

Public Safety Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2020
6:00 PM
Meeting Conducted Remotely

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer
Gary Boudreau, Deputy Police Chief
Tim Wilder, Assistant Fire Chief
Dan Camara, GIS Asset Mgmt. Tech.

Minutes

Councilor Hamann brought the Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 6:00 PM 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.

Providing public access to the meeting by telephone: At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting remotely. Even though this meeting is being conducted in a unique manner under unusual circumstances, the usual rule of conduct and decorum apply. Any person found to be disrupting this meeting will be asked to cease the disruption. Should the disruptive behavior continue thereafter, that person will be removed from this meeting. The public can call-in to the below number using the conference code. Some meetings will allow live public input, however you must have preregistered on line, otherwise, the meeting will be set to allow the public to "listen-in" only and there will be no public comment taken during the meeting. Phone number: 857-444-0744, conference code: 843095.

Public Access troubleshooting: If any member of the public has difficulty accessing the meeting by phone, please email: PublicInput@RochesterNH.net or call 603-332-1167.

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 are encouraged to do so by the following methods:

- **Mail:** City Manager's Office-/Public Input, 31 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867 (must be received at least three full days prior to the anticipated meeting date)
- **Email** Samantha.Rodgerson@rochesternh.net (must be received no later than 4:00 pm of meeting date)
- **Voicemail:** 603-332-1167 (must be received no later than 12:00 pm on said meeting date in order to be transcribed)
- **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.)

Councilor Hamann Ward 5 Present

Councilor Hutchinson Ward 1 Present

Councilor Rice Ward 5 Present

Councilor Belkin Ward 2 Present

Councilor Lachapelle Ward 3 Present

1. Public Input

Councilor Hamann asked Ms. Rodgerson if there were any members of the Public waiting in the virtual lobby that were waiting to speak. She stated that there was one person waiting and that his item was on the agenda. Councilor Hamann asked the committee members if the item 6. 122 Governors Road-blind driveway sign could be moved up on the agenda. The Committee was in agreement to that.

2. 122 Governors Road-Blind Driveway Sign

Juan Medina called in to the Public Safety Committee meeting to voice his concerns regarding speeding issues on Governors Road. Living on Governors

Road for the last 15 years, he has witnessed the City do a good job paving the road; it has been done twice since he has been there. Now there is a speeding issue because of the newly paved road. His driveway is on the only bend in the road. Coming from the Town of Farmington, vehicles are speeding and drivers can't see his driveway. Every morning he is concerned for his wife and son when they are leaving. He has trimmed the bushes back in the area to help. He is requesting a blind driveway sign. Councilor Rice asked Mr. Medina if he had a shared driveway and Mr. Medina said yes, 110-112 is a shared driveway. He also stated there is a lot of foot traffic in the area. Councilor Rice asked Deputy Police Chief when the speed trailer was placed on Governors Road. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he doesn't think it has been placed on Governors Road.

Councilor Rice made a motion to install a "blind driveway" sign for traffic travelling from the Town of Farmington into Rochester. The motion was seconded by Councilor Belkin. A Roll Call vote was taken to support this motion.

<i>Councilor Rice</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Hutchinson</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Belkin</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Hamann</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Lachapelle</i>	<i>Yes</i>		

3. Autumn Street-"No thru Trucks" Signage

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. A letter from Thomas Plourde of 116 Autumn Street was received by City staff. Mr. Plourde is requesting updated signage related to "No Thru Trucks" on Autumn Street and Salmon Falls Road. Mr. Bezanson gave a little background on this. In 2014, the City Council voted to post the portion of Salmon Falls Road between Highland St and Milton Rd to local traffic only due to the pavement condition. The pavement on that portion of roadway had been shimmed in 2012 and a construction project was planned to begin in 2015. That construction project has since been completed and the roadway improved. "No Thru Trucks" signs were installed on both ends of Autumn Street in 2012. It appears that the "No Thru Trucks" sign on the Highland Street end was removed maybe in 2018. Trucks travelling from Maine do use Autumn Street as a cut-through. ***Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to remove the "No Thru Trucks" signs on Salmon Falls Road and install a "No Thru Trucks" sign on Autumn Street at the Highland Street end. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rice. A Roll Call vote was taken to support this motion.***

<i>Councilor Hutchinson</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Lachapelle</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Belkin</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Rice</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Hamann</i>	<i>Yes</i>		

4. Chamberlain Street-Speeding Concerns

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said that staff spoke with Priscilla LeBlanc regarding speeding concerns on Chamberlain Street between Portland and Franklin; she requested a speed limit sign. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that the speed trailer was in the area for 10 days with 3,803 vehicles the average speed being 27.53 mph and 85 percent 33.62. Mr. Bezanson stated that the complainant's address is 32 Chamberlain Street. Councilor Hamann said it is a short straight stretch of roadway. No action was taken on this request.

5. Closing Charles Street To Commercial Traffic

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Councilor Lachapelle wanted to know how these requests were coming in; he stated that he does not have any back-up documentation. Councilor Hamann read an email that he received from Nellie Bentz of 24 Charles Street. She bought her house on Charles Street in 2018 and since then has learned more about the street: litter everywhere, trash piled in front of houses, property theft, and heavy traffic. She stated there is no reason for commercial trucks to be on Charles Street. Councilor Hamann stated that this is more than traffic issue. Councilor Lachapelle said that dealing with trash not properly disposed of already exists in an ordinance. These issues just need to be reported. The closing Charles Street to commercial traffic is another issue. Councilor Lachapelle said there is a gas station and a Day Care Center on the Route 125 side and an attorney, an insurance company, and a CPA on the Charles Street and Liberty end. Councilor Hamann said that he doesn't think that they can close Charles Street to commercial traffic. Councilor Belkin said she lives in a house near this Charles Street area; she said she walks in that area at different times of day, walks her dogs in the area, and can cross the street with little problem. She said there is speeding in the area. Deputy Chief Boudreau said the speed trailer was out near the Woodman Park Triangle for 8 days. There were 11,881 vehicles with the average speed being 24.16 miles per hour and the 85th percentile being 31.21, below the speed limit. Councilor Hamann said he recommends doing nothing about the commercial traffic and he will send her an email telling her to reach out to the Department of Building, Zoning, and Licensing Services for the trash complaints.

6. Old Milton Rd (backside of Dunkin Donuts)-Safety Concerns

Councilor Hamann received an email from City staff detailing a visit from Brian Paquette regarding safety concerns with the back side of Dunkin Donuts at the Old Milton Road entrance; there have been several near misses, and he was looking for something to be done to resolve this problem. Councilor Hamann

asked Deputy Chief Boudreau if there were any accidents reported at this location. Deputy Chief Boudreau said none on Old Milton Road; there have been accidents on Milton Road. Councilor Hamann said there is not much they can do about the trucks with the businesses there. Mr. Bezanson said there is a defined painted line on the property for the business's drive through service. There may be an options to define the driveway better in this area. He said DPW could approach the business to see what they will consider to do. Councilor Lachapelle said he doesn't want to cause undue hardship for them. Councilor Belkin said she would like a conversation to take place to see if they are willing to do something about the issue. Mr. Bezanson will have a discussion with Dunkin Donuts and will report back next month. Kept in committee.

7. Whitehall Road-Street Light

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Jeff Grant sent an email regarding having a 25-watt streetlight installed on Whitehall Road; he lives just past the railroad tracks at 50 Whitehall Road. He stated in his email that the homeless frequent the land behind his house and they have even walked up his driveway to get to the Chamberlain Forest area. Councilor Hamann asked if this would meet the Streetlight Policy. Mr. Bezanson stated that currently there is no streetlight at the intersection of Whitehall/Hillcrest, there is an unlit railroad crossing in this area of Whitehall, and there is a sidewalk that extends 2,100 feet between streetlights in this area. Councilor Lachapelle asked if there was a street light at the Whitehall/Sunset intersection. Mr. Bezanson said yes. Councilor Rice asked how much a street light would cost. Mr. Bezanson said he didn't remember right off hand. ***Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to install a streetlight at the corner of Whitehall Road and Hillcrest Drive. Councilor Rice seconded the motion. A Roll Call vote was taken to support this motion.***

<i>Councilor Hutchinson</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Rice</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Belkin</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Hamann</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Lachapelle</i>	<i>Yes</i>		

8. Perambulation of Boundaries

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson stated that although required every seven years by State RSA, perambulation of the City's boundaries has not been performed to his knowledge in Rochester in recent history. The most records relate to visiting boundary markers around the boundaries of the City and attempting to coordinate with the abutting cities/towns. The last time this was done was in 1991 by City staff person Dennis Schaffer, who located 26 out of a potential 37 boundary markers. In 2005 Rochester coordinated with

Somersworth to visit common boundary markers. Then in 2007, a surveyor found two additional boundary markers not found in 1991. The RSA requiring perambulation for all municipalities every 7 years is still on the books in New Hampshire; however, Rochester is not the only community that has not placed this task high on their priority list. Legislation has been proposed in recent years to repeal this RSA, but it has not passed yet. New Hampshire and Massachusetts have similar laws, but all other New England states have removed similar laws from their books. Councilor Hamann shared that Nick Bellows of 20 Mandela Drive had volunteered to help with the City's perambulation. By RSA, perambulation is required by the governing body, but in cities the task is often delegated to the office of the City Engineer. Councilor Rice recommends not taking any action at this time. Councilor Hamann said he agrees with Councilor Rice to have no action at this time. Mr. Bezanson added that in the six plus years since he has been employed by Rochester as the City Engineer he hasn't been asked to participate in any of the other six abutting city/town perambulations either.

9. Washington Street-Speed Limit

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue; Paula Gilmore sent him an email requesting more speed limit signs on Washington Street. She stated that there is one at the intersection of Washington and Brock, but is hidden by trees. Councilor Lachapelle said a sign is not going to slow people down. Deputy Chief Boudreau said the speed limit is 30 mph from Strafford Square. Councilor Rice asked if the signs are in the GIS database. Mr. Bezanson said there is an extensive amount of signs located in the database, but could not guarantee that 100% of them are included yet. Councilor Rice asked if the GIS database was something that councilors or citizens could have access to. Mr. Bezanson said there is a public-facing GIS that anyone can access; and, he could look into getting access to the specific GIS application with City infrastructure for City Councilors. No action was taken on this request.

10.52 Pickering Road-Crosswalk Signage

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson received an email from April Talon of 52 Pickering Road regarding signage at an existing crosswalk near her residence. The pedestrian sign marking the crosswalk on the right side of the road travelling westbound is blocked from view by the buildings on the curve. Ms. Talon is requesting an additional pedestrian warning sign on the left side of the road. ***Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to add an additional pedestrian warning sign at the crosswalk near Church Street at the***

discretion of DPW. The motion was seconded by Councilor Belkin. A roll call vote was taken to support this motion.

<i>Councilor Hutchinson</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Rice</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Belkin</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Hamann</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Lachapelle</i>	<i>Yes</i>		

11. Millers Farm Drive-Street Light Request

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Several emails were received by City staff requesting streetlights in the Phase 3 area of Millers Farm Drive. Phase 1 and Phase 2 have streetlights installed as part of the development. Mr. Bezanson said that all of the streetlights included in the approved development plans of the different phases were installed by the developer; however, no streetlights were planned for the back loop of Millers Farm Drive. He also said installation of streetlights in this area is not as simple as adding a cobra head; the utilities in this development are all underground, so electrical conduit/transformers and lampposts would need to be installed. Charlene Pollano of 65 Millers Farm Drive called into the meeting and spoke regarding adding streetlights. She moved there a year and a half ago. She and her neighbors are concerned about homeless people roaming around in the area and even have had them on their porches. On one occasion, police officers looking for someone in the area asked residents to turn their porch lights on. Ms. Pollano stated that we may be talking about adding two lights. This was kept in committee. Mr. Bezanson will work on a cost estimate for the proposed additional streetlights.

12. Congress/Charles Streets-Crosswalk Locations

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson explained the proposed design of two additional crosswalks and the adjustment of a third crosswalk in the Charles St/Congress St area. These crosswalks would be part of the Woodman Area Infrastructure Improvements project. One crosswalk is proposed to be added at the Liberty St/Charles St intersection crossing Charles. Another crosswalk is proposed between the Charles St municipal parking lot and proposed parking spaces on Congress St. And, the crosswalk across Charles St at the Portland St intersection already exists, but is proposed to be moved slightly to separate it from the Portland crosswalk. Mr. Bezanson is requesting approval to install the two new crosswalks. Councilor Lachapelle asked whether it made sense to remove the crosswalk at Portland, since it would now be in between two other crosswalks. Councilor Belkin stated that there is a lot of foot traffic in that area and wouldn't recommend removing any existing crosswalks.

Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to approve the two new crosswalk locations on Charles Street and Congress Street as designed by DPW. The motion was seconded by Councilor Belkin. A Roll Call vote was taken to support this motion.

<i>Councilor Hutchinson</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Belkin</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Lachapelle</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Hamann</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Rice</i>	<i>Yes</i>		

13. Cochecho River-Dam Safety Signage

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said the Riverwalk Committee is planning to install a kayak launch on the Cochecho River this summer. As they looked into a kayak launch, the question of safety regarding the downstream dam was raised. DPW has discussed the issue of dam warning signs with the City's insurer, the Dam Bureau at NHDES, and the City Attorney. As a result of discussions, DPW is proposing signs to be posted on the side of the North Main Street bridge, which is a historic structure; so, DPW has also run this idea by the HDC. A proof of a proposed sign was presented to the Committee, which includes national standard symbology for dam warning signs. A total of 4 signs are proposed. In addition, the Riverwalk Committee is creating a "rules" sign to be posted at the launch itself. Councilor Lachapelle asked what the cost of the signs will be. Mr. Bezanson stated \$85.00 per sign. Councilor Rice asked what the size of the sign is. Mr. Bezanson stated that the sign size is 18" wide x 24" tall. ***Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to approve the "Dam Safety" signs as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rice. A Roll Call vote was taken to support this motion.***

<i>Councilor Hutchinson</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Rice</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Belkin</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Councilor Hamann</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilor Lachapelle</i>	<i>Yes</i>		

14. E911 Update

Councilor Hamann asked if there was an update. Deputy Police Chief Boudreau said the E911 Committee has not met since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, so there is no update this month.

15. Emergency Management Update

Councilor Hamann asked if there was an update. Assistant Fire Chief Tim Wilder said there was no update this month. The past month has been a nice departure from the full-time EOC for the COVID-19 pandemic, but they are still on stand-by.

16. Seasonal Cold Weather Shelter

Councilor Hamann asked Councilor Hutchinson for an update. Councilor Hutchinson said he did not have an update. The Mayor gave an update at the last City Council Meeting, and there is no further update since then.

17. Other

Public Safety Committee Back-up

Councilor Lachapelle requested that going forward any backup documentation such as emails be included in the meeting agenda packet, so the councilors could be more prepared to discuss agenda items during the meeting.

Walnut Street/202A-Speeding

Councilor Lachapelle wanted to know if Walnut Street west of Twombly was City or State jurisdiction because he was interested in relocating a speed limit sign. Mr. Bezanson said that portion of Walnut St is State DOT jurisdiction. Councilor Lachapelle requested that the speed trailer be deployed to Route 202A; Deputy Chief Boudreau said he would put this area on the list for the speed trailer.

COVID-19 Updates

Councilor Belkin asked if they could get a COVID-19 update for Strafford County. Deputy Chief Boudreau went through recent daily reports that he receives, but unfortunately only Statewide data was included, none specific to Strafford County. Deputy Chief Boudreau will look for County-specific data to update the City Council.

Speeding Downtown

Deputy Chief Boudreau said that there have been some complaints regarding speeding downtown since the outside dining have been in effect. Officers were in the area with speed guns and the speed trailer was out for 15 days there was over 81,000 vehicles the average speed was 21.81 mph.

New Positions at Police and Fire Stations

Councilor Rice asked, since the new budget is now in effect, how the new hirings are coming along for the new positions. Deputy Police Chief Boudreau said 2 candidates are going through background checks and they are active working on recruiting the other 2 hires for the new position approved as of July 1. Assistant Fire Chief Wilder said they just hired 3 new employees in the last few weeks and regarding the 2 new positions for January 1 still have a hand full of great candidates that have been vetted recently on a candidate list.

Traffic Signal at Wakefield/Summer Street Intersection

Councilor Hamann said he had an email sent to him concerning the traffic signal on Wakefield Street at the Fire Station; the resident wanted to know why the signal couldn't be set to blink yellow/red. Assistant Fire Chief Wilder spoke to motorists and pedestrian safety in the intersection. Deputy Chief Boudreau added the issue of the double lane on Wakefield creates a traffic safety issue for those turning onto Wakefield from Summer. Assistant Fire Chief Wilder added the operation of fire apparatus returning to the station warrants the signal stopping traffic for a cycle. Councilor Rice added that the Union Street yield backs up traffic coming into downtown on Wakefield; the traffic signal cycles create breaks in traffic necessary to move traffic through. No action taken.

Add/Remove PSC Agenda Items

Councilor Hutchinson asked if a standing item could be added to the PSC agenda for the Emergency Management team to provide COVID-19 statistics. Councilor Hutchinson suggested that the Seasonal Cold Weather Shelter is no longer needed as a standing agenda item because the issue is being resolved independent of this Committee.

Councilor Hamann adjourned the meeting at 7:58 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Laura Miller, Secretary II.