

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM PLATFORM

April 19, 2021 @ 5:15 p.m.

Committee Members present electronically via Zoom:	Councilor David A. Witham, Chairman Councilor Donald Austin, Vice-Chairman Councilor Martin Dumont Councilor Martin Pepin
Administration/Staff present electronically via Zoom:	Bob Belmore, City Manager Scott Smith, Finance Director Michael Bobinsky, Director of Public Works & Utilities Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Witham at 5:15 p.m.

As Chairman of the Somersworth Finance Committee, I, Councilor David A. Witham find that 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. The public was asked to submit comments via email to jslaven@somersworth.com or bbelmore@somersworth.com by Monday, April 19, 2021 at 12:00 noon.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 25, 2021

Councilor Austin made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2021 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dumont and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

LIBRARY RFP UPDATE

Manager Belmore said proposals have been received, however there is another round of interviews tomorrow from some of those firms who submitted.

SIDEWALK BETA PLAN PROPOSAL

Councilor Witham stated the Public Works and Environment Committee just met this afternoon and voted unanimously to support the proposal for BETA Group Inc. to perform an assessment on the condition of the City's sidewalks. Manager Belmore stated BETA is the group who performed a similar assessment on the City's roads and the sidewalk assessment will cost \$13k which would come from this year's sidewalk operating budget. Witham stated he liked the assessment on the roads by BETA, and appreciates their attention to detail in the proposal for a sidewalk assessment. Councilor Austin asked if this project was put out for RFP or if the City requested BETA to do this. Manager Belmore explained the City did not put out an RFP for the project, rather BETA provided the proposal and

the City tailored it to our immediate needs. Belmore added that the purchasing policy does allow for professional services to be a single source. Councilor Witham added that the cost is also within the City Manager's spending limit. Councilor Pepin asked for a timeline for the work. Ms. Ferland and Director Bobinsky both stated the work should take a few weeks once the contract is signed.

Councilor Pepin made a motion to support utilizing \$13,000 for a sidewalk assessment from BETA Group, Inc. The motion was seconded by Councilor Austin and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

WRIGHT PIERCE COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN (MAIN ST. & CONSTITUTIONAL WAY)

Manager Belmore explained the City was contacted by Congressman Pappas' office regarding a potential grant for infrastructure projects. He also noted the Public Works and Environment Committee just unanimously supported a Resolution to move the project forward. Director Smith explained the proposed resolution would allow for the project to become shovel ready and increase the City's chance at receiving grant funds. Smith explained the project was originally only funded through the general fund, although each involve improvements to water and sewer mains. He recommends a supplemental appropriation from both the water and sewer funds. This would split the total cost of \$197k between the water fund and sewer fund, at \$98,500 each.

Councilor Dumont made a motion to support a Resolution amending the complete streets design contract with Wright Pierce in order to prioritize the project and have it ready for the 2022 construction season and fund the amendment with a supplemental appropriation utilizing the water and sewer funds. The motion was seconded by Councilor Austin and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

PAY PER BAG RATES

Manager Belmore stated he asked his executive assistant to research what neighboring municipalities charge for bags and found Dover and Newmarket to be higher. Director Smith explained that the cost for producing and delivering the City solid waste bags is increasing and provided a spreadsheet estimating the results of a 10 or 15 cent increase in the price per bag. He said an increase of 10 cents would allow the City to break even and an increase in 15 cents would create a modest surplus. Councilor Witham said it seems there is no choice but to increase the price per bag by 10 cents, but he recommended evaluating year to year to see what changes we are faced with regarding solid waste. Councilor Dumont suggested an increase to put us ahead of the curve. He said he would entertain a 35-cent increase now to allow for a smaller increase over the next year. Councilor Pepin stated he was in favor of a 15-cent increase. Councilor Austin stated he prefers increasing by 15 cents now then see what next year looks like.

Councilor Dumont made a motion to support an Ordinance to increase the price per bag for solid waste removal by 15 cents effective July 1, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilor Austin and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

REPORTING/TRANSFER ORDINANCE

Director Smith reported that most departments look in order with the exception of the Police Department. The PD has run into issues because of overtime due to Covid. Councilor Witham asked where a transfer to make up the difference would come from. Smith replied it would come in part from contingency funds and the rest from other departments if needed. Smith requested that any transfer ordinance be introduced in June to allow us more time in working through the actual results. Manager Belmore asked if it was the wish of the Committee to sponsor a Transfer Ordinance. The Committee reached a consensus to do so.

Director Smith informed the Committee that the State Revenue Administration is aware of our Resolution for the School Department to utilize general fund unassigned fund balance as revenue. Smith said we will know more once they have a chance to look further into it and we hope to hear back by the end of the fiscal year. Councilor Austin inquired if the State Revenue Administration could come back and say the approximately \$260k could not be allocated. Smith replied that we were uncertain at this time however he added that the City intends to push back if that is the case. He said he just sees it as a reporting issue and we will wait to see what they say.

MISCELLANEOUS

Director Smith informed the Committee that Fire Engine 2 has been put up on GovDeals twice and did not receive the amount we were looking for. The City was hoping to get close to \$10k, but only received bids for \$4100.00 and \$4300.00. Smith said we did not want to sell it too low without first getting input from this Committee. Councilor Dumont mentioned getting an estimate for a price on junking the apparatus. The Committee reached a consensus to relist the apparatus on GovDeals while also investigating a junk price.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Austin made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0 by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk