

CITY OF LEWISTON

CITY COUNCIL

JUNE 30, 2026

SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT LEWISTON HIGH SCHOOL AT 6:00 P.M.

THE HONORABLE CARL L. SHELINE, MAYOR, PRESIDING.

PRESENT: Mayor Sheline, Councilors Nagine, Longchamps, Harriman, Roy, Noble, Chittim, and Martel, City Administrator Bryan Kaenrath, Deputy City Administrator Brian O'Malley, and City Clerk Kathleen Montejo.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Sheline outlined the speakers for the evening:

Lewiston Police Chief Carly Conley

Androscoggin County District Attorney Neil McLean

Lewiston School Superintendent Jake Langlais

Executive Director of New Beginnings Chris Bicknell

Representative of Restorative Justice Maine program Duncans Pierre

Representatives from the Maine Department of Corrections Christine Lachance and Jill O'Brien

Lewiston Chief Conley – Shared a powerpoint presentation outlining the crime statistics over the past few years. She highlighted the LPD response to the shootings and described the resources available to the department and their investigative tools. Noted the various law enforcement agencies that have offices in the police station such as FBI, MDEA and others. She spoke of the importance of community engagement, connecting and resource sharing. The Chief reviewed obstacles and common misconceptions.

District Attorney McLean – Described the work of the DA's office and the structure of his department. He reviewed their case load levels. He cited federal programs for juvenile crime prevention and is exploring options. Elected officials need to take this issue seriously and provide funding to support. He feels the state definition of "chronological immaturity" needs to be updated. He noted the statutes define the criteria to hold a youth and it is only 48 hours.

Superintendent Langlais – Stated that the community cannot give up on our kids. Kids strongly influence other kids. He explained the process to expel a student from the public school system. Encouraged everyone who encounters local children to ask "how are things going?" and "what is going on in your world?" to see if resources, help and intervention are needed. Noted Lewiston does not have a truancy officer. Said in speaking with students who get in trouble, several noted stealing guns from unlocked vehicles around the city.

Mr. Bicknell, New Beginnings – We are in a public health crisis, residents are living in fear, the city needs a Public Health Office to work with ME CDC and the Maine Children's Cabinet. The City has opioid response funds that should be used to set up a Public Health Office, the state has funds too. The City should seek funding support from foundations and corporations. Youth gun violence is a problem in the community that requires resources. This is a public health emergency with a public safety component. The L/A Child Well Being Collaborative is a good resource. Many youth who have been experiencing trouble have little to no support structure in their lives.

Mr. Pierre, Restorative Justice Project of Maine – Many kids have a lack of support at home, lack of accountability. There are about 50 youth in total that have been causing issues and problems with gun violence in the community. Encouraged members of the public to take the time to get to know local youth, ask what their life is like and spend time with them to find out what is going on in their lives. There is not a lack of resources for youth but we need to figure out a way to get them to access these resources to calm their bodies and minds.

Assistant Commissioner Christine Thibau, Department of Corrections, Assistant Commissioner for Juvenile Services and Jill O'Brien, Director of Government Affairs, Department of Corrections – Their agency oversees the Longcreek Youth Development Center. They issue \$4.6 million statewide in restorative justice community programming funds, \$1.4 million in Region 2 where Lewiston is located. They described the juvenile probation process, the process for Longcreek to house detained youth. They mentioned issues of housing, poverty, mental health and substance use as all topics needed to support and serve youth. Discussed orders from Judges about detaining youth, limitations in state statutes.

The Mayor then opened the floor for Council discussion – The state needs to provide assistance, Governor Mills needs to sit with the Lewiston police department and District Attorney to hear concerns, perhaps bring in National Guard. Residents need to lock vehicles and lock up guns. Youth with guns are breaking the law, the problem did not happen overnight. The Legislature needs to address statutes to fix issues. If residents and youth see something, they must say something.

The Mayor then opened the meeting to receive public comment. Twenty residents spoke. Comments include: Frustration with lack of parental control and oversight, hoping people can donate used sporting equipment to help get kids into activities, community needs to come together to address, police are doing a good job but cannot do it all, down many officers, the youth justice system is broken, the restorative justice model is not working, solutions start with the Legislature addressing the holes in state law regarding limits on detaining youth, don't make this a political issue, don't forget we are talking about families and kids, more mentors are needed, some children have no parents, no guidance, no support, need more after school programs. This is a public health issue, need more community meetings and more people involved, it is only a matter of time before an innocent bystander is shot, blaming does not solve the problem. The Somali youth do not have a lot of strong male role models, the children are vulnerable. Money is the main issue, need funding for programs and services, need responsible gun ownership. Parents and kids need to be held responsible.

Motion to Adjourn made by Councilor Martel, second by Councilor Nagine.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 10:00pm.

A true record, Attest:

Kathleen M. Montejo, MMC
City Clerk
Lewiston, Maine