

## MINUTES

City of Concord Finance Committee Meeting  
May 30, 2019 @ 5:30 PM  
City Council Chambers

**Present:** Mayor James Bouley, City Councilors Brent Todd, Allan Herschlag, Jennifer Kretovic, Fred Keach, Byron Champlin, Mark Coen, Keith Nyhan, Linda Kenison, Gail Matson, Candace White Bouchard, and Zandra Rice Hawkins.

**Excused:** City Councilors Rob Werner and Amanda Grady Sexton.

The Mayor opened the meeting at 5:34 PM and explained that tonight's FY 2020 proposed budget review would cover the Community Development, Library, Parks & Recreation, Human Services, and CIP/TIF budgets.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2019 and May 23, 2019 Finance Committee Meetings. The motion passed with a voice vote and the minutes were unanimously approved.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Revenues, budget to budget, are up \$65,000 or 4.1%. This is mainly due to building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing permits, which are up a total of \$87,000.

Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$119,000 or 3.5%. The Department eliminated two Engineering positions, which were 50% funded from this budget; and benefits are down. The big increase is in transfer out (this is the offset to the street excavation fees reported in the revenues, which were not budgeted as transfer out last year, but is for FY 2020).

Mayor Bouley asked for a status update on the Form Based Code project and expressed concern that the project is not further along. Deputy City Manager Carlos Baia and City Planner Heather Shank approached the committee and provided a brief update on the status of the project and monies spent to date. Ms. Shank indicated that the project is a bit behind schedule, but that overall she is very pleased with the quality of the consultant's work.

Mayor Bouley asked for an explanation regarding the funding for Tyler permitting software. Deputy Manager Baia explained that the City currently has a very antiquated permitting system. Therefore, the Department went out to bid and has retained Tyler for a new permitting system. Tyler is also the company the City is using for its new ERP system. Implementation of the new permitting system will begin in November.

Mayor Bouley and several City Councilors asked Deputy Manager Baia if the City is getting the most out of the Economic Development Director position that it can. Deputy Manager Baia responded that we can always do better; however, it does take time for a position such as this to become effective and thanked the Council for its patience. There was a brief discussion about the good work the Economic Development Director did in bringing MetalMax to Concord. Deputy Manager Baia noted that the duties of the Economic Development Director aren't solely to attract businesses here, but also to help them get up and running.

Councilor Champlin asked if there were challenges in bringing international companies to Concord. Deputy Manager Baia indicated that many of the concerns international companies have are workforce related, i.e., are there enough workers here with the right skill set.

Mayor Bouley and Councilor Kenison both commented on the one-page Economic Development information sheet that Community Development provided to them, requesting more substantive information be provided.

Councilor Herschlag asked what the City's net gain is from new commercial development in the last year. Deputy Manager Baia will gather this information and provide at a later meeting.

Councilor Herschlag raised concerns about staffing in Code Administration. In response, Deputy Manager Baia provided a staffing update.

As there was no further discussion, the Mayor opened a public hearing on the Community Development budget.

Roy Schweiker, resident, spoke regarding the proposed development of the former NH Employment Security building, and the fact that a restaurant is going in there that will only offer low paying jobs. He feels the City should set a goal to bring higher paying jobs to Concord. He also spoke about MetalMax, and expressed his opinion that the company came to Concord not because of the work of the City staff, but because the company couldn't find a building in their preferred location. Lastly, he spoke in opposition to the work of the Form Based Code Consultant.

As there was no further testimony, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made and seconded to tentatively approve the Community Development budget. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**LIBRARY:** Revenues, budget to budget, are down by \$3,000 or 1.4% due to a reduction in fines for overdue books.

Expenses, budget to budget, are down \$23,000 or 1.3% due to changes in benefits.

Mayor Bouley mentioned the correspondence Council received from the Library Foundation in regards to renovating and/or expanding the current Concord Public Library. He asked if now is the time the City should start analyzing this. Library Director Todd Fabian approached and indicated that the Library is at max capacity. He noted that half of the Library's collection is in storage in the basement, and that there is currently no room for expansion. Director Fabian indicated that parking around the Library is a problem that should be assessed as well.

As there was no further discussion, the Mayor opened a public hearing on the Library budget.

Roy Schweiker, resident, spoke in opposition to expanding the Library. He feels the space is adequate and that the money would be better spent on hiring more staff so that the Library can be open more. He also suggested the hours of the library at the Citywide Community Center be expanded, as it is currently not open on the same days as the Senior Center.

Meredith Hatfield, resident, expressed concerns about energy efficiency at the Library, noting that over the winter the windows had to be open in order for the temperature to be comfortable. She would like to see the City review energy usage and efficiency at the Library.

As there was no further testimony, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made and seconded to tentatively approve the Library budget. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**PARKS & RECREATION:** Revenues, budget to budget, are flat. Anticipated revenue for the White Park Skate House are included, which means that other program revenues are lower.

Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$11,000 or 0.3%. The anticipated expenses for the White Park Skate House operations are included and are basically offset by the revenues.

Overtime is up by \$19,000, and other program expenses are reduced in conjunction with the lower revenues.

The White Park Skate House is expected to be finished by mid-June.

Mayor Bouley noted that the Citywide Community Center seems to be unaffordable for use by some groups in the community, and that the intent of a community center is for use by all members of the community. City Manager Aspell indicated that he receives many requests for the waiver of fees. Some organizations can afford to pay but don't want to if they don't have to, and then there's some groups that really can't afford it. It then becomes a matter of who the City should waive fees for and how that's determined, keeping in mind that the City doesn't want to undercut the private sector. Parks & Recreation Director David Gill approached and indicated that he is working on a draft policy concerning this matter to present to City Council at a later date.

Councilor Champlin asked why there appears to be a reduction in the donations line, although he knows the Department receives many donations. Director Gill responded that, each month, the City Council approves any donations received and they are now accounted for in a non-lapsing fund (Fund 2910).

Mayor Bouley asked Director Gill if he had adequate staffing for summer positions. Director Gill indicated that the Department has hired all the staff it needs for the summer.

As there was no further discussion, the Mayor opened a public hearing on the Parks & Recreation budget.

Sam Evans Brown, coach of the Concord High School Nordic ski team, spoke about the ski trails at Beaver Meadow Golf Course. He said the trails are groomed beautifully at the golf course, and he (and others) would like to work with the City to continue to improve the trails. He suggested that instead of purchasing a new snowmobile for \$25,000 to groom the trails, the City purchase an actual trail groomer called a Snow Rabbit. He indicated that he would be willing to pull together a group of users to work with the City to help make this happen. Councilor Kretovic suggested he come to a future Golf Course Advisory Committee Meeting to discuss his ideas further.

Representatives from Change for Concord spoke about usage of the Citywide Community Center. Change for Concord is a group of 40 young adults, mostly immigrants, who meet on a regular basis to plan free events for teens and young adults in the community. Rental of space at the Citywide Community Center is unaffordable for them and they requested to use the space free of charge on two nights a week to have their planning meetings or to hold certain events. They currently hold their meetings at McDonalds on Loudon Road, every Friday night at 6:30 PM. Councilor Champlin asked if they had tried to obtain sponsorships from local businesses, to which the representative responded that the Recreation & Parks Advisory Committee has offered to help them find sponsorships. The Change for Concord representatives also took this time to remind the Finance Committee of their request last year for lights at Keach Park.

As there was no further testimony, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made and seconded to tentatively approve the Parks & Recreation budget. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**HUMAN SERVICES:** Revenues, budget to budget, are flat. Expenses, budget to budget, are down \$12,000 or 1.7% to align more closely with anticipated 2019 expenditures.

Councilor Champlin asked how we could be spending less for Human Services. Human Services Director Karen Emis-Williams approached and indicated that expenses tend to vary – with some periods of high expense and some dips. It helps that the economy is good right now. She indicated that 90% of their expenses are for rental assistance.

Councilor White Bouchard asked why the City didn't receive the number of refugee resettlements that it anticipated in FY 2019. Director Emis-Williams indicated that the numbers decreased due to Executive Order.

