



**LACONIA CITY COUNCIL  
BUDGET WORK SESSION  
APRIL 8, 2013  
CITY HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 200A  
6:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Seymour called the meeting to order at the above date and time.

**ATTENDANCE:**

The following Councilors were in attendance: Councilor Doyle, Lahey, Lipman, Baer, and Bolduc.

Also in attendance: City Manager Scott Myers, Finance Director Donna Woodaman, Assessor Jon Duhamel and Planning/Code Director Shanna Saunders

**ASSESSING – ASSESSOR JON DUHAMEL (Pg. 28-32)**

Mr. Duhamel reviewed his proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2013/2014 budget and sales analysis information with the Council. The budget presented shows an addition of the GIS Services. This item has been added as part of the interdepartmental initiative previously discussed with the Council.

Mr. Duhamel also informed the Council that at the annual banquet of the New Hampshire Association of Assessors he was the recipient of the President's Award. Mr. Duhamel emphasized that although he was the recipient named on the award it truly belongs to the employees in his department because without their efforts receiving the award would not have been possible.

Councilor Lipman asked how the amounts for Telephone and Copier lines are determined. City Manager Myers replied that they are estimated figures based on usage but they can be rationalized by the reduction of desktop printer and removal of fax lines with use of digital faxing. The reduction in Supplies will be greater than the increase in Copier when there is a full year's information available.

Councilor Lipman confirmed that each department will experience this type of discrepancy. City Manager Myers confirmed it will. Finance Director Woodman added that at this time there is not a full year of historical data to use for analysis because the changes were not implemented to coincide with the fiscal year.

Councilor Bolduc requested a list of the members of the Board of Assessors. Mr. Duhamel replied that he will get that to the Council.

Mayor Seymour thanked Mr. Duhamel for his presentation.

**PLANNING/ZONING – PLANNING DIRECTOR SHANNA SAUNDERS (Pg. 74-79)**

Director Saunders thanked the Council for having the department heads present to them because it is a great opportunity to display the great work done by the departments throughout the year. The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustments were thanked for their dedication and hard work they put in.

Over the last year the department has worked with the Boards to update the wetlands/shorelands ordinance, helped establish the Weirs TIF District, and continued work on the noise ordinance, Downtown way finding, integrating street renovations with sidewalks on Union Avenue and the Safe Routes to School Project, and the update of the zoning ordinance. New projects will include a village overlay district to concentrate on streetscape and architecture and a storm water erosion control ordinance.

In the proposed budget there has been a request for an allocation of \$20,000 toward the long term Master Plan goal. The Master Plan is estimated to cost approximately \$60,000 and with allocations this fiscal year and next the process can begin in 2015.

Director Saunders explained that there is also a request for funding of Outside Services but it is lower than last year because of grant funding received by the City. Next year the zoning of the Weirs will be looked at and will be a very large project, along with parking, that will require additional assistance from outside sources.

The Planning Department is also participating in the interdepartmental GIS Services.

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION – PLANNING DIRECTOR SHANNA SAUNDERS (Pg. 39-41)**

Director Saunders expressed that the Conservation Commission consists of a group of fantastic, motivated people that complete a large amount of work with a very minimal budget. Some of the projects completed include working with high school students on an invasive species sidewalk day in Downtown, worked with PSNH and Northway Bank to clean up Jewett Brook with the assistance of 30 volunteers, organized a county wide open space group, created an invasive species drop off point in conjunction with Public Works and water quality monitoring with the assistance of a dozen volunteers. Director Saunders presented a map showing the sampling points around Paugus Bay for the Council to review.

In the proposed budget there has been a small increase requested to assist in the supplementing of the water quality monitoring program. There is a hope to try and start the monitoring earlier this year, in April rather than June, because small streams tend to dry up by August and the sampling has been limited to June and July only.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT – DIRECTOR SHANNA SAUNDERS (Pg. 33-38)**

Director Saunders thanked the volunteers of the Heritage Commission that work diligently with no budget. They assist with input before the demolition of historical buildings and approvals that come before the Planning Board. There are also a few volunteers on the Building Code Board of Appeals but unfortunately there are not enough to hold an official meeting.

For the past few years inspection services have been contracted to John Turner Consulting and the contract will be expiring in December 2013. With the conclusion of the contract a decision will need to

be made regarding renewing the contract or hiring a Code Enforcement Inspector separately. Director Saunders and City Manager Myers will begin working on this in October and hope for a seamless transition. The budget has been prepared with the assumption that John Turner Consulting will be contracted for the service. Director Saunders stated that they have been very happy with the service provided and the knowledge of the representatives coming to the City.

Director Saunders also informed the Council that there has been a new focus on the property maintenance requirements and the enforcement. In the past there were many attempts to cite properties with infractions but the department was spread too thin to enforce all of the infractions effectively. As a result, they have been concentrating on those that are continued offenders and shared photographs of the properties they are focusing on, noting that they are private properties and there locations should be treated delicately. With the increase in need to focus on the gateways of the City as well as repeat offenders the proposed budget includes a requested increase in hours for one part-time secretary to 26 hours each week which would allow the time to look at structure maintenance issues rather than just the exterior infractions.

Director Saunders explained that some of the most difficult structures to address are those that have been abandoned. Not only do they pose a risk because of access restrictions but they are also very time consuming and can lead to interstate searches. One particular location has led to court services and location in the State of California and within the next several months the hope is to have permission to access the property and make it safe. The cost for bringing the property up to code would be recovered by the City by placing a lien on the property.

Director Saunders explained that the full process begins with a complaint and is followed up with a site visit where a picture is taken for the file. A courtesy letter is sent advising of the property maintenance code and what the violation is and in most cases the property owner will come in and meet with the department to get a better understanding of the issues and how to resolve them. The department then looks for compliance and will reassess the site and take additional pictures which will be followed by a violation notice. At this point more meetings could take place and additional site visits could be conducted; the process to this point could take several months and as long as the property owner is working toward compliance the department will work with them for making the effort.

Councilor Baer asked if the court costs are recovered or if they are paid by the City. Director Saunders replied that some of the cases are utilizing Jim Sawyer from the Police Department and he has been helpful. City Manager Myers added that Chief Adams has been very willing to assist with this process.

Mayor Seymour expressed that the need is heard and the clarification is good to hear.

Mayor Seymour thanked Director Saunders for her presentation.

With no further presentations Mayor Seymour closed the budget hearing at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Mary A. Reynolds  
City Clerk