

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 12, 2026

6:00 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Thomas F. Powers, Chair
Bettina A. Chadbourne, Vice Chair
Bryan J. Lake
Kris E. Roberts
Michele A. Chalice

Jay V. Kahn Mayor

Members Not Present:

All Present

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Ferland, City Manager
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney
Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager
Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager
Brandon Latham, Deputy City Attorney
Kari Chamberlain, Finance Director
Aaron Costa, Asst. Public Works Director /
Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager
Ben Crowder, Water and Sewer Operations
Manager
Ryan Cooley, Airport Director
Don Lussier, Public Works Director
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer
Ben Hoy, Solid Waste Manager
Christian Tarr, Utilities Manager
Andre Kaiser, Land Manager
Jim Mumford, Asst. Public Works Director /
Equipment Manager
Chelsea North, Parking Operations Manager

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

1) Reallocation of Capital Funds – Skate Park - Deputy City Manager

Deputy City Manager Andy Bohannon addressed the Committee and stated in December the City had applied for an LWCF grant and were notified that the City was moving forward in the process. The City needed to allocate a funding source for that grant and this item addresses that process.

Mr. Bohannon went on to say that there are funds in the Russell Park Project fund of \$75,000 which are being transferred over to the Skate Park project, which allows the City to have that match for this project. These funds are for the parking lot and the pathway that would connect the parking lot on the west side of the Skate Park to the parking lot on Russell Park. This is part of the original design.

Councilor Chalice asked whether there would be adequate shade in the parking lot itself and around its edges. Mr. Bohannon stated trees would be planted around the edges.

The following motion by Councilor Chalice which was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Council reallocate \$75,000 from the Patricia Russell Park Construction (65J0006B) to the Skate Park Improvements Project (65J0008A).

2) Acceptance of Local Source Water Protection Grant - Assistant Public Works Director

Aaron Costa, Asst. Public Works Director/ Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager, and Ben Crowder, Water and Sewer Operations Manager, were the next two speakers. Mr. Costa stated that the City has taken advantage of this particular grant in the past to install fencing around the Babbidge Reservoir and to conduct property surveys around the well fields. \$25,000 of this grant will be used to install about 1,000 linear feet of eight-foot-high security fencing around City owned land and around the sanitary protective radius at the West Street well facility. \$14,500 will be used to install security fencing and a gate at the Babbidge Reservoir.

The following motion by Councilor Lake was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and execute a Local Source Water Protection grant from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) in the amount of \$39,500.00.

3) Acceptance of Donation - Office Equipment - Finance Director

Finance Director Kari Chamberlain addressed the Committee and stated that the City has been fortunate enough to receive a donation from a company, which was closing its doors in Bedford, NH. The company was Guild Mortgage and they donated an incredible amount of office furniture. The estimated value currently is around \$78,000. Additional pieces were picked up today to bring the total up to around \$100,000. The donation consists of cubicles, desks, conference tables, chairs etc. which has made a significant impact, especially with the facilities project that was discussed at the last FOP Committee meeting.

Councilor Chalice asked whether this equipment will help with the noise issues the department is experiencing in their work area. Ms. Chamberlain stated the project is for two separate locations; third floor Finance Department Accounting Function and Revenue Collection on the first floor. The first floor is where the noise issue is. She added the cubicles are taller than what they have and would hence provide for more privacy.

The following motion by Councilor Chadbourne was duly seconded by Councilor Roberts.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept the donation of office furniture and equipment from Guild Mortgage Company with an estimated value of up to \$100,000.

4) Capital Improvement Program Review – Infrastructure
A) Public Works

Public Works Director Don Lussier addressed the Committee. He stated his staff will be reviewing the Public Works General Fund as well as Parking, Solid Waste, Water, Sewer and Equipment Funds. Collectively, these programs represent an infrastructure investment of over \$66 million in the next two years.

Mr. Lussier addressed cost escalation, which he felt, should not be a surprise to anyone; construction costs are going up. As an example, during the most recent biennial update of the state's 10-year Transportation Improvement Plan, the New Hampshire DOT cut 34 previously approved transportation projects from the state plan. Not only did they not add projects in those future years, they actually cut 34 projects from the plan, which were approved two years ago. In addition, 15 other construction projects across the state have been delayed due to escalating costs that are outpacing the state's revenue.

The implications for municipalities like Keene are straightforward. Projects cost more than they did even just a few years ago. Delaying projects makes them more expensive and proactive asset management becomes increasingly important to avoid larger replacement later on. Mr. Lussier stated in the CIP, there are many proposed investments that focus on preservation, rehabilitation, and service life extension are necessary rather than waiting until assets fail and require full replacement.

The second large item Mr. Lussier addressed was increasing regulatory and environmental requirements. Next year, the City will be up for renewal of its wastewater discharge permit. Even though staff does a remarkable job of treating our wastewater to a very high purity, regulations that are even more stringent mean the next permit could require the City to make major investments in the treatment technology in order to meet those new title requirements. Essentially, the City is operating at the peak of that plant's performance, which means that plant is going to need additional equipment and processes to meet those new requirements. Similarly, the drinking water standards and testing requirements only get more stringent over time. Tonight, staff will address a new project intended to protect our water supply from future contamination and several projects designed to ensure that we are providing the highest quality drinking water possible.

The next topic Mr. Lussier addressed was alignment with Council goals and the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP). Most of the projects the Committee will hear about are directly addressing the Council's goal for strategic infrastructure investment in asset management. However, many of the projects cut across many of the Council goals and CMP pillars. For example, projects like the downtown infrastructure reconstruction, Lower Winchester Street and the West Street Corridor upgrades support master plan goal of maintaining a thriving local economy and connected mobility networks.

The Blackbrook Pump Station project will advance environmental sustainability and resilience by preventing sanitary sewer overflows and encouraging diverse housing options by providing capacity to support future redevelopment.

Finally - Like CIPs in the years past, the CIP reflects the City's long-standing commitment to financial planning and asset management across the seven-year program, the City uses a mix of capital reserves, grants, bonds and enterprise funds. This approach helps spread the costs of these major investments over time and it allows the City to smooth out the ebbs and flows of spending.

The Committee went back to Airport, which was accidentally skipped in the order of presentation. Public Works will continue after the Airport Director's presentation.

B) Airport

Ryan Cooley, Airport Director addressed the Committee. Mr. Cooley stated before he gets into specific projects, he wanted to briefly address how Airport projects are funded as this plays a big role in how the Capital Improvement Program is built.

Keene Dillant-Hopkins Airport is included in what is called the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). This is a federal program that identifies airports that are considered important to the national aviation system. Airports that are part of the NPIAS are eligible to receive federal airport improvement program funding from the FAA. Federal funding typically covers about 90% of eligible airport projects. The State of New Hampshire usually contributes another 5%, which leaves about 5% as the local share.

When the Airport CIP is developed staff aligns projects with that NPIAS whenever possible, so the City can maximize federal and state participation and minimize the impact on the City's budget. Right now, as a general aviation airport, Keene receives about \$150,000 per year in FAA entitlement funding that can be used towards eligible airport projects. Larger projects such as runway or taxiway reconstruction projects which could run in the millions depending on FAA discretionary funding becoming available. Mr. Cooley explained the City receives \$150,000 in entitlement funds from the FAA, the City can save those funds up to three years which equal up to about \$450,000.

