

**Public Safety Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 18, 2020  
6:00 PM  
Council Chambers  
Meeting Conducted Remotely**

**Members Present**

Councilor Don Hamann, Chair  
Councilor Palana Belken  
Councilor Jeremy Hutchinson  
Councilor Peter Lachapelle  
Councilor Chris Rice

**Others Present**

Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer  
Dan Camara, GIS Asset Mgmt. Tech.  
Gary Boudreau, Deputy Police Chief  
Mark Klose, Fire Chief  
Jennifer Marsh, Economic Development

Councilor Hamann brought the Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 6:00PM and he read the following statement:

**Good Evening, as Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee, I am declaring that an emergency exists and I am invoking the provisions of RSA 91-A:2, III (b). Federal, State and local officials have determined that gatherings of 10 or more people pose a substantial risk to our community in its continuing efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. In concurring with their determination, I also find that this meeting is imperative to the continued operation of City government and services, which are vital to public safety and confidence during this emergency. As such, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body physically present in the same location.**

**a.) Public Input: Due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19, the City of Rochester will be taking extra steps to allow for public input, while still ensuring participant safety and social distancing. In lieu of attending the meeting, those wishing to share comments, when permitted, with the Public Safety Committee (Public Hearing and/or Workshop settings) are encouraged to do so by the following methods:**

- Mail: Public Safety Committee, Rochester DPW 45 Old Dover Road  
Rochester, NH 03867 (*must be received at least three full days prior to the anticipated meeting date*)**
- Email: [laura.miller@rochesternh.net](mailto:laura.miller@rochesternh.net) (*must be received no later than 4:00 pm of meeting date*)**
- Voicemail: 603-335-7569 (*must be received no later than 12:00 pm on said meeting date in order to be transcribed*)**

**Please include with your correspondence the intended meeting date for which you are submitting. *All correspondence will be included with the corresponding meeting packet (Addendum).***

**In addition to the above listed public access information, the City Council will be allowing the public to enter Council Chambers and speak in person during the**

**Public Input portion of this meeting. In an effort to adhere to CDC guidelines; enter only at the front Wakefield Street entrance and exit on the side closest to the police department and adhere to 6-foot social distancing while inside. Hand sanitizer and facemasks will be available at the Wakefield Street entrance. Participants will be admitted into Council Chambers one at a time to speak and will exit directly thereafter. Please note; the seating in Council Chambers will not be available for the public during meetings.**

**At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting by phone. The public can call-in to the below number using the conference code. This meeting will be set to allow the public to “listen-in” only and there will be no public comment taken via conference line during the meeting.**

**Phone number: 857-444-0744      Conference code: 843095**

**b.) Roll Call: 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 name (and/or ward), also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law. (Additionally, Council members are required to state their name and ward each time they wish to speak.)**

**Let’s start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their name and ward, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law. Additionally, Committee members are required to state their name and ward each time they wish to speak.**

<b>Councilor Peter Lachapelle</b>	<b>Ward 3 Present</b>
<b>Councilor Jeremy Hutchinson</b>	<b>Ward 5 Present</b>
<b>Councilor Chris rice</b>	<b>Ward 5 Present</b>
<b>Councilor Palana Belken</b>	<b>Ward 2 Present</b>
<b>Councilor Don Hamann</b>	<b>Ward 5 Present</b>

## **1. Public Input**

There were no members of the public present for public input.

## **2. Hillcrest and Sunset Drive-Speeding Issues (follow-up)**

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Deputy Chief Boudreau said this was a follow-up from last month’s meeting. The speed trailer was not working last month to get the data for Hillcrest and Sunset Drives. The speed trailer was on Sunset Drive for 8 days the volume for the 8 days was 648 vehicles, the average speed was 16.5 and the 85 percentile was 21.7 mph. Deputy Chief Boudreau said it is not very heavily traveled area and is below the speed limit. They could not pull the data from Hillcrest Drive; they could place it on Hillcrest again, but don’t believe they will find much different data than what was recorded for Sunset. Councilor

Lachapelle asked what the high speed was; Deputy Chief Boudreau said the maximum speed was 37 mph and that occurred between 3 and 4 pm, the next highest speed was 35 mph at around the noon time hour. Councilor Rice said because the young man took the time to talk about the issue maybe they could put some “children at play” signs up at the end of Rochester Hill Road and Whitehall Road. Councilor Lachapelle said that the “children at play” signs are not recognized by the state. Mr. Bezanson reiterated that the “children at play” signs are not recognized by the MUTCD; maybe they were at one time, but not any longer. Councilor Lachapelle said he knows that the Police Department is busy, but maybe they could do some directed patrols in the area. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he will let the supervisors know about it; everyone wants officers on every street in the City for speed patrol. Councilor Hamann said he will write something up and send to this gentleman.

### **3. Gonic Road/Oak Street/ Colby Street Intersection-Turning Movement Concerns (follow-up)**

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said this was held over from last month; NHDOT collected data on the signal timing at this intersection and they are still evaluating for exclusive phases for Oak and Colby. He will report back once he hears from NHDOT. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he had the crime analyst get data from the last 10 years of accidents from 2011 in the Gonic Road, Oak Street intersection area. There were 81 accidents and 68 of them were rear ends and 7 were turning side impacts. This intersection was 3<sup>rd</sup> on the highest amount of accidents. Councilor Hamann asked if it was mostly on the Route 125 side and Deputy Chief Boudreau said yes and there were a few on the Colby Street portion. ***This was kept in committee and Mr. Bezanson will bring information back to the Committee when he hears from the State.***

### **4. Speeding Concerns-Cemetery Road (follow -up)**

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that the speed trailer was out on Cemetery Road for 15 days there were 6,725 cars that equals to approximately 448 vehicles a day. The average speed was 26.28 mph with the 86 percentile 34.06 mph. The speed limit is 30 mph. Not very high car volume for this area. Councilor Lachapelle said he was able to talk to the resident that sent the request in, he said there is a problem in the area. Councilor Lachapelle asked Mr. Bezanson if there was an answer from the State regarding a traffic signal at Gear Road/Gonic Road (Route 125). Mr. Bezanson did ask DOT how to evaluate traffic signal warrants knowing that traffic is currently diverting down Cemetery Road to the Flagg Road signal. He has not heard back from them yet. Mr. Bezanson said the City would likely need to engage the services of a consulting firm to evaluate the traffic warrants and does not have a budget to perform such a task. Councilor Lachapelle asked Mr. Bezanson to continue to try to get an answer from the State. Councilor Lachapelle asked Deputy Chief Boudreau if there have been in any accidents in the area. Deputy Chief Boudreau said not major accidents with bodily injury, but there have been some that have missed the stop sign at the end of Cemetery on the Flagg Road side. ***This will be***

***kept in committee for one more month so Mr. Bezanson can hear back from the State and Deputy Chief Boudreau can get the accident data for this area.***

**5. Old Milton Road (backside of Dunkin Donuts) Safety Concerns (follow up)**

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said that they have come up with a striping plan; actual striping work will have to wait until next year because of the weather getting cold and they have to coordinate with Dunkin Donuts. ***Mr. Bezanson will keep the Committee informed with the progress.***

**6. Church Street/Route 125 Intersection Safety Concerns (follow-up)**

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said they met with NHDOT to look at a few of the intersections in the City, including this one at Church St/Gonic Rd (Route 125). The resident that had the safety concerns that lives north of the intersection came out to talk to them during the site walk regarding her concerns. She said she has seen vehicles come from the intersection into her yard; she would like some sort of barrier or guardrail to protect her property. NHDOT was able to talk to her directly and explain that having a guardrail in this location is not appropriate; guardrails are designed for certain purposes including deflecting vehicles and this would be in a position to be hit head on. Vehicles striking a guardrail head on will tend to pass straight through and wouldn't serve the purpose she is looking for. NHDOT officials and DPW staff noted that a lot of the problems were likely from vehicles trying to turn left on Route 125 from Church Street, the line-of-sight is blocked by northbound right-turning vehicles on Route 125. Deputy Chief Boudreau sent crash reports for this intersection to Mr. Bezanson for the State. These crash reports seem to corroborate the observation made during the site walk, as 10+ crashes over the past 10 years include descriptions matching the noted line-of-sight deficiency. NHDOT is currently conducting a benefit analysis with the crash report data provided as they do for any potential project. They have a certain amount of funds each year through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). They distribute to the projects that have the highest ratios. Mr. Bezanson said they are awaiting the results of the analysis to see where this project may rate on the list. The initial analysis during the site walk resulted in discussion of improvements related to separating the right turning lane away from the other travel lane to help the line-of-sight. If it looks like funding for the project is moving forward, the project might be able to be completed in a couple of years. Councilor Rice asked Mr. Bezanson what about a blinking light. Mr. Bezanson said it has to meet a warrant and he wasn't sure if it would, but the State will be looking at that too. Initially the State didn't think a flashing beacon would result in the safety improvements needed at this intersection. Councilor Hamann asked Mr. Bezanson to keep the Committee informed.

**7. Discussion Regarding "15 Minute Parking" signs Downtown (follow-up)**

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Jennifer Marsh spoke about the "15 Minute Parking" signs. At the beginning there was not a lot of interest in these signs, now that the outside dining is done due to the weather the restaurants are more interesting in testing these signs out. Fresh Vibes and Mitchell Hill were

interested in doing 1 on that side of the Street, Moe's was still interested in doing 1 in the Union Street parking lot and the Revolution is interested in that type of sign but doesn't want to give up a parking spot more interested in curbside. Councilor Rice stated that he reached out to the Police Department and the City Manager regarding the parking attendant and what her position consists of. He received an email and the parking attendant works 30 hours/ 5 days a week which consists of writing parking tickets, maintaining fire lanes at other public buildings and talking to downtown business regarding parking issues; she is already tasked out. Councilor Rice went downtown and noticed that business owners are parking out front not in the parking lots. There are parking signs downtown for 2 hour parking, the number of hours that the attendant works and the amount of time needed to just do downtown would be a difference of at least 15 hours of unattended enforcement, theoretically there are 15 hours of free parking each week. He doesn't think that 3 parking spots would make a big difference this could benefit the restaurants and shops downtown. They could limit the times. This would be an investment of about \$150.00. Councilor Belken said this is more of a behavioral modification, 15 minutes isn't a great amount of time, where 2 hours could be spread out. Councilor Hamann said he thinks it is a behavioral issue. Councilor Rice said he would like to get the City's Legal Department involved with the curb side that the Revolution would like that becomes a liability to cross the street. ***Councilor Rice made a motion to recommend to City Council to have DPW order 3 signs, add "15 Minutes" to them, and work with Economic Development to place signs: 1 will be on North Main Street right outside of Falling Leaf Bistro and 2 will be placed in the Union Street parking lot. Councilor Belken seconded the motion. A Roll Call vote was taken on the motion.***

<b><i>Councilor Lachapelle</i></b>	<b><i>Ward 3</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>Councilor Hutchinson</i></b>	<b><i>Ward 1</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>Councilor Rice</i></b>	<b><i>Ward 5</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>Councilor Belken</i></b>	<b><i>Ward 2</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>Councilor Hamann</i></b>	<b><i>Ward 5</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>

#### **8. E911 Update**

There were no updates for this item this month.

#### **9. Emergency Management Update**

Fire Chief Klose said the spread of Covid is becoming a significant issue in New Hampshire not just Rochester but State wide. He believes the second phase is here, some of the traveling guide lines have changed but the changes were not available yet to discuss with the committee. There is still a drought. The state has applied for an emergency preparedness grant, Chief Klose has not heard back from the state yet. The City is preparing the cold weather shelter at 38 Hanson Street, this is separate from the Garrison Hotel and this is primarily for Rochester Residents. They have funding for 60 nights, but can be fluctuate for cold snap for the day, December through April. They hired a shelter manager named Jeff Jones,

it's a funded position. The City will be hosting the building, getting heat and lights on the intergraded health network, will be staffing it at night. Councilor Hamann asked what kind of steps will be taken due to Covid. Fire Chief Klose said he really doesn't have an answer, he has brought up those same questions. Last year biggest night had 30 people, they will be doing the social distancing wearing mask supplied by the shelter and ultimately this is the difference between life and death. Fire Chief Klose said they have a bigger generator this year to get heat where they are sleeping. Councilor Rice said thank you to Chief Klose for doing this last year and this year. He also asked what kind a message can be sent out to the community for support, what can they do or donate. Chief Klose said socks, heavy boots, they have funds for foods. Councilor Rice suggested having Matt Wyatt put information on the website. Chief Klose said that Jeff and himself will be doing an inventory of what they have already in stock.

#### **10. Covid-19 Statistics Update**

The numbers are increasing, they received a phone call from Dr. Kiley today. Chief Klose said Frisbee is full they have 7 Covid cases not sure if they are all Rochester residents. There were 4 patients waiting to get rooms. Wentworth Douglas Hospital is almost full and Portsmouth Hospital is full. He doesn't see that it is getting any better. There is 37 positive Covid cases for Rochester. He said there is a discrepancy on the website and is reaching out regarding the discrepancies. There was a case last week in an assistance living facticity, but really went to another tacitly but the last address was the facility in Rochester. The list they get is just base line. The numbers have steadily gone up.

#### **11. Other**

##### **Top Ten Intersections**

Mr. Bezanson discussed the top 10 intersections that were being discussed with NHDOT. They have been using the list compiled in the City's Transportation Master Plan. Deputy Chief Boudreau also compiled a list of intersections with more recent crash data. Below is the list of intersections from the Transportation Master Plan and the number of accidents (2012-2016):

1. Strafford Square 24
2. Highland/Salmon Falls Road 23
3. Columbus/South Main 19
4. Tebbetts/Old Dover Road 17
5. Washington Street/Spaulding Turnpike Pike (NHDOT portion) 16
6. Columbus/Summer Street 15
7. Portland/Salmon Falls Road 13
8. Betts/Cross Road 12
9. Estes/Washington Street 9
10. Estes/Walnut Street 8

The State met with DPW last week and they went to the Gonic Road/ Church Street

Intersection. The other 3 from this list that were visited included the Tebbetts and Old Dover Road intersection; this is the intersection that had the recent Road Safety Audit conducted. They also visited the Estes/Washington Street and Estes/Walnut Street intersections. The Estes/Washington Street intersection has recently had some safety improvements made, including a building that was taken down and cleared road sides, which improved the line-of-sight a little, but more work may be needed. They also discussed what can be done at the Estes/Walnut Intersection. DPW has included some improvements in the 6-year CIP budget for some of these intersections. Columbus/Summer Street they have a project in the area that has been funded. Deputy Chief Boudreau had the crime analyst put together a list of intersections with accidents. Below is the list of intersections and number of accidents (2010-2020); the criteria for the list was 5 accidents or more per year:

1. Columbus/South Main 93
2. Highland/Salmon Falls 92
3. Gonic/Oak 81
4. Old Dover/Tebbetts 56
5. Columbus/Summer 46
6. Portland/Salmon Falls 39
7. Washington/Estes 37
8. Columbus/Portland 32
9. North Main/Washington 23
10. Portland/South Main 22

Councilor Lachapelle asked if the Gonic - Church Street intersection was the intersection at the Pickering Road end. Deputy Chief Boudreau clarified that it was the intersection of Gonic Road (Route 125) and Church Street that they were talking about earlier.

Councilor Hamann adjourned the meeting at 7:13 PM.

These minutes were respectfully submitted by Laura J. Miller, Admin Assistant II