

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM
September 18, 2019 at 5:00 pm

Committee Members present: Councilor Martin P. Dumont, Sr.
 Councilor David A. Witham
 Councilor Nancie Cameron
 Councilor Edward LeVasseur

Administration/Staff present: City Manager, Bob Belmore
 City Clerk, Trish Harris
 Shanna Saunders, Dir. of Planning & Economic Dev.

Chairman Dumont called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion made by Councilor Cameron, seconded by Councilor LeVasseur to accept the July 10, 2019 minutes as presented. Motion Passed 4-0.

REVIEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE – CHAPTER 29, RE: RECREATION DIVISION

City Manager Belmore stated that he had reviewed City Ordinance Chapter 29 in regards to the Recreation Department with staff. His recommendation is:

Section 29.3.6.12.A Division of Recreation,

b) Maintain parks and recreation facilities and grounds not otherwise assigned

be moved to:

Section 29.3.6.16 Division of Public Works

City Manager Belmore went on to explain that the proposed plan is that the full-time seasonal Recreation position be transferred to Public Works. This would be budgeted in the next fiscal year as a full time Public Works position with a focus on the parks for 6-months or so, and the other 6-months the employee would assist with various highway tasks as well as plowing. This will also free up Recreation Supervisor Kristen Davenport and Assistant Mona Potter to focus on programs like soccer, basketball, summer camps and adult programs. They will have the same hours and continue to report to Director Saunders.

Belmore explained that there presently is also a building and grounds line item in the DPW budget. The approximate cost for this full-time person is initially estimated at approx. \$73,000 including benefits, when you back out the seasonal pay being budgeted now, the cost is reduced to approx. \$63,000.

Councilor Witham stated he likes the plan. The City needs to do a better job with parks maintenance. He stated that when the Park Maintenance person needs to do anything, he does not have any equipment, and has to go to DPW anyway. DPW is short staffed and this will help them as well.

Councilor LeVasseur asked who the direct supervisor would be for this position. City Manager Belmore said this position would report to the Highway Foreman.

There was discussion about various events in parks. Applications would still go through the Recreation office, and they will communicate with the Department of Public Works.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to support the City Manager's recommendation to move the parks maintenance function to fall under the Department of Public Works and support the staffing plan as described.

The motion passed, 4-0. The City Manager said he would Draft an Ordinance change for full City council action.

CITY MANAGER UPDATES

Councilor Dumont stated that the Public Safety Committee is going to be looking at Police Department, similar to what they did with the fire department. They will be looking a staffing as well. City Manager Belmore stated that he has asked all of the Department Heads to create a proposed 6-year staffing plan. He mentioned that all departments want and are in need of more staff. Councilor Witham stated that he like the forward thinking of a 6-year plan.

City Manager Belmore stated that some 10 years ago or so, the City Council directed him to recommend budget cuts that would be needed to accomplish no tax rate increase. Belmore stated that in a municipal setting such as ours it involved staffing cuts, several of which the Council eventually adopted. At that time the Children's Librarian was cut as well as the City Engineer and several others were cut from full-time to part-time.

City Manager Belmore provided a history of the City's Development Director position and the creation of an Economic Development Manager position. The City is presently doing well with a part time person. The Committee discussed the ebb and flow of development in Communities. Chairman Dumont mentioned a past EDC meeting when former Mayor George Bald attended and the fact that he emphasized the need for confidentiality and patience in the business development environment. Councilor Dumont also stated another key was the responsibility of the City to be in contact with people, evolution comes from a happy tenant. We have lost a few businesses in Somersworth, but there are various reasons for this. Local communities like Dover and Rochester are having similar issues. There was discussion about various properties owned by City.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Witham seconded by Councilor Cameron. The meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Harris, City Clerk