

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, April 29, 2015**

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

***J. Sullivan motioned to enter into non-public at 7:04pm. Seconded by J. Levesque.***

**Roll Call:**

N. Comai – Yes  
T. Lizotte – Yes  
J. Levesque – Yes  
R. Duhaime – Yes  
D. Ross – Yes  
J. Sullivan – Yes

***Vote unanimously in favor.***

***J. Sullivan motioned to exit non-public at 7:41pm. Seconded by T. Lizotte.  
Vote unanimously in favor.***

***D. Ross motioned to seal the non-public minutes of 4/29/15. Seconded by J. Levesque.  
Vote unanimously in favor.***

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Sullivan called the public session to order at 7:43 pm.

**ROLL CALL – ATTENDANCE**

Nancy Comai, David Ross, Robert Duhaime, Todd Lizotte, James Levesque, Chairman James Sullivan,  
Dr. Dean E. Shankle, Jr. (Town Administrator)

Missed: Donald Winterton, Adam Jennings, Susan Orr

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**NEW BUSINESS**

a. 15-026 Proclamation – Citizen of the Year 2015

J. Sullivan: We had a request for the Proclamation for Citizen of the Year 2015. Joanne McHugh has been named the 2015 Citizen of the Year. She has served the community for over 40 years on various boards, commissions and committees. Her main focus has been with school children where she has served as a School Board member for a total of 22 years; 10-year volunteer with the PTA/PTO; member of various school district subcommittees; she also served as a member of the Police Commission, Planning Board for 2 terms, Budget Committee and Capital Improvement Committee. She was also a member of the Salvation Army and the local Hooksett Emergency Relief Committee. In 2008 she was named by the NH School Administrators Association as the South Central Regional Champion for children. On May 15 there is a celebration; please let the committee know if you would like to attend.

***N. Comai motioned to authorize the Chair to present the Citizen of the Year proclamation as read to Joanne McHugh at the 2015 Citizen of the Year dinner and ceremony. Seconded by T. Lizotte.  
Vote unanimously in favor.***

**OLD BUSINESS**

a. 15-021 Reorganization of Department of Public Works

J. Sullivan: We talked about this at our last meeting and Dr. Shankle has an update for us.

Dr. Shankle: At the last meeting, I brought forth a proposal that would affect Recycle & Transfer, Public Works and the Engineer in the Community Development Department. There were 7 people here; not one Councilor supported that proposal so I am withdrawing my proposal and don't intend to bring forth another one.

J. Sullivan: I assume we will be entertaining that discussion at our next meeting?

Dr. Shankle: There is no discussion, I've withdrawn my proposal. There is nothing to discuss.

J. Sullivan: With the current situation, we will maintain the current status which is what?

Dr. Shankle: I would plan on putting out a call for a Public Works Director and it would go back to the way it was.

R. Duhaime: And still look for the engineer position?

Dr. Shankle: That's what we have. That's ongoing.

D. Ross: I think that given time, there are a lot of people that are semi-retired that may take the position that would have the expertise we need, and sometimes people coming right out of school would be good as well.

R. Duhaime: To be a municipal engineer you need to have your PE and be certified. You have to offer them some money, that's what I'm trying to tell you.

D. Ross: Then that should have been something we dealt with at the beginning of this. I understood the amount we budgeted was going to be half a year anyway and that would be added to the following year and that would have been more reasonable. Maybe that is something we need to talk about and readdress and perhaps we need to increase the compensation we offer the engineer. How we could afford the engineer would come from construction and construction has been slack but is turning around in a big way.

N. Comai: At this moment we have an acting director, in a dual role as the superintendent and the engineer that is on the books is still under Community Development?

Dr. Shankle: Yes. One of the things that did happen at the last meeting, I think, is that there did seem to be Council support for Councilor Winterton's recommendation. There is no reason that the Council can't go ahead and do that without my recommendation. Under the Charter, it's your responsibility to do things like that. I'd like to know if you are going to do that so I don't advertise for a Public Works Director, if you are still inclined to make those changes that Councilor Winterton suggested.

J. Levesque: So the engineer would work for the Community Development group; would he also be able to oversee jobs being done by contractors around town to make sure the roads are being built properly?

Dr. Shankle: Yes, of course. That is still the idea.

J. Levesque: They aren't the type of people to tell people what to do. They have a project and they go work on that project. As far as the engineer being the Deputy Director and telling people what to do, I don't think that is going to work.

T. Lizotte: It's true; if you have an engineer who is an engineer, they are going to focus on their projects. One of the biggest problems for an engineer is distractions; as soon as you get them off task, the original project takes 10-20% longer even though there was a small derivation. Either they are an engineer or they are a manager of engineers, but they can't do both. I like Councilor Winterton's idea of that being an offshoot of the director, but not in the linkage of the chain of command.

N. Comai: I think we should instruct Dr. Shankle to start the process of looking for people to see what the market does bear and then we can make a decision later of organization. I think Dr. Shankle should find out if there is someone out there we can hire and then we assess the situation again.

J. Sullivan: One of the reasons for the proposal was the funding for the engineer; you had indicated that the amount we were willing to pay for that position was lower and that was causing some problems. If we go with Mr. Winterton's approach, regardless of his responsibilities, there is still the question of the amount we can pay. Is there a necessity for us to create a Deputy Public Works Director? Is it possible just to have the Public Works Director? If you did eliminate the direct link from the divisions up to the director without the deputy there would be some funds available to transfer that would allow us to hire an engineer because the figure is low. Could that be a possibility? We still have an engineer that is now

almost a year out that we haven't hired yet, at the direction of the voters, so we need to solve that. If the same problem exists now that Dr. Shankle couldn't find an engineer for that position in the last year, there is a reason for that. We need more funds from somewhere; can you hire an engineer with more funds without doing any changes to the Department of Public Works? Where would those funds come from? That is the crutch; if we can get the engineer, we would be in good shape but we don't have an engineer because there aren't enough funds to cover that.

Dr. Shankle: That's why I'm not suggesting that. It made sense to me to do it in the context of more responsibilities. There is a reason I did things the way I did; to just take money from somewhere else and just have an engineer when the warrant article was pretty clear about what we were willing to pay for that, I would feel uncomfortable with that. You can do that.

T. Lizotte: Since Councilor Winterton isn't here, I think we should hold off until the next meeting. Dr. Shankle is saying we still need a director of DPW; on the engineer side we are only advertising in NH correct? There might be an ability to go a bit further than that, to expand on that. Maybe find a network and get into it.

J. Levesque: You said if we hire a new Director of Public Works, things would go back to the way they were. I see Recycle & Transfer is now going to be under the Director of Public Works.

Dr. Shankle: No, that's Councilor Winterton's proposal.

J. Sullivan: Let's talk about the engineer at this point.

R. Duhaime: I was hoping to see some different alternatives. I wasn't going to make a decision looking at those alternatives; I see no reason we can't wait a couple of weeks and do some more research in the meantime. Let's start with the engineer and then see if we can find a Public Works Director, but we have to see what the market will bear.

J. Levesque: I have a thought, but it might require going into non-public because it's about a specific individual.

J. Sullivan: To go into non-public to talk about your thoughts, we have no authority as a Council to influence or direct the hiring of any other position other than the department head, according to the Charter.

J. Levesque: I can always talk to the Town Administrator later.

D. Ross: I want to go back to the beginning of the discussion with the engineer in the first place. The whole reason behind it was to bring funding into the town from developers – they have to pay for the engineering and we paid Stantec or whoever else was doing the oversight on these projects. Nothing in that regard has changed at all. We don't have a job that's not being done, it's just not being done the way we thought it would be. Times have changed and let's see what the next construction season brings. If we find out that at the end of this year we can put out \$200,000 that we can pass through then maybe we have a case that can be made to the voters again, if need be, to increase that amount of money. In my opinion, we haven't given it enough time to bear fruit. The first thing is to get a Director of Public Works back in that seat because there is a lot of work to be done.

N. Comai: It's my understanding that we can, as a Council, increase that wage line. Is that correct?

Dr. Shankle: You set the wage rates for department heads; the engineer would not be a department head.

N. Comai: This would allow the opportunity to put out a job description, but we don't know what that is.

Dr. Shankle: We have a job description for both the engineer and the Director of Public Works.

J. Sullivan: It's not the job description for the engineer, it's the amount we are willing to pay for that job. Can we increase that wage for that position approved by the voters? Regardless of where the

economy is, we thought the increased business would cover the cost. We need to increase that wage somehow, but we need to come up with the additional funding. How can we do that, as a Council, within the Charter?

Dr. Shankle: We would have to move money from somewhere else. We are talking about July 1 at this point so it would be next year's budget. If people want to go for an engineer, we could put out the ad without putting a dollar value on it and see what happens. If we find who we want we can see if we can pay what they want. That is another way to do it.

D. Ross: Or even start as a part time position.

J. Levesque: I'd think we want to hire a DPW Director first and then look for an engineer. He is going to have to work with him along with Joanne. Maybe we will find a DPW Director who has an engineering background. I think that should be the first step.

N. Comai: Then there is the consideration of where the engineer lands as far as a direct report or not. If it's a \$90,000 position, that would probably not fit under Community Development, in my opinion. Instead, it would be in one of these buckets like the Director.

J. Sullivan: Would the engineer report directly to the Town Administrator?

Dr. Shankle: That isn't the plan at this point. IF the way people want to go is get a DPW Director and then go from there, it would be possible, if you are looking for justification to raise it, if you did create an engineering department you could have the engineer as the department head. I did think of that but then you would need some kind of administrative help, so that is why I was avoiding that.

J. Sullivan: At this point, is there a possibility you can come back with various scenarios including tweaking your original proposal?

Dr. Shankle: There is no easy way to do that. If you like what Councilor Winterton did, which most of you did, then we can go with that. Or we can keep things the way they are. I don't want to bring back something that will create more problems down the road. That's what I am trying to avoid.

J. Levesque: Transfer has been fine; there are no problems down there. If we had a good leader in DPW, we won't have all these problems.

J. Sullivan: Correct; we have to have the right people in the organization. If we have a Director that is doing the job we expect of them, then we will be all set. Let's put the discussion on next meeting's agenda and there may be another solution you come up with in the meantime.

N. Comai: So you are going to reach out for a DPW Director, which makes sense.

Dr. Shankle: I'll put out an ad but it won't be due until after your next Council meeting anyway. I won't make an irrevocable decision between now and your next meeting. But I will start the process.

J. Sullivan: So we will put this on the agenda which will give Dr. Shankle an opportunity to update us and we can discuss further with other suggestions. Councilor Winterton will be back. That's how we will proceed.

N. Comai: My thought about the Volunteer Dinner is to perhaps pass this year. We don't have the funding coming in from the sponsor and there was such an upheaval over invitees. The thought would be to not have one this year and to regroup and possibly have a lunch at the deliberative session or have something at Old Home Day so that everybody can be included, or not, and take a break and save the \$2,000. Someone mentioned there were only 45 people that came last year, so if it's not highly attended, then maybe we take a year off.

***N. Comai motioned to postpone the 2015 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner with the possibility of reinstating in 2016. Seconded by T. Lizotte.***

T. Lizotte: I think we should continue to do what we have done. If it's well attended or not, it's an ebb and flow. This is a situation where we are influencing our policies and methods based on one person who was upset over not being invited.

N. Comai: It's \$2,000 of our money vs. sponsorship money.

J. Sullivan: If we continue with our approach, it doesn't say this requires us to have a sit-down meal. If we tweak how we do it and still have a gathering we could find ways to be more practical and prudent but still show our appreciation. As a town group, we need to recognize those who volunteer for government operations. I think we should proceed that way, and make changes as necessary.

J. Levesque: For the \$2,500 it costs, and all the work these people provide for the town, it's really cheap money. I think it's bad not to have it; it's not an extravagant dinner.

R. Duhaime: It's funny that we were looking for more community involvement and now we're talking about not having the volunteer appreciation dinner. It's interesting that I'm in this leadership position, and this decision falls on me. If someone volunteers for the town concern that we are trying to manage and we are at the top and if we can't take the time or money to thank them, then I'm not doing a very good job managing. It's reflecting on the Chair, as he sits at the very top of the chain. The least we can do is say thank you; how we do that is what we are discussing. We need to do it in a thoughtful way that shows we appreciate their work.

***T. Lizotte removed his second.***

***N. Comai motioned to adjourn at 8:20pm. Seconded by R. Duhaime.  
Vote unanimously in favor.***

**NOTE:** The Town website [www.hooksett.org](http://www.hooksett.org) may have attachments to these Town Council minutes for documents referred to in the minutes, reading file material, and/or ancillary documents that the Town Council Chair has signed as agent to expend as a result of the Council's prior approval of the documents.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tiffany Verney  
Recording Clerk