

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
July 27, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.

Committee Members present: Councilor David A. Witham, Chairman
Councilor Don Austin, Vice-Chairman
Councilor Robert Gibson (arrived at 5:03 p.m.)
Councilor Martin Pepin (Temporary Mayoral Appointment)

Administration/Staff present: City Manager, Bob Belmore
Finance Director, Scott Smith
Director of Public Works & Utilities, Michael Bobinsky
City Engineer, Amber Hall
City Clerk, Kristen LaPanne

Chairman Witham called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and noted the Mayor appointed Councilor Pepin as a temporary member for this meeting to replace absent member Councilor Gerding.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councilor Austin made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Witham and passed 2-0-1. Councilor Pepin abstained.

VEHICLE LEASE – PURCHASES BUDGETED IN FY24

Finance Director Smith provided the Committee with a memorandum pertaining to lease quotes for the replacement of five City vehicles. The City received three separate quotes that included a 5-year and a 7-year lease term, he clarified that the quotes are after a \$20,000 down payment which then results in a principal balance of \$500,000 to be financed. Director Smith noted that a 2019 lease agreement for equipment purchased was paid off this year thus freeing up \$92,000 in lease payments available within the City's budget.

Councilor Gibson arrived at 5:03 p.m.

Councilor Austin and Councilor Witham inquired about the possibility of having the Department of Public Works front-end loader and the fire command vehicle in a 7-year lease, and the 3 police vehicles in a 5-year lease. Director Smith was confident that the purchases could be separated into two lease terms with the leasing company.

Councilor Austin made a motion to support a Resolution to utilize a 5-year lease for the Police Cruisers and Unmarked Police Vehicle and to utilize a 7-year lease for the Fire Command Vehicle and the front-end loader. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0.

Councilor Witham inquired about the current fire command vehicle; City Manager Belmore confirmed that the Fire Department would retain that vehicle for the new Deputy Fire Chief.

Manager Belmore informed the Committee that the Public Safety Committee and the Public Works and Environment Committee voted to sponsor Resolutions regarding the purchase of the vehicles and equipment. The Finance Committee agreed to also be added as sponsors to said Resolutions.

NOBLE PINES WATER TANK REPAIR UPDATE

Councilor Witham reported that the Public Works and Environment Committee endorsed moving forward to contract with Wright-Pierce for the design and engineering of a new storage water tank as the current one is in disrepair. He added that in the meantime, staff are going to work on gathering information on interim patch work that will allow the City time to work on the replacement water tank.

City Manager Belmore provided the Committee with a memorandum from City Engineer Amber Hall pertaining to the Hamilton Street Storage Tank – Roof Replacement budgeted project. Manager Belmore stated that the City budgeted \$154,500 for the roof replacement but that cost estimate has since increased to over \$330,000. He reported that the Public Works and Environment Committee recommended working with Wright-Pierce to determine a new estimate for a complete replacement of the storage tank.

Councilor Witham stated that the current tank needs to have repairs that can get the City by until a new tank is constructed and suggested that the timeline of the project including design and bidding creates a potential construction start date won't be until the year 2025.

Councilor Austin noted that according to the memorandum, a replacement tank project was quoted at \$6,325,000. He questioned where the funds would come from to cover the cost of a replacement tank. Councilor Witham stated that the cost would come from the Water Fund which is separate from the General Fund. He added that the replacement of the tank has been on the City's radar and water rate increases may need to be reviewed in order to support the project.

ROUTE 108 SEWER MAIN EXTENSION – CONCEPT

Councilor Witham reported that the Public Works and Environment Committee supported considering moving forward with the design of the project and requested that staff look into the numbers of a Betterment District. City Manager Belmore provided the Committee with a memorandum from Director Bobinsky pertaining to the Route 108 Sewer Extension Concept, the concept is to extend the sewer main to properties one Route 108 between Willand Drive and the Dover City line. He explained that NH Department of Transportation (DOT) is working with a consultant on the Route 108 Complete Streets project and is currently in the design phase and going through review with Somersworth, Rochester and Dover municipalities. Manager Belmore noted that once the project is completed by the State, a moratorium goes into effect and the road cannot undergo construction for a number of years following the completion. Manager Belmore stated that there is a fair amount of buildable land along the road way and that staff will look further into design and work costs for the potential roll out of a sewer main extension.

