



Portsmouth, NH City Council

Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

Monday, September 28, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Minutes

1. Non-Public Session

Councilor Moreau moved to close non-public session. Seconded by Councilor Blalock.

Motion passed 8-0.

2. Work Session (when applicable)

3. Public Dialogue Session (when applicable)

4. Call to Order (7:00 pm or thereafter)

Mayor McEachern called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

5. Roll Call

Present: Mayor McEachern, Councilors Cook, Tabor, Blalock, Bagley, Moreau, Flynn and Hopkins

Absent: Assistant Mayor Kelley

6. Invocation

7. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor McEachern led the Pledge of Allegiance.

8. Acceptance of Minutes

A. Minutes and Actions of September 14, 2026, City Council Meeting

Councilor Cook moved to accept and approve the minutes of the September 14, 2026, City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Tabor.

Motion passed 7-1. Councilor Bagley abstained.

9. Recognitions and Volunteer Committee Reports

A. Proclamations

- Children's Environmental Health Day

Mayor McEachern presented the proclamation to Joan Widmer of NH Healthy

Climate.

Councilor Moreau moved to suspend the rules and to allow Joan Widmer to comment. Seconded by Councilor Flynn.

Motion passed 8-0.

Joan Widmer spoke about Children's Environmental Health Day and thanked Mayor McEachern and the City Council for the recognition.

B. Volunteer Committee Reports

- Housing Blue Ribbon Committee (invited for Housing Action Plan Public Information and Input Session)
Peter Britz, Director of Planning and Sustainability gave a presentation on the Housing Action Plan - action items, zoning actions and incentive. He commented on the first Public Information Session held September 23, 2026 at the Library.

10. Public Comment Session

There were 5 speakers

- Beth Margeson - Prescott Park. She provided the City Council with a handout.
- Kate Leith - Parking
- Erik Anderson - Housing
- Kline Dickens - Housing
- John Maher - Burial and cemetery options

Councilor Tabor moved to suspend the rules and bring forth Item 15.A - Housing Action Plan. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Motion Passed 8-0.

Agenda Item 15.A taken out of Order - Assistant Mayor Kelley, Councilors Tabor and Moreau

- Housing Action Plan
 - Report Back on September 23, 2026, Public Information and Input Session (at Library)
 - Second Public Information and Input Session (tonight)
 - Planning Board Recommendation

Councilor Tabor moved to open the Housing Action Plan Public Information and Input Session. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Motion passed 8-0.

There were four speakers:

- Gerry Duffy - advocating for housing for all.
- Erik Anderson - spoke about various platforms to address housing issues.
- Sue Sterry - is concerned about those who are a single income home on a fixed income with rising costs. She suggested considering Boarding Houses.
- Kline Dickens - Make public housing free. There is a disparity between homeowners and renters.

Councilor Moreau moved to accept and adopt the Housing Action Plan as presented. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Councilor Cook commented on what has been presented. She is discouraged by timelines.

85% of population in NH cannot afford a home because of the median cost of housing. She would like to identify places in the City for affordable or workforce housing. City built housing for City workforce.

Councilor Moreau added to the conversation, the struggle to keep rents low enough, and discussions have yet to find an avenue to address this.

Councilor Bagley wants parking to be considered when talking about housing. The economics and solutions are challenging. There are some good projects in the pipeline, but the timeline is slow.

Councilor Tabor has taken notes on ideas that have been presented and he will bring them back to the Housing Committee. He would like to pass the plan tonight to use some of the work that has been done so far.

Mayor McEachern acknowledged the need to do more work. He addressed the need to public housing and the lack of federal money to support this. Developers do not want to put housing into their projects. He likes this plan.

Councilor Tabor would like to suggest the motion to include the words "and adopt."

Councilor Moreau agreed to amend her motion.

Motion Passed 8-0.

Councilor Flynn moved to Agenda Item 17.D Sherburne Project Update. Seconded by Councilor Blalock and voted.

Motion passed 8-0.

The Sherburne Project was presented by PHA Limited Board Chair - Adam Ruedig, Craig Welch, Andrea Pickett - part of the development team, Matt Peters - finance/development consultant, Kara Rodenheiser - Board Chair, Portsmouth Housing Authority

Adam Ruedig introduced the presentation and update, and explained that this project is a work in progress. He also spoke about Phase 2 of the project.

