

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, September 13, 2018**

**6:30 PM**

**Council Chambers**

**Members Present:**

Mitchell H. Greenwald, Chair  
Carl B. Jacobs, Vice-Chair  
Thomas F. Powers  
Terry M. Clark  
Bettina A. Chadbourne

Mayor Kendall Lane

**Staff Present:**

City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon  
City Attorney, Thomas Mullins  
City Engineer, Don Lussier  
Parks Recreation and Facilities Director,  
Andrew Bohannon  
Senior Planner, Tara Kessler  
Asst. City Manager/IT Director, Rebecca  
Landry  
Youth Services, Elisabeth Brown  
Head of Youth and Community Services,  
Gail Zachariah  
Fire Chief, Mark Howard  
Airport Manager, Jack Wozmak  
Youth Librarian, Tracy Snow

Chair Greenwald called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**1) Christine and Edward Sweeney - Offer of Donation to the City - Land at 0  
Apollo Avenue**

Parks Recreation and Facilities Director, Andrew Bohannon asked that this matter be put on more time.

Councilor Clark made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends putting this item on more time.

**2) Acceptance of a Donation - Fire Department**

Fire Chief Mark Howard stated this donation is for \$1,000 from Edward Bussieres – once the donation is accepted by the Council a letter of appreciation will be sent to Mr. Bussieres.

Councilor Powers made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the City Manager do all things necessary to accept a donation of \$1000.00.

**3) Acceptance of a Donation - Fire Department**

Chief Howard stated this \$25 donation is from Mrs. Phyllis Anderson for emergency services provided to her by the Fire Department.

Councilor Jacobs made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the City Manager do all things necessary to accept a donation of \$25.00.

**4. Acceptance of Funds From Cheshire County - Youth Services**

Youth Services Representative Elisabeth Brown stated this donation is for the 2018 funding provided to the youth services program by Cheshire County in the amount of \$23,100 which will be used for the youth intervention program and the juvenile court diversion program.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Jacobs.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and administer funds provided by Cheshire County for Youth Services programs.

**5. Acceptance of National Leadership Library Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) - Library Department**

Head of Youth and Community Services Gail Zachariah and Youth Librarian Tracy Snow addressed the Committee. Ms. Zachariah stated herself and Ms. Snow are before the committee regarding a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) – Ms. Snow will be the project director of the grant. IMLS is a federal agency which provides grants to libraries and museums and the aim is to make libraries and museums become an essential part of a community.

Ms. Snow stated the grant is for \$244,142 for a three-year project where research based STEM programs will be offered for young children (ages 2 to 6). She indicated it has been recently learned that the STEM program has been discovered to be a great program that advances pre-literacy skills, interest in science and building natural curiosity among young children. This program will be offered at no charge to the public.

Councilor Clark made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept a \$244,142 Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Leadership grant.

**6. Intent to Sell Former Alps Property - Airport Department**

Airport Manager Jack Wozmak addressed the city regarding the sale of the Alps property. Mr. Wozmak explained the city owns about 11 acres on the southern tip of the airport property which the city purchased with federal monies but have not had the need to use this property for aviation needs – staff has tried to rent the property with no success. Mr. Wozmak noted the property is required to be sold at or greater than fair market value and the proceeds of the sale will stay in the airport fund and would relieve the tax payer of having to contribute towards airport projects for a quite a while.

The Chairman asked whether the FAA would need to be reimbursed by the sale of these funds. The Chairman asked why there is language in the motion which says *Notice of Intent*. Attorney Mullins stated the city does want to sell this property but this sale does have conditions attached to it which needs to be met through the Purchase and Sales process and the FAA process. The Chairman clarified before the sale is final, the matter will come back before the Council for its approval.

Councilor Powers clarified the reason the city acquired the property was mainly to be able to take down some trees but this property can be used for many uses. Mr. Wozmak agreed.

Councilor Powers made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to proceed with the Notice of Intent to Sell the former ALPS property.

**7. Gilbo East Parking Lot - Funds for Underground Storage Tank - Public Works Department**

City Engineer Don Lussier stated when work was being undertaken on the Gilbo East parking lot a tank was discovered. It is staff's opinion that this tank (10,000 gallon) predates the city acquiring the property in 1957. The good news is the tank did not leak, the removal has been completed and there was no contamination of the ground water. What is being requested today is for additional funding to remove the sludge, remove the tank and for backfilling. Monies will come from the Jordan Road project. This project was closed out coming in at \$46,000 under budget. This project was funded with general fund monies and SB 38 funds. The Gilbo lot was funded with general funds and parking fund monies.

Chair Greenwald asked whether there were no state funds to cover this work. Mr. Lussier stated there would have been state funds, if there was a leak.

Councilor Powers clarified the rest of the project was on target. Mr. Lussier answered in the affirmative and stated the work should be completed by end of October. The lighting might be delayed slightly waiting for the lamps. Spectrum Communication is working on the underground wires.

Chair Greenwald asked whether the parking lot which has been dug up is going to extend through to St. James Street. Mr. Lussier stated the roadway being dug up on Lamson Street is for the utility work happening concurrently by Eversource to extend conduits and move transformers behind the building. This sidewalk will be replaced because of their work. The city's work will end on the south side of Lamson Street. The repaving of Lamson, St. James and Federal Streets are scheduled to happen in a couple of years. Chair Greenwald stated he was referring to Gilbo and St. James Streets – Mr. Lussier stated the fence line which exists in this location which has been cordoned off is where the limit of the city's construction would be. The Chairman asked whether the road was going to be widened. Mr. Lussier answered in the affirmative.

Councilor Clark Jacobs the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Council reallocate \$25,000 from the unspent balance of the Jordan Road Rehabilitation Project (90249) to the Gilbo East Parking Lot Improvement Project (90153).

#### **8. City Hall Mural - Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department**

Mr. Bohannon reminded the Committee about the presentation made by Walldogs to the Council a few weeks ago. Part of their project is to install 15 murals on city buildings in the downtown area – City Hall is one of the choices. The mural will be 180 square feet in size (60' x 30') located on the north side of the building.

With public art there are certain criteria that need to be met, Walldogs have met 18 of the 20 criteria (content and insurance have not yet been met) – these two items will be brought back to MSFI as the process moves forward.

On September 28 there is going to be a public forum to discuss the murals, selection and content. Once the forum is completed, staff will be back before the Council Committees. At this point we don't know what the mural would look like. Councilor Chadbourne asked whether the city would have input on what the mural would look like. Mr. Bohannon stated this is what the public forum is for and once there are some choices, they would be brought back to the Council for its approval.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept the donation of a mural located on the north side of City Hall through the Walldogs project scheduled for summer 2019.

**9. Sale of Tax Deeded Properties - Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department**

Mr. Bohannon stated this item is regarding properties located at 54 Stanhope Avenue and 15 Cross Street. He noted the city makes every effort to work with property owners and taking of a property is the last thing the city wants to do. However, in some cases the matter cannot be settled and the city ends up having to acquire the property through tax deed. In this case, the properties are going to be sold on the open market and anything that is derived through the sale which is in excess of what is owed, goes back to the property owner.

The Chairman asked whether properties are listed for sale. Mr. Bohannon stated the city needs to go through this process before a listing can happen.

Councilor Powers asked whether the properties are occupied. Mr. Bohannon answered in the negative.

The Chairman clarified this is an advertised open bid process. Mr. Bohannon agreed.

Councilor Clark made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute the sale of tax deeded properties at 54 Stanhope Avenue and 15 Cross Street.

**10. Land Acquisition Request – Beauregard Property off Chapman Road (TMP# 241-018-000 000-000) - Conservation Commission**

Senior Planner Tara Kessler stated the committee has before it a request from Mr. Bill Beauregard for the city to acquire property off Chapman Road (27.5 acres). This land is located on the west facing slope on Beech Hill and abuts about 180 acres of city owned land which property was acquired by the city to conserve the view shed and steep slopes on that area of Beech Hill.

