

CITY OF LACONIA - CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
August 30, 2021
7:00 P.M.

8/30/2021 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Councilor Lipman lead the Salute to the Flag.

3. RECORDING SECRETARY

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk

4. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Hebert took a roll call vote with the following Councilors in attendance: Bruce Cheney, Robert Soucy, Henry Lipman, Mark Haynes, and Tony Felch

Not present: Bob Hamel

Mayor Hosmer noted five Councilors were in attendance and a quorum has been established.

5. STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Scott Myers, City Manager

Glenn Smith, Finance Director

6. CITIZENS REQUESTS TO COMMENT ON CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.A. Discussion on moving a Charter question to a public hearing to be added to the November 2, 2021 Municipal Ballot

City Manager Myers explained the reason for this request. The 2020 census data came out later than normal because of the pandemic. The results of the census are used in Federal, State, and local elections in terms of US Congressional Districts, State Senate, and Representative Districts, as well as the ward boundaries in Laconia. At this point, we have received the breakdown of City population. What we have not received is the breakdown of population by Ward and we will not receive that until September 30, 2021. This information is needed in order to move boundary lines of the wards to make them as equal in population as possible. Under the City Charter, the voters need to vote to approve the ward boundary changes and therefore amend the Charter and this needs to happen at a municipal election. With the delay in the census data, we will not be in the position to have this proposed Charter amendment question completed in time for it to appear on the November 2 municipal ballot. This is due to the process of there needing to be a first reading of the proposed ward boundary, a public hearing, a vote to move it to the ballot, then reviewed by the three State agencies to ensure that it is not in conflict with State law, then we need to get ballots printed and

available in time for absentee requests. This will not happen by November 2nd and we would need to hold a Special Election for one charter question. All six wards would need to be open and we would most likely have a low voter turnout. An alternative Charter question that is being requested to be placed on the November ballot would amend the Charter to allow the City Council to adjust the ward boundaries by Ordinance every 10 years after a US Census is conducted. If the voters agree to amend the Charter to allow the City Council to handle this, with public meetings and a public hearing, then we would avoid the need to hold a special election. If they don't approve this, then we will have a special election at a date to be determined.

Councilor Cheney asked if this question can be written so it is a one time only?

City Manager Myers does not think that is legally allowed.

Councilor Felch asked if this type of question has ever been voted down?

City Manager Myers does not have that answer.

Councilor Haynes asked what the time frame would be?

City Manager Myers explained that September 30th is when we are expected to received the data. City Manager Myers stated that in 2010 a working committee was formed to adjust the ward lines.

Councilor Lipman thinks that the Council should be working on the redistricting as soon as the data becomes available. He stated it would be nice for the voters to see the physical changes at each polling location so they have a better understanding of what they are voting on.

City Manager Myers stated we could work on this as practical as we can.

Councilor Felch moved to schedule a public hearing on September 13, 2021, during the regular Council meeting to gather public input prior to any action being taken, seconded by Councilor Cheney;

Councilor Lipman suggests having charts available for viewing during the November election for the voters to see.

City Manager Myers explained we will do the best we can, dependent on when the data is received.

Mayor Hosmer called the question.

the *motion passed with all in favor.*

8. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Council and hearing no objection, Mayor Hosmer adjourned the meeting at 7:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk