

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 2002

PORTSMOUTH, NH
TIME: 7:00PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sirrell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Sirrell, Assistant Mayor Hanson, Councilors Grasso, Lown, Hynes, Pantelakos, Whitehouse, Marconi and St. Laurent

Absent: None

III. INVOCATION BY FATHER RICH, ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

Father Rich of St. John's Church conducted the invocation.

Members of the Portsmouth Fire and Police Departments Honor Guard held a procession.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Sirrell and members of the City Council led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Wendell Purrington sang the Star Spangled Banner.

OATH OF OFFICE

City Clerk Barnaby administered the Oath of Office to the following officials who were elected at the November 6, 2001 Municipal Election.

A. FIRE COMMISSION

Commissioners Richard Gamester and Paul T. Wentworth

B. POLICE COMMISSION

Commissioners Gerald W. Howe and William F. Devine

C. SCHOOL BOARD

School Board members Charles L. Vaughn, Kent L. LaPage, Nansi B. Craig, Colleen MacLeod Montminy, and Henry Clay Hayward

D. CITY COUNCIL

- 1, Councilors Joanne M. Grasso, Bradley M. Lown, John W. Hynes, Laura C. Pantelakos, Harold Whitehouse, Evelyn E. Marconi and William L. St. Laurent
2. Assistant Mayor Alex Hanson
3. Mayor Evelyn Sirrell

V. ADDRESS BY MAYOR EVELYN SIRRELL

Welcome everyone tonight, family, friends, neighbors, Councilors, School Board, Police and Fire Commissioners.

This is such a great honor that the Citizens have bestowed on me to lead the City in the next 2 years and I would like to thank the citizens of Portsmouth for choosing me to be their Mayor.

As I told you in the past year, the Mayor is only as effective as the City Council, she is part of, and only as effective as the City Manager that stands beside her. I have all of these components with the new Council and one of the finest City Managers. Together, with teamwork and cooperation, we can achieve the best. Over the last 4 years, I think it has been proven that Portsmouth is a very financially secure city.

Also, a special thank you to my senior citizens who operate the Mayor's Office, strictly out of the goodness of their hearts, I don't know what I would do without them. Also, a very special thank you to my coworkers who work very closely with me.

As I have done in the past, I will always keep the best interest of all of the citizens of Portsmouth foremost in any decisions that I make.

As Mayor of Portsmouth, I promise you that I will continue to preserve and safeguard our great City for the people who live in it. I will be that ever-faithful watchdog.

I would like to speak to my goals for 2002-2003.

1. Work to overturn the State Wide Property Tax with the Coalition Communities, which number to 30 at present. To work closely with the City Councilors and our State Representatives to find the solution to this unfair State Wide Property Tax. I would be remiss to hide my grave concerns from you tonight regarding our revaluation and the large amount of money that has been sent to concord for the State Wide Property Tax and the County Tax.

There should be a bill to repeal the State Wide Property Tax forced upon the people of this state by the court. The House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Governor, it is your sworn duty to help the people of this state.

This is not only effecting our affordable housing crisis, if this keeps going on year after year, Portsmouth will be split with just the affluent living here. We will lose our balance of the low and moderate-income groups and people on fixed incomes will be gone.

2. **City Infrastructure:** I plan to continue with infrastructure improvements throughout the City including roads, sidewalks, sewer, and water systems. Also, to continue upgrades to City parks and playgrounds. We have already accomplished great strives. A new City Yard facility with no expense to the taxpayers. 10 City Parks and Playgrounds, skateboard park and securing the Great Bog. All of this was done without expense to the taxpayers.
3. **Portsmouth Public Library:** To see the new library built.
4. **Neighborhood Groups:** To encourage and increase our neighborhood groups in the next two years. We currently have 30 groups and I would like to see at least five additional groups. The group leadership has been inspiring our neighborhoods and the Chairpersons of the neighborhoods have been working diligently to follow the direction we started 6 years ago in order to hold onto our quality of life. This quality of life creates the warmth and love of each neighborhood.
5. **Conservation Areas:** To search for new wetland and sensitive areas to secure our drinking water supply and hold these areas to prevent over developing like we did with the Great Bog. My Blue Ribbon Committee is still active and continues searching.
6. **Arts & Culture:** To hold onto the Arts and Culture. They must prosper to bring happiness to us all.
7. **Master Plan:** To work very hard and complete our Master Plan for our future generations. Part of strong neighborhoods is having an equally strong school system. We will continue to have schools that teach our children not only the needed skills to be successful upon graduation, but also provide the foundation for good citizenship.

