

**City Council Workshop
November 15, 2022
Council Chambers
7:55 PM**

COUNCILORS PRESENT

Councilor Beaudoin
Councilor Berlin
Councilor de Geofroy
Councilor Desrochers
Councilor Fontneau
Councilor Gilman
Councilor Gray
Councilor Hainey
Councilor Hamann
Councilor Larochelle (remote)
Councilor Malone (remote)
Deputy Mayor Lachapelle
Mayor Callaghan

OTHERS PRESENT

Blaine Cox, City Manager
Katie Ambrose, Deputy City Manager
Terence O'Rourke, City Attorney
human, resident
Dave Tinkham, VFW
Dennis Dube, Fire Chief

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Callaghan called the City Council Workshop meeting to order at 7:55 PM. He reminded all those present that Councilors Larochelle and Malone were connecting remotely via Microsoft Team. These Councilors had confirmed prior to the City Council Public Hearing that it was reasonably impractical for them to attend the meeting in person. Deputy City Clerk Cassie Givara had taken a roll call prior to the Public Hearing. All Councilors were present.

2. Public Input

human, resident, referenced RSA 91-A and how it relates to Councilors connecting remotely via Teams.

Dave Tinkham, resident and District 7 VFW Commander, addressed Council requesting that the City waive the tax lien on the former VFW building at 43 Highland Street. This lien had resulted from tax forms inadvertently not being filed in the three years between the discontinuation of the building's use by the VFW and the recent sale of the property. He explained that closing costs could cover the lien; however, the money could better serve veterans and their families.

3. Communications from the City Manager

City Manager Cox reported that the City is in the process of mapping City-owned cemeteries. The Old Cemetery by Willow Brook, the Old Towne Farm cemetery by Home Depot, and the cemetery on Haven Hill are all under City control under the provisions of City Code section 49. Over the past year, the City has been working with a company to survey and map the internments at the cemetery at

Haven Hill using ground-penetrating radar. This has provided more accurate information on internments and available space for future internments. The 50-year old inventory the City held for this cemetery was found to have many inaccuracies following the survey. The City is now preparing to continue this same process at the Old Towne Farm cemetery.

City Manager Cox reported that citywide voter turnout at the November 8 Election had been 65.2% compared to 53.4% at the 2018 mid-term election. There were 904 absentee ballots requested with 849 returned. In 2018, there were 645 absentee ballots requested with 597 returned.

City Manager Cox stated that, per Director of City Service Peter Nourse, the Carbon Storage facility at the WWTF was completed last month, which met the EPA Administrative order, which is part of the City's NHPDES permit. The City is now continuing work on the dewatering facility.

The City Manager reported that the Strafford Square roadwork phase is slated to begin this month.

The REDC formed a subcommittee last month to create the framework for using the newly created Economic Development Special Reserve fund. A draft will be brought forward to Council for review in the near future.

The outdoor skating rink at the Common, which Council had approved appropriation for in the last budget cycle, has now been delivered. There just needs to be low enough temperatures to maintain ice before it can start being used.

The annual Rochester tree lighting ceremony will take place on Friday, December 2 at 6:30 PM, and the Holiday Parade will take place on Sunday, December 4 at 3:00 PM. Mayor Callaghan asked that any Councilors interested in participating in the parade meet by 2:30 in the parking lot at Hanson Pines across from Spaulding.

4. Communications from the Mayor

Mayor Callaghan stated that he had taken part in an event hosted by the Seacoast Affordable Housing Coalition on Thursday, which was very well attended. He spoke about the ground breaking of the Easter Seals facility on Rochester Hill Road, which will provide affordable housing for elderly and veteran residents.

Mayor Callaghan spoke about concerns that had been raised regarding the School Board using certain federal funds. He stated that he and the City Manager had met with the Chair of the School Board and the School Board had decided not to use EFA funds certain projects due to the strings attached.

Mayor Callaghan read a proclamation declaring Saturday, November 26, 2022 as Small Business Saturday in the City in Rochester and urged residents to support small businesses in the community now and throughout the year.

The Mayor praised the City Clerk's office for their hard work on the recent election.

Councilor Gray announced that there were two recounts requested for Rochester races, District

8 and District 9. The two recounts will take place at the Archives Building in Concord on Wednesday, November 16 (District 8 at 9:30 AM and District 9 at 2:00 PM).

5. Department Reports

Councilor de Geofroy inquired about the “mystery substance” which had again been reported in the water lines off Loring Drive, as reported in the Department of Public Works report. Director of City Services Peter Nourse said that this substance has not been experienced since the end of September, but they are still actively searching for the source. They have examined a facility at Waste Management in conjunction with this substance, but have not found a source there. The investigation is ongoing in this area amongst others. The testing has shown that it is a polymer-based product. It has not caused any disruptions at the Water Treatment plant, although there was some gumming up of the pump station on Route 125 in September. Director Nourse said this has not affected the City’s permit or effluent, and he will keep Council updated.

Councilor de Geofroy inquired about the Waste Management fire cited in the Fire Department report, which stated that there was an error with the alarm system and it was two hours before the Fire Department responded. He asked what caused this alarm issue. Fire Chief Dennis Dube stated that these alarm systems are on private property and under the control of the property owner. The alarms are tested on a regular basis. However, this alarm failed and sent an alarm as a “supervisory alarm,” which only alerts a designated employee that it is occurring. This alert went to a sleeping employee at 3:00 AM. The fire was in an empty building containing materials for recycling and was contained by a sprinkler system until the Fire Department responded. Councilor Lachapelle confirmed that the issue was caused by an internal issue and the Fire Department responded appropriately when they were alerted; there was no structural or equipment damage due to the fire.

Mayor Callaghan praised the Department of Buildings and Grounds for their outstanding work on the landscaping and flower displays throughout the City during Spring and Summer as well as their maintenance of the parks and banners and flags throughout downtown.

6. Non-public/non-meeting

Mayor Callaghan stated there would be a vote to enter the non-public session at 8:16 PM. Councilor Beaudoin stated that he would be opposing the motion to enter the non-public session under RSA 91-A:3-II(d). The **MOTION CARRIED** to enter the non-public session by a 12 to 1 roll call vote with Councilors Desrochers, Gray, Hamann, de Geofroy, Hainey, Lachapelle, Gilman, Malone, Fontneau, Larochelle, Berlin, and Mayor Callaghan voting in favor and Councilor Beaudoin voting opposed.

Councilor Lachapelle **MOVED** to exit the non-public session at 9:04 PM. Councilor Hainey seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 12 – 0 roll call vote with Councilors Hainey, Gray, Gilman, Fontneau, Larochelle, de Geofroy, Desrochers, Berlin, Beaudoin, Hamann, Lachapelle, and Mayor Callaghan all voting in favor. Councilor Malone was no longer connecting to the meeting at the time of the vote.

Councilors Lachapelle **MOVED** to seal the minutes of the non-public session because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the Board. Councilor Hainey seconded the motion. The **MOTION**

CARRIED by a 11 – 1 roll call vote with Councilors Berlin, Desrochers, Gray, Fontneau, Hamann, Hainey, Lachapelle, Laroche, Gilman, de Geofroy, and Mayor Callaghan voting in favor and Councilor Beaudoin voting opposed.

7. Adjournment

Mayor Callaghan **ADJOURNED** the City Council Workshop meeting at 9:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk