

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON CITY COUNCIL
CANVASS OF THE MARCH 11, 2025, VOTE /SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
MARCH 13, 2025– CITY HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Timothy McNamara, Assistant Mayor Clifton Below,
Councilors: Erling Heistad, Karen Liot Hill, Chris Simon, Doug
Whittlesey, Devin Wilkie

MEMBERS ABSENT: George Sykes, Karen Zook

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Shaun Mulholland, Deputy City Manager David
Brooks, Deputy City Manager Special Projects Paula Maville, City
Clerk Jaseya Ewing, Deputy City Clerk Kara Tracy, Deputy Tax
Collector Diane Mulholland

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Per the City Charter, the City Council met on March 13, 2025, to canvass the March 11, 2025,
municipal vote.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Mayor McNamara at 8:00 AM.
2. Councilor Simon led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - City Manager Shaun Mulholland spoke about the meeting criteria for the public.
 - City Manager Shaun Mulholland read §C419:14 of the City Charter.
3. **Canvas-of-Vote Meeting:**
The City Council reviewed the voting results as presented by Mayor McNamara from the City Clerk
Jaseya Ewing.

Motion by Councilor Heistad:

**BE IT RESOLVED, that voting results of the March 11, 2025 City Election, as presented by the
City Clerk, be accepted as printed and that the following persons be declared elected to serve as:**

Ward Councilors:

(2-year terms)

Douglas Whittlesey, Ward 1

Devin R. Wilkie, Ward 2

Nicole Ford Burley, Ward 3

Councilors At Large:

(2-year term)

Laurel Stavis

Library Board of Trustees:

(3-year terms)

Ellen Hubbell

Moderators:

(2-year terms)

Roxanne Benzel, Ward 1
Vacant, Ward 2
Matthew J. Fay, Ward 3

Ward Clerks:
(2-year terms)

Vacant, Ward 1
Vacant, Ward 2
Vacant, Ward 3

Supervisor of the Checklist:
(2-year term)

Eileen Taylor, Ward 1
Gail Patten, Ward 1
Margaret Hastings, Ward 1
Valentina Baldwin, Ward 2
(2) Vacancies, Ward 2
Heidi Conner, Ward 3
Kim Rheinlander, Ward 3
Karen Sheehan, Ward 3

Respectfully submitted,
Jaseya Ewing
Lebanon City Clerk

Seconded by Councilor Liot Hill

****The Vote on the Canvas-of-Vote Meeting was approved among the members present (7-0).***

The Canvas of Vote meeting adjourned at 8:03 am.

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

Mayor McNamara opened the City Council Special Meeting at 8:04AM

3. City Manager Hiring Process

A. Meet with Municipal Resources Inc. (MRI) to discuss the City Manager hiring process and the role of an Interim City Manager.

Mr. Alan Gould (President of MRI) and Mr. Jack Wozmak from MRI came forth to introduce themselves and gave a background of MRI and the hiring process for replacement of the City Manager position.

Mr. Jack Wozmak, who will be taking over the role of Interim City Manager, noted he began his career in government administration back in 1998 when he ran the Cheshire County Government for 18 years; worked with Governor Hassan on a grant-funded project regarding the opioid epidemic; worked as manager for the City of Keene, NH's Airport (1-year contract but stayed there for 3 years); he was also Director of Human Resources for a local mental health agency; then started working for MRI. Prior to his work in the County, he practiced law in

Massachusetts. He had also worked as Interim City Manager for a few major towns (Enfield, Cannan, Hinsdale). At the moment, he is finishing up in Meridith, NH.

For the benefit of incoming City Councilor Nicole Ford Burley, City Manager Mulholland explained the interim plan for the City of Lebanon, NH, noting the goal is to make sure the City keeps moving forward without a pause during the transition.

City Manager Mulholland and Interim City Manager Wozmak will work together for the next several months, which will allow them to finish the Strategic Plan and issue directives to the City's departments. It is critical that Mr. Wozmak is involved with the budget process and how it works, because he will be working with Department Heads to build the budget, which will then be turned over to the new City Manager, once one has been hired, and further explained how the budget would be a big change for staff. He also noted that the City would be having a new Finance Director and a new Deputy Finance Director. City Manager Mulholland stated his last day will be May 30, 2025 (90 days), in accordance with the State's Charter.

Mr. Jack Wozmak will start as Interim City Manager on April 1, 2025. He anticipates being in the City 2-3 days/week although his schedule will remain flexible and will work with City Manager Mulholland to understand what the City's needs are and what the time schedule should be. Mayor McNamara added there will be some day-to-day operational duties and felt it is a critical time for the City's Budget, noting that by May 14, 2025 the City is planning to adopt their Strategic Plan, which starts the budget process.

