



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Thomas J. Aspell, Jr., City Manager
DATE: April 25, 2018
SUBJECT: 2018 – 2019 City Council Priorities

Recommendation

Accept this report as to the current status of the City Council Priorities established on January 29, 2018.

Background

Members of the City Council met on January 29, 2018 to discuss and set priorities for the remainder of Calendar Year 2018, as well as for Calendar Year 2019.

Discussion

Listed below, in ranked order, are the accepted priorities, projects and ongoing initiatives; and their respective statuses as of March 31, 2018.

GOAL 1. BALANCED BUDGET ISSUES: FY 2019 and 2020

a) Collective Bargaining/Contract Negotiations

Status: The City is currently under contract with all six of its labor unions. The City and the Concord Fire Officers Association (CFOA) have just begun negotiations, as the CFOA collective bargaining agreement expires on July 1, 2018.

b) Health Insurance Costs

Status: Health insurance costs will increase in FY 2019. The City was quoted a 9.9% not to exceed rate from its carrier, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, effective July 1, 2018, and was able to negotiate an 8.9% final increase in rates. Costs continue to rise in health care, overall, and the City competes in a tight market to recruit and retain talent, therefore providing competitive health insurance is a must. All City employees now pay at least 10% of the premium costs for health insurance. The City provides insurance to retirees as well, and, this year, the medical portion of the plan was renewed with a 1.48% increase, and the prescription plan was renewed at a 12.5% increase. This will result in an increase of approximately \$30,000 for the retiree health insurance subsidy.

c) Capital Financing Alternatives/Storm Water Utility

Status: City Administration has scheduled an internal meeting to begin discussions on this utility.

d) Enterprise Fund Approach

Status: The Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee discussed Enterprise Funds at their April 16, 2018 meeting.

GOAL 2. COMMUNITY-WIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES TO EXPAND TAX BASE

Status: An Economic Development Marketing Tool Kit and a Strategic Plan has been drafted and accepted by City Council. The new Economic Development website is now live. Form-based code consultants have been retained and stakeholder meetings have been held.

City Council accepted the donation of labor and appropriated funds to renovate the terminal lobby and pilots' lounge at the Concord Municipal Airport, to make this entrance into Concord more attractive.

City Council authorized ArgenTech Solutions, Inc., to apply for an FAA waiver to locate a drone operations training company at the Concord Municipal Airport.

Upon unanimous recommendation of the Planning Board, the City Council unanimously approved the rezoning of 28.5 acres of property along Whitney Road from Urban Commercial and Industrial to Gateway Performance to encourage the development of said property.

GOAL 3. PUBLIC SAFETY WORK / CONTINUED SUPPORT OF SOCIAL SAFETY NETWORK

a) Opioid/Substance Abuse

Status: The Police Department continues to take an aggressive stance in combating the opioid and illegal drug crisis facing the City. The Department has worked closely with other stakeholders on this matter, to include other police agencies, service providers, and other branches of the criminal justice system. The Department is currently working directly with Riverbend's Choices, an initiative designed to provide comprehensive treatment services for those suffering from substance abuse issues. The Department will continue these efforts and regularly assess personnel assignments and initiatives to most effectively address illegal drug usage in the city.

During the first three months of 2018, the Police Department has made 80 arrests of individuals with illegal drug related charges. The Department is using Project Granite Shield grant funds, received last fall, to cover overtime costs in conducting illegal drug investigations in the City of Concord and surrounding towns.

The Police Department also continues its involvement with the Merrimack County Drug Court Initiative. As part of this initiative, the Department has a member assigned to the Drug Court Team. The Team meets weekly to discuss the progress of individuals that have been assigned to participate in the Drug Court process. The Team regularly

evaluates the status of each individual in the program and makes recommendations based upon the individual's performance. The Department conducts curfew checks on each participant that resides in the City of Concord.

b) Community Policing

Status: Through the first three months of 2018, the Police Department has been involved in a number of initiatives designed to further its relationship with the community. The Department has hosted several community meetings involving the New American community at "Blue and You" events. At these events, officers meet with the New American Community and discuss ways to strengthen their relationship with the Department, as well as how to better understand American law enforcement. In turn, Department members learn more about their culture.

The Police Department participated in several other programs to help promote community interaction with children and adults. The Department conducted several "Lunch with a Cop" and "Police Readers" events throughout the schools in the Concord and Merrimack Valley School Districts.

