

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
DATE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2025

PORTSMOUTH, NH
TIME: 7:00PM

Councilor Tabor moved to close the Non-Public Session and seal the minutes. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.

III. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McEachern called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

IV. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor McEachern, Assistant Mayor Kelley (via Zoom), Councilors Tabor, Cook, Denton, Blalock, Bagley, Moreau, and Lombardi

V. INVOCATION

Mayor McEachern asked everyone to join in a moment of silent prayer.

VI. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Tabor led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

VIII. RECOGNITIONS AND VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE REPORTS

VII. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 6, 2025 AND OCTOBER 20, 2025

Councilor Tabor moved to approve and accept the minutes of October 6, 2025 and October 20, 2025, City Council meetings. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi and voted.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION (*This session shall not exceed 45 minutes*) – (*participation may be in person or via Zoom*)

Roy Helse said taxes continue to increase and residents are having to move out of the community because of these increases.

Jim Lee invited residents to attend the Elks Lodge on Saturday for the laying of the wreaths by Wreaths Across America in honor of veterans.

Esther Kennedy said that the title for Non-Public Sessions should be listed in addition to the statute that represents the topic.

Francis Cormier said in order to not keep making the same mistakes we need to study history. He also addressed the housing that was removed at Pease and how it is now needed for the area.

X. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTE ON ORDINANCE AND/OR RESOLUTION

Continued Public Hearing – Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) / Adoption of

CIP: *(Continued Public Hearing that was held open per action of the City Council at the November 17, 2025, meeting)*

A. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) FY 2027-2032

- **PRESENTATION** *(Presentation was held at the November 12, 2025, Work Session)*
- **CITY COUNCIL QUESTIONS**
- **PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS**
- **ADDITIONAL COUNCIL QUESTIONS AND DELIBERATIONS**

Mayor McEachern said the public hearing remains open and asked those that are wishing to speak to come forward.

Petra Huda requested that the City Council postpone the vote on the CIP. She said some of the figures in the plan do not match and feels it impacts the debt schedule. She stated it is not fiscally responsible to vote on the CIP with the figures not being accurate.

Bill Lyons spoke in support of the Sustainability Committee recommendations for the CIP. He said he supports the request for a shuttle and satellite parking.

Emma Stratton spoke in support of the CIP as presented and the need to provide work living space for artists. She said we need to make sure the community remains vibrant and inclusive.

Byron Matto spoke to the need for upgrades at New Franklin School and investing in the school. He said it is important that we make long-term investments in New Franklin.

Tammy Truax, New Franklin School, spoke in support of upgrades being made to New Franklin. She said there is a need for dedicated spaces for students and staff. She spoke about the many deficiencies at the school and the need to ensure an equal education for all students.

Esther Kennedy suggested making New Franklin School a separate category in the CIP. She said space needs for the students are important. In addition, there is no funding in the plan for the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the country.

Nancy Novelline Clayburgh, School Board Chair, spoke in support of the upgrades to the New Franklin School. She said it is important that we move forward with these much needed upgrades.

David Calkins spoke regarding the importance of the CIP and the renovations needed to New Franklin.

Josie Calkins spoke regarding the necessary upgrades to New Franklin School. She said that the gym is too close to the library for the students to have the quietness that is needed.

Ava (no last name stated) said that students are unable to work in the library at New Franklin because of the gymnasium being located next door.

Petra Huda spoke regarding the Municipal Complex items in the CIP and said these items appear to overlay scopes and are present as separate subjects.

Deputy City Manager of Finance & Administration Lunney spoke regarding comments made earlier by resident Petra Huda to errors in figures contained in the CIP. He explained that when new projects were added to the spreadsheet page the cells were not carried over. He spoke to this being a plan and that no funding is associated with this.

Councilor Bagley spoke regarding bonding authorization and need for the figures to be listed correctly.

Deputy City Manager of Finance & Administration Lunney explained that bonding does not take place until the spending has been authorized.

Councilor Cook asked that adjustments be made to the plan prior to adoption of the plan scheduled for June.

Councilor Blalock thanked the students that spoke regarding New Franklin School. He said there is a clear difference in funding provided to Dondero and Little Harbour Schools compared to New Franklin. He said every school should receive similar funding for improvements that are needed.

Councilor Cook said we need a better mechanism for improvements to the schools. She stated we should not be asking the PTA to pay for improvements to playgrounds or other items.

Councilor Tabor said that Ms. Truax gave a clear picture of the need for renovations at New Franklin School. He said we need to approve the funding and move forward with the improvements.

Mayor McEachern said he was struck by the lack of space at New Franklin School. He said we need to remember what makes New Franklin special for the kids and teachers when making the necessary renovations.

Councilor Moreau asked Fire Chief McQuillen to address funding for the fire boat. Fire Chief McQuillen explained the funding and said the goal is to protect the crew and those we rescue.

Discussion followed regarding funding for a fire boat.

The City Council discussed funding for a new parking garage and said the Planning Board considered \$150,000.00 for a new garage and putting in a placeholder of \$3,000,000.00 to look towards a facility and site location.

Councilor Cook moved to adopt the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY 2027-2032 as presented. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Councilor Moreau moved to amend Element Sheet BI-26-PW-54 – New Parking Garage to add \$3,000,000.00 under Bond/Lease Parking. Seconded by Councilor Bagley.

Councilor Bagley spoke regarding the revenue from parking and providing much needed parking for residents.

Councilor Cook said she is reluctant to support a new parking garage and was hoping we would have other solutions in place and stated it is clear a new garage is needed. She said that she would also like to see support for other parking solutions.

On a unanimous roll call 9-0, amendment passed.

Councilor Blalock moved to amend Element Sheet VE-25-FD-02 – Vehicle Replacement – Marine #1 and move \$900,000.00 from FY27 to out year FY28. Seconded by Councilor Bagley. On a roll call vote 3-6, motion failed to pass. Councilor Blalock, Bagley, and Mayor McEachern voted in favor. Assistant Mayor Kelley, Councilors Tabor, Cook, Denton, Moreau, and Lombardi voted opposed.

Councilor Denton moved to modify CIP request #BI-26-PL-29 “Microtransit Study” to change the funding source from Federal Grant Funds to Capital Outlay General Fund and/or revenues in FY2027 and FY2028 and rename the project/element sheet to Opportunities to Expend Use of Public Transit Study. Seconded by Councilor Tabor.

Discussion followed among Councilors regarding COAST services.

Councilor Moreau moved to combine the project description with the fund of BI-26-PL-29 with all its components, notes, and requests with BI-26-PW-54 funding and element sheet and renamed PW-54 to Parking Garage and Transportation. Seconded by Councilor Blalock.

Assistant Mayor Kelley left the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Councilor Moreau’s motion passed.

Councilor Denton withdrew his motion.

Councilor Denton moved to add \$50,000.00 of General Funds to the CIP for FY28 and FY30 for Greenhouse Gas Inventories to be completed by contracted professionals. Seconded by Councilor Blalock.

Councilor Denton said there is a value in having UNH do greenhouse gas inventories.

Motion passed with the addition of an element sheet.

Councilor Cook requested to update Element Sheets BI-07-SE-15 – School Facilities Capital Improvements, the Elementary School Upgrades, and the Renovation of the Portsmouth Career and Technical Education Center. She indicated that none of them have policy compliance checkmarks and two of the projects trigger the Percent for Arts and all projects trigger the Green Building Policy. She stated that the element sheets need to be updated to reflect those policies, which will not impact the budget.

On a roll call 8-0, voted to adopt the Capital Improvement Plan (DIP) FY2027-2032 as amended.

At 10:03 p.m., Mayor McEachern declared a brief recess. At 10:10 p.m., Mayor McEachern called the meeting back to order.

Councilor Lombardi moved to suspend the rules to bring forward Item XV. E.1. – Sunset Archive Committee. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

XV. CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

E. COUNCILOR LOMBARDI

1. Sunset Archive Committee

Councilor Lombardi moved to sunset the Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force to Study the Establishment of a Private/Public partnership to Properly Archive Historical Documents relating to the City of Portsmouth (Commonly known as the Archive Committee). Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.

