

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 26, 2022

6:00 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Thomas F. Powers, Chair
Michael J. Remy, Vice Chair
Bettina A. Chadbourne
Bryan J. Lake
Andrew M. Madison

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager
Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney
Fire Chief Farquhar
Jeremy LaPlante, Training Lieutenant
Dave Hickling, Airport Director
Don Lussier, City Engineer
Beth Fox, Asst. City Manager/HR Director

Members Not Present:

All Present

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1) FY21 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant - Hubbard Consulting LLC - Fire Lieutenant/Training Officer

Fire Chief Farquhar and Training Lieutenant Jeremy LaPlante were the first two speakers. The Chief indicated Lt. LaPlante authored the grant for which they are seeking the Committee's recommendation.

Lt. LaPlante explained after the City Council accepted the grant, staff put out an RFP for which they received two bids. After an internal process, they believe Hubbard Consulting LLC is the best fit for this project.

Councilor Lake made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Madison.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute a professional service contract with Hubbard Consulting LLC for an amount not to exceed \$15,000 for the delivery of a Hazardous Materials Response Plan.

2) Airport Land Lease - Airport Director

Dave Hickling, Airport Director addressed the committee next and stated the airport has multiple privately owned hangars and the airport leases the land those hangars are located on. Mr. Hickling stated there is a sale coming up for one of those hangars and the airport would like to renegotiate a new lease based on the Airport leasing plan put in place last year, with the same

terms and conditions.

Councilor Madison made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a land lease agreement with Mr. Lance Miller.

3) Cheshire Rail Trail Phase 3 - Construction Change Order #2 - City Engineer

City Engineer Don Lussier addressed the Committee next and stated this item is in reference to the Cheshire Rail Trail Project, which project is under construction. He indicated when the project first started staff from DOT attended the pre-construction meeting. One of the attendees was the individual responsible for making sure the State is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act who suggested while this work was happening the City also attend to some crosswalk improvements and accessibility improvements; he identified a total of eight locations that were in the periphery of the project - Park Avenue. They were not within the project limits but were adjacent to the project.

Mr. Lussier stated it was explained those are items that needed to be scaled back during the design phase because of being over budget. As a result, DOT has advised they will try to find some money but do not have it officially to fund their share of the project. If that doesn't happen and they don't approve the additional 80% of the cost the City wouldn't go forward with these changes, but if they do, the City Engineer felt it certainly would be good value for the City to pay 20% of the cost for doing these accessibility improvements. Mr. Lussier stated this would be for eight crosswalk locations - the crosswalks running parallel to Park Avenue.

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

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a contract Change Order with Adams Trucking & Excavation, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$41,000 (Subject to NHDOT approval). Funding to be provided by Project Cost Center 90057-F.

4) Relating to Class Allocations & Salary Schedules Ordinance O-2022-05

Asst. City Manager/HR Director Beth Fox stated she was before the Committee this evening with updates to the class allocation and salary schedules to go along with some of the adjustments and changes that have been seen in the budget process.

The ordinance related to the salary and wage schedules is for non-union employees which includes an across the board increase of 2%, which is comparable to the adjustments that are in the negotiated bargaining agreements. Ms. Fox stated it also has some schedule adjustments.

City Code Section 166, which relates to probationary public works employees, reflects COLA

adjustment and it also reflects an elimination of a step in the schedule, allowing the City to increase the entry level wage for these positions, to be a little more competitive in the market, but it still fits into the overall compensation plan for this particular workforce.

Sections 191 and 192, which relate to probationary firefighters and police officers - reflect the COLA increase and include the adjustment that was made in January, adding the paramedic only position.

Section 62194 – there are several positions that are being reclassified:

- Purchasing Specialist
- Police Dispatch Supervisor
- Fleet Services Operation Manager position is being discontinued and the Fleet Services Manager position is being added
- Assistant IT Director position is being discontinued and the individual in that position will be advanced
- Communications and Marketing Director position is being added
- Deputy City Manager title is being added

In answer to a question from a Committee member, Ms. Fox noted that the Purchasing Specialist position will replace the existing administrative support position in the Purchasing Department. She added that this department is being restructured – it is going from two and half people to two; this person is taking on additional responsibilities and the new software that is going to be implemented will require some redundancy which will put some additional responsibilities on to that position.

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

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Ordinance O-2022-05.

5) Councilor Lake – Recommended Operating Budget Adjustment – Keene Senior Center

The Manager explained the next step of the budget process; The Manager stated after the budget hearing is held by the Council, the Councilors will have until the next Tuesday to submit their potential changes to the budget. This would be in advance of the final vote for the budget. She indicated tonight is the night the Committee could talk about any changes they would like to recommend which will be moved forward to a public hearing. Adjustments can be made tonight as well as later on.

Councilor Lake stated the last two years of Covid have been difficult for everyone, particularly the older population. This includes extra safety precautions, more isolation, more time away from their friends and family. He indicated the Keen Senior Center is a really important asset to Keene and felt it was important to maintain the level of funding the City has given in the past. He

requested their line item to go to \$15,000, as has been done in the past.

Councilor Remy stated he understands where this is coming from but has had a hard time with this one and has been part of the group that reviews these requests. The Councilor stated he would like to see more progress from the Keene Senior Center - getting funding from outside towns because the amount collected from Keene is disproportionate to their percentage of membership in Keene versus what they are collecting from other towns. He stated he understands there is a much higher percentage from Keene, but the Center is collecting almost nothing from some of the outside towns, which has improved, but that was his concern.

He went on to say it is a very important organization that exists in Keene and if it did not exist there was not necessarily a City service that would replace it, and he does appreciate that, but support from outside towns is his concern.

Councilor Madison asked Councilor Remy and the City Manager when making this decision to reduce the amount the Center has received from previous years, whether it is based on what they are receiving from outside towns or the amount of effort they put into seeking requests from outside towns.

The Manager stated she would defer to Councilor Remy as the City Manager's budget includes the recommendations from the committee and she was not part of that committee process. However, stated in the justification that she saw come forward, in addition to how much funding they are receiving from outside towns, the reduction was a reflection of their decrease in participation.

Councilor Remy stated there were other factors and added getting outside town participation can be a difficult process, and added the number of people was the primary driver in the recommendation.

Chair Powers stated the Finance Committee heard in the discussion the other night from the Executive Director of the organization that their numbers have increased in the period since they met with the committee and they are continuing to work towards getting more membership and increasing their income. He added, the fact that we need to face as a City is that our population is streaming fast towards that age group. The Chair stated he hears from many people that they do use the Center. He indicated he heard from at least five people requesting the City bring the funding back to where it was, which he indicated he could not disagree with. The Chair added in all his years being part of local government, this is the first community where the senior center has not been part of the City budget.

Councilor Chadbourne stated she too received several emails and phone calls from people who value this Center. She added as a City they offer services for seniors at the Keen Rec Center and then when you look at how much we are giving to younger generations, programs, or nonprofits that are geared towards the younger generation, she felt it was a little disproportionate; heavy in one category, and not the other. Based on the fact the numbers are increasing and several people did reach out she would be in favor of level funding. She added she would bring examples for the next meeting.

Councilor Remy referred to Monadnock Diversity Equity Inclusion and Belonging Coalition. He noted this group was not ready at the time when agency proposals came through to be able to apply and have now asked for the City's support. The Councilor indicated they had also emailed him. The Savings Bank a Walpole is putting in funding and were hoping the City would match that number. He indicated he would like to bring this item forward for discussion by the Finance Committee. The Councilor referred to the Declaration of Inclusion the City recently brought forward and felt it was something that was important to the City.

Attorney Mullins felt this Committee should table this matter until it opens the discussion on the budget, because this is a discussion that will impact the budget. He also referred to the item brought forward by Councilor Lake.

Councilor Madison made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourn

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends accepting the communication from Councilor Lake as informational.

6) Relating to the 2022/2023 Fiscal Year Budget

The Manager suggested if the Council is in favor of contributing funds to the effort raised by Councilor Remy, that there could be some strings attached. She indicated the reason she says that is because this is still a work in progress. They are not a separate nonprofit; they are working with the YMCA as a fiscal sponsor. The YMCA would be hiring an executive director, which is the reason for the request for funding. She stated if the Council is interested in matching the \$10,000 it could be a pledge until the group is able to bring forward the rest of the funding and finalize what the structure would look like.

Councilor Chadbourne stated the other concern she has is, in most years when someone comes after the deadline and requests funding it is not something the Council considers and felt this would be setting a bad precedence to start the process of letting this entity through. She stated she would not be supportive of the request this year.

Councilor Lake asked whether the City in prior years has allowed people that have come in late to receive funding. Councilor Chadbourne clarified not in the time she has served. Chair Powers stated if he recalls correctly, they need to be established as an organization before the Council would even consider them for funding.

The Manager stated she would like to look at the structure, how funds would be brought into the organization, and perhaps request the City Attorney review same. Hence, the reason she suggested a pledge versus funding at this time.

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

That the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2022-09 the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget.

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

To amend Budget Line 62113, Senior Citizen Center to be \$15,000.

The amendment carried on a unanimous vote.

