.

III. **Consent items:**

1. Review, approve and sign minutes from June 10, 2025, Regular Town Council Meeting. Sherri Calhoun motioned to approve June 10, 2025, Regular Town Council Minutes. Chris Bessey seconded. No discussion. Motion Carried.

2. Review, approve and sign 2025 Treasurer Warrants #23V, 23P, 24V, 24P, 25V, 25P, 26V, & 26P. A motion was made by Sherri Calhoun to approve the noted warrants. Seconded by Chris Bessey. No discussion. Motion carried.

IV. **New Business**

1. Go into Executive Session to discuss personal issue per Maine State Law Title (1M.R.S.A Section 405-6A). Sherri Calhoun motioned moving The Executive Session to the end of the meeting. James Risner seconded. Motion passed.

2. Review transitioning Gladys J. Craig Memorial Library to a 501(c)3. In an effort to overcome the subsidy issues Town Manager Alicia Burby has been researching the possibility of transitioning the library from a municipal department to a separate 501(c)3 organization. Over 50% of all Maine Libraries follow a nonprofit business model. Unlike municipal libraries, which rely heavily on city budgets, nonprofit libraries are resilient. They draw from a diverse mix of funding such as grants, individual donations & business partnerships which are not tied to the

shifting tides of politics. Nonprofit libraries are governed by community -driven boards who are directly invested in the success of the institution. These are parents, teachers, students, retirees, and business owners from any community who all bring unique perspectives and a shared passion. They can act swiftly; design programming tailored to their neighborhoods and respond to real world needs. Why should the library be tied to a system that's inflexible and outdated, when we can unleash their full potential as community-powered nonprofit. Council members would like to set up a Library Community Advisory Board made up of Ashland residents and 1 resident from Portage, Masardis, Oxbow, Garfield and Nashville to meet for 3 months then report back to the council to see if it would be beneficial to transition the library to a 501(c)3. First a motion was made by Sherri Calhoun to schedule a special town meeting to see if the citizens will vote to transition the Gladys J Craig Memorial Library to a 501(c)3. Seconded by Chris Bessey. All council members opposed the motion. Motion failed. Then a motion was made by James Risner to appoint a Library Community Advisory Board that will meet for 3 months to explore a nonprofit for the library for all communities to be a part of. Sherri Calhoun seconded. All in favor. Motion Carried.

3. Review and select Mill Rate for 2025 Tax Commitment. There are three options for the 2025 Mill Rate 0.254, 0.0257, 0.026. Ashland's Tax Assessor recommends setting the 0.254 Mill Rate. Town Manager Alicia Burby would be more inclined to go with the middle option of 0.0257 to allow for a slightly higher overlay based on projected revenue changes due to subsidy challenges moving forward. Sherris Calhoun motioned to set the Town's Mill Rate at 0.0257. James Risner seconded. Motioned Carried.
4. Review road repair projects- The former Public Works staff started a ditching project on Rafford Road that needs to be completed. There is a culvert on Sheridan Road that poses a safety hazard and needs to be addressed. Town Manager Alicia Burby has reached out to local contractors for quotes, but she has not received them all yet.

V. Old Business:

No Old Business

VI. Manager's Report:

- 1.** Public works has 2 open vacancies and will be starting interviews shortly.
- 2.** Need a Special Town Council Meeting to discuss quotes from the road repair projects and, Library Advisory Board.
- 3.** No financials for June
- 4.** Town of Garfield added the Police for the rest of the year.
- 5.** Town of Portage voted down the subsidies for the Rec and Library.
- 6.** Prentis & Carlisle Town Land Timber, Timber still hasn't been hauled out & costs are up.

VII. Council items:

James Risner thanked the folks who made the Ashland Daze possible.

VIII. Public comments:

Teacher Michelle Beaulier made a comment that the Town needs to repair/improve the relationships with the surrounding towns over the Library & Rec subsidies.

Resident Justin Burby said over the past few years there have been a lot of waves being made in the town and nothing has been done in a long time. He feels the council is doing their best to get things done.

Resident Matthew Wood said changing the library to a 501(c)3 he thinks would be a good decision because it opens the library up to Federal Funding & Corporate Grants.

IX. New Business

Sherry Calhoun motioned to go into Executive Session to discuss Personal Issue per Maine State Law Title(1M.R.S.A Section 405- 6A). James Risner seconded Executive session started at 7:50 P.M.

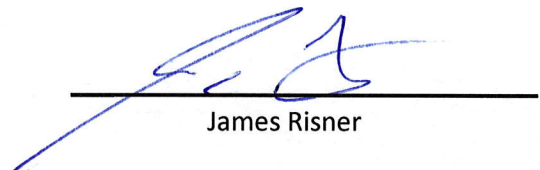
Sherry Calhoun motioned to end Executive Session. Chris Bessey seconded. Executive Session ended at 8:09 P.M.

X. Adjournment: Sherry Calhoun motioned to adjourn the meeting; Chris Bessey Seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

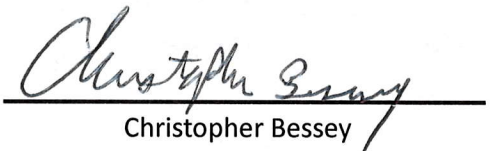
Respectfully submitted,


Susan Jimmo
Recording Secretary


Tyler Michaud, Chairman


James Risner

Sherry Calhoun


Christopher Bessey


Gayle Burby