

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2009, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

The meeting was called to order by Assistant Mayor Austin at 6:30 p.m.

Members of the Council present were:

At-Large Councilor Thomas (Toby) Batchelder, III  
At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond  
Assistant Mayor Andrew Austin  
At-Large Councilor Kyle Messier  
Ward I Councilor Christopher Lewis  
Ward III Councilor Jeffrey Goff (Late)

Absent:

At-Large Councilor Robert Picard  
Mayor Deborah Cutts  
Ward II Councilor Paul LaCasse

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager  
Jane Taylor, City Solicitor

#### **MAYOR'S NOTES**

Mr. Austin said Mayor Cutts was still recovering and that Mr. Goff would be late.

#### Stevens High School Student Council Update

None

#### Councilor Plaques

A plaque was presented to departing Councilor Batchelder. Messrs. Picard and LaCasse were absent.

#### **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

**A motion was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Raymond to accept the minutes of the November 5, 12, 14 and 19, 2009, City Council meetings.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 5-0.**

## **APPOINTMENT TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

None

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### Woven Label LLC / Parking Improvement Project Update (Economic Development Community Development Block Grant) – Public Hearing

Mr. Santagate said a public hearing is required for this grant. This grant is done. It is a \$500,000 CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) grant for the parking garage and was tied to creation of jobs. The Common Man was required to create 33.5 positions as part of the grant. They have created 39 or more positions which meet the requirement. No vote is required, but a public hearing is.

Mr. Austin opened the public hearing and asked if anyone wanted to make comments on this grant. No one spoke. He closed it.

Mr. Santagate read these bullet points into the record.

#### Woven Label LLC/Sawtooth Parking Garage

- In June of 2007, the Planning and Development office requested approval for a CDBG grant application for funds to help finance proposed parking improvements.
- The grant was submitted on behalf of Woven Label LLC for economic development and tied to job creation.
- June 13, 2007, the Council voted 9 to 0 to submit CDBG application for the Mill District parking improvement.
- Woven Label LLC signed a Beneficiary Employment Agreement (BECA) to create 33.5 new permanent full time equivalent positions.
- Of those new positions, 60% will be filled by persons of low to moderate income.
- Woven Label LLC has created those positions.
- The Grant completion date is December 31, 2009.

### Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Agreement

Mary Walter, Finance Director, said we've been negotiating this a long time. In the last contract, we paid \$18,000 to get language to protect the city and we didn't want to lose that. Comcast wanted a 15-year contract and the City wanted 5. We ended up with a seven-year contract with a three-year renewal. Technology is changing so we don't want to be locked in for a long time. It is a non-exclusive agreement, so another provider could come in.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, said Representative Ray Gagnon is sponsoring a Bill that has to do with cable access; he has submitted Legislative Service Request 2204. Mr. Folta wanted to make the

Council aware. He mentioned the dispute Comcast had with the City over tax assessments and he figured it must have been resolved. He said on page 28 of the contract is the word “sunshine.” He talked about references to proprietary information in the agreement. He noted not all Claremonters have cable access. He said it bothered him that Comcast wanted the City to be an accomplice; if someone tries to get proprietary information, the City will help stop them.

**A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Batchelder to authorize the City Manager or his designees to enter into a Cable Television Franchise Agreement between the City of Claremont and Comcast of Connecticut/Georgia/Massachusetts/New Hampshire/New York/North Carolina/Virginia/ Vermont, LLC for an initial term of seven (7) years, beginning January 12, 2010 and ending at midnight on January 11, 2017, and a single renewal term of three (3) years, ending on January 11, 2020.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 5-0.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Ordinance 512 Speed Limit – First Reading

Mr. Austin read the Explanation of Proposed Action. The purpose of this proposed change is to authorize limitation of speed limits on certain streets, as permitted by state law. Currently, the speed limits on all City streets are as set forth in RSA 265:60. However, state law, RSA 265:63, also allows the local community to vary these speed limits where appropriate and on a case-by-case basis. The Claremont City Code currently does not have a mechanism for approval of local changes to speed limits on City streets. The proposed ordinance will add provisions to the Code to enable the Council to adopt local speed limits. The proposal also includes limitation of speed limits on Puckershire Drive, Spofford Street and Water Street by decreasing the speed limit on these three streets from 30 to 25 miles per hour.

Enactment of this Ordinance will provide for local control of speed limits on City streets, as permitted by state law. It will also reduce speed limits on Puckershire Drive, Spofford Street and Water Street to 25 miles per hour. The proposed ordinance is recommended by the Traffic Advisory Committee.

