

CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP

April 6, 2017 - 6:00 P.M.

Councilors Pepin, Soldati, Messier, Dumont, Paradis, and Sprague were present. Councilor McCallion entered at 6:11pm and Councilor Cameron entered at 6:40pm.

Mayor Hilliard opened the budget workshop at 6:00pm. He explained that each organization requesting community support has already submitted their request and that there will be no presentations today. Councilors can ask any questions they have of the representatives of each organization.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- **COAST BUS SERVICE (#45472)**

Proposed Budget - \$57,986

Requested - \$83,259

Rad Nichols, Executive Director of COAST was in attendance.

Councilor Sprague asked what the ramifications would be if the city didn't meet their request. Mr. Nichols said, they would continue to request the 25 cent fee. If we were to zero out the budget, they would zero out service. There would be limited service

Councilor Sprague asked where they see themselves in 5 years. Mr. Nichols responded, with little from the government about mass transit, they would like to expand.

Councilor Sprague said council usually gets calls when things don't work. He hears about 2 hour trips one way at about \$14. Rad said he does not expect the service to shrink over the next 10 years. He has received the same calls. They do their best with scheduling to get people from Dover and points south in the morning and back towards Dover in the afternoons.

Councilor Sprague asked about the weekend trips. Rad said the length of the trip would be the same regardless of the day.

Councilor Witham asked why the request has grown from the prior year. Mr. Nichols explained that there is a heavier reliance on the community government. The federal government is not participating and certain services are difficult to provide. They rely more on the communities.

Councilor Witham asked if the ridership was generally people who do not own automobiles. Mr. Nichols responded saying that when they do the survey of the riders there is no demographic that stands out. If anything, they don't tend to have a lot of people who are earning 50k+ on the bus. It is a very broad cross section of the community.

Councilor Pepin asked how many people utilize the bus on Route 1 and on Route 2. Mr. Nichole said almost 31,000 on Route 1, and about 10,500 on Route 2 last year.

Councilor Pepin asked what the funding and formula is for ADA.

Mr. Nichols said it is approximately \$60 per trip. We don't have the geographical density to make that more efficient. We can charge up to double the regular charge, so for a trip from Somersworth to Dover, we can charge \$3. Cost is about \$65 in expenses.

Councilor Pepin asked what the coverage is for the ADA service. They go to Farmington, Rochester 6 days a week.

Councilor McCallion asked what the cost would be for a cab ride. Mr. Nichols said cabs are not ADA compliant. There are no subcontractors with the equipment and availability in the area. We are constantly working to coordinate services in the area and adding more partners every year.

Councilor Sprague asked how the advertising is going; it seems like some spots are becoming loitering locations. Rad said that the estimate revenue is \$10,800.

Councilor Sprague asked if it would be possible to run the routes without the ADA and be fully funded.

Mr. Nichols replied, No, it would not be possible. It would be a very stripped down service.

Councilor Sprague went on to ask if the end user, being a business, any thoughts with them contributing something.

Mr. Nichols said the only time they have had success was during a relocation or expansion. There isn't probably a single business that brings in enough riders to make this successful.

- BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS (#45473)

Proposed Budget - \$1,500

Requested - \$1,500

Jan Williams, Administrative Manager to the Vice President of Operations was in attendance.

Mayor Hilliard asked about the number of children in this program. Ms. Williams said there are 9 matches in Somersworth and 9 on the waiting list. No programs are imbedded. There was a program on Barrett Street (former SafeHaven). It was not well participated.

How would a family enroll a child? It is a community based program, so people can get more information on the website or from school counselors. There is a lengthy interview process for the Big Brothers Big Sisters. They ask for 4 hours a month for a 1 year minimum.

- COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY (#45474)

Proposed Budget - \$2,000

Requested - \$2,000

Patricia Vachon, Executive Director was in attendance.

Councilor Dumont asked what the annual number of people service in the community. Ms. Vachon said there was a total 3,338 families; this does not include individuals and there could be as many as 10 people in a family.

Councilor Witham asked, other than community support, where else do they receive support. Ms. Vachon said they receive support from faith based organizations, individuals in the community and area businesses. Schools, Boy Scouts and the Post Office do food drives. They purchase food from the Good Shephard food bank.

Councilor Soldati asked what the demand was for the people who have requested food in the last few years. Ms. Vachon replied that the numbers have gone down a bit in the past few years. It is mostly the elderly, families who have lost a job recently, those with large families. All stories are different.

- HAVEN - SEXUAL ASSUALT SUPPORT SERVICES (#45475)

Proposed Budget - \$2,000

Requested - \$2,500

Jane Downs, Shelter manager, was in attendance.

Councilor Sprague asked what HAVEN was. Ms. Downs explained that it is a domestic violence agency.

- CORNERSTONE VNA (#45478)

Proposed Budget - \$7,500

Requested - \$9,500

Julie Reynolds, CEO at Cornerstone VNA was in attendance.

Councilor Witham asked about their sources of funding. Ms. Reynolds said funding is based on the population. They receive funding from Medicare, Medicaid, medical insurance and donations. The City funding is a small portion.

- SOMERSWORTH YOUTH CONNECTION (#5488)

Proposed Budget - \$3,000

Requested - \$5,000

Maureen Jackman was in attendance of the Somersworth Youth connection Program serving the Somersworth Elementary and Middle Schools. Grades K-8

Councilor Witham said there is concern about potential changes in the federal funding. Where are we today?

Ms. Jackman said they are at the end of the 10th year. They just reapplied for another 5 year cycle. In order to apply, they need to match 35%. There is currently a waiting list of students who want in the program. There is a great need there.

Councilor Paradis asked if there was anything in the future for the 9-12 graders.

Ms. Jackman said they had applied for funding. They encourage high schoolers to work in the program.

Councilor Paradis asked if these hours count toward their community service hours for graduations. Ms. Jackson said that it does.

- COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM (#45482)

Proposed Budget - \$4,000

Requested - \$5,000

Kristen Welch, was in attendance.

Councilor Witham asked Ms. Welch to talk about any overlap in what they provide and what the city provides. Is there communication?

Ms. Welch said there is constant communication and hopes that their services reduce the amount of services that the communities have to provide.

Councilor Sprague, asked about any kind of testing of homes, insulation, since they provide fuel assistance to those who live in a home that may not be weatherized.

She can find more information, but there is a rigorous application process. She wished she could winterize all homes that need it but the need far exceeds what is available.

Sprague asked if they did thermo imaging. She wasn't sure, but would find out.

- FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION (#45483)

Proposed Budget - \$5,000

Requested - \$5,000

No representative in attendance. No questions from Council.

- HOMEMAKERS (#45484)

Proposed Budget - \$7,200

Requested - \$7,200

Donald Capoldo, Executive Director of Homemakers Health Services was in attendance.

Councilor Sprague asked about buses and if there was any talk about offsetting the needs of other transportation, when they aren't being used.

Mr. Capoldo said they do not except federal funds for transportation needs. They are available to assist with transportation needs, but there are some parameters. It is being discussed.

Councilor Witham stated that many hospitals have vehicles. Is there an overlap?
Mr. Capoldo said he is not the person to answer that. This is the first time people have come to them with this suggestion.

Councilor Pepin asked if there was a charge to use the buses. Mr. Capoldo said it depends on the paying source.

- AMERICAN RED CROSS
Proposed Budget - \$0
Requested - \$2,000

No representative in attendance.

- CROSS ROADS HOUSE
Proposed Budget - \$0
Requested - \$2,000

Martha Stone, Exec Director was in attendance. No questions from Council.

Councilor Sprague asked what their service was.
Ms. Stone responded by saying Cross Roads House is the largest shelter in the region servicing those experiencing homelessness. They served 513 people last year, of which 24 were from Somersworth for a total of 1559 nights. The value is about 5% population, 5% of budget is about \$65,000. Bulk of funding comes from private donations and grants.