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

To amend the budget to add a line to the Outside Agency funding for \$10,000 for Monadnock Diversity Equity Inclusion and Belonging Coalition contingent upon further approval by the City Council of their plans for operation once finalized.

Councilor Chadbourne asked the City Manager when she referred to a pledge, would that be contingent for this year or for next year. Ms. Dragon stated her suggestion was to increase the budget by \$10,000 but with some strings attached. Many of the outside agencies automatically receive their checks but this would allow for further review before that were to happen.

Councilor Lake clarified if the \$10,000 is allocated in the budget it could be moved somewhere else at the end of the year, if there was that need. Councilor Chadbourne felt it was not fair to the other organizations who make a lot of effort to get their application in on time. She felt this sets a bad precedence. The Chair stated he would tend to agree with the Councilor, however, given the time and the effort by so many in the community; Savings Bank of Walpole and others – felt the full Council should be given the opportunity to weigh in on this item.

Councilor Chadbourne stated whether this item is approved or not the full Council still gets to weigh in on it.

Councilor Madison stated he tends to agree with the Chair - this is worth bringing before the full Council. He added it is certainly not without precedent but given the times we are in now, the hate we are seeing in the nation and even in our community, it is worth bringing before the Council.

The motion made by Councilor Remy to amend the budget to add \$10,000 for Monadnock Diversity Equity Inclusion and Belonging Coalition carried on a unanimous vote.

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

On a 5-0 vote, Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2022-09 the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget as amended.

Chair Powers thanked everyone who put a lot of time and effort into this budget.

- 7) **Relating to the Appropriation of Funds for Municipal Building Roofs;**
Relating to the Appropriation of Funds for Road Rehabilitation;
Relating to the Appropriation of Funds for the Salt Shed Replacement;

Relating to the Appropriation of Funds for the Wells Street Parking Structure Maintenance; and Relating to the Appropriation of Funds for the 3MG Water Tank Repair

Resolution R-2022-10

Resolution R-2022-11

Resolution R-2022-12

Resolution R-2022-14

Resolution R-2022-15

Finance Director Merri Howe was the next speaker. She indicated the five bond Resolutions before the Committee pertain to bond funding for projects that were advanced through the CIP process back in March of 2022 and included in the FY 23 proposed budget. If approved, the City will be going out to bond in the fall 2022 and will hopefully get some decent rates.

Resolution R-2022-10 relates to the appropriation of funds for municipal building roofs. Resolution R-2022-11 relates to the appropriation of funds for road rehabilitation. Resolution R-2022-12 relates to the appropriation of funds for a salt shed replacement. Resolution R-2022-14 relates to the appropriation of funds for the Wells Street parking structure maintenance. Resolution R-2022-15 relates to the appropriation of funds for the 3 million gallon water tank repair.

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

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2022-10.

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

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2022-11.

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

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2022-12.

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

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2022-14.

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

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2022-15.

8) Relating to the Establishment of a Parks and Facilities Infrastructure Capital Reserve Resolution R-2022-18

Ms. Howe stated Resolution R-2022-18 relates to the establishment of a Parks and Facilities Infrastructure capital reserve. She explained the purpose of this capital reserve is to fund wholly or in part upgrade, renovations, improvements, replacement, maintenance, and the operations thereof of City facilities and part components and apparatus, including but not limited to buildings, building systems, roofs, paved areas, park equipment, play areas and structures.

The fiscal policies that were adopted back in September 2021 emphasized the use of funding sources for capital projects by utilizing stabilization funds by capital reserves. So by using a capital reserve, the City is using money already saved up which avoids a spike in the budget for that year and reduces reliance on debt levels in future years.

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

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2022-18.

9) Relating to an Appropriation of Funds and Use of Unassigned Fund Balance for the FY 2022 Fire Department Personnel Budget Resolution R-2022-21

Fire Chief Farquhar stated this request is to appropriate additional funds from the general fund unassigned fund balance to the fire suppression and analyst general personnel budget line items for a total of \$360,000.

He explained on May 19 the City Council referred Resolution 2022-21 to the FOP Committee for recommendation. That Resolution appropriates additional funds from the general fund unassigned fund balance to the fire suppression and ambulance general fund budget lines for a total of \$360,000. The Chief indicated staff is seeking the transfer of funds because the fire department personnel budget is projected to be over expended by \$360,000 at the end of this fiscal year, with no remaining operating budget anticipated to offset the shortfall of appropriations.

He explained current fiscal policies provide authorization for departments to obtain spending from individual line items with authorized appropriations but spending cannot exceed the budget of the department. This appropriation is offset by the projected budgetary savings of \$506,800 in the police department fiscal 22 personal budget.

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

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2022-21.

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 6:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

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