

**City Council Workshop
August 15, 2023
Council Chambers
6:03 PM**

COUNCILORS PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Katie Ambrose, City Manager
Terence O'Rourke, City Attorney
Susan Rice, resident
human, resident
Police Chief Boudreau

COUNCILORS EXCUSED

Councilor Berlin

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Callaghan called the City Council Workshop to order at 6:03 PM. He announced that Councilor Fontneau was connecting to the meeting remotely via Microsoft Teams. He asked Councilor Fontneau if it was reasonably impractical for him to attend the meeting in person. Councilor Fontneau confirmed that it was reasonably impractical to attend the meeting in person and stated illness/COVID as the reason. He indicated that no one else was in the room/home where he was remotely connected.

Recess to non-public Session for Land, RSA 91-A:3, II (d)

Reconvene City Council Workshop Meeting

(The above portion of the meeting was cancelled)

Mayor Callaghan invited Councilor Beaudoin to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kelly Walters, City Clerk, called the roll. All Councilors were present except for Councilor Berlin, who had been excused.

2. Public Input

Susan Rice, resident, spoke about Moonlight Madness and other upcoming activities offered in the downtown area. Ms. Rice spoke about the car seat safety inspection program offered by the Fire Department.

Ms. Rice spoke about a Downtown Parking Survey completed several months prior and questioned when/where those results would be available. She spoke about the City Council re-zoning of the area surrounding the old DPW building. Lastly, she spoke about the cancelation of several meetings over the last few months.

human, resident, spoke about the "deep state" and the Rochester Economic Development Reserve Fund guidelines.

City Manager Ambrose said the City Council received a public input submission from Tori Bird, resident, titled "*Services for our Unhoused Neighbors Needed Now.*"

3. Communications from the City Manager

City Manager Ambrose announced an upcoming Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce Event: "Business Resources to Longevity; Small Businesses Thriving in Rochester." This event will be held on August 29, 2023, starting at 8 AM. For more information including registration, please visit the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce Website.

City Manager Ambrose announced that the Rochester Fire Department and the Walmart Department Store are hosting a free Car Seat Check and Installation Event, to be held on August 26, 2023. For more information, contact the Rochester Fire Department at 1-603-335-7545 (Option 2). She encouraged any interested persons that are not able to attend the event to make an appointment with the Fire Department, which is staffed with trained technicians to check the safety of car seats and their installation.

4. Communications from the Mayor

Mayor Callaghan spoke about the many activities offered by the Recreation and Arena Department, including the swimming pools and summer camp. He said there are about 500 Senior Citizens who participate in some of the activities offered through Recreation and Arena. Mayor Callaghan said that New Hampshire has one of the oldest-aged citizenship by population in the country.

Mayor Callaghan said he met with the county commissioners, and it was great to hear the positive talk about the Ridge Development and City of Rochester development.

Mayor Callaghan said Concert on the Common has been successful as well.

5. REDC Update and Review of Economic Development Reserve Fund Guidelines

Jonathan Shapleigh, Chair, of the Rochester Economic Development Commission, addressed the City Council to give a brief update and review of the REDC Economic Development Reserve Fund Guidelines. He mentioned that Marcia Miller, Member of the REDC, is also in attendance at this evening's meeting.

Councilor Hailey referred to the steps outlined for approval of the money from this fund. She said step 5 reads: if declined by the Council, the request will return to the Commission for further discussion and revision as necessary. She asked if the City Council declined a request would the request be sent back to step 3* (**If approved by the Commission, the request will be moved to City Council for review, discussion, and a vote to approve or decline. A simple majority vote by the Council is required to approve or deny the funding request*). Mr. Shapleigh gave reasons why it would be handled on a case-by-case basis, but ultimately a project would not move forward without City Council approval and confirmed these projects would return to step 3.

Councilor Desrochers referenced the member of the public who had spoken earlier about the REDC guidelines. She asked if the City Attorney could confirm if he had reviewed these guidelines. City Attorney O'Rourke clarified that he was directly involved with drafting the language of the ordinance, and confirmed that he did review these guidelines as well. He explained that the guidelines detailed by Chair Shapleigh are not legally binding to either the REDC or the Council, but simply offer guidance in the process. Lastly, he said the resolution, which Council approved last year, will be sent to the Codes and Ordinances Committee for codification into the City Ordinances at their September meeting.

Councilor Gray referred to the REDC Reserve Fund Reporting Requirements. He suggested that the City Council be updated monthly by the City Council representative serving on the REDC, as is done by City Council representatives on other City boards and commissions.

Councilor Beaudoin stated concerns about the language of the REDC Reserve Fund Guidelines. He said State Law requires that these funds must be

set aside and held by the Trustees of the Trust Fund for a specified purpose. He said there are vague or ambiguous terms listed under Section 2.0 "Uses of Funding;" Purchase/control of real estate and raw land, funding of relevant studies and plans, and investments in the overall economic vitality of the City. He questioned if there would be more specific information listed in the descriptions when funds are being allocated. Mr. Shapleigh replied that all projects must be approved by the City Council, and these approved items would be the only projects where the funds could be allocated. There was a brief discussion on the process to be taken if funds were allocated for a project that did not end up moving forward.

Mayor Callaghan said that he is an Ex-Officio Member of the REDC. He stated his appreciation of the Commission and stated that they have the best interest of the City in mind.

6. Department Reports

Councilor Larochelle read from the Public Works Department Report regarding the raw water quality in the reservoir system that had degraded due to heavy rains. He said the report noted that there were elevated metals and organics significantly higher than normal. He explained that he would be interested in knowing what those metals and organics are specifically; however, he surmised that the general public may not be able to understand some of the technical language in the report. He suggested it would be best to summarize what the verbiage means and the implications thereof.

Councilor de Geofroy requested more information from the Fire Department regarding a gas leak, which occurred on July 17, 2023, and asked what can be done to prevent this sort of leak from occurring in the future.

Councilor Larochelle said the Fire Department refers to "Code 25." He questioned the meaning of a Code 25 and asked where to find a list of such codes. Police Chief Boudreau said he is familiar with the Fire Department's Code 25, which is sent out by the dispatch center to recall any/all off duty full time firefighters/personnel for station coverage.

Mayor Callaghan said it has been reported that opioid-related deaths have increased by approximately twenty-five percent in New Hampshire. He asked for more information specific to the City of Rochester. Chief Boudreau replied that Rochester has not had much change; however, he agreed to get those figures for the City Council. He spoke about the benefit of Narcan (opioid reversal agent) being used in the community.

Councilor Desrochers expressed appreciation that members of the community are utilizing Narcan and said that any loss of life is tragic. She

questioned if the use of Narcan in the community is being tracked by the Police Department. Chief Boudreau said that Narcan is tracked through the State, but not at the local level through the Police Department. Councilor Desrochers asked if the Chief could provide any additional information about receiving fewer calls due to the use of Narcan. Chief Boudreau said the Department is aware that Narcan is prevalent in the community; because of that fact, the Police Department is not always called to the scene. He surmised that there is likely a quarter to a half reduction in calls received for opioid related issues due to the use of Narcan.

Mayor Callaghan informed the public that property crimes are down by about thirty percent over the last two years and violent crimes are down by twenty percent over the last two years. Mayor Callaghan said the Police Department is currently full staffed; however, there was one recent retirement announced. He thanked the Police Chief for managing a successful department.

Councilor Gray requested to refer the public input submission from Tori Bird, resident, titled "*Services for our Unhoused Neighbors Needed Now*" to the Community Development Committee and/or the Welfare Department for review. Councilor Desrochers suggested that the matter be sent to the Opioid Abatement Committee as well. It was clarified that the email would be sent to the Community Development Committee as well as the Opioid Abatement Committee. Councilor Hainey informed the City Council that the Community Development Committee is not meeting in August; however, Ms. Bird's email shall be reviewed at the September meeting.

Councilor Desrochers spoke about a recent increase to the number of young adults/youths dealing with homelessness in the City of Rochester. She spoke about certain programs that, unfortunately, recipients age out of eventually, and emphasized that there are currently Rochester residents aging out of these programs. Councilor Desrochers spoke in favor of the upcoming programs the County is working on for transitional housing; however, she said that there is a gap in services that needs to be addressed.

7. Non-public/non-meeting

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

City Councilor Lachapelle **MOVED** to enter into the Non-Public Session, under Land, RSA 91-A:3,II(d) at 6:42 PM. Councilor Desrochers seconded the motion. Councilor Beaudoin stated that he would not support the motion pursuant to 91-A:2,II (a), in that it does not meet the stipulations specified in NH RSA 91-A:3,II (d). The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 9 – 3 roll call vote with Councilors Lachapelle, Larochelle, Desrochers, de Geofroy, Gray, Malone,

Fontneau, Hamann and Mayor Callaghan voting in favor of the motion. Councilors Hainey, Gilman, and Beaudoin, voted against the motion.

Councilor Lachapelle **MOVED** to exit the Non-Pubic Session at 7:34 PM. Councilor Hamann seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 12 – 0 roll call vote. Councilors de Geofroy, Beaudoin, Hamann, Desrochers, Lachapelle, Malone, Hainey, Larochelle, Gray, Gilman, Fontneau, and Mayor Callaghan voted in favor of the motion.

Councilor Lachapelle **MOVED** to seal the minutes of the Non-Public Session because disclosure would render the proposed action ineffective. Councilor Malone seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a roll call vote of 11 - 1. Councilors Hainey, Gray, Malone, Gilman, Fontneau, Larochelle, de Geofroy, Desrochers, Hamann, Lachapelle, and Mayor Callaghan voted in favor of the motion. Councilor Beaudoin voted against the motion.

8. Adjournment

Councilor Lachapelle **MOVED** to **ADJOURN** the City Council Workshop meeting at 7:35 PM. Councilor Hamann seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous roll call vote. Councilors Desrochers, Gray, Fontneau, Hamann, Hainey, Lachapelle, Larochelle, Beaudoin, Malone, Gilman, de Geofroy, and Mayor Callaghan voted in favor of the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Walters, CMC
City Clerk