

**FINAL**

**LEBANON CITY COUNCIL  
MINUTES, REGULAR SESSION  
REMOTE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS  
[LebanonNH.gov/Live](https://lebanonnh.gov/live)  
Tuesday, April 28, 2020  
5:30 p.m.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Tim McNamara, Assistant Mayor Clifton Below, Bruce Bronner, Erling Heistad, Karen Liot Hill, Suzanne Prentiss, George Sykes, Jim Winny, Karen Zook

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Manager Shaun Mulholland, Deputy City Manager Paula Maville, City Clerk Sandra Allard, Deputy City Clerk Kristin Kenniston, Planning & Zoning Director David Brooks, GIS Coordinator Mark Goodwin, Airport Director Carl Gross, Interim Parks & Recreation Director Rick Desharnias, Human Services Director Lynne Goodwin, Finance Director Vicki Lee, Deputy Finance Director Tina Stearns, Public Works Director Jim Donison, Energy & Facilities Manager Tad Montgomery, Chief Assessor Rick Vincent

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Mayor McNamara called the Work Session 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. The topics being discussed by Staff at this Work Session regarding what the City's objectives will be during the year are subject to potential budget rescissions.

**1. ANNUAL WORK SESSION: – PRESENTATION OF DRAFT OUTCOMES & WORK PLAN**

**A. Review of City Council Priorities:**

Some members of the Council sent in their written Council goals priorities for 2020-2022 in advance of this meeting as listed below:

**Councilor Winny**

- Encouraging development and improvements in Downtown West Lebanon, particularly consideration of TIF district and improvements based on the recent charrette
- Infrastructure (particularly roads and water/sewer)
- Continued attention to the budget and property tax rates including looking at alternative income sources for the city or reducing expenses (sewage, solar, updating fees etc.)

**Councilor Heisted**

- Quality of life - Healthy living promoted through outdoor exercise with more trails to access conservation land and String of Pearls by the Mascoma River.
- Recreation - More playing fields.
- Housing - More workforce housing.

- Medical preparedness for pandemic or health crisis preparation.
- Downtown vitality - Develop events to bring more people to Lebanon to including Greenway and Rail Trail users.
- Tax Rate - Maintain tax rate such that seniors can age in place e.g. 2.5%.
- Find additional non-property tax revenue sources such as room and meals tax.
- Urban services - We need to define the limit of urban services to help the city plan and control for major expenditures such as sewer and water.

#### **Councilor Prentiss**

- Westboro Yard.
- Managing the Economic Impacts of COVID-19.

Councilor Liot Hill stated her concerns/goals as follows: Businesses being able to financially survive the Corona Virus, noting they need relief and the City should support the business community through the Economic Development Commission and working with the Upper Valley Business Alliance; having the City play a role in the coming year to make sure neighborhoods have reliable access to high speed internet; and having a zero tax increase in the City Budget for the coming 12-24 months.

Councilor Sykes arrived remotely to the meeting at 5:40PM.

Councilor Prentiss emphasized that Westboro Yard should be completed this year and concurred with Councilor Liot Hill on a zero tax increase. We need to survive Corona and manage the losses and costs associated with COVID-19 while taking care of our community at the same time.

Councilor Zook felt helping the business community recover from the impact of what is going on should be the Council's first priority. Recreation would be great since the quality of life coming out of this pandemic will be huge. The Arts & Culture Commission is a priority for her but understands this may look different from what it would have been (prior to COVID-19).

Councilor Below felt surviving COVID-19 should be the Council's first priority by managing an economic meltdown; maintaining essential services provided by the City (i.e., first responders, utilities, water/wastewater treatment, to registering people's vehicles, and running elections); helping the community recover from the pandemic; and doing what we can to build sustainability and resiliency while simultaneously working to flattening the curve of climate change.

Councilor Sykes would like the City to maintain essential services and to look at the people who are providing those essential services more than the infrastructure. Capital Improvement Projects may have to be looked at with a slightly different view. We should also build for the future.

