

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
August 10, 2022 – 3:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Councilor David Witham, Chair
Councilor Denis Messier, Vice-Chair
Councilor Martin Pepin
Councilor Kenneth S. Vincent

Administration/Staff present: City Manager Bob Belmore
Finance Director Scott Smith
Director of Public Works Michael Bobinsky
Director of Development Services Michelle Mears
Welfare Officer Kristen LaPanne

Others in Attendance: Councilor Richard R. Michaud

Chairman Witham called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Councilor Messier made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Witham and passed 4-0.

Councilor Messier made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0.

OAKS GOLF COURSE PROPOSED PLANS

Manager Belmore explained the need for Peter Harrity, Principal Operator of the Oaks, to postpone his planned presentation of which he has a 15-20 page to present involving the possibility of a timber cut to allow more sunlight onto the fairway and greens. Currently there is a 38-year lease in place between the City and the Oaks Golf Course in which we are about 19 years into the term. Manager Belmore added that Mr. Harrity would like to discuss the possibility of increasing the lease term in order for some redesigning and improvements of around \$1,000,000 or more to the course. The Committee agreed to set a tentative date of Wednesday, August 31st to allow for the presentation and further discussion.

ENGINEERING CONSULTANT AWARDS

Manager Belmore provided a memorandum from Director Bobinsky and noted that the FY 22 Sewer Budget included \$95,000 to conduct an evaluation and condition assessment of the City's sewer collection system. The project is split into two scopes of service due to the receipt of a SRF grant award; one is for an asset management assessment of \$60,000 from the NHDES CWSRF grant funds. The

second scope is for Inflow and Infiltration analysis and flow monitoring from the \$95,000 City budgeted amount.

Manager Belmore noted that staff conducted interviews from the two proposals received in response to the City's Request for Proposal (RFPs) submitted by Barton & Loguidice and Wright Pierce. Staff recommendation to the Committee is to award the contracts to Wright Pierce for both the Wastewater Collection Asset Management and the Sewer Collection System Assessment project. Belmore added that NHDES agrees with staff recommendation of Wright Pierce to complete the sewer system projects and if the Committee and City Council approve, it will go before Governor and Executive Council for approval. Chairman Witham agreed with approving Wright Pierce considering they have knowledge of the City's systems from previous projects.

Councilor Vincent made a motion to enter into a nonpublic session per 91-A:3. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed with a roll call vote 4-0.

Chairman Witham indicated that after a brief discussion in nonpublic on the proposed topic discussion, it was determined there was no need for a nonpublic session and he immediately reopened the meeting back up to the public.

Councilor Messier commented that Wright Pierce provided asset management to the Town of Newton with no problems reported as well as mapping and video taping of his system again with no problems and therefore supports Wright Pierce Engineering. Manager Belmore acknowledged Councilor Vincent's dissatisfaction with some of Wright Pierce's work on Cemetery Road from the August 1st, 2022 City Council Meeting and reminded the Committee that the City did only receive two proposals and that Staff does thorough background checks into companies, additionally, there is currently a lot of work happening throughout the State due to the amount of ARPA money available causing lack of contractor interest due to already busy schedules. Chairman Witham added that Cemetery Road functions well and he likes the design, Wright Pierce completed work that was asked of them by this Committee and the City Council after going through multiple meetings and reviewing of plans.

Councilor Pepin made a motion to sponsor Resolutions to contract with Wright Pierce for the collection system analysis and flow monitoring contract, and the asset management grant contract. The motion was seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 4-0.

SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

Manager Belmore provided a memorandum from Director Bobinsky regarding the estimated costs for sidewalk reconstruction projects including West High Street from Maple Street to Cemetery Road, Green Street from Franklin Street to Indigo Hill Road, and Bartlett Avenue from Guy Street to High Street. Other sidewalks in poor condition are noted in the memo in which Complete Streets projects are planned for three of the streets mentioned. Manager Belmore added that the City is receiving \$194,000 in additional Highway Block Grant money which has been confirmed it can be used for sidewalk improvements. Manager Belmore noted that the operating budget for sidewalk improvements has a balance of \$100,000 available as well.

Manager Belmore notified the Committee that an additional \$260,000 was awarded to the City for Municipal Bridge Aid to be used for bridge maintenance and repair; two bridge projects had previously been put on hold until NHDOT comes up with funding. Director Smith added that the funds are non-lapsing meaning that the City will have the money available until they are able to use it.

Discussion continued regarding the provided site maps of the sidewalk suggested improvements regarding noted concrete areas that may in fact be predominately asphalt. Director Bobinsky added that the plan is to look at having some consistency from High Street through Guy Street. Councilor Messier commented on the \$100,000 Sidewalk CRF that was recently voted to be discontinued, he would like to see it go towards sidewalks. Director Smith clarified that those funds were discontinued and therefore the account closed placing it into the General Fund, the City Council would need to take action to vote to move it from the General Fund to the Sidewalk Improvement operating budget line. The Committee agreed to move forward with the three projects listed within the memo by sending them out to bid. Director Smith suggested putting the project out to bid in the Fall or Winter for Spring work depending on the Committee's expectations. Councilor Witham stated that we could leave that open as a contractor may want to do some of the work in the fall, and the balance of the work in the spring. It was agreed by the Committee to leave it open and work out a schedule with the contractor when bids are received.

Councilor Messier made a motion to sponsor a Resolution to move forward with the sidewalk reconstruction projects. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0.

