

**Public Safety Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2020
6:00 PM
Council Chambers
Meeting Conducted Remotely**

Members Present

Councilor Don Hamann, Chair
Councilor Palana Belken
Councilor Jeremy Hutchinson
Councilor Chris Rice

Members Absent

Councilor Peter Lachapelle

Others Present

Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer
Dan Camara, GIS Asset Mgmt. Tech.
Gary Boudreau, Deputy Police Chief
Tim Wilder, Fire Marshall
Jennifer Marsh, Economic Development

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

a.) 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 (Public Hearing and/or Workshop settings) are encouraged to do so by the following methods:

- **Mail: Public Safety Committee, Rochester DPW 45 Old Dover Road
Rochester, NH 03867 (*must be received at least three full days prior to the anticipated meeting date*)**
- **Email: laura.miller@rochesternh.net (*must be received no later than 4:00 pm of meeting date*)**
- **Voicemail: 603-335-7569 (*must be received no later than 12:00 pm on said meeting date in order to be transcribed*)**

Please include with your correspondence the intended meeting date for which you are submitting. All correspondence will be included with the corresponding

meeting packet (Addendum).

In addition to the above listed public access information, the City Council will be allowing the public to enter Council Chambers and speak in person during the Public Input portion of this meeting. In an effort to adhere to CDC guidelines; enter only at the front Wakefield Street entrance and exit on the side closest to the police department and adhere to 6-foot social distancing while inside. Hand sanitizer and facemasks will be available at the Wakefield Street entrance. Participants will be admitted into Council Chambers one at a time to speak, and will exit directly thereafter. Please note; the seating in Council Chambers will not be available for the public during meetings.

At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting by phone. The public can call-in to the below number using the conference code. This meeting will be set to allow the public to “listen-in” only and there will be no public comment taken via conference line during the meeting.

Phone number: 857-444-0744 Conference code: 843095

b.) 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.)

Let’s start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their name and 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, Committee members are required to state their name and ward each time they wish to speak.

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| Councilor Jeremy Hutchinson | Ward 1 Present |
| Councilor Chris Rice | Ward 5 Present (Council Chambers) |
| Councilor Palana Belken | Ward 2 Present |
| Councilor Don Hamann | Ward 5 Present (Council Chambers) |

1. Public Input

There were no members of the public present for public input.

2. Hillcrest and Sunset Drive-Speeding Issues

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Deputy Chief Boudreau said this was a follow-up from last month’s meeting. Unfortunately, the data from the speed trailer was not available for discussion at the meeting; the server that they use is cloud-based and the data inaccessible due to a server issue. He stated that he had tried all afternoon to access the data and that as soon as he can get the data he will sent it to the Committee members. ***This item was kept in committee until next month.***

3. Gonic Road/Oak Street and Colby Street Intersection-Turning Movement

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson stated this was a follow up from last month. Mike Dugas of NHDOT spoke at last month's meeting and spoke a bit about this issue. Mr. Bezanson said that the NHDOT was scheduled to receive data regarding the traffic signal timing; he said he hadn't heard yet from NHDOT whether they had collected the data, completed their analysis, or made any changes to the traffic signal timing. He stated that he suspected he would have more information to report back to the Committee next month. ***This item was kept in committee until next month.***

4. Speeding Concerns-Cemetery Road

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. This was a follow-up from last month. Deputy Chief Boudreau again stated that he could not pull data from the speed trailer due to server issues. ***This item was kept in committee until next month.***

5. Old Milton Road (backside of Dunkin Donuts)-Safety Concerns

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said DPW has been working on a plan that the City could implement with striping and marking in the public right-of-way. Once the plan is presented to the management of Dunkin Donuts, DPW will attempt to get the markings down on the pavement before winter; otherwise the striping and marking will need to wait until spring. ***This item was kept in committee until next month.***

6. Pleasant Street-Requesting a Barrier by the Railroad Tracks

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. He stated that he had talked to Councilor Lachapelle regarding this request. There are two concrete barriers that already exist at the end of Pleasant Street. Councilor Rice said the City does not own the railroad tracks and something would have to be coordinated with the railroad company. Mr. Bezanson reiterated that it is not the City's right-of-way. Councilor Hamann said there is not much that can be done with this. Mr. Bezanson said the barriers were designed to prevent vehicles from ending up on the tracks not to prohibit any pedestrian movement. Councilor Rice said that the Police Department is already working hard, but maybe random patrols throughout the day could be done. Deputy Chief Boudreau did say it was private property and that the railroad company does call them often when they see activity in the area. This is an area of concern for the Police Department; there is a lot of foot traffic and they do monitor the tracks. Councilor Hamann said it seems like the police are already doing what they can in the area. Deputy Chief did say he would follow up with the officers that monitor this area and will have them pay close attention to Pleasant Street area in particular.

7. Chamberlain/Franklin Street Intersection-Requesting "Do Not Block Intersection" Sign

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Brian Brown is a crossing guard at the Chamberlain/Franklin Street Intersection for the school. He is concerned about

the intersection for when parents and school buses are waiting for the school to open, blocking through traffic in the intersection (vehicles that are not waiting for school, including emergency vehicles). He is requesting a sign or painted box in the roadway "Do Not Block Intersection". Councilor Hamann said this seems like a similar problem to the problem by the McClellan School. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he agrees with Councilor Hamann; there is more excessive traffic due to the pandemic. More parents are bringing their kids to school. He said it should be common knowledge not to block an intersection; some think they can make it and then end up blocking the intersection. Councilor Rice suggested painting "Do Not Block Intersection" on the pavement like in front of the driveway to the new Citizens Bank on North Main Street. Mr. Bezanson said the situation on North Main Street is a completely appropriate use of a "Do Not Block" box as it is an approach to a signal and traffic stopping for red lights will have a potential to block a driveway. The Chamberlain and Franklin Street Intersection is a four-way stop. Typically, treatment in an intersection is to put a white box and to have a sign stating "Do Not Block Intersection"; however, this is usually implemented when stop signs appear on the side streets and a traffic signal could back up traffic through the intersection. Because the Chamberlain/Franklin intersection is a four-way stop, Mr. Bezanson stated that he wouldn't recommend doing anything in this area. Councilor Rice said there is an issue with traffic blocking intersection. He says it's a problem that needs to be addressed. Councilor Hamann said it is taking place about 20 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes in the afternoon during school day; he said with a four-way stop it is just common sense not to go through if you can't get all the way across. Councilor Belken said she agrees with Chair Hamann about the four-way stop; don't go through it if you can't fit without blocking the intersection. Councilor Hutchinson said there is a four-way stop; it should be pretty obvious what to do and if we go ahead and put a sign or painted box here, we are setting a precedent for other areas like this. No action taken.

8. Church Street/Route 125 Intersection-Safety Concerns

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. A resident of Church Street sent an email to the City Manager's office saying they have lived at 67 Church Street for 25 years and have had experienced many dangerous accidents at the intersection. Many are landing onto their property causing great concern when they are out mowing their lawn. There are 2 stop signs that are ignored by the majority of vehicles passing through. At least 10 times a day they are hearing horns blowing then they wait for the crash. They are requesting jersey barriers or a guardrail to protect them on their property. Councilor Rice asked Deputy Chief Boudreau if the Police Department had any data related to whether motorists are stopping at the stop signs in this area. Deputy Chief Boudreau said they don't have any data regarding whether motorists are stopping at the stop signs; most of the accidents are at the Route 125 intersection not back at the stop sign on Church Street. He can get data and bring it back to the Committee next month. He stated there have been some serious accidents at the Route 125/Church intersection over the years. He said the speed limit is 50 mph so they are traveling in the 55 mph range. Councilor Rice asked Mr. Bezanson what kind of work would have to be done to

put a blinking light in the area to warn drivers coming off from Church Street. Mr. Bezanson said they have a meeting scheduled with NHDOT in early November to go over some concerns with intersections within the City. They have an opportunity to bring this up; and, if it is not already on the list, can be added to the conversation on this day. He will plan to report back next month regarding NHDOT's reaction to what it would take or potentially other recommended safety mitigation ideas for the area. Councilor Hutchinson asked Mr. Bezanson if he could share with the Committee what the intersections with safety concerns are. Mr. Bezanson said they are using the Transportation Master Plan as a guide and he can forward a list to the Committee and will report back next month after they meet with NHDOT. ***This item was kept in committee until next month.***

9. Discussion Regarding "15 Minute Parking" signs Downtown

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Councilor Rice said he brought this up to the Economic Development team since the outdoor dining will end soon because of the cold weather. He is looking to get signs placed for 15 minute parking, 1 out on North Main Street and 2 or 4 in the Union Street municipal parking lot, so they can capitalize on the "to go" aspect of dining out since there won't be any outdoor dining in the coming months. Councilor Belken likes the idea, thinks that 20 to 30 minutes might be better than 15 minutes, for those visiting other businesses not necessarily "to go" dining, but still planning on using a parking space for a short duration. Councilor Rice said they were thinking a 15 minute parking spot on North Main Street and 30 minute spaces in the municipal parking lot. Councilor Hutchinson likes the idea and wants to know what the enforcement policy would look like. Deputy Chief Boudreau said anything you put a time limit on needs to be monitored; currently the parking enforcement officer works part-time either 28 or 30 hours per week Monday through Friday. In the scope of all calls this would be a lower priority call; it wouldn't be a top priority call. Enforcement on off hours would be low priority. Councilor Hutchinson asked Deputy Chief Boudreau what the violation was for violating a parking time limit. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he believes the ticket is fifteen dollars. Councilor Rice asked Councilor Chief Boudreau if the enforcement officer works 8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday. Deputy Chief Boudreau said the officer's hours are generally 8:30 AM to 4 PM. Councilor Rice said he was in favor of extending one spot for a "to go" spot to help the small businesses, especially out back in the municipal parking lot. He doesn't think much emphasis would need to be placed on enforcement if 4 spots were designated out back in the municipal parking lot for 30 minute parking, but understands and respects Councilor Hutchinson's opinion on enforcement. Councilor Hamann said his biggest enforcement concern would have to be at dinner time in the evening. Councilor Hutchinson said he likes the idea, but it is only as effective as far as it can be enforced. Councilor Rice will follow up with Ms. Marsh. ***This item was kept in committee until next month.***

10. E911 Update

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Assistant Chief Wilder said they had a couple of things take place. Effective last Friday, two addresses on Tebbetts Road

were changed; #41 and #35 were changed to #1 and #15 Blaine Court with the consent of the owners. The Rochester Neck Road changes will take effect on November 2nd.

11. Emergency Management

Assistant Chief Wilder said there was nothing to report this month regarding emergency management.

12. COVID-19 Statistics Update

Assistant Chief Wilder said currently in the City of Rochester there are 6 confirmed COVID-19 cases, statewide there are 9,828 since the beginning of the pandemic and the number of current cases is 824, with 16 of them being hospitalized. Rapid testing has been opened up for first responders; they can get test results in 10 to 15 minutes. Councilor Rice asked Assistant Chief Wilder if they had any City staff out on COVID-19 leave or showing any symptoms. Assistant Chief Wilder said he could only speak for the Fire Department and that they have 0 confirmed cases and no one out on COVID-19 leave. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that PD did not have anyone out on COVID-19 leave at this time; they did have a situation with an employee who contracted COVID-19 off duty and did have some employees quarantined for safety precautions, but are all back to work now and the employee that had COVID-19 is doing fine.

13. Other

Crosswalk Signage on Portland Street near the School

Mr. Bezanson said that DPW received a request from the School Department to place signage on Portland Street in the area of the School Street crosswalk. He stated that this was one of the areas that was updated last year with all the school zones signs. DPW has placed one of the portable pedestrian signs at this crosswalk and hopefully this will alleviate some of the concerns in the area.

North Main Street Municipal Lot - One-Way Traffic

Mr. Bezanson said that they are preparing to advertise for bids the rapid rectangular flashing beacon (RRFB) and lighting project for North Main Street. In conjunction with this project and the Citizens Bank redevelopment of the lot adjacent to the municipal lot, DPW is proposing one-way traffic flow through the municipal lot across the street from the Lilac City Grille. The driveway closest to the bridge would be the entrance and the exit would be from the driveway closest to the new Citizens Bank. DPW would install appropriate signage and paint directional arrows in the lot. The City's design consultants for the RRFB project agree that this would be a safety improvement for the area. Councilor Hamann said he thinks that this a good idea and that this is how he uses the parking lot now. Councilor Rice said that this is also how he uses the lot and would be in favor of it. Deputy Chief Boudreau asked whether DPW looked at the entrance and exit in the opposite direction, stating that vehicles making a left turn into the lot could block pedestrian traffic in the crosswalk. Mr. Bezanson said that is one drawback. Exiting the lot further from the bridge would be a benefit; exiting and not making a

right hand turn into the crosswalk is another. The RRFB project will add lighting and a flashing beacon to increase safety at the crosswalk.

Councilor Rice made a motion to follow the recommendation of DPW to make the North Main Street municipal parking lot one-way access with traffic entering in the northern driveway closest to the bridge and exiting from the driveway closest to the new Citizens Bank. Councilor Belken seconded the motion. A Roll Call vote was taken on the motion.

Councilor Hutchinson Ward 1 Yes

Councilor Rice Ward 5 Yes

Councilor Belken Ward 2 Yes

Councilor Hamann Ward 5 Yes

Parking Tickets-Downtown

Councilor Rice asked Deputy Chief Boudreau what page of the Police Department's monthly report contained the amount of parking tickets were issued in the downtown or how many times the parking enforcement officer was out on the street. Deputy Chief Boudreau said it is not something that PD typically tracks in the comstat report, but that he could work on getting some data on that though.

"15 Minute Parking Sign"

Jennifer Marsh joined the meeting, apologized for being late to the meeting, but stated that she was available to answer any questions regarding the 15 minute parking sign proposal. Councilor Rice said to Ms. Marsh that the primary question was how any signage downtown would be enforced. He said he would go over the information with her off line and asked if she had anything to add. Ms. Marsh said that Councilor Rice and the City Manager reached out and asked her to get information from the businesses downtown about this. Some of the businesses wanted the signage; some didn't want it located near their business. Some also raised the question of enforcement. Ms. Marsh mentioned that some responsibility for the enforcement of these signs could be on the businesses themselves. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that they do receive calls from businesses regarding the two hour parking limits that are currently in place. Further parking restrictions could be difficult to enforce even if called by the businesses because other calls, such as domestic or accidents, would take higher priority and it could be more than 15 or 30 minutes before an officer could respond.

Councilor Hamann adjourned the meeting at 6:51PM.

These minutes were respectfully submitted by Laura J. Miller, Admin Assistant II