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# FROM THE PRESIDENTS DESK

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## Taking the Right Steps

This month, the City Council voted to move the remaining non-union department heads onto a new, standardized pay scale. For a long time, raises for these positions were handled one by one, which often felt political and caused tension within City Hall. This vote fixes that by creating a transparent, fair system where pay increases are based on set "steps" with a proper framework and process set by ordinance.

I agree with Councillor Kasinskas when she said during Councillor comments, "I do sincerely hope that this serves as a strong first step toward improving consistency, easing workplace concerns within the City Hall workplace, and allowing our City Hall employees to remain focused on serving our residents, which is what matters most to our employees." This was a major piece of legislation the Council worked through, and I think we came to the best result for our employees and the taxpayers of Gardner.

## The Write Stuff: Simplifying Signage

We are committed to making Gardner more business-friendly, which is why the Council recently updated our municipal code regarding signage. By moving these regulations to a non-zoning chapter, we have simplified the permitting process for local small businesses.

This joint proposal by Councillor Mack and Mayor Nicholson addresses a long-standing hurdle that often required individual, time-consuming resolutions. These changes provide much-needed flexibility in how we review the placement and requirements for signs, saving prospective business owners valuable time and money as they work to get their doors open.

## Board-ing Call: New Members Confirmed

The Council was pleased to confirm several mayoral appointments to the Council on Aging and the Bandstand Committee. These volunteer boards are the backbone of our community's social and cultural life. The Council on Aging works hand-in-hand with our Senior Center Director to provide essential programming for our elderly residents, while the Bandstand Committee keeps our local culture vibrant by coordinating the beloved concert series at Monument Park.

To all those appointed this month: Thank you for your willingness to serve and for helping make Gardner such a great place to live.

## A Room for Everyone

Efforts are underway to make the City Council Chambers more accessible and welcoming for all members of the community. In collaboration with the Disability Commission and the Building Commissioner, the chamber is being updated to ensure every resident, regardless of physical ability, can easily navigate and participate in local government.

Adjusting the layout of the room is about more than just aesthetics; it's about showing every resident that their presence is welcomed and has worth. When we make our public spaces easier to enter, navigate and use - we make it easier for people to become and feel involved.

I want to thank Anne Hurst, the Clabough's, Danielle Fournier and Commissioner MacDonald for their help in this effort, and especially Councillor Dernalowicz for providing the muscle to help move those heavy pews.

## April Wrapped Up

The Council's standing committees were busy this month preparing themselves for the budget season. Many committees met with various departments to receive updates and Chairs have been busy coordinating their budget hearings next month. This proactive approach ensures we are well-prepared to advocate for a fiscally responsible and community-focused budget for the next fiscal year.

See you all next month! George

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Released 4-30-26 by George Tyros

President of the Gardner City Council