

Londonderry Town Council Minutes
Monday, October 16, 2023
7:00 PM
Moose Hill Council Chambers

Meeting Link: <http://173.166.17.35/CablecastPublicSite/show/12339?channel=4>

Attendance: Present: Chairman John Farrell; Councilors Ted Combes and Ron Dunn; Town Manager Michael Malaguti; Assistant Town Manager Kellie Caron

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Farrell called the Town Council meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge was led by Chairman Farrell. This was followed by a moment of silence led by Chairman Farrell for the safety of the men and women of the United States who have been deployed to support the actions in the Middle East.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Farrell opened public comment.

Name: Doug Thomas

Address: 143 Mammoth Road

Mr. Thomas expressed his gratitude to the Londonderry Police Department for allowing him to ride along with Officer Reitze recently, and for their professionalism. He thanked Officer Reitze for the work she did when he was riding with her.

Name: Robert Lebreux

Address: 76 Hall Road

Mr. Lebreux thanked the Town Council, the Londonderry Traffic Safety Committee, Public Works, and Engineering for striping Mammoth Road.

Chairman Farrell closed public comment.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ordinance #2023-04 – Amending the Fee Schedule for the Issuance of Permits by the Londonderry Fire Department

Councilor Combes moved to open the public hearing. Councilor Dunn seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes

Ron Dunn	Yes
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Motion passed 3-0-0.

Division Chief Brian Johnson appeared before the Council to present a revised fee schedule for the issuance of permits by the Fire Department. The first reading of this ordinance was waived at the last meeting. This updates the fee structure to bring it into line with that of other communities. In many cases, the current fees do not cover the associated costs. The fees have not been updated since 2008.

Councilor Combes asked for examples of the fees that have increased. Chief Johnson listed a number of items, such as inspections and permits, as well as tasks that they do not charge for.

Chairman Farrell asked for public input; there was none.

Councilor Combes moved to approve Ordinance #2023-04. Council Dunn seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes
Ron Dunn	Yes

Motion passed 3-0-0.

Ordinance #2023-05 – An Amendment to Londonderry Zoning Ordinance, Building Code Amendments, Section 9 Reflecting the Adoption of the 2018 Editions of the International Codes

Ms. Caron explained the purpose of this amendment is to update specific local regulations to coincide with the adoption of the 2018 editions of the International Codes. This is in accordance with the state building code. There are no substantive changes; this is merely updating sections referenced and the year.

Chairman Farrell asked for public input; there was none.

Councilor Dunn moved to approve Ordinance #2023-05. Council Combes seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes
Ron Dunn	Yes

Motion passed 3-0-0.

Councilor Combes moved to close the public hearing. Councilor Dunn seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes
Ron Dunn	Yes

Motion passed 3-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Elections update from the Supervisors of the Checklist

Kristin Grages, chairman of the Supervisors of the Checklist, appeared before the Council to present an update on the work they are doing to update the voter checklist. In 2021, they participated in the statewide reconciliation that occurs every ten years, where anyone who hasn't voted in the last four years is removed from the voter rolls. Approximately 4,000 voters were removed who were no longer eligible. Only 10 to 15 of those individuals have re-registered. They also have accessed permanent change of address information from the U.S. Postal Service, which allows them to remove voters who are not eligible.

She reported that last week was the last opportunity for voters to change their party before the presidential primary this winter.

Councilor Combes asked how many new voters have registered. Grages said they have seen significant new registrations. He asked about the total number of registered voters and Grages guessed it is probably around 14,000 or 15,000.

Grages noted at the last presidential election, there were 17 supervisors registering more than 1,100 people to vote on the same day. She also outlined the other duties and responsibilities of the three full-time supervisors.

Malaguti said he is impressed by Grages knowledge of state election laws and her professionalism. He has full confidence in the conduct of Londonderry's elections, due to the work of Grages and her colleagues.

Grages expressed their gratitude for the collaboration and support from the Council, the School Board, Town officials, and the Board of Elections. She encouraged all residents to vote.

Authorization to submit Drinking Water & Groundwater Trust Fund Application for Water Infrastructure Improvements

Chairman Farrell noted the Town has been working for over a year with DES to resolve the water issue in town.

Mr. Malaguti appeared before the Council to present an update on the work that has been done to bring public water to Londonderry, including warrant articles on water infrastructure investments and improvements, and applications for state grant funding. He described the details involved in improving the infrastructure as well as supporting the full buildout of Londonderry's water system in the future.

He is seeking the Council's authorization to proceed with a grant application to the Drinking and Groundwater Trust Fund to partially fund this project. He clarified this is not a request for approval of a particular plan or an obligation to spend money. He anticipates there will be changes to this project; this is a proposal to "get their foot in the door."

Chairman Farrell clarified this is not the \$250 million water system the Town has been discussing; this is Day One of the entire project. There will be presentations in public forms in the future regarding additional plans and additional funding.

Councilor Dunn moved to approve the funding application for New Hampshire Drinking and Groundwater Advisory Commission. Councilor Combes seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes
Ron Dunn	Yes

Motion passed 3-0-0.