Councilor Austin asked if there has been a demand from residents for the sewer main extension.

Manager Belmore listed a few businesses that have inquired about an extension in recent years.

Councilor Pepin commented that the extension of the sewer main has the potential to entice new development of the surrounding area. Councilor Gibson questioned if the extension would connect back properties to the sewer main or if it would be designed to only allow access along Route 108. Manager Belmore confirmed that the sewer main would be accessible to those that front Route 108 and he added that a pump station would also be required of the project.

Engineer Hall explained that a pump station is needed because sewerage requires a slant and the roadway in that part of the project area is mainly flat. Councilor Gibson questioned if the City will need to purchase land for a pump station. Director Bobinsky stated that the City would most likely need to apply for an easement or purchase property for the placement of the pump station.

Councilor Witham is concerned that if the City does not act now, it will be a number of years before further construction can take place along that section of Route 108. Director Bobinsky commented that there is also a possibility that the City could coordinate with the State contractor if the City decides to move forward with the sewer main extension at the same time the State works on the Complete Streets project.

Councilor Gibson asked if the Sewer Fund is separate from the Water Fund. Councilor Witham confirmed that they are separate funds. Councilor Austin questioned if the property owner would be responsible for paying an access fee. Director Smith stated that there would not be an access fee within a Betterment District, and assuming that all property owners connect during the installation of the sewer main, there would be no fees.

REPORTING

Director Smith stated that the City's fiscal year 2023 has closed out and the annual audit will take place in October.

MISCELLANEOUS

City Manager Belmore stated that the Public Safety Committee discussed the Police Department's Taser Lease and he reported that the expense is approximately \$3,000 over what the City initially budgeted, he added that the City will budget accordingly in the following years. Councilor Witham questioned if it was typical of municipalities to lease tasers as opposed to purchasing them. Director Smith stated that tasers have a life expectancy of about 5-years and that it is more cost effective to spread the payments over the term of the lease.

Manager Belmore mentioned that there was discussion with the Public Works and Environment Committee regarding the Willand Pond bridge repair project. He stated that the original plan was to repair the bridge using the same material, however, staff have been looking into the cost of aluminum material for longevity. Manager Belmore confirmed that staff received a quote for the cost of aluminum material of approximately \$57,000 and is seeking a second quote. He noted that the New Hampshire Municipal Association confirmed that it is allowable under State law that the City may use Conservation funds for the project, but that the Conservation Commission has control over the funding and would need to authorize the use of Conservation Funds for this purpose.

Councilor Gibson asked if composite materials would be more cost effective. Director Bobinsky stated that there is a difference in cost and that composite material is what is currently in place. Director Bobinsky added that he recommends aluminum material because it would last longer with the bridge being in the wetlands of the trails and the heavy foot traffic it receives.

Councilor Gibson stated that he has received a few letters from residents pertaining to the 4-way intersection of Blackwater Road and Old Dover Road regarding multiple vehicular accidents. He commented that the letters stated that there have been five accidents at said intersection over a period of six months. Manager Belmore reported that the City had a road safety audit conducted with the Department of Transportation of the Blackwater Road and Old Dover Road intersection. Manager Belmore stated that the City and State worked with property owners to cut back the tree line to lessen

site obstruction as well as the installation of flashing stop signs. Councilor Witham added that below the flashing stop signs is a sign that states that cross traffic does not stop.

Councilor Austin inquired about the water meter replacement project and requested a status. Manager Belmore confirmed that the City is purchasing the water meters from Ti-Sales. Director Smith added that the City received bids today from contractors to install the meters.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Austin made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen LaPanne, City Clerk