

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON
CITY COUNCIL**

Minutes, Work Session, April 23, 2019
City Hall – Council Chambers
5:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT	Mayor Timothy McNamara, Assistant Mayor Clifton Below, Councilors Bruce Bronner, Erling Heistad, Karen Liot Hill, Shane Smith, and Karen Zook
MEMBERS ABSENT	Councilors Jim Winny and Suzanne Prentiss (listened in via telephone)
STAFF PRESENT	Shaun Mulholland (City Manager), Sandra Allard (City Clerk), Tina Stearns (Executive Assistant), Chris Christopoulos (Fire Chief and Interim Airport Manager), Gloria Lacasse-Leskiewicz (Human Resources Director), Lynne Goodwin (Human Services Director), Tad Montgomery (Energy and Facilities Manager), Greg Colby (Finance Director), Vicki Lee (Deputy Finance Director), David Brooks (Planning & Zoning Director), Shelley Hadfield (City Consultant)

The work session began at 5:33 PM.

1. PRESENTATION OF DRAFT OUTCOMES AND WORK PLANS
A. Review of City Council Priorities

Assistant Mayor Below began the evening by offering some preface remarks. He stated that truth is the glue that holds government together, not just our government but society in general. He stated two inconvenient truths: 1) Taxation, specifically property taxes, have become a burden for some individuals: those at the bottom of the economic scale and those on fixed incomes. He asked the Councilors to be mindful of this as they make decisions about spending. 2) The growing realization that civilization is pushing on the ecological systems. We are not on track to meet prior goals and that means it is time to move on these goals. He would like the Council to consider how these priorities impact the use of fossil fuels and energy efficiency. The discussion began by reviewing the 2018 priorities and asked each councilor for any changes and revisions they would like to make.

Councilor Heistad said his priorities have not changed and most of the things on the list are in the same situation regarding redevelopment and the airport. He recognized there has been some progress regarding the tunnel.

Mayor McNamara said a couple of things have risen to the top, the interceptor project and resolving some of the issues at the airport have made a positive impact. He feels advances have continued to be made through the effort of Staff. He realizes that change is not made on a large scale, rather many small organizations, like a city, making change and having an impact on a larger scale.

Councilor Bronner agreed that the priorities remain constant, but he feels substantial progress has been made at the airport, including a new manager and the manager is on the cusp of getting leases signed. He credits that movement to the City Manager. Although there is still work to be done at the airport to be financially positive.

Councilor Prentiss said her priorities remain the same as last year. They are the tunnel and the interceptor.

Councilor Liot Hill said her priorities for this year are measurable progress on the Westboro Yard, and the beginning of working with the community of West Lebanon on a downtown vision. Regarding the sewer interceptor she is interested in measuring the progress that has been made and in a phased way indicate what the next steps would be for the sewer system going forward. Lastly, housing is a concern of constituents and she said focusing on housing opportunities that would help with future development and sustainability.

Councilor Smith said the capacity and long-range plans are still his issues. He is concerned how development and large investments, like the interceptor capacity, can be recovered and shifted from the residential rate payers. He is satisfied how the fees have been reviewed, including those increased to cover costs, but he is still interested in addressing the airport fees.

Councilor Zook spoke to affordable and workforce housing. She would like greater implementation of sustainability within the City. Lastly, she is interested in focusing on a comprehensive plan for human services provided to the community.

Mayor McNamara said he hears the most about the rising taxes and the affordability of living in Lebanon from constituents. He would like to work toward more tax stabilization. Taxes are moving at a higher rate than other parts of the economy, like Social Security and other forms of retirement. This is a burden for residents who want to remain in their homes and want to stay in the community. He said the Council needs to ask themselves if each improvement or project is necessary, how would it adversely affect the tax rate, and what the pay back would be over the long run.

B. Overview with City Departments

Mr. Mulholland gave an overview of the strategic plan and said departments will be making their plans more tangible. Some of the departments are already moving in this direction and have developed business plans.

City Manager

There are minor adjustments rather than big changes from 2018. The use and access to public documents and enhanced transparency are moving forward. Centralized software programs for permanent land use has made great progress. There have been two LEAN events, and more are planned for this year. DocuSign has moved forward and nearly all the departments are using the system.

Regarding the outcomes for 2019, the purchasing policy is going to be adjusted by fall and there are a few other house-keeping policies to work on as well. The personnel policy is going to be worked on with a consultant. Mr. Below asked about the missing administrative code that is called for in the Charter. Mr. Mulholland indicated he has recently come across a draft of this code and he felt it was done well. Mr. Mulholland will look into it and get the file to the Council. Staff is evaluating a mobile applications program that would allow people to apply for permits on line and it is moving faster than expected.

Complete implementation of the records management system and the City-wide paperless initiative is expected by 2020. Everything is on target for achieving it. A transparency initiative is being developed. Although it feels uncomfortable, other communities have done this and it has not been a problem. Transparency will eliminate the need for people to ask for the information under the Right-to-Know Law. The Manager believes people should be allowed to get what they want when they want it.

Under the sustainable government initiative a few things have been added. Developing workforce housing, affordable housing and a housing plan is one step. Staff have already started some of this work this year. The Downtown Visioning Plan has been created and now action steps are required. The RFP for the redevelopment of Spencer Street is coming soon. Design plans for the Downtown Tunnel are on track and construction should begin as planned. The West Lebanon Visioning Plan has a first step with the upcoming charrette that is planned. The application for the demolition of the buildings in the Westboro Yard and the acquisition of a lease has already been submitted and they are waiting for the outcome from the State Senate. It is hoped that EVEC will transition into an Economic Development Commission and that should happen in the next year. This would help with the redevelopment of Lebanon and West Lebanon. There are plans to move forward with the parking area behind City Hall. Most things have stayed the same regarding transparency and fiscal responsibility within the budget. Progress has been made on many of the items, such as streamlining the purchase processes.

Mr. Mulholland indicated departments are working on their 2021 plans. The departments are looking ahead to additional

Leadership Training. Work flow analysis will continue. There are a series of new fees that will bring in additional revenues. There are a lot of components involved in developing strategies for the City's transparency. He has asked the departments to develop long term plans and perform a cost benefit analysis of their plans. The new asset management program will help with priority management and capital projects.

The Councilors made suggestions regarding using TIF to finance some of the downtown improvements and discussed the limited TIF resources. There has been great momentum this year and the Manager has been able to rally internal and external resources. Having the City Manager's office back to full staff has allowed them to take on all the new work. Mayor McNamara spoke to all the projects that are going on and he cautioned that the studies will get done but the work cannot get left on the table because there is too much to get done. He wants to see the implementation of the initiatives and action based on the Master Plan.

Finance/IT

The new Finance Director, Greg Colby, was introduced to the Council and Vicki Lee was welcomed. Finance's main responsibility is to support the other departments. The success of Finance is helping the other departments get their work done and being a good steward of the City's funds. The strategies and outcomes are very similar from year to year. Primary to their success is keeping the financial statement current with the new standards. Cash flow analysis is used to determine what bonds need to be initiated for the year. Several things were accomplished including the credit card policy and procedures, new union contracts, education sessions and moving to a health plan that will save the City money. The accounts payable department went through a LEAN process. There will be a new process to buy/sell landfill tickets. Staff wants to move to an electronic process and plan to move it out of the libraries and into retail locations but continue the sales at City Hall. They are looking at several options to make it possible to buy the landfill tickets electronically and the system will meet standards to protect private information.

Regarding IT, staff are focused on enhancing the security of the IT systems. The new laptops for Council members will make it easier to get City documents to the Council. Paper will be provided if it is wanted but they are hoping to move to paperless as much as possible. The Council suggested that if a good portion of the budget is non-discretionary, it would be easier for them if those areas, where some decision-making ability is available, were highlighted. Ms. Liot Hill asked who is responsible for developing the public face of the City websites. Right now, there is not anyone with the role of creating

the face of Lebanon and there is not a plan to hire a communications expert. The web is mainly handled by one staff member in IT. She felt some of the information has become more difficult to find on the website since we changed web systems.

Human Resources

There have been several changes in HR. There are a few particular tasks, such as the LAPSE wage and classification study that should be done every several years for all groups as well. AFSCME will be done in 2020. The fire fighter's union will be reviewed in 2021 and the police union in 2022. Following this process, the salaries will be kept current. Personnel policies are being revised. The part time seasonal employee classification will be added to the wage classification system. Substantial work was done to move to the new health plan, staff took the ball and ran with it.

City Clerk

The big effort for the City Clerk is the electronic records management system. Staff are currently testing two systems that they are considering. Library staff have been assisting with the IT aspects as there are similarities to library management systems.

Ms. Allard spoke to the new systems that have been implemented to make it easier for people to do transactions on-line. Staff are always looking to increase their customer service and make things easier for residents. There is an online tool for people to get their own motor vehicle estimates. Dog license renewals are online. They are sponsoring a rabies clinic on Saturday and the license can be done at the same time. Resources that specify the information and documents that people need to bring to the City Hall to do their motor vehicle transactions are available online, eliminating extra trips for many residents. Auto renewals can be done online, but the State regulates that new registrations need to be done in person due to the documents required. The next year will be busy for the office with new election laws and the upcoming Presidential election in 2020. . Should some proposed legislation get passed relative to voters being able to vote by absentee ballot for any reason, this would likely create an unmanageable workload for staff during election times.

Human Services

Staff made some changes to represent what they are doing for Lebanon residents and to highlight the dispensing of temporary assistance to people besides financial assistance. They are tracking the number of services that people are receiving from the department. Adding the second person to the office allowed them to increase the extra support that some families need. Within the next year they will do more reporting. The office is not closed now that there are two people on staff. A paper survey to assess how they are doing was attempted but it did not get much response.

Mayor McNamara asked if the department is seeing any changes in demographic trends, changes in age, type of group or economics of the people receiving their services. For example, are older populations applying for more services? Ms. Goodwin noted there has been a recent increase of elderly people seeking services as people continue to hear about the services that are available. The other large demographic is males 35-55 with very limited skill sets and substance abuse issues. This demographic lives in the least expensive housing in town, they have high levels of job turnover and they are not stable. State employment services are no longer in Lebanon and other agencies, like Headrest, are trying to step up to fill that gap. Hopefully other agencies, like Twin Pines, can continue to help their clients find resources other than the City, especially if they are entitled to other funding resources. There has been a big uptick in scams, phone calls and emails. There are many low-income people who are vulnerable, and

they respond and get taken. It's the most vulnerable who are targeted and have the most to lose and gain, so they take a chance.

Airport

Chief Christopoulos has made considerable progress with the finances for the airport, hangers, leases, and generating appropriate revenue. The outcomes have been synthesized to less outcomes and made more comprehensive. A lot of progress has been made, but there is a lot of work left to do. The airport is working on a plan to create an industrial park at the airport. Staff are trying to get the airport out of the red and into the black. Some projects are on hold to avoid needlessly spending tax dollars and funds from the FAA when there is more need at other airports where the return would be more worthwhile. The rent for hanger leases is increasing by 2.3% and will take effect in July. The rent will be reviewed on an annual basis. A lease for the restaurant is under negotiations. There are areas of the airport that need to be resurveyed and work that needs to be done on specific areas. The hazard beacons may be converted to solar. That is not fundable under the FAA, but it does not preclude the City from doing this with City funds. This could reduce maintenance costs and electric charges. At one time many of the beacons were not working, but they are now functioning.

Planning

Mr. Brooks said some of the titles and outcomes from last year were refined, but it is very similar to previous years. Vibrant neighborhoods and character preservation will be maintained. There have been recent zoning amendments. Staff continue to work with the Heritage Commission on the Dana House and the fountain group. They continue to look at zoning districts and continue to look for grant opportunities. They are working on the Master plan and land use. There are density bonuses available and Staff would like to help do that work.

The NIR (Natural Resources Inventory) report will continue to be used to maximize looking at natural resources, river bank protection, conservation design and wild life corridors. The use of that document will help Staff preserve the best things in the community and still allow development. The Wild About Lebanon has been a success.

In 2019 Staff wants to update development regulations to explicitly reference the NIR and wild life corridor studies so everyone can look at the documents to see where development should be occurring. Staff continues to look broadly at steep slopes to prevent erosion and they will continue efforts to protect the wildlife corridors, including those across roadways.

In response to questions about what is being done about climate change, the amount of road, conveyance of water and susceptibility of flooding, staff responded that the CSO project has exceeded the requirements to plan for the future. There is a large part of the City where data is being collected, but Staff are not actively making changes for the future. They do usually upsize the culverts as repairs are needed. The data they have after the road mapping is completed will be used to help make future plans. The City does not have an active forest plan. Some properties do not allow managing the forest under the deeds and easements, but other City properties do. Trees become degraded and decline if they are not harvested. Selling the trees could be a revenue stream in the future for carbon credits. There are planned improvements around more energy efficient buildings and solar projects are planned.

There are plans for a University fellow from UNH to work on the greenhouse gas emissions inventory to determine some of the improvements that have been made over the last decade. Staff will continue to work on the street lights, solar evaluations and other projects to increase the flexibility in the design of

residential buildings. Tiny houses continue to be a topic of interest. Mr. Below talked about adopting more updated standards to improve energy efficiency within the City that have better standards for City buildings and stretch codes for building within Lebanon.

The department is planning for multiple transportation modes, and they are actively working on the Miracle Mile adding street lights and more bike paths. The Pedestrian/Bicycle Committee is active and DPW is supportive of their work. The construction of a bike lane on LaHaye Drive may not have funding for this year. The Greenway has been a huge hit and they are looking for ways to extend the Greenway, so people can make more use of it.

The Council discussed moving the temporary bus hubs out of the two downtown areas to places in downtown where the buses do not completely dominate the downtown areas. Some Councilors said they would like to see some expansion to services during the weekend; this could help some people with socio/economic issues who need to get to their jobs.

There are zoning efforts to limit the continued outward expansion of the outlying areas, which would help preserve these areas. Staff continues to work on the urban services effort.

Some CIP efforts are taking place and zoning changes are being discussed to develop the two downtown areas. Staff hopes to work on the flood ordinance in areas that are suitable for housing. West Lebanon will have another proposal in the CIP for the Downtown Visioning Study. There is continued support for the Westboro Yard. Ms. Liot Hill would like something concrete written into the plan about the two-acre park that was planned for Westboro Yard now that the Route 4 bridge is completed. This may be the work of another department.

Housing has become its own item in this year's work plan. Staff has done some work in the past and intend to continue to increase these efforts. They are working with other communities to get an accurate picture of the housing needs in the area. They hope to create a housing group to help work on housing, as there is no department specifically working on the housing chapter of the Master Plan, perhaps a Housing Commission. By this summer there will be over 250 new multi-family houses under construction.

Staff will continue to work with other partners on all of the issues that the City has going on, both within the City and with other partners, entities and towns that are working on similar solutions. Mr. Mulholland said outcomes will be used as a tool, looking at them quarterly to design a road map to get their work done.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted
Linda Billings
Recording Secretary