

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITY COUNCIL RULES OF ORDER
WORKSHOP MINUTES

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

6:00 PM

**Heberton Hall,
Keene Public Library**

Members Present:

Laura E. Tobin
Randy L. Filiault
Robert C. Williams
Edward J. Haas
Bryan J. Lake
Jacob R. Favolise
Catherine I. Workman
Bettina A. Chadbourne
Thomas F. Powers
Michele A. Chalice
Laura E. Ruttler-Miller
Molly V. Ellis

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

Members Not Present:

Philip M. Jones
Kris E. Roberts
Mitchell H. Greenwald

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Ferland, City Manager
Terri Hood, City Clerk
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney
Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager -
Facilities
Kari Chamberlain, Finance
Director/Treasurer
Daniel Langille, City Assessor
Paul Andrus, Community Development
Director
Andrew Mueller, IT Director
Jason Martin, Fire Chief
Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Parks and
Recreation Director
Donald Lussier, Public Works Director
Steven Stewart, Police Chief
Ryan Cooley, Airport Director
Shane Baker, Maintenance Manager -
Facilities
Andrew Keyser, Laboratory Manager
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer
Ben Hoy, Solid Waste Manager
Jim Mountford, Assistant Public Works
Director/Division Head - Fleet
Mitchell Smith, Highway Operations
Manager
Ben Crowder, Water/Sewer Operations
Manager
Aaron Costa, Assistant Public Works
Director/ Division Head - Utilities
Gregory Seymour, Deputy Fire Chief
William Stroup, Thayer Trustee (Library)

1) Call to Order

The Capital Improvements Program for fiscal years 2027–2033 City Council Workshop was called to order at 5:30 PM.

1) Department Displays and Project Overviews

Donald Lussier, Public Works Director, indicated the first portion of the meeting was an opportunity for all attendees to mingle, look at the departmental displays for each CIP item and ask questions from the various departments.

2) Introduction – City Manager

The City Manager began by thanking the Council, the Planning Board, and the public for being there. Their participation at this early stage is important and appreciated.

City Manager Ferland acknowledged that we started this process a bit later than we typically do. Our Finance team is entirely new, and this is their first time working through a full Capital Improvement Program update. That is no small undertaking.

The City Manager recognized the significant work of our Finance Director and the department head team in getting us to this point. She also specifically recognized Don Lussier for the work that he and his Office Manager Andrea Bixby did to organize tonight's presentation. The CIP is a complex, detail-oriented process that requires coordination across every department, and they have done an excellent job stepping into that responsibility.

The City Manager explained that the financial worksheet outlines the proposed funding plan. By the end of next week, we hope to have the full CIP books available for Planning Board and Council members, including the detailed project sheets.

City Manager Ferland outlined the agenda, which included department presentations until about 7:10 PM, followed by a Q&A, and concluded by 7:30 PM. Each department has about 5 minutes to present an overview.

Ms. Ferland continued to explain that this marks the beginning of our Capital Improvement Program review with the Council in a workshop setting. She emphasized that this workshop was just the start of the work. Over the coming weeks, we will continue to fine-tune and ultimately finalize recommendations for Council and Planning Board approval. The CIP is a dynamic planning document, and the discussions that begin here will evolve as we review priorities, fiscal capacity, and long-term community needs.

The start of capital planning is also the start of our operating budget preparation. While we are reviewing long-term capital investments, departments are simultaneously preparing their operating budget submissions. Throughout this month, department heads will present their operating budget recommendations to me and to the Finance Department for review. The budget process culminates in June, when the Council adopts the annual operating budget. That adopted budget will incorporate the first year of the Capital Improvement Program, as amended and approved by the Council. In that way, the capital plan and the operating budget are directly linked. Departments move from capital planning discussions directly into developing their operating proposals, ensuring that long-term investments and day-to-day service delivery remain aligned.

Tonight's discussion sets the foundation for that work. After tonight, we will finalize the Capital Improvement Program book, which will include project sheets outlining descriptions, schedules, and financial plans for projects through 2033.

The CIP is a seven-year plan, with projections beyond those seven years included in the appendix. It includes projects with an estimated cost exceeding \$50,000 and a useful life of at least 5 years. In addition, capital programs include recurring investments, often associated with asset management plans.

Tonight, and during the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee presentations, we will focus primarily on the first two years of the plan and highlight new projects coming onto the schedule. The first year is the most critical because it will be incorporated into the next operating budget proposal, which is FY27.

Working to accomplish the City's Master Plan and City Council's goals requires many smaller department-level plans. Implementation of those plans occurs incrementally, often over several years and therefore across several budgets. That is why many of you have heard about some of these projects multiple times. Projects move gradually through the planning process until they are ready for implementation.

Ultimately, the CIP is a financial planning tool that is updated as we move closer to implementation. Occasionally, projects are presented to and approved by the City Council outside of the formal CIP cycle, particularly when grant funding or partnership opportunities arise. As a planning document, the CIP does not bind any public body to undertake a project. It serves as a guide for the Council and Planning Board to identify and schedule needed improvements that align with our Master Plan and to forecast their financial impact.

The reality is that we will always have more needs and wants than available funding. Sidewalk investments may be a priority for one councilor, while lowering debt levels may be a priority for another. Our fiscal policy, Council goals, Master Plan, and department-level plans serve as our roadmap as we balance those interests.

The City Manager highlighted a few key points.

- Maintaining a consistent level of capital investment helps mitigate the impact of large projects. With advance planning, we can spread costs over multiple years using capital reserve funds and other financial tools, including grants that align with project timelines.
- At the bottom of the "Projects By funding Source" spreadsheet, you will see the internal calculation we use to determine how many new dollars are needed in each year of the plan, based on what we know today. Using that guide, there is currently no capacity for new projects until FY30/31 unless we choose to spend more, borrow more, shift projects, remove projects, or successfully secure grants and other funding sources.
- The fund balance is being used to help mitigate capital costs. In the first year of the proposed plan, a significant amount of fund balance is applied to offset the Downtown Infrastructure Project. Use of the fund balance at this level is not sustainable in the long term and will need to be monitored carefully. The fund balance increases when expenditure comes in under budget or when revenue exceeds projections.

- In the last CIP update, the former Fire Chief removed Engine 2 from the fleet plan. Chief Martin has added it back, which aligns with the addition of eight firefighters over the past several years.
- The West Keene Fire Station remains a placeholder while we pursue grant funding. The Maple Avenue location has been secured, and the next step will be seeking funding for preliminary design.
- The Police Department's body-worn cameras and in-car video system will need replacement in the coming years. We are applying this year for congressionally directed funding through Senator Shaheen's office. If unsuccessful, we will apply again next year. The project remains in the plan with grant funding identified as a source, and adjustments will be made if necessary.
- We are also applying for grant funding this year for Robin Hood Park Phase I and the Black Brook Pump Station. If successful, those awards would free up funding capacity elsewhere in the plan.

This is a good plan, but it is based on what we know today. It will continue to evolve as new information becomes available. Some projects have steadily moved up in the schedule. Others remain placeholders, such as Fire Station 2, where we know action will eventually be required but funding has not yet been identified.

Strong capital planning depends on strong asset management. Over the past several years, the City has taken important steps to improve these practices. We recently incorporated sidewalks into our formal asset management program, and we have now begun inventorying and planning for street trees. While these assets have always received attention, creating inventories and formal investment plans allows for a more strategic and informed approach.

Ms. Ferland is proud of the Department's continued efforts, especially in public works and engineering, to strengthen our capital asset planning and management strategies.

The City Manager turned it over to Don Lussier to start the PowerPoint presentations with Jason Martin, Fire Chief, as the first presenter.

3) PowerPoint Presentations
a. Fire Department:

Jason Martin, Fire Chief, presented five projects.

- Central Fire Station Alerting System – FY28 - \$104,000: The old system is outdated and failing. The new system will reduce cardiac stress on responders while improving turnout times and dispatch and fire department communications.
- Durable Medical Equipment – FY27 - \$150,235: This is a vital piece of equipment that specializes in advanced life support equipment. It will replace 5 Zol Z-Vent Mechanical Ventilators with a seven-year service life.
- Portable Radios – FY27 - \$140,000; FY28 - \$140,000; FY29 - \$140,000: The current portable radios are at the end of support. There are 65 portable radios to be replaced over a three-year cycle to improve interoperability and communication quality.

