



Regular Town Council Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday, August 4, 2026 at 6:30 pm

MEETING LOCATION

24 Main Street, Gray, ME 04039 - Town Council Chambers

JOIN MEETING THROUGH TEAMS

- **Microsoft Teams:** <https://graymaine.link/TC-Meeting>
- **Phone:** 469-708-0487 / Meeting ID: 965 999 432#

1. OPENING STATEMENT

2. ROLL CALL

Minutes:

Councilors Present: Vincent Palange (Chair), Judith Simoneau (Vice Chair), Pamela Edson, Anne Gass, Michael Johnson **Other Town Officials:** Lauren Asselin (Interim Town Manager), Kyle Hadyniak (Director of Communications & IT), Kristen Muszynski (Town Planner)

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Minutes:

Council Chair Palange led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes:

Motion: To approve the July 14, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. **Moved by:** Councilor Johnson, Seconded by Councilor Edson

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

5. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

a. Council Correspondence & Committee Reports

Minutes:

The Councilors provided updates on their respective correspondence and

committee activities.

Councilor Gass - Open Space Committee decided not to attend the Wild Blueberry Festival; Resiliency Committee's proposal to update the Watershed Management Plan was awarded by the DEP; no activities to report; received correspondence supporting restoring the Land Acquisition Fund and restoring the contract with the Sheriff's Department.

Councilor Johnson - Library Trustees talked about budget; received FOAA request from a resident; received various correspondence.

Councilor Edson - Promoted upcoming Wild Blueberry Festival; celebrated GNG/R Little League Team for recent championship; promoted MOFF Film Festival event in Gray on August 11.

Councilor Simoneau - Impressed by recent ZBA meeting; Finance Committee looks to get better reporting on Town finances; also received email about Depot Road traffic, praised solutions provided by resident.

b. Report from Council Chair

Minutes:

Councilor Palange - Discussed Finance Committee is working on improving forecasting and reporting; received feedback about councilor microphones; praised email about Depot Road, wants to approach the State about solving problem; discussed Town openings and perks of working for the Town; thanked all Town employees who have stepped up due to vacancies.

6. REPORT FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

Minutes:

Lauren Asselin - Promoted Gray Wild Blueberry Festival; promoted MOFF event; promoted OnBoardGOV and new Business Directory.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS OF NON-AGENDA ITEMS (LIMIT 3 MINS PER PERSON)

Minutes:

The following people spoke: Ken Farrington, Julie Sheets, Lisa Lehne-Gilmore, Meg Barhite

OLD BUSINESS

8. Unfinished Business - Tabled at Previous Meeting

a. Resolve 2627-1 - Council Rules

Minutes:

Motion: To remove Resolve 2627-1 Reaffirming Rules to Town Council Meetings & Workshops from the table for further discussion. **Moved by:** Councilor Johnson, Seconded by Councilor Gass **Motion:** Be resolved that the Gray Town Council hereby reaffirms the Town Council Rules, Chapter 602, as amended, to remain in full force and effect until amended by future Council action. **Moved by:** Councilor Johnson, Seconded by Councilor Gass Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: Lisa Lehne-Gilmore.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation. The Council agreed to collect proposed changes to council rules by August 13, discuss them at the August 18 meeting, and aim to have a revised draft ready for the September 1 meeting. The process includes compiling input from all councilors and reviewing substantive changes before final adoption.

Motion: To table Resolve 2627-1 Reaffirming Rules for Town Council Meetings & Workshops to a future Council agenda.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

b. Order 2627-4 - Committee and Affiliations Policy

Minutes:

Motion: To remove the Order 2627-4 - Committee and Affiliations Policy from the table for further discussion **Moved by:** Councilor Edson, Seconded by Councilor Johnson **Motion:** Be resolved, that the Gray Town Council hereby reaffirms the Committee and Affiliations Policy as amended to remain in full force and effect until amended by future Council action **Moved by:** Councilor Gass, Seconded by Councilor Simoneau

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: None.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation.

The Council set a deadline of September 1 for committee chairs to submit proposed changes, with the policy scheduled for discussion and potential adoption at the September 15 meeting.

Motion: Be ordered, that the Gray Town Council tables Order 2627-4 - Committee and Affiliations Policy to a future Council agenda.

Councilor Johnson was absent for this motion.

Vote results:

Ayes: 4 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

NEW BUSINESS

9. Resolves (One Reading Required)

a. Resolve 2627-8 - Rebranding Initiative

Minutes:

Motion: Be resolved, that the Gray Town Council approves discontinuation of all rebranding-related expenditures and no additional funds shall be spent unless specifically approved by the Town Council **Moved by:** Councilor Simoneau, Seconded by Councilor Edson

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for comments on the motion. The following individuals spoke: Lisa Lehne-Gilmore.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for council deliberation. The councilors discussed the merits and drawbacks of the new logo, the process by which it was selected, and whether to halt further expenditures. Councilor Johnson noted the language of the resolve did not match the stated goals of Councilors Simoneau and Edson. Some councilors expressed a desire to survey residents

for broader input.

Motion: Be resolved, that the Gray Town Council approves the discontinuation of all rebranding-related expenditures and no additional funds shall be spent unless approved by the Town Council.

Vote results:

Ayes: 0 / Nays: 5 / Abstains: 0

b. Resolve 2627-9 - Registrar Appointment

Minutes:

Motion: Be resolved that the Gray Town Council designates Interim Town Manager Lauren Asselin as the Town of Gray's Registrar of Voters until a new Town Clerk is hired. **Moved by:** Councilor Johnson, Seconded by Council Edson

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: None.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation. No conversation was needed.

Motion: Be resolved that the Gray Town Council designates Interim Town Manager Lauren Asselin as the Town of Gray's Registrar of Voters until a new Town Clerk is hired.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

c. Resolve 2627-10 - Acting Town Clerk Appointment

Minutes:

Motion: Be resolved that the Gray Town Council designates Interim Town Manager Lauren Asselin as the Town of Gray's Acting Town Clerk until a new Town Clerk is hired. **Moved by:** Councilor Johnson, Seconded by Councilor Edson

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: Maureen Gilbert.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation. No discussion was needed.

Motion: Be resolved that the Gray Town Council designates Interim Town Manager Lauren Asselin as the Town of Gray's Acting Town Clerk until a new Town Clerk is hired.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

d. Resolve 2627-11 - Acting Town Manager Appointment

Minutes:

Motion: Ordered and notwithstanding any previous order of the Council to the contrary, in the absence of the Town Manager, the Town Manager's designee shall serve as Acting Town Manager. In the event of the Town Manager's removal from office, the Finance Director shall serve as Acting Town Manager until such time as the Council appoints a successor. **Moved by:** Councilor

Johnson, Seconded by Councilor Gass

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: None.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation. Councilor Johnson thought Justine Hutchings would do a great job. Ms. Asselin reviewed how it's beneficial not to name specific employees as Acting Town Manager, but rather the positions. She also explained how the Finance Director is the best choice to temporarily replace the Town Manager considering that position handles the finances for the Town.

Motion: Ordered and notwithstanding any previous order of the Council to the contrary, in the absence of the Town Manager, the Town Manager's designee shall serve as Acting Town Manager. In the event of the Town Manager's removal from office, the Finance Director shall serve as Acting Town Manager until such time as the Council appoints a successor.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

10. Orders (One Reading Required)

a. Order 2526-6 - Interim Town Manager Contract

Minutes:

Motion: Be Ordered, that the Gray Town Council hereby approves the Interim Town Manager contract with Lauren Asselin, effective June 2, 2026 and authorizes the Council Chair to execute the agreement on behalf of the Town.

Moved by: Councilor Edson, Seconded by Councilor Johnson

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: None.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation.

Councilor Johnson praised Ms. Asselin's handling of the Interim Town Manager job thus far, with this sentiment echoed by other councilors.

Motion: Be Ordered, that the Gray Town Council hereby approves the Interim Town Manager contract with Lauren Asselin, effective June 2, 2026 and authorizes the Council Chair to execute the agreement on behalf of the Town.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

11. Orders (Two Readings Required)

a. Order 2627-7 - ADU Ordinance

Minutes:

Motion: The Town of Gray hereby ordains that the Town of Gray shall adopt the proposed amendments to the Accessory Dwelling Unit section of the Zoning Ordinance Chapter 402.7.9. **Moved by:** Councilor Johnson, Seconded by

Councilor Gass

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: Barry Pollen.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation.

Planning staff explained that state law will require ADUs on duplexes and three-

family homes starting next July, but some residents are currently affected by the delay. The Council considered adopting the change early to assist those with pending projects. Councilors discussed ordinance specifics, including limits on the number of ADUs per property, applicability to condos, and the rationale for certain restrictions. They also debated the aesthetics requirements and the potential impact on group homes and private roads.

