

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 23, 2021

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

Thomas F. Powers, Chair
Bettina A. Chadbourne
Michael J. Remy
Raleigh C. Ormerod

Members Not Present:

Stephen L. Hooper, Vice Chair

Staff Present:

Rebecca Landry, Asst. City Manager/IT
Director
Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney
Mary Alther, Revenue Collector
Merri Howe, Finance Director
Demetria Kirby, Youth Services Manager

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

1) Acceptance of State of New Hampshire Grant Funding for Youth Services' Juvenile Court Diversion Programming - Youth Services

Youth Services Manager Demetria Kirby stated the City of Keene Youth Services Department has an opportunity for grant funding specifically for the Juvenile Court Diversion programming. This grant funding would come through the Department of Health and Human Services in the amount of \$32,808 to be dispersed in equal amounts over two fiscal years. Ms. Kirby stated the funds will be used to hire a paid intern as well as to provide educational opportunities to youth, families and community members. The funds will also be used to assist with travel and training reimbursement and to help low income families pay for property damage and have the youth earn that property damage reimbursement back through community service rather than having a court action against them.

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

On 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to do all things necessary to accept and administer funds provided by the State of New Hampshire for Juvenile Court Diversion programming.

2) Tax Deeds for Unpaid 2018 Property Taxes -Revenue Collection

Finance Director Merri Howe and Revenue Collector Mary Alther were the next two presenters. Ms. Alther stated the City has 20 properties which have 2018 outstanding taxes due and were

leaned on May 3, 2019. Ms. Alther stated any property that has lien for non-payment of taxes and has not paid after two years and a day must be deeded unless the City Council directs the Tax Collector to waive the deeding and authorize the City Manager to sign deed waivers. She indicated deed waivers can be issued if there is a potential liability to the City, such as environmental and undesirable obligations, real estate covenants, or anything contrary to public interest. She indicated for tonight staff has three different recommendations.

The first recommendation is for seven properties – staff is recommending a waiver of tax deeding and staff will return after March 31, 2022 with additional recommendations after review of the status of the accounts. She noted these properties could have liabilities and hence would like time to review them.

The second recommendation is for 11 properties which have payment plans and staff believe they would be able to have those paid by November 1, 2021 and hence staff is recommending a waiver until the November 1, 2021.

The third recommendation is for two properties staff is recommending to take by tax deed. One of them is not occupied but the other is occupied but there is no payment plan in place. All notifications have been completed per RSA requirements and staff has attempted to contact these individual on many occasions.

Councilor Chadbourne asked whether there could be any last minute effort these property owners could consider. Ms. Alther stated there is a process with tax deeding; staff has already sent out certified letters to let them know their property could be tax deeded. There will be additional notices sent out but the city has to give them a 90 day opportunity to repurchase (30 days to get back to the city and the city has to wait another 60 days before it can actually do anything). At that point, however, the property owner will have to pay all of the taxes, not just the 2018 taxes in order to repurchase the property. She added once the city takes deed, an eviction notice is given if people are living on the premises and the city would also change the locks at that point. It is a 30 day eviction notice.

Attorney Mullins added once the city takes the property and there is no repurchase option, the city becomes the owner of the property. The City will go through the steps of informing the residents the City would be taking possession of the property. The City would have to go through a court process to commence eviction proceedings which can take some time. The attorney added the City does work with the residents to find them other accommodations. If they still haven't left, the Sheriff will assist in removing them from the property.

Councilor Ormerod asked whether provisions are in place to prevent homelessness. Ms. Alther answered in the affirmative.

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

On 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends a waiver to tax dating for the following properties with staff returning after March 31, 2022, with additional recommendations after a review of the status of their accounts: 26 Oriole Avenue, 71 Oriole Avenue, 42 Starling Street, 55 Starling Street, 27 Minerva Lane, 14 Schult Street, 493 Elm Street.

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

On 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends a waiver to tax deeding for the following properties with staff returning after November 1, 2021 with additional recommendations after review of the status of the accounts: 18 Algonquin Drive, 792 Court Street, 888 Marlboro Road, 50 Hilltop Drive, 399 Elm Street, 25 Charles Street, 139 Carroll Street, 35 Forest Street, 23 Park Avenue, 163 Island Street and 30 Dartmouth Street.

Councilor Remy clarified the map and lot number don't need to be referred to for 792 Court Street as it is referenced here and 23 Park Avenue is an apartment building. Ms. Alther agreed.

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

On 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends issuance of a tax deed for the following properties: 329 Park Avenue and 92 Beaver Street.

3) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

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