

**Town of Hooksett
Town Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 22, 2023**

1
2 The Hooksett Town Council met on Wednesday, March 22, 2023, at 6:00 in the Hooksett Municipal
3 Building.

4
5 **CALL TO ORDER**

6 Chair Sullivan called the meeting of 22 Mar 2023 to order at (6:03) pm.

7
8 **PROOF OF POSTING**

9 Human Resource Coordinator Donna Fitzpatrick provided proof of posting.

10

11 **ROLL CALL**

12 **In Attendance:** Councilor James Sullivan, Councilor Timothy Tsantoulis, Councilor Alex Walczyk,
13 Councilor Randall Lapierre, Councilor David Boutin, and Councilor John Durand, Councilor Roger
14 Duhaime (arrived at 6:07)

15

16 **Absent:** Councilor David Ross, Councilor Keith Judge

17

18 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE-** those able stood for the pledge of allegiance.

19

20 **AGENDA OVERVIEW-** Given by J. Sullivan.

21

22 **PUBLIC INPUT - 15 MINUTES-** None

23

24 **SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS**

25

26 **9.1 Granite State YMCA/ YMCA of Downtown Manchester MOU with Town of Hooksett/SAU 15-**
27 **Karen Provost, Hooksett Camp Director**

28

29 A. Garron- In 2018, the Town of Hooksett and Granite State YMCA entered into an agreement to offer a
30 youth summer program to Hooksett residents. Previously, a similar program existed that was
31 administered directly by the Town of Hooksett and overseen by the Public Works Department. The
32 instrument to conduct this relationship was a "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU) between the
33 involved organizations. A new MOU has been subsequently signed each year to renew the relationship.

34

35 ***D. Boutin motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract with Granite YMCA***
36 ***for the 2023 Summer Day Camp on behalf of the Council seconded by A. Walczyk.***

37

38 ***Vote in Favor 7-0***

39

40 A. Walczyk- I know there is a difference between fees for resident's vs nonresidents.

41

42 K. Provost- yes there is a resident and non-resident price.

43

44 T. Tsantoulis- since the YMCA has taken over, I hear safety has gotten better.

45

46 A. Walczyk- is the amount that Hooksett is putting forward adequate?

47

48 K. Provost- yes, it is adequate. We are already planning and hiring. Last year we had about 100 kids
49 weekly, in 2023 we are planning on 120 kids weekly. The 2023 fee will go up \$2.00, the \$20,000 budget
50 is to pay for Hooksett residents.

51

52 **CONSENT AGENDA**

53
54 **A. Walczyk motioned to accept the consent agenda 10.1 and 10.2 as presented; seconded by D.**
55 **Boutin.**

56

57 **Vote in favor 7-0**

58

59 10.1 to accept a donation totaling \$1,500.00 from residents Monique Cote-Melendez and Pedro
60 Melendez to the Town of Hooksett for the Hooksett Police Department per RSA 31:95-b, III(b) and
61 return that amount to the Police Department's K9 Trust Fund.

62

63 10.2 Donation(s) to the Town of Hooksett for the 2023 Hooksett Employee Appreciation Luncheon per
64 RSA 31:95-b III (b) and RSA 31:95-e II.

65

66 **OLD BUSINESS**

67

68 **Town Council Goals Update- Tax Rate Planning**

69

70 A. Garron- one of the goals we had established was increasing the fund balance at 8%. Christine will
71 go over a possible strategy we have.

72

73 C. Tewksbury- we are going to be focusing on the tax rate planning goal set last fall. Balance the use of
74 (unassigned) fund balance annually to maintain a low tax rate while building the (unassigned fund)
75 balance amount to the recommended 8% or higher. In government accounting, fund balance is the
76 difference between operating assets and liabilities resulting in a surplus or a deficit. It's not cash in the
77 bank account. It is the equity that the town has in its operating budget. There are 5 categories of fund
78 balance- non-Spendable fund balance – prepaid inventories and assets held for resale. Restricted fund
79 balance – externally enforceable legal restrictions. Committed fund balance – town meeting restrictions.
80 Assigned fund balance – town council restrictions. Unassigned fund balance (UFB) – residual category
81 includes resources whose use is limited, but not for a purpose narrower than the purpose of the fund.

