

MINUTES OF PUBLIC WORKS & ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM

October 11, 2016 – 4:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present:

Councilor Dale Sprague, Chair  
Councilor David Witham  
Councilor Denis Messier

Staff Present:

Bob Belmore, City Manager  
Mike Bobinsky, Dir. of Public Works & Util.  
Scott Smith, Dir. of Fin. & Admin.  
Shanna Saunders, Dir. of Com. Dev. & Planning  
Trish Harris, City Clerk

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*Chairman Sprague called the meeting to order at 4:30pm. Councilor Soldati was excused.*

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES

*Councilor Messier, seconded by Councilor Witham, made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 24, 2016. Motion passed, 2-0 with Councilor Sprague abstaining.*

WRIGHT PIERCE ENGINEERING FUNDING –WWTP IMPROVEMENTS

Director Bobinsky said Wright-Pierce provided a letter outlining the project scope and engineering costs for the recommended improvements at the WWTF.

The total project cost is \$3,327,000. This includes design documents to go out to bid. They are looking to fund this through the SRF.

Councilor Messier said facility planning is beneficial, and explained some of the details of the plan and upgrades.

Councilor Witham, said, looking at other communities, 4 million is not bad to get our plant up to speed. He said it is money well spent. He thinks this is a prudent course of action.

Councilor Witham asked City Staff to look at water/sewer user fees. It might be time look at some incremental increases. Small increments are better than one large jump.

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Sprague, made a motion to move forward with support of resolution to contract with Wright-Pierce for engineering services in the amount of \$384,000. Motion passed unanimously.*

This will also require a Supplemental Appropriation Ordinance to appropriate the funds from Sewer Fund. This will also require public hearing.

***Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion for a Supplemental appropriation of funds from the Sewer Utility Fund. Motion passed Unanimously***

City Manager Belmore mentioned the Blackwater Road pump station improvements. They want this ready for bid in November. We would need to modify the specs at an additional cost of \$2500, to be eligible for SRF. It delays the timing of the project. The estimate is about \$1million. Could be funded through the user fees, a bond issue.

There was discussion about on how it works. Advantages would be lower interest. This is still in the que for a state grant.

No objections from the committee; move forward, don't delay the project. Staff said it seems logical to bond this project.

Director Saunders entered at 4:48.

#### SOLAR PROPOSAL – LANDFILL

The City has received one proposal. Staff has met with the company, NH Solar Garden. This company recently completed a landfill solar project in Milton, NH.

Director Smith summarized the proposal in a memo. There was lengthy discussion. The risk is, that we don't know what the market rate will be in future years. If the rate drops, this is not a good deal.

Councilor Messier said he does not see the rates in NH going down. The question is, does this community want some sort of solar power.

Sprague asked if there was a set amount/rate that we will buy each year.

Councilor Witham said he agrees that the buyback and pilot is an incentive. This is the initial proposal. We should negotiate. City Manager Belmore said the company has already stated that there is very little room for negotiation.

Councilor Sprague said he would be ok if there was a "not to exceed" rate in there.

There was discussion about what we spend annually in power. There are different things involved. It would be nice to have "something" on the superfund site.

Councilor Witham said he wants to allow city staff to continue to negotiate with them.

Councilor Sprague said a superfund site still has to be passed by DES and EPA.

***Councilor Messier, seconded by Councilor Witham, made a motion to table this to allow City Staff to negotiate the proposal with NH Solar Garden.***

#### ROAD IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE

Director Bobinsky provided a memo regarding the update on the roads and public improvements.

Maple Street culvert. Paving complaints. Paving materials met our specs. There are segments in the joints. Issues with the guardrail and needs some loam.

Mast Point Dam, canoe launch. Wayne McKay is the contractor. Joint effort between him and city staff. There were issues with bats that restricted the project.

#### SEWER ORDINANCE – CHANGE OF USE

City Manager Belmore said Hilltop Laundry is moving to the Somersworth Plaza. The sewer fee for the change of use, was extensive. It's time to re-evaluate our procedure.

Director Saunders suggested having the Planning board review what needs a "change of use" permit.

Councilor Witham said it should go to the SRTC, not the planning board. This will show them what is required in the beginning of the process. It is an issue of fairness.

Councilor Sprague said, this prohibits the growth of businesses in the city. They are penalized for the size of their business.

Director Bobinsky said other communities have other charges, intended to pay for past investments and debt services. Dover provides an equivalent bedroom charge.

Messier suggested a graduated scale idea. There robust conversation.

#### GRANITE CURBING POLICY

There was discussion about a policy in the city that we always start with granite. Budget or other factors could be an issue, but to be discussed by committees and/or council to use anything other than granite curbing.

City Manager Belmore said to make sure granite curbing is in the proposals, and have a boots on the ground look at the area.

No need for a resolution, just discussion.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Councilor Witham mentioned that Fairpoint has put in new utility poles by existing utility poles. Eversource has moved their lines. There are a couple dozen throughout the city. Should we tax both poles?

Councilor Witham said we recently had to use a Vac Truck from another community for our construction project on Indigo Hill Road. We should have purchased our own vac truck when the WWTP plant when through an upgrade. This is an important piece of equipment. City Manager said it is in the CIP, out a few years.

Councilor Messier was happy that a manhole cover on High Street was repaired. During the work, a Public Works employee darted into the road to get a cone, causing traffic to stop fast. He could have gotten hit, or caused an accident.

ADJOURNMENT

*Councilor Messier, seconded by Councilor Witham, made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed, 3-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Trish Harris, City Clerk