Mr. Cooley went on to say airport funding levels are tied to airport classifications and passenger activity and under federal law, which was updated in 2024, airports with scheduled commercial service received significantly higher annual entitlement funding based on the number of passengers boarding a flight. For example, about 5,000 annual passengers at a small non-hub commercial service airport could generate roughly \$500,000 per year in entitlement funding and higher passenger levels could increase that amount even further.

Mr. Cooley stated tonight's discussion focuses on maintaining the Airport's existing infrastructure, restoring commercial air service in the future could significantly strengthen the Airport's ability to fund larger infrastructure improvements, with less impact on the City's general budget as a whole. He noted airport projects focus primarily on safety, infrastructure

preservation and maintaining the Airport as a reliable transportation asset for the Monadnock Region. They also align with the Comprehensive Master Plan and several City Council Goals related to public safety, infrastructure stewardship, and economic vitality.

Wildlife Perimeter Fence: This project installs approximately 17,000 feet of wildlife perimeter fencing to reduce wildlife incursions at the Airport. This will improve aviation safety significantly. Currently, there are areas of the Airport where wildlife can access the runway environment from surrounding wetlands and wooded areas. Wildlife on the runway creates a safety risk for aircraft operations, both for pilots and passengers, and it can also be dangerous for the wildlife itself.

The project supports City Council goals related to public safety and responsible infrastructure management by reducing the risk of wildlife incidents involving aircraft. It also supports the Comprehensive Master Plan Pillars of Connected Mobility and Thriving Economy by ensuring safe and reliable aviation access for region. Mr. Cooley noted one positive development with this project is that through conversations with the state and the FAA, and by emphasizing how important airport safety and security are not only for aviation but also for protecting wildlife and pedestrians, staff were able to advocate strongly for additional support. Staff were able to make the case that completing the perimeter fence sooner in one phase rather than over a lengthy period of time was important from a safety standpoint. As a result, there has been strong support for advancing construction of the full project rather than continuing to complete the fence in multiple smaller phases over several years.

Snow Removal Equipment Replacement: This project replaces one of the Airport's snow removal carrier vehicles, which is used to operate runway plows, brooms and other snow removal equipment during winter operations. The Airport currently has four carrier vehicles. However, the FAA only recognizes two of those as being eligible for their equipment standards. For the FAA to fund replacement vehicles, the Airport must first reduce its fleet down to the FAA allowable number. This means that the airport would need to surplus its two oldest carrier vehicles. If the grant is awarded, the next step is to accept the grant and replace the third oldest vehicle with a new carrier vehicle. Once that new vehicle is delivered, the third oldest vehicle would be then surplus and because the equipment was purchased with FAA grant funding, the Airport must receive FAA approval before surplusing any equipment. Once the equipment is approved for sale by the FAA those funds must remain in the Airport and used for Airport projects. This project supports City Council priorities related to public safety and reliable infrastructure, while also supporting the Comprehensive Master Plan Pillars of connected mobility and thriving economy.

Pavement Maintenance and Marking: This project restores critical Airport pavement marking to address federal compliance and improve pilot situational awareness. Preventative maintenance protects the City's investment in Airport infrastructure and aligns with Council Goals related to responsible asset management. From a Comprehensive Master Plan standpoint, the project supports the Connected Mobility Pillar or by maintaining safe and efficient transportation infrastructure. Routine maintenance like this also helps reduce long-term infrastructure costs and ensures the Airport continues operating safely and reliably.

Airport Obstruction Management: FY27 and FY28 - This project focuses on identifying and removing obstructions that penetrate protected airspace surfaces surrounding the airport. In most cases, these obstructions are trees that have grown over time into the protected airspace that aircraft rely on when approaching or departing the airport. Some of these trees are located on privately owned land outside the Airport boundary. The FAA does not have the authority to remove trees on private property. Instead, the FAA requires airports to identify obstructions and work with the property owners to address them. In most cases, the process involves working cooperatively with landowners to obtain permission on easements that allow the Airport to trim or remove trees that have grown into the protected airspace.

In cases where trees cannot be removed immediately, the FAA may require operational adjustments, such as changes to approach minimum standards until the obstruction is addressed. Mr. Cooley stated staff's goal is always to work with the property owners in a cooperative and respectful way so that safe airspace can be maintained while maintaining positive relationships with the surrounding community.

The project supports City Council goals related to public safety and infrastructure protection. It also aligns with the Comprehensive Master Plan Pillars of Flourishing Environment and Connected Mobility by placing responsible land management with safe transportation access.

Mr. Cooley noted these Airport projects support the City's long-term strategic direction by improving safety, maintaining critical infrastructure, leveraging federal funding and strengthening regional transportation connectivity. They advance the Comprehensive Master Plan Pillars of Connected Mobility, Thriving Economy, and Flourishing Environment. They also support the City Council Goals, including public safety, responsible infrastructure management, fiscal stewardship and maintaining Keene's role as a regional economic and transportation hub.

This concluded Mr. Cooley's presentation.

Councilor Roberts stated 2016 to 2018, the Airport was addressed the issue obstacles with trees, and recalled these discussions as being quite contentious and asked Mr. Cooley whether he expects it to be much more favorable this time. Mr. Cooley stated he cannot speak to this timeframe, but this is a topic that is always contentious. He stated it is always important to point out to property owners about aviation safety and come up with solutions. Ultimately, it is how these conversations are conducted, being transparent as to why you are doing this and hopefully come to an agreement.

Ms. Landry recalled towards the end of that timeframe when there was a turnover at the Airport with Directors and it was difficult to maintain those relationships with the community. However, there was a point when the City discussed replacing trees, not just removing them. She added she wasn't sure if Red Pine Scale is going to enter the equation, but a lot of those trees are susceptible.

Councilor Lake recalled having to do line marking in the winter. He asked if the repaving that is planned for FY27 includes redoing any of that. Mr. Cooley stated he thinks the project the

Councilor is referring to is the taxiway project that was being constructed right before Thanksgiving. He stated this is separate to the pavement marking and the finishing of the rehabilitation of taxiway alpha, taxiway tango and some of the connectors which is going to taking place later this spring. The project previously mentioned is going to address airport maintenance on Airport surfaces like taxiways, aprons and runways. This work has not been done since the initial pavement was laid about 15 years ago.

Critical infrastructure work will happen about once every three years with pavement marking refreshers (required by the FAA) seal coat to protect the pavement from further damage and crack sealing to ensure winter weather events don't make those cracks get larger. This concluded the Airport presentation

C) Public Works

Councilor Chalice clarified from the Public Works Director the tighter requirements he addressed with water previously are for the benefit of the public, so that people don't have to purchase bottled water. Mr. Lussier agreed and added we have good water in Keene with natural water supplies and are lucky that our forbearers had the foresight to protect most of the watershed in Roxbury so that Keene has good quality drinking water. However, there are substances that are getting more regulatory scrutiny, such as Pfas and Pfos. These are emerging contaminants that the City is just starting to understand.

Beaver Brook Flood Mitigation Project: City Engineer Bryan Ruoff stated the projected funding is out one year beyond the next two years. Mr. Ruoff stated there are a couple of reasons for that. The first is that staff do not have engineering in place to know what that construction is going to be. The second is there were some delays with the release of the FEMA flood maps to know what the most beneficial areas to target would be. Staff are still requesting the same allocation of funds, but it is pushed out one year.

Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement Program: This project has changed since the last CIP based on some reshuffling of bridge priorities and the cost the City has seen from bidding the George Street project. Mr. Ruoff noted the cost of steel has gone up significantly since the last CIP update, which is reflected in the anticipated cost for these bridges.

Mr. Ruoff went on to say that the Winchester Street over the Ash Swamp Brook is not included as part of this program – it is separate and is part of the Lower Winchester Street project. The biggest difference is Maple Avenue was previously programmed in the DOT State Municipal Bridge Aid Program, the City is requesting to replace that bridge with the Beaver Street Bridge over Beaver Brook to expedite the replacement of that in light of the 10-ton posting limit as part of the recent load rating study. Mr. Ruoff went on to say staff are also having discussions with DOT about the lower Winchester Street project funding, which was pushed out by DOT; to see if this can be done as its own project to replace the bridge and eliminate that load rating on that bridge as well.

Councilor Roberts asked, with these project being pushed out, whether staff is comfortable that the state will eventually fund them. Mr. Lussier stated despite the fact that the state had to make

some pretty significant cuts, none of the City's 10-year plan projects are looking to be eliminated. Some of the City's projects were pushed back but there are no construction funds that are cancelled. However, the 10-year plan is updated every two years and stated he didn't know what the next two years will bring. He noted the state is keenly aware of the revenue concerns and they are looking at options like increasing toll taxes. He added the gas tax hasn't seen an appreciable increase in New Hampshire since 2014.

Ms. Chalice referred to the Beaver Brook Bridge and referred to a recent accident in her neighborhood on Beaver Street where a semi-truck drove down North Lincoln Street and took down a few trees. She asked whether a sign perhaps on Washington Street would prevent semi-trucks from going down Washington Street to avoid this. Mr. Lussier stated a sign is being constructed and should be located soon.

Preservation Program: To set aside funds to make sure new bridges being installed are being maintained.

Dam Maintenance Program: The City has over the years tried to bring its dams up to DES Standards. Funds are for necessary maintenance to keep spending large amounts on repairs.

Downtown Improvements Project: First page is summary costs. The water sewer fund allocations are unchanged. Traffic signal replacement: additional funds are being allocated this year, based on bids. FY27 allocated funds includes the FY27 road rehab projects essentially taking those planned funds and using them for the paving of the downtown project.

Councilor Favolise stated he had a question from a constituent who was not able to be here tonight and asked staff to address the debt funding load for the downtown project and how that might have factored into decisions about overall CIP spending. The Manager in response stated for the downtown project, staff shifted funding to what is called the fund balance, to minimize the amount of impact related to debt or just to general taxation. She referred to a summary of projects by funding source in the Committee's book on page 11. Use of fund balance is for the downtown roadway preservation project is now being allocated for the downtown project just over 1.4 million. This is an increase usually this amount is a little over \$1,000,000. \$3.1 million is being used in the first year – the Manager noted they have tried to minimize the impact of the downtown project and also to minimize debt. She referred to page 12, where there is a high debt load coming in. This is partially from the downtown project and it also from the Robin Hood project. In order to balance the capital plan, more funds were shifted to the fund balance.

Mr. Ruoff stated a positive item is that Stantec completed the re-scoping of the contract documents, which have been reviewed and approved by DES as of this evening and the City should be receiving official authorization to rebid the project and the City should be rebidding this project early next week.

Downtown Restroom Project: FY28 – This project would go along with the Gilbo Avenue Solar Pavilion project. It will be co-designed so that there is a space within this building to house the electrical equipment for the Gilbo Avenue solar pavilion.

The City Manager stated this is a project (bathrooms) that the Council has had in the CIP for a number of years and it has moved up. It has not made its way to year two of implementation. The Manager stated she does have concerns. The City has had public bathrooms in the downtown in the past that have been vandalized. The City has tried a variety of techniques in terms of where the bathroom was being located, how the bathrooms were being secured but have not been successful. However, the item has been brought back at Council request. The bathroom staff is proposing is constructed with the hardiest of materials to try to make it last as long as possible and also make it less susceptible to vandalism and misuse. However, the cost is a little over \$440,000. The Manager stated if this is project is in the CIP in this year, it will move forward as part of the operating budget that is going to be beginning in the next few weeks.

Councilor Chalice stated she agrees there are challenges to having a public bathroom in a community, same as other communities have experienced. She felt having a place where a human being or an unhoused human being can eliminate with a measure of self-respect is important. She felt this bathroom will also be important for people who come downtown for events.

Councilor Favolise stated there was commentary that funds were shuffled around for road rehabilitation and asked how many feet of road could be paved with \$440,000.

The Manager stated she was incorrect – the bathroom would be in the next operating budget in FY28.

Mr. Lussier stated annual paving is between 1.2 and \$1.4 million. \$440,000 would cover about a third.

Councilor Chadbourne asked whether the bathrooms in City Hall and the one at the Library are the only ones available in the downtown area. The Manager answered in the affirmative. The Councilor noted this is a large price tag and it would also cost \$12,000 a year for maintenance. She stated the last bathroom was vandalized many times and it kept costing the City a lot to maintain and asked how this bathroom is going to be any different. She also noted people were locking themselves in the bathroom as place to stay overnight. The Public Works Director responded by saying this bathroom is self-cleaning, after every tenth user the bathroom would lock itself for 30 seconds for a cleaning cycle. It is a concrete and a very durable structure. The mirror, for example, is a sheet of stainless steel. It is designed to be tamper proof. However, he felt given enough time and motivation, anything can be damaged. With respect to individuals camping in it, the unit has an occupancy sensor. If somebody is in it for more than 20 minutes, it will send out a notification to either KPD or Parks and Rec. The self-cleaning cycle will not initiate if someone is locked in it.

Councilor Chadbourne asked about the public bathrooms at Russell Park and asked whether the issues that existed when these bathrooms first opened still exist. Mr. Lussier stated this unit has a time lock on it, so it is set to unlock during park opening hours and close down to dusk. He stated he has not heard of any issues, but this would be a question for Parks and Rec.

With respect to how many feet of paving \$440,000 dollars would cover, Mr. Ruoff stated it would be around two miles.

Councilor Tobin stated she does like the idea of bathrooms downtown, things do break and replacement parts can be costly. She asked whether this bathroom would be open year-round. Mr. Lussier stated it would be open year-round.

Mayor Kahn asked beyond downtown how much was going to be available for road improvement. The Manager stated the 1.4 million is what would be used for road improvement in one season. This is being moved to the downtown project to offset debt or taxation impact from the project. The Public Works Director stated the road rehabilitation project is going to be covered later on during the meeting.

The Mayor noted the contingency budget for the downtown project is around \$24,000,000 that has been allocated and is anticipated for total project expense, but there is no 2% or 3% project contingency that is carried below that line and asked if that was correct. Mr. Lussier stated the amount in the project right now is pretty close or equal to what the City is expecting for bids but there is not much in the way of buffer or contingency.

Gilbo Avenue Solar Pavilion Project: Mr. Ruoff stated the City received a Timber for Transit Grant for the design and construction of the facility. The City is already working with their consultant NextGen and should be ready for construction in 2027, in coordination with the downtown construction project.

Jordan Road Salamander Crossing: This was due to the collaboration and hard work of our former Assistant DPW Director Duncan Watson, working with at Harris Center. This project received federal funding administered through New Hampshire Fish and Game and the funding is better than the normal federal funding of 80/20; this funding is at 90/10. The local match can also be in kind funding.

What the City could do is to track the engineering hours towards the design of this project and coordination of meetings and that will likely pay for the City's in-kind match for this project. The City anticipates a formal award within the next couple of weeks and start of engineering services in the spring as part of the amphibian migration.

Liquid Brine Pre Treatment Project: Mr. Lussier stated across the northeast communities like Keene have started to see increasing concentrations of chloride in the groundwater and surface water. He noted it is not at dangerous levels. He noted this chloride comes from winter maintenance of roadways and the City is seeing a slight increase in chloride in the monitoring wells and would like to reverse that trend.

When this project together staff thought they might need about eight of these distribution systems in order to cover the City. Since the estimate was put together, staff found a company that is doing a pilot test with the City right now. Some of the main thoroughfares in the City Marlborough Street, Main Street, Court Street, Washington and West Streets, were treated with a liquid brine solution in advance of the storm. He explained the idea essentially is to treat the

roadways with a liquid brine before the storm event happens. You can spray the liquid up to about 12 hours before precipitation actually starts. Once the storm begins, it rehydrates that brine. The City is using a magnesium chloride solution. The advantage of that is it works at a much lower temperature than sodium chloride solution, and the advantage is that you can use a lot less chloride overall. During a storm, you don't have to keep reapplying rock salt and after the storm you have to use much less in order to get it cleaned up. What is being done is preventing the snow and the ice from sticking to the road in the first place. The City is happy with the results so far and this Project is proposed for FY29. He added when the CIP is updated in a couple of years the eight distributors budgeted for are likely going to be reduced to four.

Councilor Chalice extended her appreciation to staff stepping forward and looking for solutions proactively before we do more damage to our waterway systems.

Councilor Favolise asked whether there was any retrofitting that needs to happen to mount these systems or do they integrate with the large piece of equipment that the City already has. Mr. Lussier stated with the pilot study, equipment is being leased to the City by the vendor. The equipment is at no cost with the understanding that we have to buy the materials from them and that equipment is a self-contained unit in one package that sits in the back of regular plow trucks. There is very little upfront investment that the City has to expend.

If this was long term and the City went forward with a full program, the City will be looking at acquiring the actual distribution systems. They don't require retrofitting, they are just packages that sit in the back of an existing truck.

Lower Winchester Street Reconstruction Project: This is a DOT project – 80/20 funding. Mr. Ruoff stated the costs have been increased slightly for this project to reflect the most current engineer's opinion of probable engineering costs. The other change the City is making in conjunction with the DOT's 10-year plan is the construction funding was planned to be allocated in FY25 and 26, with the DOT pushing this project out to construction in FY29, and the City is updating funding allocation to match that.

As mentioned earlier, Mr. Ruoff stated staff is planning on pulling out the bridge scope of work to construct before the entire lower Winchester Street project. Mr. Ruoff went on to say that when they were made aware of this change in the dates for construction, that is when staff included this work as part of the road rehabilitation project last year, to rehab paving on that southern end of Winchester Street to keep up with that work so the condition of the street does not deteriorate too much by 2029. Mr. Ruoff commended Highway Superintendent Mitchell Smith for this insight.

Road Rehabilitation Project: Essentially what then City is looking to do is reallocate the planned FY27 funding for the downtown project reconstruction, which will eliminate the streets that were planned for, and they will be moved to future CIP'S in years 2028 and beyond. Mr. Ruoff stated to get the maximum benefit of the cost of this program to the City, the design engineer grouped road rehabilitation based on the need scoring. What the City did was it took out the FY27 paved streets program and moved it into FY28 through FY32, which adds roughly \$150,000 per year to the previous CIP, which is consistent with inflation and with the increase pricing for paving.

The City Engineer added this winter has been an extremely brutal on the roads the most. Highway staff are identifying areas that are beyond what City staff can repair and those areas will be addressed through a change order or a project unit price costs. Those repairs will be from unspent funds and highway operating funds. Councilor Chalice asked why this winter was more brutal compared to others, because we have not had those huge dips in temperatures compared to other winters. Mr. Ruoff stated roads being torn up is not so much the storms as it is the temperature differential. The frost in the ground has been the deepest it has been in many years at one point it was over 4 feet and then the thaw affects the roadways negatively. Adding to that the plowing hinders preservations program.

This winter stripped off the fog seal more than was expected compared to previous years. He added this winter the cold started very early which shut down construction almost two months earlier than usual which hurt both construction operations and general operations of the City. Councilor Chadbourne added this summer was unusually warm which caused some sidewalks to erupt and asked whether this can be expected with the changing pattern. Mr. Ruoff stated this is where asset management comes in handy where we can evaluate where these types of issues are happening in specific areas and understand ways to fix them – the Councilor noted she also saw this on West Street. The Engineer stated this is typically not something you see in New England.

Mayor Kahn extended his appreciation for the sidewalk program, which was done last summer. He questioned the downtown project in the horizon and asked how the City can accomplish what was done last summer. Is Public Works the only department that could contribute towards the downtown project? Are there compromises elsewhere in the budget?

The Manager in response stated for the downtown project road, it makes sense to use funding from road construction and reallocate those funds to mitigate impacts to the tax rate and not increase the debt more than we have to. She noted if you look at projects on the funding sheet most of them are tied to grants.

The other options are capital reserve appropriations – those could be reduced or delayed but those are tied to projects (e.g., ambulance replacement, a fire truck replacement).

The other option is to use more of the fund balance, but the City has been as aggressive as possible with the fund balance to make sure the City is going to be within the fiscal policy guidelines.

Councilor Favolise referred to the \$440,000 for the downtown bathroom and asked whether this would help Public Works get caught up with road rehab that has been shuffled around if it is delayed by a year or so. Councilor Chalice asked for how long the downtown has not had public bathrooms. Mr. Bohannon stated it was in 2012. The Councilor stated as someone who lives downtown it is pretty shameful to see people trying to hide behind things to relieve themselves. She stated she understands road rehabilitation but stated this was her opinion.

Councilor Roberts clarified if the Council approved the bathroom expenditure it would go into next year's operation budget. If we don't approve it, that money may not be spent because staff

are still waiting to see how far it is coming up to a maximum. The Manager agreed staff has not got to the operating budget yet, there are fiscal parameters that still need to be met. Staff won't know until we have all of the calculations for the operation budget, and what that looks like for the bottom line.

Mr. Ruoff stated he wanted to provide visual price comparison of what could be done with the \$440,000 in paving. He stated he would advocate for Court Street south paving—Main Street to the overpass. This section has been ready and awaiting funding.

Sidewalks: Mr. Ruoff noted in a seven-to-eight-year CIP period, the City completes about 10,000 feet of sidewalk, either installing new concrete sidewalk or removing asphalt sidewalk and putting in concrete. With the new sidewalk paver, staff were able to complete about 3 miles. The quantifiable length of what is programmed in the CIP for sidewalks and the dollar value essentially is a match from the last CIP. Councilor Chadbourne asked about how many miles of sidewalks the City has. Mr. Lussier stated it was more asphalt than concrete (nearly 50/50)

Councilor Lake clarified that the money allocated in the CIP for sidewalks is not for asphalt and it is specifically for concrete. Mr. Ruoff stated the only thing that it impacts is the planning for what sidewalks are completed. All of the sidewalk overlay is done as a part of the operations budget.

Councilor Lake noted Main Street is listed under the sidewalk section and asked whether this is part of the downtown project. Mr. Ruoff stated it was separate, it is for south of the roundabout. The Councilor noted TBD's listed for 2032 and 2033 and asked around when the future sidewalks program will be decided. Mr. Ruoff stated every five years staff does an assessment of both the roads and sidewalks and use that updated data. He noted after this winter, the road data would be completely different. He added staff do not like to plan the TBD's because they want to have the flexibility to be able to build in what is noticed that needs attention.

Councilor Jones stated in CIP's the City has used a formula of asphalt versus concrete and it was always cost versus shelf life. He indicated this has not been done in the past few years and felt it would be good for the Council to know this information before they get too far into the program. Mr. Lussier stated when sidewalk asset management plan was developed and presented to MSFI this information was reviewed again and what the calculus still suggests was over the life expectancy concrete and granite curbing is still your best investment, but it is very costly.

Stormwater and Stream Channel Maintenance Program: Mr. Ruoff stated this was added to the last CIP with no real scope.

In prior CIP's, this item was programmed for \$200,000 a year. It has now been broken up to reflect the phasing. Two projects will be designed and bid out at the same time and then wait for the allocation of these funds to build up enough to complete construction. Depending on the scope of the improvements, it is also potentially something they could be self-performed by staff, but that would depend on both availability and the scope of the project.

Councilor Chalice asked whether this project will be presented to the Conservation Commission in terms of the stabilization and the types of materials that will be used for that stabilization. Mr. Ruoff stated the Tannery Brook Rehabilitation and Martell Court side slopes would both have to go before the Conservation Commission for review and approval.

Stormwater Main Lining Program: Storm water lining will be done on Emerald Street as part of this program. CMP culverts that meet capacity but are in poor condition would be replaced as there is cost benefit as the road would not need to be dug up. Design fees are much less compared to other design fees on projects. This is because most of the design would be done in-house by the engineering division. He stated there is a large need to continue with this program for asset rehabilitation.

Storm Water Resiliency Project: This project funds are for capacity issues, and the drainage infrastructure needs to be removed, replaced, and improved. Specifically, Island Street, Court Street, and Main Street are being funded by this program to address those storm water resiliency problems. FY29 is consistent with the previous CIP in completing Church Street.

Stormwater Spot Repair Program: This is not a “designed and bid” for construction project. This is more as things come up—for example if there is a sinkhole, if there is a problem with a catch basin or a culvert that is too deep for City crews to be able to take care of. Then a contractor is hired to do this work. These funds are used every year to do point repairs on culverts or other drainage infrastructure.

Stormwater Projects: This is to hire a consultant engineer to perform storm water sizing calculations and AOT permitting for projects that the City has coming up large stormwater projects. This is not used frequently—it is an every other year allocation for this program.

Traffic Signal and Flashing Signal Replacement Program: After the Central Square project, a majority of the traffic signals in the City will require replacement and will be include as part of the West Street Reconstruction project. The other allocation of funding is based on the findings of the Safe Street For All Grant program and their recommendations that were identified in that program.

This is an increase in the previous CIP essentially because in the last CIP after FY29, there was no plan for expenditure. With this program, the City would get traffic signals and flashing signals, to be in compliance with current standards and in a serviceable condition for the foreseeable future.

West Street Corridor Improvements Project: FY27 – DOT has moved funding out for this project. Hence, this project has been updated to reflect the DOT’s new 10-year plan. It would be an 80/20 funding, and the City will be looking to start preliminary engineering study and preliminary design in FY28 as part of this project.

Mayor Kahn noted with this project being moved out to FY32 and the Committee is approving a two-year capital plan, he felt this is one of those projects that could perhaps be moved out to FY29.

D) Parking Fund Maintenance
E) Parking Fund Operations

Parking Operations Manager, Chelsea North addressed the Committee and stated parking is a critical piece of downtown infrastructure, which is a self-funded program. It is used to support residents, employees and visitors who come downtown. She stated the CIP projects staff will be reviewing tonight represent the investments needed to maintain parking assets and based on current fund projections and upcoming capital needs, meter rate increases will need to be evaluated within the calendar year to ensure the continued financial stability of the fund. She stated rate considerations will be benchmarked to similar area market rates and fund revenue needs.

Mr. Ruoff stated the biggest change in the Parking program is based on the feasibility study that was done it was determined that at this time there isn't a need or the allocated budget wasn't nearly sufficient enough for what we needed for construction of the west side parking structure.

In light of that, this program has been eliminated from the Parking project. This allocates about 1.1 million in FY26 for final design for the parking garage and 12.6 million in FY28 for construction. Neither of those are included in the current request for projects for the CIP.

City Hall Parking Structural Maintenance Program: Mr. Ruoff stated every two to three years routine maintenance seems to be necessary for the concrete and steel. A contract is in the process of being awarded. The reason staff is also looking for FY27 funding is for "would be nice to have" aspects as part of that project that staff would like to incorporate into project. FY30 is for additional planned proactive concrete repairs, repainting, and restriping exposed metal.

EV Charging Stations: In the last CIP additional installation was scheduled for FY27, this is now being pushed out to FY32. The reason for that is that the City noticed a topping off of usage and then a steep decline and stated staff needs time to reevaluate what makes sense for that program. He added as part of the Gilbo Avenue Solar Pavilion project, the City is required to install one EV car charging station as part of that development.

He felt by the next update of the CIP, we may not identify this as a need for additional stations based on the use.

Surface Parking Lot Maintenance Program: Similar to road preservations program, the City will also complete a crack seal and a fog seal on the parking lots to extend the service life of parking lots.

As part of this, this funding, there is also a need to replace parking kiosk signage and ancillary equipment.

Wells Street Parking Structure: Mr. Ruoff stated this is a maintenance program, similar to City Hall parking garage except recently there was a traffic membrane placed on that facility. The

planned funding is for preventive maintenance to make sure a large investment is not necessary to be expended at one time.

Councilor Roberts asked when the time might be to stop paying for repairs to this structure and think about a new parking facility. Mr. Lussier stated the reality is that garages are very expensive to maintain. The cost of replacing that structure, based on the Gilbo Avenue parking garage study will be incredibly expensive. He stated this garage still has plenty of life left in it, and to get that maximum value, making continuous investments and preventative maintenance will keep it in good condition.

Councilor Chalice thanked Public Works staff for the Gilbo Street Solar array and asked how much energy the City will be generating. Mr. Ruoff stated he did not know the exact number but at least 50% more than what we need to power all of downtown.

Ms. Landry referred to page 123—Parking Fund Projection—she stated the City needs to be careful that we are making our capital appropriations and maintaining fund balance. She stated the City should be ok for a year or two, but 5–6 years out looks questionable. Hence, the reason staff will be coming back before the Committee for a parking fee increase, with the hope that this will just for on street parking and lot parking and not to increase the price for fines and permits.

F) Solid Waste Fund

Solid Waste Manager Ben Hoy addressed the Committee next. Mr. Hoy stated the Solid Waste currently has 2.5 million in the account. The transfer station processes 30,000 tons of municipal solid waste annually. The station also processes 6,000 tons of recyclables, which are being kept out of the waste stream. The City receives revenue for those recyclables. In 2026 and 2027 the Solid Waste Fund is projected to take in close to 350,000 for each year, he felt this is a testament to his predecessor, Duncan Watson.

He stated the recycling station does have some equipment needs. They are in need of a feed conveyor and a new sorting line conveyor machine.

Fire Suppression System: Mr. Hoy stated the station has a 30,000-gallon water cistern and they are looking to pipe that fire suppression system to our sprinkler head system, which is currently dry. When there is a fire there is no water coming out of those sprinkler heads. The fire suppression system would link the cistern to the sprinkler system.

Climate Controlled Processing Area: Mr. Hoy stated this area is where the workers are spending 75% of their time. It is currently very cold in the area and there is no natural light; it is a dark and dismal working area. This area has worked for the City for 30 years and is showing signs of wear.

Upper-Level Pavement Project: This project is scheduled for FY26 and FY27. The intention of this project is to bridge the facility together. A paved area will open up the entire space. The current area can be slippery and muddy and there are many who visit this site.

Mr. Hoy talked about the compost operation.

Councilor Chalice complimented the planned compost operation and stated she has used compost from the facility in the past and is happy to see that it is brought back in. Mr. Hoy stated there is compost available for anyone who wants to bring a bucket. Mr. Lussier stated there is compost available at the Public Works facility for Keene residents.

The Manager stated she is happy to see the climate control area making its way into the capital project planner for FY27. She stated these employees work under difficult conditions.

Councilor Jones noted the goals listed in the CIP for each project are from the old Master Plan and hoped this would be updated to meet the goals of the new Plan. The Manager stated staff will be looking at dashboards for the Master Plan very soon.

G) Sewer Fund

Asst. Public Works Director/Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager Aaron Costa, and Utilities Manager Christian Tarr, were the next two presenters. Mr. Costa stated he was before the Committee to discuss the water and sewer funds. The water and sewer funds are enterprise funds and are funded by water and sewer rates and are not part of the tax base.

He stated the Wastewater Treatment Plant will be hosting an Open House on April 16, 2026 and will be open to the public for tours of the facility. He invited members of the public, City Council, and staff to attend.

Blackbird Wastewater Pump Station: Mr. Tarr stated that originally the Blackbird Wastewater Pump Station was designed and installed in the 1990s. It serves the Wyman Road Industrial Park. It is getting towards the end-of-life expectancy with all the equipment. In FY27, there is money appropriated for design and FY29 for a level of design or construction oversight and then construction and implementation of the station.

Court Street Pump Station: Mr. Tarr stated this pump station is almost 50 years old. It is an underground station. This needs an upgrade as well. In FY29 they are looking at installing an emergency generator. This is the one wastewater station that doesn't have that redundant power source. FY32 is design and in FY33 a new above ground station to eliminate risk.

Instrumentation Program: Mr. Costa stated the Wastewater Treatment Plant is equipped with various online monitoring equipment for process control and this project replaces in FY27 an online ammonia analyzer and nitrate probe and fiscal year funds the replacement of an online ortho phosphate analyzer. All three of these pieces of equipment have been in service since around 2012 and are due for replacement.

Lower Winchester Street Reconstruction Project: Mr. Ruoff stated this was discussed as part of the Public Works presentation and this is the sewer improvements as part of that project. The project overall is 80/20 funding, but this is non-participating cost. He felt it would benefit the

City to replace that sewer as part of this project while the roads are dug up. There are funds already allocated for this work and this is the remainder required for construction based on the engineer's opinion of probable construction costs.

Martell Court Bypass Project: Mr. Costa stated that Martell Court is the heartbeat of the City's collection system.

All the wastewater that comes from the City of Keene and Marlborough passes through this pump station before making its way up to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. This pump station is almost three years. There was a knife gate failure on the force main and the only way to fix this is with a bypass pipe around the station, which he noted was not an easy task. This project has nearly \$3.3 million in previous fiscal years that is allocated for this project. FY27 is the remainder which staff believe they will need for construction.

At the present time there is only one pipe that leads from Martell Court to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and this has been in service since 1980. This will at least give a stub that the City could tie into in the future. There will be some additional repairs to the Edgewood Gravity sewer main, which is right in the same area. The City is at 90% design and hope is to be going out for bid very soon. The goal is to complete this construction season.

Martell Court Equipment Maintenance Program: Mr. Tarr stated there are three 250 horsepower pumps at the station which run during extremely heavy flows or heavy rains. There is a 150-horsepower pump which runs the majority of the time when flows are normal. All these pumps have common wear items that need replacement every three to five years. Staff tried to break this down over a four-year period. In FY27, staff are looking to replace the control system, which automates the pumps to actuate on and off depending on flows. In FY29, the serviceable wear items on pump one and four, and in FY31 it would be pump two and three and continue that cycle on a four-year cycle for refurbishment.

Mr. Tarr addressed the next item on Martell Court which is the fuel tank replacement program. This is critical infrastructure and has a 650-kw generator. That generator had an underground storage tank which failed a test and has been running on a temporary tank to keep the station running. This project would install a new 2,500-gallon above ground tank.

Permit Renewal Program: Mr. Costa stated the City operates the Wastewater Treatment Plant, which has a permit that allows the City to discharge treated wastewater back into the Ashuelot River 24/7/365. The permits are good for five years. Our current permit expires at the end of this year. The new permit will contain discharge parameters and lower discharge limits. The City will need some professional assistance to work through that process. Mr. Costa stated there remaining funds from the last time the City went through this process; the \$75,000 that is being requested in FY27 will be a new allocation combined with the existing allocation for this work.

Councilor Favolise asked for the reason for the new parameters and lower discharge limits. Mr. Costa stated he does not know what the limits will be at this point, but the last time the City was issued a permit in 2022, the City received lower limits for total phosphorus.

In the summer limits the City received lower ammonia limits and in winter parameters lower limits for ammonia. We also received an aluminum limit and total nitrogen annual rolling average limit. As permits get renewed, regulatory agencies continue to make improvements to better protect the Ashuelot River.

Sewer Improvements Program: Mr. Ruoff stated the City has a 10-year schedule of sewer improvement locations. Most of the pipes are between 70 and 100 years old, in poor condition and cannot be lined.

The one change is the reshuffling due to the Lower Winchester Street adjustment by DOT. Otherwise, the requested funds and project locations are generally consistent with the previous approved CIP.

Sewer Main Lining Program: The City just completed about 16,000 linear feet of sewer main lining, primarily on the east side to eliminate infiltration and inflow. As part of that work, staff requested Resolutions to use planned FY27 and 28 funding. Hence, funding is shown for those two years.

The program will restart in FY 29 with the previously planned allocated funding and perform sewer main lining design and install sewer main lining from FY29 to the end of the CIP.

Sewer Main Manhole Rehab Program: Same as was previously stated, the program will restart in FY29 to the end of the CIP. Because of the prices the City received on the lining and manhole replacement, they had to reduce the plan scope by about 30%.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Advanced Treatment: Mr. Costa stated depending on what those new limits are, the plant may not be able to meet them without significant upgrades. Because of the unknowns at this time, staff hasn't added any construction costs, but have placeholders in FY29 for design work.

FY27 has money allocated to assist with an organism referred to as Daphnea—this organism is a good indicator of good water quality. However, when they end up in the clarifiers, they disrupt the settling process and can lead to permit violations. The City would like to get some consulting help on how to best rid the City of those little bugs.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Building Renovation and Demolition Program: Mr. Costa stated this has been an ongoing program for the complete renovations of the men and women's bathrooms in FY33. This building was constructed in the early 80s. This project will replace all the windows and most of the exterior doors, which are original to the building.

Chemical Feed System: This chemical is used to comply with the discharge permit for pH. Staff would like to make this a more permanent set up with bulk storage tanks. It would be for two, 2,500-gallon tanks—indoor heated as the product does freeze.

Clarifier Equipment Placement: This project would replace all the weirs and baffles that are currently on the clarifiers that allow the water to roll out in a uniform way and keep settling of materials in the tank.

Those are made of aluminum, which will not help the aluminum permit moving forward. This project will replace them with a UV rated composite material. Councilor Chalice noted with this material, what do we know about potential for microplastic. Mr. Tarr stated that this a fiberglass coated material but did not know if it would create microplastics. Mr. Lussier stated this is something he would look into.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Fiber Optic Replacement Project: Mr. Costa stated this project replaces the five-mile-long fiber optic network cable that connects the City's network from City Hall to the Wastewater Treatment Plant that is at the end of its useful life. To ensure reliable communication, the fiber needs to be run from City Hall to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mr. Costa stated this would be a cost sharing between the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Airport. FY27 funds that project and FY29 funds the fiber optic replacement around the Wastewater Treatment Plant itself. Mr. Lussier noted this project is being designed and managed by IT, and the cost is being split between the Airport and the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Ms. Landry stated this was installed 30 years ago and so was all the other fiber that we have around the City.

Grit Removal Clamshell Replacement Project: Mr. Costa stated grit removal needs to happen once every year or two years, depending on conditions. This piece of equipment is original and has served its useful life and needs to be replaced.

HVAC Replacements: Mr. Tarr stated all the HVAC equipment ages quicker than normal due to environment issues. In FY29, staff is looking to replace the grid chamber. FY31 would be the HVAC in the process area. FY33 the two HVAC units that cover the primary and the secondary buildings.

Atomic Absorption Spectrometer and Upgrade: Lab Manager Andrew Kaiser addressed the Committee next. Mr. Kaiser stated in FY27 they are looking to replace the atomic absorption spectrometer with an ICPMS. The current equipment has reached the end of its life. The ICPMS is an upgraded version. These instruments are used to measure metals and other metal like material in both water and wastewater. The ICPMS can test more metals at lower concentrations at a much higher rate and even beyond that it can test for metals we are not even looking. Right now the AA can test one metal at a time. Funds are being split between both the water and sewer departments as we test both the wastewater and drinking water with this instrument.

Paving Project for the Wastewater Treatment Plant: Mr. Ruoff stated this past year the City paved the access route to the treatment plant.

With that project, the cost were so advantageous to the City, there were unspent funds, which staff felt could cover 60% to 70% of payment repairs inside the treatment plant, which was not

part of the original project. The original project was just to pave the access route and extend the serviceable life of that access route to the treatment plant.

This project will pave inside the treatment plant and extend the serviceable life of the paving in the treatment plant. Staff will use those unspent funds from the previous paving project and these funds that are being requested are the additional funds needed for construction of that project.

The Councilor asked whether this project could be postponed to address the roadway work. Mr. Costa stated they are funded by two different sources.

Valve Replacement: Mr. Costa stated the return activated sludge is a critical part of the process and there are valves in place to divert RAS into different tanks. This project replaces two existing valves. One of which is in bad shape. Adding two additional isolation valves will make this whole valve replacement process much easier in the future.

Wastewater Plant Roof Project: Mr. Tarr stated the main building was done in the first phase and the smaller section needs to be completed now. Design and construction FY28 to remove what is referred to as a ballast roof which has rocks and stone on it and replaced with an adhered EPDM material.

Septage Pump Replacement: At the present time, what exists are original pumps from the 1980s that staff continue to use air-operated equipment that is still maintainable reaching the end of its expected life. Mr. Tarr felt the City should be looking at newer, more cost-effective technologies in the future.

Sludge Replacement Project: Mr. Tarr stated these are pumps that feed the screw presses. These again are from 1996. There is more updated equipment that is a little more energy efficient.

Wastewater Tank Repair Program: This program funds coatings of the steel structures, repairs to the concrete for these tanks. It is an ongoing program and is expensive, but these tanks are relatively large. A lot of work goes into protecting them. They were built in the early 80s and need repairs from time to time.

UV Lamp and Equipment Replacement Program: The way the wastewater plant meets its compliance with its E coli limit and its discharge permit is with the use of UV light technology to disinfect the water. These lamps have a usable light for about 14,000 hours. The system consists of around 240 UV lamps. Every four years they need to be replaced. They are recurring through the CIP; FY29 replaces the lamps and again in FY33. FY32 is replacement of the original quart sleeves (lamps go inside the sleeves)—quart sleeves need to be replaced around every 20 years.

Councilor Lake referred to sewer improvements and asked whether the streets would need to be torn specifically at George Street and Sylvan Street, which are listed FY27 and FY28, those streets are also listed for major road rehabilitation in FY31. He stated he wanted to make sure it was going to be a dig once project. Mr. Ruoff state if it was water and sewer work it will be one at the same time. He indicated staff would look into this and make sure the work is done at the same time.

Councilor Roberts referred to City work done on Marlboro Street and the gas company tore the street up again and Marlboro Street was not left in good condition and asked for clarification. Mr. Lussier stated in 2019 infrastructure utilities work was done on Marlboro Street. At the same time the City applied for the Transportation Alternatives Grant which would have funded street scape work. The intention was City work would happen the summer after the utility work was done but this project is delayed but the contract has been awarded. He indicated Liberty Utilities is not to be blamed for the condition of Marlboro Street

H) Water Fund

Water and Sewer Operations Manager Ben Crowder addressed the Committee next.

Bulk Water Fill Station: Mr. Crowder stated the City sells water from a hydrant located at Public Works facility to a contractor, citizens and haulers that supply water for swimming pools. The availability of this hydrant is limited to months of May through November, 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday. This project funds a self-serve water station that will allow customers to purchase water 24/7/365 and the bulk water fill station will have a different rate structure than existing water rates for customers that already are connected to the system and will provide an additional revenue source for the water project.

Chapman Road Water Storage Tank Repair Project: Mr. Costa stated the City has done a really great job working on its water storage tanks since 2018. This is the last tank that needs repair. The City repaired the Blackbrook Water Storage Tank which was constructed around 1996; 380,000-gallon tank. The City recently completed upgrades to the 1924 buried concrete tank at the water plant. This tank is 100 years old, and the City made some significant investments to protect that asset. This item is the last of the six water storage tanks that need to be refurbished. In FY28, \$150,000 to refurbish the interior and exterior of the tank and installation of a safety cable system on the dome of the tank.

Councilor Chalice asked if staff had seen a bulk water fill station operation elsewhere and if it would be dependable once we invest that money. Mr. Costa stated there are other stations around the state and staff talked to equipment vendors. He stated he has not visited one personally but in talking to vendors, he learned of communities that use them.

Emergency Generator Replacement: Mr. Tarr stated in FY28 funds to replace the 250-kw generator at the Water Treatment Plant, which will allow for continued operation at any time there is a power outage. In FY31, the Blackbrook Water Booster Station, which is also part of that Blackbrook Industrial Park area, replacing the 65-kw generator.

Glen Road And Fox Avenue Water Pump Station Project: Mr. Crowder stated this project is to boost pressure for customers in higher elevations—approximately 150 homes in the Glen Road and Darling Road area—and provide adequate fire flow during an emergency. FY27 focuses on the existing equipment on Glen Road: drives, motors, and more energy efficient equipment in that station. FY30 will focus on a similar project at the Fox Avenue booster station.

Lower Winchester Street: Mr. Ruoff said this is the water-funded portion, similar to the sewer. The City's infrastructure within the project footprint of the federally funded project, maximizing the benefit of the cost to the project to the ratepayers performing those water system improvements as part of this project.

Preventative Program: There have been quite a few water main breaks impacting many customers. There was a period of time when a majority of Keene was without water. This program is to proactively do an assessment of pipes, identify location and make the necessary repairs. Mr. Lussier stated this project is being moved up and hoped the Council would support it because of the number of breaks that have happened on the 16-inch main that runs the length of Keene. Mr. Lussier added the crosstown main was installed in 1957, which is actually one of the younger pipes in our inventory. He added the ductile iron mains that that age should not be failing as they are. Staff feel it could be a manufacturer's defect and perhaps a batch of pipes would need to be replaced. This is why staff are trying to get this work done sooner than later. Councilor Chalice asked whether lining could be a remedy for these pipes. Mr. Lussier stated lining has been extremely successful for sewer and drainage gravity lines. A few years ago, the City did an experiment with water main lining process, where that experiment was tried but it was not a good application. It tended to clog up valves, hydrants, etc. The water main lining program was abandoned after that experiment. Because this is a transmission main, there are fewer services coming off it, fewer sidelines coming off it and hence, maybe some combination of repairs, replace, and lining might work. Staff will not know the scope of repair until they figure out what the issues are.

Water Distributions Improvement Program: Mr. Ruoff stated this is generally consistent with the previously approved CIP. This is essentially a two-part funding where staff look to get funding, first for design-related services and then construction for the following year. The first area would be downtown, Court Street, and Hastings Avenue (last of the previous master plans). Then, look at addressing a Citywide assessment.

Dam Maintenance Program: Babbidge and Woodward Dam are funded through the water program. What staff are looking to do is to improve the access roads for both those locations. Permitting has been approved to perform this work. At some point rehabilitation of the inlet pipes for both these locations would be necessary. However, the funding request for that has not been built into the CIP, but it is something that will need to be considered for the next update.

Bridge Program: Similar to the sewer utility, work for the bridge program, the non-participating water replacement work associated with bridge replacement projects is built into the water utility bridge program. This covers the water mains that are required to be replaced as part of the bridges and updated for the planned bridgework as part of the bridge program.

Valve Replacement Program Project: The engineering division in conjunction with the water sewer division identifies a list of valve replacements and sometimes additions to the water system that help with the operating of the water system. Staff are looking for a change from what was in the previous CIP. What staff are seeing is that every year they have enough valves for two years of work. Staff were looking for this upfront and then hoping to go back down to the

regularly scheduled number of valves. Yearly inflation has been factored into the price. For a contractor to install a 16-inch valve, it would cost the City about \$30,000.

Wellfield Upgrade Program: Mr. Costa stated the City's water supply is comprised of two surface water reservoirs and four groundwater wells located on West Street and Court Street. He stated these facilities are old, they have served the City well and it is time to do some upgrades.

FY26 funds the design for upgrades to the Court Street Well Field with construction happening in FY28. FY27 installation of a fence around the sanitary protective radius at the West Street well facility. The City accepted a grant for the other 1,000 feet, which will be part of the same project. FY33 will fund design improvements for the West Street well facility.

Mr. Costa stated it is anticipated that somewhere down the road, a new groundwater production well will be installed on City owned property on the Robertson field.

Water Treatment Facilities, HVAC, and AC Systems: Mr. Tarr stated both units are original equipment circa 1993. FY27 will fund the replacement of the air conditioning unit and associated equipment for controls. FY29 will replace the remainder of the HVAC and air exchange system.

Water Treatment Facility Instrumentation Replacement and Upgrade Program: Mr. Crowder stated the water treatment facility is equipped with online monitoring equipment that gives operators the ability to process changes to optimize the water treatment process. FY28 – Replacement of the online total organic carbon analyzer. This analyzer assists in the removal of disinfection by product precursors.

Water Treatment Facility, Water Pump, and Replacement Program: Mr. Tarr stated what staff is looking to do here is to continue with the water assets on the same line. Cleaning and rewiring of motors to keep those assets operating as long as possible. FY28 is Chapman Road pump station refurbishment. FY30, the Blackbrook Booster: updating or refurbishing those booster pumps.

Water Treatment Valve and Actuator Replacement Program: This is an ongoing project that staff are working on currently and want to continue on and replace all valves and actuators at the water plant for operating the filters themselves. The replacement will involve electronic actuators on most of the valves. Some of the valves that simply open and close will be electric, eliminating the majority of compressed air consumption at the water plant.

Wastegate Actuator Project: Mr. Tarr explained after a cleaning event the water is stored in a waste tank, and these tanks use actuators to open and close automatically. The actuators currently on the site are 1993 equipment and in FY28 staff is looking to replace that equipment in house.

Councilor Chadbourne referred to the Martell Court station and asked whether the issue with wipes still exist. Mr. Costa stated the City invested around \$1.5 million to put in a screening system at Martell Court so when non-flushable material comes into the station, it is screened, compacted and discharged into a dumpster, which is sent to the landfill. The Councilor asked whether there were any campaigns done discouraging about not flushing wipes. Mr. Costa the Industrial Pretreatment Coordinator did several videos. Ms. Landry stated an insert is added to

utility bills. Mr. Tarr stated the Blackbrook Pump Station still has this problem and at the Martell Court Pump Station they remove a four-yard dumpster every two weeks.

I) Equipment Fund

Asst. Public Works Director / Equipment Manager Jim Mumford addressed the Committee. The CIP for the Equipment Fund is a program that is used to replace as needed equipment. He stated there are four individuals who work in his department. He stated the equipment they purchase is either demo or purchased at a discounted rate usually less than state contract or government contract. Mr. Mumford stated the requested funds are to keep the fleet as modern as possible and as effective as possible. Much of the equipment they have is 20 years old.

Councilor Chalice stated she saw the truck staff created in order to be able to do photography through the pipes and felt it was very impressive. Mr. Mumford stated that vehicle was scheduled to be replaced about six years ago but because that vehicle was made out of aluminum, it did not need to be replaced.

Building Upgrade: FY28 – Mr. Mumford stated their building has not had upgrades since 2003. Staff is looking for funds to increase the size of the building by about 20 feet at the front, for better and wider doors. Mr. Lussier added a company called RTA performed a full assessment of fleet operations and offered a number of recommendations. Their recommendation was with respect to the facility itself: about twice the size of the facility that exists now. He stated they could not implement their recommendations with the current building without demolishing it and starting from scratch, which he stated was not possible. Hence, a modest upgrade or enlargement of the facility is staff's suggestion. He felt this was reasonable compromise to meet staff needs and being respectful of the limited resources.

Councilor Chadbourne noted there is equipment dating back to the 90s and felt that it was a testament to how well staff is maintaining and using this equipment.

5) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk