

**Good Evening,**

**My name is Cindy Reese. I have been part of the Oakland community for over 40 years, serving on a number of community organizations during this time. I was also a public School Teacher for 25 years. My experience both personally and professionally has given me a clear understanding of the complexities in working with a variety of people and personalities in many different situations and circumstances.**

**I will speak from my notes this evening, to ensure I do not miss any important points.**

**I request that these notes be made part of the minutes for tonight's meeting.**

**I come to you tonight as a fellow citizen, resident, and taxpayer of the town of Oakland. I have had a professional relationship with Ella Bowman *only*. I have been honored to serve the citizens of Oakland alongside Ella on three successful committee assignments including: the Long Range Comprehensive Plan Committee, the Downtown Redevelopment Committee, and the Committee that worked to define the Downtown TIF district. In each, Ella has stood out for her positive working relationships, openness to new ideas, forward thinking, and with a focus on excellence for**

**Oakland that has set us apart from other communities in Central Maine and the state.**

**When I drive into Oakland, I am always proud to be a part of this town. The natural beauty, the sense of community, gives me the feeling that our Town Manager and Town Council are united in doing what is best for all of us. Oakland residents enjoy continued low property taxes and a great quality of life.**

**The events of the last few weeks are tremendously concerning. The progress we have made in becoming an extraordinary place to live could soon be stalled or even undone.**

**In Ella's remarkable 24 years of service to the Town, she has an impeccable record and her accomplishments have moved us forward in a positive direction setting the town up for an incredibly bright future.**

**Ella coordinates teams of volunteers that represent a thoughtful cross section of our Oakland residents. She looks for diverse beliefs and understandings. She always gives credit to the Town Council, volunteers, and the town staff, for the many successes. There have been many major program accomplishments during Ella's tenure as our Town Manager.**

**\*Bringing thousands of people to Oakland each year for the multi-day Oakfest Festival**

**\*Funding the gazebo at The Snow Pond boat landing and developing our music series**

- \*The Flower Committee which has added immeasurable beauty to our town**
- \*Building of our Police Station using a then innovative “design build” to bring in the project under budget**
- \*Developing and passing of the first Long Range Comprehensive Plan this town has had in 30 years, making us eligible for a host of programing and grant funding**
- \*Constructing the new Fire Station without an increase in property taxes**
- \*Moving the Fire Department from a part time to a full-time model**
- \*Placing the solar array on the closed landfill that is saving us as taxpayers about \$15,000 annually in electricity**
- \*Developing the beautiful and breathtaking Overlook Park**
- \*Demonstrating her budget, finance, and personnel skills by bringing wages for municipal staff up to market rates across the board without a tax increase.**
  
- \*Planning and implementation of a 4-day work week that has brought our town to full staff. Other towns are cutting back hours, days of operation, and even closing offices due to being short staffed.**
- \*Forming the Downtown Redevelopment Committee which will shape Oakland’s future**

**\*Developing the downtown TIF district**

**\*Changing 247 street lights to LED's**

**\*Purchasing 27 acres of land on Fairfield Street for the town's fourth park**

**\*Creating the Memorial Hall Redevelopment Committee to preserve a historical landmark that once lost will never be recreated. Ella engaged the expertise of University of Maine Augusta architecture students to create plans for this project saving the town tens of thousands of dollars.**

**\*Neighboring communities around us have experienced tax increases this year, some of them quite significant. Oakland taxes stayed flat, and some properties went down. While the Town Council approves the budgets, Ella's proposed budgets have been a result of her fiscal leadership.**

**\*Ella's work with the Kennebec Valley Diversity Coalition has encouraged growth and acceptance in our community, bringing in older and younger community members who previously left the area and the state due to lack of opportunities. This new growth (49 new homes in 2021 alone) offsets the cost of operations.**

**Ella has worked with all of you to create a welcoming, enthusiastic, open-door atmosphere for our residents.**