82

83 A. Walczyk- can you give me examples of what will fall into each category.

84

85 C. Tewksbury- Non- spendable is your fuel that we purchased but have not used.

86 Restricted is library equity. Committed fund is warrant articles that the town approved that we have not
87 spent. Assigned fund balance are the PO's that you encumber from the operating account, they are
88 projects you did not finish up, and unassigned fund balance is the number we talk about when setting
89 the tax rate, this amount that sits here is calculated 1x a year and we report it to DRA in September. In
90 November we know we have the unassigned fund balance, and DRA sets the %. We keep unassigned
91 fund balance for 5 reasons: 1) In government finance, the retention and use of unassigned fund
92 balance assists in measuring the financial health of the chief operating fund known as the general fund.
93 2) Unassigned fund balance can be used for emergency expenditures. 3) Helps with credit rating. 4)
94 Helps with fluctuation in collection of property taxes. 5) Can be used to stabilize the tax rate. I
95 recommend – Set a minimum growth percentage. Recommend 0.5% to 1%. And if we meet that % then
96 we can Set a fixed amount of UFB to apply to tax rate. Recommendation level set at \$300,000 to
97 \$500,000. We know that UFB as of 6/30/2022 = 5.43%. UFB must be at 5.93% before any UFB is used
98 to the lower tax rate. Then apply up to \$300,000 to lower rate. Anything remaining will increase to the
99 percentage held, which will be used as the starting percentage for the next year. We don't need to

100 make any decisions tonight. In September 2023, the dollar amount of UFB for 6/30/2023 will be known.
101 At that time, I can run some numbers to aid the Council in determining the appropriate “minimum
102 growth percentage” and “level amount of UFB to apply to tax rate”.

103
104 J. Sullivan- if we follow your advisory, we could meet that 8% in how long?
105

106 C. Tewksbury- I'd say 3 years or less. The worst case is that you apply 0 to the tax rate and \$250,000
107 would be a hit to the taxpayers.
108

109 T. Tsantoulis- thank you for explaining this. If an individual wanted to compare how we do it to other
110 towns can one find that information out?
111

112 C. Tewksbury- Yes, they could contact DRA and there are some websites out there as well that have
113 the information.
114

115 A. Walczyk- I like step 1 but I do not like step 2. I think it's better to take each year and take into
116 consideration its one.
117

118 C. Tewksbury- if we had a consistent amount that we set to the tax rate every year the voters would not
119 see an influx or reduction. It would stay more consistent. I would set it lower.
120

121 A. Garron- there is a variety of scenarios that we can apply. The closer to the funding level that we
122 have already set, is more attainable.
123

124 R. Duhaime- what is the average property value increase every year.
125

126 C. Tewksbury- I do not know that would be the assessor.
127

128 **NEW BUSINESS**
129

130 **14.1 Town Personnel Plan Updates Salaried exempt employees use of leave time for workweeks**
131 **with less than 40 hours worked.**
132

133 *T. Tsantoulis motioned to approve the amendments to the Town Personnel Plan to add*
134 *statement “Salaried exempt employees must use the appropriate leave(s) (sick, vacation,*
135 *holiday and/or personal time) for workweeks with less than 40 hours worked.” to the following*
136 *sections: 1) Policy on Hours of Work for Salaried Exempt Employees, 2) Vacation Leave and 3)*
137 *Sick Leave; seconded by A. Walczyk.*
138

139 **Vote in favor 6-0**
140

141 A. Walczyk- what is the problem here?
142

143 A. Garron- it is to be consistent with all union and non-union contracts.
144

145 A. Walczyk- because if the outcome of the negotiations we are putting all the pieces together and being
146 consistent.
147

148 A. Garron- we are trying to put all policies that are consistent and so there is no past practice to rely on,
149 and it is clear because it is written.
150

151 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

152
153 *T. Tsantoulis motioned to approve the public minutes of March 8, 2023; seconded by D. Boutin.*

154
155 *Amend line 90 to be “nicer park.”*
156 *Line 249 & 253 D. Boutin not R. Lapierre*

157
158 *Vote in favor 6-0*

159
160 *T. Tsantoulis motioned to approve the non-public minutes of March 8, 2023; seconded by R. Lapierre.*

161
162
163 *Vote in Favor 6-0*

164
165 **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT-** As presented by A. Garron.