Under the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Youth, we will begin to broaden the direction; we will work closely with the students to allow them the learning experience of City Politics and how it functions like I have been doing in the last 4 years. Also, I would like to see them volunteer throughout the City. Remember the students are the future leaders of tomorrow.

One unique character of Portsmouth that I do want to mention is our sincere commitment to the tradition of helping each other to solve problems that range in scope from providing relief to the homeless, to caring for our neighbors. This is all done in the spirit of cooperation.

I would like to close by saying I am proud of the citizens of our great City. We have accomplished great things and will continue to do so.

As your Mayor, I will take our City in a direction that reflects our character our direction will be one of togetherness and community.

All of this revolves around the timeless essence of Market Square, which I believe is the gateway to the City of the Open Door and our North Church Steeple, which is our Beacon.

I love you all. Thank you.

VI. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY OFFICIALS

A. CITY MANAGER

1. Acceptance of Rules and Orders of the City Council

Assistant Mayor Hanson moved to accept and approve the Rules and Orders of the City Council as submitted. Seconded by Councilor Whitehouse and voted.

2. Adoption of 2002 City Council Schedule

Councilor Grasso moved to approve the 2002 City Council Schedule as submitted. Seconded by Councilor Whitehouse and voted.

B. MAYOR SIRRELL

1. Committee Assignments for City Councilors

Mayor Sirrell announced the Committee Assignments for the City Council as follows:

Assistant Mayor Hanson – Audit and Joint Budget Committee, Chamber of Commerce, New Library Building Committee, Parking Committee, and Traffic and Safety Committee

Councilor Grasso – Audit and Joint Budget Committee, Historic District Commission, Joint Building Committee (Schools), New Library Building Committee, and Recycling Project Oversight Committee

Councilor Lown – Joint Loss Management Committee, and Planning Board

Councilor Hynes – Economic Development Commission, New Library Building Committee, Pease Development Authority Liaison, Rockingham Planning Commission, and Veterans' Affairs Organization Liaison

Councilor Pantelakos – Blue Ribbon Committee on Dogs, Joint Building Committee (Schools), Legislative Delegation and Recreation Board

Councilor Whitehouse – Audit and Joint Budget Committee, Peirce Island Study Committee, Taxi Commission, Vendors' Committee and Veterans' Affairs Organization Liaison

Councilor Marconi – Peirce Island Study Committee

Councilor St. Laurent – Fee Schedule Study Committee and Joint Building Committee (Schools)

2. Appointment of Library Building Committee

Assistant Mayor Hanson moved to adopt the appointment of Library Building Committee members as submitted by Mayor Sirrell. Seconded by Councilor Grasso and voted.

Committee Members: Chairman John O'Leary, Peter Bresciano, Lenore Bronson, Suzanne Ford, John Grossman, Todd Hanson, Kate Leith, Paul McEachern, Claudia Morner, George Robinson, Gary Rothenburger, Carvel Tefft, Library Trustee Phyllis Eldridge, Ex-Officio City Manager John Bohenko and Ex-Officio Library Director Sherman Pridham.

Mayor Sirrell announced that a reception will follow the City Council meeting in the Portsmouth Room and refreshments would be served.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:50 p.m., Assistant Mayor Hanson moved to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Grasso and voted.

KELLI L. BARNABY, CITY CLERK