

**FINAL**

**LEBANON CITY COUNCIL  
ORGANIZATION SESSION MINUTES  
Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 7:00 p.m.  
Council Chambers**

**Remote Via Microsoft Teams: [LebanonNH.gov/Live](https://lebanonnh.gov/live)**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Douglas Whittlesey, Assistant Mayor Devin Wilkie, Kellen Appleton, Nicole Ford Burley, Eric Cole, Andrew Faunce, Lori Key

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Timothy McNamara and Laurel Stavis

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Manager Andrew Hosmer, Deputy City Manager David Brooks, City Clerk Jaseya Ewing, Director of Public Engagement and Communications Beth Beraldi, Finance Director Alesia Williams

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**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Whittlesey called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.  
• **City Manager Andrew Hosmer announced the meeting criteria for attendees.**

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Whittlesey led the Council in the Pledge.

**3. PUBLIC FORUM:** Mayor Whittlesey made the Public Forum announcement.

**4. OPEN COUNCIL DISCUSSION: NONE**

**5. OPEN TO PUBLIC: No one from the public came forth.**

**6. Retirement of Outgoing Councilors:**

Mayor Whittlesey noted the retired Councilors were not present because they were recognized last week. For the record, he wanted to thank the following retired Councilors for all their many years of service to the City.

- Erling Heistad
- Chris Simon
- George Sykes
- Karen Zook

**7. Welcoming Newly Elected & Re-Elected Councilors:**

**Mayor Whittlesey welcomed the newly elected and re-elected Councilors as listed below**

- Andrew Faunce (Ward-1)
- Eric Cole (Ward 2)
- Lori Key (Ward-3)
- Kellen Appleton (At-Large)
- Timothy J. McNamara (Elected At-Large)

Jaseya Ewing, City Clerk, administrated the Oath (of service) to City Councilors.

## 8. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF **TEMPORARY CHAIR**

Mayor Whittlesey opened the Nominations for **Temporary Chair**.

*Mayor Whittlesey put forth the NOMINATION of Councilor Nicole Ford Burley as **Temporary Chair**.  
Seconded by Councilor Faunce.*

Hearing no further nominations for **Temporary Chair**, Mayor Whittlesey closed the nominations and called for a vote.

### **ACTION:**

*\*The Vote on the NOMINATION to elect Councilor Nicole Ford Burley as **Temporary Chair** was approved (7-0).*

## 9. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF MAYOR AND ASSISTANT MAYOR

### **NOMINATIONS FOR MAYOR:**

Councilor N. Ford Burley, **Temporary Chair**, opened the NOMINATIONS for MAYOR.

Councilor Wilkie put forth the Nomination of Councilor Douglas Whittlesey for MAYOR.  
Seconded by Councilor Faunce.

Councilor Whittlesey accepted the nomination.

Hearing no further nominations for Mayor, Councilor N. Ford Burley, **Temporary Chair**, closed the nominations and called for a vote.

### **ACTION**

*\*The Vote on the NOMINATION of Douglas Whittlesey for Mayor was approved (6-0-1). Councilor Douglas Whittlesey abstained.*

Councilor N. Ford Burley was no longer Temporary Chair and took her seat as a regular member of the Council.

### **NOMINATIONS FOR ASSISTANT MAYOR:**

Mayor Whittlesey opened the Nominations for Assistant Mayor.

Councilor N. Ford Burley put forth the Nomination of Councilor Wilkie for ASSISTANT MAYOR.  
Seconded by Mayor Whittlesey.

Councilor Wilkie accepted the nomination.

Hearing no further Nominations for Assistant Mayor, Mayor Whittlesey closed the nominations and called for a vote.

### **ACTION**

***\*The Vote on the NOMINATION of Councilor Wilkie as Assistant Mayor was approved (4-2-1). Councilors Faunce and Appleton, N. Ford Burley and Mayor Whittlesey in favor. Councilors Key and Cole against, and Assistant Mayor Wilkie abstained.***

**10. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS: NONE**

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Adoption of Council Rules**

1. Included in Agenda Packet on pages 3-10.

Deputy City Manager Brooks gave an overview of the Council Rules that were included in the agenda packet. These are the rules that have been brought forward from the prior Council. Under those rules, you are obligated to adopt them as is. Once adopted, you can begin to propose amendments where appropriate. He requested someone to Move for Adoption.

Before moving forward with the of Council Rules, Mayor Whittlesey noted this is the process for the new Councilors and asked if there were any questions.

Deputy City Manager Brooks read the requirements of § 191-13 A-C. Rules: Adoption, Amendments, and Suspension for the benefit of the newly seated Councilors. Any amendments made to the Council Rules will be brought back to the Council for their review and discussion. If there are no changes to Council Rules, then they will be brought back to the Council for subsequent action. This is a two-step process to amend or adopt new rules. These rules can be suspended by a 2/3 vote of those present and voting. He gave examples of a couple of amendments that have been discussed over the last several meetings with the Council (i.e., §8191-8, which is the Order of Business); §A 191-15, appointments to other City Boards/Commissions and §A 191-15-C, which speaks to City Council interviews of prospective new members).

**Council Comments:**

Councilor Key brought forward a process question and was uncertain if what she would be proposing was an amendment. She questioned §A 191-12, Permission required to address Council and wondered if the Council would be interested in exploring “What is the definition of “A speaker shall not enter into a debate with any person,” and spoke about a resident at the Budget Public Hearing who was expressing her sentiment around the budget and was concerned that she was unable to ask another question since the Public Hearing had been closed. Councilor Key requested inclusion of clarifying questions from the public as part of the process.

Assistant Mayor Wilkie concurred with Councilor Key and felt it was important, especially since we do have Councilors ask clarifying questions before a hearing and wondered if this could be addressed by changing the Council Rules to say: “The speaker may ask clarifying questions (from the public) before proceeding.” Mayor Whittlesey also added that “this shall apply to public comment during Public Hearing Items” and explained his reasons.

Deputy City Manager Brooks will bring these requested changes back to the Council for their review at the April 1, 2026 Council Meeting.

Mayor Whittlesey called for a Vote on the Council Rules and noted that if there were other potential amendments that Council wants to discuss, the Council can take them up on April 1, 2026.

**ACTION:**

**Councilor Faunce *MOVED* to approve Chapter A191, Council Rules as required and presented in the March 25, 2026 City Council agenda packet.  
Seconded by Council N. Ford Burley.**

***\*The Vote on MOTION was approved by those present (7-0).***

Deputy City Manager Brooks noted that Council Rules can be updated at any point during the year.

### **B. Council Orientation**

City Manager Hosmer congratulated the Council on their elections and their willingness to serve. Public service requires time, judgment, patience and a willingness to make difficult decisions in a very public setting. He appreciates the commitment each of the Councilors has made to this City and to the residents who have placed their trust in all of them.

Tonight's onboarding is a refresher for returning Councilors and is an introduction to those of you who are new to this body. The goal is to ground all of us in the same shared understanding of how Lebanon's Council/Manager form of government works. This structure is routed in the Lebanon City Charter, in the Lebanon City Code and both provide a great deal of clarity, but at times they can also create confusion in practice. City Manager Hosmer's hope is that his presentation adds clarity and helps address some of the areas where confusion can arise. As a relatively large legislative body, consistency really does matter. The more disciplined and consistent we are on how the Council conducts itself, and how the City operates, the more confidence the public will have in the work that you all do. That confidence is not built simply by good intentions, it's built by clear roles, sound practices, respect for the law, and a common understanding of how decisions are made. It is especially important to remember that the Council is a deliberative body. You will each bring your own experiences, perspectives and strongly held views to the table and that is very healthy. Strong disagreement is not a problem, and in many cases it's a sign that the issues before you matter but once deliberation is complete the Council acts through the vote of the majority. This body governs as a body, not as nine (9) individual office holders acting independently. That principal is directly tied to the role of the City Manager.

Under our Charter, the City Manager is the Chief Executive and Administrative Officer of the City and shall carry out the policies "laid down by the City Council." The Charter further provides that the City Manager is responsible to the City Council for the proper administration of all affairs of the City, except the School District, including the preservation of Public Health and Safety, the management of municipally owned utilities, and the responsibility for the maintenance, care, construction and oversight of the City's infrastructure, property and operations. This is not a matter of style or preference. It is the framework established by this City's Charter.

Tonight is about setting expectations clearly at the outset on what the Council's role is, what management's role is, and where those lines are drawn. Respecting those lines protects not only the institution we are all serving but also each of you as Councilors.

City Manager Hosmer presented his slide deck and spoke about and explained the following:

- How the Council Governs and how the City Manager Manages. **Practical rule:** No Councilor supervises staff, directs operations, or commits City resources unilaterally.

- Staff Contact and Department Head Protocol: What is appropriate; What is not appropriate and Working rules. (**NOTE:** Agenda requests should go the Beth Beraldi, Director of Public Engagement and Communication)
- Conflict of Interest: Legal Standard and Practical Standard: Council Policy CC 108.1; Examples to discuss; Practical guidance. (**NOTE:** The appearance of conflict or impropriety can sometimes be worse than the actual conflict or impropriety that truly exists. Appearance matters here because it gives the public confidence in the work that we are doing; gives you colleagues confidence; and the vote you are taking is in the public interests.)
- RSA 91-A: Public Meetings and Communications Outside Meetings: What counts as a meeting and what does not. (**NOTE:** Bottom line: deliberate in public; do not use serial communication(s) to do Council business off-line.)
- Nonpublic Session(s), Confidentiality, and Legal Counsel.
- Speaking for the City and Use of Title: External testimony, advocacy and appearances; Use of title, letterhead, and City Seal.
- NON-Public Session, Confidentiality, and Legal Counsel: Entering into non-public session and the Confidentiality of nonpublic session(s)/discussions. Sealed and non-sealed minutes.
- Speaking for the City and Use of Title: External testimony, advocacy, and appearances and Use of title, letterhead and City seal.
- Additional Information: Presented by Deputy City Manager Brooks and covered the Operational process; Public-records discipline and Decision-quality topics. He noted that Beth Beraldi will be sending out flyers to the Council that contains a number of quick links that the Council may find useful. If a constituent has an issue, they should contact one or more of the Councilors to get a Councilor to sponsor their request. He also spoke about agenda requests, noting agenda items are presently full for a couple of months in advance of a meeting.

Deputy City Manager Brooks stated that the Council has a yearly calendar adopted at the beginning of the year by the Council, and contains all of the yearly Council meetings, Budget meetings, deadlines, etc. This calendar will be sent to the new Council members.

Attendance and seminars can be attended at the City's expense with prior approval from the City Manager's Office (i.e., the NH Municipal Association Sessions/Training(s)).

City Manager Hosmer spoke about Public Record Discipline and Decision-Quality topics, noting the Council is now in possession of a City laptop. He gave a couple of recommendations:

1. Do City business on City systems whenever possible and reminded the Council they may be subject to a Right to Know and/or Subpoena. Anything that is contained on your computer could be opened to the public under the proper circumstance.
2. Retention implications of text and personal email: He recommended keeping accounts separated as all interactions may be subject to subpoena. Be acutely aware that Private emails should not be on your LebanonNH.gov account and vice versa.

City Manager Hosmer and Deputy City Manager Brooks explained the Strategic Process to Councilor Key.

In advance of tonight’s meeting, Deputy City Manager Brooks forwarded a copy of City Policy 108.1. He handed out the Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement Form to all Council members. It requires a signature from each individual Councilor by the end of the meeting.

**12. MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS OF COUNCILORS TO BOARDS & COMMITTEES:**

**None appointed at this meeting.** Mayor Whittlesey will talk to individual Councilors about their meeting preferences.

**13. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: NONE**

**14. ADJOURNMENT:**

*Councilor N. Ford Burley MOVED for adjournment.  
Seconded by Councilor Appleton.*

*\*The Vote on the MOTION was unanimously approved (7-0)*

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Dona E. Gibson  
Recording Secretary