- Ambulance Replacement – FY28 - \$533,595: The ambulances are on a nine-year replacement schedule. This will replace the 19A3 unit, having a power load capability with a power cot. This will make 10,000 responses over its lifespan.
- Technical Rescue Equipment – FY28 - \$65,000: This is a specialized, advanced technical equipment with a ten-year replacement per the manufacturer and NFPA, National Fire Protection Association. The Keene Fire Department is the only technical rescue team in southwestern New Hampshire. The disciplines included: trench, confined space, high-angle, swift water, and building collapse.

The next department was presented by Parks and Recreation Director Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, who outlined six projects.

b. Parks and Recreation:

- Robin Hood Park Renovation Project – FY27 - \$2,692,000 & FY 28 - \$1,175,000: The scope will be in a two-phase process. Phase one will be refurbishing the pool and constructing an inclusive playground structure. Phase two will focus on improving the camp building and bathrooms, creating a multi-sport court, upgrading parking lots, and enhancing traffic flow.
- Open Space & Trail Program – FY27- \$66,000 & FY28 - \$133,000: In FY27, Jonathan Daniels Trail Rehabilitation and paving Appel Way. In FY28, Robin Hood Park Trail, as well as Beech Hill Trail enhancements.
- Municipal Parks Maintenance Program - FY27 - \$163,530 & FY 28 - \$310,500: Through grant match funding from the programs, Durling & O’Neal irrigation upgrades; Wheelock Park playground structure replacement, and accessible surfacing as well.
- Park Forest Sustainability Project – FY27 - \$135,000 & FY28 \$125,000: In FY27, Dinsmoor Woods red pine harvest and understory maintenance along Maple Avenue. In FY28, Wheelock Park red pine harvest and native tree installation, along with Russell Park tree plantings.
- Ashuelot Green Space Project – FY27 - \$200,000 & FY28 - \$1,000,000: Through a Landmark Conservation grant and a private donor of \$35,000 starting in FY27, begin the design process; create a natural playground; create a canoe/kayak launch; install accessible public restrooms; and, with completion in FY28, have enhanced parking spaces for Ashuelot River Park.
- Trail Bridge Maintenance Program – FY27 - \$130,000 & FY28 - \$0: By the end of FY28, Ashuelot Rail Trail Trestle Bridge shall be rehabilitated.

The next department, Police, was presented by Police Chief Steve Stewart, who outlined three projects.

c. Police Department:

- Exacom Hindsight – FY27 - \$41,300: In order to maintain national accreditation, the telephone and radio communications records will be replaced. This equipment replacement will provide increased accuracy and accountability. The newer equipment will transition into a more affordable cloud-based solution.

- Body and In-Car Camera Systems Replacement – FY29 - \$97,900: The camera systems have enhanced transparency and public trust through accountability and protection for our officers, including improved evidence collection. This also represents a one-year contract renewal with our current vendor.
- Portable Radio Replacement – FY29 - \$86,328: This is the first of a three-year replacement program, and the total cost of the program is approximately \$271,928. Vendor-supported lifespan for this equipment is typically 7–10 years; FY29 will represent the full 10 years for the current equipment.

The next department, Facilities, was presented by Deputy City Manager - Facilities, Andy Bohannon, who outlined five projects.

d. Facilities:

- Municipal Building Capital Maintenance Program – FY27 - \$100,000 & FY28 - \$100,00: This project would upgrade building automation systems from N4 to N5, including Central Fire. A mini split heat pump in Council Chambers to assist in a more consistent temperature. It will also include replacing water expansion tanks and hot water circulation pumps at Public Works.
- West Keene Fire Station – FY28 - \$750,000: This would cover a schematic design, grant-ready, to relocate to Maple Ave next to Cheshire Medical. The construction is contingent on grant funding and would be in FY30.
- HVAC and Energy Conservation – FY27 - \$179,000 & FY28 - \$75,000: The HVAC would have upgrades to the City Hall electrical service and distribution system and update the facilities assessment report.
- Paving Parking Lots Program – FY27 - \$379,300 & FY28 - \$382,600: The parking lots of the Airport and Recreation Center will be rehabilitated. In future years, the rehabilitation of the Police and Library parking lots will be scheduled.
- Municipal Building Roofs Program – FY27 - \$227,875 & FY28 - \$402,250: The roof areas at the Recreation Center: Multi-purpose room, storage, and classrooms. The Airport terminal is being funded with an 80/20 split, with an FAA grant covering most of the cost. The Library, City Hall, and Central Fire Station roofs will occur in future years.

Mr. Bohannon turned the presentation over to Andrew Mueller, Information Technology Director.

e. Information Technology:

- Organizational Level Equipment Replacement – FY27 - \$129,000 & FY28 - \$229,000: Ensure that the hardware is supported and refresh any hardware and software to match the changing needs of the organization.

Mr. Mueller introduced Ryan Cooley, Airport Director, to discuss his five projects.

f. Airport:

- Wildlife Perimeter Fence Phase III (Construction) – FY27 - \$3,968,000: This phase of the project will be to install approximately 17,000 linear feet of wildlife perimeter fencing to enhance airfield security, reduce wildlife incursions, and improve overall operational safety.
- Snow Removal Equipment – FY27 - \$1,555,556: Replace a dump truck and the large runway broom.
- Pavement Maintenance & Marking – FY27 - \$166,666: Restore and refresh critical airfield pavement markings to maintain compliance, enhance pilot situational awareness, and ensure continued operational safety.
- Airport Obstruction Management – FY27 - \$500,000 & FY28 - \$650,000: Identify, evaluate, and remove vegetation penetrating protected airspace surfaces to preserve approach and departure clearances and maintain FAA safety standards.
- Terminal Apron Expansion – FY30 - \$3,661,112: Add apron space and tie-downs to facilitate larger aircraft and additional small aircraft.

Mr. Cooley stated that all these projects would be eligible for 90% federal and 5% state funding. Mr. Cooley then introduced Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer, to go over the Public Works: General Fund presentations.

g. Public Works: General Fund:

- Road Preservations and Rehabilitation Program – FY27 \$1,400,800 & FY28 - \$1,663,800: The scope of the project is in FY27 Downtown, the rebuild of Main Street and Central Square Streets. In FY28, Roxbury Street, Emerald Street, Whitcomb's Mill Road, and surrounding streets are scheduled for rehabilitation. The selection criteria included vehicle trip data, utility work, road condition assessment, rideability scoring, and street grouping. The benefits are to extend the serviceable life of the roads and minimize operating and maintenance costs for City-performed road repairs.
- Stormwater Resiliency Program – FY27 - \$3,509,300 & FY28 - \$1,230,700: The scope of the project includes, in FY27, Downtown, Central Square, and Main Street corrugated metal pipe culvert and block catch basin and drain manhole replacement; in FY28, Court Street; and in FY29, Church Street.
- West Street Corridor Improvements Project – FY27 - \$829,441 & FY30 - \$334,862: The funding is from NHDOT as an 80/20 split, funding the project for the reconstruction of West Street from Main Street to NH Rte. 9. The scope will include road realignment and reconstruction, water and sewer main replacement, traffic signals, and pedestrian and bicycle accessibility improvements. The NHDOT has planned funding in FY28 for preliminary and final design, with planned funding in FY33 for construction.
- Lower Winchester Street Corridor Improvements Projects – FY27 - \$624,200 & FY30 - \$10,274,231: The funding is an inter-community, NHDOT 80/20 funded project with the Town of Swanzey for the reconstruction of West Lower Winchester Street from the NH Rte. 9 to the Swanzey town line. The scope includes road realignment, two roundabouts, bridge replacement, sewer and main replacement, and pedestrian and bicycle accessibility

improvements. This is the right-of-way phase and final design phases, with NHDOT planned funding in FY30 for construction.

- Downtown Restroom Project – FY28 - \$442,000: The City has not had a public restroom in the Downtown area for several years. The project was developed to support downtown activities, visitors, and the community. The scope includes the design, permitting, furnishing, and installation of a self-cleaning public restroom for the Downtown area, in proximity to the proposed Gilbo Ave Solar Pavilion Project, to serve dual purposes: housing electrical components in a separate space within the building.
- Gilbo Avenue Solar Pavilion Project – FY27 - \$2,196,000: Northern Borders Timber for Transit, federal grant 80/20 project funding for the design and construction of the Gilbo Ave Solar Pavilion. The scope is currently in preliminary design and includes the design, permitting, and construction of a 30-foot by 230-foot timber frame covered structure with a rooftop photovoltaic (PV) solar array that will generate enough energy to offset the City's Downtown electrical costs.

Mr. Ruoff continued the next presentation for Chelsea North of the Parking Fund.

h. Parking Fund:

- Surface Parking Lot Maintenance Program – FY28 - \$58,400; FY30 - \$97,800; & FY32 - \$69,300: The City owns and maintains six public lots: Gilbo Ave (East and West Lots), Wells Street, Commercial Street, Elm Street, and the Library Annex. In FY28, rehabilitation or replacement of parking lot amenities. FY 30, rehabilitation or replacement of parking kiosks, re-seal Commercial and Gilbo Lots (last done in FY22). In FY32, rehabilitation and crack seal pavement at Gilbo, Elm, and Wells Street Lots (last done in FY25).
- City Hall Parking Structure Maintenance Program – FY27 - \$96,000; FY30 - \$74,000; FY33 - \$50,000: The City Hall parking garage was constructed in the late 1980's and requires rehabilitation, repairs, and replacement for wear and use every three to four years. The scope will begin in FY27 with structure repairs, traffic membrane, and miscellaneous improvements. In FY30, re-seal concrete surfaces to extend the facility's serviceable life.
- Wells Street Parking Structure Maintenance Program – FY 28 - \$50,000 & FY32 - \$65,000: The Wells Street parking garage was constructed in 1998 and requires rehabilitation, repairs and replacement for wear and use every three to four years. The scope will be in FY28, clean, repair, and recoat metal surfaces and railings. In FY32, re-seal concrete surfaces to extend the facility's serviceable life. Funding years will alternate from the City Hall Garage planned funding years.
- EV Car Charging Stations Program – FY29 - \$50,000 & FY32 - \$232,800: The City furnished and installed EV car charging stations in 2015, with planned additional stations in FY27 in the 2025–2031 CIP. With a noted decline in use, this purchase of additional EV charging stations has been pushed further out to assess and confirm the need and demand for additional stations. The scope in FY29 will be to maintain and rehab existing stations. In FY32, furnish and install five dual-port EV car charging stations.

Mr. Ruoff finished his presentation and turned it over to Ben Hoy, Solid Waste Manager.

i. Solid Waste Fund:

- Fire Suppression System Project – FY27 - \$250,000: The facility has had five recent fires with property and equipment damage. There is an existing 30,000-gallon cistern and an existing sprinkler head. The project involves connecting the water tank to the sprinklers. The current system is dry. This would add a fire pump and piping to sprinkler heads for immediate water response.
- Recycling Equipment Replacement – FY28 - \$75,000: The current equipment is 30+ years old. Recent contract to replace the in-feed and sort line conveyors. The cross-belt magnet is planned for FY28. The Eddie Current separator will need to be replaced in the coming years. The replacement or rebuilding of the bailer is planned for FY31.

Mr. Hoy introduced Aaron Costa, Assistant Public Works Director/Division Head – Utilities, to present on the Sewer Fund with the assistance of Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer, and Andrew Keyser, Laboratory Manager.

j. Sewer Fund:

- Blackbrook Wastewater Pump Station Upgrade – FY27 - \$300,000 & FY29 - \$1,910,000: This is to improve the current system with design upgrades to the station, including pumps, motors, and all related electrical gear. New backup power generator for operation during power outages. New screening technology for trash removal from the wastewater stream. The new station will enable further growth in the industrial park.
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Chemical Feed System Upgrade Project – FY 27 - \$100,000 & FY29 - \$500,000: This upgrade will provide better pricing: tote price is 0.168/lb., and the bulk price is 0.109/lb. It would save \$30,000 to \$43,000 annually, depending on usage. It is safer since it eliminates potentially hazardous transport of dangerous chemicals by personnel and heavy equipment. Better processes would keep chemicals and equipment from exposure to harsh weather, which can affect the pumping process.
- Clarifier Equipment Replacement Project – FY27 - \$40,000 & FY28 - \$240,000: Less metals since it replaces aluminum weirs and baffles with composite materials, lowering exposure to aluminum limits required by discharge permit. It produces better water by a smoother transfer of water through the new system, reducing fouling potential and leading to higher-quality effluence for receiving waters.
- Sewer Improvements Program – FY 27 - \$1,511,700 & FY28 - \$1,713,400: The scope of this program will be in FY27 the downtown, replace 5,000 feet of the undersized pre-1900 sewer main and laterals. In FY28, George Street and Sullivan Street will replace 3,000 feet of 1920s sewer main and laterals. The benefits are that it eliminates infiltration into the system, reduces maintenance and operating wastewater treatment costs for the City and Property Owners, and clears and repairs the sewer main and laterals.
- Sewer Main Lining Program – FY29 - \$225,000 & FY30 - \$232,900: The scope of this program is the lining of the City's existing sewer mains, where feasible, based on the existing conditions. The benefits will eliminate infiltration into the system, reduce maintenance, operating wastewater treatment costs to the City and Property Owners, and

clear and repair the sewer main and laterals. Less costly, less disturbance, and less required road repair as compared to conventional dig replacement methods.

- Wastewater Treatment Plant Laboratory Instrumentation & Equipment Replacement Program – FY 27 - \$105,000 for Sewer & \$105,000 for Water: The program would replace the Atomic Absorption Spectrometer with the Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometer (ICP-MS). Improved detection of metals and minerals: more elements tested at a lower concentration. Higher throughput with more samples analyzed in less time, improved monitoring programs. Testing wastewater for regulatory compliance and monitoring drinking water quality.

Mr. Costa continued with another fund presentation, Water Fund, with Ben Crowder, Water/Sewer Operations Manager, and with Mr. Rouff.

k. Water Fund:

- Well Field Upgrade Program – FY27 - \$35,000 & FY28 - \$4,229,000: Design for water quality upgrades at the Court St well Fields with construction funds in FY28. Complete renovations of three wells and all related electrical components will improve energy efficiency. Installation of fencing around the sanitary protective radius at the West St Well in FY27 will provide some security.
- Glenn Road and Fox Avenue Water Pump Station Project – FY27 - \$190,000: Complete rehabilitation of Glenn Road water booster station, including pumps, motors, and more efficient electrical components, will provide energy savings. New equipment will enable better fire flow and overall water quality, improving safety and quality. In FY30, funds are similarly upgraded to the Fox Ave booster Station.
- Bulk Water Fill Station – FY27 - \$121,000: Allows water haulers the opportunity to purchase water 24/7/365 with a user-friendly touch screen and a credit card reader for more convenience. A different rate structure will allow an opportunity for a new revenue source for the City.
- Water Distribution System Improvements Program – FY27 - \$1,814,500 & FY28 - \$1,637,900: In FY27, in the Downtown, replace 5,150 feet of pre-1900's water main. In FY28, on Hastings Avenue, replace 3,400 feet of 1920's water main. This will improve water system quality and water pressure, and reduce water main breaks, by increasing pipe sizes and interconnecting to the replacement water mains.
- Transmission Water Main Inspection and Condition Assessment Project – FY27 - \$250,000: The scope of this project is to perform an inspection of the City's existing 16-inch transmission water main and develop recommendations for repairs. Minimize water main breaks and disruptions to water system availability by identifying the necessary extents of water main repairs requiring repair and/or replacement, and improve water quality.

Mr. Ruoff introduced Jim Mountford, Assistant Public Works Director/Division Head – Fleet, for the final presentation of the evening.

I. Equipment Fund:

- Equipment Replacement Program – FY27 - \$943,233 & FY28 - \$884,666: There are 162 vehicles within the City of Keene. Based on age, condition, trade-in value, and user needs. Retired patrol cars to be recycled. Replacement only at the end of useful life.
- Fleet Building Upgrade – FY 28 - \$110,000 & FY29 - \$900,000: The number of bays that are currently available is half of what is required. The bay size is smaller than optimal, making it difficult to service some of the city’s vehicles. The lack of space and overhead doors too small are part of the issues with the current facility as is.

