

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM PLATFORM
March 29, 2021 3:45 p.m.

Committee Members present:	Councilor David A. Witham, Chairman
via Zoom:	Councilor Martin Dumont, Vice Chairman
	Councilor Matt Gerding
	Councilor Kenneth Vincent
Administration/Staff present:	City Manager Bob Belmore
via Zoom:	Finance Director Scott Smith
	Director of Public Works Michael Bobinsky
	City Engineer Amber Ferland
	City Clerk Jonathan Slaven
Others present:	Britt Eckstrom of Wright-Pierce Engineering
via Zoom:	

Chairman Witham called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

As Chairman of the Somersworth Public Works and Environment Committee, I, Councilor David Witham find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform. The public was asked to submit comments via email to jslaven@somersworth.com or bblmore@somersworth.com by Wednesday, March 29, 2021 at 12:00 noon.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON MARCH 10, 2021

Councilor Vincent made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2021 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dumont and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

CEMETERY ROAD UTILITY & ROADWAY RECONSTRUCTION BIDS

Manager Belmore informed the Committee that bids for the project have been received and reviewed by project engineers from Wright Pierce. Belmore also detailed an email from Director Smith which indicated the total cost for the project to be \$3,800,832 to include the base bid from the low bidder, engineering fees, and alternate bid to fund the driveway around the school. Manager Belmore also explained that a resident on Cemetery Road was interested in potentially extending the sewer main. Currently there are

three homes (48, 50, and 60 Cemetery Rd.) to consider, 48 and 50 have individual pump stations that connect via a force main to the sewer main on Cemetery Road, while 60 Cemetery has a septic system.

Britt Eckstrom explained 6 bids have been received with the apparent low bid coming from SUR Construction. She explained the bids have been tabulated and verified and SUR's base bid comes in around 5% lower than the engineering estimate with the alternate bid coming in around 3% higher than estimated. Ms. Eckstrom stated the other bids received were approximately 6-11% higher than estimated. She stated SUR Construction's references from other municipalities were positive and their bank accounts are in good standing. Councilor Witham said he is familiar with SUR and they are a sizable firm. Councilor Vincent concurred and stated they are a reputable firm who are definitely qualified for this project. Councilor Dumont also agreed stating they perform quality construction. Councilor Witham suggested that the bid alternate funding should come from the current bond rather than pushing the cost to the School Department. Councilor Gerding agreed. Councilor Vincent stated he is in favor also, but doesn't want to be blind to the fact that the School Department has the funding and could afford this.

Manager Belmore provided an analysis of the potential issues with extending the sewer line to the three homes at the end of Cemetery Road (near Maple St.) and stated the addition to the project could cost approximately \$100-150k. Ms. Eckstrom stated extending the sewer line to the three additional homes created 475 additional feet of sewer. These 475 additional feet, as well as approximately 800 feet of sewer in the current proposed project, would have to be buried significantly deeper to allow for gravity flow to those homes. She expounded saying this plan is merely conceptual since additional information is needed from those properties and the issue of encountering additional ledge (solid rock) is likely since there are already sections of the project where this is an issue. Councilor Witham stated the question is whether we spend the additional \$100-150k for 3 additional homes. Councilor Vincent said he believes the cost will be more than what is being estimated. He stated that with the additional cost it adds, he can't see all our citizens bearing the cost to extend sewer for 3 homes unless it could connect to Maple Street. Councilor Gerding agreed with the idea that it doesn't seem prudent unless the sewer were extended to Maple Street. Gerding asked how the City would benefit by adding homes to the sewer service, would the cost be made up by increased assessments on the homes. Manager Belmore explained that would be a question for the assessor, but can't imagine the City would gain much with the assessment or associated fees. Councilor Dumont inquired about the timeline if the proposed extension were to take place. Manager Belmore explained that based on conversations with the engineers, it is likely the project's timeline could stay on track. Dumont further inquired about timeline for completion. Ms. Eckstrom stated that pending Council approval, the project could start around mid-May, substantial completion by November, with the final paving for the project to occur the summer of 2022.

Councilor Gerding made a motion to sponsor a Resolution to award the contract to SUR Construction to include the bid alternate, and sponsor a Resolution to amend the contract with Wright/Pierce for engineering oversight, and not include the sewer line extension to the three homes as part of the project. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

SEWER ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

Manager Belmore explained to the Committee that the EPA recently reviewed the City's current SIU (Significant Industrial User) Permits and Sewer Ordinance and provided a report with requirements and recommendations. Part of that report highlighted sections of the Sewer Ordinance needing amendments. Belmore explained the amendments are not substantive, rather administrative language amendments to bring us in line with State and Federal regulations in regards to terminology. Councilor Witham concurred that the changes look administrative in nature and polled staff's thoughts on whether the issue of industrial pretreatment could become a bigger issue. Manager Belmore responded that the issue is still on staff's radar. Director Bobinsky followed up saying there are plans in the near future to look at existing industrial users and their discharge to see how it compares to current parameters. He explained the program they have in place for monitoring is sound and added that volume from industrial users has been low due to the pandemic. Councilor Vincent asked what kind of businesses would need to pretreat. Bobinsky stated it is guided by the State, but some users who are required to pretreat are General Linen (commercial laundry service), paint and solvent companies, and breweries to name a few. Councilor Vincent also asked if the user is required to provide greater pretreatment, is the cost on the user? Vincent also asked how many industrial users we currently have in the City. Bobinsky replied there are about 7-8 industrial users and they are in fact required to cover the cost of additional pretreatment if necessary.

Councilor Dumont made a motion to support the amendments to the Sewer Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gerding and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

GATOR ROCK ROAD SUBDIVISION SEWER PUMP STATION REQUEST

Manager Belmore informed the Committee of a request from Palmer Gas Co., the owner of a pump station on Gator Rock Road, for the City to have the City take over maintenance and operations of the pump station. Director Bobinsky explained he is familiar with the pump and that an inspection of the site was performed on March 16th. He stated there is currently no flow to the pump so we would have to simulate flow to test it. Bobinsky also noted investments necessary for the site to include a telecommunication system to communicate with staff, backup generator, and maintenance of the site for landscaping and snow removal. Bobinsky stated due to the limited scope of service the pump would provide and the investments necessary by the City, his recommendation is to NOT accept the responsibility of operation and maintenance of the pump station. Manager Belmore explained one reason for the request could be the potential to spur development. With the current private operation, some may see this as an impediment. Belmore asked staff if they considered accepting maintenance and operation of the pump station with conditions. Director Bobinsky and Ms. Ferland both concurred that the reach of service was too narrow and the volume of upgrades necessary was too large to recommend.

Councilor Witham questioned the timing of the request. He said he agrees putting the upgrades in changes the scope, but at this point in time, does not want to inherit the pump station. Councilor Vincent agreed, adding he would not want to consider accepting it unless the all of the issues found were brought up to

par. Manager Belmore added that another thing to consider is the fact that the upgrades to inspect, test, and maintain all need to have staff time factored in. Councilor Gerding noted that the request letter mentioned economic draw. He asked if anyone would be able to elaborate on what that draw would be. Manager Belmore explained that the owner may see the public operation of the pump as a positive when attempting to attract developers. He also explained it could potentially create more jobs for people in the region. Gerding followed up asking if private maintenance of such a station would dissuade developers. Manager Belmore replied that it really depends on the developer. Councilor Witham stated he sees that the quality of the pump is good, but feels there are too many short comings to support acceptance at this moment, would be favorable to revisiting the matter in the future.

Councilor Gerding made a motion to NOT accept operation and maintenance of the Pump Station on Gator Rock Road. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

COMMUNITY COMPOSTING PROGRAM

Councilor Gerding stated he has a request in to the company, Mr. Fox Composting, for more information to provide insight into further discussions. Gerding stated the bins need to be placed on a flat hard surface (not dirt) and be easily accessible with no need for them to be fenced in. The current recommendation from Mr. Fox is to start small with one bin and see how that goes. The bin would be picked up weekly and the City would be billed monthly. Councilor Vincent asked what Mr. Fox does with the compost once collected. Gerding responded he sells it to individuals for use. Councilor Witham stated he agreed with the idea of starting small and monitoring. He said the logical spot for the bin would be near the cardboard dumpsters at the Department of Public Works building. Gerding added that signage would be important and may be provided by Mr. Fox. He also said that many students and their families are currently engaged in composting and could lead the charge for others. Councilor Vincent stated he likes the idea of the City composting, but doesn't want to give it away. He asked why we couldn't just do this on our own? Councilor Witham stated the Committee will continue to receive information and discuss further.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Dumont made a Motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 4-0 by roll call vote. Meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk