

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

January 22, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.

Committee Members present: Councilor Kenneth Vincent, Vice-Chairman
Councilor Martin Pepin
Councilor Denis Messier

Committee Members absent: Councilor David A. Witham, Chairman

Administration/Staff present: City Manager, Bob Belmore
Finance Director, Scott Smith
Director of Public Works, Michael Bobinsky
City Engineer, Amber Hall
Director of Development Services, Michelle Mears
Deputy City Clerk, Ammy Ramsey

Others present: David Francoeur, Upland LLC

Councilor Messier called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF NOVEMBER 29, 2023

Councilor Pepin made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 29, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 3-0.

EVERSOURCE EASEMENT (TO CITY BONEYARD)

City Manager Belmore informed the Committee that Public Works Director Bobinsky received a memo from Public Service of New Hampshire, d.b.a. Eversource Energy regarding a distribution easement for a portion of land off the westerly side of Maple Street owned by the City. Manager Belmore mentioned that there will be a Resolution that will go to full Council to authorize the City Manager to sign the easement that will allow provide electricity to the new natural gas transmission line substation. Manager Belmore stated that the City Council had previously approved an easement for Consolidated Communications of Northern New England Company, LLC and Northern Utilities, Inc., d.b.a. Unitil.

Councilor Messier inquired with the Committee if anyone had any questions, and mentioned he has read the document and stated that this will allow for power so Unitil to can run their services for the substation. There were no follow-up questions from the Committee.

Councilor Pepin made a motion to sponsor a Resolution to Authorize the City Manager to Convey a Distribution Utility Easement to Public Service of New Hampshire d.b.a Eversource. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 3-0.

GREENVIEW SUBDIVISION ROADS ACCEPTANCE

Councilor Messier confirmed that this subdivision is on Whippoorwill Way and Sandlot Lane.

City Manager Belmore stated that Director Mears provided a memo that included items that need to be addressed that included compaction test concerns, a fourth street light receiving power, reseeding the cul-de-sac in the Spring, revised As-Built plans from Tritech Engineering, and the submission of a letter certifying that the development has been built to City standards. Manager Belmore also mentioned that a surety bond will need to be provided by the developer to cover maintenance of the roads and other improvements for two years.

Director Mears mentioned that her department has received information from Tritech and other information regarding the items of concern from her memo that will be reviewed.

City Engineer Hall stated that S.W. Cole Engineering submitted the results from the compaction test and there were two areas that did not meet the NH DOT minimum requirements. Engineer Hall contacted S.W. Cole to discuss the areas of concern and it was determined that this test result was for the 1-inch top coat. The inspection that DuBois and King performed was for the base and the base did meet the NH DOT minimum requirements, therefore S.W. Cole and GMI does not feel that the 1-inch compaction is an issue for the structural integrity of the road construction. Engineer Hall also mentioned that GMI stated that the areas of original concern were within the col-de-sac and they were not able to use the heavier roller in that area.

Public Works Director Bobinsky mentioned they just received some plans that will be reviewed and some items that Director Mears provided in her update are being discussed and reviewed as well.

There was some discussion pertaining to the lots and the status of the construction on the lots.

Mr. Francoeur also described the details on how the compaction test is performed and how it is difficult to use a heavier rolling machine on the corners of a road in hopes to clarify any confusion why there were areas of concern.

Councilor Pepin inquired with the staff concerning any issues they may have if the Committee accepts the plan before all concerns have been met. Director Bobinsky stated that is ok and that there is an understanding that the letter from Horsley Witten certifying the development will still need to be received. There was some discussion pertaining to when this will go to the full Council for a vote. Director Mears stated that it will also need to be reviewed by legal counsel.

Councilor Pepin made a motion to sponsor a Resolution to the full Council, subject to all outstanding issues being resolved, to accept Whippoorwill Way and Sandlot Lane as City roads. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 3-0

There was some further discussion pertaining to who is responsible for any damage that is done to the cul-de-sac during plowing season. Manager Belmore stated that once the road is accepted by the City, it is the City who will be responsible for any damage from plowing. Councilor Messier mentioned that the mowing will be the homeowner's associations responsibility.

WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

Finance Director Smith explained that the City was broken down into zones and all the letters have been sent to notify the residents that their meter needs to be replaced. The project started at the end of November 2023 and as of January 13th, 597 meters have been replaced. Director Smith mentioned that compliance has been good, and the water clerk has been assisting customers that have had some trouble making the appointments. The project will take a few more months to complete, and he added that residents who have water meters that are 5 years old or less are not being replaced.

Councilor Vincent inquired about why this is being done. Director Smith stated that some of the meters in the City are 20 years old and it is recommended to replace the meter every 10 years, and he mentioned that the older meters run slower and the accuracy is compromised.

Director Smith stated that they will be extending appointments until 5:30 p.m. and adding some Saturdays to accommodate residents' availability.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES, LEAVES/BRUSH/CHRISTMAS TREE PICK-UP

City Manager Belmore stated that this agenda item was requested by Councilor Witham. There was some discussion pertaining to what the Public Works Department has prepared to report to the Committee and the type of services provided by the Public Works currently provides to the City.

Councilor Messier made a motion to table the discussion of Public Works Services due to Councilor Witham's absence. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 3-0.

MISCELLANEOUS

City Manager Belmore informed the Committee that there will be an additional seven poles that will be installed at the Somersworth Landfill to accommodate the future solar array. There was some discussion pertaining to the pole placement and where the hook up to the grid will be. Manager Belmore included that there was some pre-planning done to avoid any gas vents.

Councilor Pepin inquired about the natural gas and how that would hook into the current backup generators that are at the Police Department and Public Works Department. Director Bobinsky responded the back-up generator at the Police Station is a diesel unit, and would be very difficult to convert to natural gas, and most likely would cost more than replacing it with a new generator.

City Manager Belmore stated that Director Bobinsky was contacted by the State regarding the City of Somersworth being interested in expanding their sewer line from Route 108 up to Amazon Park in Rochester. Manager Belmore informed the Committee that he spoke with Wastewater Treatment Plant Chief Operator, Jamie Wood, and he feels that it would not be a good idea because it would take away some of the WWTP's capacity. Manager Belmore added that this is a policy decision and that is why he has brought it to this Committee. Councilor Messier believes there are many questions that need to be answered before this decision should be considered.

Councilor Pepin made a motion to deny the request to expand the sewer line. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent.

The motion passed 3-0

City Manager Belmore stated that it was discussed by this Committee in the past that the City would not supply water or sewer service to any other communities without an intermunicipal agreement in place. Councilor Messier mentioned that the area they would like the extension to is an industrial park.

City Manager Belmore mentioned that Director Smith informed him of the need to discuss a possible increase to utility rates. Councilor Messier suggested coming back with a 3-year plan for consideration.

Councilor Messier inquired about the water tank and if the current one will be taken down and replaced. Director Bobinsky stated that they are currently in the design phase of that project and believes a new tank would be in the design. Councilor Messier is in favor of a new tank for safety reasons. There was some further discussion regarding the ability to have antennas on the tank as well.

City Engineer Hall presented the Committee with the FY2024 Road Resurfacing Bid results she received and explained the differences between the three base bids. Councilor Messier confirmed that GMI Asphalt, LLC bid came in at \$582,455.00 for all three base bids with Engineer Hall, and inquired about the budgeted amount. Finance Director Smith stated that there is \$1.3 million available for road maintenance, \$176,000 from a block grant, and if needed there are funds from the Municipal and Transportation Fund, so there is about \$1.6 million in total available. Director Smith also mentioned that \$36,000 of the bid amount will be coming from the Water Fund.

Councilor Pepin made a motion to sponsor a Resolution to the full Council to contract with GMI Asphalt, LLC for the FY2024 Road Resurfacing projects. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 3-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Pepin made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 3-0 by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ammy Ramsey, Deputy City Clerk