Police Chief Alex Scott said the Traffic Advisory Committee had received complaints about the speed limit on Water Street. RSA 265.63 allows the City to lower speed limits. Speed limits set by the state in the urban area are 30 mph. For some streets, 30 mph is too fast. After an in-house engineering or traffic review the City is allowed to lower the speed limit to 25 mph (the lowest statute allows us to go, other than school zones which is 20 mph). There have been 20 reported accidents on Water Street from January 1, 2008, through October 21, 2009. This is a short street with high vehicular traffic plus lots of businesses. Spofford Street has had only one accident, but it is a narrow road; the road condition is very poor; and there are a number of driveway entrances on that road. On Puckershire Drive, residents made the request to lower the speed limit. It has gone from pavement to gravel/dirt and is used as a cut through between Sugar River Drive and Chestnut Street.

Mr. Raymond asked if these are the only three streets being looked at. Chief Scott said currently, yes, but there are other streets that need to be addressed i.e. Pleasant and Broad Streets) and so he'll be back with other streets.

**A motion was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Ms. Messier to adopt Ordinance 512 Speed Limit on first reading.**

Ms. Messier said it is a good idea and she would like to be able to reduce speed limits to 20 mph.

**Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 5-0.**

Resolution 2009-18 Encumbrances – Public Hearing

416	Planning	Employee Training	\$	1,000
416	Planning	Website & Brochure Updates	\$	4,000
416	Planning	Building Repairs	\$	2,000
416	Planning	Code /Master Plan Upgrades	\$	10,000
421	Police	Park Patrol	\$	11,000
421	Police	Establish capital reserve for future accreditation costs	\$	4,000
482	GCC	Dehumidifier Repairs	\$	6,000
482	GCC	Safety Upgrades	\$	5,000
			Total to Encumber	\$ 43,000

Ms. Walter said the Police Department had asked to withdraw their two requests due to upcoming changes and the year end money will not be available. The new bottom line for this will be \$28,000. She noted the website will be updated to meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements.

<b>416</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Employee Training</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>416</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Website &amp; Brochure Updates</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>4,000</b>
<b>416</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Building Repairs</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>416</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Code /Master Plan Upgrades</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>482</b>	<b>GCC</b>	<b>Dehumidifier Repairs</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>6,000</b>
<b>482</b>	<b>GCC</b>	<b>Safety Upgrades</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>5,000</b>
			<b>Total to Encumber</b>	<b>\$ 28,000</b>

Mr. Santagate talked about the earlier budget approval of the approximately \$73,000 from Fund Balance that was to be used for the 2010 salary and benefits for the returning National Guard

employee. The employee has resigned his position with the City, so we feel we have fulfilled our obligations. The money will not be used and will be returned to Fund Balance on December 31st.

Mr. Lewis asked Police Chief Alex Scott about the \$11,000 for Park Patrol and the ability to police the parks next summer. Chief Scott said that amount should be covered by grant money which will allow him to fund the Park Patrol. Mr. Lewis asked about the money for the accreditation. Chief Scott said there is money in the current budget. His plan was to start saving for the "on-site" in 2012. He hopes to start saving next year as it will cost \$8,000 to \$12,000 total.

**A motion was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Raymond to adopt Resolution 2009-18 Encumbrances.**

Mr. Lewis read the resolution into the record.

Assistant Mayor Austin opened the public hearing. No one spoke. He closed it.

**Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 5-0.**

Acceptance of Restricted Donation of \$265.74 from the Family of William R. Roberts

Ms. Walter said that Susan Brewer's dad (William R. Roberts) passed away in 2007. He had a passion for the City of Claremont and the eagle. He did the work on the replica eagle that sits over the front of City Hall. The family wants the donation to go to the cleaning and maintenance of that eagle.

**A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Batchelder to accept a restricted donation of \$265.74 from the family of William R. Roberts with thanks.**

Mr. Raymond said he remembered Bill Roberts and he was adamant about that eagle. Mr. Raymond thanked the family for doing this.

**Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 5-0.**

Acceptance of \$1,000 Training Grant from Police Standards and Training Roger Williams University First Line Supervisor School

Chief Scott said this is an ongoing grant that is offered throughout the state. It is applied for when an officer attends the training. Corporal Emily Binder attended the training.

**A motion was made by Mr. Batchelder and seconded by Mr. Raymond to accept \$1,000 Training Grant from Police Standards and Training Roger Williams University First Line Supervisor School with thanks.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 5-0.**

Shugah Valley Snow Riders Trail Permission

Mr. Santagate said this is an annual request to use trails on city property.