Public Hearing and Second Reading of Ordinance:

- B. PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND READING of Ordinance amending Chapter 1 – Administrative Code, Article IV – Commissions and Authorities, Section 1.414 – Establishing a Permanent Energy Advisory Committee
- **PRESENTATION**
 - **CITY COUNCIL QUESTIONS**
 - **PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS**
 - **ADDITIONAL COUNCIL QUESTIONS AND DELIBERATIONS**

Mayor McEachern read the legal notice, declared the public hearing open and called for speakers.

Councilor Tabor moved to pass second reading and hold third and final reading at the December 22, 2025, City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Bagley.

Councilor Tabor said the Energy Advisory Committee has been in existence for 5 years and reviewed the various accomplishments of the committee.

Councilor Cook thanked Councilor Tabor for his leadership on the Blue Ribbon Committee and supported it by becoming a permanent committee.

Councilor Blalock thanked Councilor Tabor and all his work on the committee.

Mayor McEachern spoke about the impact solar has towards cost savings.

With no speakers, Mayor McEachern closed the public hearing.

Motion passed.

Councilor Moreau moved to suspend the rules to bring forward third and final reading. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

Councilor Moreau moved to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented. Seconded by Councilor Cook and voted.

Third and Final Reading of Ordinances:

- C. Third and Final Reading of Ordinance amending Chapter 6 – Licenses, Article I – General Provisions, by amending the title of Chapter 6 to Licenses and Encumbrances and replacing Article I in its entirety, with Article I - Encumbrance Permits and Licenses for Use of Public Property, Sections 6.101 – 6.110

Councilor Blalock moved to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented. Seconded by Councilor Tabor and voted.

- D. Third and Final Reading of Ordinance amending Chapter 6 - Licenses, Article X – Theatricals, Parades, Open Air Meetings, Section 6.1001 – License Required, Section 6.1002 – License Form, Section 6.1003 – Fee, Section 6.1004 – Penalty for Failure to License be deleted in its entirety

Councilor Bagley moved to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented. Seconded by Councilor Cook and voted.

- E. Third and Final Reading of Ordinance amending Chapter 7 – Vehicles, Traffic and Parking, Article I – Parking Meters, Section 7.114 – Construction Permit be deleted in its entirety

Councilor Denton moved to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi and voted.

- F. Third and Final Reading of Ordinance amending Chapter 8 – Encumbrances and Injurious Practices in Streets, Article I - Encumbrances, Section 8.101 – Encumbrances, General, Section 8.105 – Digging up a Street, Section 8.106 – License to Obstruct Street, Section 8.114 – Awning and Signs, Section 8.120 – Displaying Merchandise on Sidewalk be deleted in its entirety

Councilor Lombardi moved to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented. Seconded by Councilor Cook and voted.

- G. Third and Final Reading of Ordinance amending Chapter 9, Article V – Public Way Obstructions, Placement & Registration, Sections 9.501 – 9.511 regarding public way obstructions be deleted in its entirety

Councilor Tabor moved to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented. Seconded by Councilor Denton and voted.

- H. Third and Final Reading of Ordinance amending Chapter 11, Sidewalks, Sewers, Layout of Streets, Subdivision of Land, Article VI – Referrals to Planning Board, Section 11.602 A 1, Referral and Report be amended to delete the word

Councilor Blalock moved to pass third and final reading of the ordinance as presented. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.

XI. CITY MANAGER'S ITEMS WHICH REQUIRE ACTION

A. CITY MANAGER CONARD

1. Rescission of City Council Policy 2009 – 03 Projecting Sign Policy

Councilor Moreau moved to rescind City Council Policy 2009-03. Seconded by Councilor Cook and voted.

2. Rescission of City Council Policy 2010 – 01 Policy regarding Flags Projecting Over City Property

Councilor Cook moved to rescind City Council Policy 2010-01. Seconded by Councilor Tabor and voted.

3. Request for a Water/Sewer Rate Model Study Work Session

City Manager Conard advised that she would like to have a Work Session on this matter.

Councilor Moreau moved to schedule a work session regarding the Water/Sewer Rate Model Study on January 14th at the previously scheduled time of 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Bagley and voted.