Ms. Kessler stated between 2008 and 2010 the city was approached by the Beauregard family to purchase the property and the Conservation Commission voted in favor of this sale, but the transaction was never completed. Mr. Beauregard went back before the Conservation Commission with this request and based on their prior decision, they voted for the city to enter into negotiation with the applicant. The Commission noted that the landuse change tax would be used for this purchase; there is approximately \$140,000 in this fund. Ms. Kessler turned the presentation over to Mr. Beauregard.

Mr. Bill Beauregard stated his dad, when he was alive approached the city about this purchase. After his passing, in an effort to settle his estate, the family has brought this item back before the Board. Mr. Beauregard oriented the committee with the location of the property.

Councilor Clark for full disclosure purposes stated he is the listing agent for a five acre property that abuts this property. Attorney Mullins stated because the councilor does not have a pecuniary interest in this property, the attorney did not see any issue.

Councilor Powers made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate the purchase of 27.5 acres of land off Chapman Road belonging to the Beauregard family.

**11. Councilors Greenwald and Richards - Use of Remaining Fund Balances at the End of the Fiscal Year**

Councilor David Richards addressed the Committee and stated as discussed in the past the city would like to reduce its bond indebtedness. This year there is approximately \$100,000 left and his suggestion is to take these funds and use it for next year's bond indebtedness, as well as to increase the reserve fund. Reserve funds are in good stead, but the city is at a 9<sup>th</sup> year of recovery.

Councilor Powers asked whether the councilor was referring to the entire general fund or capital projects. Councilor Richards stated he was referring to capital projects. Councilor Powers asked whether capital projects are not usually left open for a few years.

City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon explained the net between the capital projects and the general fund falls to the fund balance. She indicated she agrees to reducing bond indebtedness but is concerned about creating a policy which is too restrictive because the city could very well see a recession again. She indicated one of the things the city hears from bond council is how they like the manner in which the city's fiscal policies are structured and that it puts the city in a good position when it goes out to bond market. She asked this be considered as an annual discussion. The Manager agreed the less debt the city has the better it is, but there is a balance that needs to be arrived at and this won't become clear until books are closed and an audit is completed at the end of each fiscal year.

Councilor Richards felt this might be a good item to look at during the budget discussion and felt something needs to be in writing so that no-one forgets about it. The Councilor asked whether this could be an item to be addressed during fiscal policies next year. The Manager reiterated how the books are going to be closed will be an agenda item and fund balance discussion will be addressed during the fiscal policies next year. Councilor

Jacobs noted if this item is discussed during the fiscal policies, it will guide the city in the path it should take as far as this item is concerned.

Councilor Clark recalled there were certain things deleted from the fiscal policies because they were too restrictive and added he always wonders how much money is left over for different funds. He felt the tax payers would appreciate if they can save money on taxes if surplus could be used to pay off an expense and felt having this item as an annual discussion was a good idea.

Councilor Powers asked what is the expectation for staff and the timing of same.

With reference to requesting work from the Finance Department, the Manager noted to how short staffed this department is and felt assigning anything more to this department at this time would not be ideal. However, what she is hearing is once books close, staff will look at year end balances and present it to this body and as part of the fiscal policies discussion this matter would be brought up again.

Mayor Lane asked how this is different from what the city already has in place – taking money out of fund balance to avoid bonding. Councilor Richards stated he was looking to make sure staff is looking at this item in more detail and having council educated is what he was looking to do.

Councilor Jacobs made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends accepting this item as informational.

## **12. Relating to the Tax Lien Process Ordinance O-2018-11**

Attorney Mullins stated this is for the purpose of providing the city with another opportunity for the disposition of tax deeded properties. At times the city might have to dispose of properties outside of the tax deed method – such as perhaps transferring a property to an abutter if the city has no use for a certain piece of property. This ordinance provides the city the authority to do so.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Ordinance O-2018-11.

Chairman Greenwald thanked Councilor Jacobs for stepping in during his absence.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

FOP Meeting Minutes  
September 13, 2018

Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Additional Edits by,  
Terri M. Hood, Assistant City Clerk