Councilor Sprague asked if they receive federal funds and Ms. Stone replied, yes they do. She said they have seen a spike and have seen about 35% above normal for individuals. The demand for shelter is significant.

Councilor Sprague asked how long a person would typically use their services.
Ms. Stone replied by saying, statistically, 63 days last year. It may be long stays or short stays, several times. The goal is to help them transition.

- SOBER SISTERS
Proposed Budget - \$0
Requested - \$2,500

Mone Cassier Exec Dir. was in attendance. No questions from Council.

- HOMELESS CTR, FOR STRAFFORD COUNTY
 - Proposed Budget - \$0
 - Requested - \$4,500

Sally Struble, Executive Director was in attendance.

Councilor Witham asked what they do.

Ms. Struble said they provide emergency shelter to homeless, specifically women and families.

Councilor Paradis asked what they provided for Somersworth families last year. Ms. Struble said they provided for 2 Somersworth families in the past year for a total of 584 bed nights.

Councilor Sprague asked about the hours of operation. Ms. Struble said they are open, 24/7, October through May. They have a small staff of 2 full time and 5 part time employees and about 50 volunteers.

Councilor Sprague asked about their location. Ms. Struble said they are on Rochester Neck Road in a building owned by Waste Management.

Councilor Sprague went on to ask what the long term plan was regarding their location. Ms. Struble said the former director said they could probably use the building for about 8 more years. They are looking into having the shelter open year around.

Councilor Sprague asked if they get reimbursed by communities that people come from? Ms. Struble said they do get some federal funding through the City of Rochester and the City of Dover. If a family has income, they are charged \$70 a week. If no income, they bill the community.

Councilor Witham said there is obviously demand. He asked if all of these organizations talk.

Ms. Struble said there is a central intake system, run by the Community Action of Strafford county. There is a waitlist of single men and women. In December they received 550 new calls. They receive 3-5 calls a day.

- AIDS RESPONSE

- Proposed Budget - \$0
- Requested - \$500

Ty Bogus, a member of the board was in attendance.

Councilor Witham asked about the mission. Mr. Bogus said they collect funds to help people with housing, food, services, medications, preventative education.

Councilor Paradis asked if background checks are done on those involved in the preventative education. Mr. Bogus said he was not sure of any official process.

Councilor Paradis asked how many clients are from Somersworth? They have 384 visits, twice a month; 17% from Somersworth.

- CASA
 - Proposed Budget - \$0
 - Requested - \$500

No representative in attendance.

- LYDIA'S HOUSE OF HOPE
 - Proposed Budget - \$0
 - Requested - \$500

Theresa Tozier, Executive Director, was in attendance.

Councilor Witham asked about the capacity of the house. Ms. Tozier said they can board 25 people.

Councilor Sprague asked how everything is going.

Ms. Tozier said they have received no federal funds. All funding is from private grants, individuals; everyone has been so supportive. Now that we have residents, the depth of homelessness is devastating. The biggest challenge is that these people need building blocks and a foundation. At the house, it is challenging and hard work. They are starting to see the results.

Councilor Cameron asked how many are currently at the house. Ms. Tozier said there are 3 families and 2 more coming in next week.

That concluded the Community Support section and Council went on to the Operational Budget.

Page C-1

Councilor Sprague the Highway Block grant, meals & rooms, those are probably estimates based on last year's budget. He just wanted Council to know that there are talks in Concord; there is some infrastructure money that the Governor put into his budget. That may raise the Highway Block Grant aid money that comes to us.

Councilor Sprague asked why the State Adequacy Grant went higher, why tuition is down and what miscellaneous school is, and he asked if the local property taxes were estimated.

Finance Director, Scott Smith said local tax is an estimate, based on the current proposed budget. It may go up or down based on council decision. He will talk with the school in regard to the reason the tuition is down and what Miscellaneous School is. The Highway Block Grant is based on last year.

Page C-2

Councilor Sprague, Hydro Lease, anything we can add to this? He was not on the prevailing side of that vote for the Solar Lease. He thinks there should be a time tied to the lease. No parameter was set on the start of the lease. What if it takes 10 years before this gets started. If we start this 2 years from now, there will be a line item in the budget, correct? Director Smith confirmed, that is correct.

City Manager, said these were initial estimates. In September the City files a revised estimate of revenues with the State DRA before they set the tax rate. This budget is mostly based on last year and early projections.

Councilor Sprague asked about if they could potentially inflate the property tax collection estimate to keep below the tax cap.

Director Smith said that would actually cause them to go above the tax cap because it is based on the property tax collections.

ELECTED LEADERSHIP (400)

Page C-5

Councilor Dumont said under the 125 Anniversary Celebration he sees the proposed budget amount at \$2,000. He would like to see that around \$4-5,000.

Councilor Witham said they are just below the tax cap by about \$13,000 so there might be some room to move with this line item.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (404)

Page C-27

Councilor Witham asked about the cost of the line item 40220, Part Time Salaries, this would be for the Economic Development Manager. He asked what the cost would be if it were a full time position.

City Manager Belmore said the prior position was about \$62,000, plus other costs.

Page C-35

Councilor Witham asked if the seasonal salaries were increased.

City Manager Belmore said it was increased as discussed in the Recreation Committee meetings.

Page C-38

Councilor Witham stated that in regards to the recreational programing, it is revenue neutral. It is not a money in, money out type of thing. Is that fair to guess?

City Manager Belmore said Yes.

Page C-40

Councilor Sprague asked what the spike was for building maintenance, it increased from \$17,692 to \$30,000 last year. It has remained at \$30,000; and why it can't go back down. Director Smith said that includes the contract with the school maintenance manager.

PUBLIC SAFETY (405)

Page C-47

Councilor Witham questioned the vehicle maintenance for the leased AWD vehicles. Although they are newer, he would expect the cost to go up and not down. Chief Kretschmar said he expects it to go up some, just in the cost of tires.

City Manager Belmore said it did increase on page C-48, Vehicle Maintenance.

Councilor Witham asked what it would look like if we were to hire another officer. Chief Kretschmar said it would be about \$80,000 with benefits and a two person plan.

Page C-50

Councilor Witham said there has been discussion about funding a position through the drug task force.

Chief Kretschmar said we have a full time position and is funded through investigations.

Councilor Messier asked how health and dental goes from \$86,183 to #159,641.

Director Smith said there was a rate increase, and an increase in staffing.

Page C-51

Councilor McCallion state that the retirement line item increased.

City Manager Belmore said that Chief Kretschmar transferred one person from one department to another. There is now a transfer from one line to another.

Page C-54

Councilor Witham asked about the parking enforcement officer; does the chief have a plan for hours. Chief Kretschmar said they are looking at 20 hours a week; 4 hours a day, with flexibility for movement.

Councilor Witham asked about the revenue stream that will be generated by this position. Chief Kretschmar explained that if they issue 6 parking tickets a day, the revenue could cover the salary.

Councilor Messier said the revenue from the parking tickets stays within the community.

Pages C-51 – C-53

Councilor McCallion noticed that there are different rates for different areas. FICA is at a different percentage for different areas? For sworn Police Officers and Firefighters, they pay only the Medicare portion of Social Security. All other employees pay the full FICA portion at the 7.65%. Retirement is different as well.

Page C-51

Councilor Sprague, asked if the number would be going down. There has been some discussion by legislature. They would contribute 15% of the cost.

Councilor Witham asked a general question. If were to add to the budget to help with retention, maybe it is salaries, but what would help?

Chief Kretschmar said, without getting into details, that would have an impact.

Page C-60

Councilor Dumont asked about overtime. Chief Hoyle said they are projected to be at 172,000. There were 2 firefighters last year that took long term sick leave. Discussed the total number of firefighters needed on during the day and night.

Councilor Witham said there are a number of fire departments that have looked at 24 hour shifts. Would that have a positive impact on overtime?

Chief Hoyle said sick leave goes down slightly over the day.

Councilor Witham said it may be helpful to contact agencies throughout the state to see how that works for you.

McCallion asked if this decision was contractual and how the firefighters feel about this.

Chief Hoyle said some like this idea, and some don't.

PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES (406)

Page C-68

Councilor Witham noted the line item, Sweeper Parts; he gets many calls on sidewalks, calls about the street sweeper. Will this increase help the thing to work better?

Director of Public Works and Utilities, Michael Bobinsky said there will be maintenance done. It is projected for replacement in a year or two. They are looking at a vacuum type sweeper. There are pros and cons to each. Our mechanic will keep it up and running for this season.

Councilor Sprague asked about Road Resurfacing. He asked how much was needed to complete the roads this year.

Director Bobinsky said the pavement management study that was done a few years ago said about \$1mil a year.

City Manager Belmore just wanted to note that on page C-76 there is a line item for the new City Engineer. The funding for this position will come out of the General Fund and the Water and Sewer funds.

Councilor Messier asked how the history of Hot top/Patch item has been. Do we typically run out of money?

Director Bobinsky said it depends. There are many variables.

Councilor Messier asked if we need to add more money in to this account.

Director Smith said we usually spend \$10-15,000.

Councilor Witham said he has seen a “hotbox” machine in other communities. It keeps the material hot and adheres in a more effective manor.

Director Bobinsky, said it is something that they are looking to purchase in the future.

The cost for the reclaimer is \$24,000.

Councilor Dumont asked if we should we consider doing some patching when the paving companies come in to town working on the other planned jobs?

Director Bobinsky said we have never done that in the past. It may require change orders.

Page C-68

Councilor Witham asked if we will be hitting the downtown more aggressively with the Paint for Roads. He hopes the crosswalks are on the list.

Director Bobinsky said they are on the list.

Page C-70

Councilor Messier said the storm pretreatment that is used is just salt brine which destroys our vehicles. The Public Works and Environment Committee should have a discussion about that.

Page C-72

Councilor Pepin said since they are upgrading the street lights, any chance of saving money.

City Manager Belmore said they will look into this.

Page C-78

Councilor Witham said he isn't sure the Adopt a spot program is working. Director Bobinsky said he will look into it.

Councilor Paradis said she would like a running list of Adopt a spots. Maybe have Vision2020 look into promoting it.

Councilor Dumont said lack of irrigation is a frustration. Dover uses an irrigation truck.

Page C-80

Councilor Messier said he heard there is a possible grant; is matching funds that we need to budget for?

Director Bobinsky said it is associated with the Moose plate, and no local match needed.

OTHER EXPENSES (407)

Page C-85

Councilor McCallion, paying the bonds does not help...

Smith, they can refund the bond issues, we cannot refund or prepay.

Page C-86

Councilor Witham ask if we have a list of the vehicles planned to be leased.
Director Smith said this is for current vehicles that have already been leased.

OTHER EXPENSES (408)

Page C-92

City Manager said line item 49082, Vehicle Leases, is the proposed funding for the vehicles to be leased in this budget. There are several vehicles; 6 wheel dump, skid steer, pickup for Code, and a couple others.

ENTERPRISE FUNDS (406)

Page C-99

Councilor Witham asked if there would be any kind of savings after the renovation of the pump station on Blackwater Rd, considering they are installing better pumps, motors, etc. It is too early to know the answer to that.

Page C-104

Councilor Sprague asked how the pager reimbursement works.
Director Bobinsky said they get paid an additional \$16 per day to carry the pager.

The workshop adjourned at 8:30pm.

Trish Harris, City Clerk

Dana S. Hilliard, Mayor