

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Wednesday, May 25, 2016, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

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

Members of the Council present were:

Ward I Councilor Carolyn Towle
Ward II Councilor Scott Pope
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

Absent:

At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager
Jane Taylor, City Solicitor
Mary Walter, Finance Director

AGENDA (CHANGES)

Move 6A to after Citizen's Forum.

CITIZEN'S FORUM

Mr. Santagate said River Valley Community College presented him with the President's Award. As part of his speech, he told the students "Labor Omnia Vincit" (Work Conquers All). It fits the students as a lot of them are older and they work, study and have families.

Margaret Hurley, Ward 2, said she was representing a number of people who are concerned about the cutting of trees at Arrowhead. She presented a copy of their signed request for a public forum. There were 42 signatures.

Mayor Lovett said a tour of Arrowhead will be scheduled after the budget process is complete and the public will be invited. No date has been set yet.

Jack Hurley, Ward 2, disagreed with the decision for the proposed sculpture. Art can help revitalize a community. He was pleased with the forum that was held at the Community Center. He hopes the public conversation continues. He would like to have a similar conversation for Arrowhead.

Trevor Bielarski, Ward 2 resident and teacher at Stevens High School, said he was born in Claremont and he thinks Claremont is architecturally beautiful. However, he appreciates its natural beauty. He hikes up Arrowhead and is opposed to the logging of Arrowhead. He referred to stumps left in Moody Park and said the view of Mount Ascutney doesn't make up for the stumps that were left.

David Messier, Ward 1, said flower planting at Opera House Square is scheduled for Saturday, June 4th, 9 a.m. to noon. He is looking for volunteers. This was started 15 years ago by the Main Street program and is now funded by the Heart of Claremont. He recognized In the Garden Greenhouse and JP Landscaping for their donations. He gave a brief background of this program. He has organized this effort since the beginning. This is his last year to organize the program and he hopes to find a volunteer to take over. He said everything Main Street did was geared toward economic development. This project has not cost the City any money. He wondered if the City should appropriate funds for it in the future and perhaps it is time for the City to take stewardship of the program. The flowers are estimated to cost \$900 wholesale, including fertilizer and the mulch is estimated at \$300.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, suggested Council read "Decision Tools for Budgetary Analysis." He said some people are wondering what's happening with the City Manager's search. He's looking for a status report and also looking for citizen input.

Mayor Lovett said there will be an RFQ update on the June 8th agenda. She said the RFQ is being issued and we will talk about that on June 8th. Once a company has been hired, then citizens will get involved.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion for Reestablishment of the Public Right-of-Way on Lower Main Street

Ms. Taylor said lower Main Street is an 1830s road that the City is trying to improve and Council's formal approval of the reestablishment of the right-of-way (ROW) is required.

Kurt Beek, Project Manager, this is to seek approval to reestablish the ROW on Main Street from Opera House Square to Union Street. A survey was done, but we were unable to locate the monuments or to locate the records. The surveyor recommended establishing a new ROW. City Staff agreed it made sense. They met with NHDOT (Department of Transportation) to discuss the process. The state also wants it done.

Ms. Taylor said this will reestablish the ROW. All abutters have been notified. It is time sensitive.

A motion was made by Mr. Simonds and seconded by Mr. Damren that

Whereas, over time, the majority of points needed to identify the original highway boundaries of Main Street from its intersection with Union Street to just west of Opera House Square have become lost, uncertain or doubtful because the majority of points needed to identify the original boundaries have disappeared; and

Whereas, pursuant to RSA 231:27, the City Council may reestablish the boundary lines, limits and locations of the City's public highways;

Now therefore, the City Council hereby authorizes the reestablishment of the highway boundary lines of a portion of Main Street from its intersection with Union Street to just west of Opera House Square.

The City Council further authorizes the City Manager or his designees to undertake all actions and execute all documents as may be required to reestablish this portion of Main Street pursuant to the procedures set forth in RSA 228:35.

The City Council further authorizes the City Manager to negotiate and enter into such easement and/or encroachment agreements with abutting property owners as may be appropriate and necessary for purposes of reestablishing the Main Street right of way, such agreements to be filed in the Sullivan County Registry of Deeds.

Voice vote: motion carried 6-0.

BUDGET

Assessing

Department Request \$221,326 City Manager Proposed \$171,326

Marlene Jordan, Assessing Technician, said there are two full-time employees in Assessing. The previous Assessing Clerk didn't need health benefits, but the current one does.

Ms. Jordan said regarding Part-Time help, there is an RFP out for cyclical work and Ms. Walter said that is under Consulting Services. Ms. Walter said \$15,000 will be encumbered for Consulting. Ms. Jordan said Consulting is used when they have a complicated commercial property to assess, for Current Use review, which hasn't been done for a while, and to issue land use change tax. Ms. Walter said over 71% of the City is in Current Use.

Ms. Jordan said for Revaluation, she will encumber money from this year. Ms. Walter said \$32,000 was encumbered from last year and an RFP is due back June 17th so that money will be spent.

There was a discussion about the cyclical review and that by doing 20% of the City each year, helps to maintain the integrity of the file.

A revaluation is done every 5 years. Mr. Santagate said that because Claremont keeps its files current, we can do the less expensive \$81,000 statistical revaluation versus the \$400,000 full revaluation. Mr. Bergeron asked if there was a reserve fund to pay for that and if not, maybe it needs to be looked at.

Welfare

Department Request \$389,648 City Manager Proposed \$359,648

Suzanne Carr, Welfare Director, said there are two full-time employees in this department. She said the biggest issue is homelessness. Rents are going up and the shelters are filled. There is no

motel to use as the one they used to use went up in flames. Lack of affordable housing is a problem. The list for subsidized housing has been closed for four years. Statewide the list is 8-10 years.

Mayor Lovett asked for a Welfare presentation at the second meeting in July. She would like an overview of housing options for the state and Claremont, and she would like to know how the lack of a residency requirement impacts Claremont and the state.

Ms. Towle would like a comparison of last year versus this year. Ms. Carr said rents are held pending housing inspections and that money sometimes carries over from one month to the next.

Mr. Bergeron would like to know the impact of the entire area (Sunapee, Newport, etc.).

Councilors asked questions for clarity.

Library

Department Request \$502,602 City Manager Proposed \$492,382

Mike Grace, Library Director, said the Capital Projects Department Request of \$6,500 was to replace the circulation and cataloging computer system. The City Manager's proposal is \$0. The system was installed in 1996. There are no funds available to carryover for this expense.

Mr. Bergeron thinks that money should be put into the budget.

Mr. Pope said this budget is too lean and he agreed with Mr. Bergeron the \$6,500 should be put in.

Ms. Towle thinks Technology & Internet needs to be increased. Mr. Grace agreed and said they are trying to digitize archival materials.

There was a discussion about encumbering unspent funds to be put into a capital reserve fund for automation.

Mr. Grace said there are 4 full-time and 6 part-time employees at the Library.

There was a discussion about replacing the automation system through fundraising and grants.

Mr. Bergeron thinks the City should fund it; no other department is asked to fundraise for computers.

Fire

Department Request \$2,668,536 City Manager Proposed \$2,602,536

Fire Chief Rick Bergeron talked about an upgrade for a Class B Foam Eductor for petroleum-based fires. Cost would be about \$8,000.

When they purchase a new engine, they will include a Class B Eductor on that engine.

Chief Bergeron talked about Engine 2 being a smaller tanker (1250 gallons) versus an average of 2,500 gallons. This smaller truck fits in the Fire Department. Rebuilding the barn behind the fire house is on the CIP. He wants to take \$49,300 to upgrade the building so Engine 2 can be in a heated building. The estimated cost to replace the barn would be about \$550,000.

Airport

Department Request \$111,241 City Manager Proposed \$109,278

There was a discussion about making the airport more profitable. Chief Bergeron talked about selling advertising on the outside of the fence.

The Chamber of Commerce is interested in holding its annual auction and dance at the airport. He hopes to make people aware of the airport. He talked about the potential for when the new terminal building is constructed.

Mayor Lovett thinks the airport isn't being leveraged as much as it could be. She said we have also talked about advertising as a revenue source for over a year and nothing has been done and it is time to move forward on it.

Policy

Department Request \$714,019 City Manager Proposed \$624,219

Mr. Santagate said Policy staff includes himself, Ms. Russell, Ms. Taylor and a part-time legal assistant. Payroll is up due to the 53-week payroll and assuming an increase in pay for the incoming City Manager.

There were questions and answers for clarity.

Outside Agency Request

Department Request \$0 City Manager Proposed \$0

Ms. Walter said there is \$1,300 in Social – Community Alliance – CTS Inc. that has not been spent and she has not been given any direction. This was a special appropriation with a one-year trial period. Mr. Santagate said we have never been billed. Mayor Lovett said they had a change of director and are in flux. Ms. Walter asked if she should encumber this. Council concurred.

CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

None

NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3,II(d) – REAL ESTATE

At 8:55 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Bergeron and seconded by Mr. Damren to enter into the Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3,II(d) – Real Estate and to invite Mr. Santagate, Nancy Merrill, Planning and Development Director, Ms. Taylor and Ms. Russell into the session.

Roll call vote: motion carried 6-0.

At 9:17 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Simonds and seconded by Mr. Damren to exit the non-public session and to return to the public session.

Roll call vote: motion carried 6-0.

A motion was made by Mr. Bergeron and seconded by Ms. Towle to seal the minutes until the purpose for sealing them no longer exists.

Roll call vote: motion carried 6-0.

After discussion it was the consensus of the Council to have a June 16 Council meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Lovett asked Councilors to submit suggested budget changes to Ms. Russell to be included in the packet for the June 16th meeting.

There was a discussion about getting the department expenses for the month of June. Mayor Lovett suggested that information could be placed on the City's website.

Mr. Bergeron will not be at the June 16th meeting, but he will call in.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:23 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Bergeron and seconded by Mr. Simonds to adjourn.

Voice vote: motion carried 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell
Clerk to the Council