

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 23, 2021

6:30 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Thomas F. Powers, Chair
Stephen L. Hooper, Vice Chair
Bettina A. Chadbourne
Michael J. Remy

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager
Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney
Police Captain Todd Lawrence
Rebecca Landry, ACM/IT Director

Members Not Present:

Raleigh C. Ormerod

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

1) Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant- 2021 - Police Department

Police Captain Todd Lawrence addressed the committee first regarding the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program with the Department of Justice. Captain Lawrence stated the Police Department provides all its officers with bulletproof vests. He noted the vests have a five year warranty.

The department has a budget of approximately \$3,950. The department was awarded \$5,588 through the grant, which will provide the City with about 57% of what is needed over a two year period.

Councilor Chadbourne asked for the price of a vest. Captain Lawrence stated it is just under \$700.

Councilor Hooper asked for clarification of the five-year warranty – he asked whether it was the material that at some point begins to lose their effectiveness. Captain Lawrence agreed the material does begin to wear down after a period of time; wearing the vests 40 hours a week 365 days if the year does wear down the material. He added about four to six officers get a new vest each year.

Attorney Mullins asked whether the used vests are recycled for working dogs. Captain Lawrence stated now that the city is back involved with the Working Dog Foundation, they are trying to use the vests that can be recycled for use by K-9's.

Councilor Remy made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept \$5,588.00 from the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program funds of the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Programs.

2) Branding, Marketing and Communications Vendor Selection - IT Director/ACM

Asst. City Manager/IT Director Rebecca Landry addressed the committee and stated staff is coming before the committee to seek authorization for the City Manager to negotiate an agreement with a branding and marketing firm which is being put forward after an RFP process and a thorough review process by a committee consisting of City staff.

She noted the City has never branded itself. An RFP was issued mid to late summer and staff went through a number of meetings to identify the goals of the project. Nine proposals were received. The top three or four winning proposals were invited to review their proposals with the City, either in person or via online meetings.

Ms. Landry noted Guide Studio has been selected by the committee, but the second place finisher has also been included in the recommendation and staff is asking that the City Manager negotiate with them, should the City be unable to reach an agreement with Guide Studio.

Councilor Chadbourne asked how long the City plans to retain their services. Ms. Landry stated the proposals came in anywhere from four to eight months in terms of the duration of the project. It will be driven somewhat by budget. She indicated there is funding this fiscal year, which will be put together with funding from next fiscal year. Ms. Landry stated there is \$30,000 for each fiscal year plus there will be funds coming from the Parks and Recreation budget.

Councilor Remy stated because it is multi-tiered, he would like to ask staff to negotiate and come back to the Finance Committee as there are no dollars attached to this request. He also inquired which City staff served on the selection committee. Ms. Landry stated the Parks and Recreation Director, the Economic Development Director, HR Director, the Airport Director as well as herself served on the committee.

The Councilor stated he gets nervous about going forward with this item at this time, with only staff being on the review committee; because it is a citywide branding initiative.

The City Manager stated they intend to involve other stakeholders in the process, but typically reviewing contracts for hiring a consultant is a staff driven process. At this point what the City would be doing is engaging Guide Studio for this fiscal year and next year plan to put additional funds in the budget so the project will in fact span over two years. Once they are brought on board, the City is talking about creating a committee with various stakeholders. Staff has already met with the Chamber of Commerce and have talked with them about how the City might be able to coordinate with the Chamber's effort; to make sure there is no conflict.

Ms. Landry stated the way she sees this happening is the branding component would be the first phase of the project, which could be completed in a span of a few months before next budget year comes around. Involving the city leadership, as well as stakeholders, businesses in the

community and citizenship is all part of the process. Before anything concrete is done the stakeholder process has to be engaged.

Councilor Hooper stated he echoes Councilor Remy's concern but knowing very soon in the process the City will be branching out and having more discussion with the greater community. He indicated his priority has always been branding for the City of Keene. He felt this is a much needed item and applauded the City for coming up with it. The Councilor asked whether in the future there is a plan to employ a marketing expert or will there be more work assigned to present staff.

The Manager stated the end product will be a Marketing Communications Plan. Once this Plan is in place the City will have a better understanding of how to market the brand. The City is looking at how to improve its communications and marketing efforts for the future.

Councilor Remy stated he appreciates this is a staff function primarily in looking at contracts, but having served on the committee for the Chamber, one of the primary selection criteria is getting a feel of a vendor, what their prior work had looked like and how it might fit with the City. He felt by choosing a vendor, the City is picking the path. He added by going with this proposal the City is signing up for a much larger dollar amount without having a full understanding.

Ms. Landry stated the role of the Staff Committee that chose Guide was not to drive the brand for the City. It was to pick the agency that was best able to perform the scope of work. One of the reasons the committee chose Guide over the other consultants was because of their experience working with government entities, city councils, Parks and Rec organizations; no one else came to the table with that level of expertise. Ms. Landry stated the next step in the process is for staff to outline the process and to show how the other stakeholders will be involved.

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

On a 3-1 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and execute an agreement with Guide Studio for Branding, Marketing and Communications services and that the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and execute an agreement with Selbert Perkins Design if negotiations with Guide Studio are unsuccessful.

Councilor Remy vote in opposition.

3) Relating to the Office of the City Treasurer Resolution R-2021-43

Finance Director Merri Howe addressed the committee next. She explained when the previous Finance Director retired in August 2018, the City Council appointed Ms. Howe as the Interim Treasurer for the City of Keene; this title is still in existence today.

The first resolution is to request the Council to remove the word Interim from that title.

The second resolution is that the City has hired an Assistant Finance Director. That position is the Deputy Treasurer for the City of Keene. The second Resolution is to appoint Robert Constable as the Deputy Treasurer for the City of Keene.

Chair Powers noted this is one of the few positions the Council appoints. The City used to have an outside individual perform the duties of Treasurer for a long time but the market has changed and it made more sense that the Finance Director assume that role.

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

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2021-43 relating to the appointment of City Treasurer.

4) Relating to the Office of the City Treasurer Resolution R-2021-44

Councilor Remy made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2021-44 relating to the appointment of City Treasurer.

5) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

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