TAP GRANT UPDATE

Manager Belmore stated that one bid was received which was over budget by about \$300,000. Director Bobinsky and City Engineer Amber Hall have been in discussions with NHDOT, initial support coming from the NH DOT Project Engineer and is pending approval by his Director and the Assistance Commissioner due to the overage. Director Bobinsky provided an update that the Project Engineer is recommending approval and that Staff are optimistic and preparing a contract for Manager Belmore and Director Smith to endorse pending NHDOT approval. Director Smith added that the City will need to come up with around \$60,000 in additional funds if the grant is approved by the State.

CHURCH STREET DISCONTINUANCE UPDATE

Manager Belmore mentioned that a project went to the Site Review Technical Committee (SRTC) earlier today requesting that the City consider not discontinuing Church Street and asked Director Mears to provide an update to the Committee. Director Mears summarized the potential project to be a multi-family, four story building with 128 apartment units. The project proposal includes two direct access points off of Green Street and underground parking with access off of Church Street.

Chairman Witham added background to the initial reasoning of the discontinuance of Church Street being that it is currently in a terrible state of repair and minimal traffic usage, suggests that if the company intends to utilize the street for their project it appears to be reason enough to hold off the discussion of discontinuance at this time. Councilor Messier questioned what happens to the street if the City were to decide to discontinue it. Chairman Witham and Manager Belmore agreed that it would be divided from the center line of the road to the abutters on each side.

The Committee agreed to take no action at this time in order to see how the proposed development moves forward.

SOLID WASTE BAG PROGRAM

Manager Belmore noted the email and attachments provided by staff. Discussion with City Staff have led to a recommendation that the \$0.20 increase option for FY 24 and FY 25 appears to work best at getting the fund balance out of the negative. Staff also inquired about the bag quality specifications for the Town of Exeter, it was confirmed that the Town of Exeter bags are 1.6 mil and Somersworth's are 1.9 mil thickness. In response to complaints of poor-quality bags, Waste Zero explained that issues including aging machines, staffing challenges, and raw material supply were all exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic causing the quality of bags to suffer. Waste Zero assured City Staff that the issue has since been resolved and quality complaints from residents have dramatically decreased.

Director Smith provided three rate change scenarios projecting out to FY 24-25 adding that currently the City costs are \$2.15 for 30-gallon bags and \$1.60 for 15-gallon bags. The City collects \$0.10 per bag sold to keep as reserve should any unanticipated issues arise with Recycling or Municipal Solid Waste (MSW). Director Smith noted that if the City continues at the current rate of \$.10 increases per year/per box, the net revenue will continue to operate at a loss, this is a similar scenario with a \$0.20 increase for FY 24 and a \$0.10 increase for FY 25 and therefore, staff suggestion is the \$0.20 annual increase having the net revenue being in the positive by FY 25.

Discussion regarding City of Dover and their bag costs for comparison were \$3.91 per 30-gallon bag and \$2.34 per 15-gallon bag. Councilor Vincent questioned if a \$0.25 annual increase would keep the net revenue out of loss and it was confirmed it would. Chairman Witham questioned if the bulky waste stickers would be affected by the rate increase, it was confirmed it would not but that it may require a discussion in the future.

Councilor Vincent made a motion to support an Ordinance increasing the pay-per-bag fees by \$0.25 for FY 23-24 and FY 24-25. Motion seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 4-0.

MISCELLANEOUS

Manager Belmore and City Staff met with a Unutil representative to discuss 3 project upgrades to natural gas lines with a proposed start date in 2026. The first proposed project includes adding a 12-inch line to increase services to homes and businesses along Bartlett Avenue and Maple Street to Tates Brook as well as West High Street to Whitehouse Road in 3 phases. The second proposed project includes a new gas sub-station in the works with SRTC and the Planning Board. Lastly, the third proposed project includes extending lines down Black Water Road with a goal to service the Police Department and Public Works Facility. Unutil would like to present to the Committee when appropriate.

There was discussion regarding three fire hydrants that are out of service throughout the City caused by leaks and another being struck. Director Bobinsky confirmed that the Public Works Department is aware and working to have repaired.

Councilor Pepin brought up concern of the road and sidewalks from Cemetery Road to West High Street needing repairs. Director Bobinsky responded that the City will be continuing with their early bid process by providing the City Council with a list of roads to be considered for repair within the next budget year in September/October in order to go out to bid during the Winter. Director Bobinsky added that West High Street is on the list for consideration.

Councilor Messier requested an update regarding the failed catch basin in front of the new section of the Fire Department. Director Bobinsky confirmed that there was a catch basin structure that failed

and had been replaced. The catch basin was raised to grade and the company will be in to finalize the paving around the basin.

Chairman Witham requested an update as to the traffic markings contracted by K-5. Director Bobinsky has been working with K-5 and at this time does not have a specific timeline to offer to the Committee for when work will be completed for High Street, Market Street and the long lines from Dover to Market Street. K-5 has been directed to contact Department of Public Works to schedule a date for completion.

Chairman Witham reported that much of the gravel that was placed off of Noble Street has washed down the street due to the recent rain storms exposing the road edge and having filled the paved swale with gravel. Discussion continued adding that part of the issue could be resolved with larger stone or packing of gravel, Director Bobinsky will visit site to review.

Chairman Witham shared a request from a resident to repair the Main Street sidewalks just before Indigo Hill Road. The sidewalk in that area is in disrepair and needs attention. Chairman Witham also requested an update on CMAQ High Street signals in which Director Smith confirmed City Staff are accepting bids tomorrow at 2pm. Councilor Pepin added that the signal lights at the intersection of Hilltop Chevrolet are providing an inconvenience to operators crossing, suggests reviewing flow. Director Bobinsky confirmed it is a State signal but they will check it out and touch base with the State.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Messier made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen LaPanne, Welfare Officer