

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
November 29, 2022 – 5:30 p.m.

Committee Members present:      Councilor David A. Witham, Chair  
   Councilor Don Austin, Vice-Chair  
   Councilor Matt Gerding  
   Councilor Richard Michaud (Temp Mayoral Appointment)

Committee Members Absent:      Councilor Robert Gibson

Administration/Staff present:      City Manager Bob Belmore  
   Finance Director Scott Smith  
   Public Works Director Michael Bobinsky  
   Fire Chief George Kramlinger  
   City Clerk Kristen LaPanne

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Chairman Witham called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and noted the Mayor appointed Councilor Michaud as a temporary member for this meeting in the absence of Councilor Gibson.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

***Councilor Austin made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gerding and passed 3-0. Councilor Michaud abstained.***

SCHOOL ZONE WARNING LIGHTS; MAPLE STREET & HIGH STREET

Chairman Witham reported that the Public Works and Environment Committee met early this month to discuss the replacement of the school zone warning lights on Maple Street and High Street due to the aging conditions of the equipment. The Public Works and Environment Committee along with City Staff recommend the project be contracted through S.U.R Construction as it keeps consistency of the use of the TAPCO software as was installed on Cemetery Road.

Manager Belmore provided minutes from the November 10<sup>th</sup> Public Works and Environment Committee meeting pertaining to the school zone warning lights discussion and added that City Engineer Hall pointed out that the placement of the current school zone warning lights are not 200 ft. from the school entrances as required by the Highway Traffic Standards and this would be resolved during the replacement project. He reported that City Staff suggested an option for the project funding from the Municipal and Transportation Fund and consider adding in some contingency funds. The Committee agreed that approving a budget of \$40,000 would allow for that.

Finance Director Smith explained that first there would be a Resolution to authorize the City to fund the project through the Municipal and Transportation Fund and then a follow-up Ordinance to approve a Supplemental Appropriation to transfer the funds and revise the budget.

Councilor Austin questioned the removal cost for the current equipment is not within the provided quote from S.U.R Construction. Director Bobinsky stated that this was noticed and the Public Works Department staff have made plans to handle the removal, additionally, they will contact Eversource to disconnect the power to do so.

Chairman Witham asked that City staff take into consideration any potential impacts to residents on Maple Street and High Street if the new placement of the school zone warning lights land in or close to driveways; Manager Belmore added that with the lights being solar powered, also to be aware of tree canopies blocking the sun.

***Councilor Gerding made a motion to authorize staff to move forward with the project at a figure not to exceed \$40,000, as it is within the Finance Committee's spending authority, sponsor a Resolution to authorize the use of the Municipal and Transportation Fund to fund the project, and sponsor a Supplemental Appropriation to appropriate the funding for the project into this year's fiscal budget. The motion was seconded by Councilor Austin and passed 4-0.***

#### NH DES CYBERSECURITY IMPLEMENTATION GRANT

Manager Belmore provided the Committee with a draft Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to accept the NH DES Cybersecurity Implementation Grant. He explained the City contracted with ATOM Group to conduct a Cybersecurity Audit at the City's Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities and were provided with a list of recommendations to increase security. The Grant award in the amount of \$41,966 would cover costs to address the list of recommendations in the audit such as software and hardware updates. Chairman Witham expressed the importance of cybersecurity for the City and thanked City Staff for looking into this grant opportunity.

***Councilor Austin made a motion to support a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Accept the NH DES Cybersecurity Implementation Grant. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 4-0.***

#### EXTRICATION TOOLS BIDS FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chairman Witham requested that Fire Chief Kramlinger attend the Committee meeting to provide an update on the Assistance to Firefighters Grant for the purchase of a battery powered vehicle extrication tool. Chief Kramlinger noted that the City was awarded a grant of \$44,695 with a City match of \$2,352 for a total project cost amount of \$47,047 for the purchase of extrication tools. City Staff sent out bid specifications and received bids from four vendors that sell extrication tools. Chief Kramlinger is scheduling times for the vendors to provide in-person demonstrations on how their tools work with the first demonstration scheduled on December 9<sup>th</sup> with the rest to follow. The Chief expects to be able to fully evaluate the tools, ergonomics and feel in order to make the most informed decision on which vendor to purchase the extrication tool from. Chief Kramlinger added that when choosing a vendor, he is also taking into consideration things like training, customer service and warranties.

Councilor Gerding noted the Chief's explanation that the extrication tool is being purchased for the new fire engine, which expected to be in service in March of 2023, however he asked if it could be used with any of the current fire engines. Chief Kramlinger confirmed that the mounting hardware requested with the bids was for a vertical mount as that is what was planned and designed for with the new fire engine, however it still could be used within the current fire apparatus pending the arrival of the new

fire apparatus. The Committee supports the current process that Chief Kramlinger is taking to make the best-informed decision on the purchase of the extrication tools.

## REPORTING

Director Smith provided an updated General Fund budget summary and informed the Committee of the continued need to monitor the Fire Department operating budget due to an unanticipated Engine repair which cost roughly \$42,000 and overtime expenses. He also noted that recycling costs have seen an increase this fiscal year due to the current market.

Director Smith added that the electric contracted rate is set to expire in November of 2023 and the natural gas contract rate is set to expire in April of 2024 and should be expenses to watch as rates could potentially double at these times. Councilor Gerding questioned if the solar project would be completed in time for the contracts expiring. Director Smith indicated that it was still uncertain; and indicated that the interconnect process is moving forward by the developer with Eversource along with other behind the scenes work.

Manager Belmore provided a Memorandum regarding a request for surplus vehicles to be sold on GovDeals to include a water distribution 2010 box truck and an unmarked police vehicle as replacement vehicles have been purchased. Manager Belmore will work to determine asking prices. He also suggested he check with the School Department regarding the box truck being of any use to them. Chairman Witham confirmed no action necessary from the Committee at this time and the Committee agreed it should go to the full Council for approval to dispose of these vehicles as surplus pending the School Department's response.

Councilor Gerding questioned if the City had received its tax rate yet. Director Smith stated it had not yet been received but that he is actively working with the State regarding it and will continue to do so.

Manager Belmore reported that the Public Works and Environment Committee discussed at their last meeting several grant opportunities through the NH DES Drinking Water Groundwater Bureau and wanted to mention two of the most time sensitive grants in regards to the deadline to apply by December 9<sup>th</sup>. First, the Drinking Water Asset Management Program Grant could provide up to \$100,000 with no City match required to develop a Drinking Water Asset Management Program which the City does not currently have and two years to spend the funds. Wright Pierce Engineers will complete and submit the application on the City's behalf after the City's review and approval. Secondly, the Energy Audit Solicitation Grant which NH DES would hire a consultant to conduct an energy audit of the Water Treatment Plant. Director Smith added that there is an RFP out currently for a Water Treatment Plant analysis that would coincide with the two grants mentioned.

Chairman Witham asked on the status of Berwick's request for a Berwick and Somersworth water interconnect. Manager Belmore noted that we are waiting for the Town of Berwick to see if they wish to continue exploring the water interconnect.

## ADJOURNMENT

*Councilor Austin made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Finance Committee  
November 29, 2022

Kristen LaPanne, City Clerk