

Council Meeting

January 6, 2016

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The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Wednesday, January 6, 2016, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

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

OATH OF OFFICE FOR COUNCILORS, MAYOR AND ASSISTANT MAYOR

Gwen Melcher, City Clerk, administered the oath of office for the Mayor, Assistant Mayor and Councilors.

Members of the Council present were:

Ward I Councilor Carolyn Towle
Ward II Councilor Scott Pope
At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond
Assistant Mayor Victor Bergeron
Mayor Charlene Lovett
At-Large Councilor Allen Damren
At-Large Councilor Bruce Temple
Ward III Councilor Nicholas Koloski
At-Large Councilor John Simonds

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager
Jane Taylor, City Solicitor

NEW BUSINESS

Overview

Mayor Lovett said the top three priorities are to identify Council's primary goals, establish a finance committee and establish a policy committee. She said Mr. Bergeron handed out an example of a finance committee template. She asked Councilors to think about whether or not they would be interested in sitting on that and the policy committee.

Mayor Lovett said there are 15 major items that are to be addressed by the Council:

1. Economic Development
 - Downtown area
 - Expansion of tax base
 - Regaining lost valuation of City
2. Establishing a search committee for a new City Manager
3. Meeting with the School Board

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- Exchange information impacting City as a whole
- Explore partnership opportunities
- 4. Downtown TIFD
- 5. Infrastructure
 - Water and Sewer Rates
 - Roads
 - Sidewalks
- 6. Tax Deeded Property
- 7. Abandoned Property
- 8. City Owned Property
- 9. Current Use Property
- 10. Union Contracts
 - Negotiations underway with Local Firefighter Union
 - Negotiations with other unions upcoming in 2016
 - Merit Employee Contract
- 11. 2017 Budget
- 12. Charter Review
- 13. Ordinances
 - Enclosed fire pits in residential areas
 - Raising small farm animals in residential areas
 - Waste management
 - Tax Exemptions/Credits
- 14. Boards and Commissions
- 15. ATV Trail Waiver

Mr. Santagate said the list is pretty comprehensive. It's a good starting point.

Mayor Lovett suggested meeting on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month and her intention is to end the meetings no later than 9:30 p.m. Ms. Towle-yes; Mr. Pope-yes; Mr. Raymond asked about the second meetings being workshops. Mayor Lovett said the intention is to control the number of items on the second meeting in order to have in-depth conversations; Mr. Bergeron-yes; Mr. Damren-yes; Mr. Temple asked about the 9:30 p.m. finish time and asked if citizens' comments will be limited or will citizens be allowed to speak on every topic and still end at 9:30 p.m. Mayor Lovett asked that the Council determine how to do that today; Mr. Koloski-yes; and Mr. Simonds-yes.

Mayor Lovett said it is time to review Council Rules. She would like Council to consider moving the City Manager's Report after Mayor Notes. She asked Councilors to bring ideas for Council Rule changes in writing to the January 27th meeting.

There was a discussion about Councilor thoughts regarding citizens' comments (i.e. time allowed, speak once or multiple times on one subject, will back and forth conversation be allowed). Mayor Lovett asked Councilors to bring ideas to the January 27th meeting.

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Mayor Lovett asked Mr. Simonds to be the Sergeant-at-Arms and he accepted. He said he will give speakers a one minute warning during citizen comments.

Mayor Lovett talked about persons with mobility issues. She said she talked to the CCTV (Claremont Community Television) people and was told there are microphones in the ceiling, so those who need to can stay seated and still ask questions. Council agreed that was acceptable.

Mayor Lovett asked Mr. Santagate to look into getting headphones for hearing impaired individuals and getting an audio system in Council Chambers so those in the room can hear the speakers.

Mayor Lovett said the City is in union negotiations with the Fire Department. She requested a “non-meeting” on January 13 at 6 p.m. to brief the Council. She said the negotiating team is made up of the City Manager, Attorney Matt Upton, Finance Director Mary Walter and Fire Chief Rick Bergeron.

Mr. Temple asked if Councilors are late, can they come in to the non-meeting. Ms. Taylor said yes.

Mayor Lovett said she will send lots of informational emails through the Council Clerk Dorée Russell to the Council. There is to be no back and forth emails.

Mr. Bergeron said in the future, non-public sessions will be held before the Council meeting instead of starting the meeting and then going into non-public.

Mr. Temple asked how Councilors can communicate with the Mayor. Ms. Taylor said that emails should be limited to time, place and manner (no substance). Comments of substance should be made in public. If there is a slip up, then it should be disclosed and circulated at the next Council meeting.

Mayor Lovett said if there are documents that Councilors want to see, they can contact Ms. Russell. Mayor Lovett talked about funding for Council training and webinars through NH Municipal Association (NHMA).

Mr. Santagate said the Council interactions with department heads should be about information, but they cannot direct employees. Department heads can answer questions that would regularly be given to the public. Information that should go to all Councilors should go through the mayor to him, or to both.

Mr. Santagate talked about a workshop versus a regular meeting. A workshop denotes a more informal meeting, but the question is does it mean Council can't vote. He said Ms. Taylor can do some research and bring the information back to Council.

Mayor Lovett said if Councilors cannot be at a meeting to let her know. She said an absent Councilor may be able phone in to the meeting, but there has to be a quorum of five Councilors present in Council Chambers.

Mr. Damren asked about discussing using a facilitator to help define goals.

Mayor Lovett talked about strategic objectives and goals from Lebanon that Bernie Folta submitted.

New Councilor Orientation/Training

Councilors were given the following documents in their packet:

- RSA 91-A
- List of Boards, Committees and Commissions
- Code of Conduct
- City Fee Schedule
- Charter
- Council Rules and Regulations
- Representatives and State Senator
- Budget
- Capital Improvements Plan
- List of Bonds
- Goals
- Strategic Planning

CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:15 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Damren and seconded by Mr. Raymond to adjourn.

Voice vote: motion carried 9-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell
Clerk to the Council