

ADOPTED

City of Keene
New Hampshire

COUNCIL GOAL SETTING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

4:45 PM

IT Training Room,
City Hall

Members Present:

Carl Jacobs, Chair
Steve Hooper
Philip Jones (Arrived Late)
Bettina Chadbourne
Robert O'Connor

Staff Present:

Medard Kopczynski, City Manager
Thomas Mullins, City Attorney
Patty Little, City Clerk

Members Not Present:

1) **Call to Order**

Chair Jacobs called the meeting to order at 4:47 PM.

2) **Approval of Minutes – December 7, 2016**

Councilor Chadbourne made a motion to approve the minutes of December 7, 2016, which was seconded by Councilor Hooper and carried unanimously.

3) **Goal One Objectives**

Chair Jacobs recalled the task was to discuss objectives for **Goal One: Provide high quality, cost-effective and environmentally sensitive services that are responsive to community needs**. He said he looked over the Comprehensive Master Plan and the Broadband Plan and he did not see where there was much attention to the notion of high quality or cost effective services. He noted the Comprehensive Plan referenced some

City services, but it did not define the concepts of high quality, cost effective services. Chair Jacobs explained these concepts were important to define. He continued based on the feedback he received, the City needed to address the concern of some that certain services viewed as wasteful and not every effective. Chair Jacobs suggested there needed to be a mechanism to show how the services were evaluated to determine if the services were high quality and cost effective services.

Councilor Jacobs asked the Committee how the City could recognize a service as high quality and cost effective. The City Clerk made a recommendation to conduct a customer surveys. Councilor Jacobs asked what questions would be asked on the survey. Councilor Chadbourne replied the survey would ask the participant to prioritize their needs and wants due to the level of importance. She noted the survey could be structured to ask relevant questions associated with high quality and effective services.

The City Manager explained that surveys were a constantly moving target and what often happens in government was that the government responds to a specific problem at a specific time and creates bureaucracies to deal with the problem. He said that did not necessarily reflect the service level or quality. The City Manager said there was a discussion about some of the reports produced for the City Council that came from departments in the City. He continued the question asked was if those reports represented a metric that made any sense from a standpoint of determining if the department services were considered as high quality and cost effective services. The City Manager said he would argue from a quality standpoint that almost everyone that worked for the City did a good, high quality job and the cost effectiveness was in the eye of the beholder. He noted that the metric always changed and he was not sure if a metric could ever be set in stone.

The City Attorney said out of the five goals that were identified, goal one was unique in the sense that it needed to be started at the bottom up and it was the only goal that had a specific attachment to something, which was services. He suggested the first step was to identify the services that are presently provided, the services that are not currently provided and what services people want. The City Attorney said once the services were identified then a metric needed to be in place to judge if the services were high quality and cost effective.

Councilor Hooper said he agreed with the City Attorney that there was a need to prioritize the services provided by the City and to start goal one by working from the bottom up.

Chair Jacobs asked the Committee if the goal would be to have a process to conduct a survey. The City Manager said the downside to surveys were that they were sometimes biased and not necessary indicative of the question asked. He explained when surveys were conducted with Code Enforcement they never had a bad report because customers do not want a building inspector upset with them. The City Manager said he did not know of a better mechanism but he unsure if a survey was the right mechanism.

Councilor Chadbourne said she disagreed and explained how she liked to provide her feedback on surveys. She said that she did not have to be upset or mad to provide her feedback.

Councilor Jacobs said he thought most people in the community were satisfied with the services the City offered, but they were not happy with their property taxes.

The City Manager said there are times when he did not fill out a survey because of the way the survey was written. He recommended formulating each question from the perspective of the respondent. The City Attorney used the example of a personality profile tests that used multiples choice questions to get to the same spot. He noted the personality profile tests consisted of controlled questions intended to look at a specific question differently. He suggested the survey have open ended questions that were tied to specific questions that were more specific, noting that people liked structure.

The City Attorney said he kept coming back to the point that he had never seen a list of services the City offered.

Chair Jacobs said that the task was not to write the survey questions and recognized there were pros and cons to surveys. He suggested an objective under goal one would be to conduct a survey to get the public's opinion of the quality and cost of services. Councilor Chadbourne said that as a City Councilor people in the community had voiced their concerns to her about what is and what is not working. She continued that if she were surveyed the majority of concerns addressed where of the roads. Councilor Chadbourne said in terms of the roads, survey questions she would ask were how she handled when she called the City, how fast the work was done and was the road smooth and travelable. She explained if all of those expectations were met then it would equal a high quality service.

Councilor Chadbourne continued the most compliments she received were about The City Clerk's Office and the excellence of customer service. The City Attorney said that with all due respect there were not enforcement issues in the City Clerk's Office. He noted that dealing with enforcement issues made a difference in the perception from citizens in terms of what services they are getting from the City.

The City Manager agreed that the Committee was not there to write the survey, but some of the points of the discussion were important for whoever writes the survey questions. He suggested a question on the survey ask the participant to list the services provided by the City. He noted very few people have experience in dealing with their municipality. The Committee agreed on the following: **Goal One, Objective One: Identify All Services Provided by the City.**

The City Manager said that once the list of services was identified it would then lead to the question of cost effectiveness. Chair Jacobs said another question to consider was how this would be communicated to the public. He said he had a strong sense based on the communication with the public that there was a notion the City could do more communication.

The Committee agreed on the following: **Goal One, Objective Two: Gather public opinion to determine what services the City should not be providing or what services the City should be providing.**

Councilor Jacobs said one objective was to identify the services and then determine if there was a need to add or remove a service. He noted the goal was speaking to the community needs and the question should be brought to the community.

The City Attorney said there seemed to be three steps in the objective 1) list what know services are provided 2) list what services might the City want to provide 3) working from both lists what services does the public want the City to provide or not provide. He noted the steps were distinct.

Councilor Hooper recalled a meeting where the Gainesville, Florida Citizen Centric approach was discussed. He said the Citizen Centric was a good example in terms of the objectives for goal one. He continued that the Citizen Centric approach would be to get the feedback from the public on what the City does know, does not know or should know. The City Manager said the City staff would know what service was high priority based on the experiences with the public. Councilor Hooper noted a survey completed by the public would allow the public to become better educated and better able to participate in the City activities.

Chair Jacobs explained the issue with quality was that it was in the eye of beholder. The City Manager used an example how someone may consider high quality as walking into the door in Code Enforcement and getting a building permit right away. He continued or was high quality service the fact that the building inspector found issues that needed to be fixed for life safety. Chair Jacobs noted that the metric of quality was a moving target.

Council Jones arrived to the meeting and Councilor Jacobs provided a brief review of the meeting.

Councilor Jones recalled his previous suggestion of getting reports from the City Departments to determine what services they are performing that are unknown or services that need to be changed. He asked if this was already implemented with the City staff. The City Clerk replied there was a discussion of an implementation strategy.

The City Clerk suggested determining the cost of City services. She said there was difficulty with determining an actual cost of City services the way the budgeting document was setup with cost line items. She explained that went back to the priority based budgeting concept that would align expenses to services as opposed to cost line items. Chair Jacobs suggested the concept of priority based budgeting might be better included in Goal Three. Chair Jacobs asked if some of the ideas surrounding cost effective would relate to goal three. The City Attorney said cost effective to residence of the community related to the service. He used the example of the metric used to determine the time a

police department responded to a 911 call. The City Attorney said if the response was one hour the service would be determined as a low quality service and if the response was 3 minutes it would be considered a high quality service. He said a metric could be developed to show the cost of the police department being able to show up at any location in a certain amount of time. He said that cost effective measurement would then be part of Goal Three.

The Committee agreed on the following: **Goal One, Objective Three: Implement a Process to Determine a Metric that would identify the Cost Effectiveness of Providing City Services.**

The City Clerk provided a review of the objectives determined for goal one.

Councilor Chadbourne noted the Committee had not discussed environmentally sensitive services and asked if that would require its own objective.

The Manager said the City Council would have to determine what environmentally sensitive was and how that interplays with cost effective. He noted there were some things done from an environmental reason that were not cost effective. Councilor Chadbourne asked the City Manager to provide an example. The City Manager replied an example was the solar panels installed on roof of the City Hall. He continued the panels should not have been installed based on the return on investment. He explained the reason the solar panels were put in was for carbon reduction and as a demonstration project. He said purely based on cost effectiveness and as a return on investment the solar panels on City Hall would not be considered a good choice.

The City Clerk suggested when conducting the inventory of City services to ask departments to identify whether one of the services had an environmental component. The City Manager said when the City looked at supplies such as toilet paper and paper towels it was looked at from a standpoint of the product effect on the environment. He continued decision were also based on the return on investment, how much of the product was used due to quality and also if the product was produced eco-friendly. Chair Jacobs asked if there should be an objective to evaluate the environmental impact of the services. Councilor Jones said there was a big difference between buying toilet paper and designing an intersection to be more environmentally friendly. He said there was a much larger picture than buying supplies. Councilor Hooper said there also needed to be a thought of how green to go before it became too expensive. The City Attorney said at some point where the delta was zero and there was an environmental benefit and a cost associated with that it became a policy question. Chair Jacobs said he did not think any of the objections exist to the exclusions to the others. He suggested an objective that clearly spoke to service that were environmentally sensitive. The Committee agreed on the following: **Goal One, Objective Four: Analyze City Services for Environmental Sensitivity.**

Councilor Jones asked the Committee if there was anything from Smart Growth Principles, which could be incorporated into an objective. The City Clerk read the

following from Smart Growth Principles, "Smart growth is an approach to development that encourages a mix of building types and uses, diverse housing and transportation options, development within existing neighborhoods, and community engagement".

The City Clerk read the 10 Smart Growth Principles as follows:

1. Mix land uses
2. Take advantage of compact design
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
4. Create walkable neighborhoods
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
7. Direct development towards existing communities
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

Chair Jacobs said that Smart Growth Principles was not speaking toward services as much as it was planning and should be under the quality of life goal.

Councilor Hooper asked when the exercise happens to start listing all of the services. Chair Jacobs said the Committee's job was to bring all of the information to the City Council. The City Clerk said the City Council would need to prioritize the work of the Committee and which objectives should be focused on. She noted this was a multiyear project.

4) **Next Steps**

- 2) The Committee will discuss objectives for **Goal Two: Establish a Competitive and Prosperous Local Economy** at the next meeting.

5) **Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Chair Jacobs adjourned the meeting at 5:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jennifer Clark, Minute Taker