

FINAL

**LEBANON HOUSING TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Remote Via Microsoft Teams
[LebanonNH.gov/Live](https://lebanonnh.gov/live)
Monday, February 24, 2025
8:15 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Tim McNamara, Ryan Dube (remote), Andrew Faunce, Tia Winter

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ellen Smith Ahern, Susan Almy, John D'Entremont David Duncan, Tracy Hutchins

STAFF PRESENT: Leigh Hays, Chief Bldg. Official & Health Officer, Catheryn Hembree, Associate Planner, Nathan Reichert, Director, Planning & Development

1. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 8:18AM by Mayor McNamara.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Andrew Faunce MOVED to approve January 27, 2025 Minutes as amended. The motion was Seconded by Mr. Ryan Dube.

Amendments:

Page 4, Line 32, replace The Federal Government owns public housing with: **The Federal Government funds public housing by providing funding thought capital funds and management operating funds to the public housing agency in this case Lebanon Housing Authority.**

** The MOTION was approved unanimously*

3. STUDY ITEMS:

A. Housing Opportunity Planning Grant consultants

Joining today's meeting were: Liz Kelly, with Resilience Planning & Design, and Alison Christensen, RKG Associates.

Ms. Hembree shared some details about the City of Lebanon and West Lebanon tour she and other members of this task force/consultants completed recently. She also shared a map showing the route they took. They saw a variety of all types of housing in the area. Ms. Kelly commented that the tour was informative and served to give them more direction.

Next Ms. Christensen provided an update for the Task Force. She met recently with Mr. Mark Goodwin, GIS Coordinator, as well as local real estate brokers, landlords, property managers, and others to help provide her a broader view and inform her analysis, which she will have ready for next month's meeting. She is planning to also meet with Novo Nordisk as well as DHMC to include their feedback in this analysis. Mr. Dube will facilitate a meeting with Lebanon Housing Authority, and Mayor McNamara offered connecting her with Hypertherm, another large employer here (+1,350 employees), along with

some mid-size and smaller employers, with a goal of meeting with 10 local employers. They will work with the planning office to get her contact information of some additional employers. He, along with the Planning Department, will work on getting them this information this week. Also, Ms. Winters offered to go in to employers and talk with them directly. She has done this in the past with success.

Mayor McNamara asked about the format of the report and Ms. Christensen said it will be a PDF paired with a narrative. It will be condensed, and high level and they will review this with the task force at the March 24th Lebanon Housing Task Force meeting.

Next the consultants shared their Outreach and Engagement Plan and displayed their spreadsheet which will be the working document used at every meeting (not in the agenda packet). This document includes the two categories, “getting the word out”, and “public participation opportunities”, the person(s) responsible, and the anticipated quarter in 2025 for each initiative

Ms. Kelly said given the history of the difficulty of getting information from the public, collecting peoples’ housing stories and struggles, can help inform this initiative. Their goal is to make it easy for people to share their experiences; she also posed the possibility of providing incentives.

Mayor McNamara and the Task Force need to read through this information before they can provide feedback. Mr. Faunce suggested some formatting changes. Ms. Hembree said they might want to make this survey information anonymous, particularly if the respondee has been homeless in the past. Ms. Dube suggested that conversations can provide a much better understanding of some peoples’ experiences, such as seniors, previously homeless, etc. Mayor McNamara reiterated the importance of talking with seniors.

Mr. Dube can assist with in person meetings at potentially five different locations (3 of these are senior communities). He and LHA can help drive attendance.

Mayor McNamara asked how they will get information from potential residents. Ms. Kelly said they will work with some of the large local employers and possibly use some of their past completed surveys. Mr. Faunce suggested that the pay grade of employees could also help further inform them. Mr. Dube suggested that they talk with local landlords about their applications and glean some information from these as well.

Ms. Kelly said the anchor of this project will be focus groups, both in person, Zoom, community meetings as well as small residents meetings, tacking on to other meetings such as Rotary Club, School Board, etc. She will bring a more concrete plan to the next meeting.

It was suggested (by Joan, a member of the public) that they also put up signage in numerous areas, to help public awareness about this initiative.

Mr. Dube stated they need to look at information from an entire calendar year and preferably multiple years as it can vary greatly because of DHMC and their big blitz of matching employees with housing, which takes place early March of every year. Ms. Hembree sent Ms. Christensen information from Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center with Graduate Medical Education Office (MATCH) information that happens every March.

Mayor McNamara also encouraged them to talk with some lending institutions; the City has a relationship with Mascoma Bank; they are very active in the community.

It was agreed that this Task Force will provide the consultants with these community contacts as discussed today.

Ms. Reichert suggested they also have marketing materials, **a branded campaign**, and have a presence at the dump, Farmers Market (as in the past), etc. Yards signs, signage on buses, QR codes, and other were mentioned by Ms. Kelly, as techniques to “get the word out”.

Mr. Faunce asked if they are looking to team up community members to host some of these neighborhood meetings. These are likely to result in a good cross section of people.

Next Ms. Kelly displayed three draft logos along with the proposed initiative name:

“LIVING IN LEBANON” (LIL). Mayor McNamara said that the name has a nice ring. The Task Force provided their feedback on the three logos. Mr. Faunce also said that if they are looking for a mascot, “Lily” could be an option. Ms. Kelly will incorporate their feedback for her revision, while maintaining simplicity, for greater impact.

Ms. Kelly did a recap of what the next steps will be for the March meeting including a first draft of their housing needs assessment (sent to internal City staff in advance of the March meeting), refining the outreach plan as well as the logo, and updating the spreadsheet. Thereafter they will provide a market needs analysis for a future meeting.

B. Housing minimum standards and enforcement presentation by Leigh Hays

Mr. Hays started by saying that because the City has not formally adopted a minimum housing standards or ordinance, the City still has a reliance on State law, that must be enforced, which states that any violation by a landlord is a *criminal offense*. This current process is time consuming, and delays things such as issuing a fine or penalty. This costs the City more. Mayor McNamara asked if this is common or if most cities adopt a standard, to which Mr. Hays responded that most cities adopt a minimum housing standard or ordinance, or a property maintenance code that allows for a local land use citation. This would then allow Mr. Hays to write the equivalent of a traffic fine. This is a more expedient process and allows for an incentive for the landlords. The City of Claremont adopted the International Property Maintenance Code which also writes the building codes that have been adopted by New Hampshire.

Mr. Hays provided this Housing Task Force a draft of the code that Enfield has adopted. Mayor McNamara said that they want the most efficient use of City resources and of City staff and he said it sounds like this could really streamline the process not just with enforcement but also the costs to the City. Mr. Faunce commented that this could also allow for a landlord who has made an error to act in good faith. It would benefit the good actors but still has the teeth needed for bad actors. Mr. Reichert stated that another key benefit is that it changes the venue from Superior Court to District Court, which brings it local, so it is much less costly and certainly more practical, and again, expedites the entire process, including getting help for tenants to live in safe environments.

Mayor McNamara is in support of this and asked Mr. Hays to bring this forward to the City Council, as soon as possible, which Mr. Hays agreed to do.

Mr. Dube said that later this year, there will be updates to some codes on smoke detectors and fire alarms, etc. so the City might need to make some additional changes when the new memo comes out from the State Fire Marshal; simply something to be aware of.

Mr. Faunce shared that there is currently some new housing being developed for Dartmouth housing, and he suggested that they celebrate this with perhaps a letter to the editor. This idea was supported, and he will write the letter.

Joan (public attendee) thanked this Lebanon Housing Task Force for the work that they are doing. She posed that when anything comes forward, she and other residents would like to know how it benefits the current residents of Lebanon.

Mr. Reichert encouraged her to vote for Amendment One, based on her comments. He also said that as the City adds on to this consultants' package, that different housing has different economic impacts, but that the City of Lebanon needs an updated study (post COVID) to know the *current* impacts, and to this end, the City of Lebanon is working on a contract to pay for this additional study which is a rational tool to learn which housing the City should be focusing on.

4. OTHER BUSINESS: None

5. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Andrew Faunce MOVED for adjournment
Seconded by Ms. Tia Winter
**The MOTION was approved unanimously*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 AM

Respectfully submitted,
Cinda Mersel
Recording Secretary