At the request of Councilor Simon, Mr. Gould described what MRI does throughout the State and what they would be doing for the City and noted Mr. Wozmak will be overseeing the recruitment process for the City of Lebanon and will be developing the City/community profile.

Mr. Gould spoke about how brutal the hiring market is at the moment and noted there are more good people leaving their positions now than are entering the market. Those that are entering the market are good people, but they do not have the experience. Salaries have escalated since COVID. He has advised City Councils and towns to make sure that they put enough funding into the advertising as to what the top salary range is in the profile, which is an opportunity to sell the City to potential candidates. He further explained what needs to be done in developing the City/Community profile. It would most likely take a couple of weeks to develop the profile. MRI would also be requesting essays from potential candidates; will be doing background checks and doing phone interviews for each candidate. While there may be multiple candidates, they would bring back the three (3) final candidates to the Council for their review. Mr. Gould and City Manager Mulholland further explained how interview screenings would be conducted.

Mayor McNamara spoke about why the Council needed to act quickly on the salary for a new City Manager and suggested an April meeting after the new City Councilors have been seated.

The Council and Mr. Gould continued discussions on how to post the salary range (i.e., hiring range up to; commensurate with experience; etc.); the Council's concerns regarding the residency requirement in the City's Charter; how long it would take to change the residency requirement; the difficulties/concerns a potential candidate might have with the City's residency

requirement; the housing shortage/costs in Lebanon and how that might affect a potential candidate's decision; the timeline for changing the City's Charter regarding the residency requirement; how most cities/towns have changed their residency requirement to a non-resident status that would allow candidates to commute to work; potentially holding a Special Election Meeting regarding the residency requirement in the City's Charter to get input from the residents; the need to have public discussions early to actively engage with the community; comparable salaries that other cities/towns are paying their managers/administrators (i.e., Hanover \$172K; Somersworth \$170K; Amherst Town Administrator \$175K; Hudson Town Administrator \$170K; Meridith \$160K; Laconia \$160K+/-; Rochester \$178,750; Portsmouth \$189.5K; Dover is off the charts at \$259K+/-; Lexington, MA \$260K; Lebanon currently at \$164K); the regional population pool for candidates that Lebanon will be drawing from; work arounds on the residency requirements for the City (i.e., develop housing for new City Manager on city-owned land; purchasing/renting an apartment; potential use of house on the Mascoma Street Extension; making sure that in the advertisement the resident requirement is mentioned and the details can be worked out later.

Councilor Simon spoke about having uncomfortable talks with his constituents concerning the level of pay/benefits for the City's employees and requested the need to have more background information rather than having just a number so Councilors can go out and talk to their communities.

The Council continued discussions regarding making a salary decision at their meeting on March 19th, and while the new Councilors will not be seated at this time, they could still attend this meeting and participate in the discussion; the pros/cons of the residency requirement; the importance of having public engagement with the City by future candidates; housing costs; the challenges a candidate might have with family (i.e., having kids in schools where they might want to commute; a candidates' spouse needing to find a job); salary challenges; reasons for government toxicity; and labor shortages.

Deputy City Manager Brooks noted that in looking at the Charter, the citizens binding initiative process states that if it passes it takes effect in the next municipal year. For a Charter that the Council initiates, such as the ones passed on Tuesday, the Council can identify when it can take affect (i.e., those passed on Tuesday can take effect on July 1, 2025). Unless the Council has a Special Election, you would be looking at March of 2026 (for the residency requirement to be lifted). The Council does have some flexibility (in determining the effective date).

Hiring process:

- Profiles: MRI will be reaching out to the Council within 1 week
 - Suggested MRI interview the 9 Councilors seated and the 2 new Councilors
- MRI will bring 4-5 finalists to City Council for their review
- Next Steps will be determined by the Council:
- More extensive interviews by MRI will be done after final candidates are selected and then a discussion of salary range will be done

Councilors Liot Hill and Whittlesey requested the Council receive a list of all the applicants so everyone can understand what the larger pool looks like.

Mayor McNamara also requested more information regarding MRI's vetting process.

4. Adjournment

Councilor Heistad MOVED for Adjournment.

Seconded by Councilor Wilkie.

****The Vote on Motion was approved (7-0)***

***The Special Meeting was adjourned at 9:04 AM**

Respectfully Submitted,

Dona E. Gibson

Recording Secretary