4. Parking Lot Usage and Maintenance Agreement with St. John's Masonic Lodge

City Manager Conard said that this would be a one-year extension.

Councilor Lombardi moved to authorize the City Manager to negotiate and enter into a Parking Lot Usage/Maintenance Agreement with St. John's in a form similar to the attached document contained in the City Council packet. Seconded by Councilor Denton and voted.

5. Friends of Lafayette House PILOT

Councilor Blalock moved to authorize the City Manager to enter into a PILOT agreement with Friends of Lafayette House in the amount of \$3,500.00 for FY 2026. Seconded by Councilor Tabor and voted.

XII. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Letter from Mike Peabody, Millennium Running, requesting permission to hold the 2026 New Castle 10k on Sunday, April 26, 2026 (***Anticipated action – move to refer to the City Manager with Authority to Act***)
- B. Letter from Jennie Halstead, My Breast Center Support, requesting permission to hold the Celebrate Pink 5k Walk & Run on Sunday, September 27, 2026 (***Anticipated action – move to refer to the City Manager with Authority to Act***)

Councilor Lombardi moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilor Bagley and voted.

XIII. PRESENTATIONS AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A. Email Correspondence

Councilor Denton moved to accept and place on file. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi and voted.

Councilor Moreau moved to suspend the rules to continue the meeting beyond 10:30 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi and voted.

Councilor Lombardi left the meeting.

B. Installation of Marker in Prescott Park

Councilor Blalock moved to the City Manager to negotiate the terms and conditions of a license for the acceptance and placement of an historic marker. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Councilor Moreau moved to suspend the rules to hear from Curtis Herman regarding placement of the historic marker. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

Mr. Herman said he would agree with the city on the proper location to place the historic marker.

Motion passed.

XIV. MAYOR McEACHERN

1. Acceptance of Resignations:
 - Max Ward from the Sustainability Committee

Councilor Denton moved to accept with regret the resignation of Max Ward from the Sustainability Committee. Seconded by Councilor Cook and voted.

- Phyllis Eldridge from the Zoning Board of Adjustment

Councilor Moreau moved to accept with regret the resignation of Phyllis Eldridge from the Zoning Board of Adjustment effective January 1, 2026. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

2. Appointments to be Considered:
 - Appointment of Robert P. Sullivan as a Regular Member to the Zoning Board of Adjustment
 - Appointment of Mike Lucas as an Alternate Member to the Zoning Board of Adjustment

The City Council considered the appointment of Robert P. Sullivan as a regular member and Mike Lucas as an alternate member to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. These appointments will be voted upon at the December 22, 2025, City Council meeting.

3. Appointments to be Voted:

- Appointment of James (Jim) Wilson to the Cable and Broadband Internet Commission
- Appointment of Wendy Courteau-Clement to the Economic Development Commission
- Appointment of Daniel Finan to the Safe Water Advisory Group
- Reappointment of Thomas Nies to the Zoning Board of Adjustment

Councilor Tabor moved to appoint James (Jim) Wilson as an Alternate to the Cable and Broadband Internet Commission until April 1, 2028; appoint Wendy Courteau-Clement to the Economic Development Commission until October 1, 2029; appoint Daniel Finan to the Safe Water Advisory Group until December 31, 2027; and reappoint Thomas Nies to the Zoning Board of Adjustment until December 1, 2030. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.

XV. CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

A. ASSISTANT MAYOR KELLEY

1. End of Year Report of African Burying Ground Memorial Park Stewardship Committee

Assistant Mayor Kelley will bring this report forward at the December 22, 2025, City Council meeting.

B. COUNCILOR COOK

1. Adding Muslim Holy Days of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha to the City Calendar

Councilor Cook moved to add the Muslim Holy Days of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha to the City Calendar, including not scheduling meetings the night before Eid al-Fitr during the breaking of the Ramadan fast. Seconded by Councilor Denton

(For 2026, that would mean no City Council, commission, or committee meetings after sundown on March 19th, and no City Council, commission, or committee meetings all day on March 20th and May 27th. These holidays shift annually, so the dates will be different for 2027)

Councilor Tabor expressed concern with adding holidays because we lose the ability to meet each month. He said we need to be able to count on when meetings are held. He stated that this may cause problems moving dates for notices to the public and board members.