Mayor McNamara shared the same goals as the Council, and he agreed with much of it. The tax impact is going to be critical for both the commercial and residential taxpayers, noting the City would probably be seeing a number of requests for temporary abatement of their taxes and should try to have a flat budget. We should also maintain our leadership role in the State, because this is not the end of this. Lebanon has a lot to offer by engaging with the State and, as a small City, we are certainly able to bridge to gap between towns and larger cities.

Councilor Bronner said this is going to be an impact of which the likes we have never seen before and felt it very important that we choose our priorities carefully. The City should take care of itself as best as it can because we don't know what financial support we will be getting, and all the essential services need to function in spite of the costs. We should also keep the public informed.

Mr. Mulholland gave a PowerPoint presentation that was originally planned for May 6, 2020, but felt it important to let the Council and public know where the City stands financially, and what the goals and objectives are due the COVID-19 Pandemic. The work plans were designed and built prior to the circumstances that are before us right now. Much of the economy has been shut down for now, and his concern, along with much of the City, is that if we open up too early we may well be in a situation where we have a further outbreak and another shutdown. He spoke about the economic hit in revenues that Lebanon and local governments in other towns/cities are taking; employment claims throughout the USA; the collapse of retail sales; Lebanon's unemployment claims (10.8%); significant issues that will have a swift, severe impact on city/town revenues (i.e., hospitals and industries, etc.); the uncertainty if there will be Federal/State funds to offset losses incurred by municipalities; and how the distributing the \$1.25M the State has received from the Federal Government would work, noting it is clear from Governor Sununu this fund cannot be used for offsetting losses incurred by State or local municipalities, with the exception of allowing these funds to repay emergency response costs up to 75%.

The City's primary objectives is to develop and refine projects in the budget's expenses and revenues, noting it will be difficult to develop a financial picture on what the impacts might be on property tax revenue, but we need to explore possible taxpayer and rate relief options.

Mr. Mulholland will be requesting the Council give him the authority to enter into payment plan agreements for sewer to allow some relief to the ratepayers. For property taxes, everything is done by statute, but the City does have the authority under RSA 80:80 to enter into agreements with residents for tax payment plans so we do not have to Tax Deed properties. The NHMA (New Hampshire Municipal Association) will be asking Governor Sununu for an Emergency Order allowing cities/town to enter into tax payment plans at the time the taxes are actually do (July 1<sup>st</sup>) and explained how tax payment plans work.

The first rescissions in the City's budget and expenditures have been made and plans are being developed to address the long-term impacts on the local economy (i.e., Rte. 12A, the shopping district and retail), so we need to start thinking ahead and prepare to deal with any impacts on these rescissions. To do this, the City's strategy should be to closely monitor the projected revenue and expenditure impacts in the 2020 budget; implement rescissions in the 2020 Operating Budget; and develop a long-term economic recovery plan by using the Economic Development Commission and other Boards to start moving in this direction together - we cannot wait, or rely, on the Federal or State Government.

Mr. Mulholland reviewed the Property Tax Revenue impacts; plans for the NHMA to ask the Governor for an Emergency Order to allow School Boards to reduce their tax rate; the State's revenue sharing, which is uncertain at this point; the Federal assistance stimulus funds (unclear if the City will receive any of this); the Airport's receipt of \$1M and 5% of the cost for Capital Improvements to have their parking lot paved and adding a snow removal building; the Fire Department's receipt of \$32,566.00 from the Medicare Act Funds for ambulance service; and how NH will be distributing \$1.25B from the Federal Government, which is yet to be determined by the Governor. As of now there is no plan to have some of these funds go to towns/cities.

Mayor McNamara said that presumably the distribution of funds from the Cares Act to non-governmental entities in the State will trickle down and help Lebanon to allow people to pay their taxes. We may indirectly see some of these funds, but will not see it directly under the current guidelines.

Councilor Sykes said one of the questions not answered by the State’s Legislature was an increase or decrease in business taxes. The best projections so far is they do not know yet.

Councilor Heistad felt the City needs to have a robust preparation in place for whatever events might be coming down the road and we need to be prepared for a long-term struggle, as this is not over yet.

At the request of Councilor Liot Hill, Mr. Mulholland briefly explained some of the cuts the City has taken, and he will be sending a copy of his proposed rescissions in the City’s budget to the Council for their review and discussion on May 13, 2020. At this time, the City is not planning any layoffs and Capital Projects have not been cut.

Councilor Sykes suggested the City think about a volunteer committee, or even a dedicated Public Health Officer position whose job would be to specifically integrate and focus the City’s efforts with the State.

## **B. Overview with City Departments**

### **City Manager:** (pages 4 -7 of agenda packet)

Mr. Mulholland reviewed the Strategies, 2019 Accomplishments, 2020 Outcomes Measures, and plans for looking ahead in 2021-2022 for the following:

- Implementation of a Records Management System.
- Having a well-attended Citizens Academy.
- Developing a Transparency Initiative (2020), with implementation in 2021.
- Expand the City-wide digital media presence, which included a public records portal that would be available users to directly download applicable City documents.
- Have a transparent and fiscally responsible annual the City Budget and a balanced CAP Improvement Plan.

### **Finance/IT** (pages 11- 13 of agenda packet)

Ms. Vicki Lee, Finance Director, reviewed the strategies, 2019 accomplishments, the 2020 outcome measures, and looking ahead (2021-2022) plans for the following:

- Fiscal sustainability and long-term financial planning.
- Accurate & efficient handling of financial resources.
- Compliance with Federal/State/Local Policies and Principles.
- Information Technology (IT): Compliance to ensure protection of City data.

Of special note: The plan is to have the City go paperless by July 2020, have cross training, and implementing new financial software by July 2020.

### **Human Resources:** (page 17 of agenda packet)

Ms. Gloria Leskiewicz, HR Director, reviewed the strategies, 2019 accomplishments, the 2020 outcome measures, and looking ahead (2021-2022) plans for aligning policies, compensation & benefits to strategic goals, optimizing best Human Resources practices, and collaboration and communications within Human Resources.

**City Clerk:**

Ms. Sandi Allard, City Clerk, reviewed the strategies, 2019 accomplishments, the 2020 outcome measures, and looking ahead (2021-2022) plans for Inventoried, Conserved, and Accessible Permanent Records, using the Digital Records Management System (Laserfiche).

Ms. Allard highlighted that in looking ahead for 2021-2022, she foresees the full implementation of electronic board/committee appointment tracking software; minute preparation software; research options and budget for implementing an electronic filing system for recording and tracking cemetery deeds, noting anything that is a public record will end up in the public repository so that people can find them.

Mr. Mulholland explained his concerns with privacy issues for some records, such as banks/alarms, and certain other records that contain classified information and explained his reasons. Ms. Allard concurred with the City Manager and said there will be some discretion used on documents that would be open for public review.

Councilor Liot Hill thanked Ms. Allard for her years of service as she prepares to retire and spoke the great job she has done in training her staff and preparing for her transition. She welcomed Ms. Kristin Kenniston as the new City Clerk when Ms. Allard retires at the end of May.

Ms. Kristin Kenniston, Deputy City Clerk, reviewed the strategies, 2019 accomplishments, the 2020 outcome measures, and looking ahead (2021-2022) plans for the efficient processing of vital records, vehicle registrations and dog licenses.

**Human Services:** (page 26 in agenda packet)

Ms. Lynne Goodwin, Human Services Director, reviewed the strategies, 2019 accomplishments, the 2020 outcome measures, and looking ahead (2021-2022) plans for creating a high functioning, collaborative, customer focused general assistance program for Human Services.

Due to the COVID-10 Pandemic, their budget is taking a hit right now in providing hotels for the homeless, and rental assistance is presently on hold. There is a need for more assistance in providing support for the homeless because when the moratorium for evictions is lifted it is expected the number of those asking for assistance will increase. State-wide advocates are planning to ask the Governor to extend the moratorium on evictions for at least three (3) months from the time when restrictions are lifted so families are not at an immediate risk of losing their housing. This would also allow more time to plan for the assistance that may be needed. There will be more rental assistance coming through different pockets of the Federal Government and different State agencies.

Councilor Liot Hill asked if there would be any other funding opening up from the Federal Government to provide more assistance. Ms. Goodwin said there has been funding coming through for Food Banks/Upper Valley Strong, which is helping to meet the immediate needs of folks, but she anticipates the largest economic impact will come in terms of housing and utilities. The fuel assistance was extended by one (1) month, so folks that have not already applied could do so, but we are going to need more funding coming into these programs in order to help people.

Ms. Paula Maville (Deputy City Manager) said that hopefully, Governor Sununu will be taking these needs into serious consideration when he is looking at the disbursement of \$1.25B within the State due to the burden that local municipalities will have to endure to make sure that we can provide for those that are not able to provide for themselves because of COVID-10. If we, and other cities/towns, have an

onslaught of people needing assistance for housing, utilities and heat sources, we certainly should not be losing revenue, like we have been, in trying to cope with this crisis.

Councilor Liot Hill concurred with Ms. Maville noting that she was uncertain if other States have placed the burden on municipalities in exactly the same way as New Hampshire does. She asked if the NHMA (New Hampshire Municipal Association) was think about and acting on this. Ms. Mulholland said this issue has been brought up and the Governor is thinking about how to do this.

**Airport:** (page 30 in agenda packet)

Mr. Carl Gross, Lebanon Airport Director, reviewed the strategies, 2019 accomplishments, the 2020 outcome measures, and looking ahead (2021-2022) plans for a financially stable and self-supporting Airport.

Mayor McNamara asked if there has been any guidance from the FAA as to whether they will allow a waiver for us to continue getting the EAS Grant funds for the upcoming year if we do not make 10K in enplanements. Mr. Gross said EAS has not been affected by the Cares Act funding. EAS is still a fully funded program. The concern with the 10K enplanements will be with the Development Grant funding and he is working with Senator Shaheen’s office, the American Association of Airport Executives and the FAA on this issue.

In response to Councilor Below’s question, Mr. Gross said Cape Air is currently flying to Boston, but not New York City, noting that the Lebanon Airport has 90% of their flights going in and out of the Airport.

**Planning:** (pages 34 – 45 in agenda packet)

Mr. David Brooks, Director of Planning & Zoning, reviewed the strategies, 2019 accomplishments, the 2020 outcome measures, and looking ahead (2021-2022) plans for the following:

- Planning for vibrant neighborhoods, including character preservation and opportunities for appropriate infill.
- Maximizing the use of natural resources inventory (NRI) report in land use, open space, recreation, and natural resource planning.
- Implementing land use policies that result in more energy-efficient building and sustainable development.
- Planning for multi-modal transportation: For pedestrians/bicyclists and Advance Transit.
- Implementing land use policies that preserve outlying rural areas and direct development to built-up areas.
- Promoting revitalization of the Central Business Districts in Downtown Lebanon and Downtown West Lebanon.
- Promoting the development of housing to enhance the vitality of the community: Downtown Lebanon and Downtown West Lebanon.
- Seeking opportunities to partner with other organizations on community development issues.
- Supporting an organized and active approach by the City to promote sustainable economic development.

Mr. Mark Goodwin (GIS Coordinator) and Mr. Tad Montgomery (Energy & Facilities Manager) came before the Council remotely and gave an informative slide presentation on the City of Lebanon’s Green House Gas Emission (GHG) Inventory and additional steps the City has taken to continue to reduce

emissions. The presentation included an overview of the 2019 Lebanon Emission Inventory Project (LED Streetlight and parking light conversions); Pending Projects for additional GHG Emission Reductions; the process for identifying additional projects; and the next steps for the City to consider as action items.

**13. ADJOURNMENT:**

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Dona E. Gibson  
Recording Secretary