Order #2023-14 – The Expenditure of Maintenance Trust Funds for the Leach Library Roof Repair

David Wholley, Director of Public Works and Municipal Facilities, appeared before the Council to discuss a permanent solution to the continuing issues with the flat rubber membrane roof over the library. An RFP was issued and a vendor chosen. He is seeking \$145,000, which covers the repairs, a bond, and contingency money to cover any unanticipated issues experienced during the process. The work should begin at the end of the month and take approximately two weeks.

Councilor Dunn asked if the work will be warrantied and Wholley verified that it will be. Wholley stressed the impeccable references of this vendor.

Council Combes asked about the state of other Town building roofs. Wholley said there are some concerns at Station 2 and while there are no other issues, the buildings are aging.

Councilor Dunn asked about the balance of the maintenance trust funds. Finance Director Justin Campo said once this project is fully expended, there will be between \$250,000 and \$260,000 in the fund, pending other outstanding authorized projects. Councilor Combes asked about the projected winter spenddown. Wholley predicted an expenditure of \$40,000 to \$50,000.

Councilor Dunn moved to accept order #2023-14, Expenditure of Maintenance Trust Funds.
Councilor Combes seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes
Ron Dunn	Yes

Motion passed 3-0-0.

Resolution #2023-18 – Amending the Elderly Exemption Policy

The exemption program grants a benefit amount, which is effectively reduced by the impact of the revaluation that occurred this year. It is recommended that the elderly exemption amount for persons ages 65 to 74 be increased to \$175,000, for ages 75 to 79 to \$225,000, and for ages 80 or older to \$300,000. By examining the change in value for the properties that are impacted by this, these increases are about 23% per category, which is about the same increase in value as the Town overall.

Resolution #2023-19 – Amending the Disability Exemption Policy

The disability exemption is set at the amount of the lowest age category for the elderly exemption program.

Resolution #2023-20 – Readopting the Property Tax Credit Provided to Veterans

This is a readoption that has been recommended by the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration due to a change to the qualification statute. This readoption is necessary to maintain the credit at the level it had previously been adopted at.

Councilor Dunn asked what the exemption costs the Town. Mr. Malaguti noted that it costs the Town nothing, as an exemption reallocates the tax burden. It does not change the amount of tax that is being collected.

Councilor Combes moved to approve Resolution #2023-18, 19, and 20. Councilor Dunn seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes
Ron Dunn	Yes

Motion passed 3-0-0.

ARPA Request – Upgraded first aid kits for Town Hall

Administrative Support Coordinator Kirsten Hildonen noted at the Joint Loss Management Committee Meeting in July, it was proposed to enhance the medical supplies in Town Hall. With the help of Fire Department staff, it has been decided to place a trauma kit on each floor of Town Hall. She is requesting \$505.56 of ARPA funds to purchase these supplies.

Councilor Combes moved to approve the ARPA fund request. Councilor Dunn seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes
Ron Dunn	Yes

Motion passed 3-0-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Town Treasurer Warrant Article Discussion

Mr. Malaguti said the Council requested that he research whether a background check can be legally performed on an appointed position. He said the answer appears to be yes, as long as the position involves the handling of money.

Mr. Campo clarified comments made by the Town's treasurer at the last meeting regarding deterrents and safeholds that she instituted to protect the Town's finances. He expressed his concern that the current qualifications to hold the treasurer position are not adequate, given the size of the Town's budget. He noted that the new treasurer could institute new procedures that are not as stringent as the current restrictions. He believes that if the position is appointed, a background check can be conducted and the applicant's resume and qualifications can be considered. Mr. Campo listed neighboring towns that have appointed treasurers, many of whom also hold the position of Town Finance Director, Deputy Finance Director, Controller, or Accountant.

Chairman Farrell asked if Campo's professional recommendation is that the Town move forward with a charter amendment to the ballot recommending the Town treasurer be an appointed position. Campo agreed and noted that if something goes awry, he believes it is easier to remove or freeze the ability of an appointed official quicker than with an elected official. Malaguti will obtain legal clarification of this.

Councilor Dunn asked if the person should be someone from outside Town Hall. Campo believes it should be someone from the Finance Department, to avoid duplication of efforts as well as the fact that these individuals are hired to do this work.

Malaguti said the next step in the process would be to hold a public hearing. The Council agreed to make this decision at the next meeting, due to Council members being missing.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilor Combes moved to approve the October 2, 2023, Town Council minutes as presented. Councilor Dunn seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes
Ron Dunn	Yes

Motion passed 3-0-0.

Councilor Combes moved to approve the October 2, 2023, Unsealed Non-Public Town Council minutes as presented. Councilor Dunn seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes
Ron Dunn	Yes

Motion passed 3-0-0.

APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

Liaison Reports

Chairman Farrell attended the Lions Hall presentation. He has asked the Town Manager and the Public Works director to present a phased understanding to the Council of what is and is not possible.

Town Manager Report

There was no Town Manager report.

Assistant Town Manager Caron made her report.

MEETING SCHEDULE

- November 4, 2023: Budget Kick-off workshop, Moose Hill Council Chambers, 9:00 a.m.
- November 6, 2023: Moose Hill Council Chambers; 7:00 p.m.
- November 20, 2023: Moose Hill Council Chambers; 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Combes moved to adjourn. Councilor Dunn seconded the motion.

John Farrell	Yes
Ted Combes	Yes
Ron Dunn	Yes

Motion passed 3-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Beth Hanggeli.