

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
October 28, 2020 @ 4:30 p.m.

Committee Members present: Councilor David A. Witham, Chairman  
Councilor Donald Austin, Vice-Chair  
Councilor Martin Dumont  
Councilor Martin Pepin

Administration/Staff present: Bob Belmore, City Manager  
Scott Smith, Finance Director  
Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk

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The meeting was called to order by Chairman Witham at 4:30 p.m.

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7, 2020

*Councilor Austin made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0 by voice vote.*

HOMELESS EMERGENCY SHELTER – CAP FUNDING REQUEST

Manager Belmore explained to the Committee that a letter from the Community Action Partnership of Strafford County (CAPSC) was recently sent to the Mayor requesting \$20,000 for a homeless emergency shelter at Garrison Hotel in Dover. There is \$2,500 in the FY2021 adopted budget for homeless support. It was placed in the Human Services /Welfare budget. Manager Belmore recommended we consider overspending this line and should the Welfare budget not be able to cover the over expenditure, it could be covered by our contingency line.

Councilor Dumont voiced a concern about the overall project cost of \$100,000 and wonders how they are coming up with that figure. He said when St. Ignatius was used as a warming shelter the largest number of guests in a given night was 32 and \$100,000 seems like lot of money for that few people.

Councilor Witham brought up the concern that there will be homeless from outside the Tri-City area who utilize this service. Director Smith said CAP has a homeless outreach director who attempts to place people in housing closer to where they are from. He explained that the benefit is if someone comes to Somersworth for shelter, we wouldn't have to put someone up in a motel.

Councilor Witham said the homeless population demographic has shifted and now includes families. Director Smith said the facility is family accessible and the way the building is laid out, CAP should be able to keep families and individuals separated. He explained they estimate being able to house between 30-50 people each night.

Councilor Witham inquired if the money spent towards this shelter would save money on the line item in the budget that we use to temporarily house people in motels. Director Smith said our

welfare office has been relatively quiet for the past few months, but it is hard to quantify what kind of demand we will have this year.

Councilor Witham inquired if the facility is a long-term solution. Director Smith responded that the total length of the project is for 18 months. Councilor Witham stated he is willing to approve the funding to get the project off the ground, but does has reservations about the funding strategy and what Somersworth's contribution is being used toward specifically. Director Smith said he would get clarity; however, it is his understanding that the Tri-Cities are paying for the day-time operations through April. Manager Belmore recommended the Committee approve the funding contingent upon clarity that the program will cover our access through the program's duration.

Councilor Witham requested a motion to approve the funding of \$20,000 provided that CAP clarifies that this program grants Somersworth access through April of 2021.

***Councilor Austin made a motion to approve the request of \$20,000 subject to clarification of the program going through April, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0 by voice vote.***

#### REPORTING

Director Smith provided a budget report and estimated expenditures with nothing to highlight other than he continues to monitor issues such as overtime, emergency, and winter storm issues. He said revenues seem generally consistent with last year . He said he will provide an update on the capital reserve accounts next meeting as requested.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Councilor Dumont inquired about any funds the Governor has allocated to certain items that, if not spent, will be returned. Director Smith said he will look into it, but is not aware of anything we qualify for.

Manager Belmore informed the Committee that the City is moving forward with partial pre-processing of absentee ballots and will be paying the election workers coming in to assist with this process.

Councilor Austin asked if the DRA has come back with a tax rate number yet. Director Smith said they have not, but has already reached out to the State a few times.

#### ADJOURNMENT

***Councilor Dumont made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0 by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

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Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk