

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 27, 2021

6:30 PM

**Hybrid Meeting –
Council Chambers B/via Zoom**

Members Present:

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

Members Not Present:

All Present

George S. Hansel, Mayor

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager
Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney
Patricia Little, City Clerk
Dan Langille, City Assessor
Senior Accountant, Karen Grey
Senior Planner, Tara Kessler
Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director,
Andy Bohannon
Steve Russo, Police Chief
Mark Howard, Fire Chief
David Hickling, Airport Director

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

1) **Acceptance of the 2020 Homeland Security Grant Award - HazMat Allocation - Fire Department**

Fire Chief Mark Howard addressed committee regarding a \$25,000 grant from the 2020 State of New Hampshire Homeland Security Grant Program Hazmat allocation. Staff was notified on May 19, 2021 that the Fire Department had been awarded the grant. The equipment being purchased will be 150 pounds of chlorine free firefighting foam. Recently, PFAS has been an issue for the City due to some recent sampling at the landfill. With this grant, the Department will be able to resupply the current trucks with chlorine-free firefighting foam. The grant will also fund Level A and Level B hazmat suits; batteries for portable radios replacement; life safety rope; 4 gas leak detection units and some chemical wastewater classifiers.

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

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 accept a grant in the amount of \$25,000 from the 2020 State of New Hampshire Homeland Security Program - HazMat Allocation.

2) **Use of Airport Personnel Funds - Airport Director**

Airport Director David Hickling was the next speaker. Mr. Hickling indicated the airport has received a \$69,000 grant through the FAA Cares Act. This grant will cover operational costs for the airport and is administered through the New Hampshire DOT. Staff has been working with DOT to determine the most efficient way to utilize these funds and it was determined the best way would be to apply the funds towards personnel expenses. This will make some unused personnel funds available, which staff would like to reallocate for projects that had originally been intended to include in the FY22 budget as supplementary requests. Those projects include airport maintenance equipment; terminal improvements; an increase to the advertising budget and also services from an Air Service consultant. Any balance would be applied to operational expenses such as utilities.

The Director continued that using this grant allows the airport to move forward with some important airport objectives without an impact to FY 22 budget.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to use unexpended personnel monies from the FY21 Airport personnel budget for operations.

3) Acceptance of Grant Funds – NH Division of Historical Resources Certified Local Government Grant - Senior Planner

Senior Planner Tara Kessler stated they are in receipt of a \$10,000 grant from the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources from their Certified Local Government grant program. She indicated this grant is for the development of a web-based crowd sourcing tool for the Heritage Commission. In addition, the grant would be used to employ the services of a qualified consultant to develop an online map platform whereby members of the public can upload a variety of media (historic photos of a place, oral history of stories) about an area or neighborhood they grew up in. This online platform will help the Heritage Commission better understand the history, culture and heritage of neighborhoods in the City of Keene. This online platform is a component of a bigger initiative the Commission is working on.

Ms. Kessler stated this grant is a 60% federally funded grant hence, there is a 40% local match commitment. This match would be provided through in-kind donation of volunteer time from both the commission members and city staff. This is the fourth round of funding from this grant program the Heritage Commission has received in recent history and they have been very successful at meeting their match commitments and completing these grants on time.

This work would need to take place between July 1, 2021 and before September 2022.

Councilor Ormerod asked how city staff volunteer their time and would they be required to work outside their regularly scheduled hours. Ms. Kessler stated volunteer time would be from commission members and they would be applying a rate from the independent sector (independentsector.org) which has a set volunteer rate. Staff time is matched according to their hourly rate. Ms. Kessler noted the granting agency accepts staff time for working on the project. Volunteer time for the prior grants have been satisfied by commission members' hours. The

Councilor stated city staff works hard enough and he would not want them to have to work nights and weekends.

Councilor Hooper stated Keene is known as a destination city. The amount of history with the architectural buildings is extremely important and he extended his appreciation for this project.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to do all things necessary to accept and execute a \$10,000 grant award from the NH Division of Historical Resources Certified Local Government Grant Program for the development of a web-based, crowdsourcing tool for the Heritage Commission.

