

**City Council Workshop
February 20, 2024
Council Chambers
6:39 PM**

COUNCILORS PRESENT

Councilor Creteau
Councilor de Geofroy
Councilor Fitzpatrick
Councilor Fontneau
Councilor Herman
Councilor Lawrence
Councilor Richardson
Councilor Sullivan
Councilor Turner
Councilor Walker
Deputy Mayor Hamann
Mayor Callaghan

COUNCILORS ABSENT

Councilor Karolian

OTHERS PRESENT

Katie Ambrose, City Manager
Terence O'Rourke, City Attorney
human, resident
Tom Kaczynski, resident
Chris Rice, resident
Susan Rice, resident
Dr. Thomas Moon, DVM
Gail Gettens, DHHS
Beverly Drouin, Healthy Homes Program
Jenn Czysz, SRPC

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Callaghan called the City Council Workshop to order at 6:39 PM.

Deputy City Clerk Cassie Givara had taken the roll call attendance prior to the Public Hearing preceding the Workshop. All Councilors were present except for Councilor Karolian, who was absent.

Prior to the Public Hearing preceding the Workshop, Mayor Callaghan announced that Councilor Lawrence would be attending the meeting remotely. Mayor Callaghan asked Councilor Lawrence, per RSA 91-A, if it was reasonably impractical for her to attend the meeting in person and asked her to state a reason for the record. Councilor Lawrence replied that it was reasonably impractical for her to appear in person due to illness. Mayor Callaghan asked, per RSA 91-A, if Councilor Lawrence was alone in the location from which she was connecting. She stated that her husband was in the house, but not in the room.

2. Public Input

human, resident, addressed Council regarding the role of the City Attorney.

Tom Kaczynski, resident, spoke to Council regarding the Ward 6 ward clerk position vacancy.

Chris Rice, resident, addressed the City Council regarding staff turnover and shortages at the Rochester Police Department. He additionally spoke about the suggested installation of streetlights on Route 11.

Susan Rice, resident, questioned the cost of trash stickers and where this revenue is placed. Ms. Rice also spoke about the transparency of the Mayor's meeting schedule.

3. Communications from the City Manager

City Manager Ambrose announced that there had been one online public input submission from Hira Booth titled "Diversity" that had been distributed to the Councilors.

City Manager Ambrose read a press release regarding Waste Management residential drop off. She stated that, due to misuse of the residential drop-off for solid waste, Waste Management was starting to more strictly enforce their policy as laid out in the host agreement, requiring stickers purchased at the tax office for such waste disposal. She stated that the City is exploring alternative distribution options and locations and would be reporting back on their findings.

4. Communications from the Mayor

4.1 Proclamation: Choose Love Awareness Month – February 2024

Mayor Callaghan read a proclamation declaring February 2024 "Choose Love Awareness" month.

4.2 Proclamation: Career Technical Education Month – February 2024

Mayor Callaghan read a proclamation declaring February 2024 "Career Technical Education" month.

5. Presentation: Healthy Homes and Lead Prevention – DHHS

Dr. Thomas Moon, DVM, President of the Rochester Board of Health, introduced Gail Gettens of DHHS to present to the Council regarding the issue of lead poisoning in the City.

Gayle Gettens, Child Development Specialist/Health Communications Coordinator for the Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at DHHS, explained that all lead level blood tests performed throughout the State come in through the Healthy Homes Program and are reviewed by nurse case managers. This data is then compiled into an annual lead testing and exposure brief. Ms. Gettens gave the data on elevated blood lead exposure statistics for children in the state of NH between 2015-2019, affecting 3,402 children during this time period. Ms. Gettens explained that during this time, only ¼ of children of applicable age in the state of NH were given this statutorily required blood test. This would indicate that the 3,402 children reported with elevated blood lead levels is highly underreported due to the lack of testing being performed.

Ms. Gettens spoke about how children are most often exposed to lead; lead dust from lead paint applied prior to 1978. She spoke about the high prevalence of lead paint and lead dust in Rochester homes due to the age of the housing stock. Ms. Gettens detailed the physiological effects of lead on the brains of children under 6 years old and the long term developmental effects caused by these exposures. She stated that it only takes trace amounts of lead, nearly undetectable by the naked eye, to cause lead toxicity in children. The damage caused is permanent and irreversible and will not be evident until later stages of development. She detailed the potential results of lead exposure and the high economic costs to a community caused by this exposure.

Ms. Gettens spoke about the available resources as well as guidance for educators in dealing with children who have had lead exposures.

