



# City of Concord

## Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee

### Meeting Minutes - Draft

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Monday, April 19, 2021

4:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8453052256>

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#### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM and the roll was called. Chairman Keith Nyhan read the COVID-19 Public Meeting Procedures Notice in compliance with Governor Sununu's Executive Order #12.

#### 2. Roll Call

##### **Present:**

City Councilors - Keith Nyhan (Chairman), Mayor Jim Bouley, Byron Champlin, Fred Keach, Gail Matson, Candace White Bouchard, and Amanda Grady Sexton.  
City Staff - Thomas Aspell, Jr., City Manager; Brian LeBrun, Deputy City Manager - Finance; Carlos Baia, Deputy City Manager - Development; Chip Chesley, General Services Director; Marco Philippon, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent; Dawn Enwright, City Treasurer; John Chisholm, Deputy Fire Chief; Katie Graff, Assistant Finance Director; Bob McManus, Director of OMB; and Sue Stevens, Executive Assistant.

#### 3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2021 meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved with a roll call vote.

#### 4. Closed Loop Irrigation System

General Services Director Chip Chesley and Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Marco Philippon addressed a concern that was submitted to Councilor Nyhan from resident Daniel Tullo regarding the way the City bills for sewage. Mr. Tullo planted a vegetable garden in 2020 and his sewer bill increased substantially,

although the water he is using to irrigate his garden is not going into the City sewer. He feels that this isn't fair and that, like some other communities in the country, the City should calculate summer usage based on water usage over the winter months, otherwise known as a closed loop system.

Mr. Chesley and Mr. Philippon indicated that the method the City uses to calculate sewer usage is the industry standard and, of the seven "sister" cities in New Hampshire, Nashua is the only municipality that uses a closed loop system. Nashua is an anomaly and uses a closed loop system due to historical reasons in that their waste water system used to be privately owned and then became a public system.

Mr. Chesley and Mr. Philippon indicated that Concord residents have the option of installing an irrigation meter which will more accurately measure the amount of water that is going into the City sewer system. An irrigation meter can cost between \$400 and \$1200.

Committee members asked if there were other models that could be looked at so that residents wouldn't have to incur the cost of a special meter to accurately calculate their sewer bill. Mr. Chesley and Mr. Philippon responded that the current method is the most accurate and is considered best practice.

A motion was made and seconded to refer the matter to the full City Council for discussion at the same time the Council addresses the utility rate structure changes. The motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote.

#### **5. 3rd Quarter EMS Billing Report**

Deputy Fire Chief John Chisholm reviewed the third quarter EMS billing report. He indicated that there were no anomalies. At the request of committee members, Deputy Chief Chisholm will work with the Finance Department to come up with a set of metrics regarding percent collected.

#### **6. Tax Deeding of Manufactured Homes in Parks**

City Treasurer/Tax Collector Dawn Enwright gave an overview of a report that is recommended to send to the full City Council requesting approval to execute a tax deed on eight manufactured homes in parks with unredeemed 2015 tax lien balances. Council has directed the Tax Collector to not execute a deed on several properties.

Administration has been working with park owners and community members to

develop solutions to address the excessive delinquencies with these properties and has come up with some options to address the liability concerns while allowing park owners to improve the communities in which the properties reside.

Committee members expressed concern that this would lead to people becoming homeless. Ms. Enwright indicated that of the eight properties, six are vacant and two are occupied. She indicated that her office is working with the Human Services Department to ensure that nobody is displaced.

Mayor Bouley expressed his concern that park owners may not remove the dilapidated properties. Ms. Enwright indicated that the City will encourage the park owners to do so. She also noted that there is alternative funding available for co-ops to help them remove dilapidated properties.

A motion was made and seconded to refer the report to the full City Council. The motion was approved with a unanimous roll call vote.

## **7. FY 2021 YTD Financial Statement Review**

Deputy City Manager LeBrun provided an overview of the FY 2021 Fiscal Year to Date Financial Statements.

Of note, the property tax collection rate is at 98.5%, compared to 97.5% at this time last year. Revenue from motor vehicle registrations was down slightly last month and is up again this month. Construction permits are also up. Investment income and Highway Block Grant funding remains down. All other revenue is on target.

On the expense side, Parks and Recreation and Human Services expenses are down. Administration is watching Fire Department overtime closely, as it has increased due to the number of staff assisting with the State's COVID-19 vaccine efforts. The City will be reimbursed for these costs but probably not until June or July.

Administration is watching the Parking Fund closely, which is currently about \$645,000 below last year at this time. The Arena fund is also stressed due to the cancellation of events as a result of COVID. The Golf Course is doing well and is \$290,000 ahead of this time last year.

## **8. Other**

**American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):** The City will be receiving \$4,319,109.75 in

federal ARPA funding. In order to receive the funding, a municipality must have a valid Duns Number, which the City does have. Concord is not an entitlement community, therefore, we will receive less funds. We are still waiting for specific details on how the funds can be used, but it appears that there will be flexibility to replenish reserves, as well as to offset expenses and lost revenues. Amounts received will need to be used by the end of calendar year 2024 and will be received in two installments - half this year and half next year.

Bryan Gleason from the National League of Cities has been keeping the NHMA updated on information as it is released and, in turn, Margaret Byrnes, NHMA Executive Director, has been keeping NH cities and towns informed.

**Water Infrastructure Projects:** Mayor Bouley indicated that he had a recent phone conversation with the Director of the NH Department of Environmental Services who indicated that there is a substantial amount of money coming to the State for water infrastructure projects and that if the City is looking to regionalize its water system, building new water plants, etc., that now is the time to do it. He indicated that State obligations for these projects will probably be paid with federal funds, not State funds.

**Inspection Fees:** Mayor Bouley mentioned that the Governor has budgeted for a 25-bed psychiatric unit to be built in Concord. Mayor Bouley indicated that, per statute, the State is exempt from paying municipal inspection fees, which equates to a substantial amount of money for the City on projects like this. Mayor Bouley informed the committee that he has asked the Legislature to revise this statute and that Representative Kathy Rogers is spearheading this.

## 9. **Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The motion was approved with a unanimous roll call vote and the meeting adjourned at 5:58 PM.