

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, January 21, 2021. The Honorable Mayor George S. Hansel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Mayor Hansel read into the record the Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04. He continued that the members of the City Council would be participating remotely. The Mayor asked that during the roll call for attendance, each Councilor identify their online presence and whether there are others with them in the room. Roll called: Stephen L. Hooper, Michael J. Remy, Janis O. Manwaring, Michael Giacomo, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, , Terry M. Clark, Raleigh C. Ormerod, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Catherine I. Workman, Mitchell H. Greenwald, Kate M. Bosley, and Thomas F. Powers were present. Gladys Johnsen joined the meeting at 7:07 PM. A motion by Councilor Powers to accept the minutes from the January 7, 2021 regular meeting was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley and the motion passed on a roll call with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor; Councilor Johnsen was absent for the vote. The Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Workshop on Council Goals was scheduled for Tuesday, February 2 at 6:00 PM. At the workshop, the City Manager would be presenting current and proposed initiatives of City Departments that align with the Council's recently adopted goals.

RESOLUTION R-2021-04 – IN APPRECIATION OF KATHY B. BELIVEAU UPON HER RETIREMENT; RESOLUTION R-2021-02 – IN APPRECIATION OF THADDEUS C. CHOTAIN UPON HIS RETIREMENT; RESOLUTION R-2021-03 – IN APPRECIATION OF THOMAS F. MORAN UPON HIS RETIREMENT

A memoranda from the City Manager was read recommending the adoption of Resolutions R-2021-04 in honor of Kathy Beliveau upon her retirement from the Assessment Department, R-2021-02 in honor of Thaddeus Chotain upon his retirement from the Public Works Department, and R-2021-03 in honor of Thomas Moran upon his retirement from the Public Works Department. A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Resolutions R-2021-02, R-2021-03, and R-2021-04 was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

CONFIRMATIONS

The following nominations were received from the Mayor. To the Human Rights Committee, Marti Fiske to serve as an Ex-Officio member of Library Staff, with a term to expire December 31, 2023. To the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board, Dian Matthews, with a term to expire December 31, 2023. A motion by Councilor Powers to confirm the nominations was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

NOMINATIONS

Mayor Hansel made the following nominations: Harrold Farrington to serve as an alternate member of the Planning Board with a term to expire December 31, 2023 and Jude Nuru as a

regular member to the Energy and Climate Committee with a term to expire December 31, 2023. Mayor Hansel tabled the nominations until the next regular meeting.

COMMUNICATION – WESTON LIU – NEW ENGLAND AEROBATIC CLUB – REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY

A communication was received from Weston Liu, on behalf of the New England Aerobatic Club, requesting to use City property. The Mayor forwarded the communication to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

MSFI REPORT – CIVIL FORFEITURES FOR UNLICENSED DOGS – CITY CLERK

Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee report read recommending to accept the report on the civil forfeiture process for unlicensed dogs as informational. Mayor Hansel filed the report as informational.

PLD REPORT – KEENE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PROGRAM – ENERGY & CLIMATE COMMITTEE; AND STAFF REPORT – REVISIONS TO THE KEENE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PLAN

Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report read recommending adoption of the Sustainable Energy Plan, with staff to prepare revisions to the plan that would clarify the programs are voluntary. A motion by Councilor Bosley to adopt the revised Keene Sustainable Energy Plan was duly seconded by Councilor Greenwald.

Councilor Greenwald said that the background notes on the PLD discussion of this plan made his concerns clear as to whether this program was aspirational, voluntary, or progressing toward compulsory. He thanked City Staff for being very reactive to clarifying that this is a purely voluntary plan. He wanted to be very clear that the Energy and Climate Committee did an excellent job writing the plan, which he supports. Having given the matter of disclosures a great deal of thought over the prior week, he said that his office would be doing these voluntary disclosures and displaying the energy costs when showing apartments to prospective tenants, and he challenged his fellow property managers to do the same. He said it is true that a well-informed tenant is a good tenant. In his experience most tenants ask those questions already, but he said that if putting it on paper would make it better, then so be it. He reiterated that this is a voluntary program and he hopes that it remains as such because he thinks property managers would be more likely to comply if not forced.

Mayor Hansel reiterated that the Sustainable Energy Plan is the culmination of significant work by dedicated members of the Keene community and he recognized the efforts of all those volunteers that supplanted what the City would otherwise have had to hire outside consultants for.

Councilor Clark encouraged the Council to support and adopt this Sustainable Energy Plan and he looked forward to future processes establishing ordinances, policies, and partnerships toward a renewable future.

Councilor Johnsen stated her enthusiasm for this plan, noting that the Energy and Climate Committee is comprised of experts, engineers, doctors, lawyers, and business people that dedicated more than two years to its development. She said that air in the Keene valley is not as good as it should be, and as stewards of the earth, Councilor Johnsen was eager to enact this voluntary plan that would help the future of Keene residents.

Mayor Hansel added recognition of the City Staff that worked on this plan as well.

Councilor Chadbourne appreciated the amendments made to the plan and stated that she was thrilled with the outcome. She acknowledged that the two concerns expressed to her most frequently by constituents were the programs being mandatory and placing financial burden on constituents, and what she called an extreme comment about increasing personnel and therefore the budget. She supported the plan.

Councilor Jones thanked the Energy and Climate Committee for their efforts on this plan that he supported. He recalled suggesting an accompanying implementation plan, for which there was no expressed support at PLD.

The motion to adopt the revised Keene Sustainable Energy Plan passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

PLD REPORT – LORI SCHREIER & HERMAN KELTING – RELATING TO SMALL WIRELESS FACILITY DEPLOYMENTS IN PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY

Planning, Licenses & Development Committee report read recommending to accept the communications as informational. Mayor Hansel filed the report as informational.

FOP REPORT – ADOPT A BENCH DONATION - ASHUELOT RIVER PARK – PARKS, RECREATION AND FACILITIES DIRECTOR

Finance, Organization & Personnel Committee report read recommending the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept the donation of \$1,350.00 from Jane Nolan to purchase a bench to be placed in the Ashuelot River Park. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper and the motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – FEMA GRANTS FOR CITY HALL GENERATOR – PARKS, RECREATION AND FACILITIES DIRECTOR

Finance, Organization & Personnel Committee report read recommending City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to enter into and accept an Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of New Hampshire for the replacement of the City Hall Emergency Generator in the amount of \$75,000 with a 50% match and to move forward with the application. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper and the motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS – HUMAN SERVICES MANAGER

Finance, Organization & Personnel Committee report read recommending the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept anonymous cash donations to offset cost necessary to assist Human Services clients who may be experiencing an extraordinary need. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper and the motion passed with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT CHANGE ORDER - CMA ENGINEERS – ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES FOR FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM AND INCREASED STRUCTURAL SUPPORT AT T. RANSFER STATION – ASSISTANT PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/SOLID WASTE MANAGER

Finance, Organization & Personnel Committee report read recommending the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and execute a change order with CMA Engineers, on professional services contract 04-20-27, for engineering and technical services for a fire suppression system and increased structural support for the roof of the Transfer Station and Recycling Center for an amount not to exceed Thirty Two Thousand One Hundred Forty Five Dollars (\$32,145). A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper and the motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – COLONY COURT SEWER REPLACEMENT – CONSULTANT SELECTION – CITY ENGINEER

Finance, Organization & Personnel Committee report read recommending the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a professional service contract with DuBois & King, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$70,000, for engineering and technical services for the Colony Court Sewer Main Replacement Project. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper and the motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager began by discussing the aforementioned Council Goals Workshop to occur February 2 at 6:00 PM. Now that the Council had adopted goals, the next step in the strategic governance process would be to review the current initiatives underway or in preparation that align with each of the goals. She was in the process of gathering all this information. Department heads would be present at the workshop to answer questions. She said this would be a great opportunity for the Council to ask questions and provide comments to ensure the City's operations team moves the Council's goals forward.

On Covid-19, the City Manager stated that during the week in advance of this meeting, Director of Parks, Recreation & Facilities, Andy Bohannon, worked with the City's Emergency Management Team and arrived at a decision to postpone the start of several Recreation Department programs. Indoor operations are shut down temporarily until March 1 unless local Covid-19 positivity numbers and conditions related to statewide hospital capacity in February provide better guidance. As of January 20, according updates from Dr. Caruso, local positivity numbers were over 13% whereas the statewide numbers were closer to 7%. Cheshire Medical

Center had 14 people with Covid-19 in the hospital including three in the ICU. Within approximately one week following this meeting, numbers were hoped to plateau and then start to decline in line with the rest of the State. In the meantime, basketball was rescheduled to March 1 because this program was impossible to place on hold logistically and so it was easier to have a new start date after February school vacation. Other programs placed on hold with a tentative start date of March 1 include pickle ball, jump rope, Zumba, senior exercise programs, and Tae Kwon Do. In addition, booking of meeting space by outside groups at the Recreation Center was on hold. The remote and afterschool program would continue. Lastly, archery had been cancelled. Unfortunately, many of these programs were about to start at the height of local positivity numbers and at a time when the hospital system was being overloaded. To do our part in reducing community spread, City Staff felt it was prudent to delay these indoor and/or close activities. The City Manager concluded that seasonally warm weather conditions had delayed outdoor ice making activities. However, weather after this meeting was expected to bring a cold blast of air to the State. Therefore, the Recreation Department was starting to make ice at Wheelock Park in hopes it would hold with the upcoming cold weather.

On the topic of Covid-19 vaccines, the City Manager said there had been a lot of excitement and that the County was making progress but had a long way to go. On January 25, Cheshire County staff and residents would be given their second shot of the vaccine. The hospital will also be finished by Monday. The last few rounds of Covid-19 testing were 100% negative for the County, which was encouraging. The hospital was seeing an approximate 50% decline in people calling sick to work and while they could not say for sure, they felt it was tied to the vaccine.

On January 22, the State would begin the online vaccine registration for people 65 and older, and those with qualifying health conditions that make them high risk. The City Manager expected many challenges with the initial rush to sign-up. The state estimated 300,000 people in NH that would qualify for this phase; however the state was currently only receiving 17,000 doses per week for the entire state. At this rate, if everyone wanted the vaccine it would take five months to complete this phase. Logistically there are challenges as well. Fixed sites would be used to distribute the majority of vaccinations and for Keene that site is located at the Keene State College property on Krif Road where the National Guard was testing several months ago.

New Hampshire is one of the only states that does not have a vaccine registry system and so they had been using a CDC program called VAMS for the healthcare and EMS workforce, but they had challenges with this system and were planning a switch to another software called VMS and then ultimately transfer to a statewide vaccine registry system. Logistically, this would mean a multiple step process for this next vaccine phase. The City Manager listened to the Governor's press conference on January 21 and they felt confident their website could handle the activity. Residents over age 65 could register for the vaccine starting at 8:00 AM on January 22 at www.vaccines.nh.gov. The Mayor appreciated the City Manager's summary and said that the bottom line is bottle-necking of vaccines coming into NH, so it would take time to rely on the vaccine, and therefore social prudence would continue being necessary.

MORE TIME

Planning, Licenses & Development report read recommending to place the communication from Councilor Clark relating to Small Wireless Facility Installations in Public Rights-of -Way on more time. The Mayor granted more time.

Councilor Clark said that a member of the State Commission, Dr. Kent Chamberlain, sent the Council a letter with his comments about the PLD conversation, which Councilor Clark encouraged his peers and staff to review. He went on to ask what clear directions were given to the City Manager or Staff to trigger the matter coming back to Committee. The City Manager said her next step was to reach out to majority and minority members of the report. She also invited the 5G Commission's chairperson to a PLD Committee meeting during the cycle after next to provide a summary of the report and answer questions from the Council.

MSFI REPORT – COLONIAL THEATER GROUP, INC. – PETITION FOR DISCONTINUANCE – RESOLUTION R-2020-38

Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee report read recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2020-38. Councilor Chadbourne and Councilor Williams abstained because they had not attended the statutory site visit. Mayor Hansel filed the report. Mayor Hansel noted that Councilors Chadbourne, Ormerod, Williams, and Johnsen would be unable to participate in the discussion and vote at this meeting.

A motion by Councilor Manwaring to adopt Resolution R-2020-38 was duly seconded by Councilor Giacomo and the motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote with 11 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Chadbourne, Ormerod, Williams and Johnsen abstained.

FOP REPORT – RELATING TO USE OF FUND BALANCE SCBA MASKS - FIRE CHIEF – RESOLUTION R-2021-01

Finance, Organization & Personnel Committee report read recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2021-01. Mayor Hansel filed the report.

A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt resolution R-2021-01 was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper and the motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Hansel adjourned the meeting at 8:01 PM.

A true record, attest:



City Clerk