

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
November 29, 2023 – 4:00 p.m.

Committee Members present: Councilor David A. Witham, Chairman
 Councilor Denis Messier, Vice-Chairman
 Councilor Martin Pepin
 Councilor Kenneth Vincent

Administration/Staff present: City Manager, Bob Belmore
 Finance Director, Scott Smith
 Director of Public Works, Michael Bobinsky
 City Engineer, Amber Hall
 Deputy City Clerk, Ammy Ramsey

Councilor Witham called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF OCTOBER 16, 2023

Councilor Messier made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 3-0-1. Councilor Vincent abstained.

COLES POND ROAD UPDATE

City Manager Belmore stated that the residents of the Cole's Pond Road Association, Inc. have retained Brian R. Barrington of The Coolidge Law Firm who sent a memo to the City concerning cost sharing of any road maintenance such as snow plowing because of the City owned parcel on Cole's Pond Road. Manager Belmore mentioned that the City Attorney sent a letter to Mr. Barrington in response stating that the RSA 231:1 does not apply to this City owned property and that the City will be posting no trespassing signs on the property.

There was some discussion pertaining to the City owned property's details and potential uses. The consensus of the Committee was to post the property with no trespassing signs and not participate in the cost sharing of the road maintenance. Councilor Witham requested that City staff look into the possibility of selling the property as well.

Public Works Director mentioned that the property will be posted by next week because they had to order the signs.

UNITIL GAS LINE – MAPLE STREET

Councilor Witham mentioned that he requested the update for this project and was pleased to find out that the areas with new base pavement will be milled and paved in the Spring but has concerns with the sidewalk portion of the repair.

City Engineer Hall stated that the work on Maple Street should be completed by Friday. Engineer Hall also mentioned that she spoke with the construction manager and he stated that they were hesitant to reestablish the curbing for the sidewalk because of plowing and will make the proper repairs in the Spring.

Councilor Witham inquired if in the Spring when the work is being done on the Blackwater Road, if the City would have the opportunity to have detectable warning panels put in at that time. Public Works Director Bobinsky stated that he will look into that.

CMAQ PROJECT UPDATE

Public Works Director Bobinsky stated that there is a lot of activity going on currently with some paving and finishing up the hardscape. The inspector has been going through each of the cabinets at the intersections to verify the electronics and approximately 80% are installed, and next week they will be fine tuning the system. The punch list is anticipated for the first week of December and around the 8th of December a scheduled review with Sebago Technics will take place to double check the system and do some programming. Director Bobinsky stated that there is a one-year agreement with Sebago to have continued support and monitoring of the system. Councilor Witham mentioned a few things that should be addressed concerning emergency receivers and sign placement concerns.

DISCUSSION ON RTE 108 NH DOT COMPLETE STREETS-RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Works Director Bobinsky stated they have had some meetings with the design team for this project and the Department of Transportation (DOT) is seeking endorsements from the three Cities regarding specific design elements. The first element is sidewalk design and deciding whether or not to include a sidewalk on the west side of Rout 108 from Interstate Drive to Whitehouse Road. There was some discussion pertaining to the need for a sidewalk on the west side for pedestrian safety. The consensus of the Committee is to support the sidewalk installation.

Director Bobinsky stated the next element up for a decision is for crosswalks, since the consensus is to have a sidewalk on the west side of Route 108, a crosswalk will be required to cross Route 108 at the Route 108/W. High Street/Whitehouse Road intersections. The consensus of the Committee is to have those crosswalks.

Director Bobinsky stated that there are three additional elements to consider regarding mid-block crosswalks on Route 108 at Interstate Drive, Route 108 at Goodwin Family Medical Center, and Route 108 at Works Way. Councilor Witham stated that if the Committee decides they would like these mid-block crosswalks, what type of mid-block crosswalks should be installed such as the

flashing beacon lights or to include a raised island/safe refuge type of crosswalk. There was discussion pertaining to the safety of mid-block crosswalks and the maintenance of them. The consensus of the Committee is to have the flashing beacon light at all three proposed locations but not include the pedestrian refuge island.

Director Bobinsky also requested that the Committee decide what type of street lighting they would prefer. The current project envisions standard LED cut off lighting. Councilor Witham stated he is comfortable with the current strategy that is outlined, all agreed.

Director Bobinsky inquired about the landscaping aspect of the project and stated that the City has been going towards a low maintenance type of style. The consensus of the Committee is to continue with no landscaping or grass panels.

Director Bobinsky stated that they plan on scheduling a public hearing during the Summer in Somersworth regarding the Route 108 Complete Streets project.

MISCELLANEOUS UPDATES

Councilor Witham thanked City staff for the detailed memo with various updates included.

Councilor Messier thanked City staff for handling the US Flag concern he had.

Councilor Witham inquired about the water meter replacement process. Finance Director Smith stated that replacements started this week and appointments continue to be scheduled. Director Smith also mentioned that the City was broken into a number of zones and letters were sent to the older meter zones first.

Councilor Messier inquired about the Hamilton Street Water Storage Tank update which stated staff are revisiting a few elements of the project, Councilor Messier recalled this being a bid project and wondered if that is being revisited. City Manager Belmore stated the engineering wasn't bid out, that the project was awarded to Wright/Pierce Engineers based on recommendations of Council Committees. Public Works Director Bobinsky stated they are reviewing the contract language and not the amount of the project. Councilor Messier mentioned that he hopes that the design is similar to the storage tank that recently went up in Dover.

Councilor Messier mentioned that there is a vote coming forward for Resolution 22-24 concerning the variable frequency drives and how important it is to get the proper equipment for the facility.

Councilor Vincent inquired about the type of security the City has for their water system. Finance Director Smith stated the City had a cyber security audit conducted on the two plants, and the City is completing the recommended cyber security upgrades at the Water Treatment Plant.

City Manager Belmore mentioned a few comments he has received concerning parking meters because of concern that patrons visiting businesses only have the ability to park for one hour and that often is not enough time. Councilor Witham stated he feels that pay and display will come

eventually but the challenge at the moment is the enforcement aspect. The City uses a part-time parking enforcement officer, and if you have pay and display, but don't enforce it becomes pointless.

Belmore mentioned that SRPC will be doing a parking survey for the City without any additional cost as they have done a few already for some neighboring communities.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Pepin made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 4-0 by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ammy Ramsey, Deputy City Clerk