

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATED REMOTELY VIA ZOOM VIDEO
CONFERENCE
CITY STAFF PARTICIPATED FROM THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
June 9, 2020 @ 3:30 PM

Committee Members present: Councilor David A. Witham, Chairman
Electronically via Zoom Councilor Donald Austin, Vice-Chair
Councilor Martin Pepin
Councilor Martin P. Dumont, Sr.

Administration/Staff present: Bob Belmore, City Manager
Scott Smith, Finance Director
Kelly Gagne, Deputy City Clerk
Gary Lemay, City Engineer (left @ 4:49pm)
George Kramlinger, Fire Chief
Mike Bobinsky, Director of Public Works & Utilities (left at 4:49pm)

Other:

Chairman Witham announced:

Due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and although the meeting is open to the public, the public was encouraged not to attend. The public was encouraged to offer written comment by email, via USPS, or by drop-off at the City Hall Tax Collector drive-thru window.

The meeting called to order by Chairman Witham at 3:30 PM.

Chairman Witham announced that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by **roll call vote**.

Attendance was taken by roll call vote; all members were present and all Committee members had no one in the room with them.

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES

Councilor Austin, seconded by Councilor Dumont made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2020 meeting. Roll call vote Motion passed 4-0.

City Manager stated who was in attendance in the City Council chamber which is noted above.

AUDITOR PROPOSALS

Director Smith stated that we went out to bid and received four proposals and all four are well known firms. The two firms that we narrowed it down to were based on cost, Vachon Clukay and Plodzick and Sanderson. He would recommend both firm and notes that Vachon Clukay are the City's current auditors and that they have committed to changing principal staff in charge of the audit to provide a change from the prior engagement.

Manager Belmore stated that a number of City staff interviewed the two firms which included himself, Finance Director Smith, Assistant Finance Director Ross and from the School Department SAU Superintendent Gadowski and Business Administrator Krauss.

Councilor Witham asked how many years have we been with Vachon Clukay. Director Smith stated we have used them for the last 10 years. Councilor Witham agreed with City staff that all four firms could do the work, that Vachon Clukay is an excellent firm, but the fact that we have been with them for 10 years gives him hesitation. He would entertain moving to the other mentioned firm.

Councilor Austin agreed with Councilor Witham's comments. He questioned if there is any additional pre-work or set up before a new firm would come in. Director Smith answered yes there is some testing done with our processes, but that is included with the noted fee there are no additional cost for this.

Councilor Dumont agreed with what has been said. He believed that five years is usually the tenure of an auditor. He would be in favor of supporting the new auditor.

Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor Dumont made a motion that the Finance Committee supports a Resolution to authorize the City Manager to enter into a three year contract with two one-year options with Plodzick and Sanderson, P.A. of Concord, NH for municipal auditing service. Motion passed 4-0, by roll call vote.

TOWN OF BERWICK EMERGENCY WATER STUDY

Manager Belmore mentioned that in the packet you have a handout from Director Bobinsky regarding a feasibility study proposed by the Town of Berwick, Maine. This has also been discussed at the Public Works & Environment Committee. It will all be paid for by the Town of Berwick. This topic was discussed back during the time the bridge between Somersworth and Berwick was replaced. It would be used as an emergency water supply only for the Town of Berwick. We currently have an inter-municipal agreement with the Cities of Dover and Rochester. The agreement with Rochester is simply for water supply, the agreement with Dover is for emergency water supply to either community should it become necessary. This study is being done at no cost to the City of Somersworth and will only use City staff time.

Councilor Witham stated that the Public Works & Environment Committee endorsed this and there was no issue standing in the way right now. He supported looking at this providing there was no cost to the City of Somersworth.

Councilor Pepin stated that he was at the Public Works & Environment Committee back when it was first brought up years ago. He would like them to stay away from the new bridge.

Councilor Austin asked about what the discussion was in the past and it not working out. He questioned if the Town of Berwick didn't come forward with this, is this something that we would want to do on our own.

Manager Belmore answered no, this is driven by the Town of Berwick.

Committee had a unanimous consensus to allow Staff to assist the Town of Berwick with the feasibility study.

NADEAU STREET BETTERMENT FUNDING

Manager Belmore spoke of the memo in the packet. We would move forward with a legal document to get commitment from the three property owners on Nadeau Street. The property owners have informed us they would like to move forward with this agreement and have done a lot of due diligence and would like to move forward with the Betterment Assessment District. We have discussed agreeing to a repayment schedule of anywhere between 5 and 10 years.

Director Smith provided the Committee a 10 year amortization schedule and described how he got to his estimated numbers.

Manager Belmore stated that this still has to go through the Planning Board process. He also mentioned that not included in the memo is the City will be inspecting the sewer lines and have contracted for the use of camera lines to look into the sewer line.

Councilor Witham stated that the Public Works & Environment Committee liked this approach as well. The 10 year option would help to soften the blow to the residents. It was discussed at the Public Works & Environment Committee meeting about the City sharing the costs, the majority felt there was no thought in sharing the costs.

Councilor Austin, seconded by Councilor Dumont made a motion that the Finance Committee supports the establishment of a Betterment District for Nadeau Street residents. Motion passed 4-0, by roll call vote.

MILLENNIUM PARK FIELD LIGHT REPAIRS

Councilor Witham stated there was a detailed memo provided by Director Bobinsky in regards to the lights at Millennium Park. This came to light after one of the lights was damaged in a wind storm.

Manager Belmore stated that this was discussed at the Recreation Committee meeting. There are eight poles total, one pole has come down completely and is covered by the City's insurance. The City contracted with Civil Consultants to conduct a visual inspection of the remaining seven light poles to determine their condition, they recommended removing, retrofitting with additional support, or replacing all seven poles. After further research we found an option for round light pole retrofit kits available that will attach to the existing foundations that come at a cost of \$989.00 per pole. The left field light pole is leaning considerably and will need to be replaced, which will cost approximately \$31,155. The cost to retrofit seven poles and replace the fallen light pole and the leaning pole is \$65,876, which will be reduced to \$38,355 after insurance covers the cost of the fallen pole.

Manager Belmore explained that the Recreation Supervisor reached out to Liberty Mutual who uses Millennium field for their softball team to see how many times they would use the field. During those discussions it was discovered that the softball league for Liberty Mutual may not be in existence as they are having a hard time getting people to play.

Councilor Pepin stated he is on the Recreation Committee and they wondered if it is worthwhile for us to repair it. They discussed sending it this to full council for discussion and that he felt it was better to repair than to have to re-install all new lights if they took them down.

Councilor Witham stated that the City acquired this park a number of years ago formally known as the GE Field. He looks at the lights as an investment. His recommendation would be to maintain them and repair the poles that are there. Replace the broken one, replace the leaning one and secure the ones that are still good. He noted there is a consensus to replace the heads with LED lighting, which are cheaper to run than traditional lighting.

Councilor Dumont stated that he agreed with what Councilor Pepin and Councilor Witham said. Our intention when we acquired the park was to maintain it. Unfortunately we don't have the desire to use this field for softball organizations. He would like to see us replace and maintain the poles. The responsibility should lie with the Recreation Committee to push the use of this field.

There was discussion on drawing attention to Millennium Park and that the creation of the Dog Park will help make the park known.

Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor Pepin made a motion that the Finance Committee authorizes the repairs in the amount of \$38,355. Motion passed 4-0, by roll call vote.

Manager Belmore stated that on another note he was recently informed by City staff that the Girls Softball League that currently leases the softball fields at Malley Farm, have informed us they no longer are interested in leasing the field this year and may be terminating the lease agreement. We will be charged with maintaining that field.

Councilor Witham also noted that he received a communication concerning the height of the grass that there was an agreement where the softball league maintained them.

ROAD REPAIRS FUNDING

BLACKWATER ROAD

Manager Belmore stated that there is shoulder damage adjacent to the Cumberland Farms on Route 108. Cumberland Farms has agreed to pay for these damages.

Manager Belmore stated that Belanger Paving has responded to the bid in the amount of \$13,500.

Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor Austin made a motion to approve the shoulder repairs to Blackwater Road adjacent to Cumberland Farms with work to be completed by Boulanger Paving of Berwick, ME in the amount of \$13,500. Motion passed by roll call vote 4-0.

CITY HALL PARKING LOT

Councilor Witham noted that the project for paving of the City Hall parking is a budgeted item in the FY 2021 budget.

Manager Belmore mentioned that \$15,000 has been budgeted for this July 1, 2020. Boulanger Paving was the only one that responded to a request for quotes and proposed a cost of \$12,300.

Councilor Witham stated the work that Boulanger Paving does is excellent. He noted that City staff will do the striping.

Manager Belmore noted the drive thru will not be repaved.

Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor Austin made a motion to approve the repaving of the City Hall parking lot with work to be completed by Boulanger Paving of Berwick, ME in the amount of \$12,300. Motion passed by roll call vote 4-0.

OLD ROCHESTER RD AND BLACKWATER RD TRANSITION

Manager Belmore explained that this is a status update on the transition from Old Rochester Road and Blackwater Road in regards to work that Pike completed in 2014. They indicated that the repair they did in the fall of 2019 was their last attempt at fixing the transition under their “warranty” period.

City Engineer Lemay explained that the strip is continuing to experience delamination. We received a price quote from Pike to conduct a more extensive mill/overlay repair. At the same time, Pike also provided a price quote to conduct a more extensive mill-and-overlay of the

temporary water main patch just up the street toward Route 108. The price quote from Pike is for \$10,600.

The Committee asked if we have funding available to pay for these repairs. Director Smith informed them that we have approximately \$45,000 left in the special highway block grant funding we received a couple years ago, and any work for the water or sewer utility associated with these repairs would be paid for from those funds.

Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor Pepin made a motion to approve the repair to the Old Rochester Road and Blackwater Road transition to include a patch on Route 108 in the amount of \$10,600. Motion passed by roll call vote 4-0.

HIGHLAND STREET

Councilor Witham stated that this is in regards to resurfacing a section of Highland Street between Prospect Street and Grand Street near Hilltop School. According to the memo prepared by City Engineer Lemay he has estimated a cost of \$15,000.

Manager Belmore shared that the City has \$2,500 in an escrow account from Chinburg Properties for this project, which was part of the site plan approval of the Planning Board.

Councilor Witham is in full support of this.

Councilor Austin, seconded by Councilor Pepin made a motion to move forward with resurfacing a section of Highland Street near Hilltop School in the amount of \$15,000, minus the \$2,500 from Chinburg Properties, Motion passed by roll call vote 4-0.

FRANKLIN ST./HIGH ST. TRANSITION

Councilor Witham noted that this transition was left out in anticipation of the TAP grant taking care of it, but that work has been pushed to 2021. We have asked City staff to get an estimate together to have Pike to do the work.

City Engineer Lemay stated that we are recommending going from the fog line to the newly paved surface on Franklin Street, Pike will do this work at last year's prices, the mobilization cost is an estimate.

Councilor Pepin stated that he keeps looking at this intersection is why we have not gotten 90 degree angles. That intersection when kids get out of school is a very busy intersection.

Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor Dumont made a motion to move forward with Pike completing the work in the amount of \$10,340. Motion passed by roll call vote 4-0.

RESOLUTION 49-20: FIREFIGHTER STAFFING

Manager Belmore stated that this discussion was spoken about during the Public Safety Committee meeting and has since been referred to the Finance Committee. We have estimated the financial impact will be an increase of the overall cost of replacement overtime by \$27,000. The breakdown is \$20,000 for additional overtime costs and \$7,000 for wage related roll-ups such as NH Retirement, Medicare, etc.

Councilor Pepin stated that he would like to see this happen.

There was discussion on how this would be funded and how the scheduling of the Firefighters works.

Councilor Witham suggested that in the CIP for FY21 could we swap the portable/mobile radios out to allow for this to happen.

Manager Belmore stated that Fire Chief Kramlinger would need to go back and look at the CIP before recommending that option.

Councilor Witham requested that the Fire Chief be prepared to address this at the Council meeting.

There was discussion on how the fire shifts are scheduled.

Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor Dumont made a motion that the Finance Committee sponsor Resolution No 49-20. Motion passed by roll call vote 3-1, Councilor Witham voted no.

Councilor Witham stated that he will not support the Resolution as it is now, but would support an amendment if the radios could be deferred.

CH. 4, PERSONNEL REGS., NON-UNION WAGES

Manager Belmore explained that the Government Operations Committee met last week and took this matter up. They discussed wages for non-union employees and the four current unions who have contracts were negotiated at a 2.5% increase. The water/wastewater union has a “me too” clause in their contract that states they will receive the same as non-union employees.

Councilor Austin, seconded by Councilor Pepin made a motion that the Finance Committee support an Ordinance for a wage increase of 2.5% for non-union and water/wastewater employees. Motion passed by roll call vote 4-0.

REPORTING

Director Smith highlighted that there has been very few changes with the budget. Recycling is still an issue this year. As of right now he does not see a necessity for a transfer Ordinance and we will have a reasonable amount to turn over to the General Fund.

ADJOURNMENT

*Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor Dumont made a motion to adjourn at 5:02 pm.
Motion passed 4-0 by roll call vote.*

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Gagne, Deputy City Clerk