



LEBANON STRATEGIC PLAN TASK FORCE
AUGUST 18, 2026 - 8:30 AM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL OR
REMOTE VIA VIRTUAL PLATFORM
LEBANONNH.GOV/LIVE

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- 1. Call to Order**
The August 18, 2026, Strategic Plan Task Force Meeting is hereby called to order.
 - 2. Approval of Minutes**
 - A. August 4, 2026
 - 3. Old Business**
 - A. Review of Existing Master Plan Vision and Purpose Statements
 - B. Review of Strategic Planning in Small Communities article
 - C. Scope of Strategic Planning Committee
 - D. Make-up of Strategic Planning Committee
 - E. Public Input Opportunities for Strategic Planning Committee
 - 4. New Business**
 - A. Discussion of Request for Qualifications (RFQ) - Public engagement services and qualifications
 - 5. Other Business**
 - 6. Future Agenda Items**
 - 7. Adjournment**

Meetings are open for in-person and remote attendance. Members of the public who wish to attend remotely may do so by going to LebanonNH.gov/Live where you will find instructions on how to enter the meeting. Members of the public will be able to participate and ask questions through the City's virtual platform or by phone. Please note: Should technical difficulties occur during the meeting that disrupt virtual or phone connection(s), the meeting will continue without remote access capabilities.

Any person with a disability who wishes to attend this public meeting and needs additional accommodation, please contact the ADA coordinator at City Hall by calling 603-448-4220 at least 72 hours in advance so that the City can make any necessary arrangements.

DRAFT

**Strategic Plan Task Force
Tuesday, August 4, 2026 - 8:30am
Council Chambers - City Hall - or remote via Virtual Platform
MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilor Lori Key, Councilor Timothy McNamara, Fire Chief James Wheatley, Deputy Finance Director Victoria Paquin, Recreation, Arts, and Parks Director Paul Coats, George Blike (remote), and Fran Casale (Alternate)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilor Kellen Appleton

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Andrew Hosmer

STAFF ABSENT: Deputy City Manager David Brooks

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The August 4, 2026, Strategic Plan Task Force meeting was called to order.

Chair Lori Key stated that the goals for the meeting were to clarify the work to be completed by the Task Force and establish a common understanding of its scope. She proposed that, by November 2026, the Phase One Task Force design the process for developing a strategic plan that reflects the community's values and vision. The future Phase Two Strategic Planning Committee would then develop the strategic plan to guide City policy and funding priorities.

2. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Review of Existing Master Plan Vision and Purpose Statements

The Task Force reviewed the relationship between the City's 2012 Master Plan and a future strategic plan. Members discussed whether the Master Plan should serve as the City's long-term vision with a shorter-term strategic plan beneath it, whether the strategic planning process could help inform the ongoing Master Plan update, and how to address potential conflicts while both documents remain guiding policies.

Members discussed the International City/County Management Association article included in the agenda packet. The article's framework of mission, long-term vision, values, shorter-term goals, and implementation strategies prompted discussion about the appropriate duration and function of Lebanon's strategic plan. Examples from other New Hampshire municipalities were also considered, including the use of shorter-term City Council goals and strategic objectives while master plan updates proceed separately.

The Task Force generally supported pairing a longer-term community vision with a shorter-term, prioritized strategic plan. Members discussed a three- to five-year planning horizon with annual review and updates so that changing conditions, community priorities, elected leadership, departmental work plans, the budget, and the Capital Improvement Program remain aligned. The existing Master Plan was viewed as a useful starting point whose vision and 2009 Principles of Sustainable Community should be tested and revalidated through community engagement rather than assumed to remain current.

B. Scope of Strategic Planning Committee

The Task Force clarified that Phase One is responsible for designing the process, not drafting the strategic plan itself. Phase One's work is expected to define the process, timeline, approach to public engagement, possible use of a consultant or facilitator, and structure needed so that the Phase Two Strategic Planning Committee can begin substantive work promptly.

Members discussed lessons from the City's prior strategic planning approach. Concerns included limited community input, too many unprioritized items, ambiguity about implementation, and a weak connection between the plan and budget decisions. The Task Force supported providing Phase Two with a critical review of what had not worked so the new process does not reproduce those shortcomings. Department directors were identified as important contributors because they can explain operational constraints and the information needed to translate priorities into work plans.

The strategic plan was discussed as a practical tool for prioritizing limited resources, guiding the City Manager's proposed budget and Capital Improvement Program, aligning departmental work plans, communicating choices to the public, and evaluating progress. Members emphasized that community priorities should be considered alongside clear, accessible data about service levels, costs, tradeoffs, and implementation capacity so public input can be informed and useful.

C. Make-up of Strategic Planning Committee

The Task Force discussed the relationship between the current Phase One Task Force and the future Phase Two Strategic Planning Committee. Members supported completing substantial preliminary work before Phase Two begins while preserving the future Committee's ability to participate in significant decisions and shape the process it will be responsible for carrying out.

No final committee composition was established. Members noted that some Phase One participants may continue into Phase Two, but the process should work for the individuals ultimately appointed. The Task Force also discussed allowing Phase Two to review consultant qualifications, conduct interviews if appropriate, and participate in any final selection rather than binding the future Committee to a consultant chosen in advance.

D. Public Input Opportunities for Strategic Planning Committee

The Task Force identified robust, visible, and inclusive community engagement as a central requirement of the strategic planning process. Members discussed the need to hear from residents, the business community, people who are satisfied with City services, people seeking change, and people who do not ordinarily participate in municipal processes. The goal would be broad community input rather than reliance on organized or self-selecting interest groups.

Potential methods included open community forums, focus groups, surveys or a community report card, written and virtual participation, and outreach in places where people already gather. A possible two-step approach would begin with open-ended conversations to identify themes, followed by a broadly distributed survey to test and prioritize those themes. Members discussed the importance of asking both what residents want Lebanon to become over the long term and what near-term priorities and service tradeoffs they would support to move toward that vision.

Members recognized that the breadth and quality of engagement would depend on the resources committed to outreach, facilitation, data collection, and synthesis. The Task Force discussed whether an outside consultant could add value by designing and managing public engagement, reaching underrepresented groups, applying successful practices from other communities, and helping the Committee synthesize a large volume of information. Before seeking qualifications, the Task Force would need to define the services and outcomes expected from a consultant and determine which work could be completed internally.

City Manager Andrew Hosmer offered to prepare draft Request for Qualifications language for review and editing at the next meeting. Members were asked to consider the consultant services and qualifications that should be included. Staff also agreed to circulate publicly available examples from benchmark communities and seek potential contacts who could describe which public engagement approaches were effective.

As preparation for the next meeting, members were encouraged to read the strategic planning article and the introductory section of the Master Plan and to develop ideas for the possible Request for Qualifications. The next meeting was scheduled for August 18, 2026.

3. OTHER BUSINESS:

None discussed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:59am.