Roger Wright, Ward 3, said with this permission, the City is covered by a \$2 million liability insurance policy. The Shugah Valley Snow Riders Club has 600 members. There are about 65 miles of trails within Claremont. The trails interconnect from the Massachusetts border to Canada and snowmobile riders bring \$1.5 million into state revenue.

At 7:12 p.m., Jeff Goff arrived.

**A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Batchelder to authorize the city manager, or his designees, to take such actions as may be necessary to issue a written Snowmobile Trail Permission, pursuant to RSA 215-A:15 to Shugah Valley Snow Riders, Inc. for a period of one year. This permission is for use of designated City-owned land and class VI highways, which list is to be included with the Use Permission Form and is subject to all City and state rules and regulations pertaining to use of snowmobiles on public property.**

Ms. Messier asked if there were any changes in the trails. Mr. Wright said there is no change to city-owned property. There is a change to CDA (Claremont Development Authority) property adding a trail that connects Grissom Lane and River Road that makes an access to the T-bird store. They have gotten permission from the CDA for the trail and they anticipate putting it in within the next few months.

**Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 5-0, with Mr. Goff abstaining since he was not here for the debate.**

Acceptance of Crossing Signal Valued at \$10,000 at Market Basket from Sullivan County ATV Club

Bill Cote, President, Sullivan County ATV (SCATV) Club, said this project creates a safe crossing across Washington Street and was started four years ago. Pedestals are in place and when the button is pressed, all lights go to red so pedestrians and ATVs can cross safely. The Club is donating the signal and tonight is asking the City to take possession of the signal. The signal has been installed. They worked with Police Chief Scott and Fire Chief Peter Chase on its installation.

Mr. Santagate read a letter from SCATV describing the signal and the purpose for putting it in (safer crossing).

Chief Chase said the Fire Department is responsible for traffic signs and certain criteria have to be met which SCATV did. There will be a No Right Turn on Red sign posted as you come out of the Market Basket parking lot toward Newport. He appreciated the donation.

Mr. Lewis thanked SCATV and Ms. Messier appreciated the perseverance.

**A motion was made by Mr. Batchelder and seconded by Mr. Raymond to accept the crossing signal valued at \$10,000 at Market Basket from Sullivan County ATV Club with great thanks.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 6-0.**

### **CITIZEN'S FORUM**

No one spoke.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Austin passed out a letter from Mr. Santagate to Governor Lynch about school building aid. Mr. Santagate said \$500,000 has been expended for architectural fees for the proposed Stevens High School renovation. Stevens High School's accreditation is at stake. The letter is a request not to suspend school building aid. He was told there is no guarantee, but the odds of suspending all school aid are not great. The committee voted not to do that. They will explore all options. We need to keep the pressure on through Senator Odell and our Representatives. We can't afford to have the money withdrawn. Claremont has not accessed that fund in many years. It would be unfair to not be able to use it.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND DIRECTIVES**

Assistant Mayor Austin had previously asked about Myrtle Street parking. Mr. Santagate said the Traffic Advisory Committee voted to post No Parking signs in that area. Public Works Director Bruce Temple said there is a business on Myrtle Street and that creates an issue with the parking. The signs have been ordered and the Traffic Advisory Committee will determine where the signs will be located.

Mr. Santagate talked about the meeting this Friday at Claremont Savings Bank, to be led by River Valley Community College, to talk about jobs. The City will attend. Concrete suggestions will be forwarded to the White House. These meetings are being held all around the country. President Obama has talked about giving incentives to companies to hire. We work with the Congressional Delegation on the stimulus package and other grant opportunities for the City. The administration is working on programs that may be approved through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Senator Shaheen has earmarked \$500,000 for a project on Main Street, from the diner to the bridge by Esersky's, to separate the water and sewer system and then to fix the sidewalk and street. The rough estimate is \$2 million. If we can get CDBG money, the project may be doable. He will let the Council know what we are applying for.

Mr. Austin asked if the public is invited to the meeting on jobs. Mr. Santagate will verify and let Mr. Austin know. Mr. Santagate welcomes input from the public. A skilled workforce is critical and he has asked Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center and River Valley Community College to take the lead in the technical training that is needed. He wants to get Claremont tied in to that effort.

Ms. Messier asked about getting the plaques to absent Councilors Picard and LaCasse. Mr. Santagate said we will call them.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### Master Plan Committee

None

## **CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL**

None

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**At 7:41 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Batchelder to adjourn.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell  
Clerk to the Council