4) Q&A with Don Lussier and the City Manager

Mr. Lussier and the City Manager opened the floor for any questions that the audience had regarding the presentations.

Councilor Molly Ellis wanted clarification on the 80/20 split as to what the City’s portion of the split is. The reply was that the City would be responsible for 20% of the project's total cost.

Councilor Laura Ruttle-Miller wanted more clarification on the Central Fire Station Alerting System. Fire Chief Jason Martin explained that the current wake-up system is very loud, and the new system is a low, gentle sound with lights. This will be kinder to the body, as it needs to be awakened for the emergency the crew needs to attend.

Councilor Bettina Chadbourne questioned what happens to the old equipment when it is replaced with new equipment; does it get traded in under the new contract? Or can another community purchase it? Fire Chief said it depends. If they know a community is looking for one of these items, they will contact the contracting company to purchase it through them, but ultimately, they are generally traded in under the new contract.

Councilor Ed Haas commented positively about the Ashuelot Green Space Project and asked about the Eddie Current, referencing the Recycling Equipment Replacement Project. Mr. Hoy explained that the Eddie Current is not in service at this time and is 30 years old; it is in dire need of replacement, but they are working to keep it in some working condition.

Councilor Michele Chalice inquired about the term “Climate Resilience” not being used frequently. Ms. Ferland said that the 5-megawatt airport solar project furthers this priority. Mr. Lussier agreed and stated that a study on the Stormwater Program, the Stormwater Resiliency Program, in the CIP presentation had touched on this concern as well.

Mayor Kahn commented that the Goose Down Bridge has finally reached the \$10,000 community donation, which means Savings Bank of Walpole will make a \$10,000 match toward this project.

The Mayor continued with the question about the potholes not keeping the fill on Court Street. He was wondering whether this was sewer and drainage from the northernmost end, not from the downtown area to the hospital. Mr. Ruoff addressed this concern, stating that the unspent funds will assist in the improvements and are planned for FY28 or FY29.

The last question that the Mayor asked was on the West Street Improvements. He stated that the State of New Hampshire has this project slated for FY33. Mr. Lussier replied that construction will start during FY 32 and is still in the 10-year plan design in FY 27.

Councilor Jacob Favolise needed more clarification on the new airport surplus equipment. Mr. Cooley responded that the FAA has strict regulations and rules on how many pieces of equipment an airport can have on site in its possession. The replacement costs on a new dump truck and the large runway broom will be 5% to the City.

Councilor Laura Tobin asked about the EV Car Charging Stations Program. Mr. Ruoff thinks it has been declining and would like to hold off to reevaluate this situation at a later point after more information has been gathered.

Councilor Bettina Chadbourne wanted more elaboration on the Trial Rehab project. Ms. Fiske-Hennessey explained that it is mostly about erosion and making the trails more accessible for all.

Councilor Chadbourne continued with wanting more clarification on the tree removal. Does the person who takes the lumber also take the brush piles and logs, or can these be left for a natural habitat for the local animals? Ms. Fiske-Hennessey explained that the proposal with the contract will be discussed in a future Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee Meeting.

Councilor Chadbourne asked for more explanation on the Ashuelot Green Space Project. She did not see plans for playground equipment. Ms. Fiske-Hennessey explained that the plans include a natural playground.

Councilor Tobin expressed her appreciation for Mr. Ruoff's enthusiasm on the topic of water mains.

Councilor Chadbourne needed more clarification on the Gilbo Avenue Solar Pavilion Project. Mr. Ruoff explained that the structure's size could generate more than enough electricity for downtown. Councilor Chalice wanted to be sure that the City keeps the Farmers' Market in mind while constructing this solar pavilion.

The City Manager stated that the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee department presentations start Tuesday, March 10 at 5:30 PM (be sure to review the start times for FOP in March as there are special meetings and earlier start times). The CIP public hearing is on March 19. Planning board presentation on March 23, Council adoption on April 2, 2026.

The City Manager thanked the Councilors for their engagement in this process.

There being no further business, the City Manager adjourned the meeting at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Heather Fitz-Simon, Administrative Assistant

Reviewed & Edited by,
Terri Hood, City Clerk