

**CITY OF LACONIA - CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING
7:00 P.M.**

6/6/2022 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hosmer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Councilor Hamel led the salute to the flag

3. RECORDING SECRETARY

Katie Gargano, City Clerk

4. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Gargano called the roll of the City Council: Councilor Cheney, Councilor Soucy via zoom, Councilor Haynes, Councilor Hamel, Councilor Felch and Mayor Hosmer.

Councilor Soucy attended the meeting remotely, he verified that he is away on business in Alabama, and he was alone in the room. Because Councilor Soucy attended the meeting remotely any votes must be done by roll call vote.

Absent: Councilor Lipman

Mayor Hosmer stated that 5 members of the Council were present and a quorum was established.

5. STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Scott Myers, City Manager; Glenn Smith Finance Director/ IT Coordinator

6. PRESENTATIONS

6.A. Department Budget Presentation

Parks/Recreation/Facilities - Amy Lovisek, Director

Employees present: Matthew Mansur & Amy Lovisek

Assistant Director Mansur started by comparing fiscal year 21 to fiscal year 22. The Parks and Recreation Department is working on bringing the money spent per capita closer to the national standard. These funds are spent on field maintenance, programming, beaches, & facility maintenance.

The Parks and Recreation Department takes pride in the maintenance and beauty of all their fields. What plays a major role in keeping the fields nice is by delaying the opening of the fields in the spring. Opening the fields too early can cause damage because the ground is too soft. They frequently get requests from sports teams to open the fields early and they made a video to show why they delay when they open the fields and they have shared with schools and sports teams.

Continuing with trying to bring the Parks and Recreation funding closer to the national median in fiscal year 23 they have requested 61.47 per capita; the proposed budget was cut by the City Manager to 58.69 per capita but they are ok because it is still an increase over the prior fiscal year. This increase allows for the playground improvement line, temporary salaries and outside service contracts and one additional year-round employee to join the regular staff.

They reviewed the playgrounds around the City. At Wyatt Park the slides removed due to vandalism, the replacement slides were ordered in August 2021, and they just received notice that they just shipped today 6/6/22. 600 lbs. of playground mulch is being added to playgrounds throughout the City. Leavitt Park needs a complete upgrade. Something new being added to the budget is a line specifically for playgrounds. This will help bring our playgrounds into the 21st century. They'd like the line to be able to roll over into the next fiscal year so that they can save for larger projects and replacement equipment.

Mayor Hosmer asked if they have looked into any grants for playground equipment. Director Lovisek replied at this time they have not lately, but she will look into what is currently out there. She stated some parks are not eligible for certain types of grants because they have already received grant money in the past and other grants are tricky with stipulations. Bond Beach as an example wouldn't be able to remain resident only if they used grant money so they would like to avoid that.

Manager Myers wanted to let the Council know that the money Assistant Director Mansur just spoke of is on page 12 of the Proposed Expenditure Plan which shows the capital portion of budget. The new line titled Playground Revitalization is listed there with \$25,000.00 for the major projects. Page 102 covers the recreation facilities. There is a playground improvement line that has \$15,000.00 for the maintenance and replacement of slides and swings when needed.

Staffing and amenities at Weirs Beach are from June 25 through Labor Day. After Memorial Day weekend, they hauled out 740 lbs. of trash that was piled up around the outside of the barrels.

Councilor Hamel suggested to have carry in carry out for trash like the NH State Parks.

Mayor Hosmer asked about increasing fees to help compensate for increased fees for the disposal of trash and cleaning the bath houses. Manager Myers responded that because of grant funds received in the past, they are not allowed to charge patrons to get into the beach. They can charge for parking but they cannot charge to use the beach. There are many access points to the beach that would geographically make it very difficult.

Assistant Director Mansur explained that if the Parks and Rec Department was to expand their seasonal beach season to the beginning of May this would cause an increase in salaries for temporary seasonal help, an increase in trash removal, and an increase in the budget for the cleaning of the bath houses.

He continued to their vision and goals for fiscal year 2024 and beyond. Some ideas are longer hours at the Community Center, security cameras at the parks, recreation management software to allow for online program registration, creating a Laconia Youth Corps, the future of youth sports, new community center, and a splash pad.

Several members of the City Council thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for their hard work in the parks and their beautification that has been added to the City by taking care of the flowers and grass and the fields.

6.B. Department Budget Presentation

Public Works - Wes Anderson, Director

Director Anderson started with a general fund overview- solid waste and recycling, Public Works

operations, general fund capital, internal service fund, sanitary sewer fund, capital improvement and projects.

Director Anderson showed a graph comparing the solid waste and recycling from FY 2014 through FY 2021. This is made up of: 1/3 of disposal costs are paid by taxpayers with curbside pickup, 1/3 of disposal costs are paid for at the Transfer Station, and 1/3 from outside haulers.

Mayor Hosmer asked where the largest increase is coming from. Director Anderson replied that this is the first fiscal year without Gilford, and he would prefer to wait until the end of this fiscal year to be able to determine where the largest increase is coming from.

Manager Myers clarified for the Council that 2/3 of the disposal is being paid for by user fees and 1/3 is the curbside that is paid out of the general fund. If the tonnage increases and we are able to have the tipping fees cover it, it will be a wash. There will be no tax/budget impact.

Director Anderson said in the FY 23 Budget proposal there is a 182k increase, which is made up of a \$71,027 increase going to salaries, a \$19,250 increase going to winter maintenance, a \$3,232 increase going to highway maintenance, -\$14,000 savings in streetlights and \$88,654 increase for ISF repair and replacement. He then stated that because the budget process began in the late fall, he just received road salt prices for fiscal year 2022/2023 and they increased from the 58.16 he budgeted to 73.10/ ton. He estimates there will be a \$50,000 shortfall in the Winter Maintenance line that will need to be found in the budget or from the reserve account. Other concerns are the rising costs in materials for projects, the lack of availability of materials and gas and diesel prices that are going to affect the department's expenses as well.

Projects they are working on is with the private road Issues, rolling out the new work order system to assist with fleet maintenance, road improvements like paving, striping, overlays. Other projects that are near completion are Comcast with 70 poles left to replace, ADA improvements at traffic signals (completed this year were Main/Court; Main/Church; Union/ Elm; Union/ Messer). This coming year there are none scheduled and in the future that will be upgrading Main/ Oak; Beacon St E/Church; Union/Church; Union/ Gilford. The parking garage, which is a City Council goal, fiscal year 2021 maintenance expenditures were \$34,500.00. They are planning the construction to begin April 2023 and they have a downtown study that is due back by June 17th.

Director Anderson moved into the Internal service fund- for the equipment maintenance division. Vehicle and equipment maintenance is funded by fees charged to other departments. The largest impact on this fund is the cost of fuel. When the budget was submitted gas was based on \$3.80/gal. and diesel was based on \$3.33/gal. With the costs as high as they are right now, there will be a deficit.

Manager Myers referred the Council to page 12 of the budget book where he discussed road improvements and how pending legislation could impact that line by being awarded with community block grants. The bill has passed both chambers and should be headed to the Governor's desk soon. Because of the petroleum component we may not be able to get as much asphalt as we originally thought. There is another component to this bill that will be awarding municipalities additional money for bridge programs. The additional awards of money may help us offset the increased cost of fuel.

Director Anderson moved on to discuss employees at the DPW. They are currently one position short. They have been trying to hire for this position since March. Director Anderson has received one application; he called the person twice and they haven't returned his phone call. The Council did increase the starting wages when they approved the union contract, and he has since readvertised the position with the new salary figures and hopes to get an applicant. The market is extremely tough right now and the competition with the private sector adding in sign on bonuses and other incentives is very challenging.

Director Anderson continued with the Sanitary Sewer Fund System costs. The Sanitary Sewer fund

is an enterprise fund. It is paid for by rate payers. The City obtains loans to spread costs over time, bonds and the clean water state revolving loan gives 10% principal forgiveness. 60% of the annual sewer budget goes to the Winnepesaukee River Basin Program, the rate system that was established in the 1980s comprises of operation and maintenance, administration, replacement fund and debt service. There will be a new operations and maintenance cost allocation system that begins on July 1, 2022, it will be implanted over 3 years. Laconia's share will drop from 49.87% to 43.31% which should be equivalent to around \$200,000 savings. We will not see this savings, but we will see a reduction in the increase of our costs. Current sewer projects include Elm St. sewer, Lakeport north, pump station upgrades and lining. He is working on the Sanitary Sewer Ordinance update to comply with the State Permit. A rate model update will be coming to the Council in the fall to discuss rate increases.

Capital improvement program - they are still working hard on this by doing inspections themselves or working with a contractor. Items include the City's road maintenance program, soil testing & compaction services, and asphalt surface thickness & compaction. Project inspection - to have someone in house conducting vehicle inspections; and the pavement management system that will be coming to the Council in the fall with a 5 year coordination plan and what their major projects are in the future.

Councilor Hamel thanked Director Anderson and his crew for all their hard work on winter maintenance and the sinking manholes. He thinks the department may not get a lot of credit, but they deserve a lot of credit.

Director Anderson mentioned that next week at the regular City Council meeting they will be discussing the fee increases.

Councilor Hamel further commented on the quick decision to close the Transfer Station until Tuesday. Director Anderson said that that was out of his control because Casella's land fill in Belmont reached capacity and they could not accept any more waste and had to close. This caused an increase in the Laconia haulers bringing waste to the Laconia Transfer Station resulting in a quick fill. They did not turn away residents, but they were turning away commercial haulers until they could get some loads picked up. This issue may continue for a week or so until Belmont can get caught up.

Manager Myers informed the Council that an email did go out to the Mayor and Council on Friday afternoon informing them of the temporary closure.

Director Anderson said that they will be back open for regular business starting tomorrow, but they don't know how long that will last because Casella in Belmont will still be closed.

The Mayor and Council thanked Director Anderson for his presentation tonight.

6.C. Department Budget Presentation

Police Department- Employees present: Chief Matt Canfield, Captain Al Graton of Support Services, Det Sgt Ben Black, Detective Eric Adams

Chief Canfield began by updating the Council that there were 625 line of duty deaths in 2021; these past couple years have been very challenging for police across the country. The current state of the department is they will be fully staffed as of June 20, 2022. There are 4 new officers in the new budget, 3 of which are funded by a grant. Their recruitment and retention rates have been very good lately. In the proposed fiscal year budget, there is a \$201,000 increase in salaries. The majority of this is for the 4 new police officers, but 3 of them will be grant funded out of this increase. The name of the grant is the Department of Justice Grant, and they are waiting to hear if they are going to be awarded for the Cops Hiring Grant. In addition, their training line was increased by \$20,000. Training is extremely important in their job, so they are trained to react in a crisis. Training is something the Department takes very seriously given the recent events in Texas. A \$30,000 increase in contracted

services includes their axon body cameras and tasers and their records management back up software. Over the past 5 years they have received 2.6 million in grant funding; they are very active in researching and applying for grant funding.

In 2020, they had their site-based review with Calea which is a national and international accreditation program. This review is conducted every 4 years. The review is very extensive and receiving the accreditation is a big deal. They are 1 of 13 police departments in the state who are accredited. There are about 100 standards to comply with the accreditation. When they received their report in 2021 there were 106 standards that were reviewed, and they received compliance in all the standards which shows all the hard work the Police Department is doing.

In 2022, they are looking forward to bringing back some of their department programs and community outreach which includes the Citizen Police Academy, their Victim Services Unit, School Resource Officer/ Liaison Officer Program, Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, Community Service Officers, Internship Program, Tip 411, Cop Card program, and National Night Out which will be on the first Tuesday of August this year in person.

Chief Canfield went over some 2022 goals – they are working on a complete review of their Detective Unit, Study of Dept Uniform Review/Study Committee, Comprehensive Written Directive Review, Social Media Improvement, and Coffee With a Cop.

Chief Canfield wanted to walk about their active shooter readiness and response given the events that continue to be happening around the country. In 2021 they saw a total of 61 active shooter incidents across the country, resulting in 243 casualties. In 2018 Chief Canfield had the opportunity to sit on the Governor's School Safety Task Force. He included the handout that was published in 2018 to the Council for their review, along with any updates since then. Chief Canfield and Superintendent Tucker speak on almost a daily basis and there is a lot of talk about school safety. He does feel confident that the City and the Schools have a great relationship towards planning and keeping our schools safe. There is a school emergency planning group made up of Chief Canfield, Chief Beattie, Superintendent Tucker and a number of other people including all of the principals from all of the schools. They meet on a monthly basis during the school year to discuss any potential issues; the School Resource Officers and active shooter response which is one of their highest priorities and it is one of the hardest types of incidents to respond to. They make this one of their top priorities and they have continuous ongoing training. They will be conducting additional in service training this September. Their goal is to have a tabletop training in October and a full-scale exercise in the beginning of November this year.

Mayor Hosmer asked what a full-scale exercise is. Chief Canfield said that a full-scale exercise is taking an active shooter incident and bringing it from start to finish. It will include the Laconia Police Department, all their law enforcement partners, their ambulance personnel that may assist, the school department and the hospital. It is a full drill to run it from A-Z. It'll take place on a Saturday, and will discuss some of the breakdowns in communications that have happened in other active shooter incidents that have happened around the country. This is where their weakness comes from because there was no actual scenario-based training exercise beforehand that they are practicing for and their breakdown of communication suffers. In collaboration with this training exercise they will be hosting a community forum with the school department that will be open to the public talking about school safety. Chief Canfield expects this to take place in the upcoming months of this year.

Chief Canfield talked briefly about the opioid crisis in Laconia. In 2021 we had 83 drug overdoses, with 14 overdose deaths in Laconia, and 67 found needles. 14 overdose deaths was a significant spike from the year prior where they had 4 overdose deaths. These are very sad times, and for 14 people to die of drug overdoses in this community is not okay. He is proud to say that they have made several cases and are in the process of making several cases of drug related death cases. These cases are very difficult to make, but so far they have been able to make 3 cases against the dealers.

Sergeant Detective Ben Black from the bureau of criminal investigations made a presentation from the Drug Unit to present to the Mayor and Council on drugs. Sergeant Black began by giving the

Council his history on how he became a police officer in Laconia 19 years ago and some of the different tasks he has done within the department during that time. He also stated that there are 2 detectives that specifically handle drug cases at the Laconia Police Department. One of the employees spends all their time doing drug work. The other drug detective's duties are split ½ time on drugs and ½ time handling all the other cases that detectives have ranging from the overdose death cases, burglaries, robberies, sexual assaults, and child sexual assaults. He thinks that they are seeing an increase in people coming forward now and reporting assaults that they felt that they couldn't report prior because they were in lockdown due to Covid.

Sergeant Black moved onto drugs in the community. He knows we've all seen the people that are affected by drugs. The major drugs that are being seen in the City are methamphetamine and fentanyl. He described what the drugs are, how they are used and some side effects they can cause on one's body. They have also seen an increase in cocaine and suboxone. He went over the numbers of what has been seized by the department over the past couple of years and the overdose death statistics.

Mayor Hosmer thanked Sergeant Black for his presentation and all the hard work that he does for the City. It is sobering.

Detective Adams from the Prevention Enforcement and Treatment Program- made a presentation to present to the Mayor and Council. Detective Adams is frequently referred to as the **PET** Officer. **PET** stands for **P**revention, **E**nforcement and **T**reatment.

Detective Adams began by explaining the work that he does and what the acronym stands for. After seeing Sergeant Black's presentation, you can see why there is a need for this program. Enforcement is a huge part of what we need to continue to do, the other part is to try to work with people that are struggling with addiction and get them into recovery so that they can be contributing members of society.

Prevention is educating the public on addiction and mental health to reduce the stigma and collaborating with our schools to receive the most updated information, empowering our youth to speak up.

Enforcement is working with people that get arrested for possession charges and creating supplemental bail orders. A supplemental bail order allows they judge to add stipulations to their release to be court ordered to work with him to try to get them into treatment. He has the flexibility in his schedule to be on top of them and making sure they are staying on track. He gets referrals from our probation and parole, and other police departments.

Treatment is understanding the resources we have in our community like Doorway Concord Hospital- Laconia, Navigating Recovery of the Lakes Region, Horizons Counseling Services, Groups Recover Together, Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Sobriety Centers of NH, and Health First.

Detective Adams went over the statistics for overdoses – 71 Laconia lives have been lost since 2019.

Initiatives he is working on- Homelessness, mental health, substance misuse, and prevention.

Looking at the present to the future, he talked about the COSSAP Grant- it is a 3 year grant they started on May 24, 2022 and it will continue until September 30, 2024. The hope is in the next 8 months the Attorney General's office is going to ask for a one-year extension to make it the full 3 years. He feels the probability of this happening is highly likely. He then spoke about his position; he asked to stay here in Laconia so he could continue to work within the City and do a dual role.

Detective Adams discussed another thing that was implemented was a ACERT program through Lakes Region Community Services which had an expansion to Gilford, Belmont, Tilton, Sanbornton, and soon to be starting in Meredith and Center Harbor. All the schools are going to be interconnected through this program. One initiative for the future is to re-energize the Mayor's Homelessness Task Force. Detective Adams then introduced the new PET Coordinator who is now

Master Patrol Officer Steve Orton. He was chosen by the board who interviewed all of the candidates.

Manager Myers wanted to add that we all may have seen in the newspaper or seeing on TV mentions of the opioid settlements that are being announced and that there are billions of dollars being awarded to each state by manufacturers and distributors. Three or four years ago Laconia entered into a mass tort with several other municipalities and counties and all of the claimants were put into one large group that is being heard by Judge Polsters court somewhere outside of Columbus, OH. There are some settlements that have come forward. Some money has started to come to New Hampshire. What happened along the way in the legislature a year or two ago is that the legislature said that the State needs to sign off on behalf of the local municipalities or on the county level for the funding. When that happens 85 % of the funding goes to the State and will be held for future distribution which, to his knowledge, has not been determined yet. It will be application based, justifying in doing the paperwork and a lot of the locals who had their communities go and testify this year on a bill that would try to increase that distribution to 35% come to the locals and 65 % stay at the State. That bill did get referred to interim study. In the next 30-60 days we should start to see some of our 15 % share starting to come in. It is a population-based distribution and in the case of Belknap County, they will back out Laconia's population and we'll get our allotment directly where the other communities will be determined on the county level. He knows that the numbers that are being thrown out are in the billions and many are spread out over 15-20 years, and it is tied to that distribution formula.

Mayor Hosmer thanked Chief Canfield and his whole department for all their hard work. The City is very fortunate to have the people who work in the Police Department. He thinks that it is not just good luck that we have, it stems from the tone that the Chief sets to make it such a great place to work. He understands how hard this profession has been over the years and he is grateful to everyone who puts on that uniform every day and gives our City a fighting chance.

7. Any other business that may come before the Council

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Hosmer adjourned the meeting at 9:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Katie Gargano, City Clerk