

DRAFT MINUTES
Town Council Workshop
Wednesday, August 10, 2016
6:30 p.m.
Town Hall, Council Chambers

1. Discussion of Best Practices with Previous Councilor(s)

Chairman James Sullivan called the workshop meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. In attendance: Councilors Donald Winterton, James Levesque, Robert Duhaim (arrived at 6:40 p.m.), John Giotas, Adam Jennings, David Ross (arrived at 7:21 p.m.), and Timothy Tsantoulis. Councilor Miville was not present but did provide a number of suggested items to be discussed.

Town Administrator, Dr. Dean Shankle, said they have had issues in getting feedback from microphones and asked everyone to speak into the microphone to diminish feedback. The Councilors welcomed Dr. Shankle back from China, and Chairman Sullivan suggested that at the next council meeting, he might provide feedback on his trip.

Administrator Shankle also announced that Katie Ambrose will be leaving Hooksett to take on a position as Town Administrator in Sanbornton. Councilors noted that a number of employees have left for similar positions in the past.

Chairman Sullivan said that at 7:00 p.m. tonight the NH Department of Transportation was having an open house and public information session regarding alternatives for improving I-293 and the interchanges at Exit 6, Amoskeag Street, and Exit 7, Route 3A, River Road, which could impact Hooksett, but this workshop was already scheduled.

2. Administrative Code Updates – [copy included in Council packet]

a. Update 5.7 Budget Development

The Council packet included recommended changes by Finance Director, Christine Soucie, to Administrative Code, Section 5.7. Dr. Shankle stated that the suggested changes reflect actual practice. Chairman Sullivan questioned whether the change would impact the Budget Committee. Dr. Shankle said the changes had more to do with timing. The Town Council's submittal date to the Budget Committee is set by the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee should conclude its meetings as prescribed by the Town Charter.

b. Add 5.13 Cellular Phones in the Workplace

Donna Fitzpatrick said that Administration did not have a concrete cell phone policy that encompassed the use of cell phones in the workplace. The purpose of the policy is to establish guidelines for employees who have been identified as needing cellular phones, both town provided and reimbursed (via allowances) personal phones. Councilor Winterton asked Dr. Shankle if he was comfortable with the proposed policy regarding disciplining, if and when necessary. Dr. Shankle said they needed something more comprehensive and over the last month, they have brought it up at staff meetings and it seems okay. Councilor Winterton asked if there were people in the collective bargaining unit that the town provides cell phones to and how would a grievance be filed if necessary. Dr. Shankle said the bargaining unit contract doesn't address cell phones. Councilor Jennings asked how many people were getting a cell phone

52 allowance and whether an increase would be anticipated if rates change. Donna Fitzpatrick said a handful
53 of people get an allowance. She will provide an answer to the question at the next meeting. Dr. Shankle
54 said it is not a big problem. Councilor Duhaime said if the town wants an employee to have a phone, it
55 must provide it. Councilor Tsantoulis felt there were two parts to the issues ó use by employees when they
56 are working and when an employee is not doing their legitimate work. Councilor Levesque pointed out
57 that most cell phone plans now have unlimited texting and WiFi is widely available. He feels the draft
58 policy is straightforward enough. After a bit more discussion, it was agreed that verbiage should be added
59 to the effect that the policy will follow the disciplinary process as described in the personnel policy.
60

61 **3. Town Council Rules of Procedures Updates – [copy included in Board packet]**

62 a. Update 2.a. Annually, at the first meeting of the new Town Council

63
64
65 Numbers 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11 were added to Section 2.a of the Town Council Rules and Procedures. No. 8
66 Motion to Adopt the Administrative Code, included ð(which includes the Investment and Fund Balance
67 Policies). There was no particular discussion on the suggested changes.
68

69 b. Update 2.c.3.d. Minutes attachments

70
71 Donna Fitzpatrick stated that attachments to minutes must now be formatted in PDF and makes the
72 upcoming Board packet larger than it needs to be. The Council discussed options. It was pointed out that
73 most attachments are provided to Council members at meetings so need not be included with the minutes
74 placed in the Council packets for approval. Everyone agreed that attachments be posted online as a
75 separate document and that minutes include reference to the attachments as appropriate.
76

77 c. Update 3.d. extend public session

78
79 Chairman Sullivan suggested starting the Town Council meetings at 6:00 p.m. instead of 6:30. Councilor
80 Winterton said that the Board of Assessors sometimes meets on Town Council meeting nights, but they can
81 adjust and start a little earlier. It was recommended that the verbiage to Section 3.d include ðThe Council
82 shall motion to extend public session meetings past 9:30 p.m. as follows ñmotion to extend public session
83 until meeting is adjournedð. Councilor Winterton said it's hard to get all of the public business that town
84 councilors must accomplish in two days of the month and at the end of some meetings things get
85 compressed and perhaps not take as much time as it should take. He urged the Councilors to ðdo the
86 public's business and do it rightð. He was in favor of starting meetings at 6:00 p.m. Councilor Winterton
87 said that in his work life, meetings started on time and ended when they were done. Councilor Jennings
88 said Councilor Miville said he's okay with a 6:00 p.m. start time. Councilor Winterton was in favor of
89 motioning to extend until adjournment. Chairman Sullivan said motions to extend public sessions will
90 occur past 9:30 p.m.
91

92 d. Update 6.3.a. addressing remarks through the Chair

93
94 Chairman Sullivan said he requested that remarks be kept at a maximum of two times per subject matter.
95 Councilor Winterton feels it should be left to the discretion of the Chair, and leave it to two times but not
96 include a maximum since this section may be waived at the discretion of the chair.
97

98 e. Update 8.b. non-public sessions ó no motions to extend

99
100 No. 8.b was included and reads ðNon-public sessions do not require motions to extend the meeting past
101 9:30 p.m. There was no discussion on this matter.
102

103 It was recommended to add ðno later than noon the Wednesday prior to the regular Council meetingö to No.
104 9.a. Councilor Winterton asked if there had been an issue historically and how long it takes staff to put
105 together Council meeting materials once everything has been received. Donna Fitzpatrick said it takes
106 from noon to end of day. Councilor Winterton was concerned with establishing a drop dead time, and
107 asked about something coming in three minutes after deadline and it not being able to be included on the
108 meeting agenda.

109
110 Chairman Sullivan indicated that the Town Administrator's report has leeway to bring items to the
111 Council's attention. Dr. Shankle said he didn't like departments bringing in last minute items and
112 expecting the Council to vote on it. Councilor Tsantoulis said if staff needs time to prepare materials, all
113 should adhere to the timeline as much as possible, recognizing that there will be exceptions. Exceptions
114 should go through Dr. Shankle. Chairman Sullivan pointed out that the Council has the option to table
115 items as they see fit, and late items should go to the Administrator. Councilor Ross said that if an item is
116 brought in the same day of a meeting, the Council should not vote on it. Dr. Shankle noted that printing
117 begins at noon and when items come in later, the whole packet needs to be reprinted. Councilor Ross noted
118 that residents must be advised in advance about what the Council will take up. Dr. Shankle said state law
119 requires notification occur 24 hours prior to discussion. Chairman Sullivan said when the rule is waived to
120 consider last minute items, a statement on the reasons why should accompany the action.

121
122 f. Add 14 Moment of Silence

123
124 The Council agreed to delete the word ðshallö and instead use the word ðmayö in the phrase and not narrow
125 the practice. The section should read: ðthe Council Chair may call a moment of silence for deceased.

126
127 g. Add 15 Special Recognition

128
129 The Council discussed recognizing new hires and whether they need to be recognized. Councilor Jennings
130 said they could be included on the meeting agenda. Chairman Sullivan said newly hired employees could
131 be mentioned in the Town Administrator's report. Councilor Ross again suggested included verbiage to the
132 affect ðmay include but is not limitedí ö Councilor Giotas likes the idea of recognizing length of service to
133 the town. Chairman Sullivan suggested longevity awards be provided in September with a Hooksett Pin or
134 other appropriate recognition. Councilor Jennings said perhaps they could be recognized during employee
135 appreciation ó recognize at meeting and follow up with employee appreciation. Councilor Winterton
136 suggested having staff come on their anniversary dates to be recognized and provided with a token of
137 appreciation. Donna Fitzpatrick mentioned that being a concern for staff on shifts. Katie Ambrose
138 mentioned that there are still pens left that use to be handed out. Donna Fitzpatrick said comments that have
139 been received from staff include: a bonus, a paid administrative day off, vacation accrual because it maxes
140 out at 15. Councilor Ross said he would be more inclined to go with a bonus. Chairman Sullivan said the
141 key is to recognize them on camera. Councilor Winterton said there is a difference between recognition and
142 compensation. ðWe're talking about recognitionö. Councilor Ross said rewarding with pens is nice but at
143 the 15-20 year point, bonuses speak volumes; it's not a bad idea especially since we have a retention
144 problem. Donna Fitzpatrick said she and Dr. Shankle will work on a recognition program.

145
146 **4. Personnel Plan Discussion – [copy included in Council packet]**

147
148 a. Section 2 Vacancy ó job postings

149
150 At the Council's last meeting there was discussion about expanding where job openings are announced.
151 Donna Fitzpatrick listed where job openings are placed. Councilor Ross said online postings make sense;
152 perhaps try Monster.com. Donna said they post with the NH Municipal Association and have used
153 Employment Security in the past. Chairman Sullivan said the issue is posting new positions and possibly

154 expanding distribution of staff openings. Councilor Winterton asked if the Municipal Association provided
155 links to other sites. Dr. Shankle indicated that other things would need to be changed since the town
156 doesn't accept just a resume; we require applicants to fill in a form and have them sign the form.
157 Chairman Sullivan said if increased postings, increase applicants, perhaps there is need to make other
158 changes.

159
160 Councilor Ross said perhaps a call can be made to those whose resume looks good and have them come in
161 to fill out an application. He said we need to cast a wider net. Chairman Sullivan said consensus is that
162 we need to expand the net of applicants. Administration will come back to the Council.

163
164 The Council then discussed whether new positions are to be placed on the ballot. Councilor Ross suggested
165 including verbiage to be placed on the ballot. Dr. Shankle asked about additional positions instead of
166 a new position. Chairman Sullivan said open positions would have to wait until March to be posted;
167 perhaps a position could not be filled for a full year. Councilor Ross feels that the town should have an
168 opportunity to weigh in on whether to add an employee or not.

169
170 Councilor Winterton questioned whether additional would constitute adding counselors to the Fun in the
171 Sun program, for example. Dr. Shankle said the policy would apply to full time positions only, permanent
172 position. Councilor Jennings asked if the four recent police hires were in the budget and not on the ballot.
173 Councilor Ross said permanent, full time positions have to go on the ballot and that's what Dr. Shankle has
174 been doing. Councilor Giotas asked if that meant the town can only hire once a year and brought up the
175 issue of hiring emergency personnel. Councilor Ross said yes. Councilor Duhaimé suggested that the
176 practice would restrict the Town Administrator. Councilor Ross said the Town Administrator has to
177 manage. Councilor Tsantoulis said there should be reasonable expectation that the Town Administrator
178 would be able to exercise some judgment and do what is prudent for the time, and what a Town
179 Administrator does is subject to review. If he or she is putting too many people on, the Council has means
180 of dealing with it, rather than restrict employment for a year. Councilor Tsantoulis feels having to place all
181 full time permanent positions on the ballot is too restrictive and that much can happen in 365 days.
182 Chairman Sullivan said the Council should not tie the Town Administrator's hands within the scope of the
183 fiscal year. There seemed to be consensus that only permanent, full time positions would be placed on the
184 ballot. Administration would be free to hire full time and part time temporary.

185
186 Councilor Miville asked to add this phrase to the following sentence: "No new position will be established
187 without the approval of the Town Administrator and vote of the Town Council", and with the advanced
188 advising notice to Town Council, upon the Department Head's request for the new position." Councilor
189 Miville suggested the phrase to recognize the recent attempt to create the temporary full-time Recreation
190 Director position where a candidate was advised to seek out the position, and behind the scenes go to
191 various boards and groups around town prior to the Council being made aware of the position and prior to
192 Council vote. Councilor Miville asks that the Council be made aware of any departmental requests for a
193 new position immediately upon the Town Administrator receiving the request.

194
195 Councilor Miville asked that Administration establish a "notification" file per district that would highlight
196 and outline anything that occurs in each district. Dr. Shankle said that would be burdensome to try to figure
197 out districts. He said communications need to improve but for the Council as a whole. All agreed.

198
199 Councilor Miville said there have been multiple email messages from constituents expressing their opinion
200 about how the Council is not responding to their requests or call for action. Councilor Miville asked what
201 the protocol is for responding to such messages when sent to councilors as a group; i.e., can each councilor
202 respond on their own, or should the Council provide a unified response. Councilor Winterton suggested
203 NEVER responding TO ALL since that would constitute a Council meeting. Dr. Shankle said the Chair

204 copies him and tells the person that he is copying the town administrator and it will be taken care of.
205 Consensus was to respond and copy the Town Administrator.

206
207 One final item brought up by Councilor Miville was access to the Reading File. Donna Fitzpatrick said that
208 the read file is available anytime.

209
210 **5. Assessing Discussion Items – [copy included in Council packet]**

211
212 a. Veterans or Veterans Widow Credit

213
214 Councilor Winterton said he would prefer to hold off making a recommendation until the data previously
215 provided by Lee Ann Moynihan, Field Appraiser, is available. Other councilors agreed.

216
217 b. Elderly Exemption

218
219 Councilors decided to hold off making any recommendations, pending Lee Ann Moynihan providing the
220 formula and numbers as previously provided. Chairman Sullivan asked that the three members of the Board
221 of Assessors meet with Ms. Moynihan and bring back to the Council their recommendations.

222
223 **6. Old Home Day September 17, 2016 – Town Council Booth**

224
225 a. Volunteer Schedule

226
227 Donna Fitzpatrick asked for a volunteer to work with her leading up to the Old Home Day celebration to
228 help coordinate the Town Council Old Home Day booth and Employee Appreciation Picnic. Chairman
229 Sullivan volunteered to help.

230
231 b. Assign Town Councilor to Coordinate Booth with Administration

232
233 Donna Fitzpatrick asked Councilors to sign up to cover the Town Council Booth during Old Home Day.

234
235 **7. Employee Appreciation Picnic October 7, 2016**

236
237 a. Volunteer Schedule

238
239 b. Assign Town Councilor to Coordinate Picnic with Administration

240
241 Chairman Sullivan volunteered. Donna Fitzpatrick said they have a budget line for the picnic and asked
242 councilors to sign up to volunteer the event.

243
244 **8. Other**

245
246 a. Communication with Boards & Committees

247
248 Chairman Sullivan said there is a disconnect with what is going on with town Boards. He asked Council
249 representatives to the Boards to be more forthcoming in their reports to the Council. Donna Fitzpatrick said
250 many Boards and Committees have been invited to come in to address the Council but were unable to make
251 it.

252
253 b. Town Administrator information sharing with Councilors

254 Councilor Miville asked that more email communications be sent to councilors in between the twice
255 monthly meetings. Dr. Shankle pointed out that he doesn't always know of every pothole being fixed,
256 and he doesn't want to add staff to keep Council informed. He acknowledged that the Council should be
257 informed of signs being posted or things going on at the dog park.

258
259 c. Encumbrances ó is item already contracted?

260
261 Councilor Ross said his concern is that the Council is not supposed to create situations to encumber money
262 and disagrees with the "use or lose" mentality. How the last batch of encumbrances were handled was
263 improper and he is not impressed as a taxpayer. Councilor Duhaime said he, too, didn't recall doing
264 anything like that over the last two previous years. Dr. Shankle agreed and felt it "was dumped on all of
265 us". Councilor Ross suggested putting the practice in policy. Dr. Shankle said it needs to be done by July
266 1st; there's a law and policy.

267
268 d. Budget transfers and overages of a specific amount within divisions of the same dept.

269
270 It was agreed to take up this issue when Finance Director, Christine Soucie, is available.

271
272 e. Miscellaneous

273
274 Councilor Tsantoulis asked if meetings would begin at 6:00 going forward. Chairman Sullivan said voting
275 on matters discuss tonight will take place at the Council's next meeting. If approved, start time of Council
276 meetings could be effective in September.

277
278 Chairman Sullivan adjourned the workshop meeting at 8:47 p.m.
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281
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