Beverly Drouin, Healthy Homes Program, introduced a law going into effect on July 1, 2024; RSA 130-a:5-d. , which requires that newly constructed rental units from pre-1978 properties, will require certification of lead safety prior to occupancy (or use as a daycare center). She gave an overview of the types of properties to which this new law would apply and steps which will need to be taken once the law goes into effect.

Ms. Gettens summarized actions steps the City should take, including ensuring that all children are tested for lead at age one and again at age 2. She also recommended education on lead hazards, school policy requiring blood lead level testing, requiring Renovate, Repair, and Paint (RRP) certification number on building permits, and requiring Lead-Safe Certificates for certificates of occupancy for projects done on pre-1978 properties. She also suggested that the City consider establishing proactive rental inspections to check for lead hazards.

Councilor de Geofroy inquired about the lack of lead testing Ms. Gettens had spoken about. He asked if it was due to parents not initiating the testing by bringing their children to the doctor, or the doctors not performing the test on the recommended basis. Ms. Gettens explained that it is a combination of both but speculated that much of this is due to parents not getting their children on a schedule of “well child” visits annually, which is normally when this testing is performed. Councilor Fontneau asked what the City could do to increase compliance for this testing. Ms. Gettens stated that requiring blood lead level testing for school entry is the most effective way to increase testing.

Councilor de Geofroy inquired if this evening’s presentation would also be given to the School Board. Ms. Gettens stated that she has presented to the Board of Health and now the City Council but has not yet had an opportunity to present to the School Board.

Councilor de Geofroy asked which party is in charge of enforcing lead safe certificates for new rentals. Ms. Drouin stated that the suggestion is that this requirement be instilled into the process through building and licensing prior to a property owner receiving their certificate of occupancy. This would be a more proactive approach versus the current method in which no action can be taken until a child is poisoned.

6. Annual Presentation: Strafford Regional Planning Commission

Jenn Czysz, Executive Director of Strafford Regional Planning Commission, gave an overview of the SRPC’s role in the community, their current projects, and projects which are upcoming. Strafford Regional Planning Commission has appointees designated for each of the communities they represent; Rochester has four seats, with Councilor Hamann, Joe Boudreau, and Barbara Holstein currently representing Rochester. She outlined SRPC’s regional comprehensive plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and explained the responsibilities handled by SRPC which are set by State statute.

Ms. Czysz detailed the findings of the regional housing needs assessment completed the prior year. She explained that the SRPC is a major hub for data of all sorts and summarized the resources and types of maps produced by the organization and where these resources can be found. She explained that SRPC annually published a "Data Snapshot" compiled of 140 different datapoints on transportation, demographics, planning, etc.

Ms. Czysz spoke about municipal dues gathered from participating municipalities and how these dues are utilized by SRPC. Dues constitute 7% of the annual budget, and much of this money goes towards matching funds for various project such as federal transportation programs, economic development district, grants, and recreation department master plan project. Ms. Czysz detailed the Rochester specific projects ongoing and upcoming.

Councilor Sullivan inquired where residents could access the recreational master plan survey Ms. Czysz had referenced. City Manager Ambrose reported that the link to all current surveys can be found on rochesternh.gov under the "Get Involved" tab.

Councilor de Geofroy asked how the snapshot referenced by Ms. Czysz is published. Ms. Czysz responded that the snapshot is published as a PDF, however there is also an interactive map companion. This data can be found by going to Strafford.org under the "measure" tab.

7. Department Reports

No Discussion.

8. Non-public/non-meeting

8.1 Non-Public Session – Personnel, RSA 91-A:3, II (a)

Councilor **MOVED** to enter a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (a), Personnel, at 8:22 PM. Councilor Fontneau seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 12-0 roll call vote with Councilors Fitzpatrick, Turner, Hamann, Richardson, Sullivan, Fontneau, Creteau, Herman, de Geofroy, Walker, Lawrence, and Mayor Callaghan voting in favor.

Councilor Walker **MOVED** to exit the non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (a), Personnel, at 8:51 PM and to seal the minutes as divulgence would render the proposed actions ineffective. Councilor de

Geofroy seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 12-0 roll call vote with Councilors Walker, Herman, Fontneau, Lawrence, de Geofroy, Turner, Fitzpatrick, Hamann, Sullivan, Creteau, Richardson, and Mayor Callaghan voting in favor.

9. Adjournment

Mayor Callaghan **ADJOURNED** the City Council Workshop meeting at 8:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk