

FINAL

**LEBANON CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES, BUDGET WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2021
5:30 P.M.
REMOTE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
LEBANONNH.GOV/LIVE**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Tim McNamara, Assistant Mayor Clifton Below, Erling Heistad, Devin Wilkie, Douglas Whittlesey, Jim Winny, Karen Zook, Karen Liot Hill arrived after roll call.

MEMBERS ABSENT: George Sykes

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Shaun Mulholland, Deputy City Manager Paula Maville, City Clerk Kristin Kenniston, Director of Planning & Development David Brooks, Finance Director Vicki Lee, Deputy Finance Director Tina Stearns, Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director Chris Christopoulos, Human Resources Director Gloria Leskiewicz, Human Services Director Lynne Goodwin, Executive Assistant of City Manager Beth Beraldi, GIS Coordinator Mark Goodwin, Cyber Services Director Perry Eaton

Mayor McNamara called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

City Manager Mulholland informed the public this meeting is taking place virtually due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and is thereby being conducted in accordance with the Emergency Orders issued by the New Hampshire Governor, NH RSA 91-A "Right-to-Know Law." The topics being discussed by Staff at this Work Session address the City's objectives during the year and are subject to potential budget rescissions.

A Roll Call was taken and all Councilors who were present for this Work Session are listed above.

This is not a Public Hearing but rather a work session for the Council to talk about what has been accomplished in 2020 based on last year's objectives, what will be accomplished in 2021 and what is proposed for 2022 and 2023. However, the public is encouraged to listen in. It is an important aspect of the budget cycle, to make sure City Staff are doing what the City Council expects of them to meet the City Council's objectives. Detailed explanations are in the packet for this evening's meeting. On May 5, at the regular Council Meeting, they will be talking about the financial outlook of the City and get input from the Council and the Public. The City Manager outlined the budget process for the upcoming year.

1. ANNUAL WORK SESSION: Presentation of Draft Outcomes & Work Plan

City Manager (pages 3 - 12 of agenda packet)

Mr. Mulholland reviewed the Strategies, 2020 Accomplishments, 2021 Outcome Measures, and looking ahead to 2022-2023 for the following:

- Highly Efficient Customer-Focused Organization

There were some substantial changes that had to be made due to Covid 19 and that moved forward the virtual meeting process. The website has been redesigned and the paperless initiative has made great strides with two departments onboard, Assessing and Human Resources. In 2021, the complaint process and tracking software became completely operational. He hopes to develop a Chief Innovation Officer position by reorganizing departments instead of hiring new people. The Chief

Diversity Officer is a new role and the function will likely be added to the City Manager position. Transition of DPW into the Laserfiche system is moving forward, will provide transparency and will be expanded in 2022.

- Expanded citywide Digital Media & Public Information Presence

One of the things the Manager would like to do on the City Website is the ability to provide explanatory videos, like how to vote or register to vote. Also, he wants to expand the transparency project, for the public to access public documents on their own. Expansion of the Laserfiche work will continue in 2021. He intends to create a communication platform regarding transportation issues that will be led by Deputy City Manager Paula Maville. This will ensure City projects and State projects are coordinated and will keep traffic flows and communications regarding the best traffic routes. The solid waste permitting will be fully operational by September. In 2022-23, the DPW will transition into the City transparency program.

- Legislative Advocacy

There have been close collaborations on several bills with the Legislature, to include Councilor Below's work on the energy issues and Councilor Hill's and the Mayor's work on several bills. They wish to formalize the work that has been ongoing and detailing the importance of the role of the City. Mayor McNamara said the Mayors group has made additional efforts and he emphasized continuing to work with the Legislature as this allows the Mayors to speak with a single voice and be heard. Deputy City Manager Maville said she appreciated the efforts of the City Manager to move forward digitally during the pandemic. She recognized other staff as well who accomplished many things, including Beth Beraldi and Melanie McDonough.

- Enhanced Sustainable Economic Development

A lot of this functionality is moving to Planning and Community Development. The Airport Technology Park is a key component of that as well as the redevelopment of Downtown West Lebanon and the Westboro Yard. They will continue to work with community organizations to expand the Biotech businesses and bring in high paying employment opportunities.

- Transparent and Fiscally Responsible Annual Budget

The central collections have been streamlined to make it more customer friendly. They are working on the three-year projection of financial needs for the City. Councilor Below discussed reviewing the procurement policies, such as best value versus lowest bid. There is some unfinished business that was started in 2019. A lot of work began prior to the pandemic that needs to reflect the sustainability principles.

- Careful, Well Balanced, Cost-Conscious, Capital Improvement Planning

The City Manager is working on the debt management plan over the fixed six-year plan starting in 2027.

Finance/Assessing (pages 13 - 20 of agenda packet)

Vicki Lee reviewed the Strategies, 2020 Accomplishments, 2021 Outcome Measures, and looking ahead to 2022-2023 for the following:

- Focus on Fiscal Sustainability & Long-Term Financial Planning
- Accurate & Efficient Handling of Financial Resources
- Compliance with Federal, State & Local Policies and Principles
- Public Education About Assessment Functions and Activities
- Equitable Assessments Maintained at or Near Market Value

She emphasized the role Finance plays in the inner workings of the City. In the past, five divisions fell under Finance: accounts payable, water and sewer, payroll, property taxes and cyber services. In 2021, the tax collector role moved to the City Clerk's Department, Assessing moved under Finance and Cyber Services is now under the City Manager. She outlined the department roles and the aspects of government that involve the department. They updated the reporting and documentation

process. They went out to bond to take advantage of the low interest rates. She outlined all the efforts they have made regarding payments. Now all of their output is digital, and they are paperless. They have reviewed new software and will be moving forward with that soon. There was a citywide property reevaluation. They will continue to do cross training within the department to provide backup on work roles and build in redundancy between the staff. The Assessing Department will be brought on board and will become digital.

Cyber Services (pages 21 - 25 of agenda packet)

Perry Eaton reviewed the Strategies, 2020 Accomplishments, 2021 Outcome Measures, and looking ahead to 2022-2023 for the following:

- **Focus on Enhancing Cyber Security Posture**

Over the past year they have been incorporating the email phishing tests and training employees to identify those phishing emails. It has been a concerted effort. They enabled multi authentication on cloud-based applications. They identified the network security framework to follow the National standards. They intend to develop a newsletter and will be working on bringing in updating packages within the City rather than working with an outside organization. They will be upgrading their audits.

- **Maintain and Improve Cyber Services Infrastructure with Emphasis on Data Security**

In the past year they relocated City staff and equipment from and back to the new offices within City Hall. They moved the office of the Cyber Services within City Hall. They upgraded the phone system and implemented a new video conferencing system. They are looking for ways to build redundancy within the PC network. They are upgrading the Wi-Fi network and will add Public Wi-Fi to Colburn Park, to mention a few of their intended upgrades.

- **Effectively and Efficiently Supporting the Technology Needs of the City**

During the past year they implemented Microsoft teams and video conferencing. They have added Cyber Services onboarding for new employees. They have assisted various departments with new software, one being the GIS and DPW asset management system. They will be helping with the digital records system and the new finance system. They hope to build in single sign in whenever possible and to continue with the training of the cyber services staff.

The City Manager said Staff made a dramatic change by addressing security issues and mitigating risk. They will be moving to a cloud-based accounting system. A Cyber Services Specialist will be embedded within the DPW department to work directly with their efforts. That department is the largest user and needs Cyber solutions, and this will be an attempt to have a cyber services specialist become a working member of that department.

Human Resources (pages 26 - 28 of agenda packet)

Gloria Leskiewicz reviewed the Strategies, 2020 Accomplishments, 2021 Outcome Measures, and looking ahead to 2022-2023 for the following:

- **Aligning Policies, Compensation & Benefits to Strategic Goals, Optimizing Best Human Resources Practices, Collaboration, and Communication**

This year, HR has been performing investigations and providing training for supervisors, midlevel managers and directors to define a process on how investigations should be performed and how background checks should be performed. They are undergoing collective bargaining with all the unions. They have accomplished a HR tracking and hiring system and are now paperless. They are looking forward to doing the classification studies for fire and police for the wage and market classification studies. They have finalized the AFSCME classification study.

Human Services (pages 29 - 31 of agenda packet)

Lynne Goodwin reviewed the Strategies, 2020 Accomplishments, 2021 Outcome Measures, and looking ahead to 2022-2023 for the following:

- High Functioning, Collaborative, Customer Focused General Assistance Program

The year of 2020 was a different year for residents due to the pandemic. Many residents were without income. Federal assistance for rental assistance and deferment of eviction allowed human services to help many households. Upper Valley Strong also provided assistance. The office primarily provided assistance with temporary housing that was usually resolved with motels. The shelters reduced capacity due to the pandemic. They used more than 10 times the usual annual motel assistance, or \$75,000 on motel rooms. They spent \$42,500 in rent or security deposits. They helped many homeless in 2020 and they helped 77 households.

- Develop Integrated Community Health Program

They collaborated with community resources to provide a safety net and continue to strategize how to plug the holes in needs, primarily related to housing. This year for the first time they are developing the Integrated Community Health Program, along with the Fire Department and other regional community programs. They hope to have a social worker to serve several area communities. They will be partnering with West Central Behavioral Health. The Fire Department is bringing in a community paramedic. Together they will provide a better overall healthcare response to people with multiple needs. This is the beginning of a Community Health Department, without creating that department.

Councilor Winny asked where the gaps are in the safety net, what needs shoring up and what are the future challenges. They hope to be more proactive with community nursing for aging in place.

There is new housing in the pipeline, but it really is not targeted for the people in the financial groups that they are serving. The rent for area housing exceeds what is allowed by housing vouchers and despite best efforts it is hard to move people to affordable housing. Councilor Winny sees a lot of trouble with seniors who need more support and help aging in place. There are not enough senior residences.

Councilor Hill asked about the Community Health Assessment and if there could be a link to it on the website. They are currently undertaking that effort with area communities and the data is not available yet. Other regional planning councils do inventories that the City could access. It could be possible to put that information on the City Website.

Councilor Hill asked what is being looked at trying to set some goals around affordable housing, not just market rate housing. In the 2020 budget there was money set aside for homeless sheltering. Because of the pandemic they had to be housed in motels and small micro units of housing where they had access to hygiene. They are considering other ways to provide housing, such as an old motel or something similar. The outlook is grim to acquire a property for a homeless shelter and they are thinking outside of the box to find ways to creatively provide housing in new ways for many people. Ms. Goodwin would like the City to help influence HUD in how fair market rents are established for this area and to determine how the rents compare across the county so the vouchers could be used. The vouchers are artificially low compared to market rates and the vacancy rate is under 1%. Three things are needed: make housing units available, align vouchers with rents to make those units affordable, and provide the support services to make sure tenants get the services needed to sustain that housing.

Fire (pages 32 - 71 of agenda packet)

Chief Chris Christopoulos reviewed the Strategies, 2020 Accomplishments, 2021 Outcome Measures, and looking ahead to 2022-2023 for the following:

- “Best in Class” Fire & Emergency Medical Services

The department ordered a new tanker and it is in use. They replaced an ambulance. The cardiac monitors will be available in a few days. They received a FEMA grant for supplemental Covid PPE

and disinfectant equipment. Now the ambulance can be sanitized quickly and is back in service in 15 minutes. They also received a grant that allowed them to provide PPE and sanitation equipment to the Police Department. They are decreasing their down time for all emergency services. Covid has been a large part of their world. They have standardized procedures and use of PPE. No fire department employees have contracted Covid. The paramedics and advanced EMTs continue to give vaccinations and work with regional clinics and the clinic at the JC Penney site. The wages for the fire employees giving vaccinations are being reimbursed by the Federal government. They were able to secure over 2000 vaccines to give to the senior housing in the regional areas. They continue to coordinate activities and provide sanitation to all City departments. They helped develop the citywide employee screening and quarantine policy. They funded the program for testing for all City employees.

The department is meeting as a planning group with regional experts to develop the program goals for the Community Health Program. They hope to onboard the community paramedic and make the program operational within the next couple of months. They are updating the citywide intersection control system. It was 50% funded by Dartmouth-Hitchcock for the Route 120 corridor. They are looking at the rates for the ambulance services as they are several years behind in potential rate increases.

- **Safety Security of Life and Property for Building Construction and Occupancy**

They have been training the public on the proper use of fire extinguishers. They have worked with groups, such as the school system to provide a program called Stop the Bleed for treating emergency wounds. Looking ahead they have assigned one of the captains to lead a community risk reduction program and determine what they can do in the community to reduce risk, such as smoke detectors.

- **Heightened Emergency Preparedness**

All City employees were trained in basic incident command. They updated their emergency plan and water treatment plan under a State grant. They will be continuing with Covid activities and training key leadership in advanced incident command. They are looking for land for a future firehouse for upcoming years. It is in the 2022-23 budget plan. Potentially they looked at combining the two fire stations, including the EMTs and the Fire. It sounds like they will keep stations in both downtowns and potential locations are being identified.

- **Lebanon Fire Department Business Plan**

This was provided in the packet for the Councilors to review.

