

**Town of Hooksett
Town Council Workshop Meeting Minutes - Official
Wednesday, August 14, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sullivan called to order the Workshop Meeting of the Town of Hooksett Town Council at 7:00 pm.

PROOF OF POSTING

Donna Fitzpatrick, Administrative Services Coordinator, provided proof of posting.

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Councilor James Sullivan, Councilor Clark Karolian, Councilor James Levesque, Councilor Avery Comai, Councilor Cliff Jones, Councilor John Durand, Councilor Robert Duhaime and Councilor Alex Walczyk.

Missed: Councilor Timothy Tsantoulis

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Sullivan called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

WORKSHOP ITEMS

Chair Sullivan: During this workshop meeting, the Council will review the Administrative Code, the Rules of Procedure, and other issues which have arisen over the past year. This meeting is for discussion and possible consensus. No motions will be made tonight, but can be made at the next regular Town Council meeting on August 28, 2019.

▪ **Administrative Code**

Chair Sullivan: What is the reason for the changes in Section 2.2 and 2.3?

A. Garron: The Finance Director suggested these changes, and I have not had a chance to discuss them with her.

D. Fitzpatrick: All of the suggested changes in the Administrative Code are from the Finance Director. I suggest inviting her to explain them at the August 28, 2019 meeting.

C. Karolian: Referring to Section 6 in the definition of Lease, the first use of the word "that" should be removed.

Chair Sullivan: Referring to page 36, Section V, REIMBURSEMENT ALLOWANCES FOR PERSONAL CELLULAR PHONES, why is \$11.53 changed to \$11.54?

D. Fitzpatrick: That is due to rounding. The annual cost of \$600 divided by 52 weeks equals \$11.538. Some employees have the choice of using their personal phones for work. If they do, they are subject to RSA 91-A.

Chair Sullivan: I would like to find out how many employees use their personal cell phones.

▪ **Rules of Procedure**

A. Garron: The note added to 2.a.1. clarifies that the Town Administrator acts as Council Chair from July 1st until the new Town Council has its first meeting, leading the first meeting through Town Council Reorganization – Part I.

A. Walczyk: Referring to 1.a., the guide is 'Roberts' (not Riggins) Rules and Parliamentary Law at a Glance.

C. Karolian: I would suggest striking the section in parenthesis under 3.c. Saying that a quorum is two-thirds is sufficient.

Chair Sullivan: The Secretary should sit next to the Recording Clerk, as stated in 3.g. because they often need to consult.

J. Levesque: I think 3.h. should stay as a reminder that everyone should address the Chair, confine remarks to the pending question, and not engage in personalities.

D. Fitzpatrick: Regarding 4.c., this issue was brought up recently, and this clarifies that the Town Administrator may require department heads or other employees to attend a meeting when their input might be needed. All questions should be directed to the Town Administrator who may then defer to a department head or an employee.

Chair Sullivan: Under 5.a., we are reminded that motions should be read from staff reports.

Chair Sullivan: Regarding debate, 6.b.1. reminds us that every Council member may speak twice on any motion, except for the member making the motion, who may speak three times.

C. Karolian: How does the two-thirds vote referenced in 6.a.2. occur?

Chair Sullivan: I would ask if anyone wishes to have further discussion, and if the response is yes, I would call for a vote.

C. Karolian: I would like 6.a. to stay because raising one's hand lets other members know you want to speak.

C. Karolian: The items in 6.3. are important because the feedback I have received from those watching and hearing indicates that the meetings should be more orderly.

R. Duhaime: I have been accused of taking the long way around the barn when I present several comments leading up to a main point or question.

Chair Sullivan: The next section is 7. Order of Business. The approval of minutes has been moved down because of the time it takes. We want to accommodate the audience. The Agenda Overview is the time to request a change in the Order of Business. We want to have any Public Hearings as early as possible in the meeting. This change is also to accommodate the audience.

Chair Sullivan: It is suggested that the 15 Minute Recess be eliminated.

