

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Wednesday, August 10, 2016, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Charlene Lovett at 6:35 pm.

Members of the Council present were:

Ward 1 Councilor Carolyn Towle  
At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond  
Assistant Mayor Victor Bergeron  
Mayor Charlene Lovett  
At-Large Councilor Bruce Temple  
Ward III Councilor Nicholas Koloski  
At-Large Councilor John Simonds

Absent:

At-Large Councilor Allen Damren

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager  
Jane Taylor, City Solicitor

### **AGENDA CHANGES**

Ms. Lovett asked to move New Business Item C, Motion regarding 25 Chestnut St to follow Old Business Item A, Ordinance 548 as Chief Scott will be discussing both items. The Council agreed.

### **REPORT OF SECRETARY**

**A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Ms. Towle to accept the minutes of the July 13, 2016, City Council meeting.**

**Voice vote: motion carried 7-0, 1 abstain (Ms. Lovett abstained as she was not at that meeting).**

Ms. Lovett stated they would not be voting on the minutes of July 27, 2016 tonight as they had just received the draft minutes.

### **MAYOR NOTES**

Ms. Lovett said she attended the tour of North Country Smokehouse with Senator Shaheen and Mr. Santagate and that it is amazing to see how much the company has grown. They plan to move into a 66,000 sq. foot facility by next May and that they are a large water user, and to keep

this in mind when we have the discussion of water rate increases. She said that the Council and School Board met last night in an effort to work together to address the issues that hinder our growth as a community. The governing bodies agreed on their top 3 priorities: workforce/vocational training; marketing and poverty. Sub-committees will be formed to report back to a joint meeting in November. In addition the City Manager and the Superintendent will be working on several cost sharing initiatives.

Ms. Lovett recognized several people who represented Claremont at the 2016 Shriner's Maple Sugar Bowl: Justin Demars, a 9 year old boy, who suffered burns as an infant, was crowned King for the event to honor his accepting donations for the Shriner's instead of birthday gifts for the last 5 years. Stevens High School student, Colin Belt, participated in the game and head coach Paul Silva served as a NH assistant coach.

Mr. Lovett also congratulated Kenneth Hamilton of DPW for completing the Master Roads Scholar Program.

Ms. Lovett announced that the contract with MRI to conduct the city manager search will be executed tomorrow and gave the council a timeline and an overview of the recommended process for public input. She asked for feedback from the Council members at the next meeting.

## **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Santagate spoke about the growth in commercial/industrial activity, citing the North Country Smokehouse construction, Jewell Trucking's new facility and NH Industries' move to the City (70 employees). He is very pleased with the direction of the city, but said many challenges remain.

Mr. Santagate gave background of the redevelopment of the Mill District, citing a 1999 council vote to demolish the mill buildings, which didn't happen when a bid came back to demolish the buildings for \$2 million and not even clean up the sites. He spoke about the expansion of the Downtown TIF, the renovation of the Mill buildings, with the addition of Common Man, Red River Computer and Ramunto's to the area, rebuilding the infrastructure so that sewage would not flow into the Sugar River, all accomplished by public and private sectors working together. He said the challenge is now the Downtown and he wants to bring forth alternatives for discussion to revitalize the area, which will be discussed in depth at the 8/24 meeting. He also noted the sale of the Sawtooth building, which will become a makerspace facility.

Mr. Santagate complimented Director Brislin and the Police Department on the July 4th celebration, which was spectacular and without incident. He described the Parks & Recreation Department as a quiet story, providing over 180 programs for the community.

Mr. Santagate said he met with Bill Kennedy and Attorney Tom Connair. Mr. Kennedy wants to revisit the Claremont Lawsuit issues as he believes it was not implemented. Mr. Santagate said he indicated there is no easy answer and suggested Mr. Kennedy wait to bring the issue to the Council until he has a defined proposal.

Mr. Santagate also recognized the work of DPW on its many projects all over the city. He said the City had received an SRF loan of \$882,000 for the Lower Main Street project. He anticipates that using SRF funds will result in an estimated 18% savings on the costs, without impacting the tax rate.

## **APPOINTMENT TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

### Frances J. Tolles Home Trustees

**A motion was made by Mr. Pope and seconded Mr. Simonds to re-appoint Rebecca Vinduska to seat #2 of the Frances J. Tolles Home Trustees.**

**Voice vote: motion carried 8-0**

**A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded Mr. Bergeron to re-appoint Vicki Landry to seat #5 of the Frances J. Tolles Home Trustees.**

**Voice vote: motion carried 8-0**

## **CITIZEN'S FORUM**

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, said that the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission received a Brownfields grant for hundreds of thousands of dollars, part of which was to be spent in Claremont. He wanted to know where.

AJ Maranville Jr., Ward 2, said it is difficult to keep up with what is before the Council because the agenda keeps getting changed. He wanted to know why the TIF has been removed from the agenda. He said the Council has a fiduciary duty to make sure the City's money is spent properly. If they can't document where the money is spent then he wants a forensic audit of the TIF since 2006.

James Sullivan, Ward 1, said Downtown TIF is a problem and he asked the Council to follow the money. He alleged that \$3 million is missing. He also noted that GCC memberships have dropped by 12%, which means they are going to have a significant deficit. He suggested adding a babysitting service.

Walter Stapleton, Ward 3, introduced himself as a candidate for the NH House District 10. He said he has lived in Claremont since 1983 and has a background in insurance and railroad consulting. He is interested in transportation, insurance and social issues.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### Ordinance 548 Franklin St Parking Lot – Second Reading – Public Hearing

Chief Scott said this came before the Traffic Advisory Committee from the Off Pleasant Street Barbershop. Currently there is no limit on daytime parking, no striping and no handicapped

space designated. The Traffic Advisory Committee is recommending this change. Certain spaces will be designated as 2 hour and a handicapped space will be designated.

Explanation of Proposed Action:

The purpose of this proposal is to enact a two-hour limit for certain parking spaces in the Municipal Parking Lot on Franklin Street to provide better parking access to clients of Franklin and Pleasant Street businesses and to clarify that parking generally in municipal parking lots is from 7 a.m. until 12:00 midnight unless otherwise indicated. Designation of a handicapped parking space in the Franklin St. Municipal Parking Lot will be accomplished administratively, as authorized by Section 19-89 of the Code. Winter night parking availability in the Franklin St. Municipal Parking Lot is not changed.

Enactment of this Ordinance will regulate public parking availability for the downtown area.

**A motion was made by Mr. Simonds and seconded by Mr. Koloski to adopt Ordinance #548 – Franklin St. Municipal Parking lot on second reading.**

Mr. Simonds read the Ordinance into the record.

Ms. Lovett opened the public hearing

No one appeared.

Ms. Lovett closed the public hearing.

**Roll call vote: motion passed 8-0**

25 Chestnut Street

Chief Scott gave the code enforcement history of this property, which resulted in a request to the Circuit Court to allow the City to collect the costs of cleaning up the worst issues on the property. Approving this final step will allow the City to bill the property owner for the costs and, if not paid, lien the property.

**A motion was made by Mr. Simonds and seconded by Mr. Koloski**

**Whereas the City's health and code enforcement officers determined the conditions at 25 Chestnut Street, Map 132, Lot 63, to be a threat to public health and safety, citing the property owner for numerous Code violations; and whereas upon the property owner's failure to abate these violations, the City has taken corrective action and obtained permission from the Circuit Court to recover its expenses from the property owner or to place a lien against the property pursuant to RSA 676:17-a, IX and RSA Chapter 80, the Claremont City Council hereby authorizes the City Manager or his designees to submit the expense account, as approved by the Court, together with a warrant, to the City's tax**

**collector for collection against the property owner and, if not paid within 30 days after the bill is mailed, to place a lien upon the property. The Council further authorizes the City Manager or his designees to undertake all actions and execute all documents as may be required to implement this motion.**

**Roll call vote: Motion carried 8-0**

Water & sewer rate study

Mayor Lovett apologized for the confusion – would like to reserve an in depth discussion at the 2nd August meeting.

Asst. Director St. Pierre said the City this week received its new 5-year Wastewater Treatment Plant permit. There are different standards for phosphorus and nitrogen than with the last permit, so we need to do additional testing and make adjustments to treatment. He said the City needs to develop a new collection operating plan and make certain updates to sewer infrastructure to minimize infiltration. We should be able to do this within our current funding.

Mr. St. Pierre said that even with the current drought, the reservoirs are down about a foot. We are still using the Sugar River because the pipe from the reservoir is too small for the needed capacity. DPW continues to work on its get the lead out program. Some of the pipes date from 1913 that may contain lead, but there is no way to know without cutting into them. The head of the state Department of Environmental Services is coming to meet with us regarding this. He said he believes that the proposed rates will be able to fund the issues.

Mr. Pope asked the cost of turning on the Sugar River pump. Mr. St. Pierre said it used to cost \$10,000/month but we have changed our procedure, which is about \$3,300/month. Pumping out of the Sugar River is done every 5-6 weeks.

In response to a question on cost from Ms. Lovett, the Council discussed the cost of replacing the 11,500 feet of pipe from the reservoir against the cost of pumping from the Sugar River.

Mr. Koloski asked a question about lead in the water meters. Mr. St. Pierre indicated that the brass fittings in meters have 8% lead, which is why we are changing the meters out, but we don't have enough money to change all of the meters at the same time.

The Council discussed sewer charges and a DPW policy that a water spill under 5,000 gallons is not abated, but they do allow someone filling their swimming pool to read their meter before and after to abate the sewer amount.

Mr. Temple said that as of 1/01/2015, all new meters are required to be lead free. He said the new meters should be stamped "LF" for lead free. He also said he thinks it is important to replace the pipe between the Whitewater and Dole Reservoirs. He also wanted to see how the Water/Sewer CIP interfaces with the Planning Board's City CIP to make sure projects are coordinated. He would also like to revisit fire hydrant and fixed rates in the water/sewer rate proposals.

The Council discussed the scheduling of a discussion of the rate proposal. Mr. Santagate indicated if new rates are adopted, they need to be in place for January 1. Ms. Lovett asked Mr. Santagate to keep the action items for the September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting to a minimum so they can have adequate time to discuss the water/sewer rates.

Ms. Lovett called a recess at 8:11 pm; Council reconvened at 8:25 p.m.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Resolution 2017-7 Special Events Budget - Public Hearing

Ms. Lovett indicated this item is being postponed because she had not given direction on its content. She said it should be for special event items that the Council is interested in to promote the City but are not included in any department's budget.

Mr. Pope asked for clarification of what the funds would be used for. He wanted to know if any other municipalities do this, as he would like to get a sense of how they handle it. Ms. Lovett gave the example of the Amtrak Stop activities and possibly the Airport.

Ms. Towle suggested \$1,500 and Mr. Koloski said he wouldn't support a higher amount when the Council tells social service agencies that there is no money for them.

Mary Walter, Finance Director, said there is \$1,300 in the social service line that is not being spent on CATS transportation. This could be moved to another line by a motion.

Ms. Lovett asked that this transfer be put on the September agenda.

### Resolution 2017-8 – Funding for Reach the Peak Event – Public Hearing

**A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Ms. Towle to adopt Resolution 2017-8 Funding for “Reach the Peak” Event**

**Mr. Raymond read the resolution into the record**

Director Brislin said this event has been going on for 4 years with \$16,000 being raised last year. Last year, the City partnered with the Community Alliance and we wanted to continue, but learned 2-3 weeks ago that the Community Alliance is not able to this year. We currently have 30 people signed up but most people wait until the last minute to sign up. Last year we had approximately 130 participants.

Ms. Lovett opened the public hearing.

Ms. Lovett closed the public hearing.

**Roll call vote: motion carried 8-0** (Ms. Lovett stated that Councilor Damren expressed to her that he was in favor of this)

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Lovett asked for a report from the Claremont Development Authority.

Ms. Lovett said the Claremont Amtrak stop is up 56.5% for the month of June 2015 to June 2016.

Ms. Towle spoke about the decision to host an annual bike tour, which will be the weekend of October 15th this year. This will help promote Amtrak's ability to allow bicycles.

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Ms. Towle asked when the Arrowhead tour will be scheduled.

Ms. Towle suggested students be invited to say the Pledge of Allegiance or sing the National Anthem.

Mr. Bergeron stated he had asked a few months ago about getting the numbers of red light violations and speeding violations on Washington St.

Mr. Koloski said the Conservation Commission members should be invited when the Council tours Arrowhead.

Ms. Lovett asked about the efficiency audit for the Community Center. She wants to know if they could be more efficient with operational costs and use those savings on a maintenance person.

Mr. Santagate said that if the review is to see if offsets in expenses are appropriate for one department, it should be done for all. He asked if the Mayor wanted an audit of income or an audit on operations.

Mr. Raymond said when the Community Center opened, the Council was looking at revenue of \$500,000 because that was what was spent on the old GCC. If we operated the old GCC, the City would spend more than that.

Ms. Lovett said she wanted a study of the efficiency of operational costs and that no one was picking on the Community Center.

Mr. Koloski disagreed with the Mayor and said that this is singling out one building, saying he would like to combine Parks and Recreation into one first. He also said he would like to know the cost before going forward.

Mr. Koloski asked for an update on Facebook.

Ms. Lovett said she would like an update on Facebook in the city manager's report.

Mr. Temple said he had some questions on Mayor Lovett's hand-outs regarding the search process with MRI. The Council has not talked about a salary and benefit package. It sounds like he is going to poll councilors one on one, not as a group. Who will determine the screening committee? Mayor stated that is up to the Council.

Mr. Temple said the July Council minutes indicated the City Solicitor said the proposed Charter amendment on residency could be challenged. He would like a summary on whether the language could be challenged on the September 14 agenda.

Mr. Koloski spoke about using the Sugar River as an asset for the community.

Ms. Lovett said there was a gap between the Master Plan and actual planning board activities.

Ms. Towle said she feels the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment and Conservation Commission should have a copy of the Master Plan that was done 5 years ago.

#### **CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL**

None

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**At 9:14 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Temple and seconded by Ms. Towle to adjourn.**

**Voice vote: motion carried 8-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Gwendolyn R. Melcher  
Clerk to the Council