The Mayor opened a public hearing on the Human Services budget. As there was no testimony, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made and seconded to tentatively approve the Human Services budget. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP):**

Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects, provided an overview of the projects in the Capital Improvement Program. Projects that spurred discussion are as follows:

- **CIP #30 – Hoit Road/Route 4/Whitney Road Intersection:** There was a brief discussion. Specifically, the Mayor asked about what the State share would be. Mr. Walsh responded that we are still in the very early stages and haven't gotten that far yet. He indicated that there are many moving pieces and conversations that still need to take place, including the permitting process with the State of NH. Councilor Herschlag requested that the City determine if any State funding will be made available for the project.

Councilors also expressed concern that the City may have to maintain the portion of Route 4 that runs through the intersection. Mr. Walsh iterated that Route 4 is a State road and that the City would not have to maintain any portion of Route 4.

- **Parking projects (CIP #403, 432, 433, 529, and 595):** The Mayor expressed his dissatisfaction with the number of kiosks that have been out of service lately. He feels the customer service experience is terrible, and that if the kiosks aren't going to work, the City should take them out. Mr. Walsh responded that the Parking staff is very frustrated too, and that the issue is with the cellular provider, AT&T, which had been going on since about May 14, 2019. City staff and the kiosk vendor have been working with AT&T to resolve the matter. AT&T has finally accepted that it is their problem.

Councilor Rice Hawkins inquired about the loss of revenue the City has experienced with the downed kiosks, and how the City would recoup the loss. Mr. Walsh indicated that the Parking Division would research that. Councilor Rice Hawkins also asked if there had been an increase in ticketing with the kiosks not working. Mr. Walsh indicated that the Parking Division has been gentle in their enforcement efforts.

Other concerns raised about the kiosks and meters included the fact that the meters don't show hours of enforcement, that the City should simplify the instructions on the kiosks, and that credit card charges for the kiosks are confusing to users.

There was also a discussion about the number of meters the City bags for use by State Legislators. The Mayor asked if the City has had a conversation with the State about discontinuing this process, as the City loses revenue. Mr. Walsh indicated that it had been some time since the City has had a conversation with the State about this matter and that staff would be happy to meet with them if Council requests it.

Councilor Herschlag asked Mr. Walsh if the Parking Fund will be able to pay the debt and interest on the bonds for CIP #595 – Parking Meters. Mr. Walsh indicated that the Parking pro forma shows that it will.

- **CIP #51 – White Park Parking Lot Repair:** The Mayor asked why the parking lot failed so quickly. Mr. Walsh explained that it was designed with porous pavement, which hasn't held up well. City Engineer David Cedarholm approached the committee and explained that porous concrete has improved quite a bit over the years since the lot was initially paved. As porous concrete can't be salted, and you can't prevent salt contamination from vehicles in the winter, Councilor Herschlag suggested that the City consider using a different kind of surface on the lot.
- **Public Buildings (CIP #63, 65, and 323):** Mayor Bouley noted that, going forward, a more comprehensive review of all of the City's public buildings will need to take place.
- **CIP #543 – Merrimack River Greenway Trail:** Councilor Champlin suggested the City make the Merrimack River Greenway Trail Committee aware of this project. Mr. Walsh indicated that staff would do so.

- **CIP #83 – Storm Sewer Improvements:** At Councilor Herschlag’s request, City Engineer David Cedarholm approached the committee and gave a brief update on the Alder Creek Drive culvert, noting that it is in very bad shape. Engineering has yet to complete its assessment of the culvert, and it’s possible that the amount budgeted may not be enough to make the repairs.
- **CIP #78 – Annual Highway Improvement Program:** City Manager Aspell noted that, due to detrimental winter/spring weather conditions, and increased paving costs, the \$2 million allocated for street paving in the City will not result in the overall improved conditions the City Council would prefer. As a result, the City Council asked Manager Aspell to look for a way to add a significant amount of funding to this year’s road paving program, beyond the proposed amount, without significantly impacting the tax rate or increasing long-term debt.

