FINAL

LEBANON CITY COUNCIL
BUDGET WORK SESSION
Thursday, November 12, 2020, 5:30 p.m.
Remote Via Microsoft Teams: LebanonNH.gov/Live

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mayor Tim McNamara, Assistant Mayor Clifton Below, Bruce Bronner, Erling Heistad, Karen Liot Hill, Suzanne Prentiss, George Sykes, Jim Winny, Karen Zook
MEMBERS ABSENT:	None
STAFF PRESENT:	City Manager Shaun Mulholland, Deputy City Manager Paula Maville, City Clerk Kristin Kenniston, Director of Planning & Zoning David Brooks, Finance Director Vicki Lee, Deputy Finance Director Tina Stearns, Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director Chris Christopoulos, Airport Director Carl Gross, Parks & Recreation Director Paul Coats, Recreation Coordinator Krissy Flythe, HR Director Gloria Leskiewicz, Human Services Director Lynne Goodwin, Library Director Sean Fleming, Parks & Recreations Coordinator Meagan Henry

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Call to Order: Mayor McNamara called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

This meeting took place virtually due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and was conducted in accordance with the Emergency Orders issued by the New Hampshire Governor according to NH RSA 91-A "Right-to-Know Law."

All Councilors who were present for this Work Session are listed above. Councilors Liot Hill and Winny were not present at the time of the roll call but signed in shortly afterward.

This is not a Public Hearing but rather a work session for the Council to review staff's proposed budgets for 2021. However, the public is encouraged to listen in. There will be opportunities for public comment in the upcoming weeks.

Pledge of Allegiance: Councilor Bronner led the Council in the Pledge.

1. Review of 2021 City Budget – Question & Answer Session.

A. Recreations & Parks: Director Paul Coats
Requesting $849,990.00 (A decrease of $-130,540.00 or -13.31% from 2020)
Revenues: $144,500.00 (A decrease of $-27,510.00 or -15.99% from 2020).

Recreation and Parks Director Paul Coats introduced his staff and reviewed the proposed Recreation & Parks budget line items for expenses and revenues with the Council, noting Recreation Services have done their best to keep community enrichment services for 2020 running. This has been a very strange year in how we keep programs and services in place for people without being able to actually gather people together. As a result, a major part of our mission has been thwarted by COVID and finding unique ways to provide community programs is still being worked on. He spoke about the following events/programs that have been drastically affected and will not be taking place in 2021 as follows:

- Pool: The most drastic change in revenues for 2021 is the reduction of $-27,520, because the pool will not be opening in 2021.
- About 90% of our programs all have cost recovery revenues, such as the Day Camp and Farmer's Market.
- Monday night concerts: There has been a long tradition of offering Monday night concerts, and while the attendance at these concerts are not like the Thursday night concerts, the City has been able to enjoy the bands and other local/regional performances. However since these are free concerts the City provides to the public, and short of having some major corporate sponsorship, Monday night concerts will not be offered in 2021.
- Summer Celebration/4th of July: Some parts of the Summer Celebration will take place in 2021, because the fireworks have already been paid for, but looking forward, some of the music will not be taking place. This also holds true for the 4th of July. These are all things that cost the City quite a bit of money but do not have corresponding revenues.
- Holiday lights in Colburn Park and in West Lebanon will not be put up in 2021 ($3,600 under Operating Supplies), ***but for 2020 there will be lights***. Usually Recreation & Parks need to purchase lights on a yearly basis because they have found that lights do not withstand the longer winter season so cannot be reused from year-to-year. Roughly $2,500 are spent on lights each year.
- Hours for part-time staff have been reduced and we have been able to get by without as many part-time staff hours due to the nature of college students leaving.

In response to Mayor McNamara's question regarding revenues, Director Coats confirmed there will be no incoming revenues for the remainder of this year.

Councilor Heistad commended the Recreation & Parks Department for doing a wonderful job in getting people outdoors. The Recreation Department is a vital part of the health of the City, especially during the times we are all in. The more we can get people outside and being active, the better off the community will be health wise, mentally as well as physically.

Director Coats said a lot of the efforts from staff has been transferred over to the betterment of the City's parks. One of the positive things from COVID this year is that people have stayed local and sought their own ways of being outside. Staff is trying to make sure the Mascoma River Greenway Trail is well maintained, as well as all ball fields and Colburn Park. He spoke about the work done by the Arts & Culture Commission to put in the new Graffiti Park at the Riverside Skatepark area.

Councilor Sykes asked what portion of cuts for the pool was due to budgetary issues and what part was due to COVID. Director Coats explained they were facing a significant portion of their budget being cut without knowing whether COVID would be with us in the summer of 2021 so they had to look at the pool being slashed. The decision to cut the pool, rather than cutting staff, was an easy choice based on multiple factors. Cutting staff would have a very different list of impacts. Many more programs would have been cancelled because 20% of the staff would have disappeared. The pool has seasonal part-time staff.

Councilor Liot Hill asked if he thought about increasing the pool fees. Director Coats said fees are set pretty low to begin with in order to make it affordable as directed by the Council. However, in order to make up that kind of revenue shortfall, he would have to be guaranteed that attendance would not only be maintained, but the fees would have to be raised right out of the market (i.e., instead of paying $1.00 per child per day, they would have to pay $10). He has not done an in-depth study about where fees would need to be set, but they would be 4-5 time higher than what they currently are. It would also be risky behavior due to all the expenses directly involved with running the pool.

Councilor Liot Hill requested the pool issue be explored more and suggested a business plan be drafted to determine how many family passes would be needed for the pool to break even. She also had misgivings about eliminating the holiday lights in Colburn Park for 2021 and felt there were other desirable places to cut the budget.

- Day Camp Review: No change from 2020
- Pool Review: In an effort to slash expenses, the pool will not be opening in 2021 due to a lack in revenues in 2020 to match the associated expenses. Recreation and Parks hope this will be a short term change for the overall City Services.
- Farmer's Market Review: No change from 2020.

B. Outside Recreation Services: Director Paul Coats

- <u>Lebanon Outing Club Review</u>: **Requesting $27,350 No change from 2020.**

Storrs Hill is still planned to open for skiing this winter. The major changes being made are to not have the lodge open to the public, other than the bathrooms; staff will be inside the lodge servicing from the concession stand through an outside window; heat sources outside are being planned for the deck and the current grass area (this is common throughout the country); Saturday skiing will be from 12-9 PM and Sundays from 12–7 PM, assuming there are enough volunteers to run the lift and serve on the Ski Patrol. Volunteers are urged to contact Director Coats.

New this year: Grooming for cross country skiing will be done on the Alice Peck Day's trails to the Mascoma Greenway. Part of the Mascoma Greenway will also be groomed, as well as 1-2 loops at River Park in West Lebanon.

- <u>Greater Lebanon Youth Hockey Review</u>: **Requesting $3,730. No change from 2020.**

They will be having a local season this year. This will not be a travel hockey season. We are supporting an in-house (local) group or people only.

Rinks are being put up at the Bank Street extension to encourage community ice skating.

- <u>Lebanon Youth Baseball:</u> **Requesting $1,500. No change from 2020.**

They use and maintain Logan Field, which is owned by the City, through fundraising and funds from the City. They also use Smith Field and do a fantastic job of maintaining it (i.e., paved parking and installed a playground this year).

Councilor Heistad applauded all the volunteers who come out to help these programs. Without the volunteers, the City would not have the existing programs.

- <u>Arts & Culture</u>:
  Requesting $5,000. (An increase of $5,000, or a 100% increase over 2020)

This is the first year Arts & Culture has come under the auspices of Parks & Recreation and are responsible for the new Graffiti Park going up at Riverside Park.

C. Human Services: Director Lynne Goodwin
Requesting: $638,600.00 (an increase of $95,680.00, or 17.62% over 2020).

Director Goodwin introduced her staff and reviewed the Human Services proposed budget with the Council. Unlike most of the City Departments, the Human Services budget for 2021 reflects a 17.62%

increase over 2020. She explained the increases in administrative and Direct Assistant expenses, noting there are some increased costs in personnel, which are out of her control, but she tried to reduce expenses under Staff Development and other Purchased Services.

For Direct Assistance, the Human Services budget for 2020 is anticipated to be fully spent. This has been a very difficult year providing temporary emergency shelter for folks when shelters had to reduce capacity in order to keep everyone save (due to COVID), so they had no choice but to look at motels because of the lack of other emergency shelters. As of the end of October, the City spent $56K in motel assistance. Fortunately, we were able to recoup about $18,221 in reimbursement for those motel expenses through the CARES ACT. However, the budget is quite high in terms of expenditures and as of the end of October she spent $99,169 in Direct Assistance. She anticipates spending $17K in Direct Assistance for both November and December, which puts us on track to spend a total of $115,220. This puts us over the budgeted amount in our Direct Assistance category for rent, which is $85K, but if she draws on other areas of the budget that have not been spent down yet (i.e., food, fuel, utilities and medical), she does not believe they will over spend the budget, but noted she will certainly use all the remaining funds for 2020.

Looking ahead to 2021, $20K was put into the Direct Assistance rent line, with the hopes that the Haven and Twin Pines Housing partnerships will stand up and assist in the placement of a low barrier shelter expected to become operational by the Fall of 2021. If the Council approves these funds, Lebanon will be the first of the four municipalities (Lebanon, Hartford, Hanover and Norwich) to set aside funds for this endeavor.

Mayor McNamara asked if she had any idea where this low barrier shelter might be located. Director Goodwin said their goal would be to have it located in lower Grafton County, ideally in Lebanon or West Lebanon, so the shelter can be conveniently located on a bus route and close to services that folks need. Mayor McNamara asked why it should be in Lebanon, as opposed to Hanover, for example. Director. Goodwin said these areas are close to bus routes or the services that folks use, but they could certainly look at properties in Hanover if they were appropriate for the use. Ms. Goodwin explained the definition of a low barrier shelter. It means a shelter that is easy to access and does not have some strict requirements that would exclude people from using it such as: Someone who is actively using substances; someone who has active mental health issues, and; someone who, potentially, is on the Sex Offender Registry. Since there will be no children in said shelter, people could still be safely housed and would not be a risk to others. In other words, there are no barriers to getting and there are no barriers to being accepted in a low barrier shelter.

City Manager Mulholland explained the plans for a low barrier shelter has been going on for a long time and noted that someone needs to get this moving because these will not be going away.

D. Outside Human Services Agencies: Deputy City Manager Paula Maville.

Deputy City Manager Paula Maville reviewed the Outside Humans Services Agencies proposed 2021 budget. The total budget proposal for Contracted Services this year is **$638,600.00 (an increase of $95,680.00, or 17.62% over 2020).** She was not at the budget meeting but believes that Chief Christopoulos touched on the Community Nursing Program (see below).

Contracted Services:

- UV Community Nursing: **Requesting $75,000 (increase of $51,740 or 222.44% over 2020).**

It is hoped that the Community Nursing Program will be funded through the Pilot Agreement with DHMC and part of the MIH programs. If this comes to fruition, $75K would be funded. If it doesn't, the City would be potentially looking at funding the $23,260 in 2021.

- Tri County CAP: **Requesting $14,250**

There was an accounting error of $1K in this item. The City did receive $15,250 in 2020 and we are looking to level fund them in 2021, so we would be requesting, as part of the budget resolution after the Public Hearing on December 16, that the Council increase that line item for Tri County CAP by $1K.

- LISTEN: **Requesting $20,000 (increase of 100% over 2020)**

The $20K increase for LISTEN is because they did not request funding in 2020. Their program, and what they are requesting in 2021 ($20K) includes: $5K for housing helpers rental assistance; $5K for heating help, and fuel/electric assistance; $5K for their food pantry, and; $5K for community dinners. They reported providing $339,470 worth of services to Lebanon residents in 2019. This request is well worth the cost.

- Public Health Council: **$0.00**

Ms. Maville stated they requested $15K and based on the review done by her and Lynne Goodwin, they, unfortunately, did not fit into the funding criteria for outside agencies. They had a lengthy discussion with Alice Ely about their summer meals program, so we may have them come back for next year's funding requests.

- Headrest: **Requesting $50,000**

Councilor Sykes asked if, because of COVID and employment pressures, there has been an increase in the demand for Headrest's services, noting that their budget request is level-funded.

Mr. Cameron Ford, Director of Headrest, came forth noting Headrest has definitely seen an increase and the need for services. They have actually expanded what they had to do, which included taking precautions, following protocols and the acquisition of PPEs. The community has been fantastic about supporting them and giving them the supplies needed. They did receive a PPE loan and have been able to transfer to telehealth for group and individual counseling sessions. We felt that since we have done okay this year, we requested level funding.

- Senior Citizens: **Requesting $63,750**
- Visiting Nurses: **Requesting $59,390**
- Wise: **Requesting $15,000**
- HIV/HCV Resource: **Requesting $3,000**
- West Central Behavioral Health: **Requesting $14,500 (a decrease of $-1,000 or -6.56% over 2020)**
- Good Neighbor Health: **Requesting $11,040**
- UV Haven: **Requesting $5,000**
- Twin Pines Housing: **Requesting $9,900**

Councilor Prentiss spoke about the Public Health Council's functions, which includes working on substance abuse issues, emergency public health preparedness, and being part of the prevention and vaccinations teams that will be involved with the (pandemic) emergency we are in. She requested the Council to consider funding for them, or even put aside funds someplace else in the budget.

City Manager Mulholland explained the Public Health Council is part of the overall Public Health Department for the region. While it is not part of the Public Health Department, it does perform some public health services.

Ms. Maville concurred that the Public Health Council does a lot of coordination. When we looked at the guidelines in how we would be funding them, we asked what would happen to our overburdened Human Services Division or our Public Safety Divisions if the Public Health Council (PHC) did not exist. Trying to find a way that is impactful just did not fit. Ms. Goodwin did mention they are requesting the same amount in funds from other communities and further explained their request, noting their services were not detailed/broken out.

The Council held further discussions and expressed their concerns about not funding the Public Health Council; not having a Public Health Officer within the City; how the City and State's public health structure needs support and strengthening, and having a larger discussion on this issue in the future.

Ms. Maville will send the Council the Public Health Council's funding request for their review. She reiterated that these are never easy decisions for them to make and they are using the criteria that was adopted by the Council in 2015. As we are looking at the criteria and having discussions over the terms with all of the funding agencies, these decisions are never easy. She would be more than happy if the Council decides to give funding to the Public Health Council.

City Manager Mulholland was curious about what the Council thought they would get from the PHC that they do not have now, in the middle of this public health pandemic.

The Council will have a future discussion on this issue.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dona E. Gibson
Recording Secretary