

CITY OF LACONIA - CITY COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING

June 7, 2021

7:00 P.M.

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

We are utilizing platform for this electronic meeting. All members have the ability to communicate during this meeting through this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to watch the live YouTube video at www.youtube.com/laconianh, listen to this meeting through dialing the following phone number 1-646-558-8656 or participate by the Zoom app: Webinar ID: 849 0715 9648 and password 704239.

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 527-1265 ext. 243 or email: 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.

6/7/2021 - Minutes

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

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

2. **SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

Councilor Cheney lead the Salute to the Flag.

3. **RECORDING SECRETARY**

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk

4. **ROLL CALL**

City Clerk Hebert took a roll call attendance:

Councilor Cheney YES, Is anyone in the room with you? Physically present in the Council Chamber

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

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

Councilor Haynes YES, Is anyone in the room with you? Physically present in the Council Chamber

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 Councilors were in attendance and a quorum has been established.

5. **STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

Scott Myers, City Manager

Glenn Smith, Finance Director

6. **PRESENTATIONS**

6.A. **Department Budget Presentation**

Chief Matt Canfield presented the Laconia Police Department proposed budget. A copy of the PowerPoint is part of the record.

Chief Canfield began the presentation by reviewing the Country-Wide officer deaths. 235 deaths were because of COVID, 45 from gunfire and 13 vehicular assaults were just some of the statistics.

Chief Canfield then reviewed the State of the Department. In the year 2020, there were 422 simple assaults, 496 thefts, 215 drug offenses, and 39 auto thefts to name just a few. There was a 42.6% increase in motor vehicle stops compared to 2019. There were 19,661 Calls for Service in 2019 and 12,936 Calls for Service in 2021 year-to-date.

Chief Canfield reviewed the departments activity statistics for 2020. To highlight some, calls for service, 19,661, Special Response Area, 2,227, park/walk/talk, 1,015, and community policing events, 276. One of the areas that is being concentrated on for the park/walk/talk is Sanborn Park. This is where an officer parks his car and makes his presence known at certain areas and talks to our residents. Chief Canfield discussed the bicycle registration program, especially with the increase of bicycle thefts. The number of domestic disturbances went up to 1,474 in 2020 from 1,100 in 2019.

Chief Canfield stated there is one officer position open.

Chief Canfield explained that 2020 was a big year for the department. Every four years a base review is done (CALEA). This is a commission on accreditation for law enforcement agencies. There are 21 commissioners. The focus areas of the assessment are community engagement, training, body-worn/in-car camera program, communications center, etc. In 2017, only 79 standards were reviewed for compliance and 2020 there were 253 standards reviewed. The overall assessment results were very favorable with all compliance verified with zero deficiencies. In November 2020 the department was granted a four-year re-accreditation status by the Commission on Law Enforcement

Accreditation. There are only 13 agencies in the State of New Hampshire that are national accredited. This is a testament to the hard work and commitment of the Laconia Police Department.

Chief Canfield reviewed the 2021 department goals and objectives. A lot of these have been carried over from 2020 because of COVID. One of the goals is the Detective Unit Review. Currently Dan Carson is training to be a polygrapher to take over the reigns of Kevin Butler. Another goal is to study, review, and implement if applicable a method of utilizing advanced electronics to include sign boards and CAD displays to better enhance situational awareness and create a better awareness. , The training uniform has been improved and updated through a COVID grant that was received. The department would like to continue to develop a departmental firearms range and develop a comprehensive plan with actionable items defined by specific deadline parameters in order to create a written plan ready for presentation to Council at a later date. The department has also been working on a recruitment video to be used to promote the agency in order to assist with recruitment of quality candidates.

Chief Canfield also reviewed for the Council what community programs the department has been involved with.

Some of the budget request highlights being proposed are: slight increase in salaries and special duty. There is a \$6,000 decrease in the telephone line item due to elimination of dedicated repeater line. There was a increase in the outside service contracts of about \$70,000.

Councilor Lipman asked about the O/S contract increase.

Chief Canfield explained this is mostly due to the body/in-car camera systems contract. If a camera was to break, they would be covered under the contract plus the technology will always be up to date.

Chief Canfield reviewed the effects of the opioid crisis here in Laconia. As of date in 2021, there have been 25 drug overdoses, with 3 deaths. In 2020 there were 78 drug overdoses with 4 overdose deaths and 115 found needles.

Chief Canfield introduced Officer Eric Adams. He is the P.E.T. Officer (Prevention, Enforcement, and Treatment)

Officer Eric Adams explained what he has been doing for the past six years. He is on the Board of Directors for Navigating Recovery, Board of Directors for New Futures, which is the largest advocacy in the State, board representative for their AOD policy committee, and LSDA (Laconia Service Delivery Area). This is a committee that works on the homelessness in our region. The Partnership for Public Health just received a Grant for \$250,000 for drug prevention and youth in our City. There is still two youth groups under Stand Up Sachems, one in the high school and one in the middle school. Officer Adams also sits on the Partnership and Community Wellness Committee. Over the past six months, Officer Adams has been working on the Governor's Council regarding housing stability as a law enforcement representative. He was recently asked to sit on the DCYF statewide initiative. This is working on a resource guide available via app or website. This is to help citizens decided whether an incident is reportable to DCYF or another agency in regards to children. Officer Adams also works on the States Youth Homelessness Committee.

Councilor Lipman thanked Eric Adams for his perserverance. He also asked him what are his three top items that he has accomplished.

Officer Adams explained his top three are: the Recovery Center, the overall awareness of what the officers do on a daily basis, and the community resources that have pulled together. Currently Officer Adams is working with about four people right now. He used to work with 15-20 people at a time when he first started.

Councilor Hamel thanked Officer Adams for everything he has done over these years. Councilor Hamel asked how quickly one can get into treatment.

Officer Adams explained people are able to get into treatment pretty quickly compared to years past. It is the objective of the Governor to have treatment places open 24 hours a day. Right now they are open Monday through Fridays. Officer Adams explained if it takes more than a few days to get someone into treatment then he stays in contact with them until that happens.

Councilor Felch thanked Officer Adams for always going above and beyond on everything he does.

6.B. Department Budget Presentation

Finance Director Glenn Smith presented the Finance Department's proposed budget. A copy of the PowerPoint is part of the record.

Finance Director Smith reviewed the Finance Department, Tax Department, Welfare, General Fund Revenues, Internal Service Fund, Anticipated Grants, and the TIF Districts.

Some recent employee changes have happened over the past year. Gail Denio and Sharon Parpart have both retired. Cathy Raymond was hired as the new Welfare Technician and Gina Roy as the new Finance Clerk. One position was also shifted from Welfare to Finance. Director Smith also reviewed some of the COVID impacts. Finance has been diligently tracking revenue and expenses. Human Resources has been monitoring guidance from the CDC and keeping City departments informed of any and all changes. The IT department has accommodated remote working. The Welfare department has been assisting citizens with navigating new programs and coordinating the county-wide CDBG application.

Finance Director Smith reviewed some of the functions each of the departments. There is a two-person team for Information Technology. They take care of each City department except School and Police. IT manages the computer network, IT security, phones, security cameras, remote access, training and support.

Welfare provides interim emergency assistance to meet the basic needs. In 2020 there were 398 contacts made which resulted in 74 vouchers written. Both of these numbers are considerably down from 2019. Director Smith reviewed the quarterly welfare expenses going back to 2017 by quarter.

Director Smith stated there has been a 3.8% increase in revenues. The increase is due to motor vehicle income remaining strong, interest revenue decreased significantly, and the increase in solid waste disposal revenues. Some highlights for Fiscal Year 22 is the 26% increase in retirement due to increased rates, an 11% increase in health insurance due to rate increase and plan selections and a 2.4% decrease in Principal and Interest due to bond refinancing. The City is in the final year of two bonds and six other bonds will retire within the next three years.

Director Smith would like to do an operational review within the IT Department. As the need for more IT security is warranted, there may be more need for personnel. IT would also like to see a transition from antiquated phones, which are not that secure, to a VOIP system (Voice Over Internet Protocol). This system is currently being used by the Police and Fire Departments.

Director Smith also explained that the Finance Department is looking to transition to an automated Accounts Payable System rather than the current paper system. There will be more accuracy and more time efficient.

Director Smith then spoke about the Internal Service Fund. This fund was created in the 1990's to track vehicle and equipment repair and replacement. Airport and School are not part of the ISF. The ISF is a form of an accounting system, solely on paper. There is no bank account, no checkbook. On the expense side; a vehicle needs a part, the part is purchased by the General Fund which on

the books the ISF owes the General Fund. This is done by the ISF charging the General Fund services for the cost of the repair. In theory the revenue side should balance out the General Fund. Since 2009 the operating expenses have exceeded the operating revenues on a consistent basis. Some reasons for this is the way the ISF bills. The rates have not been updated as often as they should have been therefore did not keep up with inflation. Part of the \$1.2 million of the non-spendable portion of the General Fund is because of the imbalance of the ISF. This can hopefully be addressed over the next five years.

Director Smith also reviewed the anticipated grants for the upcoming Fiscal Year as well as the Tax Increment Financing Districts. The Downtown TIF is covering a majority of the Colonial Bond Interest and the Weirs TIF continues to eliminate the negative balance.

Councilor Lipman would like to know if extending the life of our current vehicles and removing vehicles from our inventory that are no longer used is part of the plan to fix the ISF.

Director Smith explained that once a vehicle is fully depreciated and they remain on our lists they are not considered part of our fiscal transactions. It is the hopes to get a better fixed asset system to keep up with the City needs. Director Smith stated that as far as extending the life of vehicles, he stated that question would be better suited for the department that has those vehicles.

Councilor Lipman thinks getting one more year out of vehicles is more than just maintenance but sometimes a want for something new.

Mayor Hosmer stated the feedback he receives regarding Director Smith and his staff is overwhelmingly positive.

6.C. Department Budget Presentation

City Manager Scott Myers presented the Administration proposed budget. City Manager Myers thanked Director Smith and his team for everything they have done especially during the pandemic.

City Manager Myers started out on Page nine in the Proposed Expenditure Plan Book. There are no real changes this year.

On Page 13, Capital Outlay, we are up from \$1,685,000 last year to \$1,780,000 this year. Some of the \$300,000 that the Council approved to be put in a reserve account previously, is being used for the Parks Department for tree replacements. The rest of the \$300,000, the City Manager will be bringing Resolutions to the Council for approval for bridge work and improvements to the docks. The docks are too tightly spaced for the newer bigger boats. We are in line for a grant in an amount of \$160,000 with a match of \$62,000. Also \$20,000 for significant maintenance on our gravel roads and \$50,000 for the Weirs Boulevard drainage.

On page 23 is the \$40,000 for the partial interest payment for the Elm Street Road Reconstruction.

On Page 24, City Manager Myers spoke of the two new items for this year. One is the Colonial Lease with BEDC for leasing the theatre from them and the other item is the Colonial operations. The City did not take over the operations this year because of the pandemic. The City didn't take over the operations until May of 2021. The Carryover resolution will be brought to the Council.

Page 26 represents the local service agents that the City supports in various manners.

On page 35 is the assessing functions. The Assessing function is a contracted service but there are still three full-time employees. Because of the contracted service the City is saving on salaries and health insurance.

On page 74 is our legal services. The staff does a great job only using these services when needed.

The retainer fee has not changed much over the past years.

On page 111, the City Manager stated not much has changed budget wise for the Records department. This is the City Clerk function with minutes, motor vehicle transactions, records, dogs, and vital records. City Manager Myers stated that we will be looking to extend our hours twice a month again starting in the fall as long as the COVID numbers stay low. The Clerk office, Tax Office, and the Planning Departments would stay open until 6:00 pm twice a month.

On page 115 is the Elections proposed budget. For the current year, the budget will be exceeded because of the unprecedented times.

City Manager Myers stated the Carryforwards will be brought to the Council soon. Also this coming Monday, June 14th the Water Department and Library will be presenting their budgets.

Councilor Lipman asked if the Carryforwards are in line with prior years?

City Manager Myers explained they are pretty similar with most being in the Public Works department.

City Manager Myers also said that the General Budget Discussion will be held on June 21, 2021. By charter our budget does not need to be adopted until the end of July. Our public hearings will be held on June 14th. Procedurally we are on track. We will be waiting to see what happens at the State level with that budget.

7. Any other business that may come before the Council

8. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Council and hearing no objection, Mayor Hosmer adjourned the meeting at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk

MINUTES OF THIS MEETING WERE APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON JUNE 14, 2021