

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

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

**Thursday, January 28, 2021**

**6:30 PM**

**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Thomas F. Powers, Chair  
Stephen L. Hooper, Vice-Chair  
Terry M. Clark  
Michael J. Remy  
Raleigh C. Ormerod

**Staff Present:**

Elizabeth A. Dragon City Manager  
Thomas P. Mullins City Attorney  
Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director  
Andy Bohannon  
City Engineer Don Lussier  
Civil Engineer Brett Rusnock

**Members Not Present:**

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

**1) Acceptance of Grant Funding - Complete Street Infrastructure - Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director**

Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director Andrew Bohannon addressed the committee first and stated this item is in reference to the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST) 2020 Complete Streets Implementation Grant. The City received this grant from Southwest Regional Planning Commission in the amount of \$41,000. The grant is for two phases. The first is for wayfinding signage to navigate around the trail system. The second piece is for ADA infrastructure within the street infrastructures.

Mr. Bohannon noted key transition zones are going to be addressed such as the West Street and Island Street intersection. The slope at this location is going to be corrected, with tactile warnings and push buttons installed to bring this intersection into compliance with ADA standards. Mr. Bohannon indicated the grant would also cover the Cheshire Rail Trail/Gilbo Avenue/School Street intersection, the Cheshire Rail Trail/Ashuelot Rail Trail and the Emerald Street intersection. The grant needs to be completed before December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Councilor Clark asked whether these specifications will include pedestrian lighting. Mr. Bohannon stated the City Engineer will be overseeing this work and referred the question to him. City Engineer Don Lussier stated lighting is already being planned for the Ashuelot Rail Trail crossing for Emerald Street. Two alternatives are being looked at, one would be the typical LED cobra-head lights like we have used elsewhere. If the pole in that location doesn't work for this type of installation, staff will be looking at solar alternatives. He added solar will also be used for the Winchester Street corridor improvements.

Councilor Clark stated he believes the Gilbo parking lot project included some sort of report on this and most recently the 2020 NH Transportation Report from the Brattleboro Hinsdale bridge project showed that electricity savings over the life of the solar lighting fixture exceeds the difference in cost between solar and traditional fixtures. He felt solar should take precedent unless there is a reason the City should not and urged staff to consider this.

Councilor Ormerod referred to the West Street/Island Street intersection – this seems to be the first priority but these intersections are going to be taken apart at some point for the traffic circles and asked how that would coincide with this work. Mr. Lussier noted the ADA improvements being proposed for Island Street is for where Island Street meets West Street and not for the Winchester Street intersection.

Chair Powers noted the West Street/Island Street intersection has a lot of issues and asked what improvements were being planned. Mr. Bohannon stated the improvements being proposed were for curb cuts and push buttons for traffic signals to bring the intersection into compliance. The Chairman referred to School Street and noted those traffic signals are scheduled for replacement under a carry over and asked how this work will coincide with that work. Mr. Bohannon explained staff has been working with the Police Department to make sure the projects are aligned – it is a coordinated effort. The Chairman confirmed this work is in reference to traffic signals not overhead lighting except for the end of Emerald Street. Mr. Bohannon answered in the affirmative.

Councilor Remy referred to the Gilbo Avenue/School Street intersection and noted these traffic signals are signaled as “open green” but should be “protected green” and stated he wasn’t sure if this affected the sidewalk and crosswalk pattern which is confusing for drivers. Mr. Lussier in response stated for this project, the City is not proposing to re-time any of the intersections but what is being done is to make the existing hardware ADA compatible.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute the Project Agreement with Southwest Regional Planning Commission for the award of the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST) 2020 Complete Streets Implementation Grant and recommend the acceptance of the grant in the amount of \$41,000.00 for the complete streets infrastructure.

**2) Lease Agreement with Senator Shaheen at 12 Gilbo Avenue - Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director**

Mr. Bohannon stated this item is in reference to a lease agreement with Senator Shaheen’s office at the existing space at 12 Gilbo Avenue. With the re-election the Senator’s office is looking for a lease renewal through an extended term of 2027. The City has been renting with Senator Shaheen’s office since 2011 and they have been a good tenant. Potential development on Gilbo Avenue has been built into the lease term as a clause, as was done with the other two tenants in that building.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a lease renewal with United States Senator Jeanne Shaheen for the office space located at 12 Gilbo Avenue.

**3) Upgrades to HVAC systems at City Hall - Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director**

Mr. Bohannon stated he had addressed the FEMA grant at the last meeting and this upgrade of the ventilation system was attached to that grant in the amount of \$165,500. Staff submitted a carryover request for the last budget cycle for \$90,000 for the upgrade; however, since that time the specifications have come back at a higher price. Staff believes it was important to move forward with this project because of the pandemic and air quality transmission which is a key component for the spread of the COVID virus. Mr. Bohannon stated the FEMA grant will help tremendously with this cost, as well as moving some other projects around.

Mr. Bohannon noted the third and fourth floors in City Hall have air quality issues and this project will help with that.

Councilor Ormerod commended this project but questioned if brand new equipment is being purchased whether there is any energy efficiency with this new equipment and also asked how old the current system is. Mr. Bohannon stated the current system is at least 15 years old and this system was called out in the EMG process (facility assessment). He added with this system the City will also be moving towards its sustainability goals. Councilor Ormerod stated he would like to see a reporting out as this project moves forward.

Chair Powers stated there are areas on the third and fourth floors which are going to be renovated to reduce exposure during the pandemic and other such issues. He asked if that has been anticipated and the project appropriately adjusted to address this issue. Mr. Bohannon stated as renovations are being made the ventilation system for those areas are being looked at and improved.

The Chairman stated he supports this item but noted this might delay other projects by shifting funds. He asked if the grant will free up money in the CIP. Mr. Bohannon answered in the affirmative and added staff's hope is to use some of the Covid-19 relief funds to offset some of City operation costs.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to award and execute a contract with KPMB Enterprises LLC for specifications to upgrade the ventilation and HVAC system at City Hall in the amount of \$165,500.00.

**4) City Hall Rear. Wall Project - Consultant Selection - City Engineer**

Civil Engineer Brett Rusnock was the next speaker. Mr. Rusnock stated the FY20 CIP allocated \$175,000 for the repair of the rear wall at City Hall. Mr. Rusnock stated staff believes the cracking wall is because of uneven soil settlement which is also the reason for failure of the Town Brook Drainage pipe which runs underneath City Hall. He indicated this pipe is 2' high x 4' wide brick drainage pipe installed in the late 1800's to enclose a stream that ran across City Hall property. The building was constructed on top of it.

Mr. Rusnock stated last year staff attempted, unsuccessfully to perform a video pipe inspection of the pipe. It was unsuccessful because the pipe has standing water, debris and silts inside it. This problem is beyond staff's expertise to resolve. Last year the work was advertised and two proposals were received. One from Simpson Gumpertz & Heger for \$190,000 and the other from Dubois & King for \$150,000. A committee made up of staff reviewed paper proposals, interviewed the two firms. Based on this, Dubois & King scored higher than Simpson Gumpertz & Heger. As a result, staff is recommending the Manager enter into a contract with DuBois & King, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 for engineering and technical services.

Councilor Hooper clarified this cost is to analyze the problem and to come up with a figure to see how much it would cost to fix the problem, which would be in addition to the \$150,000. Mr. Rusnock answered in the affirmative.

Councilor Clark stated he has always been fascinated with the fee, companies get for professional services work – preliminary work. This is not to even to fix the problem. He stated it would be helpful for members of the Finance Committee to attend a workshop on the kind and amount of work that is involved in this type of contracts, because it sometimes seems like a lot of money.

Councilor Ormerod asked what would happen if this work was postponed because the problem has been going on for decades. Mr. Rusnock stated there is a risk that it could either slowly or immediately start getting worse. In addition to the rear wall, staff also suspects the Town Brook pipe is contributing to some other liabilities the City faces, most notably flooding in the basement and on adjoining properties.

Chair Powers stated this flooding has been an issue for a long time. This problem will save future liability for City Hall, especially with the Central Square Terrace property.

Councilor Clark indicated he has read that back in the 1800's people used to fish off a bridge on Gilbo Avenue.

The City Manager stated Central Square Terrace has approached the City on two occasions regarding flooding concerns and their concerns relate to this brook that runs beneath City Hall. The work being recommended is to address the crack in the exterior wall of City Hall as well as

because of the flooding on neighboring properties.

Mr. Lussier stated staff has done its due diligence with the tools it has. He indicated a lot of expense related to this proposal has to do with geo technical borings to determine the strength of the soil and ground penetrating radar for assessment. He added this proposal takes the project through the investigation phase to the design phase. At the end of the project, the City will have a good idea of what needs to be done and cost associated with the work.

Councilor Hooper asked whether there are any other buildings in the City that are constructed over this brook. Councilor Clark stated the Keene Middle School on Washington Street is constructed over the brook. Public Works Director Kurt Blomquist added there are many buildings that are constructed over brooks in Keene. There is a brook that runs underneath Kohls, another that runs under Key Road.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a professional service contract with DuBois & King, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 for engineering and technical services for the City Hall Rear Wall Project.

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

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