R. Duhaime: I don't agree with this because this is a time for networking with the public in the audience. It is a time to shake hands and listen to the people.

A. Garron: Eliminating the recess is proposed because of the desire to push through and complete the agenda items.

Chair Sullivan: A compromise would be a brief recess.

Chair Sullivan: Another suggested change in the Order of Business is to list Non-Public Session including all categories (a – l). We currently list only those which we know of at the time of posting the agenda, which is one week prior to the meeting. What if another item comes up between that time and the meeting?

C. Karolian: For transparency, we want the public to know which category we are going to discuss.

Chair Sullivan: This is only for the printed/posted agenda. When we actually motion to enter non-public, we then state specific categories, based on the subject matter.

C. Karolian: I thought a Counselor could request a non-public session at any time during the meeting.

Chair Sullivan: The suggested change would accommodate that. However, if the agenda states (a) & (b), for example, a Councilor cannot ask to enter a non-public session under (c).

D. Fitzpatrick: Our legal counsel, Matt Serge, has advised us that listing RSA 91-A:3, II (a – l) on the agenda is acceptable.

R. Duhaime: We want to be transparent.

D. Fitzpatrick: Under 8.a. is proposed language stating that in advance of the meeting, the Chair should discuss with the Town Administrator which categories (a – l) correspond to the items to be taken up. Section 8.b. is language stating that the minutes of the non-public session are sealed in public session.

A. Garron: Other changes under that section clarify what the non-public minutes should include and the need for confidentiality unless or until the minutes are unsealed.

J. Levesque: It is good to state that.

D. Fitzpatrick: The language of RSA 91-A was used for these proposed changes.

Chair Sullivan: Under 13.f., this change allows the Workshop meeting to take place in July/August.

Chair Sullivan: Referring to the NHMA document regarding meeting minutes, it is my understanding that we are following all sections except E.

D. Fitzpatrick: Yes. Currently, we are following F, not E; NHMA recommends E, although F is acceptable and legal. Under E, edits should be listed in the minutes of the subsequent meeting under Approval of Minutes. The Town Clerk would make a notation on the original minutes of where to find these edits.

Chair Sullivan: This would make it easier to track edits.

D. Fitzpatrick: The NHMA points out that this is especially important for Planning and Zoning committees. The whole town should adopt E, and all Boards and Committees would need to be educated.

Chair Sullivan: A memo would have to be sent to all Boards and Committees.

A. Garron: I suggest setting an effective date to allow time to educate everyone.

Chair Sullivan: I would like to suggest holding off on the setting of goals for the Town Administrator until our next meeting.

D. Fitzpatrick: The Town Administrator's contract states that goals must be set within 90 days of hire. Mr. Garron was hired on May 30, 2019.

A. Garron: I agree to wait until the August 28th meeting to set my goals.

D. Fitzpatrick: The document provided is just a template; the Councilors need to set their own goals for the Town Administrator.

Chair Sullivan: Let's look at the items under 4. Other in the document entitled Discussion Items. Does anyone wish to eliminate any of these or are there items you wish to further pursue? These are items which have come up throughout the year.

J. Durand: Regarding the first item, Recreation Coordinator/Director/Community Services, I feel strongly that this item was voted down three times by the voters. HYAA handles this well. Sports activity is down in Hooksett. There is no football and baseball has been combined with Manchester.

C. Karolian: I am dumbfounded as to why this is on the list. Is this to create or talk about creating this position?

Chair Sullivan: It is an item which has been discussed during the past year and is on the list to see if anyone wishes to pursue it further.

A. Garron: This goes beyond the number of teams. It is about integrating the whole demographic of the community and working in coordination with other organizations. I think the activity level is up in Hooksett. We want to look to the needs of the future.

Chair Sullivan: I don't want to consider a full-time coordinator or director. I don't want to go there because it has been voted down three times. However, we had a part-time coordinator this year and there were benefits to that.

A. Garron: The Master Plan will be out soon. That will provide data on demographics and allow us to better utilize our natural and manmade resources.

