

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATED REMOTELY VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CITY STAFF PARTICIPATED FROM THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

June 3, 2020 @ 4:00 pm

Committee Members present: Councilor Richard Michaud, Chair
Councilor Nancie Cameron, Vice-Chair
Councilor Don Austin
Councilor Matt Gerding

Administration/Staff present: City Manager, Bob Belmore
Director of Finance, Scott Smith

Chairman Michaud stated due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order#12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. This meeting will be held via Zoom online platform. City Manager Belmore added that the public was asked to submit comments via email to kgagne@somersworth.com or bbelmore@somersworth.com. Comments must be received by Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 12 noon. The public can access the meeting and listen live by telephoning any of the numbers posted on the agenda.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michaud at 4:05 pm.

Roll call attendance vote was done Councilors Michaud, Cameron, Austin and Gerding were present and by themselves.

Manager Belmore noted who was present in the Council Chambers which is noted above.

Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Councilor Austin, second by Councilor Gerding to accept the January 22, 2020 minutes as presented. Motion Passed by roll call vote, 4-0.

City Ordinance, Ch.4, Personnel Rules & Regulations

Manager Belmore went over the two Memorandums provided to the Committee regarding his recommended changes to Section 11.2 Retirement Plan and Section 11.3.1 Health/Dental Insurance in Chapter 4. Presently the Retirement Section states that employees receive retirement benefits "after the Probationary period"; the recommendation is to change that language to "on the date of hire". Belmore stated that the City is required to enroll employees into the NH Retirement System upon hire as it is mandated by State Legislation. Councilor Cameron mentioned that this occurs in most organizations and this housekeeping change is appropriate.

Motion made by Councilor Austin, seconded by Councilor Gerding, to sponsor an Ordinance change & forward to the full Council, passed by roll call vote, 4-0.

Manager Belmore explained the intent of the change to Section 11.3.1 that addressed the opt out of insurance coverage provision of providing an employee a \$5,000 annual payment for not taking health insurance coverage. Belmore's recommendation was to add a new clause to the end of the Section – "This benefit shall not be available to any employee whose alternative health insurance is provided through a spouse's plan through either the City or School District." Councilor Austin asked if this had ever occurred in the past. Belmore stated no, to the best of his knowledge.

Motion by Austin, second by Cameron, to sponsor an Ordinance change & forward to the full Council, passed by roll call vote, 4-0.

Manager Belmore stated that the projected cost of a 1% COLA wage increase for non-union employees with roll-up costs included (NHRS, FICA, etc.) was provided by Director Smith. It would be approximately \$20,616 for non-union employees and for water/wastewater union employees, it would be \$7,847. Belmore explained the "me to" provision negotiated into this Union's CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) as language that provided for any changes in COLA wage increases or Health Insurance coverage provided to non-union employees would be acceptable to these Union employees without further negotiations. Belmore stated that four other City unions would be receiving 2 ½% on July 1, 2020. Councilor Gerding mentioned that it was important to keep union and non-union increases consistent as possible, Councilor Cameron stated that we have been giving the same increases the last few times and was supportive of this increase. Belmore stated that the Finance Committee would be discussion this same issue at their meeting next week.

Motion by Austin, second by Cameron to move the recommendation of a 2 ½ % COLA wage increase to the Finance Committee for their consideration, passed by roll call vote, 4-0.

City Manager Updates

Manager Belmore went over various employee updates to include recent hiring as well as recruitment efforts. Some of which was included in the packet material document entitled Employee Breakdown by Department. Belmore also mentioned some other updates including the start up next week of curbside Library service. Councilor Gerding asked if the word could be passed along to the School Department. Belmore stated, will do.

Motion by Councilor Austin, seconded by Councilor Cameron, to adjourn at 4:32 pm, passed by a roll call vote, 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Belmore, City Manager