Manager Aspell explained to the Committee that the City has monies in a reserve account that was created in 2013 and earmarked for Consolidated Communications (formerly Fairpoint Communications), should they prevail in their property tax abatement against the City for the years 2011-2017, and should the City have to refund those monies. Manager Aspell has determined that of the \$1,264,399.24 in the reserve account, \$1 million may be released and used for any purpose. Manager Aspell proposed that the City Council appropriate the \$1 million from the reserve account for additional paving this fiscal year, and recommended that the following additional streets be made priorities with the additional \$1 million:

Reclaim: Ormond Street, from Loudon Road to Christian Avenue; Hutchins Street, from North State Street to the Water Treatment Plant; and the full length of Sylvester Street.

Cold Plane/Overlay: Penacook Street, from Rumford to Bradley Street; the full length of Shawmut Street; Sewalls Falls Road, from Second Street to Abbot Road; Horse Hill Road, from Runnells Road to 3,000 feet westerly; Shaker Road, from Snow Pond Road to Hoit Road; and Hutchins Street, from the Water Treatment Plant to West Parish Road.

The above-named streets are in addition to the streets listed below, which are already proposed for paving in the FY 2020 budget:

Reclaim: Ridge Road, full length.

Cold Plane/Overlay: East Side Drive, from #244 west 1,500 feet; and Hoit Road, from Mountain Road to #180, and from #194 to the Loudon town line.

Maintenance Overlay: Blake Street, full length; Borough Road, from River Road to Blueberry; Broad Cove Drive, full length; Downing Street, full length; Forest Street, from Auburn Street to Ridge Road; Liberty Street, from Centre to Pleasant Street; Norwich Street, from Clinton to Wilson Street; Pine Street, full length; Pleasant Street, from Rum Hill Road to Langley Parkway; Thayer Pond Road, full length; and Washington Street, full length.

Manager Aspell noted that if the Finance Committee approves this proposal, the City would increase the amount of spending on road improvements by 50%, while adding four additional miles of much needed paving, with no impact to the tax rate or bonded debt.

With no further discussion, the Mayor opened up a public hearing on the CIP budget.

Linda Stephenson, resident of Tallant Road, spoke about the unsafe conditions at the intersection of Tallant and Hoit Roads. Finance Committee members referred her concerns to the Traffic Policy Advisory Committee.

Moira Brouillard, Concord business owner, spoke about the poor condition of Shawmut Street and Oak Hill Road, and provided a petition signed by approximately 140 people urging the City to fix the roads.

Chris Flynn, resident, spoke in support of fixing Shawmut Street and Oak Hill Road.

Laurie Rauseo, developer, spoke in favor of CIP #30 and CIP #502. She noted that her engineering consultant is currently reviewing the findings of the City's recent intersection study completed by HDR. As a former traffic engineer who worked on a variety of NHDOT projects, she suggested that the future maintenance of any improvements constructed within Route 4 by the City would become the responsibility of the State of New Hampshire, except perhaps any landscaping features. A discussion of a potential roundabout in lieu of a signalized intersection occurred.

Roy Schweiker, resident, spoke in opposition to the Parking Division purchasing a new vehicle; urged the City to make the State pay for bagged parking meters for legislators; spoke in opposition to a rotary at the Whitney Road intersection; spoke in opposition to the Storrs Street Extension; and urged the City to get rid of the TIF districts.

As there was no further testimony, the public hearing was closed.

At this time, Rule 6A was invoked for the following Council members:

- Councilor Kretovic for the vote regarding CIP #30 and CIP #502; and
- Councilor Todd for the vote regarding CIP #571.

Councilor Nyhan suggested that the West Street/Broadway intersection be moved up in the CIP, and asked City staff to provide a design cost estimate.

Councilor Herschlag requested that staff provide a traffic count for Bog Road, Shawmut Street, Oak Hill Road, and Cemetery Street.

With no other discussion, a motion was made and seconded to tentatively approve the CIP budget and the City Manager's proposal to amend CIP #78. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

### **TAX INCREMENT FINANCE (TIF) DISTRICTS:**

Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects, provided an overview of the Tax Increment Finance Districts.

With no discussion, a motion was made and seconded to tentatively approve the TIF District budget. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Mayor Bouley noted that the next Finance Committee would be held on Monday, June 3rd, at 5:30 PM, at which time Special Revenue Funds and Enterprise Funds will be discussed.

With no other discussion, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Stevens, Executive Assistant

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