

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 25, 2023

6:00 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Thomas F. Powers, Chair
Michael J. Remy, Vice Chair
(joined via zoom)
Bryan J. Lake
Andrew M. Madison

Members Not Present:

Bettina A. Chadbourne

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager
Amanda Palmeira, Assistant City Attorney
Aaron Costa, Asst. Public Works
Manager/WWTP Operations Manager
Don Lussier, City Engineer
Merri Howe, Finance Director
Beth Fox, Assistant City Manager/Human
Resources Director

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 6 PM. Councilor Remy stated he was traveling for work and asked to join remotely. He was in an office part of a warehouse but wasn't alone. The Committee accepted his request to participate remotely.

- 1) **Acceptance of Strategic Planning Grant - Engineering Evaluation of Groundwater - Asst. Public Works Director/Operations Manager, Aaron Costa, Assistant Public Works Director/ Operations Manager, Kurt Blomquist, Assistant City Manager/Public Works Director**

Assistant City Manager/Public Works Director Aaron Costa addressed the Committee first. He stated he was before the Committee to request acceptance of a strategic planning grant through NHDES for \$50,000. He explained the West Street water facility has been a source of water for the City since the 1950's. In 1997 the City purchased Robertson Field as a potential location for groundwater sources. One of the recommendations of the Water Supply Master Plan was to develop that property as a groundwater source and connect West Street well supply via a new raw water main to the treatment facility on the Robertson Field property, thus minimizing the upgrades needed at the West Street Well Facility.

Mr. Costa stated the City applied for the Strategic Planning Grant and will use those funds to hire a consultant to provide a clearer picture of the scope of work required to develop a new groundwater source on the Robertson Field property, look at what would entail installing a new transmission line that connects the West Street groundwater supply to the Robertson Field property and any improvements needed at the West Street Well Facilities.

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

On a 4-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute and expend a Strategic Planning Grant from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) for \$50,000 to perform an engineering evaluation of the Robertson Field property and West Street Well Facilities.

2) Change Order for Professional Services - Appraisal Services - Winchester Street Reconstruction Project - City Engineer Donald Lussier, City Engineer

City Engineer Don Lussier addressed the Committee next and stated he was before the Committee regarding a professional services change order for an appraiser that is assisting the City with the Winchester Street property acquisition. One of the property owners of property the City acquired challenged the City as to whether this was a necessity or a net public benefit. The City won this argument at the Superior Court and the next step is to go before the Bureau of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA). That hearing was scheduled for this month but the property owner has asked for a continuance and it is now tentatively scheduled for next spring.

Mr. Lussier stated the City Manager approved a professional services contract with the appraiser who was assisting the City's outside counsel in preparing for the BTLA hearing; updating the appraisal to current value, reviewing the opposing team's appraisal, and providing feedback to counsel. Mr. Lussier stated when the contract was prepared the City was not sure what the effort would be and it was done for a nominal amount of money but now have a better idea of what this work entails. Unfortunately, the change order is more than 10% of the original contract and needs Council authority.

Chair Powers clarified this additional amount is also within the budgeted amount for this project. Mr. Lussier agreed and added this project is funded through the federal highway grant, 80/20 split. No additional City funds are being asked to be appropriated for this project.

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

On a 4-0 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 change order for continuing professional services with MMC Appraisal Services for an amount not to exceed \$20,000.

3) Amendment to KSC Agreement - City Manager Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager

City Manager Elizabeth Dragon addressed the Committee and stated this item is an amendment to the Municipal Service Agreement with Keene State College. The Manager stated when they started this conversation with Keene State College, their enrollment was declining and there was a lot of pressure on the Keene State College budget. As has happened in the past, the Manager is asking for an extension of the Agreement but to approve

an automatic renewal in the future unless one entity asks for negotiation of a new agreement. The Manager stated this agreement is important to the City, especially during budget time as it brings all revenue amount into the budget; the life safety portion of the agreement is just over \$497,000 and the City also receives funding for a police officer position which is approximately \$141,000, the social host position is split which is about \$15,000, in the past have also collected \$10,000 for prosecution services. The new agreement in addition to creating an automatic renewal, instead of referring to prosecution services talks about off-campus neighborhood and code and fire enforcement. This is something the President of Keene State College would like to work towards.

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

On a 4-0 roll vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute the 6th amendment to the Municipal Services Agreement between the City of Keene and Keene State College.

4) Relating to Class Allocation and Salary Schedules Ordinance O-2023-11-A Elizabeth Fox, Assistant City Manager/Human Resources Director

Assistant City Manager/Human Resources Director Beth Fox was the next speaker who addressed the Committee regarding Ordinance O-2023-11-A which refers to Class Allocation and Salary Schedules for non-union employees and includes Charter Officers, Call Firefighters, Probationary Public Works Employees, Probationary Firefighters, Probationary Police Officers, and Non-Union Administrative Management and Technical Group.

Ms. Fox stated this Ordinance provides for COLA Adjustments that are comparable to the bargaining units.

Ms. Fox called the Committee's attention to a couple of other issues – the City is proposing a larger adjustment to Probationary Police Officers. The City like many communities are having a difficult time recruiting and are hoping offering a substantive increase in the starting pay for Probationary Non-Certified Officers can create more success with recruitment.

She also noted the Class Allocation Schedule does include adjustments that were discussed during the budget process. There is a new job title added for Human Services Specialist and a reclassification for the Parking Operations Manager position. There is also the addition (anticipation of a grant) for a position of Social Worker and in Public Works an Infrastructure Project Manager position included in the schedule.

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

On a 4-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Ordinance O-2023-11-A.

5) **Relating to the Appropriation of Funds - Road Preservation and Rehabilitation Program; Relating to the Appropriation of Funds - Stormwater Resiliency Program, and Relating to the Appropriation of Funds - Thompson Road Stabilization Project Resolution R-2023-14, Resolution R-2023-15, Resolution R-2023-16**

Finance Director Merri Howe addressed the Committee next and referred to final pieces of the budget regarding Resolutions for bonding that came out of the CIP. There are three Resolutions this year.

The first is the Road Preservation and Rehabilitation Program R-2023-14, General Fund Bond in the amount of \$520,000. This is for the road program the City does every year since this work moved to a program. Funding for FY24 road program.

Resolution R-2023-15, Stormwater Resiliency Program for \$1,374,000, General Fund Bond, for a program coming out of the CIP for FY24 project.

Resolution R-2023-16, Thompson Road Stabilization Project, General Fund Bond in the amount of \$1,057,000 for work that needs to be done on Thompson Road to stabilize it from falling down.

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

On a 4-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2023-14.

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

On a 4-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2023-15.

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

On a 4-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2023-16.

1) **Relating to the FY 2023-2024 Budget Resolution R-2023-13**

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

That the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2023-13.

Councilor Lake referred to Page 39, Outside Agencies, and stated the Committee heard a few weeks ago about the unfortunate closure of the Samaritans organization. The first change is to adjust the Samaritan's line item appropriately.

The second change is to the Senior Citizens Center the intended appropriation was to be the agency request of \$16,500 but due to a clerical error, it was noted to last year's funding amount.

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

To amend Resolution R-2023-13, Line 521330, Senior Citizens Center from \$15,000 to \$16,500 and Line 521480, Samaritans from \$5,000 to zero dollars.

The amended motion carried on a 4-0 roll call vote.

Councilor Madison proposed an amendment, based on the zeroing out of the \$5,000 of the Samaritans and the adjustment of \$1,500 to the Senior Center. He noted that leaves a remainder of \$3,500 and proposed to split that amount (\$1,750) between the Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention and Monadnock Region Child Advocacy Center. Councilor Lake seconded the motion.

The amended motion carried on a 4-0 roll call vote.

Councilor Remy stated he was going to suggest applying the funding to Four on the Fourth or the Clarence DeMar Marathon.

It was noted that because the amendments made by the FOP Committee did not change any of the language in Resolution R-2023-13, that is not necessary to offer the Resolution as an "A" version when it returns to City Council with the Committee's recommendation.

On a 4-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2023-13.

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 6:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

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