



Portsmouth, NH City Council

Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers
Municipal Complex, 1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH

Meeting Minutes and Actions of the Portsmouth City Council
May 18, 2026

Non-Public Session

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to close the non-public session and seal the minutes. Seconded by Councilor Cook. Motion passed unanimously.

McEachern called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM

1. Roll Call

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

Absent: Councilor Tabor

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor McEachern led the Pledge of Allegiance

3. Acceptance of Minutes

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to accept and approve the minutes of the May 4, 2026, City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Cook. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Recognitions and Volunteer Committee Reports

A. Recognition

- Mayor McEachern recognized Dustan Knight, Darlene Furbush Ouellett, Teresa McCue and Kimberly Kane for exhibiting their work in the Public Art Review Committee's debut invitational show, *"Summer Times Vibes – Burst Into Color"*. The exhibit will run from May 13 – August 26, 2026 in the Portsmouth Room, and

will be open to the public, free of charge when City Hall is open Monday through Friday.

B. Proclamations

- Portsmouth Poet Laureate (Passing of the Quill) - Miles Burr, the 15th Portsmouth Poet Laureate was presented the Proclamation by Mayor McEachern
- Women's Health Month - State Representative Jennifer Mandelbaum was presented the Proclamation by Assistant Mayor Kelley

5. Public Comment Session

There were three speakers: Chris Dwyer (PARC-Hive mural), Esther Kennedy (250th Celebrations), Tyler Garzo (Route 1)

Councilor Cook moved to suspend the rules and bring forth an item out of order City Manager Item 11.D. Public Art Contract. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley. Motion passed unanimously.

6. City Manager Item 11.D Public Art Contract

Chris Dwyer, Public Art Review Committee spoke about the "Good of the Hive" Middle School Art Project. It is part of the multidisciplinary education at the school.

City Manager Conard explained the motion. The mural will be installed at the Middle School in Fall 2027. She also requested to move to further authorize and direct the Trustees of Trust Funds to disburse sums from the City of Portsmouth Public Arts Trust funds associated with the Middle School Addition Percent-for-Art contribution, but only to the extent of such funds, to Matthew Willey Murals, Inc. as required under said contract (as the same may be amended from time to time) for the mural to be installed at the Middle School. Said disbursements shall be made in amounts and upon dates as requested in writing by the City Manager containing a certification that the requested funds are then due under the contract. The City Manager is authorized to request multiple disbursements under the contract up to the amount held in the Trust associated with the Middle School Addition Percent-for-Art contribution, without further vote of the City Council.

Councilor Bagley moved to further authorize and direct the Trustees of Trust Funds to disburse sums from the City of Portsmouth Public Arts Trust funds associated with the Middle School Addition Percent-for-Art contribution, but only to the extent of such funds, to Matthew Willey Murals, Inc. as required under said contract (as the same may be amended from time to time) for the mural to be installed at the Middle School. Said disbursements shall be made in amounts and upon dates as

requested in writing by the City Manager containing a certification that the requested funds are then due under the contract. The City Manager is authorized to request multiple disbursements under the contract up to the amount held in the Trust associated with the Middle School Addition Percent-for-Art contribution, without further vote of the City Council. Seconded by Councilor Cook. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Cook moved to authorize the City Manager to enter into a public art installation agreement with Matthew Willey Murals Inc, for the creation of a “Good of the Hive” mural to be located in the Portsmouth Middle School in substantially the same form as presented. Seconded by Councilor Blalock. Motion passed unanimously.

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

A. Public Hearing on the Proposed FY27 (July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027) Budget

- **PRESENTATION (see presentation from May 11, 2026 Work Session)**
- **CITY COUNCIL QUESTIONS** – Councilor Moreau directed a question to the Fire Department regarding the fire boat. Chief McQuillen will have an answer for the Work Session on May 28, 2026. Assistant Mayor Kelley had a question for Superintendent McLaughlin regarding school hiring. Mayor McEachern asked about the status of report backs from the previous work sessions, which will be provided at the May 28th Work Session. Councilors Bagley and Cook spoke to the Proposed Budget, voicing their support.
- **PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS** – Esther Kennedy (salary increases, hiring, education, boats), Tyler Garzo (parking revenues), Erik Anderson (budget increase, fire boat)

Councilor Blalock moved to continue the Budget Public Hearing until Monday, June 8, 2026. Seconded by Councilor Bagley. Motion Passed unanimously.

(Note: Continuation of the Budget Public Hearing will be held on June 8, 2026)

B. Public Hearing Regarding Open Enrollment Policy

- **PRESENTATION** School Board Chair Rapaport spoke about their approach to the open enrollment policy and some updates to SB751 regarding funding.
- **PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKER:** Esther Kennedy

Councilor Moreau moved to schedule a vote on the Open Enrollment Policy for Portsmouth School District/SAU52 at the June 8, 2026 City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Flynn. Motion passed unanimously.

- C. Public Hearing and Second Reading of Ordinance Amending Chapter 7, Parking, Article I - Parking Meters, Section 7.102, Parking Meter Rates, to establish parking rates for the Resident Access Parking Program (RAPP) Pilot

- **PRESENTATION** Deputy City Manager Weber provided an update to the RAPP Pilot.

Councilor Cook moved to suspend the rules and bring forth an item out of order City Council Member Item 15.A. Councilors Tabor, Bagley and Moreau – May 13, 2026 Fee Schedule Study Committee Update on RAPP. Seconded by Councilor Bagley. Motion passed unanimously.

There was discussion about ParkMobile Fees, gateway fees and ParkMobile Wallet use. Councilor Blalock voiced his concerns. Councilor Hopkins asked a question regarding garage fees.

- **CITY COUNCIL QUESTIONS** Councilor Bagley asked downtown workers' parking usage. Assistant Mayor Kelley had a question about enforcement of this policy.
- **PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKER:** Tyler Garzo

Councilor Hopkins moved to pass second reading and hold third and final reading at the June 8, 2026 City Council meeting. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley. Motion passed 7-1.

- D. First Reading Regarding Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 5, Fire Department and Prevention Regulations, Article IX: Adopted Fire Codes

Councilor Cook moved to pass first reading of the amendment to Chapter 5, Fire Department and Prevention Regulations, Article IX: Adopted Fire Codes, and schedule a public hearing and second reading at the June 8, 2026 City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Blalock. Motion passed unanimously.

8. City Manager's Items Which Require Action

- A. 11.E South Meeting House Lease Revisions

Councilor Bagley moved to authorize the City Manager to accept and approve the revised Lease of the South Meeting House with the Schleyer Foundation, and the related Sublease to PMAC, in substantially similar form to the documents contained in the agenda packet and accept the payment of \$70,634.90 from the Schleyer Foundation as repayment of Community Development Block Grant Funds. Seconded by Councilor Moreau. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor McEachern called for a recess at 9:01 PM

Mayor McEachern called the meeting back to order at 9:15 PM

- B. 11.A Request for a Work Session on Mechanic Street Pump Station Replacement Project on June 22, 2026

Councilor Bagley moved to schedule a Work Session on the Mechanic Street Pump Station Replacement Project on June 22, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Moreau. Motion passed unanimously.

- C. 11.B Renewal of International Drive Water Tank License Agreement

Councilor Flynn moved to authorize the City Manager to execute the International Drive Water Tank License Agreement Renewal with NHDOT in a form substantially similar to the attached document. Seconded by Councilor Hopkins. Motion passed unanimously.

- D. 11.C 175 Fleet Street License and Landscape Agreement

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to authorize the City Manager to execute and accept the 175 Fleet Street License and Landscape Agreement in a form similar to the attached. Seconded by Councilor Cook. Motion passed unanimously.

9. Consent Agenda

- A. Pole License Request 63-0771

- B. Event Request by St. John's Masonic Lodge – Annual Parade Sunday June 28, 2026

- C. Active City Encumbrances Report from Peter Rice, Director of Public Works dated May 7, 2026.

Councilor Flynn moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Hopkins. Motion passed unanimously.

10. Presentations and Written Communications

- A. Email Correspondence

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to accept and place on file. Seconded by Councilor Cook. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Mayor McEachern

- A. Appointments to be Considered

- Reappointment of Deidre (Dee) Forte to the Cemetery Committee
- Reappointment of Michael Griffin to the Cemetery Committee
- Reappointment of Sue Polidura to the Cemetery Committee
- Reappointment of Talia Sperduto to the Conservation Commission

- Reappointment of Barbara McMillan to the Conservation Commission
- Appointment of Matt Dydo to the Arts and Cultural Commission
- Appointment of Marta Hurgin to the Sustainability Committee

B. Appointments to be Voted:

- Appointment of Tyler Garzo to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Blue Ribbon Committee
- Appointment of Ryan Harper to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Blue Ribbon Committee
- Appointment of Ken Hale to the Citywide Neighborhood Committee
- Appointment of Christian Berling to the Citywide Neighborhood Committee

Councilor Blalock moved to appoint the as presented. Seconded by Councilor Bagley. Motion passed unanimously.

12. Approval of Grants/Donations

- A. *Acceptance of Community Development Block Grant Funds - \$499,576

Councilor Moreau moved to accept and expend a Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$499,576 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Seconded by Councilor Flynn. Motion passed unanimously.

- B. Acceptance of Senior Activity Center Luncheon Fund Donation - \$500

Councilor Hopkins moved to accept and approve the donation as presented. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley. Motion passed unanimously.

13. City Manager's Informational Items

- A. Household Hazardous Waste Day Update
- B. RAPP Pilot Program Policy
- C. Emerging Contaminants Clean Water, State revolving Fund (CWSRF) Grant for Coakley Landfill Group (CLG)

14. Miscellaneous Business Including Business Remaining Unfinished At Previous Meeting

15. Adjournment

Councilor Moreau moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 PM. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley.

On a unanimous vote, motion passed.

Prepared by:

Sally A. Kellar

Sally Kellar

City Clerk

Approved by the City Council:

Date: June 8, 2026

The Portsmouth City Council Meeting of May 18, 2026, can be viewed in its entirety on the City of Portsmouth YouTube channel.