

**City Council Workshop
September 19, 2023
Council Chambers
6:18 PM**

COUNCILORS PRESENT

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

COUNCILORS EXCUSED

Councilor Hailey

OTHERS PRESENT

Katie Ambrose, City Manager
Ray Barnett, resident
Tom Kaczynski, resident
Susan Rice, resident
Mark Sullivan, Deputy Finance Director
Peter Nourse, Director of City Services

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Callaghan called the City Council Workshop to order at 6:18 PM. Prior to the Public Hearing preceding the workshop, he had announced that Councilor Malone was attending the meeting remotely. Per RSA 91-A, he asked Councilor Malone if it was reasonably impractical for her to attend the meeting in person and asked her to state for the record the reason she could not attend. Councilor Malone stated that it was impractical for her to attend in person due to medical reasons. She stated she was alone in the location from which she was connecting.

2. Roll Call

Deputy City Clerk Cassie Givara took the roll call attendance prior to the public hearing. The following Councilors were present in Council Chambers: Councilors Beaudoin, Berlin, de Geofroy, Desrochers, Fontneau, Gilman, Gray, Hamann, Larochelle, Lachapelle, and Mayor Callaghan. Councilor Hailey was excused. Councilor Malone was connecting remotely, as detailed above.

3. Public Input

Tom Kaczynski, resident, addressed Council regarding the undesignated fund balance and the use of this money.

Susan Rice, resident, spoke to Council regarding the use of unassigned fund balance and questioned the percentage being requested for the new school project. Ms. Rice also inquired about the Strafford Square roundabout project and asked for a status update on the Parking Review group. Ms. Rice also asked if the City of Rochester would be moving forward with a community electricity program.

Ray Barnett, resident, questioned the timeline of the Community Center solar project and the need for a supplemental appropriation following the budget approval. Mr. Barnett also addressed use of the unassigned fund balance.

City Manager Katie Ambrose reported that there were two public input submissions received: Linda Turmelle with the subject "Building Ordinances," and Carol and Wayne Limberger with the subject "Waste Management."

4. Communications from the City Manager

City Manager Ambrose announced that PorchFest would take place on Sunday, September 24th throughout the downtown area. This is a free outdoor musical festival. More information can be found at www.rochesteroperahouse.com/porchfest23

City Manager Ambrose stated that the filing period for the November 7, 2023 Municipal Election is underway and will be open until Monday, September 25 at 5:00 PM. Filing is open for all positions on City Council, Police Commission, School Board, Election Officials, and Mayor. More information can be obtained through the City Clerk's office at 603-332-2130 or by visiting the City Clerk's office in City Hall.

City Manager Ambrose announced that the Department of Public Works has initiated their search for a Christmas tree to be placed in Central Square. They are looking for a balsam fir or blue spruce in good condition, approximately 25"-35" tall, and located within City limits. Residents who have a tree they feel may work should contact Lisa Clark at the Department of Public works at 332-4096.

Councilor Beaudoin asked what arrangement is made for police and fire details at the Porch Fest event; are the costs reimbursed by the Opera House or is the work “donated” by the City. Chief Boudreau answered that there is no special detail assigned for Porch Fest. However, there will be patrol officers in the area if needed. He clarified that the fair is occurring at the same time and it can be a busy time for the department. City Manager Ambrose explained that there are police details assigned to the fair, and the costs for these officers is invoiced to the fair association.

5. Communications from the Mayor

Mayor Callaghan reported that the State of the City event had taken place on Friday, September 15 at the Frisbee Conference Center. He said the event had been engaging and positive and praised City staff for the successful event.

Mayor Callaghan referenced the Recreation department report in the packet and praised the staff for the wonderful work being done in the community; especially with offerings for the elderly population.

The Mayor referenced the 40% reduction in the Rochester violent crime rate as detailed in the police department report. He also spoke about the reduction in property crimes and overdose death rates. He speculated that these reductions are in part due to the work of the Community Outreach Coordinator, the Department of Welfare, and the work of the Rochester Police Department. He also praised several local non-profit organizations for their work in the community. Councilor Desrochers spoke about the role of harm reduction in the community and how these services have helped in the reduction of overdoses and overdose deaths.

6. Department Reports

Councilor Larochelle reported he had received a concerned call from a constituent regarding drinking water quality (disinfectant byproducts). He acknowledged that the water quality in Rochester is some of the best in the country, but he questioned the way the relevant data was reported in the public works department report which he felt needed clarity. Director Nourse gave details on the reference ranges used in the reporting and explained that the water complies with all State and Federal regulations and the City of Rochester is in compliance with all requirements. Director Nourse stated that he would get back to Councilor Larochelle with the specific data he requested.

Councilor Desrochers inquired about the testing for lead levels in

the water, which had been referenced by Director Nourse. She asked if there could be more detail given on lead levels and their sources. Director Nourse stated that this is a very complex issue that cannot be briefly summarized. He spoke about the required inventory of water services being undertaken to determine if any contain lead. The regulations require the replacement of any lead service lines, however none have been found thus far. He further explained the testing schedule and the required limits. Councilor Desrochers acknowledged the proactive approach being taken by the City of Rochester wherein if there is any chance of lead water services, these are being addressed.

Councilor de Geofroy directed the Council to the Building and Licensing services report. He stated that the numbers of permits issues has increased over the prior year, but the revenue collected from permits is reduced. City Manager Ambrose stated that she would follow up with this inquiry. Councilor de Geofroy also commended the "staff kudos" contained in some of the department reports and he encouraged the recognition of staff for work well done.

Mayor Callaghan referenced a notation in the Public Works report regarding \$384,000 in savings resultant from work being done by Weston & Sampson. Director Nourse confirmed that this was part of the sewer system master plan and stated that when the corrective measures are implemented, this will eventually save millions of dollars. He reported that there would be a presentation on this project at the October Public Works meeting.

7. Non-public/non-meeting

There was no non-public meeting.

8. Adjournment

Councilor Lachapelle **MOVED** to **ADJOURN** the City Council Workshop meeting at 6:47 PM. Councilor Desrochers seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 12-0 roll call vote with Councilors Gilman, de Geofroy, Gray, Laroche, Berlin, Lachapelle, Fontneau, Hamann, Beaudoin, Desrochers, Malone, and Mayor Callaghan all voting in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara,
Deputy City Clerk