

CITY OF LACONIA - CITY COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING
May 24, 2021
6:00 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 the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All 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 www.youtube.com/laconianh, listen to this meeting through dialing the following phone #1-646-558-8656 or participate by the Zoom app: Webinar ID: 838 2133 4710 password 456544

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 x 243 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.

5/24/2021 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Councilor Haynes 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 Not present

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

Councilor Hamel Not present

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

Mayor Hosmer noted four Councilors are 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**

Director of Planning and Community Development Dean Trefethen presented the Planning, Code, & Conservation Commission proposed budget to the Council.

The proposed budget for Code Enforcement is \$160,136, which is less than last year's budget. There are three full time employees in this department. Some of the activities in this department are permits (building, electrical, demolition, and occupancy) and inspections. There was a 35% increase in inspections. Permits almost doubled from last year with the value being over 39 million. There has been a significant increase in decks, garages, and remodels and also an increase in larger projects. Director Trefethen also mentioned that the Code Department also takes care of property maintenance code enforcement, inspections of properties either by complaint or drive-bys. There are various methods of enforcement (phone calls, letters, violations, and court). Because of the pandemic, the courts did not see these violations as a priority. Also because of the pandemic the housing inspector activities were limited. The Housing Inspector is also responsible for Short Term Lodging Permit Inspections and as a back up to the Building Inspector.

Director Trefethen then reviewed Conservation. The proposed budget is \$4,500, which is the same as the past three years. Conservation is primarily to support the Conservation Commission activities. The Commission's major focus is the storm water management and wetlands protection to protect the lakes. It also gives erosion control advice and inspections. The Conservation Commission has been having discussions on how to enhance the property on Pickerel Pond Road that the City purchased in 2019.

Councilor Cheney asked if the update of the Wetlands Buffer Ordinance related to the State statute? Director Trefethen explained that the updates are to conform to the most current laws and NH DES policies.

Councilor Soucy asked about the milfoil problems and how it is decided what bodies of water are addressed.

Director Trefethen explained they are not more focused on Opechee. In terms of total dollars being spent, there is more money being spent on Paugus Bay. This is driven a lot by the State as they are one of the major contributors to the pool of money that is being used. Plus they control what chemicals can and can not be used. The fundraising aspect over the past few years has been a little more robust for Paugus Bay.

Director Trefethen also reviewed Planning and Community Development. The proposed budget is \$308,103 which is \$27,000 less than Fiscal Year 2021. There are five full-time employees, one part-time position was eliminated, and the outside contracts were curtailed, which is the reason for the \$27,000 decrease. Some of the Planning Department activities include: support for boards and commissions (Planning Board, Zoning Board, Conservation Commission, Technical Review, Minor Site Plan, Special Events/Motorcycle Week, and the new Historic District Commission). The Planning Department also advises property owners about regulations. This department also is part of potential developments and redevelopment opportunity discussions. Director Trefethen attends the State Commission meetings that are part of the redevelopment of the State School property.

The 2020 and start of 2021 was very robust with over \$39 million in permit values. The development of Lakeport Square, Barton's Motel, and many big house being built on the lake as contributed to that value. For residential, there are 90 "starter" homes being built on Lilac Valley. Lilac Valley is over by the end of Province Road/Route 107. Mountain Lake Village is off of Mile Hill Road and will have about 70 homes being built. Director Trefethen spoke of the positive things happening in the downtown area.

Director Trefethen stated the Planning Department is implementing the recommendations in the 2018 Master Plan. The Master Plan Steering Committee will be restarting shortly. The Urban Commercial Zone and Performance Zoning was successful. There have been about 100 permits for Short Terms rentals received, with only about 75 issued. Some of the permits have been denied, some couldn't meet the requirements needed to get a permit, and some for lack of parking. Director Trefethen will be bringing some Ordinance changes to the Council at some point.

Councilor Lipman is present in the meeting at 6:40 pm.

Councilor Lipman asked if Director Trefethen could give more detail about the Master Plan Steering Committee. Director Trefethen is hoping to start the first meeting in June and continue monthly thereafter. There are a number of Zoning changes that need to be updated and this is something that could be discussed with this committee.

Councilor Hamel is present in the meeting at 6:40 pm.

Councilor Hamel asked how many short-term rental properties there are in Laconia that are registered and how many that have not registered.

Director Trefethen stated there have been only 75 permits issued but if you visit the Air BnB website you will see over 200 in Laconia. Some are hotels that are using the site for marketing. Director Trefethen stated there are a number of people doing this that the City does not know about. The department is aware that more publicity needs to happen to make people aware of the City's Ordinance pertaining to short term rentals. Director Trefethen stated there are a number of companies that offer a service to find the short term rentals that are not registered but it is not cheap to use this service. A mailer is planned to go out and educate people.

Councilor Hamel asked if the new unit going up in place of Barton's Motel, will those be allowed for short term rentals?

Director Trefethen explained those would not be allowed and there is going to be provisions in the contract to state the units could not be used as a short term rental.

Mayor Hosmer would like to see some estimates of what the cost would be to use an outside vendor

to enforce short term rentals. The reason he would like to do this, is for the people that have complied with the Ordinance.

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 6:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk

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