

These are "Action Only" minutes. Video of comments may be found on recorded discs at City Hall or at www.cityofbelfast.org.

**City of Belfast
Council Chambers-Belfast City Hall
Tuesday, January 18, 2022**

7:00 p.m. Regular Council Meeting

Due to the ongoing public health crisis, per Emergency Order adopted by the City Council on August 12, 2021, all City Council Meetings will be conducted online using Zoom. If you do not plan to speak at open to the public we encourage the public to stream the meeting on the City website www.cityofbelfast.org, watch live on BEL TV channel 7 or channel 1303.

Regular Council Meeting No. 14

1) Call to order

2) Present: Mayor Eric Sanders, Councilors Neal Harkness, Brenda Bonneville, Michael Hurley and Paul Dean; City Manager Erin Herbig and Assistant to the City Manager Manda Cushman.

Absent: Councilor Mary Mortier (arrived at 7:12 p.m.)

3) Pledge of Allegiance

4) Adoption of the agenda

Councilor Hurley requested to amend the agenda to add item **5) A** Discussion on mask mandates and policies and to move item **10) K** Council discussion on implementing a City-wide indoor mask mandate, be moved to item **10) A #1**.

Councilor Hurley, seconded by Councilor Harkness, made a motion to adopt the agenda, as amended. This motion was approved, 4-0 (Councilor Mortier was having technical difficulties).

City Manager Erin Herbig requested to amend the agenda as follows:

- Add item **10) P #1** Request to go into Executive Session to discuss a Poverty Abatement pursuant to Title 36 M.R.S.A. 841.
- Add item **10) O #1** Request to designate the City Manager to serve as the fair hearing authority on General Assistance Appeals.

Councilor Harkness, seconded by Councilor Hurley, made a motion to adopt the agenda, as amended. This motion was approved, 4-0 (Councilor Mortier was having technical difficulties).

5) Acceptance of the minutes

Regular Council Meeting of January 4, 2022 and Special City Council Meeting of January 5, 2022.

Councilor Harkness, seconded by Councilor Hurley, made a motion to accept the minutes from Regular Council Meeting of January 4, 2022 and Special City Council Meeting of January 5, 2022. This was approved, 4-0 (Councilor Mortier was having technical difficulties).

5) A. Discussion on mask mandates and policies.

Councilors discussed how items arrive on the agenda and discussed their stance regarding the topic of City wide mask mandates and policies.

6) A. Open to the public

City Manager Erin Herbig noted that Council received 40 emails and 0 postal mail, prior to noon today which were shared with Council before the start of the Council meeting to be included as part of the Open to the Public.

1. Chris Jastram of Belfast discussed as a physician his medical opinion on mask mandates.
2. Denis Howard of Belfast discussed concerns regarding possible mask mandates.
3. Michael Mercer of Belfast requested that Council cease any mandates regarding masking and informed the Council that this is the official statement that they are on notice.
4. Joseph Yacoe of Belfast discussed relief that it appears that Council is not in support of passing a mask mandate as he is not in support of one.
5. Nathan McCann of Freedom hopes that Council does not pass a mask mandate.
6. Paul McCarrier of Monroe and is a Belfast business owner discussed hope that the Council would work with not against business owners.
7. Matt Lecher of Waldo and is a Belfast business owner asked that Council withstand from implementing a mask mandate.

B. Organization and Department Reports

City Manager Erin Herbig noted that interviews for School Board would be taking place on February 1, 2022 prior to the start of the Regular Council Meeting, would be reaching out to Council to determine an appropriate start time.

7) Communications

Councilor Dean reminded the public that they can get sand from the Public Works Facility.

Councilor Harkness informed the public where they can get free COVID tests online, welcomed the Grasshopper Shop to Belfast, requested clarification on the heated sidewalks at the Library and discussed concerns regarding speed by Belfast Variety.

Councilor Hurley discussed changes in businesses in Belfast.

8) Old Business and Council Committee Reports

No comments.

9) Permits, Petitions and Licenses - Consent Agenda

No items.

10) Business

A) #1 Council discussion on implementing a City-wide indoor mask mandate.

Councilors discussed a City-wide indoor mask mandate and concerns brought forward by citizens and business owners both for and against the idea of a mandate, and discussed the idea of a proclamation that the Council could do to help get out the word about the importance of vaccines and mask wearing.

Councilor Dean, seconded by Councilor Mortier, made a motion to directed the City Manager and City Attorney to draft a proclamation urging the Belfast community to get vaccinated, get their booster shots and wear a mask indoors amid a surge of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, to be brought back for Council consideration at the February 1, 2022 Council Meeting. This motion was approved, 5-0.

A) Request from the Fire Chief to confirm Drew Long as full time Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician for the Belfast Fire and Ambulance Department.

No Council discussion.

Councilor Hurley, seconded by Councilor Mortier, made a motion to confirm Drew Long as full time Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician for the Belfast Fire and Ambulance Department. This motion was approved, 5-0.

B) Request from the Fire Chief to confirm Mark Cote as a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician for the Belfast Ambulance Department.

Councilors discussed that these hires are in direct relation to the City's response to address the need in addressing wages for the Department and thanked Chief Richards for his leadership and plan and vision for the Department.

Councilor Dean, seconded by Councilor Mortier, made a motion to confirm Mark Cote as a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician for the Belfast Ambulance Department. This motion was approved, 5-0.

C) Request from the Belfast Fire Chief to expend up to \$6,250.00 for Basic Emergency Medical Training schooling for five students.

Fire Chief Patrick Richards explained the request to expend up to \$6,250.00 for Basic Emergency Medical Training schooling for five students and answered Council questions.

Councilor Dean, seconded by Councilor Mortier, made a motion to expend up to \$6,250.00 for Basic Emergency Medical Training schooling for five students, with funding of \$5,000.00 be transferred from the department's Reserve Training Account and placed into the current budget line to cover the cost for training. This motion was approved, 5-0.

D) Council discussion regarding the Planning Board response to a report by the State Commission to increase housing opportunities by studying zoning and land use restrictions.

Director of Code and Planning Bub Fournier reviewed the generated nine recommendations from the report.

Planning Board Chair Hugh Townsend discussed the Planning Boards current work to look at how the City of Belfast can increase housing opportunities through zoning ordinance amendments and answered Council questions.

Councilors discussed having additional time to review and discuss outside the Bypass proposed zoning amendments, scheduling a Work Shop on February 8, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. on these amendments before it comes to a Regular Council Meeting for a First Reading in late February or early March.

Councilors discussed having a joint Work Shop (possibly fitting it in on February 8, 2022 if time allows) regarding housing in the near future.

E) Council discussion on substandard housing concerns and property maintenance issues.

Director of Code and Planning Bub Fournier and Code Enforcement Officer Steve Wilson reviewed areas of concern of substandard housing within the community with Council and discussed proposed options moving forward.

Councilors discussed potential ideas and ways as a City Council and staff can start addressing these areas of concern.

F) Update on the Belfast Keep the Faith Fund.

City Manager Erin Herbig provided an update on the Keep the Faith Fund.

Councilors discussed support for moving forward with the grocery voucher program and discussed funding to allocate toward gift cards for the program and to increase gift card amounts.

Councilors discussed the possibility of utilizing funding from Keep the Faith Fund to jump start an emergency home repairs program, no formal action was taken.

Councilor Mortier, seconded by Councilor Harkness, made a motion to authorize City staff to offer a fourth round of the grocery voucher program as quickly as feasible to respond to a current need we are seeing in the City of Belfast, allocating \$25,000.00 from the Keep the Faith Fund to purchase grocery store gift cards for the program increasing the gift card amounts to \$125.00 per household and \$75.00 per each additional child. This motion was approved, 5-0.

G) Request by the Economic Development Director to have the City Council adopt a target area survey for the Wight Street area.

Economic Development Director Thomas Kittredge reviewed the request to adopt the survey and associated beneficiary profile that was conducted for the Wight and Congress Street target area

and sign the certification form as part of the requirement of the Community Development Block Grant Public Infrastructure Grant Program, that could financially support an infrastructure improvement project focused on the entirety of Wight Street and on a portion of Congress Street.

Councilor Harkness, seconded by Councilor Mortier, made a motion to adopt the survey and associated beneficiary profile that was conducted for the Wight and Congress Street target area and sign the certification form. This motion was approved, 5-0.

H) Request from the Airport Manager to have the City Council authorize the City Manager to award a contract to SolarLogix, 28 Loxley Lane Swanville, ME to install a heat pump in the Belfast Airport Terminal building.

Airport Manager Kenn Ortmann reviewed the request to award a contract to SolarLogix, 28 Loxley Lane Swanville, ME to install a heat pump in the Belfast Airport Terminal building and answered Council questions.

Councilor Mortier, seconded by Councilor Harkness, made a motion to authorize the City Manager to sign a project contract with SolarLogix, 28 Loxley Lane Swanville, ME to install 1 Mitsubishi MUZFS12NA 12000 btu hyper heat pump at the Airport Terminal building utilizing the \$1,600 Efficiency Maine rebate to reduce the City's cost to \$2,300 and utilize the Airport Maintenance Capital Reserve Account 640-711 to pay for the work. This motion was approved, 5-0.

I) Update and further discussion regarding the Finance Office.

Finance Director Theresa Butler further discussed with Council moving the Finance Office into Conference Room A answering Council questions.

Councilors discussed how it would look if moved and a permanent versus and temporary move of the office.

Councilor Bonneville, seconded by Councilor Dean, made a motion to move the Finance Office into Conference Room A. This motion failed, 2-3 (Councilor Harkness, Hurley and Dean opposed).

Councilor Harkness, seconded by Councilor Hurley, made a motion to temporarily move the Finance Office into Conference Room A. This motion was approved, 5-0.

J) Council discussion on City Council Budget Priorities.

Councilor Hurley briefly discussed proposed Budget Priorities and request that Council hold a Work Shop to discuss further at a future date.

K) Council discussion on implementing a City-wide indoor mask mandate.

Item moved to **10) A #1**.

L) Request to place small public use sand/salt buckets around downtown.

Councilors discussed the request to place small public use sand/salt buckets around downtown.

Councilor Hurley, seconded by Councilor Mortier, made a motion to place 3 to place small public use sand/salt buckets around downtown as a temporary experiment. This motion was approved, 5-0.

M) Request to accept State of Maine American Rescue Plan Funding in the amount of \$409.78.

No Council discussion.

Councilor Harkness, seconded by Councilor Bonneville, made a motion to accept the funds of \$409.78 and to place these funds into the American Rescue Plan Funding account #730-911. This motion was approved, 5-0.

N) Request to accept a \$1,000.00 donation to the Belfast Fire Department.

No Council discussion.

Councilor Harkness, seconded by Councilor Mortier, made a motion to accept the donation, with funding to be applied to the Jaws of Life account (1-2100-00) account. This motion was approved, 5-0.

O) Request to approve a CMP pole permit for two new poles on Herrick Rd.

No Council discussion.

Councilor Harkness, seconded by Councilor Dean, made a motion to approve the CMP pole permit for two new poles on Herrick Rd. This motion was approved, 5-0.

10) O #1 Request to designate the City Manager to serve as the fair hearing authority on General Assistance Appeals.

Councilor Harkness, seconded by Councilor Dean, made a motion to designate the City Manager to serve as the fair hearing authority on General Assistance Appeals. This motion was approved, 5-0.

P) Request to go into Executive Session on a Personnel matter pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405 (6) A.

Councilor Harkness, seconded by Councilor Bonneville, made a motion to go into Executive Session on a Personnel matter pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405 (6) A at 11:32 p.m. This motion was approved, 5-0.

Councilor Hurley, seconded by Councilor Mortier, made a motion to adjourn the Executive Session on a Personnel matter pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405 (6) A at 11:46 p.m. This motion was approved, 5-0.

P) #1 Request to go into Executive Session to discuss a Poverty Abatement pursuant to Title 36 M.R.S.A. 841.

Councilor Harkness, seconded by Councilor Mortier, made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a Poverty Abatement pursuant to Title 36 M.R.S.A. 841 at 11:46 p.m. This motion was approved, 5-0.

Councilor Mortier, seconded by Councilor Harkness, made a motion to adjourn the Executive Session to discuss a Poverty Abatement pursuant to Title 36 M.R.S.A. 841 at 11:59 p.m. This motion was approved, 5-0.

***Council returned to the Regular Meeting in open session.**

Councilor Mortier, seconded by Councilor Bonneville, made a motion to waive a foreclosure of tax lien filed 7/16/2020, BK4517 P316 for Map 008 Lot 096. This motion was approved, 4-0 (Councilor Hurley was absent during the vote).

Q) Signing of Council Orders and housekeeping items.

Council Order #58 Signed by Councilor Bonneville Ordered That:

The City Manager and the City Treasurer are authorized to expend up to \$6,250.00 for Basic Emergency Medical Training schooling for five students. Funding of \$5,000.00 is to be transferred from the department's Reserve Training Account and placed into the current budget line to cover the cost for training. (Approved January 18, 2022)

Council Order #59 Signed by Councilor Bonneville Ordered That:

The City Manager and the City Treasurer are authorized to allocating \$25,000.00 to purchase grocery store gift cards from Hannaford to be utilized for the fourth round of the Belfast Keep the Faith Fund Grocery Voucher Program. Funding is to come from the Belfast Keep the Faith Fund account. (Approved January 18, 2022)

Council Order #60 Signed by Councilor Bonneville Ordered That:

The City Manager and the City Treasurer are authorized to expend \$2,300.00, utilizing the \$1,600 Efficiency Maine rebate to reduce the City's cost, to have SolarLogix, of Swanville, ME to install 1 Mitsubishi MUZFS12NA 12000 btu hyper heat pump at the Airport Terminal building. Funding is to come from the Airport Maintenance Capital Reserve Account 640-711. (Approved January 18, 2022)

Council Order #61 Signed by Councilor Bonneville Ordered That:

The City Manager and the City Treasurer are authorized to accept \$409.78 State of Maine American Rescue Plan Funding and to place these funds into the American Rescue Plan Funding account #730-911. (Approved January 18, 2022)

Council Order #62 Signed by Councilor Bonneville Ordered That:

The City Manager and the City Treasurer are authorized to accept the \$1,000.00 donation, with funding to be applied to the Jaws of Life account (1-2100-00) account. (Approved January 18, 2022)

Council Order #63 Signed by Councilor Bonneville Ordered That:

The City Manager and the City Treasurer are authorized to waive a foreclosure of tax lien filed 7/16/2020, BK4517 P316 for Map 008 Lot 096. (Approved January 18, 2022)

11) Communications

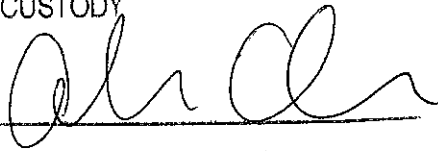
Councilor Hurley discussed changes to properties in downtown Belfast.

12) Adjourn

Councilor Mortier, seconded by Councilor Harkness, made a motion to adjourn at 11:59 p.m. This motion was approved, 4-0 (Councilor Hurley was absent during the vote).

HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE
IS A TRUE COPY OF INFORMATION
ON THE RECORD WHICH IS IN MY
OFFICIAL CUSTODY

ATTEST



AMANDA CUSHMAN, BELFAST MAINE