

FINAL

**WELCOMING LEBANON TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
Remote Via Microsoft Teams
[LebanonNH.gov/Live](https://lebanonnh.gov/Live)
July 14, 2026
5:30 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Devin Wilkie, Assistant Mayor, Lindsay Dearborn, Lucas Mendelsohn, Keiselim (Keyci) Montas, Phillip Roberts, Lebanon Police Chief, Tia Winter

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Hosmer, City Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER – Assistant Mayor Wilkie called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

2. PREAMBLE – Read by City Manager Hosmer

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

4. OLD BUSINESS: None

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Input Opportunity for Welcoming Lebanon

Assistant Mayor Wilkie started by giving a brief background of why the City formed this Task Force and what they are looking for. This information is included in the public handout which is in the Agenda Packet for today.

Highlights are:

In 2018 the City Council adopted a resolution for inclusiveness which affirmed its commitment to preserving public trust and promoting community identity, civic pride, and quality of life for all Lebanon residents. Then in 2020, Lebanon voters passed the Welcoming Lebanon Ordinance by Citizens Binding Initiative, which was subsequently added to the City's code in January 2021. Among other things, it limited municipal cooperation with federal immigration enforcement.

In May 2025, the State of New Hampshire passed some bills into law, prohibiting municipalities from taking those very actions, carrying fines of up to 25% of annual State funding for violating those laws. Those bills became effective in January 2026, under New Hampshire RSA 106Q and 106R.

The City Council and the DEI Commission examined alternatives but realized that in order to remain compliant with the new laws, they would need to repeal the Welcoming Lebanon Ordinance, which the City Council did, to become effective December 31, 2025.

In January 2026, the City Council formed this Welcoming Lebanon Task Force to explore options. This Task Force has been meeting for the past few months and while it has explored some possibilities (in the packet), it wants to get input from the public. Some options are to include a new resolution, without enforcement provisions but reflecting the values and wishes of the City Council, or passing a new ordinance that is in compliance with State law. Actions could include examining and potentially revising the charge of the DEI Commission or creating a subcommittee that could have any number of charges such as support members of our community, public information, and public education. Also consider whether any of our municipal or City Manager's policies or our Police Department's policies have opportunity for revision; they could make those recommendations for consideration by City staff.

Assistant Mayor Wilkie's hope is to hear from residents about what they believe the City should do. Then this Task Force will continue their discussion over the next few months to decide what they want to recommend to the City Council.

Members from the public spoke next.

Mr. Fran Cassell, Ward 2 – Mr. Cassell said that he thinks the City passing a new resolution affirming its commitment to inclusiveness and equity is a good idea. He also believes that a revised charge of the DEI is in order.

He is unsure if the roadmap is clear for immigrants coming into our community regarding which agency or agencies would be ideal for them to work with; he suggested that the City partner with the many agencies that it already works with, to help with a flow chart or something that would provide a clear understanding of options available to immigrants and others in need of various services. The focus needs to be on getting the appropriate help to the people in need.

He does not see the need for a City code or ordinance.

Ms. Faye Grearson, Ward 2 – Ms. Grearson said that she agrees and would like to see Lebanon put as much in writing as is practicable and legally permissible. She thinks this is just, and a humane way to build community. She added that we have numerous people here working in healthcare, and their roles are critical to helping to keep things running. If there were to be a large exodus of these people, our community would suffer immensely, including our employers.

Ms. Martha Tecca, Orford, NH, Board Chair for SHARE (Supporting and Helping Asylees and Refugees) – Ms. Tecca said that she is aware of how intertwined everyone's rights are and she has experienced Lebanon to be an important center of access to services for people who are frequently in need of help with applications for a range of services they need, independent of their immigration status. She asked that as Lebanon puts something in writing, that it feel welcoming, not "othersome".

She ended by thanking Lebanon and this Task Force and added that she is grateful for the extraordinary resources available here due to the community, the municipality, and many businesses here; these are important to the entire upper valley. She offered her help to get involved in this initiative.

Ms. Susan Almy, Ward 1 – Ms. Almy said that while she has not looked at the Ordinance recently, she thinks it would be worthwhile to write it in a more humane way and yet still accomplish what is intended. Ms. Almy wondered why some impacted people were not at this meeting but that perhaps it is because this is a public meeting and she also said that Lebanon does not seem to be attracting ICE's attention anymore.

Ms. Kathy Beckett, Ward 2 (virtual) – Ms. Beckett said she appreciates what this Task Force is doing and asked that the resolution clearly state our values and come from “the bottom up”, by listening and talking with those who are impacted. She continued that there are many federal and state laws that can help people know what their rights are around, for example, discrimination. These rights exists for immigrants, and for people with disabilities, to name two. Those rights are worth fighting for and she appreciates this Task Force as well as the many people in our community working toward a better life for these people.

Ms. Angela Zhang, Ward 2 (virtual)– Ms. Zhang, in response to Ms. Almy said that she has spoken with people who have expressed a lot of fear and concern about speaking publicly, particularly in recorded settings. She also said that ICE has in fact been present in the area recently.

Assistant Mayor Wilkie concluded the Public portion of this meeting. He asked all listening to feel free to reach out to him with any further public comment, directing them to a Boards & Committees contact form which is on the City's website; also they can email him directly. In response to the question of how to locate the actual Ordinance, City Manager Hosmer referred people to the City's website.

Assistant Mayor Wilkie said that this Task Force still has much work to do, and will be having their next meeting on Monday, July 20th at 5:30PM. This and future TF meetings will be focused on what recommendations they will make to the City Council and they will strive to provide these to the Council in September. Future Task Force meetings are open to the Public.

He concluded by saying they gained valuable insights today and thanked all for coming.

6. OTHER BUSINESS None

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS None

7. ADJOURNMENT

Assistant Mayor Wilkie adjourned the meeting at 6:04PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Cinda Mersel
Recording Secretary