R. Duhaime: We have the pavilion project. Many towns have part-time recreation directors. We had a winter carnival this year.

J. Durand: Even a part-time director is circumventing the vote of the people. It's the optics.

N. Germain: Regarding b. Computer Purchase System, we have a staff technology committee working on increasing the sophistication of our strategy regarding the purchase of computers.

A. Garron: We use a lot of paper. Councilors could have laptops and information would be available electronically. The question is this: Is there a better way to get information to the Town Council?

R. Duhaime: I know we have been purchasing systems through Block 5. I would like to know the cost to update the Town Council.

N. Germain: The desks here could be set up differently to accommodate laptops. The biggest thing is that we now plan from year to year and not for the long term. We have been using more graphs and charts to make projections. A project-based plan is desirable.

A. Garron: A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is important. We need a more comprehensive plan for major capital expenses. The Master Plan will be done soon and the role of the CIP is to carry out that plan.

Chair Sullivan: The CIP is the responsibility of the Planning Board.

A. Garron: I want the Council to know that we are now working on a written Social Media Policy.

A. Walczyk: Referring to my list of 15 items of interest, #12 Set up CIP Committee, is important. Joanne McHugh's suggestion that this committee be reestablished is a good one. We should be anticipating growth and the needs of the schools. My understanding is that there were not enough people to volunteer for the CIP Committee. The Planning Board and the School need to work together; we need to be more proactive than reactive. The fourteenth item on my list is about concern that we may be forcing constituents to connect to town sewer systems.

C. Jones: I can check into the State mandate regarding hooking up to town sewer. I know that if a septic system fails and there is access to town sewer, the State will not approve a new septic design, thus forcing a connection to town sewer.

N. Germain: I know that a municipal sewer system is safer and better for the environment. There was possibly some misinformation about this.

R. Duhaime: When a septic system fails, the water source is polluted.

C. Karolian: I asked a question about this a few meetings back, and I'm glad that I did. We got two different answers. There was conflict about whether this was just related to the TIF district. I am glad that we will discuss this, and it will be great to have clarity on it.

A. Garron: I will get a copy of the sewer hook-up policy.

A. Walczyk: I feel strongly about the first item on my list, banning single-use plastic.

Chair Sullivan: I have a problem with taxing plastic trash bags. That would be controversial. I am hesitant about that.

J. Durand: I'm against any new tax.

A. Walczyk: We are going to pay one way or another. This is killing the environment. The second and third items on my list could be accomplished jointly because bee colonies could be established in conjunction with solar installations. Another important item is improvement of audio for the chambers, #4 on my list. Multiple constituents have expressed concern about this. Exploring electronic voting is #11. Tallying votes at the end of each election is an arduous task. Our voting machines are at the end of life, so we need to plan for that. Performance zone management, the seventh item, is also a concern. We need more consistency. Trees and bushes are being cut on Route 3. Again, this is about the environment. The last item, #15, is about the taxes taken out of stipend checks for elected town employees. I would like this eliminated or at least to have the amount taken for taxes returned to the town.

R. Duhaime: Performance zone management, #7, is now being reviewed by the Planning Board. I am on the Architectural Review subcommittee. We want no more all steel buildings. Bedford's plan is almost identical to ours, so why is Bedford better? Perhaps their enforcement is better.

A. Garron: Enforcement problems are not unique to Hooksett. A town must be willing to go to court.

R. Duhaime: Trees and bushes are being cut on Route 3 through Hooksett. There is no enforcement, and the code enforcement officer is already busy. More staff is needed.

C. Jones: There is enough going on along Route 3 to keep a part-time code enforcement officer busy.

C. Karolian: Do we have a Building Inspector and a Code Enforcement Officer? If not, I strongly suggest that we should.

ADJOURNMENT

J. Levesque motioned to adjourn at 8:57 pm. J. Durand seconded the motion. Voted unanimously in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Donnelly

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Recording Clerk