

**Town of Hooksett
Town Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 27, 2024**

1
2 The Hooksett Town Council met on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 6:00 pm in the Hooksett Municipal
3 Building.

4
5 **CALL TO ORDER**

6 Chair Tsantoulis called the meeting of 27 Mar 2024 to order at 6:00 pm.

7
8 **PROOF OF POSTING**

9 Town Administrator, Andre Garron, provided proof of posting.

10

11 **ROLL CALL**

12 **In Attendance:** Councilor James Sullivan, Councilor John Durand (arrived at 6:39), Councilor Randall
13 Lapierre, Councilor David Boutin, Councilor Timothy Tsantoulis, Councilor Jodi Pinard, and Councilor
14 Alex Walczyk

15

16 **Absent:** Councilor Keith Judge and Councilor Roger Duhaime.

17

18 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

19

20 **AGENDA OVERVIEW**

21

22 **SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

23

24 **Hooksett Municipal Employee - New Hire**

25

26 A. Garron- Matthew Gardner in the Public Works Department.

27

28 **PUBLIC INPUT - None**

29

30 **SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS**

31

32 **9.1 NHDOT Donati Street Bridge Route 93 Maintenance Project – Traffic Detour Discussion with**
33 **John Bousquet, Vice President of R.M. Piper, Inc.**

34

35 B. Thomas- At the August 23, 2023, meeting of the Town Council, the Council voted to require the
36 NHDOT to keep the Donati Bridge open for traffic during the course of construction. The reason for
37 requiring the bridge to remain open was, in part, due to other construction projects that could occur
38 during the same time period. As it turns out, both the Martins Ferry Road project and the Hooksett
39 Road widening project will not begin until at least next spring (2025). This Donati Bridge project will take
40 place this spring (2024) as soon as the spring term at Southern New Hampshire University ends (on
41 April 28th). The contractor is requesting that the Council revisit their previous decision to keep the
42 bridge open for construction.

43

44 John Bousquet, Vice President of R.M. Piper, Inc.- we were the chosen contractor by the NHDOT for
45 this project. We are requesting that we be allowed to temporarily close the bridge. Phased construction
46 (allowing the project to be detoured) should take about 18-20 weeks, If the bridge is closed, the project
47 should take about 10 -12 weeks to complete. Both scenarios assume an average amount of deck repair
48 work. If more is found than anticipated, it will affect construction duration. Since this project is the only

49 significant project being constructed in the area this summer. No other significant projects will interfere
50 with or complicate the detour. This will save money on the project. This is a very short detour, and
51 safety is very important to us, and we think it is a better scenario for everyone.

52
53 J. Sullivan- We have the minutes and I know in August we voted 6-2 to keep it open and have it in two
54 phases, as long as there is no impact on the schools then I am in favor of closing it.

55
56 R. Lapierre- what did the school say? Will this increase the time they are on the bus? If the school
57 board says they can figure out a way that this does not increase the time they are on the bus, that may
58 work out too.

59
60 T. Tsantoulis- the only reason I recall was that two projects were running concurrently. This will save
61 money for the state and the alternating signal is a pain, and it is not a heavily trafficked road.

62
63 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the closure of the bridge as presented; seconded by T.***
64 ***Tsantoulis.***

65
66 ***Motion fails 3-3***

67
68 R. Lapierre- do we have a start date?

69
70 J. Bousquet- I was looking at the end of April after SNHU closed the semester.

71
72 A. Garron- going back to our August meeting of 2023 the schools had been spoken to and they did not
73 have an issue, the fire department, and other businesses did not have an issue with it.

74
75 D. Boutin- call the question.

76
77 A. Walczyk- it was mentioned last time that there was a road through SNHU as an option to alleviate
78 some of the traffic.

79
80 R. Lapierre- was Underhill included in that? And was that back in August? That was before the school
81 year started. If someone wants to reach out to them and see what their stance is now, then I would
82 reconsider.

83
84 A. Garron- right now they have an approval for a 1 lane closure, to go to a 2 lane closure if the council
85 is willing to table this rather than vote on this and allow me to reach out to the schools and see if they
86 have an issue with it, as well as reach out to other staff.

87
88 T. Tsantoulis- we already voted, and it failed, the best we can do is vote to reconsider at a later date.

89
90 B. Thomas- can I suggest a 3rd option and have you approve the proposal subject to Underhill's
91 approval?

92
93 J. Pinard- No

94
95 **CONSENT AGENDA**

96
97 **10.1 \$2,000 check(s) (\$1,500 Town & \$500 Library) from HealthTrust to the Town of Hooksett for**
98 **the 2024 town-wide wellness program(s) per RSA 31:95-b, III (b).**

99
TC MINUTES

3-27-2024

2

100 **D. Boutin motioned to accept \$2,000 check(s) (\$1,500 Town & \$500 Library) from HealthTrust to**
101 **the Town of Hooksett for the 2024 town-wide wellness program(s) per RSA 31:95-b, III (b);**
102 **seconded by R. Lapierre.**

103
104 **Vote in favor 6-0**

105
106 **OLD BUSINESS**

107
108 **13.1 2024 MS-232 Report of Appropriations Actually Voted totaling \$25,738,820.00.**

109
110 C. Tewksbury- you have in front of you the report to DRA regarding what passed at the Town Meeting,
111 we had four that failed. The Martins Ferry RD intersection, the CRF for the Air packs, tools &
112 equipment, GIS, and the \$60,000 for the revaluation. The rest passed giving us an operating budget of
113 \$25,738,820.00.

114
115 **J. Sullivan motioned to sign the "2024 MS-232 Report of Appropriations Actually Voted" totaling**
116 **\$25,738,820.00; seconded by D. Boutin.**

117
118 **Roll Call Vote #2**

119 **R. Duhaime NP**

120 **J Durand NP**

121 **J. Pinard Aye**

122 **R. Lapierre Aye**

123 **A. Walczyk Aye**

124 **D. Boutin Aye**

125 **K. Judge NP**

126 **J. Sullivan Aye**

127 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**

128 **Vote in favor 6-0**

129
130 **13.2 Town Administrator Recommendations to comply with the vote to the default Operating**
131 **Budget FY2024-2025 of \$23,693,487 as voted on at Town elections on March 12, 2024.**

132
133 A. Garron- at the last meeting I went through each department and made certain decreases to the
134 budget to meet the default budget. I met that goal and then made some additional restorations.

135
136 C. Tewksbury- one of the questions was regarding the Cemetery and the reductions in their budgets.
137 The reductions do not have an impact on the headstone restoration.

138
139 A. Garron- a proposal on the resurfacing is we can pull in other lines at the end of the year and
140 encumber funds and pull them forward. It may not cover it all but will help.

141
142 J. Sullivan motioned to approve the TA proposed recommendations on the reductions in the budget to
143 meet the default budget.

144
145 C. Tewksbury- a motion is not necessary, just a consensus that you agree with our proposal and
146 recommendations moving forward.

147
148
149

150 **13.3 Town Council 2023/2024 Goals Update**

151

152 A. Garron- we have updated the website; we are looking to work with the library to utilize a portion of
153 their newsletter to get information out to the community. As far as putting up electronic signs we will
154 look at next year's budget on how to cover those costs, and we will discuss how many signs to put up
155 and the locations. Regarding goal number 2, and how we want to move forward with setting the budget
156 increase.

157

158 D. Boutin- I believe the council should maintain the 2% budget increase.

159

160 J. Sullivan- if you can strive to maintain that 2%, I would support that and if you can show a good
161 reason what we need to deviate from that and show.

162

163 A. Garron- there will be changes that are natural that we are already committed to that we cannot
164 control.

165

166 J. Pinard- I would agree with the 2% and not include the health insurance increase in the 2% figure.

167

168 D. Boutin- I am very concerned to hear you say that the 2% is a goal and if we go past it oh well.

169

170 T. Tsantoulis- a goal is a goal. There are items we have no control of. If we set the goal at 2% and we
171 go past that and we get in a jam with things we cannot control.

172

173 A. Garron – goal #3 and the removal of the unnecessary utility poles, I have been getting updates that
174 he poles are coming down, but I am unable to get a solid answer as far as to how far along they are in
175 the process. Goal #4 the council has been responsive if they are not going to be here, so we have a
176 quorum. I also met with the Conservation Commission and the council's desire to improve the trail
177 system and the utility of the Merrimack River. The planning Board held a workshop on the Master Plan.
178 The goals are aligned with the council and the Master plan.

179

180 **NEW BUSINESS**

181

182 **14.1 Safety Center Roof and Drainage Review and Design Change Order in the amount of**
183 **\$18,500.00.**

184

185 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the additional services provided by Gale Associates for***
186 ***structural reinforcement design changes costs of \$18,500.00; seconded by J. Sullivan.***

187

188 **Roll Call Vote #3**

189 ***D. Boutin Aye***

190 ***J. Pinard Aye***

191 ***A. Walczyk Aye***

192 ***J. Durand Aye***

193 ***R. Duhaime NP***

194 ***J. Sullivan Aye***

195 ***R. Lapierre Aye***

196 ***K. Judge NP***

197 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

198

199 ***Vote in favor 7-0***

200

201 B. Berthiaume- On 5/24/2023, the Town Council approved and awarded the RFP to Gale Associates for
202 a total of \$58,500, \$51,000 for evaluation and design services plus \$7,500.00 contingencies for
203 masonry and roofing contractor costs to be funded from the Building Maintenance Capital Reserve
204 Account. The original design scope did not include costs for structural reinforcement design changes as
205 it was assumed at the time of RFP development that none would be required. During Gale Associates
206 site visits, review of the original design documents, and evaluation of the new roofing system, they have
207 determined that additional structural design is required.
208

209 **14.2 Phase III Town Owned Properties**

210
211 A. Garron- this is phase 3, and as you know all the phase 3 properties have issues with the title. The
212 proposal is to move forward with NH Tax Deeding. They will take care of all the issues with the tax
213 deeds. The properties that did not sell in phase 2, they will roll that into phase 3 of the auction. They are
214 going to take care of the troubled deeded properties and there would be no additional costs to the town.
215

216 J. Durand- I do not think we should base it off them doing the paperwork or not. I think we should go
217 with St. Jeann auctions and get the most back for our taxpayers. I think their reputation speaks for
218 themselves, again we said we were going to go with the company that did the better job, and they are
219 willing to take that job on.
220

221 R. Lapierre- do you have the final costs on the project?
222

223 A. Garron- some of the legal work was chargeable to the sale, and some of the additional costs are
224 attributable to the interpleader and the costs associated with that.
225

226 L. Mcglaughlin- I do not have all the invoices but I can get that to you. The reason this is presented is
227 because they all need significant title research that could cost a few thousand dollars each. This is the
228 last phase, St. Jeanne was great to work with and they did a good job, and NH Tax Deeding is able to
229 provide us additional services that we need at this time without having to dip into the budget.
230

231 J. Sullivan- I think we need a little bit more information before we can move on with this.
232

233 ***J. Sullivan motioned to table discussion until we can get more information on what we paid after***
234 ***auction in legal expenses and staff time; seconded by D. Boutin.***

235 **Vote in favor 7-0**
236

237 A. Walczyk- it sounds like we are still working on phase 1, and we might not have all the information,
238 correct?
239

240 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

241
242 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the Town Council public minutes of March 13, 2024, seconded***
243 ***by R. Lapierre.***

244 **Vote in favor 7-0**
245

246 **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

247
248 • Employee Appreciation Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, April 18th from 12pm-2pm at the
249 Hooksett Library.
250

251 **J. Sullivan Motioned to hold the Employee Appreciation Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday,**
252 **April 18th from 12pm-2pm at the Hooksett Library and allow employees to be dismissed from**
253 **work duties if allowed by dept head; seconded by D. Boutin.**
254 **Vote in favor 7-0**

- 255
- 256 - Congressman Pappas-contact my office about the Community funding Request-\$1.5 million
- 257 Martins Ferry Roadway and Bridge project realizing that it did not get the votes needed and
- 258 suggested we apply for another funding source through his office, and we have a legal review if
- 259 we apply for it even though it was voted down at Town Meeting. We have to move forward with
- 260 that project, it is unsafe to keep the jersey barriers there.
- 261 - Senator Shaheen- Environmental Improvement Project- \$2M TIF District Infrastructure project
- 262 - Community Development Dept.- Farmer Market Application has been put together so that we
- 263 can cover all our bases if an application is brought forward, and an event is held. We are also
- 264 adding a nominal fee for the application, we want to have a process in how we react.
- 265 - Charter changes effective date is July 1st, 2024. And the 9-7 councilors will take effect in 2025.
- 266 - ARPA Obligation Deadline- Dec. 31, 2024
- 267 - Review and update financial, personnel and operational policies. We did make changes to
- 268 Amendments to Administrative Financial Policies and Procedures to include increasing the \$3,000
- 269 threshold to \$5,000 and the \$15,000 threshold to \$20,000 and removing language that refers to three
- 270 competitive bids.
- 271 - Personnel Plan amendments
 - 272 o Health Insurance Stipend Agreement
 - 273 o Juneteenth addition
 - 274 o Operational
 - 275 o Sign on bonuses (Police, Fire and DPW)
 - 276 o Revision PPA

277 Upcoming Meetings:

- 278 Planning Board- April 1, 2024- Town Hall @ 6pm
- 279 Conservation Commission- April 8, 2024- Town Hall @ 4:30p
- 280 Zoning Board of Adjustment- April 9, 2024-Town Hall @ 6:30p
- 281 Town Council-April 10, 2024- Town Hall @ 6pm
- 282 Planning Board – April 15, 2024- Town Hall @ 6 pm
- 283 Parks & Rec. Advisory Committee- April 16, 2024-Town Hall @ 6pm
- 284 Economic Development Advisory Committee- April 17, 2024- Town Hall @ 5 pm
- 285 Town Council- April 24, 2024-Town Hall @6pm

286

287 **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS**

288

289 R. Lapierre- ARPA Subcommittee meeting coming April 12th at 9am if anyone has a project to propose.

290

291 A. Walczyk- will be working with staff & the Town Councils for the Employee Appreciation luncheon, on
292 April 18th there is a Beautify Hooksett Day through the Conservation Commission. On May 16th there is
293 a grand opening of the River Walk Trail.

294

295 J. Sullivan- the master plan was finalized, and we will be discussing that on Monday.

296

297 T. Tsantoulis- I serve on the Board of Assessors and we had 109 abatements that came through, and
298 the state came in and did the audit and the categories that they audited us on we passed, and they
299 were happy. No Youth Achiever nominations.

300

301 **PUBLIC INPUT- None**

302
303 **NON-PUBLIC SESSION NH RSA 91-A:3 II**
304
305 ***T. Tsantoulis motioned to enter NON-PUBLIC SESSION per NH RSA 91-A:3 II E; seconded by D. Boutin.***
306 (e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed by or against the
307 public body or any subdivision thereof, or by or against any member thereof because of his or her membership in such public
308 body, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Any application filed for tax abatement,
309 pursuant to law, with anybody or board shall not constitute a threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the
310 purposes of this subparagraph.

311
312 **Roll Call Vote #4**
313 ***A. Walczyk Aye***
314 ***R. Lapierre Aye***
315 ***J. Pinard NP***
316 ***R. Duhaime NP***
317 ***J. Durand Aye***
318 ***K. Judge NP***
319 ***J. Sullivan Aye***
320 ***D. Boutin Aye***
321 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***
322 ***Vote in favor 7-0***

323
324 ***J. Sullivan motioned to leave the non-public session at 8:13; seconded by D. Boutin.***
325 ***Vote in favor 7-0***

326
327 ***T. Tsantoulis motioned to seal the Non-Public minutes of March 27, 2024; seconded by J. Sullivan.***

328
329 **Roll Call Vote #5**
330 ***J. Sullivan Aye***
331 ***J. Pinard Aye***
332 ***R. Duhaime NP***
333 ***A. Walczyk Aye***
334 ***R. Lapierre Aye***
335 ***K. Judge NP***
336 ***J. Durand Aye***
337 ***D. Boutin Aye***
338 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***
339 ***Vote in favor 7-0***

340
341 **ADJOURNMENT**

342
343 ***T. Tsantoulis motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:14; seconded by R. Lapierre***
344 ***Vote in favor 7-0***

345
346 Respectfully submitted,

347
348 ***Alicia Jipson***

349
350 Alicia Jipson

351 Recording Clerk
352