

FINAL

City of Lebanon
Tree Advisory Board
Monday, September 25, 2023 at 5:30pm
Meeting Room 2, City Hall and remote via virtual platform lebanonnh.gov/live

MEMBERS PRESENT (7/7): Kathleen Corrigan, Charlie DePuy, Andrew Garthwaite, Kelsey Haigh, Susan Johnson, Mary Maxfield, Sarah Riley

MEMBERS ABSENT (0/7):

STAFF ABSENT: Patrick McCarthy (DPW/TAB)

GUEST PRESENT: Shaun Mulholland (City Manager)

- I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm.
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: We were not able to review minutes from our last two meetings on 7/25/23 and 9/11/23. We will do so at our next regular meeting.
- III. NEW BUSINESS: There is only one agenda item for this evening's meeting: A discussion with Shaun Mulholland about options associated with the city's obligations regarding our IRA/urban forestry grant to plant trees.
 - A. The city's (in-kind labor of city employees) and volunteers' contributions must account for \$244K as our match toward the total grant of \$488K. The city must figure out how to get \$107K now—to be divided over the next five years.
 - B. Here are some options toward securing that 107K:
 1. The Council appropriates the full amount of the matching funds through property taxation and places the funds in account. This would happen on December 13.
 2. The Council diverts the land use change tax that presently goes to the LOST Fund to this urban forestry fund until the match amount is collected.
 3. We obtain donations for the match amount.
 4. Some combination of the three options.

5. Mentioned by Shaun during this meeting: The city could appropriate the \$107K now so that it could be reported to the grant-giving group. This amount would come from the Unassigned Fund Balance, aka the “319-19A Fund” or UFB. This fund contains money left over from the city budget each year. There was actually no leftover money this year. There is currently about \$11 million.
 6. We decline the grant.
- C. The city council will discuss our recommendations on October 18th.
- D. Discussion of these options:
1. Shaun: This is a really hard problem. Tax increases and possible layoffs are always possible issues.
 2. Shaun doesn't think the city council would reject using the UFB, but the city has a bunch of projects for which it would like to commit some of this money.
 3. Sarah: The Lost Fund shouldn't be used. This fund's money comes from land use change taxes when land is taken out of current use. The City Council would have to okay this. The TAB would work against it. This could be the first bite from the Lost Fund. Roads need trees and not vice-versa. Our open spaces pay for themselves. They are part of our city infrastructure. It would be just as inappropriate to take money from the airport infrastructure. It would be more appropriate to look in other places.
 4. Kathleen: Is there any money for trees already in the budget? This is the first grant. The work required by the landslide at the School Street Cemetery was paid for from this year's budget—but not in future years' budgets.
 5. Fundraising ruminations:
 - a) The city can accept donations directly. It'd be important that any donations include a qualifier that this is for the trees project.
 - b) Paul Coats said we could do it through the Friends of Lebanon Rec, a 501-3C organization, a fund that can be used as needed. We wonder if Paul could be the financier.
 - c) Individual contributions toward a tree could be, say, \$500/tree. Donor's name could appear on a brass plate to be affixed to a tree.
 - d) The city could issue a receipt to donors that could be used for tax breaks.

- e) Some of us would like to fundraise from Lebanon citizens, as well as from the Women's Club and Rotary. Maybe Timken would be interested in helping.
 - f) Sarah would be more comfortable with the city just using the UFB moneys combined with our fundraising.
 - g) Charlie and Kathleen suggest asking that the NH Charitable Foundation put us on their list of possible recipients from donors.
- 6. Question to Shaun: How do other cities do this?
 - a) Appropriate money
 - b) But that'd affect the tax rate
- 7. Using the Lost Fund seems like the city has less of a commitment. It is important that the city be pro-tree. It is important that the tree code be pro-tree (rather than in a more vague infrastructure maintenance category). It's important that our tree warden is a strong advocate for trees.
- E. Shaun asked that one of us speak at the October 18th meeting of the City Council about all of this.
- IV. MOTION by Andrew: We will ask the City Council to take 107K from the UFB and do our best to fundraise and train volunteers. Motion seconded by Sarah. No further discussion. Unanimously approved.
- V. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:39PM
- VI. NEXT MEETING: Monday, October 9th at 5:30pm (in-person at City Hall and remote)

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Maxfield, Recording Secretary