

**Rochester City Council Workshop
March 19, 2013
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
7:08 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilor Hervey
Councilor Hynes
Councilor Keans
Councilor LaBranche
Councilor Lachapelle
Councilor Larochelle
Councilor Savoie
Councilor Torr (*arrived at 8:15 PM*)
Councilor Varney
Councilor Walker
Mayor Jean

OTHERS PRESENT

Daniel Fitzpatrick, City Manager
Blaine Cox, Deputy City Manager
Dan Wensley, City Attorney
Peter Nourse, City Engineer and
Acting Public Works Director
George Maglaras, County Commissioner
Jake Collins, Resident
Fred Leonard, Resident

MEMBERS EXCUSED

Councilor Lauterborn
Councilor Reed-Erickson

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mayor Jean called the City Council Workshop meeting to order at 7:08 PM. Marcia Roddy, Deputy City Clerk, took a silent roll call. All Councilors were present except for Councilors Lauterborn and Reed-Erickson, who had been excused. Councilor Torr arrived at 8:15 PM.

2. Public Input

No one came forward to speak. Mayor Jean closed Public Input at 7:09 PM.

3. Communications from the Mayor

Mayor Jean said that item # 3.1 had been removed as the Police Commission has withdrawn the request for a salary adjustment and it will no longer be considered.

3.4 Mayor Jean gave a brief presentation regarding regionalization of Emergency Dispatch Services. He said that the three County Commissioners were in attendance and would be available to answer questions after the presentation.

County Commissioner George Maglaras came forward to answer questions from the Council. He began by acknowledging the informative presentation by Mayor Jean.

Mr. Maglaras said that Rockingham County has a regionalized dispatch service that services 23 communities and is very effective. He sees no reason why Strafford County could not be as effective with only 13 communities.

Mr. Maglaras said that the Town of Durham recently became part of the dispatch center and by doing so has saved the taxpayers approximately a quarter of a million dollars. This would add up to about \$2.5 million in savings over ten years. The Town of Lee also realized a savings of approximately \$70,000. The Commissioners are convinced that a regionalized dispatch center could save the taxpayers a considerable amount of money. He pointed out that the three cities in Strafford County now have tax caps and will be faced with some tough decisions going forward relating to those caps. The proposed regionalization would be helpful in managing those caps.

Councilor Savoie asked Mr. Maglaras what additional staffing would be required to take care of the regionalization. Mr. Maglaras said that the City would need to look at its present call data and compare it with the county call data. Then it would be necessary to look at the present staffing scenarios and determine the specific number of staff that would be needed. Most dispatch centers, he said, historically operate at a 40% efficiency level, and the ultimate goal here would be to raise the efficiency level.

Mr. Maglaras said that the State of New Hampshire has missed out on a number of opportunities for Federal grants for mass communication. After the [Hurricane] Katrina episode in Louisiana, the government made millions of dollars available for emergency communications because of what was learned from Katrina. The State of New Hampshire has not had the opportunity to access some of that money, simply because there are so many towns doing business on their own and the Federal government could not fund each of these individual communities. He believes that once the communities regionalize they would be able to access additional Federal grants that would help in the future as it relates to computer access in terms of not only the patrolmen on the streets, but general communications across the line.

Another example that Mr. Maglaras gave is when an incident occurs in another county of the state and comes through Strafford County, most communities do not speak with each other. They have to get on the phone and call.

Councilor Savoie followed up with a question regarding equipment. Specifically, what would happen to the equipment in the new Police Station. Mayor Jean said the City would look to the needs of the county. If they could use any of that equipment, then the City of Rochester would get credit for any of that equipment, or a capital equipment credit.

Councilor Hynes asked Mr. Maglaras how many of the 13 municipalities in the county are presently doing this (regionalization) and are any of the cities participating. Mr. Maglaras said none of the three cities are participating, but all of the ten towns are.

Councilor Walker said this is something the City was looking into about ten years ago, when he was mayor, and it is a long time coming. He added that with today's budget requirements and restrictions it is something that the City needs to take a hard look at it and decide whether or not to do it.

Councilor Varney wanted to know what the county's five year CIP plan is regarding to dispatch services to see what we will be paying for in the future. The other thing he would like would be a comparison of the expense costs of Dover and Portsmouth dispatch centers to see how they compare with Rochester.

Councilor Hervey said he assumes that the dispatch center in Rochester has some sort of backup if the dispatch center goes offline, for example. He asked if the regional center has a backup.

Mr. Maglaras said this has been the subject for discussion for some time. Other counties are discussing this, as well. The technology is so advanced to the point that we are looking at talking with other counties about backing each other up. A few years back there was talk about dispatch services at the county using Rochester as a backup. The technology is moving forward rapidly. He added that the more communities contributing to a regional dispatch center, the more the capital costs go down. There is a capital plan in place that will be shared with the Council. It is based on a per capita basis and the towns are already contributing toward it. The more people there are in the system, the more that capital cost will go down. He thinks that the equipment that Rochester has that could be used at the county level would bring Rochester's cost down.

Mr. Maglaras said there is a lot of work involved in the process and they are willing to do it. It is their hope that as our county becomes involved, they will have backup from our "sister" counties. He added that our County Sheriff, David Dubois, is very supportive of this program. He also commended Rochester Chief Allen for his work in opening the Family Justice Center in Rochester.

Councilor Lachapelle asked if the City chooses to go forward with this process and the county determines that it will need more staff, will they look to the Rochester staff to fill some of those positions. Mr. Maglaras said absolutely, there would be no question about that.

Mayor Jean thanked Mr. Maglaras for his help and input in getting this process started.

3.2 Information from the Clerk's Office Regarding Dogs

Mayor Jean said that all dog licenses in the City of Rochester will expire on April 30, 2013, and it is the New Hampshire state law that all dogs are required to be licensed in the

town in which they reside. Failure to do so will result in late fees, penalties, and a possible citation. He said that the City Clerk's office is available to license dogs on Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Mayor Jean said that the City will be hosting two rabies clinics: April 20 and May 11 from 12:00 noon to 2:00 PM at the Rochester Fairgrounds 4H Building. The charge for the shots is \$15 and all dogs must be on a leash and all cats must be in a carrier.

3.3 Chapter 42 – Ward Meeting updates

Mayor Jean announced the updated list of Ward meetings concerning Chapter 42. They are as follows:

Ward One – April 8, 2013
Ward Two – April 22, 2013
Ward Three – April 10, 2013
Ward Four – April 1, 2013
Ward Five – TBD
Ward Six – April 24, 2013

4. Candidate Interviews for the Vacant School Board Seat [Ward One, Seat A]

Jake Collins, resident of 90 Whitehall Road, spoke for several minutes regarding his qualifications for a seat on the School Board. He cited his background as a lifelong resident of Rochester, as well as his experience, both professionally and civically.

Councilor Savoie asked Mr. Collins what he considered to be the single most important issue, in his opinion, for the School Board to deal with. Mr. Collins said he believes the safety of the students is a top priority and he fully supports having a school resource officer.

Mayor Jean asked Mr. Collins for his thoughts about the recent proposal to renovate the East Rochester School for a price of \$13 million. Mr. Collins replied that he did not know enough about it, but the price tag scared him. He added that he would be interested in finding cost savings in the project.

Fred Leonard, resident of 10 Sandina Drive, said he moved to the community almost 21 years ago. He said he has always believed in the importance of public education. He said he believes that there is not enough parent involvement with the schools. The recent issue with truancy, he added, is partly due to the lack of parent involvement

Mr. Leonard said that a good school system reflects directly on the community. When people consider moving to Rochester, one of the considerations is what kind of school system it has. He also said that manufacturers are having difficulty hiring people with good skills, such

as math skills, and too many students are graduating without the necessary skills to meet the requirements for employment or college.

Mr. Leonard stated that he believes school principals should be able to hire their own staff and be accountable for the functionality of their school. The principal should evaluate and monitor the staff and dismiss those who are not meeting the requirements of the job.

Councilor Savoie asked Mr. Leonard if there is a single issue that he feels to be most important. Mr. Leonard believes that the involvement of parents and how they engage with their children and the school department is a top priority.

Mayor Jean asked the question regarding the School Department's proposal to renovate the East Rochester School. Mr. Leonard agreed that it is a high price ("mind blowing"), but it is imperative to look at the elementary schools and do what is right to keep them at a high standard. If the renovation is part of that process, then it should be looked at. He said the open concept has failed and it is time to improve that situation.

5. Discussion: Amazon MHP – Municipal Water Request

Peter Nourse, City Engineer and Acting Public Works Director, presented information regarding the request by Amazon MHP to bring water in from Somersworth to the park. Per the 2003 inter-municipal agreement between Rochester and Somersworth, the City of Rochester has to request Somersworth for permission to expand any water transmission system which is supplied by Somersworth. Amazon Mobile Home Park is looking to obtain a water source; they have a system of wells that, except for one, are not fit for drinking water and the State has required them to have a backup system.

Mr. Nourse said that in 2006 some options were explored to bring water to the park: one was to bring water down Whitehouse Road about 5,700 feet from Rochester; another is to bring water up Whitehouse Road from Somersworth for about 3,900 feet; and another option that was selected was to bring water in cross-country from Old Dover Road about 3,000 feet into the park in a 6 inch pipe to come off the existing main on Old Dover Road. He said that they have obtained an engineer with the expectation to do the work this summer. Somersworth has asked for a letter of request to have this transmission line expanded.

Councilor Walker said that the PUD/Clark's Brook is bringing Rochester water to the Somersworth line for their development. He asked if that could be tied into the line instead of Somersworth water. Mr. Nourse said that Clark's Brook is about 800 feet north of Constitution Way, which is almost the precise locality of where the take-off would be for Amazon. It could be extended, but it was his impression that it was not desirable to bring water down there and have any cross-connection with Somersworth. Councilor Walker said that it was his preference to have the water line run from the Clark's Brook line to Amazon, using Rochester water rather than Somersworth water.

Councilor Varney pointed out that the issue would be that the line would run across a lot of private property and why would the City want to get involved with a right-of-way and access to the line. He also asked who would be paying for this work. Mr. Nourse said Amazon is paying for this; they have deeded easements along the way by 3,000 feet.

City Manager Fitzpatrick said that the only thing this governing body [City Council] is being asked to do with this request is to give their permission. There would be no expense and no one from City staff would be doing any work on it.

Councilor Varney wanted it to be clear that it would not be the City who would maintain this line. Mr. Nourse confirmed that it would be on a deeded easement and that Amazon would be solely responsible for maintenance. He emphasized that he finds it preferable to tie into a Rochester line to generate revenue for the City, rather than running it cross-country.

Councilor Keans commented that this has the potential for unintentional consequences that the City does not need. There are enough water problems at this time and the City does not need any additional unanticipated problems.

Councilor Savoie asked Mr. Nourse what the cost differential would be between the two options. Mr. Nourse said he did not have that information. Mayor Jean added that it is his understanding that the entire cost of this project would be borne by Amazon.

Councilor Larochelle asked what the impact would be on other ratepayers. Mr. Nourse said that it would be similar to Little Quarry where the people use water off one meter and the City bills for that. The City does not make a large profit from it, but does get some revenue.

Councilor Walker reiterated that the timing of this project is similar to that of Clark's Brook and it is preferable to him that both projects use Rochester water. Mayor Jean agreed.

Mr. Nourse said that the purpose of him being at this meeting was to obtain the Council's permission for the project.

Councilor Larochelle suggested sending the matter to the Finance Committee or Public Works, or both, for consideration. Councilor Varney said both. Mayor Jean said he would rather send it to Public Works first. He asked what the time constraints are. Mr. Nourse said that Somersworth requested this in January and Amazon would like to do the project this summer. Mayor Jean suggested the matter come before the April Public Works Committee meeting.

Councilor Hervey pointed out that it looks like Amazon has done some research on this and perhaps they have some cost figures on each way that could be requested of them. Mr. Nourse said he thinks they do.

Mayor Jean summarized the issue as it being less costly for Amazon to tie in with Somersworth, but more acceptable to the Council for Amazon to tie in with Rochester, which

would most likely be more costly to Amazon. The matter will be discussed at the next Public Works Committee meeting.

6. Department Reports

No discussion.

7. Non-Public Session

7.1 Personnel, RSA 91-A: 3 II (a)

Councilor Lachapelle **MOVED** to enter Non-Public Session under Personnel, RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) at 8:20 PM. Councilor Labranche seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a roll call vote of 11 to 2. Councilors Keans, Hynes, Walker, Laroche, Savoie, Varney, Labranche, Hervey Lachapelle, Torr, and Mayor Jean all voted yes. Councilors Lauterborn and Reed-Erickson were excused.

Councilor Lachapelle **MOVED** to exit Non-Public session at 8:47 PM. Councilor Labranche seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by unanimous voice vote.

8. Adjournment

Councilor Walker **MOVED** to adjourn at 8:48 PM. Councilor Varney seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia H. Roddy
Deputy City Clerk