Through the first three months of 2018, the Department sponsored one Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) program. RAD is a comprehensive self-defense course for women and includes situational awareness, prevention, risk reduction and avoidance, and progresses to the basics of hands-on defense training. The RAD system is dedicated to teaching women defensive concepts and techniques against various types of assault by utilizing easy, effective, and proven self-defense tactics. The system of realistic defense provides women with the knowledge to make an educated decision about resistance.

Due to the recent trend of mass shootings occurring in businesses and schools throughout the country, the Department has been offering active shooter training seminars. Through the first three months of 2018, the Department has participated in two active shooter trainings with approximately 60 attendees.

Members of the Police Department have also presented several internet safety talks in the Concord and Merrimack Valley School Districts to help educate students about the dangers of the internet and how to avoid being victimized.

The Department is committed to participating in these types of initiatives and continuing to foster the relationship between the Department and the community. All officers are encouraged to participate in community engagement activities. The success of the Police Department in providing the safest community possible is dependent upon a cooperative effort between the Department and the community as a whole.

GOAL 4. PUBLIC INFORMATION, MARKETING, AND COMMUNICATIONS

Status:

City Administration: An Economic Development Marketing Tool Kit has been developed, and the Public Information Officer position is now filled.

General Services Department: The General Services Department continues to increase communications with the community. The Department disseminates public information via website updates, print media, press releases, the City Manager's newsletter, its monthly

General Gazette newsletter, and bill stuffers. Social media is used to improve community engagement, continue branding, and encourage public awareness of services.

During the first three months of 2018, the General Services Department continued to highlight its employees on social media and in its General Gazette newsletter featuring promotions, new hires, training initiatives, and retirements in order to develop personal connections with the public and “humanize” public works services. Job openings continue to be advertised on social media and in the General Gazette as well, with a consistent message that Concord General Services is a great place to work. A new YouTube video was published in January showcasing various Department employees in their work settings, explaining why they loved working at General Services with a word poster. This new video was used for promotional efforts to encourage the public to consider a career at Concord General Services. So far, the video has been watched over 13,500 times, and the Department was able to track 734 website visits to the City’s job posting page directly from the Facebook advertisement of the video. The video was highly engaged upon and will be promoted from time to time to increase recruitment.

WMUR’s Chronicle filmed an episode at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Facility, which aired in January, to educate viewers about the work that goes into maintaining sustainable wastewater and biosolid recovery to protect public health and the quality of the river. This video was also later available online, which the Department then shared across social media, on its website, and in the General Gazette.

Winter storm parking bans were implemented numerous times during the first three months of 2018, which required heavy outreach for each ban issued. Every parking ban notice is published on the City website, e-mailed to alert and newsletter subscribers, advertised on social media, broadcasted by Concord TV (and often times WMUR), published online by local newspaper outlets, and mentioned on-air by local radio stations. A print flyer was also created and mailed out to residents of narrow streets encouraging them to park off-street during parking bans and to subscribe to parking ban alerts on the City website. The Department utilizes every outlet possible for every parking ban issued in order to reach as many people as possible. The Department has also issued some parking bans earlier than usual to get the message out to the community sooner.

In February, the General Services’ Communication Coordinator wrote an article that was published in the American Public Works Association’s *Reporter* magazine. The article showcased the successful Department outreach and celebration of the national “Imagine a Day Without Water” campaign back in October.

In March, the Department once again celebrated EPA WaterSense’s Fix a Leak Week by encouraging the public to find and fix water leaks in the home. The Department held a Twitter Party to kick off the week with a national online conversation that included helpful information on how to find and fix leaks. The Department received very high engagement and over 6,000 tweet views during the hour-long Twitter Party. A new YouTube video, “How to Find Water Leaks at Home,” was created and promoted in coordination with Fix a Leak Week, which featured the City’s Water Conservation Technician chasing down water leaks in the average U.S. home. The Water Conservation Technician also made a guest appearance on 107.7 WTPL “The Pulse” radio station to promote Fix a Leak Week. Toilet leak dye test kits were available for residents at the water billing office and a “Royal Leak Detection” contest was held for residents to enter for a chance to win a free WaterSense

labeled toilet. This campaign effectively engages and educates the community about water conservation. Additional topics promoted through various media outlets included Christmas Tree Collection, delayed trash collection, and Everett Arena energy saving project.

As of March 31, 2018, the Department had 1,744 Facebook likes, 463 Twitter followers, 24 Google+ followers, and 120 YouTube subscribers. In addition, the Department had 8,641 total subscriptions to the Alert Center, Notify Me, and News Flash modules of the City website. Approximately 55 press releases featuring the Department have been published by the local media during this quarter.

Human Resources Department: During the first three months of 2018, the Department posted eight new full-time, one permanent part-time, and four part-time position vacancies; as well as nine temporary positions, three rosters, and one intern position. This totaled 26 new postings, of which seven were carried forward from the last quarter of 2017.

During the first three months of 2018, 13 job vacancies (FT, PPT, and PT) were filled, of which four were internal promotions and nine were new hires. There was an average of 63.5 days from posting to hiring. This statistic does not include temporary hires, roster development postings, or intern postings. There were two recruitments that totaled 266 days. Without these two outliers, the average number of days from posting to hiring would be 49.6 days. Additionally, there was one Firefighter hired from an existing roster and nine seasonal/temporary positions were successfully filled.

The Human Resources Department continues to use its standard free resources (the City website, Primex, NHMA, Chamber of Commerce, and NH Community College Consortium), as well as paid sources (Union Leader, Indeed, Facebook, LinkedIn, Craig's List, and industry specific job boards) for promoting job postings. These sources typically generate an adequate response for most positions. The Department continues to look for new and affordable ways to promote our talent acquisition needs and looks forward to partnering with the City's new Public Information Officer to continue to develop our outreach.

Information Technology: Outstanding growth of the City website has shown to be an excellent investment in communication technology. The IT staff has been working for the past eight months with several department staff representatives, in conjunction with the City's website vendor, CivicPlus, on a redesign of the current website. Current design proposals will incorporate the City seal, a new color scheme, and will also redevelop the leisure services sites, as well as expand the design on the General Services pages. The new design will migrate all current functionality to the new site. The target to go live is tentatively the end of June 2018.

Parks & Recreation: The Parks & Recreation Department created their annual winter/spring brochure, which was delivered to the community in early February. This brochure advertises all programs and events from March 1st to mid-June 2018. In March, the Summer Camp brochure was also delivered to the community. The Summer Camp brochure advertises all regular summer camps, and many new camps that will be held in the new citywide community center. The Department continues to maintain very active Facebook (over 3,000 followers) and Instagram pages. Staff continues to be active on the City's website development team and has also upgraded the Department's scheduling software to allow users of the Audi to request dates and pay online for rentals. With this upgrade, the online registration page has an Audi Schedule where people can see upcoming shows and links to the performers' contacts and website. Department staff will continue to

send out news releases and will work with the City's new Public Information Officer and Concord TV for assistance with marketing needs.

Police Department: The Police Department utilizes a number of social media sites, as well as the City website, to present information about the Department to the public and to keep the public informed of events occurring in the City. The Department's website includes many pages with valuable information, including guidance on how to obtain reports and other services that the Department provides. The site also provides notification about upcoming hiring processes, drug take-back days, upcoming citizen police academies, and other events. In addition, Police Department press releases are placed on its web page.

The Police Department's Twitter page has approximately 1,645 followers, and its Facebook page has approximately 3,650 followers. Both of these venues are used to disseminate information regarding Department/City events and provide emergency information as necessary.

The Police Department also administers the Concord Regional Crimeline, which allows individuals to anonymously provide tips regarding ongoing investigations in Concord and surrounding towns. Tips can be submitted by phone, online, or by text message. During the first three months of 2018, over 35 tips were received leading to the arrest of 12 individuals.

The Police Chief participates in a weekly radio show on WKXL, where different topics are addressed based upon events occurring in the city, state, and, on occasion, the nation.

Another initiative of the Police Department is "Coffee with a Cop". This program is designed to promote interaction between the community and the Department by sharing coffee and fostering discussion in a relaxed atmosphere. Recently, the Department held a "Coffee with a Cop" event at Starbucks on Loudon Road. Since its inception, the Department has held ten "Coffee with a Cop" events at different locations throughout the city. All of these events have been well received by the public and business owners.

GOAL 5. PARKING MASTER PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Status: The City embarked upon a strategic planning process in 2014 for the purpose of making the Parking Fund financially solvent, while simultaneously promoting economic development goals tied to parking, as well as improving customer service and the quality of the City's parking facilities. The Parking Committee presented its final Strategic Plan to the City Council on November 13, 2017. The Strategic Plan included a variety of short and long-term recommendations to be implemented over the next several years. In December 2017, the City Council approved several ordinances to begin implementation of parking reforms. Ordinances included changes to parking rates, hours of enforcement, citations, and resident permit parking near the UNH Law School. On April 9, 2018, the City Council approved \$35,000 to re-program meters and install updated signage in order to implement the above-mentioned ordinance changes. Other financial components of the Strategic Plan will be brought forward as part of the upcoming FY 2019 budget process.

On March 16, 2018, the City received proposals from vendors for the purchase of smart meters and future upgrade of parking kiosks. Vendor interviews will be completed by May 1, 2018. Demonstration periods for new smart meters and kiosks will begin this summer and continue for nine months so that the City may fully vet new equipment before purchasing.

Also in March, the City secured the domain name “ParkConcordNH.com” for the forthcoming independent parking website. Pending the FY 2019 budget, the website will be implemented in the coming year.

On May 14, 2018, the City Council will hold a public hearing on a proposed ordinance enabling the City to establish permit parking in certain parking garages and surface parking lots.

GOAL 6. FOSTER/ENHANCE DIALOGUE WITH LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

Status: Working with Senator Feltes, the City put forward a bill (SB 587) to amend certain State statutes concerning motor vehicle registration surcharges to support construction and maintenance of parking infrastructure. The proposal was determined inexpedient to legislate by the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

GOAL 7. ENHANCED COMMUNITY EVENT OPPORTUNITIES

Status: City Council has approved a partnership with the League of NH Craftsmen to hold an event in September 2018 on South Main Street. City Council has also approved the sponsorship of the 2018 Governor’s Conference on Tourism to be held in Concord. The City’s banner program continues.

The Parks & Recreation Department continues to work with many organizations to offer community events. This past winter, the Department worked with the Black Ice Pond Hockey Association for the annual event. Also this winter, the Department created a partnership with Concord Crew for a summer “Learn to Row” program for first time rowers, and worked with Red River Theatres to co-sponsor two “Movies in the Park” events for this summer. The Department is also co-sponsoring a new 5K road race at Rollins Park with the Frank Monahan Foundation. Some of the proceeds from this event will come back to the City to help upgrade the basketball court at Rollins Park.

GOAL 8. SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Status: Form Based Code – Concord Next - In early February, key members of the Code Studio consultant team traveled to Concord for a three-day visit to explore the community, meet with key stakeholders, and conduct an initial public kick-off meeting. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews was to hear from people familiar with the city, local development, and existing regulations.

PROJECT 1. BUILDINGS AND PARKS

a) White Park Skate House

Status: Milestone Engineering and Construction has been selected for the project. The City entered into a contract with Milestone on February 27, 2018. The estimated total cost of the project is \$1.15 million. The Mayor plans to form a committee to raise half of the total project budget through fundraising.

b) Athletic Fields

Status: The Parks & Recreation Department continues to work with leagues to review and increase the usage of its athletic fields. This spring, there will be over 230

scheduled youth and adult baseball games played on the City's four baseball fields, an increase from last year, and an increase of almost 70 games over FY 2012, when the Department was re-organized. The Department has also created a new youth lacrosse field at Memorial Field that will be useable for weekend use by the Concord Crush Youth Lacrosse League.

c) **Terrill Park:**

Status: The Parks & Recreation Department continues to work with VHB, Planning and Engineering staff on the final design and permitting for the new Terrill Park. All local and State permits will be filed and permits should be reviewed and returned to the City this spring. These permits will be valid for five years, which should be ample time for the City to complete the project.

d) **Penacook Branch Library**

Status: Library staff will be meeting with the Penacook Village Association in May to discuss the future of the Penacook Branch Library. Staff has contacted other libraries that have recently launched new bookmobile services to obtain some usage statistics.

PROJECT 2. FUTURE CIP PROJECTS

Status: The final portion of the Manchester Street project design has begun. The Abbott Road/Sewalls Falls Road roundabout is tentatively scheduled to begin in June 2018.

ONGOING INITIATIVE 1. OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

a) **Former NH Employment Security Property**

Status: In October 2017, the City Council held a public hearing and approved an agreement to sell the former NH Employment Security property to Dol-Soul Properties for \$1.075 million. Dol-Soul plans to redevelop the property into a 180,000 square foot mixed use project, featuring approximately 125 market rate apartments, 5,000 square feet of commercial space, and 125 parking spaces. To support the project, the City will demolish the former Employment Security building at a cost of approximately \$300,000. The City may also provide a quantity of permit parking spaces to augment on-site parking provided by the developer. The developer has completed its due diligence and has begun the design process. It is anticipated that permitting will occur this summer, followed by demolition of the existing building this fall and construction of the new building in spring 2019.

b) **Elm Grove Properties**

Status: In September 2017, the Elm Grove Companies acquired four properties in Downtown Concord for redevelopment. Elm Grove plans to renovate all four properties and will add 31 new market rate apartments, combined, at 5 South State Street and 15 Pleasant Street. On December 11, 2017, the City Council granted RSA 79-E Community Tax Relief Incentives with six year terms to support renovation of the two above-mentioned properties. Building permits for the renovations were issued in March 2018. Both projects will be completed this summer.

c) Hotel Concord

Status: During the fall of 2017, Capital Commons, LLC, began renovating approximately 20,000 square feet of its office building located at 11 South Main Street into an independent, 38-room boutique hotel. The hotel will be located on the 3rd, 4th, and 6th floors of the building. The initial phase of the project will be completed in August 2018. The second phase of the project will be completed in early 2019.

d) New Concord Theatre

Status: On December 27, 2017, local developer Steve Duprey, doing business as New Concord Theatre, LLC, acquired the former Concord Theatre located at 16-18 South Main Street for the sum of \$483,500. Mr. Duprey is working in partnership with the Capitol Center for the Arts (CCA). Together, they plan to undertake a \$5,457,102 renovation of the property to create a new performing arts venue. The new venue will be a second location which will be operated – and eventually owned by – the CCA. This new venue will feature an auditorium with capacity to hold between 270 guests (seated) to 450 patrons (standing), and will be capable of hosting a variety of performances, including small plays, concerts, lectures, and movies. The auditorium will be equipped with retractable stadium seating for easy configuration of the space, depending upon the event. The Theatre will also have banquet capabilities for meetings, parties, weddings, and other special events. On January 24, 2018, the City's Community Development Advisory Committee approved a loan participation agreement with the Capitol Regional Development Council in the amount of \$250,000 to support the project. Pending award of New Markets Tax Credits and Historic Tax Credits, the project will begin in late spring/early summer 2018. The project will take approximately 9-12 months to complete.

e) Former Allied Leather Tannery

Status: On May 8, 2017, the City Council approved a purchase and sales agreement to sell approximately 2.5 acres of the site to the Caleb Development Corporation for the sum of \$540,000 (a full price offer). Caleb plans to redevelop the property into a 54-unit affordable housing project. The remaining 1.5 +/- acres of the site will be retained by the City for a potential future riverfront park, currently scheduled in CIP #567 in FY 2020 for \$1.2 million, as added by the City Council during the FY 2018 budget adoption process. The project has secured all required approvals from the Planning and Zoning Boards. In November 2017, Caleb applied for certain federal tax credits to support development of the project. Their application was not funded and Caleb plans to reapply for said credits in August. Awards will be announced in October 2018. Should Caleb receive necessary tax credits, sale of the property would close by the end of 2018, and construction would begin in spring 2019.

f) Storrs Street Extension

Status: The City is awaiting further determination from the NH Department of Transportation concerning preferred alternatives for I-93 Exits 14 and 15. The State's ultimate route will impact circulation in the area of Stickney Avenue. The City and the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee have expressed concerns regarding the latest iteration of the State's plan, particularly its impact on pedestrian and cyclist connectivity across the river.

ON-GOING INITIATIVE 2. CITYWIDE MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER

Status: A construction contract was executed with Milestone Engineering and Construction last May, and construction for the new citywide multi-generational community center began on June 15, 2017. The 30,750 square foot facility will be completed and open to the public in June 2018. The project is on schedule and on budget.

ON-GOING INITIATIVE 3. CREATE AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS

Status: The City is partnering with the League of NH Craftsmen to hold an event on South Main Street in September 2018.

Mayor Bouley announced the kickoff of the public portion of the fundraising effort for the White Park Multi-Use Facility, with the co-chairs of this campaign being Jennifer Frizzell and Chris Brown. In addition, Tom Champagne, Councilor Champlin, Kristyn Van Ostern, Laura Simoes, and Luke Bonner have agreed to volunteer their time and effort to see this project through. The H.L. Turner Group has donated over \$40,000 of free labor to put the designs and planning together to this point.

ON-GOING INITIATIVE 4. CONTINUE EXPANDED NEIGHBORHOOD STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Status: The FY 2018 paving project was awarded to GMI Paving, and work has begun despite the late arrival of spring. Work is presently being performed on Washington Street (Penacook), Millstream Street, Randolph Street, and Rum Hill Road.