

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

June 26, 2023 – 4:00 p.m.

Committee Members present: Councilor David A. Witham, Chairman (arrived at 4:18 p.m.)
Councilor Denis Messier, Vice-Chairman
Councilor Kenneth Vincent
Councilor Martin Pepin

Administration/Staff present: City Manager Bob Belmore
Director of Public Works Michael Bobinsky
City Engineer Amber Hall
City Clerk Kristen LaPanne

Others present: The Oaks Principal Operator Peter Harrity

Councilor Messier called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF APRIL 21, 2023

Councilor Pepin made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 21, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 2-0-1 by voice vote. Councilor Vincent abstained.

GMI ASPHALT SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS CHANGE ORDER

City Manager Belmore provided the Committee with a memorandum from City Engineer Amber Hall and explained the contractor exceeded the amount of loam and seed required by the bid specs which went over cost by \$20,800. Staff and the contractor negotiated a proposed resolution in that the City pay \$5,000 of that overage.

Councilor Messier questioned the total amount of the change order. Director Bobinsky noted that there are five items associated with the overages which he and Engineer Hall confirmed were accurate during a field assessment to review the work. Engineer Hall reported that the need for additional asphalt was due to driveways along High Street requiring an adjustment to their grade as well as the turn onto Maple Street. Director Bobinsky commented on the significant increase in loam and seed, he added that the contractor, GMI Asphalt, went above and beyond what the project initially called for to ensure a more finished look. The overage expenses total approximately \$22,300 which includes if the City were to agree to pay the additional \$5,000 for loam and seed.

Councilor Messier commented that the project was well done. He asked where the additional funds are recommended to come from in order to cover the costs. Finance Director Smith stated that the City Council approved a total project cost of \$140,000, the change order goes above that by

approximately \$18,000. He recommended that the change order request go to full Council and suggests that the funds come from the Public Works Department budget as they have the ability to cover the overage in expenses.

Councilor Witham arrived at 4:18 p.m.

Councilor Messier asked if Councilor Witham had any questions regarding the change order requested by GMI Asphalt. Councilor Witham confirmed that he read over the material and was well informed by the City Manager prior to the meeting. He had no questions and commented that he felt the project was great and supports the change order request.

Councilor Witham made a motion to recommend the approval of the change order to the full Council as presented by City staff for an amount not to exceed \$22,300. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0 by voice vote.

THE OAKS GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT LEASE EXTENSION REQUEST

City Manager Belmore summarized the current lease agreement between the City of Somersworth and The Oaks Golf Course. Currently, the lease term has about 20 years remaining of the 38-year lease agreement signed in September of 2002. The Oaks Golf Course is requesting a lease extension of an additional 20 years out to the year 2060. Manager Belmore briefed the Committee on the reason of the extension request, he reported that The Oaks management team is looking to invest a substantial amount of funds into improvements and upgrades of the grounds and facility. In order for The Oaks to see a return of their investment, they are wishing to extend the current lease agreement.

Manager Belmore reviewed the list of items proposed within the prepared Lease Extension Request prepared by the Peter Harrity. The capital improvements proposed include tree thinning, new tee complexes, bunkers, cart paths, irrigation, practice facility, and infrastructure and building improvements.

Peter Harrity thanked Manager Belmore for his briefing on the proposed lease extension request and added that the document also outlines the current state of the property and facility conditions. Mr. Harrity stated that with about 18 years left in the current lease agreement, The Oaks has an obligation to maintain the grounds. He noted that irrigation over the last 20 year since being installed at The Oaks, has had drastic changes whereas now irrigation systems are more efficient and use less water. Mr. Harrity discussed the initial design having had some known flaws due to protected wetlands and permitting requirements during the design process some 20 years ago. He added that the proposal also outlines a timeline of the proposed capital improvements with a ten-year window.

Councilor Messier noted that tree thinning was previously approved by the full Council but has not yet started, he asked for clarification of that reasoning. Mr. Harrity stated that due to the mild winter, the ground never froze and therefore they were unable to start the timber cut tree thinning process. He added that they are going out to bid for the project in August.

Councilor Witham commented that he is in full support of the lease extension request by The Oaks. He stated that the City's partnership with The Oaks has been great over the years and agrees that in order for the proposed capital investments to be made, The Oaks needs more time in terms of the lease agreement. Councilor Witham added that he feels that the interest of both the City and The Oaks are protected within this lease extension. Councilor Witham questioned if there is language within the current lease agreement pertaining to if The Oaks were to decide to sell their rights of the lease. Finance Director Smith believes that there is language that speaks to this, but will confirm. Mr. Harrity assured the Committee that he, nor his partner, have any intention of selling their rights to the lease.

Mr. Harrity also noted that the original team of consultants that the City had hired to design The Oaks Golf Course were retained and have been consulted and involved in all projects over the years.

Councilor Pepin commented that he is in favor of the proposed lease extension and feels that the partnership between the City and The Oaks has been working great. He added his understanding of the need to invest money into the property to keep up with maintenance and to keep golfers coming back to the course. Councilor Messier stated that he also agrees with Councilor Pepin's comments.

Councilor Witham made a motion to support a Resolution to negotiate the proposed Lease Extension Request presented by The Oaks. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 4-0 by voice vote.

PROJECT UPDATES

City Manager Belmore provided a memorandum from Public Works Director Bobinsky that summarized key project updates. Councilor Messier inquired about the TAP Grant light poles that were installed on Memorial Drive and if they are the same as the ones installed on High Street. Director Bobinsky confirmed that the new lights are similar with some minor differences such as being solar powered.

Councilor Witham stated that he appreciates the memorandum and all that is going on within the City. He shared however, his disappointment with the pavement markings contracted through Spots on Lots and the slow moving of the project thus far. Councilor Witham understands that they are a small company and appreciates them trying to take on the project but doesn't know that he would support contracting with them in the future due to the delays. Director Bobinsky thanked Councilor

Witham for his input and reported that pavement markings in the downtown area were completed but the rain caused further delay last night in another area of the City.

Councilor Messier commented that the Italianate Well House roof looks wonderful. He added that he is happy to see that City staff is meeting with Electric Light Co. to begin the CMAQ Grant project. Director Bobinsky confirmed that the meeting today with Electric Light Co. went well.

MISCELLANEOUS

Councilor Pepin recommended having the lights at the West High Street and Route 108 intersection studied to allow for a smoother traffic pattern. Director Bobinsky stated that the City does not maintain those lights but will recommend they be reviewed by the appropriate agency. He added that he believes the State is reviewing Route 108 in general as part of their complete streets project.

City Manager Belmore mentioned that the City has mailed letters and is working on meeting with the residents of Coles Pond Road to start a conversation regarding the City no longer providing winter maintenance on the private road. Director Bobinsky added that they have also recently sent out a second batch of certified letters to ensure that all residents receive proper notification of the City's effort to reach them.

Manager Belmore reported that the bridge along the Willand Pond recreational walking trails is in disrepair. City staff posted a caution sign and consulted with the City's insurance carrier as to whether or not the caution sign is enough, and confirmed it is. Manager Belmore stated that the materials to repair the bridge is expected to cost approximately \$9,000, and added that he requested that Director Bobinsky obtain a quote to hire a contractor to complete the bridge repair as the Public Works Department staff are busy with other important City projects. Councilor Messier questioned if the City could use Conservation Funds available to assist in covering the cost of the bridge repair. Director Smith commented that he was unsure if that is an option due to restrictions but he will look into it.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Witham made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 4-0 by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen LaPanne, City Clerk