

CITY OF LACONIA - CITY COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING

May 11, 2020

6:30 P.M. (via Zoom)

5/11/2020 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hosmer called the meeting to order at the above date and time.

As Mayor of the Laconia City Council, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

a) Providing the public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means;

We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All Council Members have the ability to communicate during this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to watch the live YouTube video at <https://www.youtube.com/laconianh>, listen to this meeting through dialing the following phone number 1/301-715-8592 or participate by the Zoom app: Webinar ID: 824 0545 1946 password 840332

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting;

We previously gave notice to the public of how to access the meeting using Zoom, and instructions are provided on the City of Laconia's website at: www.laconianh.gov.

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access;

If anybody has a problem, please call 524-3877 ext 249 or email at: cityclerk@laconianh.gov

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, we will adjourn the meeting and have it rescheduled at that time.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their presence, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know Law.

2. RECORDING SECRETARY

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk

3. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Hebert took a roll call vote:

Councilor Cheney: YES, (Physically present)

Councilor Bownes: YES, Is anyone in the room with you? NO

Councilor Lipman: YES, Is anyone in the room with you? NO

Councilor Haynes: YES (physically present)

Councilor Hamel: YES, Is anyone in the room with you? NO

Councilor Felch: YES, Is anyone in the room with you? NO

Mayor Hosmer noted all six (6) Councilors were in attendance and a quorum has been established.

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.A. Department Budget Presentation

Heather Lounsbury, Chair for the Laconia School District School Board - Mrs. Lounsbury briefed the Council on the proposed School Budget. She spoke of the remote learning environment that the district has been doing for the past six weeks and how the next school year may differ due to the current pandemic.

Christine Blouin, Business Administrator - Reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that is a Tax Compliant Budget for the 2020-2021 School Year. The Tax Cap from the City is 1.8% which is based on the Consumer Price Index. Building Permits are \$17.4 million (tax cap: \$647,826). Revenues (State/Federal/Local, projected stabilization, and trust funds) total allowable increase of \$1,297,486. This budget does not include any COVID-19 expenses the district may accrue. Ms. Blouin detailed some of the driving factors of the proposed school budget. A large portion of the budget is from salaries and benefits (74%).

A copy of the PowerPoint is attached to the minutes.

Amy Hinds, Assistant Superintendent - Ms. Hinds spoke of the number of students and the number of out-of-district placement students. Fourteen out-of-district students have been added to the budget due to court involvement, bringing the total of out-of-district students to 33 students. The district does not have any control of these numbers once the court becomes involved. The estimated 402 CAP is \$52,272 per placement for the 2020-2021 school year. During the 2019-2020 school year the average number of court involved cases are between 89 and 112.

Business Administrator Blouin stated the Department of Education has informed the district that they will be receiving funds from the CARE ACT. The district is still awaiting guidance on when this money will be received and how it will be used.

Superintendent Tucker spoke of the 2020-2021 School Year and the effects COVID-19 may have. The district is uncertain how the 2020-2021 School Year will look like due to COVID-19. As the district prepared this budget, the focus is on short and long term planning. The district has been advised to plan for a number of different scenarios to prepare for learning in the upcoming school year. Some of the scenarios are the traditional learning setting, a remote setting, and a hybrid setting to include both remote and traditional learning.

Assistant Hinds spoke of the current remote learning process and how the district is planning for the return of students to traditional learning, if that can happen. With the remote learning that has been happening, many different services have had to be put in place. DCYF reported, after only a week into remote learning, there was a 51% decrease in reports to their call center. The district also

realizes that the students needs will have to be addressed to bring them up to current standards once the school year begins. Guidance counselors and support staff have been doing a great job at meeting the needs of the Tier 2 and Tier 3 students during this distant learning time.

Superintendent Tucker spoke of some of the modifications that will need to be done if opening the schools in a traditional manner does not happen in the fall. The district will need to make sure all the schools are cleaned in a way to protect everyone, modify the transportation needs if a staggered schedule needs to happen, food service, and technology. Right now students in grades three (3) through twelve (12) have been given 1:1 learning devices. Superintendent Tucker said the district is preparing for the unknown while preparing this Tax Compliant Budget.

Mayor Hosmer thanked the School Board for presenting a tax compliant budget and the entire school district for everything they have been doing in response to this pandemic.

Councilor Bownes questioned if anyone has an idea on when and how much money the School District will receive from the CARES Act from the State stimulus fund.

Superintendent Tucker stated the district will be allocated up to \$980,000 from the government.

Business Administrator Blouin received word today that the school district will receive up to \$980,000 for COVID-19 related expenses. There has not been a date set for when the district will receive that money. The funds will be available until September of 2021. They are still waiting to hear on clarification on what the funds can be used for.

Councilor Bownes expressed his appreciation for the School District and for what everyone has been doing.

Councilor Hamel asked if there is an amount the District has received as of this date.

BA Blouin stated no money has been received as of yet and will get back to the Council with an amount that has been spent due to COVID-19 expenses.

Councilor Hamel also thanked the School District for doing everything they have been doing. Councilor Hamel asked what projects the District is looking to do this upcoming school year and that he has noticed that the parking lots at the high school and Elm Street School have been done.

Superintendent Tucker explained a lot of the construction has been done this year. Some of the stabilization money that was received from the Governor in October was used to renovate the auditorium at the high school, paving of the two parking lots, and replacing the gym bleachers at the high school.

Councilor Lipman also thanked the School Board and the entire school district. Councilor Lipman asked if the district has confirmed a last day of school for this year.

Superintendent Tucker stated June 5, 2020 will be the last day of learning for the students, with four flex days the following week to finalize any assessments. The last day for teachers will be June 12, 2020 with some floating days added for professional development and closeout.

Councilor Lipman asked if there are any transfers being done to cover the budget.

BA Blouin stated \$275,000 coming from the School District Stabilization Fund, \$100,000 coming from the Special Education Stabilization Fund, and requesting \$75,000 to come from Impact Fees.

Councilor Lipman is the \$100,000 the money that is held by the City for the schools?

BA Blouin explained all the Trust Fund monies are held by the City.

Councilor Lipman asked if the School District will be coming back to the Council with a revision to the budget in regards to the monies received from the Government in relation to COVID-19?

Superintendent Tucker explained the budget that was prepared is the traditional school opening. But one of the challenges is there isn't a way of knowing if there will be a typical school opening or if the District will have to look at other options.

BA Blouin explained that at this time the funds, in relation to COVID-19 funds that the School District is expecting to receive, have not been received. But when they are received the District will collaborate with the City on how to implement those funds into the Stabilization Funds. It may mean that a supplemental appropriation may have to be asked for in relation to this budget in the future. It may also mean the District may have to overspend the bottom line of the budget in order to receive those funds.

Councilor Lipman asked the City Manager is this can treated like a Grant that the City may receive and be voted on now as a placeholder so the School District doesn't need to come back to the Council with a supplement to the budget?

City Manager Myers explained a placeholder could be put into the budget. Also a supplemental appropriation could be put in and this would still keep the budget tax cap compliant.

Mayor Hosmer thanked the School Board for the presentation and working with the City.

5. Any other business that may come before the Council

6. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Council and hearing no objection, Mayor Hosmer adjourned the meeting at 7:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk

MINUTES OF THIS MEETING WERE APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON MAY 26 2020