FINAL

LEBANON CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES, BUDGET REVIEW
Monday, November 14, 2022, 5:30 PM
Remote Via Microsoft Teams: LebanonNH.gov/Live

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mayor Tim McNamara, Assistant Mayor Clifton Below, Karen Liot Hill (remote), Christian Simon, George Sykes, Douglas Whittlesey, Devin Wilkie
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Erling Heistad and Karen Zook
STAFF PRESENT:	City Manager Shaun Mulholland, Deputy City Manager David Brooks, City Clerk Kristin Kenniston, Finance Director Vicki Lee, Deputy Finance Director Alesia Williams, Lebanon Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director Jim Wheatley, Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Libbey, Library Director Sean Fleming

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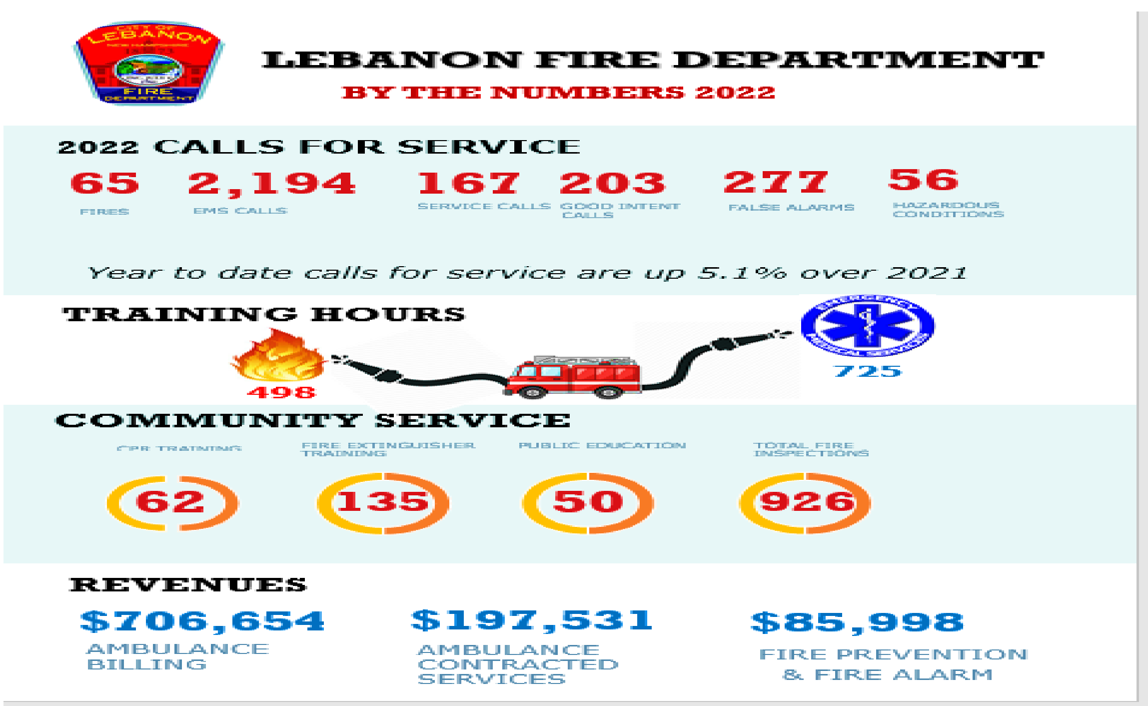
1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor McNamara called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
   - City Manager Shaun Mulholland announced the meeting criteria for the public, noting this is a City Council Work Session, the Council will not be taking any action on the budget items listed below, and public comments will not be taken. There will be time for public comments on December 14, 2022 @ 6 PM, which is the Public Hearing on the 2023 Budget. All the Budget Workshops are listed on the City's Website.
   - City Manager Mulholland suggested the Council's Question/Answer meeting on November 29th, 2022 could be added to the November 28th meeting and the November 29th meeting could be canceled. The Council agreed and the November 29th Council meeting will be canceled.

2. **FIRE: Presented by Lebanon Fire Chief Jim Wheatley and Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Libbey.**
   (Line Item Details can be found on pages 2-6, City Council agenda packet)



Total 2023 Lebanon Fire Department (LFD) Requested Appropriations: $**3,389,590 (A < of ($46,650) or (1.36%) from 2022)**

Fire Chief Jim Wheatley presented an overview of the Lebanon Fire Departments budget and spoke about the things driving their budget, which included energy costs and personnel expenses.

Year to date they have had 3425 emergency calls (> of 5.1% =/- over last year's budget). This year we are on pace to do approximately 1K back-to-back emergency calls and are trending towards a 4K total. In 2017, we added four (4) people to our staff and were doing about 2,600 a year. There are challenges in hiring new people due to the availability and affordability of housing. He spoke about adding a fire alarm technician in 2017 and a community paramedic in 2020 (revenue sharing with DHMC) and the reasons why the Fire Department was not able to use them on a regular basis for emergency call backs .

The LFD's demand for energy (usage rate) is pretty consistent with our increase for calls. For diesel/gasoline we are seeing about a 5-6% increase, due to the increase in these costs.

He spoke about the revenues as listed in the info. graphics and noted they are projecting to be about 100K over what they predicted for this year.

Training is down this year because they are not sending anyone to an initial certification this year, which costs between $10K-12K/person. There is also a recertification cycle which requires that every two (2) years, Paramedics have to go through a 48-hour recertification process.

We installed a boiler at Station 2 and hope to see a reduction in energy consumption.

In 2022, we received a Swift Water Grant from NH Emergency Management/Homeland Security which helps to maintain our resource capability both locally and state-wide.

They will be coming before the Council on November 16, 2022 to request their Ambulance billing rates be increased by 7.9% to try and stay even with the cost of living. However, we are still below the average even with that increase. We are also trying to increase the rate of some high volume inspection fees for fire prevention.

The Council and Chief Wheatley discussed: the sizable volume (of calls) increase, which is primarily due to the amount of EMS runs; LFD vacancies (offers being made to two (2) firefighter positions); for DHMC, billings go out 2x's each year; increased staff time in the future and the need to do a planning study now to predict future staffing needs.

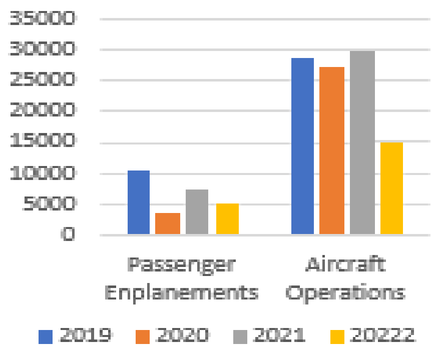
Chief Wheatley also spoke about the facilities, noting they have two options for properties and are analyzing both. One is in the Route 120 area for Station 1 and the other one they are now speaking with the property owner to see if they have space to accommodate us.

3. **AIRPORT: Present by Airport Manager Carl Gross** ***(Line Item Details can be found on pages 7-11, City Council agenda packet)***

LEBANON MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

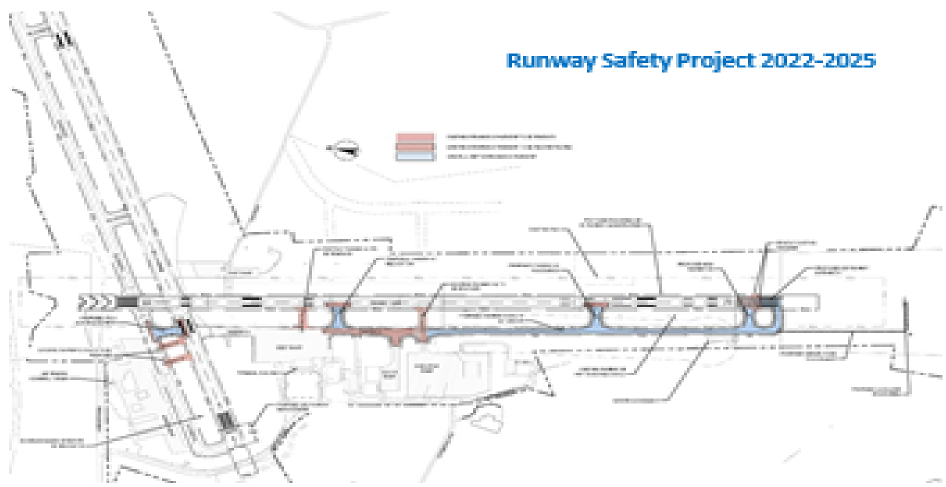
- Commercial service to Boston and New York City
- Private flights from the US, Canada, and Europe
- 43 based aircraft

Passenger and Aircraft Operations 2019-2022



Airport Projects

- 2022
  - Terminal building renovation started.
  - Environmental Assessment completed
  - Brightside Brewing opens
  - Design Phase I of Safety Improvement
- 2023
  - Construct Phase I of safety improvements
  - Relocate navigation aid
  - Design Phase II and III of safety improvements
- 2024 - Construct Phase II of safety improvements
- 2025 – Construct Phase III of safety improvements



Total 2023 Requested Airport Appropriations: $224,850 **(A < of ($325,420) or (59.14%) from 2022).**

Mayor McNamara spoke about the positive email he received regarding enplanements and will send this out to Councilors.

Director Gross spoke about having a small celebration with Cape Air for the extension of their Essential Air Service Contract and the official start of the Tecnam Service. Hopefully, on December 1, 2022, we will have all of our flights using Tecnam.

For enplanements, a good estimate for this year (2022) will be approximately 9,500 with Cape Air. Traditionally we also pick up a couple hundred additional enplanements through some of the Charter Flights. Nation-wide, the only airports that really made a comeback are those airports at destination cities. Business travel is still not back to 100%.

Mayor McNamara asked if the leniency expires in 2023 and Director Gross confirmed, noting that for Lebanon's projects the FAA has committed discretionary funding for the Runway Safety Project for the next three (3) years and this will not be affected by the passenger number.

Director Gross reviewed and explained the Airport's info. graphic (above) and line items as presented on ***pages 7- 11, City Council agenda packet.*** The T-hangers are 100% full and there is a waiting list of about 8-9 people. The projected increase for 2023 will be from the Safety Runway Project Grant, plus a grant for the 30-year-old section of pavement.

Another big increase for the Airport will be energy costs. We are seeing a substantial increase in Terminal costs. We really do not have a good estimate as to what those costs might be. There are also increases in water/sewer costs.

Tenants of the Airport will undergo a CPI increase on July 1, 2023.

In response to Councilor Simon's question on how Lebanon's landing fees compared to other regional airports, Director Gross noted the closest airport to us that collects landing fees is Keene, NH and Lebanon is consistent with those. A study was done in 2019 of the various regional airports. Lebanon increased landing fees last year and he will look at the numbers again in 2024. He also noted the Lebanon Airport has seen private flights come in from London and Zurich and they have all come in on the larger 7000's planes.

Assistant Mayor Below questioned if customs/immigration services could be called upon (for international flights). Director Gross noted they could be called, but most flights get their clearance in Bangor, ME and on departure they fly directly out of Lebanon to their home base.

4. CITY CLERK: Presented by City Clerk/Tax Collector Kristin Kenniston *(Line Item Details can be found on Pages 12-15, City Council agenda packet)*

Total 2023 City Clerk Requested Appropriations: ($2,091,710) (A< of ($24,240) (1.17%) from 2022)
Total 2023 Elections Requested Appropriations: $791,990 (An > of $70,360 (9.75%) over 2022

City Clerk & Tax Collector's Office

As of 9/30/2022

- *8,722 MV Registrations*
- *169 Boat Registrations*
- *1,744 Dogs Licensed*
- *75 Marriage Licenses Issued*
- *162 Amendments to Vital Records*
- *3,946 Certified Vital Records Issued*
- *1,770 Solid Waste Permits*
- *2,989 Landfill Tickets Sold*
- *190 Documents Notarized*
- *96.6% of July 2022 Property Tax Bills Collected*
- *53 Properties Liened for 2021 Delinquent Taxes*
- *290 Voters Registered By Staff*
- *214 Absentee Ballots Issued (Primary)*

REVENUE FOR THE YEAR, SO FAR…

- $12,523 Dog Licensing
- $23,931 Vital Records & Marriage Licenses
- $46,605 SW Permits & LF Tickets
- $1,871,550.77 Motor Vehicle & Boats
- $30,235,696.08 Property Taxes (July 22)

City Clerk/Tax Collector Kristin Kenniston reviewed the info. graphic above. The top revenue generators for the City are Motor Vehicle Registrations and property taxes. They are also in charge of elections. Moving forward next year, her plan is doing staff development and really wants to work on getting everyone certified at the State level, which is a good foundation to work from to make sure things are being done correctly and efficiently.

This year (2022) we had three (3) elections and next year we only have one (1) as long as there is not a special one. She increased one of the line items to include the cost of electronic poll books, which is a new technology that will make checking in to vote much faster and help relieve the bottle necks people are experiencing, noting the high turnout for this past midterm election was 60%. Knowing what we are coming into for 2024, her goal is to try and get some poll books in place, at least in one polling location, and get people trained on their use before the Presidential Primary.

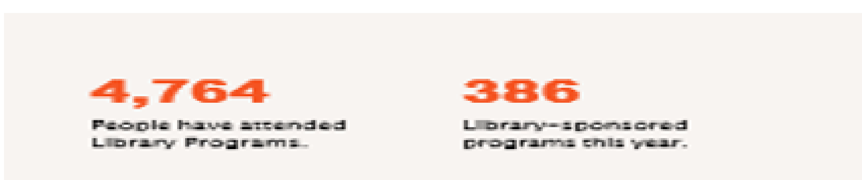
In response to Councilor Liot Hill's question regarding residents feedback on City Hall being open four (4) days each week, City Clerk Kenniston noted all-in-all it was positive. At first it was hard getting people accustomed to the hours and some showed up on Fridays to find out that we were closed, even though we tried to get the word out as much as we could. It does make for a long day for staff, but it is nice to have 3-days to recoup, noting Monday's are their busiest day. It has also improved their ability to service the public from 7AM-5PM, and in instances where she feels more hours are needed, especially with coming big elections, she has been offering extended hours. With big elections, she will make sure staff is around on Saturdays to help people.

In response to Councilor Sykes' question regarding whether or not studies have been done to determine when the most people are coming in. City Clerk Kenniston said she has not done any studies but from her observations, it is usually first thing in the morning until lunch time and picks up again through the end of the day: it depends on the type of business people are trying to get done.

City Clerk Kenniston agreed with Mayor McNamara about getting a study done and will talk with the software company about getting data recorded. She noted that not all transactions get recorded and can hopefully come up with some data for the Council.

City Manager Mulholland noted that the biggest problem (in the past) was that people had to take time off work and the new hours provide another option for folks so they do not need to take time off from their work.

5. LIBRARY: Presented and reviewed by Director of Lebanon Libraries Sean Fleming. ***(Line Item Details can be found on pages 16-18, City Council agenda packet)***



Total 2023 Lebanon Libraries Requested Appropriations: $**1,514,740 (An > of $131,300 (9.49%) from 2022).**

Library Director Sean Fleming noted they had a $300K fundraising goal for Lebanon Library renovations and exceeded our goal. This year, we received the last of our pledges and he was able to hand a check to the City Manager for $24K above and beyond that $300K commitment. This was a group effort and our Foundation really did a lot of work reaching out to individuals, corporations, and grant making organizations. He wanted to send his accolades to everyone who helped make this happen.

Director Fleming noted that last year, coming out of COVID, they planned to scale back hours at both libraries by eliminating Sunday hours, cutting back our evening hours at Kilton, and made some changes with staffing by consolidating some parttime positions into fulltime. These were all very successful and they have not received any complaints about the changes. Another change being considered is to consolidate the part-time custodial positions into one (1) full-time custodian. We will be able to do this without increasing the cost of benefits and explained how this would be done.

There are not too many changes except with the cost of electricity, which is being seen across a lot of departments. The libraries will be doing more with staff development and anticipate more travel next year.

In response to Mayor McNamara's question regarding the stabilization of hours since COVID, Director Fleming stated he felt this was a good schedule. We had 8:00PM hours/4 nights/wk. at both buildings, which is really an anomaly in most communities. The thing about Kilton is they can have their Community Room open after the rest of the building is closed to the public, so it seemed to make sense to close Kilton earlier. The Lebanon Library hours are now 10:00AM-8:00PM/Monday-Thursday and 10:00AM-5:00PM/Friday-Saturday. Kilton's hours are now 10:00AM-6:00PM/Monday-Thursday and then 10:00AM-5:00 PM/Fridays. He does not anticipate changing this anytime soon because it seems to be working well.

In response to Councilor Sykes' question regarding how Lebanon compares with other communities on library cards, Director Fleming noted that in general, across the United States, library membership is pretty high and talked about the polls he has seen. He was uncertain how Lebanon compares to what the averages across the country are. Assistant Mayor Below noted 58% of adults in the US have public library cards.

Director Fleming noted that with services, like Libby, the libraries get this through a state-wide consortium, and they subscribe to Hoopla. These are both included under books and other in their budget. We also get funds from the Trustees and from the Foundation for these. He also noted that for years the Foundation has been routing $25K for the purchase of items, but will be providing an increase up to $35K in 2023.

Councilor Sykes wanted to make sure that the City has sufficient, publicly available computers for folks who might not otherwise have one and questioned if the libraries have sufficient resources to provide these. Director Fleming spoke about the availability of Chrome Books and desk top computers for the public, noting they have never come close to running out of there availability in the libraries. They do have sufficient funds for these as well. He also spoke about the short-term/long-term loan out programs, which have recently been discontinued but noted they are looking at finding ways to get used laptops into the hands of people who really need them.

In response to Councilor Liot Hill's question regarding whether or not the libraries are experiencing an increased level of aggressive behavior like the Lebanon Police Department (LPD) is seeing; if housing insecurity is having an effect on the Lebanon libraries; and if staff is feeling safe in their job.

Director Fleming spoke about the LPD, noting it is a wonderful thing to have such a well-funded and well-trained force. We have had occasions where we needed to call 911 or use our panic buttons and the LPD's response time is amazing. This is an asset that a lot of other communities do not have. Our staff is seeing a change (in behavior). We do have more people who are acting more aggressively and spoke about the increase in individual letters of trespassing notices. We are going to be doing more staff trainings (i.e., mass shooting), have revamped our Safety Policy, and have added five (5) panic buttons in different location at the Lebanon Library when the renovation took place. We are making sure, and encouraging, people to press those buttons at any time they feel like they need to. This (aggressiveness) is affecting our personnel and he felt it might be affecting the libraries ability to retain/deter people from entering the profession.

Director Fleming noted he did not feel they have seen a change in how homelessness is affecting the libraries. More people were housed during COVID but would say they are not seeing as many homeless people at Kilton as we used to.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dona E. Gibson
Recording Secretary