- 166
167
 - March 28, 2023, Election Day at Cawley Middle School- the Town election was postponed due to the storm. It will be next Tuesday.
 - Fellowship Church Easter Egg Hunt- the easter egg hunt being put on by the Fellowship Church and that is on April 8th at Donati Field at 10:30 am.
 - FD and PD IT priority projects-Budget Transfer from FD to Admin- the 3 IT projects coming up the server is at capacity, but we did find a cost effective solution, by consolidating them into one server. These are priority items and need to be addressed.
 - Five proposals received in response to Hooksett/NHDOT QBS Advertisement for Hackett Hill/Rt.3A/Main Street project- in a couple of weeks we will hold interviews for all 5, and I extend the invitation to all councilors who want to attend. We have a scoring sheet for each proposal.
 - Council scheduled attendance remains as assigned on March 14, 2023 for the March 28th Town Meeting.

179 TA Goals update:

 - Town Owned Land Project-Phase one is currently scheduled for April.
 - Solar Project- Solar Team currently reviewing responses to the RFP.
 - Master Plan Adoption- Planning Board will be discussing a draft of the Master Plan at its April meeting.
 - College Park development plans- No new information on this project

185
186 **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

187
188 J. Sullivan read the following letters into the record as requested.

189
190 Dear Hooksett Town Council members- I am writing to you about the garage and land at the beginning of Edgewater Drive. The Town currently owns it due to back taxes, and is considering selling it at auction. If you visit that piece of property, you will see that Edgewater Drive is narrow as you drive down the hill to the railroad tracks. Right now you have the property at such a reasonable cost or basically at no cost. If this road would ever need improvement, widening, or utilities, run down the road, such as sewer or water you will be left with few options to complete improvements. As a property owner on Edgewater Drive, I would highly encourage the town to retain this property. Looking at what the potential price tag would be at auction I believe it could become irreplaceable and extremely expensive if you had to purchase it in the future.

199 Ken Scarpetti.

200
201 To Town Council Chairman James Sullivan

202 I am writing this letter on behalf of the following families: Felch, Holt , Murray, Dickson, Duhaime, Roy,
203 Vallee, Phillips, Carroll, Yianakopolos, MacEackern, McAndrews, L'Heureux, Robie. They would like to
204 thank the town of Hooksett for replacing the signs and posts at Donati Field that they purchased for
205 their loved ones. Some of the other families replaced the signs and posts with their own money. Those
206 families were the Hebert, Hemeon, Bulger, St.Germain and St. Pierre. James, I don't know if you
207 remember the Parks and recreation Department starting this program in the early 1990's. The people
208 could sit in the parking lot or on top of the hill to watch the kids play ball. It was a nice program that
209 worked out very well. They could sit under the trees with plenty of shade and watch the kids play. There
210 are 2 people that need to be recognized for this project getting started and completed. They are Andy
211 Janosz of the Hooksett parks and Rec advisory Board and Phil Arnone, the Parks n Rec Foreman.
212 After many months of meeting and trying to find the money, they got the project completed this past fall.
213 It was so nice to see these 2 gentlemen remember the old people of the town of Hooksett and ensure
214 that they are remembered and not forgotten.

215 Dale Hemeon

216

217 Dear Chairman Sullivan,

218

219 This letter is to request that the Town Council revoke the appointment of Councilor David Boutin to the
220 Planning board. His behavior at the Planning Board meetings has been unprofessional, argumentative,
221 and incredibly rude to the Chair, other Board members, and to applicants, and citizens of Hooksett
222 expect from elected and appointed officials. Councilor Boutin's comments to the Town Planner on his
223 resignation "the town is fortunate that you are leaving. You will not be missed." Are so unprofessional
224 and just rude. His actions have been a huge detriment to the functioning of the Planning Board and an
225 embarrassment to the citizens of Hooksett, especially those who volunteer to try to continue to move
226 Hooksett forward. Please consider this request as soon as possible and appoint a councilor to the
227 planning Board that will bring seriousness to this important town board. The citizens of Hooksett, other
228 volunteers and prospective applicants deserve this.

229 Christopher Stelmach- Vice Chairman Hooksett Planning Board

230

231 J. Sullivan- With that being said Mr. Boutin, I encourage you to reflect on what they said, be a little more
232 professional and little more cooperative, and improve on their perceptions, and if the council wants to
233 handle it a different way, please let me know.

234

235 T. Tsantoulis- The unfortunate reality is that the members of the PB signed that letter, and they felt
236 strongly to sign and send that letter to the Town Administrator. To me that is a sign of no confidence in
237 the ability of one individual and I find it somewhat troubling as a volunteer or voted official. I suspect
238 that if I were in that same position I would handle that differently, and perhaps Mr. Boutin will want to
239 reflect on his choice to continue or not on the PB. I don't think there is room to remove someone. I think
240 it is something that an individual should do if he so chooses.

241

242 **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS**

243 ARPA Sub-committee – Councilor Lapierre will work with Administration to schedule their 1st meeting
244 for Friday, March 31st.

245 ZBA – Councilor Duhaime commented that the 3/14 meeting cancelled due to snowstorm and
246 applicant(s) postponed month out. One applicant was already postponed from February and now
247 postponed again. ZBA should look at scheduling a "special meeting" earlier than a month out – costing
248 applicant money and time.

249 Hooksett Youth Achiever – Councilor Tsantoulis stated has not received a nomination in a while and is
250 seeking nominations. Chair Sullivan suggested a letter be sent to the Hooksett SAU Superintendent
251 seeking nominations.

252 Conservation Committee – Councilor Walczyk informed that ConCom reached out to NH Fish & Game
253 regarding Head’s Pond complaints of shooting noises. Fish & Game advised to get on video & then
254 they may be able to take action. Walczyk researched purchasing a trail/wildlife camera.

255 **PUBLIC INPUT**

256 Sheena Gilbert, Planning Board Alternate- Hoping this Council takes further review of Planning Board
257 letter. As much as Mr. Boutin has to add, Mr. Boutin is a challenge vs. an asset to the Planning Board. I
258 also want to remind you all that just about every member of the Planning Board did sign that letter. Mr.
259 Boutin is problematic at the Planning Board meetings & Town Council meetings. If you were to review
260 any meeting, then you would see why. I think this needs more than a brief discussion, I think it is
261 something the Board needs to take into further consideration. I understand that conflict is difficult and
262 no one wants to point it out, but this is problematic. You are problematic in these meetings as well and
263 it’s unfortunate that we have to have these conversations. My question to you is why you are a part of
264 these things; I’d love to see all of that skill that you have to come to light again.

265 **NON-PUBLIC SESSION NH RSA 91-A:3 II**

266

267 ***J. Sullivan motioned to enter NON-PUBLIC SESSION NH RSA 91-A:3 II E; seconded by T.***
268 ***Tsantoulis.***

269

270 (e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or
271 filed by or against the public body or any subdivision thereof, or by or against any member thereof
272 because of his or her membership in such public body, until the claim or litigation has been fully
273 adjudicated or otherwise settled. Any application filed for tax abatement, pursuant to law, with anybody
274 or board shall not constitute a threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the purposes of
275 this subparagraph.

276

277 **Roll Call Vote #2**

278 ***R. Duhaime Aye***

279 ***J. Durand Aye***

280 ***D. Ross NP***

281 ***R. Lapierre Aye***

282 ***A. Walczyk Aye***

283 ***D. Boutin Aye***

284 ***K. Judge NP***

285 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

286 ***J. Sullivan Aye***

287

288 **Vote 7-0**

289

290 ***J. Sullivan motioned to leave non-public session of March 22, 2023, at 7:41 pm; seconded by D.***
291 ***Boutin.***

292

293 ***Vote in favor 7-0***

294

295 ***J. Sullivan motioned to seal the minutes of March 22, 2023; seconded by R. Lapierre.***

296 **Roll Call Vote #3**

297 ***D. Boutin Aye***

298 ***D. Ross NP***

299 ***A. Walczyk Aye***

300 ***J. Durand Aye***

301 ***R. Duhaime Aye***

302 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

303 ***R. Lapierre Aye***

304 ***K. Judge NP***

305 ***J. Sullivan Aye***

306

307 ***Vote in favor 7-0***

308

309 **ADJOURNMENT**

310

311 ***J. Sullivan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 pm. Seconded by D. Boutin.***

312

313 ***All in favor 7-0***

314

315 Respectfully submitted,

316

317 *Alicia Jipson*

318

319 Alicia Jipson

320 Recording Clerk