

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATED REMOTELY
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE
CITY STAFF PARTICPATED FROM THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

August 4, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.

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
 Human Resources Manager, Linda Corriveau
 Code/Assessing Clerk, Brianna Belléy

Chairman Michaud called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

City Manager Belmore 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. The public is asked to submit comments via email to jslaven@somersworth.com or bbelmore@somersworth.com. Comments must be received by Tuesday, August 4, 2020 at 12 noon. The public can access the meeting and listen live by telephoning any of the numbers posted on the agenda.

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

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion made by Councilor Cameron, seconded by Councilor Austin, to approve the minutes of the June 03, 2020 meeting. Motion was approved 4-0 by a roll call vote.

ORDINANCE NO. 23-20, HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT

Manager Belmore’s recommendation was to remove the \$5,000 stipend should this continue to be an area of confusion. He offered his respectful concern that it was being referred to as “discrimination” as it was now in Union contracts without Union objection and City Labor Attorney had approved it.

Councilor Cameron shared her understanding of the insurance policy and stated that families typically go with whatever works best for their families. Councilor Cameron stated how she was unsure how this could potentially be discriminating against employees.

Councilor Gerding spoke to individuals who work for the City, and how this extra benefit is an incentive for couples who are both employed by the City.

Councilor Austin stated that the City has a very favorable benefits plan compared to larger corporations. Councilor Austin does not believe just because two people both work for the City, they should be further rewarded because they have full coverage.

Manager Belmore stated that the City provides very good benefits, and that employees often come for career advancement and a variety of other reasons. He also shared that Council has been very steadfast about not increasing the 15% that is paid into the insurance by employees.

Councilor Gerding shared that he was not comfortable moving it forward to Council with a recommendation. Council Gerding stated that the Committee should look at how to save money across the board if that was the main concern, instead of taking away the stipend.

There was discussion between Committee members about where to move forward with or without a recommendation to the City Council.

Mayor Dana Hilliard joined the meeting at 4:42 p.m. to clarify the Committee's procedural method.

Councilor Cameron recommended holding onto it until another meeting, the Committee agreed.

LICENSING BOARD – CITY ORD., CHAPTER 14

Manager Belmore's office did research on licensing boards with our neighboring Cities . He shared he wanted to begin this process to see what information the Committee needed to make a decision on this.

Committee decided to wait for more information to proceed.

CITY MANAGER UPDATES

Manager Belmore shared that effective July 1st, Council approved a part time sergeant to be promoted to fulltime police officer. The seasonal recreation grounds maintenance employee was made into a fulltime employee under the highway division . Highway is now fully staffed. He gave various other updates across City Departments.

Councilor Austin asked if there are seven inactive call firefighters or if those positions are trying to be filled.

Manager Belmore shared that there was a stipend in the CARES Act for first responders and that those call firefighters had to be placed in active or inactive positions to determine who fulfilled their duty requirements.

MISC

Councilor Gerding shared his thoughts on the Black Lives Matter movement and what we can do as a City moving forward within our police departments to ensure we are hiring qualified candidates. Councilor Gerding suggested a hiring committee, similar to what the school board does, to make sure we are hiring qualified candidates for our police department.

Manager Belmore shared information on Right to Know RSA's and how the City goes about with the hiring process. He stated that this type of change would require a City Charter change, so we would need a Charter Commission to move forward with this discussion.

Mayor Hilliard elaborated on Manager Belmore's comment, and went into further detail on the City Charter.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Cameron, seconded by Councilor Austin, motion passed 4-0 roll call vote. Meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brianna Belléy, Code/Assessing Clerk