Planning (pages 72 - 91 of agenda packet)

David Brooks discussed the efforts that do not reflect the day to day work that the department does. During the pandemic they still reviewed 450 building permits, performed over 2300 building inspections, processed over 80 development applications and raised substantial funds from the permits. It has been a very busy year. He reviewed the Strategies, 2020 Accomplishments, 2021 Outcome Measures, and looking ahead to 2022-2023 for the following:

- **Plan for Vibrant Neighborhoods Including Opportunities for Appropriate Infill and Redevelopment**

The plan is to encourage development where services and infrastructure already exist. Some zoning amendments have been adopted. The urban services district and boundary will assist in smart growth goals to make efficient use of the infrastructure systems. They hope to simplify the process for small housing projects.

- **Maximize Use of Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) Report in Land Use, Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resource Planning**

They integrated the NRI into development proposals to protect the wildlife corridors and develop an open space plan. They are working with the Planning Board and other Boards to make sure the NRI

and wildlife corridor is incorporated into their application processes. They are in the final steps of the adoption of the open space plan and hope that will be happening soon.

- Implement Land Use Policies That Result in More Energy-Efficient Buildings and Sustainable Development

This a key focus of the upcoming year. They will work with potential zoning amendments to address energy efficiency. They hope to learn from other communities and incorporate in their plans what makes the most sense for Lebanon. The City Commissions and Boards will play an important role in what is developed and to help minimize the impact of greenhouse emissions.

- Plan for Multi-Modal Transportation

The goal is to try to encourage a diversity of transportation and move away from single person vehicles, formalize other means of transportation and bikeway linkages. They intend to standardize bridge development and road projects. They have made some safety improvements in pedestrian networks, including the Miracle Mile, along Route 12A and the Route 120 corridor. They are going to implement Phase 1 of the Complete Streets Plan. They recently applied for sidewalk improvements along Mechanic Street. They are looking at Planning Development updates for the Pedestrian Bikeways. They are working on a feasibility study for a trail along the Westboro Yard area.

- Support Preservation of Historic Resources and Character

Their big push is a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant to review and update the original Colburn Park National Registered District. It will include updated application forms and evaluation of potential expansion. This will include working on zoning amendments for the Local Historic District.

- Promote Revitalization of the Central Business Districts

They are working on projects to revitalize both of the Downtown areas with smart growth goals. They are working with the Spencer Street development with divisions for worker development housing. They are coordinating with public works to make improvements. They are working with the City Council to be transparent with information and to be consistent about what would be required to gain access to tax relief. The Revitalization Advisory Committee is active and moving forward regarding West Lebanon. There will be Main Street improvement recommendations coming in future years.

- Foster the Development of a Balanced Range of Housing to Enhance the Vitality of the Community

They are trying to provide incentives for development of high-density residential areas and tax relief. This would encourage better use of developed areas and to protect the outlying undeveloped areas. The UVLSRPC and other partners have completed the Keys to the Valley Project. That study will provide good information to the City, along with census data to figure out what policy opportunities there may be to achieve housing goals. There are opportunities for density bonuses that could be used with affordable housing.

- Support an Organized and Active Approach by the City to Promoting Sustainable Economic Development

Spencer Street and the Airport TIF District are nearing the construction stage. Rebecca Owens is working with agencies and providers to get full development of broadband for areas where there is not good service. There is the possibility of fiber, and satellite in addition to the traditional services like Comcast and Fairpoint that are already here. Recently they have been building relationships to help develop employment in high tech positions. There are not many tools to build sustainable economic housing to support the existing employment needs in the City. There is a need for businesses to have room to grow, but the City cannot be too aggressive. The City is actively pursuing ways to increase affordable housing, even more so than other communities. The City is a key player in the Region.

Mr. Mark Goodwin addressed the Green House Gas (GHG) Reduction Initiatives. This will be kept on the front burner and they have been actively engaged in reducing greenhouse gases since 2010. Measuring reductions means tabulating emissions for the City, it does not include the community. This was last done in 2018 and they will conduct this exercise again in 2022. Between 2015 and 2018 the City reduced the GHG emissions by 33%. They are discussing developing a new Municipal Climate Action Plan in the future and they currently have a rolling action list. In the meantime, they have been looking at climate work from other communities. There are several projects that are completed and other projects that are in mid development and this will make big changes in the next few years. The in-process projects will reduce emissions by a total of 42%. There are also potential projects that could improve the reduction initiatives. The City emissions are about 10% of the community emissions. There is more work to be done to improve the greenhouse gas within the community. There are several projects that the City could be involved with and take initiative, that would improve the community emissions.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Billings
Recording Secretary