4) Funding for Pool Improvements - Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director stated this request is for transferring \$45,000 from the operating budget to the capital project of municipal parks, which is where funding is being obtained to do some upgrades to the pool. Last year both pools were closed, hence this money is coming from what would have been paid to lifeguards. Staff is looking to move this money to get some of the bathroom work done. The city went out to bid but the bids were very costly for both pools to get the work done. Mr. Bohannon stated what he is looking to do is essentially chip away at projects with any available money.

The pools are going to be open and they will need approximately \$10,000 to make sure staff is paid for this year. Mr. Bohannon noted if this money can be utilized and in July, another \$50,000 can be utilized from the CIP.

Councilor Hooper asked if both pools will be operational during construction. Mr. Bohannon stated Robin Hood pool will be closed this season, part of this is due to the amount of lifeguards they were able to employ and because of construction. Wheelock pool will open and swim lessons will still be offered.

Chair Powers clarified the work being completed is what was put out to bid – Mr. Bohannon agreed but added they are not able to do all of the work. He added he is working with the project resource group on the submitted bid. If the Council supports the request, they will have a total of \$138,000. The Chairman stated he is not a fan of using of personnel funds for operational things but due to the pandemic he will support the request. .

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the capital transfer of \$45,000 from the 2020-2021 operating budget to the Municipal Parks capital project #90318 and that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute an agreement with Project Resource Group, LLC for the work to be completed at the municipal pools.

5) Capital Project Transfer for Body Worn Cameras - Police Chief

City Manager Elizabeth Dragon addressed the committee next and stated in June 2020 the City Council tasked her with looking at body worn cameras for the Police Department. In July, the department obtained quotes and conducted in house demonstrations with three different vendors for body worn cameras systems and in car video systems.

The department chose body worn cameras and the pricing for that system is included in the committee's packet for a total is \$451,095. The Chief made a thorough presentation of his findings in August and in September, and the Council endorsed the recommendation. The testing and evaluation period ran from November through December 2020, and the Chief followed up with Council again in January 2021 with a detailed memo on the results of that test and evaluation period.

At that time, the FOP committee put this item on more time because of potential State grant funds that could assist with a purchase of this type of equipment. In addition, the State budget is still making its way through the Senate. In addition, the Chief put together an application, which was submitted to Senator Shaheen's office for an earmark fund along with several other projects the City submitted.

What staff is requesting today is for the Committee to approve moving funds from the current budget - this will not impact next year's budget; utilizing unspent funds in the Police Department, funds available from the Covid Cares Act funds the City received this year for approximately \$89,000 as well as some budgetary savings due to personnel vacancies. If this request is approved tonight the funds will go into a capital project, which will allow reserved funds for next year. That will also allow the City time to see if it is successful with the grant application.

The motion before the Committee allows the Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement with Bodyworn Corporation, which would be in the next fiscal year once it is determined whether or not funds are available through the State or through the grant.

Councilor Ormerod asked what is included on the costs outlined today. The Manager stated it is for camera equipment for both body worn for officers' vest and for the in-car systems. It also includes some tablets and other equipment necessary, as well as training. There is \$9,500 allocated for training. Chief Russo agreed and added if the city was to pay for five years there is a cost savings, which he was not sure at this time what that amount was. He added he has a phone call with the sales rep tomorrow to discuss some of these issues. Councilor Ormerod stated he was hoping things like software costs and upgrades will be included. Chief Russo stated as has been presented the contract will include equipment, accessories, wireless access points, clothing equipment that's required for the uniforms, software to manage the program and cloud storage.

Chair Powers asked how long before this item will be executed. The Manager stated it would be after the budget is finalized for the State and the City has an update on its grant application. Chief Russo stated it is looking like the funds could be approved by the State but the State has up to six months to decide how it wants to distribute the funds.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the authorization of the capital transfer of \$460,000 from the 2020-2021 operating budget to a Body

Worn Cameras capital project. In addition, that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute an agreement with BodyWorn, part of Pileum Corporation, for the purchase of body worn cameras, in-car video systems, and necessary support equipment and training.

- 6) **Councilors Remy, Workman, and Madison - Council and Standing Committees**
- 7) **Meeting Cycles, Agenda Deadlines and Packet Distribution Timelines - City Clerk**

Councilor Remy stated the three Councilors who have signed this item have talked to the Council and the City Manager about some of the inefficiencies they have seen and the inconveniences particularly, having a really short timeframe to review Committee meeting agendas. For the FOP Committee there is some advantage because it is scheduled on Thursdays but the other two committees, getting their agendas at the end of the day Tuesday for a meeting on Wednesday is difficult. In discussing this, other topics also came up, and it was agreed even though everyone enjoys hearing the stories behind the donations that come through Council, having to have them come through the Committee to vote on them, and then come back through Council and vote on them again - may not be efficient or necessary.

Councilor Remy continued there are different topics worth having a conversation with the Council on; meeting process, meeting days, how we compare against other cities and towns in New Hampshire and a better understanding what could be done differently.

Councilor Madison stated they only have about 24 hours to review agenda and supporting materials, and then do whatever research needs to be done before coming to the Council and then ultimately having to make decisions that can have a major impact on our community. This is in addition to balancing a full time job was becoming a challenge. He was looking at possibly rescheduling meetings or rescheduling when items are due to come into the Council process. He felt it would be in the best interest of the public if the Council had more time to review agenda items.

Councilor Hooper stated he agrees with the three Councilors with respect to the review timeframe and he realizes there are a lot of moving parts with City staff. He stated he would like to see this go forward with some type of discussion.

Councilor Chadbourne stated this is something that crosses the mind of every new Councilor, but noted if you were to look at the process an item comes to the Council first through a City Council meeting, at which time the Mayor assigns it to a committee, and all information needed for the following week is already in that Council packet. She noted at times, it is about getting into the rhythm of how the process works and she felt the councilors are in fact given more time than they realize. She indicated, the council is looking at it as getting information the Tuesday before the meeting but they are actually receiving the information the Thursday before a Council meeting. She felt what is being raised are valid concerns, but she felt they need to look at the bigger picture.

The Manager stated she appreciates the three Councilors bringing this forward, having this conversation, and agreed there could be ways the City could become more efficient and it is worth a conversation. The Manager noted the City Clerk has done quite a bit of research on how other cities handle their agenda items and timelines.

The Chairman referred to the efficiency of the Council work since the introduction of the electronic agenda packets. He recalled when the packets were distributed only in paper. With respect to why meetings are held on Thursday night, he indicated this night was likely picked because of other activities going on in the city (government and non-government) which made Thursday night the least intrusive.

City Clerk Patty Little addressed the committee next and stated the continuous cycle with the Council referring items of business to Committees and then the standing Committees making recommendations back to the Council is unique for a New Hampshire city. Other cities, which have standing committees do not meet on a regular cycle as Keene does. In these cities, the Council really operates as a “committee of the whole” – a term in Robert's Rules of Order, which means the full body makes decisions – they have the public and staff present at Council meetings and that is where the full discussion occurs. There are times when items are referred to a standing committees but it is not like what Keene has where every item is referred to one of the three Standing Committees.

In terms of meeting dates, the charter only provides that the Council must meet at least once a month. The Rules of Order provides meeting on the first and third Thursday of each month. Ms. Little noted when Keene first became a city in 1874, the Council met on different dates, at times even on a Saturday. However, since 1876 the City has been meeting on Thursdays.

Keene's Rules of Order, which is how the processes are dictated also provides for the meeting dates of the three Standing Committees, as well the agenda deadlines. Also unique to Keene is its rules require that all items appearing on the Council agenda must be referred to a Standing Committee. Keene's rules do not allow discussion when an item is included on the Council agenda for the first time unless the Rules of Order is suspended.

On the production side, Ms. Little stated the City needs to start with its minute takers because it is the minutes that drives the Committee and Council cycle process. Although, State law dictates that a minute take has five days to produce draft minutes, the City requires that minutes be submitted by Sunday evening so that recommendations can be reviewed by the Manager and department heads at the Monday morning staff meeting. When minutes come in on Monday morning, staff starts their review, and typically they are then sent to the committee chairs, late Monday or early Tuesday. The committee chairs return the edited minutes by late Tuesday afternoon. On Wednesday morning the minutes are reformatted into reports and added to the agenda through Novus.

Ms. Little added the Rules also provides that new items can come into a Council agenda and they can be added up to 4pm on the Tuesday of the Council meeting week. This means the final packet production starts Wednesday morning, the day before the Council meeting. Staff's goal is always to have that packet released, published online and available for the Council by 3pm on the Wednesday immediately before the Thursday Council meeting. For Standing Committees the agenda cut off is 1pm on the Tuesday of the committee week. Again, staff's goal is for package to be released and published by 3pm, on the Tuesday before the Wednesday committee meeting.

Ms. Little referred to a chart included in the committee packet and noted Keene is the only City where the Council meets on a Thursday. All the other councils/board of aldermen meet earlier in the week. All the other cities have the committee agenda deadline and the production of the

packet occurring the preceding week so that the Councilors have the weekend to review the agenda packet.

Ms. Little agreed as the Manager stated, there are things that can be done to improve the situation but agreed there are a lot of moving parts. This is an operation that does not quickly happen and it does take a lot of attention by a lot of different people to produce a packet, so that it is complete enough so that a Councilor who wasn't attending the meeting could read the minutes and have a good understanding of the topic, and the pros and cons of each issue. She indicated as the Manager stated, she is very interested in a discussion to potentially find ways to improve the process. This concluded the City Clerk's presentation.

Councilor Chadbourne asked with reference to Rules of Order and making amendments, is that something that is within the purview of the Council because there are certain items which might have more to do with the Charter where it actually has to go to the public and be part of the ballot. Ms. Little stated these agenda deadlines and meeting dates are in the Rules of Order so that is a under the purview of the City Council.

Councilor Remy questioned was muffled – City Manager responded to what the Councilor's question was - the items that come in from the public come in through to the Council and are referred to Committee by the Mayor. However, many of the items that are included in the Committee agendas are put on the agenda by staff. Those items for instance could be contracts or budget related decisions that are moving forward. Some might be items the Council sees on the Thursday, but there are a good portion of items that are items staff move forward through the process.

Councilor Chadbourne clarified not all staff items are coming at the last minute. All staff items are put on by the administration; they go to the Manager who approves them to go into the Novus packet. The only ones that go to the Council are agenda items that come from the public.

Chair Powers added many of the items that come from staff may have been a previous discussion of work that has been done, it has been put on more time, work that was required which has been done - research or changes, and then it comes back before the Council for action.

Councilor Ormerod referred to the chart right hand column which says - number of days before meeting is one day. However, many of the other cities have 3, 5, or days. However, what he heard mentioned by Councilor Chadbourne it is one day to the committee meeting but there is actually a whole other week included and asked for clarification. Ms. Little stated the days before meeting would suggest the packet is released the same week as the meeting, whereas the other cities, the packet is released the preceding week of the particular official meeting. The Manager added, in addition to that, the packet includes any sort of recommendation or research from staff. It is not only the challenge for the Clerk's office to turn it around in such a short period of time but it is also a challenge for other staff, which is why at times more time is requested.

The Chairman felt this is a fairly significant discussion and felt it is an item prudent for a workshop setting.

Councilor Ormerod suggested consent agendas and stated the School Board uses this format quite effectively which give people the chance to read material ahead of time. If any one person

doesn't agree with what is on the consent agenda it can be removed. He asked that this be included as an item for discussion for the workshop.

Councilor Chadbourne agreed a workshop was an excellent idea and she felt there is definitely room for improvement. She stated being frustrated as a new councilor, but has now done this for many year so she is familiar with the process. She indicated she is glad these councilors are bringing this item forward so there is the opportunity to improve this process.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends accepting the communication from Councilors Remy, Workman and Madison as well as the presentation from the City Council as informational and requests that the Mayor set date for a workshop after the budget discussion has concluded.

8) Relating to the Powers and Duties of the Assessor's Board

City Assessor Dan Langille addressed the Committee and stated this item is a continuation of a discussion from a prior FOP meeting. Mr. Langille indicated after the last meeting he met with both the City Manager and City Attorney and reviewed the comments from the last discussion and he was before the Committee with changes to the Ordinance based on those recommendations. He noted the committee has those changes in their packet for tonight.

He indicated he wanted to point out two items: The Assessor's Board will still provide a public process for citizens who wish to bring their concerns regarding their assessed values. The other item he would like to emphasize is that the Board has the authority to make the final decision on the abatement as to whether it should be granted or denied.

This is a three-member public board with the Assessor acting in the role of chairman, but he will be a non-voting member. The language in the current ordinance is at least 50 years old and the assessing industry has now become a profession; it is heavily regulated and reviewed by the Department of Revenue as well as the State Assessing Standards Board.

Councilor Chadbourne stated the changes being proposed tonight are good changes and she supports them - the Board is providing a public service which gives the public the opportunity to be heard by peers while being guided by professional assessor.

Councilor Ormerod noted to item six which item has been crossed out. The Councilor stated this item was not discussed last time but in the past the Board was required to file an annual report but this duty has been assigned to the assessor or the City Manager and asked for clarification. Mr. Langille stated this is referred to as the MS1 report filed annually by September 1 with the State to determine the tax rate – this filing is completed by the Assessor.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend the City Council adopt Ordinance O-2021-05-A.

9) Relating to Class Allocation and Salary Schedule

Asst. City Manager/ Human Resources Director Beth Fox addressed the annual updates to chapter 2 and chapter 62 of the city code which provides the salary schedules applicable to the city's regular full and part time, non-union positions. The proposed salary ordinance provides for across the board COLA adjustment of 2% to the existing schedules, which include the Council appointments of the City Manager, City Clerk and City Attorney, the call firefighters, probationary public works employees, probationary full time firefighters and police officers, as well as the largest group of non-union employees with approximately 85 personnel, administrative office and technical management personnel that hold positions across the city's 11 departments.

The COLA adjustment proposed for FY 22 is comparable to the contract-based adjustments, effective July 1 authorized by the City Council for five of the city's collective bargaining units. There is one collective bargaining unit which is not under contract for July 1 and staff is currently in negotiations with that group.

Ms. Fox noted this past year has had an extraordinary impact on the labor market, but emerging from the pandemic despite the fact that unemployment experienced enormous volatility during the past 14 months and nationally remains a challenge. New Hampshire's current unemployment rate is almost returned to pre pandemic levels. In March 2021, the rate was at 3% statewide and 3.2% for the county. Statewide the available workforce has declined over the past year adding pressures to employers seeking talent.

Ms. Fox stated she wanted to review with the committee the changes to each of the schedules that are beyond the COLA:

Section 2:141 - Call Firefighter Schedules:

The amendments to this section is to clarify job title language and establish an additional probationary grade, which would be applicable to a new call firefighter with a level two certification or one that attains their certification during their probationary period, establishing the additional grade and recognize the extended training these new hires apply to their duties of the position.

Section 62:166 - Hourly Wage Schedule:

Applicable to probationary Public Works employees. This section includes a new job title - under PPW 10 - lead mechanic. The title been proposed by the city to the union, including it in the ordinance update assures the schedule provided by code, aligns with the schedule and the collective bargaining unit. The position added - lead mechanic will be responsible for providing operational direction and take the lead and resolution of concerns or complaints when the fleet operations manager is not available to do so.

Section 62:192:2 - Relates to probationary Police Officers – Although this amendment, probably could be pushed through as a scrivener's error. The proposal is to add an additional "P" - PP1 would be probationary and P1 would be regular police officer.

The final amendment applies to Administrative Office, Technical and Management Positions: It includes several modified or new job titles as well as a grade change. Ms. Fox stated there is also a change she wanted to bring to the committee's attention which was not introduced to Council last week.

The A version recommends establishment of a new job title, Senior Paralegal, S15 position and eliminates the current Legal Paralegal title on the schedule. Staff has discussed extensively about the impacts on the organization of right to know and the additional demands, knowledge and expertise right to know and recent evolutions in case law have placed on the organization. This paralegal position has been significantly impacted and the review of the job description, its expanded right to know responsibilities and other duties performed supports repositioning of the salary schedule and modification of the job title to reflect the type of work, and the complexity of performing this work.

Other changes in the schedule include the area Public Works. Two positions have been re-titled. Including a new title for Water/Sewer Manager which will replace the Water/Sewer Superintendent, and another new title, Transportation and Stormwater Operations Manager to replace the title of Highway Superintendent. These new titles recognize both the changing skill set and educational level required by the duties of these positions, which have evolved over time to function as managers versus field supervisors. The position of Fleet Services Superintendent which has been vacant for a long period of time is also proposed for elimination in this ordinance update.

The next change relates to Parks, Recreation and Facilities – this change recognizes the ever-expanding scope and impact this department is having on our community. A new job title, but not an additional position of Recreation Manager is part of this ordinance update. The Director continued that the mission of this department has evolved; programs and recreation facilities have expanded significantly in the past three to five years. The diverse nature of the department, recreational assets program, youth services and general citywide facilities is a very broad scope for a Director. This Recreation Manager position is the first step towards developing a more consolidated and stronger management structure across the department's diverse functions.

The final adjustment to the ordinance is the return of the Assistant City Attorney position to the schedule to provide greater support to the right to know process, particularly at the police department, in addition to other city legal matters. The city manager, city attorney and the police chief have discussed this position quite a bit with Council in the past.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Ordinance O-2021-08-A.

10) Tax Credits and Exemptions - City Assessor

Mr. Langille stated this item is a follow-up of a discussion from last time with the committee. It is regarding exemptions and credit and the impact they have on the city's budget. On the agenda today are five resolutions that are going to change the current exemption and credit offerings.

Blind Exemption - increase from \$16,500 to \$18,000.

Deaf Exemption – increase from \$29,700 to \$33,000 - also increasing the income and asset levels by 10% - this is for the purpose of determining the eligibility of an applicant as cost of living has increased.

Veterans tax credit –increase from \$225 to \$300 – this will affect the All Veterans Credit as well but there isn't a separate resolution, the reason being when the veterans tax credit changes, by statute the same credit has to be offered to the All Veterans Credit as well. The difference is one served during wartime and the other served during peacetime.

Exemption for the Disabled - changing from \$29,700 to \$33,000 - also increasing the incoming asset limitations.

Elderly Exemptions - three different categories:

First category is \$29,700 to \$33,000.

Second category is \$37,400 to \$45,000.

Third category, oldest population \$44,900 to \$60,000. The Resolution also adjusts the income asset requirements.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend the adoption of Resolution R-2021-25, Resolution R-2021-26, Resolution R-2021-27, Resolution R-2021-29, Resolution R-2021-30, relating to tax credits and exemptions.

11) Councilor Ormerod - Budget Priority for Maintenance and Replacement of Sidewalks

Councilor Ormerod stated the city is planning an asset management for sidewalks. He indicated he is also noticing the city is looking to increasing the parking fund and there are more parking meters going up around the city, particularly on Main Street. He noted that Main Street is a gateway entrance and there are places on Main Street where we don't have sidewalks and these are probably areas being targeted. There are numerous other areas in the city where it is hardly worth plowing the sidewalks because it creates too much ice due to the unevenness of the sidewalk.

The Councilor suggested looking more closely at the parking program. Looking at unpaid fines, extending the hours of operation or raising the parking rates to help pay for sidewalks.

The Manager responded by saying the parking fund is a separate fund, any revenue generated stays in the parking fund to pay for related activities such as the parking garage, beautification efforts in the downtown, etc. She indicated increasing parking enforcement is a conversation worth having, but those funds would probably need to stay in the parking fund because it is its own separate distinct fund. Regarding unpaid tickets - over the past couple of years the city has increased efforts to collect unpaid tickets by contracting with a collection agency. The city also uploads ticket information to the State of New Hampshire Department of Motor Vehicle which prevent violators from registering vehicles until their ticket is paid. This revenue also goes into the parking fund.

In regards to sidewalks, sidewalks are a priority and this is a conversation staff is working on. This Wednesday before the MSFI Committee there was supposed to have been a presentation scheduled to happen on the asset management program for sidewalks to determine how the Ciuty

Council would like to prioritize sidewalks by creating an Asset Management Plan. Due to technical issues, the presentation was postponed for the following meeting cycle. This conversation would be part of the capital plan, those efforts will begin this summer and capital infrastructure items over \$20,000 will become part of a capital plan conversation. The Manager noted sidewalks have received basic maintenance over the years and they have not been a priority. The only new sidewalks that have been built have been related to projects. The City Council put a pause on sidewalks many years ago.

The Manager stated she is hopeful the City Engineer who is very good at creating an asset management plans will be able to walk through a process for the Council to understand what the parameters are in terms of how to focus public dollars for sidewalks. The asset management plan conversation is scheduled for the next MSFI and then it is also scheduled to be part of the upcoming capital plan conversation. The Manager went on to say if the Council wanted to add \$250,000 to the capital portion of the budget, the impact of that would be an additional 14 cents to the City's portion of the text rate. The Manager went on to say the City is hoping to receive some transportation funds that are coming from the Federal government which can help with projects like sidewalks.

The Chairman asked Councilor Ormerod whether he is talking about replacing existing sidewalks that are deteriorating or looking to add sidewalks in areas that don't currently have them. The Councilor stated he was first focusing on sidewalks that were deteriorating, but he is aware the asset management plan probably looks at places where there should be sidewalks as well.

Councilor Hooper stated he agrees with Councilor Ormerod as people drive on Main Street, the gateway to the city, sidewalks need to be safe for tourists as well as the residents of the city. He stated he would like the Council to think in terms of sidewalks and streets being of same importance.

Councilor Williams thanked Councilor Ormerod for bringing this item forward. He stated as Councilor Ormerod suggested, he felt it appropriate to tie this funding to parking in some way, even if that money is currently segregated into a separate fund, whether through extending parking hours or perhaps by allocating some portion of the hourly parking rate to become a sustainable long term funding source for pedestrian and bicycle projects.

Councilor Williams went on to say at the present time, all the parking funds are reserved to support parking projects, he felt that was a mistake because it is taking a resource that belongs to the entire city, which is the limited amount of downtown real estate to store cars. The funds generated from that resource are directed towards what is essentially a subsidy for people who drive. Councilor Williams noted it is easier it is to get downtown without a car and the fewer parking spaces are going to be needed, but to make that work we are going to need to shift towards a more pedestrian friendly culture. Hence, an important step would be to spend time focusing first on repairing and restoring more of the broken-down sidewalk infrastructure we have. He agreed there are some areas where new sidewalks would be nice to have but his first priority is to restore the existing sidewalks. He felt perhaps what is needed is a short-term funding source to cover some of the immediate repairs that have been backlogged for some time

and then in the long term a more sustainable amount. Another potential source of revenue, the Councilor stated is perhaps selling off some city owned properties that are being underutilized and referred to one property in his neighborhood which has been vacant for a while. The Councilor noted the City does have a road and sidewalk infrastructure fund and he hoped that a fund can be created to provide for sidewalks in much the same way we use it to fund roads.

Counselor Ormerod stated Councilor Williams raised one approach he wanted to stress; the way the fund right now is set up all parking proceeds go to other parking projects. He asked if this fund could be redefined and asked how much latitude the Council had to pursue something like this; parking assets as part of sidewalk assets since they actually sit on the sidewalk.

The Chairman referred this question to the City Attorney. Attorney Mullins responded by saying there are statutory restrictions with respect to the use of parking fees. He indicated he would need to review this issue but felt you could not just place those funds into the general fund. The State has placed certain restrictions as to what the city can do with parking funds.

Councilor Ormerod stated he would be inclined to propose a budget triggered, just like with the body worn cameras where the city is anticipating grants, unsure if it will be received, but include a figure in the budget which shows the city's commitment to this topic. Chair Powers stated, if the Councilor was to do that – that amount will have to be raised by taxes and if it is not used it will go to the undesignated surplus. If the project is paid with Federal money, which is what the Chair said he would like to do, the City has collected the money from the taxpayer when it was needed, and the tax rate could have been lower.

Councilor Ormerod asked whether this is what is being done with body worn cameras. The chairman stated body worn cameras are included in this year's budget, it is excess funds from this budget year. The Councilor asked whether the city would identify some excess funds or is that not an option at this point. The Chair stated it could be but it won't happen for a couple more weeks.

The manager explained for the Police Department those were funds from the reimbursed Covid grants, which were then reimbursed to the Police Department budget. The Manager stated the Council can revisit this at any time during the year, but if this item was put in right now it is going to have to be raise by taxes because the City does not have an identified funding source. She felt the time to discuss this might be in the summer when the capital plan is discussed. Through a Sidewalk Asset Management Plan the City can identify where we want to invest those dollars and then working it into the overall plan. The benefit of being a city is that if we do happen to get some Federal dollars, the item can be revisited and those funds reallocated sooner through an additional appropriation. The Manager stated she will be on the lookout for those funds and report back.

Councilor Ormerod asked what type of motion he would make if he wanted the funds to be taken from another funding source. The Manager stated there are two choices: the Council can raise the budget by \$250,000, increase the bottom line of the budget and increase the impact to the tax rate, or you can find a way to cut the budget by \$250,000 which would be a difficult task as the City is only increasing the budget by a minimal amount and keeping within fiscal policy, with

the current proposed budget document.

Councilor Ormerod asked if this item is tabled whether he can come back with a specific recommendation for the next council meeting or whether it would have to be referred back to committee. Chair Powers stated any Councilor can propose a change to the budget-on-budget adoption night. He added the issue he sees is there is no plan for the required dollars as of yet. He stated it is his hope they get to this objective with Federal funds because there is another series of funds that are coming forward that aren't as designated; 88% is for infrastructure.

Councilor Remy stated he is very supportive of renovating sidewalks but he would be against putting a budget number in without a specific plan.

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

That the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend the communication from Councilor Ormerod regarding sidewalk funding be accepted as informational.

Councilor Ormerod stated what he understood from the City Attorney is using parking fund for sidewalk work is not something the city might be able to do and stated he would like to have more discussion on that issue. The Manager stated just like the water fund or the sewer fund, the parking fund can only be used for a specific purpose; for what it was created for. However, staff will look at the language. She added, however, there is no ability to raise \$250,000 in the parking fund without drastic changes such as raising rates, prolonging hours of operation. The City currently operates on a very small margin and presently the fund is in the negative last year due to Covid. The Manager indicated she will obtain the impact this amount would have on the fund for the Councilor's review.

The motion made by Councilor Hooper carried on a unanimous roll call vote.

12. Relating to the FY 2021-2022-Operating Budget Resolution R-2021-22

The Chairman noted there were a couple of staff changes. He noted the Resolution before the committee today is inclusive of the staff changes that were made early on when they discovered some calculations that were not necessary.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommended these staff changes be incorporated into the final 2021-2022 budget as noted.

13. Relating to the FY 2021-2022 Budget - Bond Resolutions Resolution R-2021-15, R-2021-16, R-2021-17

Karen Gray senior staff accountant addressed the Committee behalf of the Finance Director and stated there are three bond Resolutions for all projects in the FY 22 budget. They were in the second year of the FY21-27 Capital Improvement Program. All bonds this year are from the general fund.

Ms. Gray explained that the City Council authorizes the issue of financial obligations annually, but typically staff only issues the actual debt every other year in order to save on the issuance cost. If approved these bonds will probably be issued in Fall 2022. The City always consults the PFM Financial Advisors on market conditions before it goes to market. Last fall the City had a very successful direct purchase of new bonds at 1.65% and a refunding of some 2013 and 2010 bonds at 1.36%.

The three bonds before the committee tonight are Resolution R-2021-15, for \$744,004 earmarked for flood management, Resolution R-2021-16 for \$1,283,000 earmarked for the Patricia T Russell Park, and Resolution R-2021-17 for \$922,000 earmarked for the road rehabilitation.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend the adoption of R-2021-15.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend the adoption of R-2021-16.

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

On 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend the adoption of R-2021-17.

Councilor Remy noted the committee not having any discussion on this item shows the level of work city staff and put into the budget and extended his appreciation. The Chairman agreed staff puts a lot of work into this item and extended his appreciation as well.

There being no further business, adjourned the meeting at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Additional edits by,
Patricia Little, City Clerk