Craig Welch gave a presentation and updated the City Council on the Sherburne Project. He spoke about next steps as well as financing.

Councilor Bagley would like more information on financing.

Matt Peters explained the financing needed and is looking for feedback.

Councilor Bagley spoke. There are many outstanding questions to be addressed.

Councilor Tabor is unclear on the amount of financing needed.

Mayor McEachern asked about infrastructure costs.

Councilor Cook would like to see them work with City staff on other solutions.

Councilor Moreau moved to suspend the rules and bring forth Agenda Item 13.C Letter of Request from the Portsmouth Housing Authority for Sewer Extension and Reimbursement Agreement relative to the Sherburne Project. Seconded by Councilor Bagley.

Motion passed 8-0.

Councilor Bagley moved to refer the request to the Legal, Finance, and Public Works Departments for review and report back. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Motion passed 8-0.

A brief recess was taken at 8:52pm.

Councilor Flynn moved to suspend the rules and take Agenda Item 13.A - Presentation Regarding Stormwater Utility Evaluation with Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. Seconded by Councilor Cook.

Motion passed 8-0.

Presentation by Dave Fox - Vice President Raftelis Financial Consultants Inc. Jamie McCarty, GIS Stormwater Operations Manager, Katie Cromwell, (by Zoom) and Sam Villegas.

Councilor Moreau is excited about this utility. She is concerned about communication.

Councilor Cook spoke in favor of this utility.

Councilor Bagley excited to be moving forward with this outreach.

Councilor Tabor believes messaging is key. What happens with our municipal services with Pease? Suzanne Woodland, Regulatory Counsel, believes this needs more examination and discussion. How many cities have seen sewer rates drop? The majority of residents in Boston saw a decrease in their bill. There may be an increase in stormwater but a larger decrease in sewer bills.

Councilor Hopkins spoke about education and engagement. The Sustainability Committee is engaged with the task of implementing the climate action plan. She explained the need to educate the public.

11. Public Hearings and Vote On Ordinances and/or Resolutions

- A. Public Hearing and Second Reading to amend Chapter 1, Administrative Code, Article III, Boards, Section 1.302 (D) Appointments, Tenure, and Removal

- ***PRESENTATION** - Suzanne Woodland, Regulatory Council
- **CITY COUNCIL QUESTIONS** No additional questions
- **PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS** There were no speakers.

Councilor Tabor moved to pass second reading of the amendment to Chapter 1, Administrative Code, Article III, Boards, Section 1.302 (D), Appointments, Tenure and Removal, and schedule a third and final reading at the October 13, 2026, City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Blalock.

Motion passed 8-0.

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

Motion passed 8-0.

Councilor Moreau moved to pass third and final reading as presented. Seconded by Councilor Blalock.

Motion passed 8-0.

- B. Third and Final Reading to amend Chapter 10, Zoning Ordinance, Article 2 - Administration and Enforcement, Section 10.234 - Procedures for Variances, Special Exceptions and Appeals from Decisions of Code Official; Section 10.264 - Expiration and Abandonment of Approvals and Article 10 - Environmental Protection Standards, Section 10.1017.70 Expiration and Extension

Councilor Bagley moved to pass third and final reading as presented. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Motion passed 8-0.

- C. Third and Final Reading to amend Chapter 7, Vehicles, Traffic and Parking, Article III, Traffic Ordinance, Section 7.330 A, No Parking, which will move parking spaces from the west side to the east side of Fleet Street

Councilor Flynn moved to pass third and final reading as presented. Seconded by Councilor Hopkins.

Motion passed 8-0.

- D. Third and Final Reading to amend Chapter 7, Vehicles, Traffic and Parking, Article III, Traffic Ordinance, Section 7.336 A, One-Way Streets, changing Fleet Street to one-way from Congress Street to Hanover Street with contra-flow bike lane

Councilor Moreau moved to pass third and final reading as presented. Seconded by Councilor Cook.

Motion passed 8-0.

12. City Manager's Items Which Require Action CM Report 9_28_2026.pdf

- A. Water Service Access Easement

Councilor Tabor moved to authorize the City Manager to accept and record a Water Service Access Easement Deed from 1151 Sagamore Avenue CBC, LLC in a substantially similar form to the easement deed contained in the agenda packet. Seconded by Councilor Blalock.

Motion passed 8-0.

- B. Landscaping Installation and Maintenance Agreement for 145 Maplewood Avenue

Councilor Bagley moved to authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute a Landscaping Installation and Maintenance Agreement with 145 Maplewood Avenue, LLC in a substantially similar form to the agreement contained in the agenda packet. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Councilor Cook is excited to see this move forward.

Motion passed 8-0.

- C. Request for Release of Funds from the Lower State Street Pocket Park Trust to Pay for Landscape and Sculpture Installation Coordination

Councilor Flynn moved to approve the release of \$9,500 from the Lower State Street Pocket Park Trust to pay for landscape consulting and coordination of amenity (sculpture) installation services. Seconded by Councilor Hopkins.

Motion passed 8-0.

13. Consent Agenda

- A. Scarecrows of the Port Event
B. Active Encumbrances

Councilor Moreau moved to accept Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Hopkins.

Motion passed 8-0.

14. Presentations and Written Communications

- A. Agenda Item 13.A taken out of order - *Presentation Regarding Stormwater Utility Evaluation with Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc
- B. Email Correspondence

Councilor Hopkins moved to accept and place on file. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Motion passed 8-0.

- C. Agenda Item 13.C taken out of order - Letter of Request from Portsmouth Housing Authority for Sewer Extension and Reimbursement Agreement relative to the Sherburne Project

15. Mayor McEachern

- A. Acceptance of resignation
 - Anne Torrez from the Bicycle & Pedestrian Blue Ribbon Committee
 - Freddy Petrone from the Bicycle & Pedestrian Blue Ribbon Committee

Councilor Flynn moved to accept with regret the resignations of Anne Torrez and Freddy Petrone from the Bicycle & Pedestrian Blue Ribbon Committee and send letters thanking Anne and Freddy for their service to the City. Seconded by Councilor Hopkins.

Motion passed 8-0.

- B. Appointments to be Considered
 - Alanna Lang appointment to the Behavioral Health Task Force
 - Meganne Fabrega reappointment to the Library Board of Trustees
 - Alice Carey reappointment to the Conservation Commission
- C. *Appointments to be Voted
 - John Bohenko appointment to the Public Art Review Committee
 - Richard Samdperil appointment to the Library Board of Trustees
 - Jason Goodrich appointment from alternate to full member to the Economic Development Commission
 - Thomas Watson reappointment to the Economic Development Commission
 - Anne Weidman reappointment to the Economic Development Commission

Councilor Moreau moved to appoint as presented. Seconded by Councilor Cook.

Motion passed 8-0.

16. City Council Members

- A. Agenda Item taken out of order - Assistant Mayor Kelley and Councilors Tabor and Moreau
 - Housing Action Plan
 - Report Back on September 23, 2026, Public Information and Input Session (at Library)
 - Second Public Information and Input Session (tonight)

- Planning Board Recommendation

B. Councilors Cook and Bagley

- Natural Burial Options

Councilor Bagley moved that the City Council direct the City Manager to dedicate staff time, or recommend an appropriation, to determine whether any city owned land is suitable for natural burials, and to recommend funding in the CIP for FY2028 to establish that capability, whether on City owned land or through acquisition. Seconded by Councilor Cook.

Councilor Bagley spoke to the benefits of natural burials

Councilor Cook spoke about natural burials and conservation easement.

Motion passed 8-0.

C. Councilor Cook

- Amendment to the Downtown Workforce Parking Program & Request for Report Back
 - Expansion of eligibility effective October 1, 2026, for the Downtown Workforce Parking Program (DWPP) to all downtown workers of businesses who previously participated in DWPP who work in hourly clerical, customer service, administrative, and support staff positions until March 1, 2027, and to request a report back from City staff in October on options for businesses that are downtown that might need an off-peak solution for parking during the workweek.

Councilor Cook moved to amend the RAPP Policy eligibility effective October 1, 2026, for the Downtown Workforce Parking Program (DWPP) to all downtown workers of businesses who previously participated in DWPP who work in clerical, customer service, administrative, and support staff positions until March 1, 2027). Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Councilor Bagley asked if this is something we can accomplish easily.

There was discussion about hourly vs. salaried workers.

Councilor Hopkins would like to know who really qualifies for this program.

Councilor Bagley spoke about the reason to strike the word hourly.

Mayor McEachern would like to know the businesses that are taking advantage of this program.

Councilor Hopkins would like to recuse herself from this motion because of a family member who works downtown.

Motion passed 7-0. Councilor Hopkins abstained.

Councilor Cook moved to request a report back from City staff in October on options for businesses that are downtown that might need an off-peak solution for parking during the workweek. Seconded by Councilor Moreau.

Councilor Bagley supports this motion.

Motion passed 8-0.

D. Councilor Tabor

*City Manager Evaluation

Councilor Tabor commented on the City Manager's ability to excel regarding the Municipal Budget. The committee appreciates her support of City Council goals. He commended her for her leadership style as well as the positive experience the Council has had through their interactions with her. She is a strong presence in the community.

Councilor Bagley appreciates the work the City Manager does for the City.

E. Councilor Tabor

Request Report Back on April motion the City collaborate with Prescott Park Arts Festival to plan for and initiate improvements to the park infrastructure, including a covered stage and ancillary structures funded by the Festival, to support the long-term needs of the organization

Councilor Tabor moved to request Report Back on April motion the City collaborate with Prescott Park Arts Festival to plan for and initiate improvements to the park infrastructure, including a covered stage and ancillary structures funded by the Festival, to support the long-term needs of the organization. Seconded by Councilor Hopkins.

Councilor Tabor mentioned the improvements will be an upgrade to the overall experience at Prescott Park. This will be entirely privately funded.

Councilor Bagley asked about the trust funds allocated to Prescott Park. How much money does the City contribute towards the maintenance of the park? He would like a report back from Legal on how much money is in the trust and how much money does the general budget give to the trust.

Motion passed 8-0.

F. Councilor Blalock

- *Gift from the Rice Family to the Portsmouth Recreation Board

Councilor Blalock discussed briefly. Anti-Hero Skateboards designed and produced a limited series deck board honoring New England skateboarding legend Chris Rice

G. Councilor Moreau

- *Planning Board update regarding Heritage Commission

Councilor Moreau discussed briefly.

17. Approval of Grants/Donations

- A. Donation to the Sister Cities' Special Revenue Fund in honor of Eileen Dondero Foley from Mary Carey Foley in the amount of \$1,000

Councilor Tabor moved to accept the donation as presented. Seconded by Councilor Blalock.

Councilor Blalock thanked the Sister Cities Committee for establishing this fund.

Motion passed 8-0.

- B. Portsmouth Police Department Grant

Councilor Bagley moved to accept a grant in the amount of \$14,868 to the Portsmouth

***Police Department from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance (JAG) Program.
Seconded by Councilor Moreau.***

Motion passed 8-0.

- C. Point of Graves Cemetery Donations

Councilor Flynn moved to accept with thanks donations for the Point of Graves Cemetery Wall Replacement from Sue Kingman, Don Kingman, Alexis Hanson, Patricia Kennedy, Frank Connard, and Rebecca Martin Connard in the amounts as presented in the attached Gift and Donation Submission Forms. Seconded by Councilor Hopkins.

Motion passed 8-0.

18. City Manager's Informational Items

- A. *Pease Development Authority (PDA) Board Meeting Update
City Manager Conard gave a brief update from the September 15, 2026 PDA Board Meeting.
- B. Amended RAPP Policy and Maps
City Manager Conard mentioned the amended map will be amended again to include tonight's amendment and provided in the October 13, 2026, City Council packet.
- C. *Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day - Saturday October 24, 2026
- D. *Sherburne Project Update - Item taken out of order

19. Miscellaneous Business Including Business Remaining Unfinished At Previous Meeting

Councilor Hopkins announced the Shuttle Loop Working Group has scheduled their first meeting on October 19, 2026

Councilor Blalock mentioned the Sister Cities Donation Button on the website. He also mentioned the quote on Chris Rice's favorite hat, "Get off the internet, listen to some jazz, and go plant a garden."

20. Adjournment

Councilor Moreau moved to adjourn at 10:20 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Bagley.

Motion passed 8-0.

Sally A. Kellar