Councilor Moreau said Planning Board has two days per month when they meet, and some agendas would be pushed off to the next week and/or meeting.

Councilor Cook said she feels like this was an oversight, we have a Moske in the city and we need to recognize the holy days. She does not want anyone to be negatively impacted.

Motion passed. Councilor Tabor voted opposed.

2. Request for Work Session with School Board regarding School Buildings and Grounds Improvements

Councilor Cook moved to request a work session with the School Board on School Buildings and Grounds Improvements that should be included in the CIP Budget in out years. Seconded by Councilor Bagley.

Councilor Cook said having projects brought in at the last minute and how they impact other things in the budget is a concern. She said she would like to meet with the School Board and make sure projects are part of the CIP budget.

Motion passed.

D. COUNCILOR BAGLEY

1. Request Report Back on all Private Parking Space Contracts for all City-owned Parking

Councilor Bagley moved to request a report back on all Private Parking Space Contracts for all City-owned parking or reasonably presumed City-owned spaces in the Worth Lot and adjacent surface lots / street area, including holders' names, locations, term/expiration, and options to return these spaces to public use. Request that this list be published annually on the City website in a prominent location as long as such contracts are in force. Seconded by Councilor Denton and voted.

XVI. APPROVAL OF GRANTS/DONATIONS

- A. Approval of Homeland Security Grant Award to purchase ballistic helmets for the Seacoast Emergency Response Team - \$27,383

Councilor Moreau moved to approve and accept the Grant as presented. Seconded by Councilor Denton and voted.

- B. Approval of Grant Agreement between the Granite United Way and the City of Portsmouth for the Opioid Abatement Community Grant Award - \$11,388

Councilor Tabor moved to approve and accept the Grant as presented. Seconded by Councilor Moreau and voted.

C. Approval of Moose License Plate Conservation Grant - \$9,929.95

Councilor Cook moved to approve and accept the Grant as presented. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

XVII. CITY MANAGER'S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Report Back on Green Burials – City Manager Conard reported that the City of Portsmouth does not currently own or manage any cemeteries with active burials. She said the city-owned and managed cemeteries are all historic in nature with no new internments available. She stated the city is currently investigating locations for a new cemetery or other local options for the burial of Portsmouth residents. She advised the City Council that caskets are buried at various depths, often depending on the presence of ledge and water tables.

Report Back on Resident Access Parking Program – City Manager Conard said staff has worked hard on a one-year pilot policy. She said we are leaving it with the City Council and residents to consider and will come forward at the next City Council meeting with a further report back. She reported that this program would include all residents that have a vehicle registered in the city and would go in effect early 2026.

Councilor Moreau suggested that Rock Street be considered as part of the program.

Pease Development Authority Board Meeting Update – City Manager Conard reported the following:

- Golf course is closed
- Fourth year in a row there were 70,000 rounds of golf
- In-door golf simulator is in full swing
- Breeze Airlines started flying to Raleigh Durham, North Carolina
- Richard Hartley started as the Director of the Divisions of Ports and Harbors
- Friday, December 19th is Permit Day at the Dover DMV from 9:00 a.m. – Noon for commercial boaters
- American Cruise Lines is looking into a multi-year contract with the Port

Update on Tax Bill Status – City Manager Conard reported that Deputy City Manager of Finance and Administration Lunney and the Finance Team has sent all the materials required for setting the tax rate. She stated we are now waiting on the State of New Hampshire to set the rate. She advised the City Council that the State has three individuals setting the rates for the entire state. She also said that Deputy City Manager of Finance and Administration Lunney will be having a discussion with the State this week which will then set in motion the process by which we will prepare and send out the tax bills.

XVIII. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS INCLUDING BUSINESS REMAINING UNFINISHED AT PREVIOUS MEETING

Mayor McEachern thanked the Public Works, Police, Fire and Recreation Departments for all their work with another successful Holiday parade.

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:55 p.m., Councilor Moreau moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Councilor Bagley and voted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kelli L. Barnaby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

KELLI L. BARNABY, MMC/CNHMC
CITY CLERK