Motion: The Town of Gray hereby ordains that the Town of Gray shall adopt the proposed amendments to the Accessory Dwelling Unit section of the Zoning Ordinance Chapter 402.7.9.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

b. Order 2627-8 - Zoning Ordinance

Minutes:

Motion: The Town of Gray hereby ordains that the Town of Gray shall adopt the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Chapter 402. **Moved by:**

Councilor Johnson, Seconded by Councilor Gass

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: None.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation.

The Council discussed updates to the zoning ordinance, including clarifications on parking requirements for ADUs and senior housing, and provisions for Zoning Board of Appeals decisions. Councilors discussed the need for possible extensions in appeal cases and the rationale for parking standards.

Motion: The Town of Gray hereby ordains that the Town of Gray shall adopt the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Chapter 402.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

c. Order 2627-9 - Growth Ordinance

Minutes:

Motion: Move to repeal the Growth Management Ordinance, Chapter 409, effective immediately. **Moved by:** Councilor Gass, Seconded by Councilor Johnson.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: None.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation.

The Council debated repealing the Growth Management Ordinance, with some members favoring its retention to control development pace and others advocating for repeal to encourage housing growth. The decision was made to keep the ordinance in place for now, with plans to revisit the permit cap and consider input from an upcoming housing study.

Motion: Move to repeal the Growth Management Ordinance, Chapter 409, effective immediately.

Vote results:

Ayes: 2 / Nays: 3 / Abstains: 0

d. Order 2627-10 - Data Center

Minutes:

Motion: Move to approve the Ordinance Establishing a Temporary Moratorium on Data Centers, effective retroactively to July 14, 2026, to be in full force and effect for 180 days thereafter. **Moved by:** Councilor Gass, Seconded by Councilor Johnson

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: Joseph Pensky, Lisa Lehne-Gilmore
Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation.

The Council discussed the lack of specific local regulations for data centers and the need for time to study their potential impacts.

Motion: Move to approve the Ordinance Establishing a Temporary Moratorium on Data Centers, effective retroactively to July 14, 2026, to be in full force and effect for 180 days thereafter.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

e. Order 2627-11 - Surface Water Protection Ordinance

Minutes:

Motion: Be ordered that the Gray Town Council hereby adopts the Surface Water Protection Ordinance. **Moved by:** Councilor Johnson, Seconded by Councilor Gass

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: None.

The Council opted to table this item to September 1, 2026.

Motion: To table Order 2627-11 to September 1. **Moved by:** Councilor Johnson, Seconded by Councilor Gass

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

f. Order 2627-12 - Subdivision Ordinance

Minutes:

Motion: The Town of Gray hereby ordains that the Town of Gray shall adopt the proposed amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance Chapter 401. **Moved by:** Councilor Johnson, Seconded by Councilor Gass

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for discussion on the motion. The following individuals spoke: None.

Council Chair Palange opened the floor for Council deliberation.

Housekeeping changes to the subdivision ordinance were discussed, aligning fire protection standards with NFPA guidelines and clarifying requirements for cisterns, hydrants, and sprinklers. The Council discussed the cost and necessity of fire protection options and the standards for road construction and winter maintenance.

Motion: The Town of Gray hereby ordains that the Town of Gray shall adopt the proposed amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance Chapter 401.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0 / Abstains: 0

12. REFERRALS & OTHER BUSINESS

a. Discussion of Town Council Recaps

Minutes:

The Town Council discussed the recap of Town Council meetings published to the website and promoted on social media and in the bi-weekly newsletter.

Councilor Simoneau said she thought the recap may unintentionally include some bias and asserted the Town of Gray's minutes and meeting recordings are suitable for transparency.

Councilor Edson voiced concerns about the recaps not providing enough context for issues discussed at Town Council meetings. Councilor Johnson echoed this sentiment. Councilor Johnson also mentioned he received emails in support of the recap.

Councilor Gass supported the recaps, praising their accessibility for busy residents and the checks and balances systems used to create them.

Several residents spoke about how useful the recaps are and encouraged the Council to keep them.

The Council opted to provide timestamps to the community in lieu of the recap articles.

13. CURRENT COUNCIL REFERRALS

14. UPCOMING MEETINGS

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

16. ADJOURNMENT