

COUNCIL ORIENTATION

December 10, 2007

Wentworth Douglas Hospital, Ann Torr Rm 4th floor

The returning and elected council were welcomed and the orientation was started at 7:10pm. Councilor Keays was absent from the proceedings. In addition, The City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk were present. This meeting was to provide guidance on how things operate and an orientation manual was given to each councilor. The meeting started with each person giving a short biography. The Inauguration is scheduled for January 7, 2008. There will be a meeting at 6pm to determine Deputy Mayor, have the Councilors sworn in and begin to establish rules. The inauguration will begin at 7pm. The Police will provide color guard and, Fire Fighters will provide bagpipes. The Middle School chorus will be in attendance and local clergy will do the swearing in. Invitations should be available next week. Councilors were instructed to fill out the provided forms: committee preference (needs to be back to Mayor Myers by 12/20), employment forms, Oath of Office, email and internet policies, anti-harassment policy, points of contact, direct deposit, and life insurance.

The City Attorney discussed the relationship between New Hampshire law and local government and reinforced that New Hampshire is not a home rule state. 2 major Statutes cover most of what we do. The first is budget appropriation and the second is the ability to pass ordinances for the provincial affairs of Dover (health, welfare and safety.) The purchasing rules were discussed. Council approval is currently needed for anything over \$25,000.00 or purchases that are exceptions to normal purchasing rules.

Next the oath of office and confidentiality were discussed. Councilors are immune from liability as long as they are acting within their scope and in good faith. They are covered by City insurance for this type of issue.

The code of conduct and ethics are covered under Charter 10 and Ordinance 22. Conflict of interest provisions concern financial matters. Discussion centered on abstaining from voting. It is a personal decision if there is a conflict and it must be disclosed either in public meeting or a letter to the City Clerk. The Councilor must not discuss or vote and must leave the area. There appears to be some conflict concerning the ability to recuse self. This will be further reviewed by the City Attorney.

RSA 91-A, Right to Know laws, were discussed and it was enforced to the Council that this includes emails as well. Right to Know concerns both meetings and documents. There are 3 situations that are not a meeting: Collective bargaining, social and meeting with the City Attorney. All other meetings are open and posted with the exception of Nonpublic. Nonpublic sessions are posted with the reason it can be nonpublic: personelle, legal or sale of property. Minutes are taken and can be either sealed or unsealed.

Citizens can inspect city documents. Most information is sent to all Councilors but there are exceptions. It was again stressed that emails need to be viewed as a meeting if a quorum is involved and 5 Councilors can be involved by virtue of forwarding and CCing without someone being aware it has occurred. If a quorum is on the email then it should be CCd to the Council archive email.

The new online email system was discussed by the City Manager. This email is only accessed by staff for Right to Know or Court request. The Councilors were shown the web Browser and functions (calendar, drafts, contacts)

The City electronic archives were discussed. These are organized by department. A demonstration was given.

Other layers of government in the State were touched upon including Senators, Executive Council and legislative. Councilors were encouraged to get involved with State issues such as the retirement system, Little Bay bridge, Willand Pond and County tax.

This meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm