

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

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

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

Other: Fosters Reporter Judi Currie

The meeting called to order by Chairman Witham at 3:00 PM.

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES

Councilor Soldati, seconded by Councilor Pepin, made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2017 meeting; the motion approved 4-0.

SCHOOL DISTRICT REVENUE SHORTFALL

Councilor Witham stated that at the SAU meeting the other night it was voted to release 75% of SAU fund balance, which has a balance of \$140,000 unaudited, making the total amount released \$105,000. Somersworth will receive 75% of that which is \$88,000. Lengthy discussion on a possible school budget reduction to address the revenue shortfall ensued. Councilor Witham likes the approach recommended by the Joint Commission of the City Council and School Board. They recommend the School Budget be reduced by \$516,000 and ask the SAU to look for additional savings. Furthermore, they recommend the SAU complete a review of the entire School budget and return with a report in the spring. Should the School require additional funding, the City Council may consider a supplemental appropriation at that time, thereby doing it once and avoid addressing this issue multiple times. Councilor Sprague still wants to see cuts from the School Board; he also thinks some accountability needs to be clearer with what happened.

Councilor Sprague made a motion that the Finance Committee endorse the Joint Commission plan to reduce school budget by \$516,000, seconded by Soldati, motion approved 4-0.

SALE OF TAX DEEDED PROPERTY – 20 GREEN STREET

Manager Belmore updated the Committee that the former Profile Garage owner had indicated that there may be some waste underground. The State tested the site using State of NH MTBE funds and the findings are that the site is clean. The City can now move forward to sell the property. Manager Belmore stated that today he received a letter from the former owner's attorney that he wants to start the process to repurchase the property. He is asking the City to waive penalty assessment fees and also ask that the assessor drop the value of the property. Property is currently assessed at \$164,000; total payoff to the City would be \$53,625.99. Councilor Witham votes no on forgiveness of City fees and he would leave any question on assessed value to the proper department. Councilor Pepin also voted no on any forgiveness of City fees. Belmore suggested it may be prudent to have the full City Council act on the request for the waiver of fees, the Committee agreed to request such a vote be placed before the full Council.

Councilor Witham, made a motion to support sponsoring a Resolution to the full Council to initiate the selling process of 20 Green St, seconded by Councilor Pepin. Motion approved 4-0.

REPORTING

No reporting updates at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

Manager Belmore wants to bring forward Wright/Pierce Engineers to the full City Council for a presentation on the Wastewater Treatment Facility update. No objection from the Finance Committee to bring to full City Council. A workshop will be scheduled on Dec 4, 2017 pending the Mayor's approval.

Manager Belmore updated the Committee on the proposed inter-municipal water agreement with the City of Dover on the water system interconnection project. The Drinking Water and Groundwater Advisory Commission gave initial approval to move forward their recommendation for funding the project to Governor and Council, which has an project estimate of \$ 1.3 million. Director Bobinsky states that the temporary emergency connection site on Old Dover Rd will be completed in the next week or two.

ADJOURNMENT

***Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor Soldati made a motion to adjourn at 3:25pm
Passed 3-1. Sprague opposed.***

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Gagne, Deputy City Clerk