

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM
October 12, 2017, 3:00pm.

Committee Members present: Councilor David A. Witham, Chairman
 Councilor Dale R. Sprague, Vice-Chair
 Councilor Martin Pepin
 Councilor Jennifer Soldati

Administration/Staff present: City Manager, Bob Belmore
 Director of Public Works, Michael Bobinsky
 Finance Director, Scott Smith
 Superintendent, Connie Brown
 SAU Business Administrator, Marie D 'Agostino
 Deputy City Clerk, Kelly Gagne

Other:

The meeting called to order by Vice-Chairman Sprague at 3:00 PM.

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES

Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor Soldati, made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2017 meeting; the motion approve. 3-0.

Chairman Witham entered the meeting at 3:07pm.

MOOSE PLATE GRANT AWARD FOR FOREST GLADE CEMETERY

Manager Belmore explained that there is a \$10,000 grant awarded to the City of Somersworth from the State of NH, and there is no local funding match required. The grant funds are to be used to upgrade the main entrance gate, fencing and monument restoration in the Forest Glade Cemetery. The upgrades are being done as part of historical restoration.

Councilor Pepin, made a motion to sponsor a Resolution to accept the grant, seconded by Councilor Soldati. Motion passed 4-0.

TAX DEEDED PROPERTY

Director Smith explained to the committee that a real estate agent is needed to sell tax deeded property on Winter St. The City solicited proposals and Heather Kretschmar of ReMax was the only proposal received and she has worked successfully with the City in the past. She has proposed a 5% commission for single family and 7% for mobile homes on all sold properties. The Committee has no objection and the consensus was the City Manager had authority to move forward with the process.

Councilor Witham asked for an update on 10 Green St. Manager Belmore stated that test boring was being done on Wednesday October 11, 2017.

Director Smith presented a list of properties that are currently at risk of being deeded due to unpaid taxes. There is a list in the handout of properties that are to be sent to tax deed, he did note that staff has been able to reduce the MHU list quite a bit. The property on Wexford Lane has contaminated soils with buried debris.

Councilor Sprague questioned why Wynne Daigle's property is on the list, he believes it was sold recently. He has seen a lot of activity lately; Director Smith stated he will check on that. Councilor Witham said he thinks it may be a timber harvest that was causing the increased activity.

Councilor Witham stated that he would like to move forward with deeding the single family homes. In terms of the mobile homes, he would like to deed properties that have outstanding taxes from 2012 or 2013. Councilor Sprague said that we need to be consistent. That he is okay with deeding mobile homes that have outstanding taxes owed from 2012.

Councilor Sprague made a motion to sponsor a resolution to not deed any MHU homes or the properties located at 7 or 5 Wexford Lane, except for the MHU at 3 Jack & Jill, seconded by Councilor Soldati. Motion passed 4-0

Director Smith updated the committee on 37 Franklin Street that the City took due to a tax deed. That property has been subject to vandalism, it is loaded fully with hoarder type materials. The City has begun looking into have it cleaned out; razed etc. An abutter has shown interest in purchasing the property. The cost to have building torn down is in the area of \$18,000. He is looking for guidance from the Finance Committee

Councilor Sprague is okay with selling to the abutter, but that he will have to go through the process of buying it through a real estate agent as there needs to be consistency. Councilor Pepin would like to request a proposal from the abutter, if they are to purchase the property, on what the plans are with the property. He doesn't want the property to sit there after the sale in its current state.

CITY HALL HVAC IMPROVEMENT BID AWARD

Manager Belmore stated that the City has received bids for the City Hall and School Buildings HVAC upgrades. The top bid for the city project was from Denron out of Manchester, NH and their bid was \$46,300, and Palmer and Sicard out of Exeter, NH also submitted a bid and their bid was \$64,105. Staff has recommended Dendron out of Manchester, NH to complete the improvement.

Motion made by Councilor Pepin, to sponsor a resolution to award a contract with Denron Plumbing and HVAC of Manchester, NH for the purchase and installation of a cooling tower for city hall for \$46,300, seconded by Councilor Sprague. Motion passed 4-0.

CODE OFFICE TRUCK PURCHASE

Director Bobinsky provided background for standard half-ton 4-wheel drive Ford pick-up truck as a replacement vehicle for the Code Enforcement Officer. The Committee had asked Staff to obtain prices so that a comparison could be made for a ½ ton 4 wheel drive pick-up truck versus a 1 size larger (¾ ton) pick-up truck outfitted with winter plow gear. The price for a ½ ton pick-up came in at \$23,500; the ¾ ton pick-up with snow gear included came in at \$35,690.

Councilor Witham states that it is not worth the extra money to have the redundancy for use by highway if one of their smaller vehicles broke down during a winter event. Councilor Sprague believes that the department doesn't need a truck.

Motion made by Councilor Pepin, to sponsor a resolution for the purchase of a ½ ton 4 wheel drive pick-up, seconded by Councilor Soldati . Motion passed 3-1, Councilor Sprague opposed.

CABLE TV EQUIPMENT PURCHASE

City Manager informed the committee staff developed a cost for equipment to live telecast on Channel 22 from outside the Council Chambers. The City is interested in broadcasting certain events such as the upcoming Holiday parade. The cost for this equipment is within the Manager's spending authority. Absent any direction to the contrary he intends to move forward with the purchase. The Committee agreed to spend the money to update the cable TV equipment.

MISCELLANEOUS

Councilor Witham stated that the School has a shortfall in the projected revenues. That it was reported a few weeks ago. He wants to look at the issue and how to tackle it.

Superintendent Brown updated that the School Board is having a special meeting on Tuesday October 17, 2017 that they will come up with options. The Special Education reserve fund has \$104,000 that could help. She will work with administrators to see what they can find in budget reductions.

Councilor Pepin asked if the budget has been frozen and felt there can be some savings. Superintendent Brown plans on announcing that the budget will be frozen tomorrow.

Manager Belmore stated that we are going to need another budget public hearing for a tax cap override vote, would like to target Nov 6th for a public hearing.

There was a lengthy discussion between Councilors and School staff on why and how this happened. There was discussion on overriding the tax cap and what the process may be to resolve the issue concerning the School Department revenue.

Councilor Witham notified the committee there will be a joint meeting of the Council and School Board next Thursday at the Career Technical Center to discuss this issue. Councilor Witham would like staff to come up with more ideas to bring forward.

ADJOURNMENT

***Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor Sprague made a motion to adjourn at 4:00.
Passed 4-0***

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Gagne, Deputy City Clerk