The Hooksett Town Council met on Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 6:00 in the Hooksett Municipal Building.

CALL TO ORDER
Chair Sullivan called the meeting of 26 Feb 2020 to order at 6:01 pm.

PROOF OF POSTING
Administrative Services Coordinator Donna Fitzpatrick provided proof of posting.

ROLL CALL
In Attendance: Councilor James Sullivan, Councilor Robert Duhaime, Councilor John Durand, Councilor Avery Comai, Councilor James Levesque, Councilor Clifford Jones, Councilor Timothy Tsantoulis, Councilor Clark Karolian, and Councilor Alex Walczyk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Chair Sullivan called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA OVERVIEW
Chair Sullivan: We have scheduled appointments with Mr. Rainier and Mr. Miville to discuss elections, and with Mr. Williams and Mr. Scarpetti to discuss Commercial and Industrial Construction Tax Exemptions.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION
Hooksett Youth Achiever of the Month
Chair Sullivan: We are pleased to recognize Alex Gannon as the Hooksett Youth Achiever for February. We know him from his Eagle Scout project presentation. Councilor Tsantoulis will present the award.

T. Tsantoulis: We are talking with Alex Gannon via Facetime because he is at the Naval Academy and cannot be here in person. Alex was nominated as a Youth Achiever in July 2019. He has a background with the Boy Scouts and will have his Court of Honor next Friday, March 6th. We know that he spoke before a large crowd at a Scout fundraiser and is now at the Naval Academy. I expect we will be hearing more about Alex Gannon in the years to come. His mother and sister are here with us tonight. I am proud of him, and I know that his mother is also. We have recognized many outstanding young individuals as Youth Achievers, and Alex deserves a place among them.

Chair Sullivan: Where are you now, Alex?
A. Gannon: I am in Newport, Rhode Island right now in the barracks.

Chair Sullivan: What is your rank?

A. Gannon: I am a midshipman candidate.

Chair Sullivan: How many are in your barracks?

A Gannon: There are 250 here.

T. Tsantoulis: We have an award for you and expect you will look back at this in future years. I am proud of you and I know that your mother is also. This award goes to the parents also, because their determination and support are important to the success of their children.

A. Gannon: Thank you very much for this award.

Chair Sullivan: Thank you for your service. Stay safe and good luck.

Hooksett Municipal Employee - New Hire

A. Gannon: Jordan Fanny is a new hire as a truck driver/laborer in the Public Works department.

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

Todd Rainier, Town Clerk and Marc Miville, Town Moderator - February 11, 2020 Federal Primary Election Results & March 10, 2020 Town/School/Special General Election Preparations

T. Rainier: I have a schedule for you to pass around to sign up to work at the polls at the Town Election. If you are on the ballot, you can't touch ballots, but there are other things you can do. Regarding the February 11th election, we began the day with 10,381 registered voters, and we registered 481 new voters that day. The turnout was not as big as we were expecting. A total of 4,735 ballots were cast, of which 230 were absentees. We instituted a new traffic pattern which worked well. We try to improve the process from what we learn. We had many positive comments after the election. We want to thank the Public Works employees who were out in the cold all day, as well as the Police and the School custodial staff. We must count the ballots before and after each election to be sure the numbers balance. A total of 100 people worked at the election to ensure that all went smoothly, and 20 people worked with us at the end of the night. The State Primary will be on September 6th, the day after Labor Day.

M. Miville: We opened a second door in the back so that people parking in the back don't have to walk around the school to get into the building. It was successful, and we want people to be more aware of this option.

Chair Sullivan: Hooksett was one town not reporting when the Union Leader was giving the results of the election. Can you explain why?

T. Rainier: When the Moderator is comfortable, he lets those who are there at the election know the results. He reads from the tape, so these are not official results. If a reporter is not there, they don't get those unofficial results. Later, I return to Town Hall, scan the results, and respond to email requests. This happened after midnight at this election. A lot of ballots were kicked out and had to be hand counted, mainly because Michael Bloomberg had a lot of write-ins – about 40 - and many of these could not be read by the optical scanner.
M. Miville: I have to be comfortable with the numbers before reading them.

T. Rainier: For the March 10th Town Election, we will be here Friday beginning at 1:00 pm to test the tabulators. The Supervisors of the Checklist will hold a session here this Saturday, March 29th at 9:00 am to register voters and prepare the checklist. After that session, people cannot vote in Town Clerk’s office. Three elections will take place on March 10th - the Town, the School, and the Special Election for a State Representative. The Town’s ballot is two, double sided pages, 14 inches long. The School ballot is one regular-size, double-sided page, and the Special Election ballot is one, one-sided regular-size page. Thus far, we have 82 absentee requests. The wrap-up for last election will be at 10:00 tomorrow here in the Council Chambers. It is a noticed, public session. We will need three Councilors at the end of the night, which is a challenge since a lot of you are on the ballot.

Nicholas Williams, Town Planner and David Scarpetti, EDAC Chair: RSA 72:80-83 Commercial and Industrial Construction Exemption

N. Williams: The State offers four statutory items which encourage commercial and industrial expansion via tax relief incentives. Hooksett has adopted three of these. The fourth one, RSA 72-80, allows a town to target specific properties which it would like to see developed by offering commercial & industrial construction property tax exemption. EDAC is proposing that Hooksett adopt this exemption, which is only for new construction or renovation, and would not be used in the TIF district. No motion is needed tonight. This is just a proposal, and the Planning Board will be involved as well.

D. Scarpetti: We have the Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZ), but that is only six zones and is funded by the State.

N. Williams: This is a local property tax exemption. The Town Council would set the parameters, allowing up to a 50% tax exemption for up to ten years.

R. Duhaime: It’s great to move this forward because we can get growth where we want it.

D. Scarpetti: This provides an incentive for businesses to come to Hooksett or to expand an existing business here.

Chair Sullivan: If a business takes down a building and rebuilds on the site, only the new value is exempted, correct? The Town doesn’t lose the current valuation in the tax base.

N. Williams: That is correct.

T. Tsantoulis: Thank you for presenting this. Is it correct that the proposal will come back to the Council?

N. Williams: Yes, it will.

T. Tsantoulis: Is there a timetable for this?

N. Williams: No, there is no timetable. There will be a formal recommendation with parameters established.
A. Garron: I heard the presentation for this at the EDAC meeting. It is another tool in the toolbox, and a good one to have. The number of years has to be determined, and the amount of the exemption. The proposal goes to the taxpayers as well.

D. Scarpetti: We will bring this back to the Town Council sometime in the next 30 to 60 days.

N. Williams: It will probably be in late April

A. Walczyk motioned to request a formal proposal from the Economic Development Advisory Committee, after consultation with the Planning Board, which includes the following information:
1. Recommended zones/parcels to be targeted in the motion
2. Recommended percentage of tax relief for approved projects
3. Recommended time limitation of tax relief for approved projects
T. Tsantoulis seconded the motion.
Voted unanimously in favor (9-0).

Appointment with Carrie Hyde, Chairwoman of the Hooksett Old Home Day Committee

A. Garron: Carrie Hyde cannot be here tonight, but she provided me with a map of the parade route and the permit request.

Chief Bouchard: The request comes to me and I sign the permit.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to accept reimbursement not to exceed $3,150.00 from the State of New Hampshire, Department of Safety, to the Town of Hooksett for the Hooksett Police Department per RSA 31:91-b: III(b) and return said funds to the police department’s budget.

R. Duhaime motioned to approve the Consent Agenda item. J. Levesque seconded the motion. Voted unanimously in favor.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

A. Garron: I have received information from the NHMA about their annual policy review process. They have set an April 17th deadline for receiving submittals of policy suggestions from cities and towns. They are also looking for town councilors to volunteer to work on the process.

D. Fitzpatrick: We participated for the first time in 2018, but only joined in for the last part of the process, with Councilor Walczyk volunteering to represent Hooksett. Now NHMA is asking about the first part – the gathering of policy ideas. We are looking for your ideas and input by the March 11th Town Council meeting. You may want to talk with your fellow Councilors about policies Hooksett might want to propose. The orange handout in your packet includes a form for submitting ideas and a sample to guide you. The NHMA submits to the NH legislature those policies voted upon favorably by the group.

A. Garron: There will be three meetings between now and the deadline.

TC MINUTES 02-26-2020
A. Garron: The Village Water Precinct is presenting Get to Know Your Water System on March 3rd at the Hooksett Library, beginning at 6:00 pm.

A. Garron: I would like to commend Nick Germain for his work updating the Wi-Fi for Town Hall. He has also been updating the building codes, and the mailroom is next to be done.

A. Garron: Earl Labonte’s Public Works Department has prepared a snow event presentation, which will go onto the website. It can be sent electronically to Town Councilors. It outlines procedures during snowstorms for plowing, trash containers, and mailboxes.

J. Levesque: For the closing of Trail Bridge during the winter, could we have a set policy?

A. Garron: The intent was for it to be used during three seasons – or to be a ‘use at your own risk’ venue.

C. Jones: There is a big safety issue in the winter.

R. Duhaime: Maybe this should go back to the Conservation Commission.

J. Levesque: It is best to have it open only three seasons and leave it closed in the winter. You can’t keep opening and closing it.

R. Duhaime: Because state and federal funds were used, do we have an obligation to keep it open year-round?

A. Garron: It is a town decision regarding closing for the winter.

Chair Sullivan: At our last meeting, DES employees were here discussing the testing of well water and they said they would be planning a workshop. Have you had any notice yet?

A. Garron: They are targeting April. The details have to be worked out.

C. Karolian: I have been called by numerous constituents. I have told them what the DES said: If their well has been or will be tested, they will be notified by letter of the workshop.

Chair Sullivan: There will be a general invitation as well for anyone wishing to attend.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Town of Hooksett Town-wide Property Equalization Ratio

Jon Duhamel, Town Assessor: The equalization ratio is also known as the assessment ratio. When a property is sold, the information is sent to the State. Based on all of the sales in a year, the State sets the ratio. The equalization year begins on April 1st of each year. It is based on data from the sales six months prior to April 1st and six months after. For the data from October 1, 2018 through September 30,
2019, a ratio of 90.8% was set, meaning that properties in Hooksett are assessed at 90.8% of their market value. The ratio now is at 88%. The State prefers that ratios fall between 90% and 100%. The question is this: Do we want the percentage to keep dropping, or should we bite the apple and do another revaluation earlier than 2023?

C. Karolian: What is the cost of a revaluation?

J. Duhamel: The last one cost $114,000. It was done by KRT. However, I could do the residential properties and we would only pay for the commercial properties.

A. Garron: It is a hot market right now.

C. Karolian: This does not mean necessarily that the tax rate will go up, does it?

J. Duhamel: No, it does not. It could go down.

R. Duhaime: Do the new home sales help?

J. Duhamel: The only development I know of is Berry Hill Estates. If we do a revaluation now, we don’t have to do one for five more years.

T. Tsantoulis: Is it safe to assume that many communities are in a similar situation?

J. Duhamel: Yes, that is a safe assumption.

C. Karolian: What are the pros and cons of doing the revaluation sooner than required by the State?

J. Duhamel: One pro is the mitigation of sticker shock. On the flip side, market values could go down.

Chair Sullivan: This would require some PR work to explain the benefits and the rationale.

J. Duhamel: The more PR, the better.

Approval to utilize Police Impact Fees for the purchase and installation of 6 Patrol PC Mobile Data Terminals (MDT’s)

C. Karolian motioned to authorize the purchase of six (6) Mobile Data Terminals from Patrol PC in the amount of $27,558.39, as well as the installation of the units, including parts and labor from Ossipee Mountain Electronics, Inc. in the amount of $5,396.50 for a total amount of $32,954.89 to be taken from the Police Impact Fee Fund. J. Durand seconded the motion.

Chief Bouchard: First I want to congratulate Alex Gannon, who is my son’s best friend. They were in ROTC together. These Mobile Data Terminals are used every day for every shift. We have been looking at this issue for two years because of the issues we have with connectivity. Rick Belanger, who is with me tonight, is the Communications Supervisor. The units being replaced are from 2013, which means in the world of technology, they are out of date. We have checked with the Town Administrator and the Town Attorney, and both confirm that this is an acceptable use of impact fees.
T. Tsantoulis: I see that it will cost $295 to ship six units. There is no way that we should pay that for shipping.

R. Belanger: I tried to get free shipping, but there was no way around it. Parts come from three different locations.

Chief Bouchard: We did get a discount for buying six units and also were allowed to trade in the old units. I have a lot of confidence in Rick; I know he got the best deal possible.

C. Jones: Are they going to be compatible?

R. Belanger: To stay compliant, we have to use Windows 10. Windows 7 is obsolete, so we can’t upgrade three of them.

R. Duhaime: Why not have one outside antenna?

R. Belanger: Going from 3g to 4g and then to 5g when it comes out, there will be no more card. I researched several external modems and the cheapest one was the best. We will have 99.9% connectivity. There is only one location in town where they don’t work.

R. Duhaime: Why are you buying only six? What about the other two?

R. Belanger: One is almost up to date because it was replaced after a traffic accident, and the newest one was purchased a year after that.

Chief Bouchard: Going forward, we plan to not buy six at once.

Chair Sullivan called for a vote on the motion to purchase six Mobile Data Units for the Police Department.

Roll Call Vote #2

R. Duhaime Aye
J Durand Aye
C. Jones Aye
J. Levesque Aye
A. Walczyk Aye
A. Comai Aye
C. Karolian Aye
T. Tsantoulis Aye
J. Sullivan Aye

Voted unanimously in favor (9-0).

Solid Waste/Recycling & Transfer Ordinance 00-31 Amendment

E. Labonte: Ordinance amendments are done through the Town Clerk’s office, so Mr. Rainier is with me to present this.
T. Rainier: This is basically a housekeeping issue. Two ordinances are being combined.

D. Fitzpatrick: Pages 37-50 in your packets are the two old ordinances. Pages 51-62 is the new combined one. Pages 63-85 are duplicate pages and should be ignored. There was a problem with the software which prepares these packets.

Chair Sullivan: If the Council wishes to proceed after the discussion, we will need a motion for a public hearing.

A. Walczyk: I have several questions. Do we do air conditioners without Freon?

E. Labonte: No, they all have Freon.

A. Walczyk: How do you price televisions over 19 inches?

Richard Blake, Crew Chief of Recycling and Transfer: We weigh them and take an average.

A. Walczyk: Is ‘crew chief’ removed on page 57?

R. Blake: Yes, it is. The line didn’t go through as it should have.

A. Walczyk: On page 57 under Enforcement, are the statutory and regulatory items removed?

E. Labonte: Yes, they are.

A. Walczyk: The word ‘for’ needs to be inserted on page 61 as follows: “No charge for leaves…"

A. Walczyk: What is the pricing for yard waste?

R. Blake: Residential yard waste is free; commercial is $15 per load.

Chair Sullivan: You need an 8A or 9 for Commercial fees. They are not included.

A. Walczyk: Multi-family homes up to three families are residential; four family units and up are classified as commercial. Is that correct?

R. Blake: Yes, it is.

C. Karolian: I don’t see an explanation for why a building with more than three families is commercial. What about condominiums?

R. Blake: The difference is that condos are owned, not rented.

J. Levesque: For asphalt shingles, it says they must be kept clean. Shouldn’t they also be separate? People tend to bring them combined with wrappers and coffee cups.
C. Jones: Is what you have here the same as what you have on your website?

R. Blake: The website will be updated once this is approved, so they will match at that time.

T. Rainier: The public notice for the hearing will direct people to the Town Clerk’s office to view the amendment.

D. Fitzpatrick: If this is not time-sensitive, since a lot of changes have been suggested here, I strongly recommend that you come back to the next meeting with updated language. It would save the cost of a second public hearing notice. In the past, if changes are made, another public hearing must be held.

Chair Sullivan: We will see these edits at our next meeting, then.

T. Rainier: Would it be possible to produce the proposed ordinance amendment in color?

D. Fitzpatrick: It will be in color on the website. It can be done in color, but the whole packet would have to be done in color, which is costly.

A. Garron: Perhaps we can do just this section separately in color.

R. Duhaime: If we could have a bullet list of the changes, that would make it easy to find them.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Public: 02/12/2020

T. Tsantoulis motioned to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2020 public session. J. Levesque seconded the motion.

Chair Sullivan: I want to remind Council members that corrections must be emailed prior to the meeting when then will be approved or given to the Council Secretary prior to the beginning of the meeting.

C. Karolian: What is the best way to email corrections?

Chair Sullivan: You can email Bonnie Smith, bsmith@hooksett.org or you can email the Council Secretary, acomai@hooksett.org.

Chair Sullivan called for a vote on the motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2020 meeting.

Voted in favor (8-1). C. Karolian voted nay.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Comai: The Conservation Commission was excited about the Council’s favorable decision regarding the Merrimack Valley Trail Riders event.

T. Tsantoulis: Next Friday, March 6th, is the Court of Honor for Alex Gannon. I have a schedule conflict and wonder if anyone else could attend. It is at 5:00 pm at the Hooksett Library.
Chair Sullivan: I will attend.

T. Tsantoulis: The Hooksett Youth Achievers Committee has selected recipients for March and April.

D. Fitzpatrick: I received another nomination tonight.

A. Walczyk: Parks & Recreation met on February 18th and learned that the trail on Quimby Mountain will be marked for the boundary of park. It has been learned that the deed for Dalton Brook Pond, which is behind Walgreens, says that it will be a skating rink. If the Pavilion is passed at the Town Election, Parks & Rec may decide to issue permits. These may be at a cost or not.

Chair Sullivan: The Heritage Commission deemed that the Underhill home could be saved. They held a public hearing with at least 20 people in attendance. All who spoke made comments in favor of trying to save the building. Others to be reviewed include the house at Whitehall Road and Whitehall Terrace, and the barn on the Duford homestead.

J. Levesque: What about the Roy barn, which was moved to the Larrabee pit and then torn down? They had no demo permit, and there should be a fine.

Chair Sullivan: They did not go through the proper demolition procedure.

A. Garron: Letters have gone out.

Chair Sullivan: Remember that the demolition permit process only delays the demolition.

Chair Sullivan: Mr. Germain will schedule something for the Bicentennial Committee after the March 10th Town Election.

C. Karolian motioned to adjourn at 8:00 pm. T. Tsantoulis seconded the motion. Voted unanimously in favor (9-0).

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Donnelly

Kathleen Donnelly
Recording Clerk

Please see subsequent meeting minutes for any amendments to these minutes.