

**City Council Workshop
January 16, 2024
Council Chambers
6:04 PM**

COUNCILORS PRESENT

Councilor Creteau
Councilor de Geofroy
Councilor Fitzpatrick
Councilor Karolian
Councilor Richardson
Councilor Sullivan
Councilor Turner
Councilor Walker
Deputy Mayor Hamann
Mayor Callaghan

OTHERS PRESENT

Katie Ambrose, City Manager
Terence O'Rourke, City Attorney
human, resident
Susan Rice, resident
Nicole Rodler, Rochester Police

COUNCILORS EXCUSED

Councilor Fontneau
Councilor Herman

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Callaghan called the City Council Workshop Meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

2. Public Input

human, resident, addressed Council regarding the wording of his oath of office for the Ward 6 Ward Clerk position.

Susan Rice, resident, requested that an article be published in the Rochester Post regarding the process and requirements for disposing of household waste at the landfill. Ms. Rice also spoke about the schedule for meeting videos appearing on the City website, and fulfillment of Right-to-Know requests.

City Manager Ambrose stated that there were two online public input submissions; a submission from Fred Leonard titled "Stormwater runoff scheme" and a submission from Dan Clarke titled "Library."

3. Communications from the City Manager

City Manager Ambrose announced that the Willand Warming Center would be activated this evening, January 17, and January 18. She shared data and demographics related to the warming center activations for the months of November and December.

4. Communications from the Mayor

Mayor Callaghan reminded constituents that NH's First in the Nation Primary would take place on Tuesday, January 23. Residents needing to register to vote can do so in the City Clerk's Office or register on Election Day at the polls. Residents can determine which ward they live in by visiting the City Clerk's page of the website and looking up their address.

Mayor Callaghan announced that on Friday, January 26 at 8:15 AM to 10 AM, The Rochester Mental Health Alliance will be meeting at the Rochester Community Center and will be rolling out their program to help address mental health issues within the Community.

6. Opioid Abatement Committee Update & Funding Request

Nicole Rodler, Rochester Police Department, gave a brief overview of the Committees work thus far. The Opioid Abatement Committee started their work in 2021 when Rochester started receiving their portion of opioid abatement litigation settlement funds. This Committee was formed to come up with ways to allocate these funds, which are required to be used for purposes directly related to the opioid crisis. There will be additional settlement funds received over the next 18 years minimum, although they will not be received in set amounts or on a definitive schedule.

Ms. Rodler explained that the Committee is currently making a request to use some of the funding received so far. She clarified that this money is an award resultant from litigation and is not derived from taxpayer money. The Committee is requesting:

- \$16,000 to go towards transportation needs; \$6,000 of which will be used to transport high school students to Seacoast Youth Services day treatment program. Ms. Rodler explained that this is the closest youth program in the area. The remaining \$10,000 of this request will go toward adult

program transportation to medical appointments and service providers.

- \$6,000 requested for the Willand Warming Center to expand services to provide case management and other services not currently being met in off hours, as well as hiring additional staff to provide these services.
- \$60,000-\$70,000 for Rochester transitional housing services to help cover gap funding to prevent homelessness during brief, but critical transitional periods.
- \$3,500 for Third Millennium online curriculum for middle and high school students.
- \$5,000 for the "Choose Love" city-wide initiative to provide the community with a tool for mental wellness and prevention. She explained that Scarlett Lewis, the founder of the program, will be presenting to the Community on February 7.
- \$50,000 for oral health care services for those in recovery.

Councilor de Geofroy acknowledged that the settlement money is not being received on a regular schedule or with known amounts; he asked if this posed a barrier and prevented the Committee from looking into longer-term programs due to the unpredictability of the receipt of funds. Ms. Rodler clarified that the Committee does have the entirety of the above-listed funding waiting for approval. She acknowledged that due to the unpredictable nature of the funding, the Committee would not have the ability to allocate larger amounts towards specific programs. She briefly discussed the potential of saving and investing money for several years as it was received; however, she said the Committee has been strategic in how the money can be best used and allocated in various categories to help the Community immediately.

Councilor Sullivan inquired if the \$150,000 being requested would be renewed and on what timeline. City Attorney O'Rourke stated that the settlement money is coming from various sources and litigations, some of which are ongoing, some of which are closed, and some of which have gone into bankruptcy and are now being handled through bankruptcy court. The money will be potentially received for even longer than the 18 years referenced earlier. Attorney O'Rourke explained that the State received larger allocations of litigation settlement funds and

there is a program to apply for some of this funding, in addition to the money received by the City, if there was a larger value program in which the City was interested in pursuing.

Mayor Callaghan stated that the City Council will likely be voting on a small portion of this funding; the \$5,000 for the Choose Love Initiative, at the February 6 City Council meeting. The remainder of the requests will likely be referred to Finance for further review.

Mayor Callaghan inquired regarding housing assistance and if any money allocated towards this use would be part of a larger initiative. He expressed concern that if residents were given rental assistance without additional services attached, they would be missing out on the case management aspect discussed. Ms. Rodler stated that there has not been a specific method established for distributing money for this use, but if it is determined that City welfare in the most appropriate location for addressing this need, the Committee would recommend that.

7. Department Reports

Councilor de Geofroy commended the Fire Department for the work they did with the recent flooding.

Councilor de Geofroy referenced a portion of the DPW report in regard to sewer obstructions due to improper items being flushed. He inquired if there was any way to find out where these obstructions are coming from and what is causing them, as well as how to prevent additional blockages from occurring.

8. Non-public/non-meeting

8.1 Non-Public Session – Land, RSA 91-A:3, II (d)

Councilor Walker **MOVED** to enter into a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (d) for Land at 6:34 PM. Councilor de Geofroy seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 10 – 0 roll call vote with Councilors Karolian, Hamann, Turner, Sullivan, de Geofroy, Walker, Creteau, Fitzpatrick, Richardson, and Mayor Callaghan voting in favor.

Councilor Walker **MOVED** to exit the non-public session at 7:58 PM and to seal the minutes indefinitely because divulgence could render the proposed action ineffective. Councilor Hamann seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 10 – 0 roll call vote with Councilors Turner, Richardson, Karolian, Fitzpatrick, Sullivan, Hamann, de Geofroy,

Walker, Creteau, and Mayor Callaghan voting in favor.

9. Adjournment

Mayor Callaghan **ADJOURNED** the City Council Workshop Meeting at 8:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk