



City of Concord

Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, April 18, 2022

4:30 PM

City Hall
41 Green Street, 2nd Floor Conference
Room

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM.

Present:

City Councilors - Keith Nyhan (Chairman), Byron Champlin, Candace White Bouchard, Fred Keach, Gail Matson and Mayor Jim Bouley.

City Staff - Thomas Aspell, Jr., City Manager; Brian LeBrun, Deputy City Manager - Finance; Carlos Baia, Deputy City Manager - Development; Bob McManus, Director of OMB; Rebekah Dougherty, Budget Analyst; John Chisholm, Interim Fire Chief; Crayton Brubaker, Community Development Specialist; and Sue Stevens, Executive Assistant.

Excused: City Councilor Amanda Grady Sexton.

2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft minutes from the March 21, 2022 meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

3. Quarterly Ambulance Billing and Balance Billing Discussion

Interim Fire Chief John Chisholm discussed FY 2022, 3rd Quarter EMS billing receivables and allowances, of which there has been little change from previous quarters. He explained that the balance is slightly higher this quarter due to the fact that the billing company is beginning to get caught up after being short staffed and running behind. The collection rate has dropped from the 73-74% range, down to 68.84%, as we have asked the billing company to hold claims for a little longer.

Chairman Nyhan asked about balance billing. Interim Chief Chisholm indicated that, in 2021, \$200,000 was balance billed. Chairman Nyhan asked how much of that was billed to Concord residents. Interim Chief Chisholm said he is digging down deeper for that answer and will get it to the committee as soon as possible.

Chairman Nyhan asked if the balance billing was for co-pays and deductibles. Interim Chief Chisholm indicated that anything not paid by the insurance company is balance billed to the patient, and that co-pays and deductibles are not included. Chairman Nyhan asked if the City allows payment plans. Interim Chief Chisholm indicated that we do accept payment plans and that the City also has a forgiveness program that is coordinated through the City's Human Services Department for those who are unable to pay and who qualify.

4. Referral from Councilor Kretovic on behalf of the Ad-Hoc Gully Hill Road Committee

Councilor White Bouchard, a member of the Ad-Hoc Gully Hill Road Committee, explained that the Ad-Hoc Committee met twice to discuss options for the use of the land along the Merrimack River, between Loudon Road and Manchester Street, including whether to keep using it for commercial farming or use it for community gardens, which has been proposed. She noted that the Ad-Hoc Committee supported the idea of community gardens, but felt that this location was not appropriate. The majority of the Ad-Hoc Committee members agreed that maintaining commercial farming at this location would be the best use of the land. Councilor White Bouchard noted that the Ad-Hoc Committee had received testimony from about a dozen farmers and residents in support of continuing to use this land for commercial farming. She also suggested that FPAC committee members read testimony that was received from Ralph Jimenez, a former Concord Monitor reporter who is very involved in the Sycamore Gardens at NHTI and the community gardens on Clinton Street, which are owned by the State. She said his testimony was very informative and was also in support of continuing to use this land for commercial farming.

Councilor White Bouchard noted that the Conservation Commission, who, in the early stages of discussing this matter, supported the concept of using this land for community gardens; decided at their most recent meeting that they would like to keep this land managed by farmers.

It was noted that the farmers currently leasing the property are not Concord residents. Councilor White Bouchard indicated that, although not Concord residents, they are from a five-generation dairy farm who sells milk to a Concord business (Hood).

Mayor Bouley suggested that the City continue to operate as it always has by issuing an RFP for commercial agricultural use of the land. Councilor White Bouchard noted that the short-term, three-year leases don't allow farmers to invest

in the land and suggested the City consider lengthening the terms in the RFP.

As a side note, Mayor Bouley mentioned that he had spoken with Ralph Jimenez and asked him what he'd like/need for the future operation of the community gardens. Mr. Jimenez indicated that he would like water at the gardens. The Mayor suggested that the City keep this in mind when infrastructure work takes place for the new middle school to be built on Clinton Street.

A motion was made and seconded to recommend that City Council proceed with an RFP for commercial agricultural use of this land, with a five-year term and the option for four, five-year renewals; and include in the agreement to allow the successful bidder to sublet a portion of the leased property, with the approval of the City. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

5. Quarterly Financial Statements

Deputy City Manager Brian LeBrun briefly discussed the financial statements for the period ending March 31, 2022. He noted that motor vehicle registration revenue is down slightly from FY 2021, but still on target with budget. In other revenue, the City has received \$321,800 to date in insurance distributions and credits, which represents the General Fund portion of the Worker's Compensation, Property & Liability, and Unemployment Premium Holiday received from Primex; \$1,185,200 has been received in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) revenue; revenue for Police Special Duty charges is 145% of budget and there is an offsetting overtime expense to this revenue; ambulance charges are \$294,000 better than FY 2021 and ahead of budget by 88% year to date; and in Community Development, revenue for Construction Permits is short of budget by 59%, and revenue for review fees is ahead of budget by 149% to date.

Deputy City Manager LeBrun indicated that expense items are mainly on track with budget. He explained that the Fire Department has already spent 93% of its overtime budget, due to the fact that they have staff working overtime to cover for an employee who has been out on temporary alternate duty, as well as for three employees who were deployed to assist with national emergencies. Deputy City Manager LeBrun indicated that although Fire Overtime expenses will likely be over budget, he is anticipating meeting overall Citywide budget appropriations. Should that not happen, it would require requesting a supplemental appropriation and using excess revenues to support the request. When asked how much of a supplemental appropriation he would anticipate, Deputy City Manager LeBrun responded that it would likely be \$200,000 to \$300,000. Mayor Bouley asked when City Administration would know if we will need a supplemental appropriation, to which

Deputy City Manager LeBrun responded July or August.

6. Other

Councilor Keach asked if downtown businesses lying within the Downtown Solid Waste District are charged the same amount as downtown residential properties for trash removal. To which the answer was yes. He feels this is unfair, as businesses, especially restaurants, produce a lot more garbage than most residences. He requested that the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) look into this matter. Chairman Nyhan, who is a member of SWAC, indicated that he will ask the committee staff person to add this topic to the next SWAC meeting agenda.

7. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The motion was approved with a unanimous voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.