

MINUTES

City of Concord Finance Committee Meeting
June 5, 2023 @ 5:30 PM
City Council Chambers

Present: Mayor James Bouley, City Councilors Brent Todd, Jennifer Kretovic, Erle Pierce, Karen McNamara, Stacey Brown, Nathan Fennessy, Amanda Grady Sexton, Byron Champlin, Fred Keach, Paula McLaughlin, Keith Nyhan, Gail Matson, Candace White Bouchard, and Zandra Rice Hawkins.

The Mayor opened the meeting at 5:33 PM and stated that the purpose of this meeting was to hold a work session to discuss potential changes to the FY 2024 proposed budget, followed by a City Council meeting for a public hearing and adoption of the proposed budget.

Mayor Bouley suggested making the following changes to the proposed FY 2024 budget:

Operating Budget:

- In the Legal Department budget, adding \$66,600 for a part-time Assistant City Prosecutor.
- In the City Clerk's budget, adding \$1,250 for the Deputy City Clerk to attend Leadership Concord; adding \$11,880 for a salary increase for ward officials; and adding \$3,900 for election signage.
- In the Police Department, adding \$15,000 for CVSA – Pre-Employment Screening; and adding \$66,713 for a Police Outreach Social Worker for six months.
- In the General Services Department, Highways & Utilities Division, adding \$26,840 for a Laborer/Truck Driver position to be shared with the Golf Course.
- In the General Services Department, Administration Division, adding \$1,467 for Emerging Department Leadership.
- In General Overhead, adding \$4,000 for Holiday Celebrations; eliminating \$7,500 for Arts; and adding \$15,000 for Street Tree Planting.
- In the City Manager's budget, adding \$150,000 for grants for events and community programming.
- In the City Council budget, adding \$140,000 for DEI Training.

The above expenses total \$495,150, which would be offset by increasing the budgeted revenues as follows:

- Using \$150,000 from Economic Development Reserve;
- Adding \$50,000 in Motor Vehicle Registrations; and
- Using \$295,150 from Fund Balance.

Golf Fund:

- Adding \$50,696 for its share of funding for the Laborer/Truck Driver position to be shared with the General Services Department, Highways & Utilities Division.
- Adding \$35,426 in Daily Green Fees revenue.

Capital Budget:

- Removing \$180,000 in funding for CIP #4, Fire Department Staff Vehicle Replacement.
- Moving CIP #696 up to FY 2024 for Planter Box Fencing downtown, \$95,000.
- Creating a new CIP and adding \$100,000 for the display of a donated Stage Coach downtown. Anything over \$100,000 would have to come from donations.
- Adding \$15,000 to CIP #644 for Street Tree Planting.

These changes will result in no additional increase to the tax rate, which will remain at 3.95%, as proposed.

Councilor Brown asked why we are using fund balance, although the City Council has a goal to not use fund balance. Mayor Bouley responded that the goal of the City Council is to have a fund balance of no less than 18.5%. The current fund balance is 19.6%; therefore, we're using a small amount of fund balance, which will result in a fund balance of approximately 19.1%, still exceeding the City Council's goal and allowing for the proposed changes without further increasing the tax rate.

Councilor Brown noted that the Tree Crew at the General Services Department has a backlog of trees that need tending to and they don't have enough staff. Therefore, she feels that the Laborer/Truck Driver position should not be shared with the Golf Course, and should be assigned solely to the General Services Department.

Councilor Bouchard proposed amending CIP #52, Keach Park. She proposed reducing funding by \$130,000 and creating a new CIP in the amount of \$130,000 for the purchase of a moveable barricade system for events. In addition, she would like to reduce the FY 2024 funding in CIP #52 to \$40,000, in order to move forward with the design and public outreach for the lights at Keach Park. She would like to take the remaining funds in CIP #52 (\$213,775) and asterisk them for installation of the lights in FY 2025. This will give us time to take a good look at our fields and get a handle on who's using them. In addition, it will give us time to receive the required approvals from the FAA and Fish & Game.

Councilor Brown pointed out a couple of errors in the budget document that she would like to see fixed. Specifically, there is an organizational chart on page 152 that is incorrect; and there is a reference to Carlos Baia, former Deputy City Manager – Development, on page 645 that needs to be changed to Matt Walsh. In addition, she proposes changing the Origin description on page 645 to include the Abenaki tribe as being a part of Concord's history. She'd like to add the following sentence, "The land that would become Concord was originally populated for thousands of years by Native Americans known as Penacook who were a branch of the Algonquin speaking Abenaki nation." Councilor Brown indicated that she took this sentence right off the City's website.

Councilor Brown requested that population and density be broken down by ward, as it will show which wards are more densely populated and the square mileage of each ward.

Councilor Brown indicated that she would like to see a line in General Overhead specifically dedicated to the Multicultural Festival in the amount of \$2,500; as opposed to lumping it into the Grants and Events line in the City Manager's budget.

Councilor Brown proposed that the City fund an All Kids Bike Program in collaboration with the Concord School District. The All Kids Bike Program teaches kindergarten students how to ride a bike. For \$9,000, a school will receive 24 bikes, 24 helmets, a lesson curriculum, an instructor bike, and two rolling storage racks. Councilor Brown indicated that she has spoken with the Superintendent of the Concord School District and they are willing to split the cost of this program with the City. Therefore, the City would need to budget for \$4,500.

Councilor Brown proposed adding \$1,500 in Special Programs for the organization, Project Story, to assist them with rental of space at the Citywide Community Center.

Councilor Brown proposed reducing the funding from \$7,500 to \$5,000 for Grounds and Horticultural at the Golf Course, and increasing the Sustainable Tree Program to \$10,000.

Councilor Brown proposed pausing CIP #235, Golf Course Grounds Improvements.

Discussion ensued about the All Kids Bike Program, with there being concerns that if the City funds a portion of the program, it will blur the lines between the municipal budget and the school budget. It was also noted that there was nobody in attendance from the School District to speak to the matter or answer any questions; and City Manager Aspell indicated that nobody from the School District had reached out to him about the project. Councilor Kretovic suggested that if City Council is going to have any conversations about partnerships with the school district, those conversations should occur through the Joint City Council/School Board Committee.

Councilor Kretovic indicated that she supports the Mayor's recommendation to start a grant program for non-profits, but she doesn't support allotting a lump sum of money for one specific organization without requiring an official application. She also noted that the City already has a grant program through which non-profit organizations can apply for funds.

Councilor Bouchard noted that Project Story is a for-profit organization, that does its own fundraising, and has been running a summer camp and a soccer club out of Keach Park, possibly without the knowledge of the Parks & Recreation Director. She expressed concern that the organization hasn't followed the same checks and balances as other organizations who use space at the Community Center/Parks. She feels it's important that all users follow the same protocols.

Councilor Rice Hawkins suggested breaking down the \$140,000 of funding for DEI Training, as follows: \$30,000 for multi-cultural groups to use space at the community center; \$10,000 for outreach and translation services; \$30,000 for implementation; and \$70,000 for a consultant.

At this time, Councilor Grady Sexton motioned, and Councilor Champlin seconded, to approve the Mayor's suggested changes to the proposed FY 2024 budget, with the addition of the \$20,000 for the tree canopy.

Councilor Rice Hawkins made a motion, and Councilor Brown seconded, to amend the Mayor's proposed changes and break down the DEI Training funding as follows: \$30,000 for multi-cultural groups to use space at the community center; \$10,000 for outreach and translation services; \$30,000

for implementation; and \$70,000 for a consultant. The Committee discussed the motion and Mayor Bouley asked for a vote. The motion failed by a roll call vote of 2-13. YES: Councilors Rice Hawkins and Brown. NO: Mayor Bouley, and Councilors Fennessy, Grady Sexton, Keach, Champlin, Nyhan, McLaughlin, McNamara, Pierce, Todd, Matson, Kretovic, and Bouchard.

Councilor Brown motioned, and Councilor Rice Hawkins seconded, to amend the Mayor's changes whereby the proposed Laborer/Truck Driver would not be shared. She proposed keeping the funding the same, with the Golf Fund paying a share of the cost for the position, but the position would not be shared with the Golf Course. The Committee discussed the motion and Mayor Bouley asked for a vote. The motion failed by a roll call vote of 2-13. YES: Councilors Rice Hawkins and Brown. NO: Mayor Bouley, and Councilors Fennessy, Grady Sexton, Keach, Champlin, Nyhan, McLaughlin, McNamara, Pierce, Todd, Matson, Kretovic, and Bouchard.

Councilor Bouchard motioned, and Councilor Kretovic seconded, to add a new CIP in the amount of \$130,000 for the purchase of a moveable barricade system for events. The Committee discussed the motion and it was determined that one barricade system would likely not be enough, and that we need to better understand what exactly we would be purchasing. It was also suggested that the City seek grant funding if it were to proceed with this purchase. As a result of this discussion, Councilor Bouchard withdrew her motion, but would like to see the City look into the matter further and apply for grant funding.

Mayor Bouley asked for a vote on Councilor Grady Sexton's motion to approve his proposed changes, with the addition of funding for the tree planting and clarified the amount is \$15,000 and not \$20,000. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 15-0.

Councilor Brown motioned, and Councilor Rice Hawkins seconded, to make the following amendments to Mayor Bouley's changes to the FY 2024 budget: 1) correct the organizational chart on page 152 and update it with Matt Walsh's correct title; 2) replace Carlos Baia's name on page 645 with Matt Walsh's name; 3) add language to the Origin on page 645 to include the Abenaki nation in the description; and 4) breakout the City's population by density and ward.

There was support amongst the committee members about revising the description in the Origin on page 645 to include the Abenaki nation. However, the consensus of the committee was that we ensure that whatever language is added is accurate. Councilor Brown indicated that she took the language directly off the City's website, except she did add the word "thousands". The consensus of the committee was that this be referred to the Heritage Commission to research and ensure that whatever language we add is accurate. Mayor Bouley asked Councilor Brown if she would be willing to remove this item from her motion so that the Heritage Commission can review. Councilor Brown agreed to remove this item from her motion, but would like to see action on this as soon as possible.

Mayor Bouley asked for a vote on Councilor Brown's motion to: 1) correct the organizational chart on page 152 and update it with Matt Walsh's correct title; 2) replace Carlos Baia's name on page 645 with Matt Walsh's name; and 3) breakout the City's population by density and ward. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 15-0.

Mayor Bouley asked for a motion to refer the Origin description to the Heritage Commission for review and feedback. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 15-0.

Councilor Brown motioned, and Councilor Rice Hawkins seconded, to add a line item under Special Programs in the amount of \$2,500 for the Multicultural Festival. The consensus of the committee was that the Multicultural Festival is a “crown jewel” community building event in our city, and that the City should support it. However, the organizers of this event may actually need more than \$2,500; therefore, it would be better for them to formally apply for needed funds from the \$150,000 allotted for grants for non-profit organizations. Councilor Rice Hawkins noted that she agrees with Councilor Brown and feels there should be funds earmarked for the Multicultural Festival so they know they have the City’s support. Mayor Bouley asked for a vote on Councilor Brown’s motion. The motion failed with a roll call vote of 2-13. YES: Councilors Rice Hawkins and Brown. NO: Mayor Bouley, and Councilors Fennessy, Grady Sexton, Keach, Champlin, Nyhan, McLaughlin, McNamara, Pierce, Todd, Matson, Kretovic, and Bouchard.

Councilor Brown motioned, and Councilor Rice Hawkins seconded, to add \$4,500, dependent on the Concord School District contributing \$4,500, for an All Kids Bike Project. The Committee discussed the motion and Mayor Bouley asked for a vote. The motion failed with a roll call vote of 2-13. YES: Councilors Rice Hawkins and Brown. NO: Mayor Bouley, and Councilors Fennessy, Grady Sexton, Keach, Champlin, Nyhan, McLaughlin, McNamara, Pierce, Todd, Matson, Kretovic, and Bouchard.

Councilor Brown motioned, and Councilor Rice Hawkins seconded, to reduce the funding from \$7,500 to \$5,000 for Grounds and Horticultural Maintenance at the Golf Course. The Committee discussed the motion and Mayor Bouley asked for a vote. The motion failed with a roll call vote of 2-13. YES: Councilors Rice Hawkins and Brown. NO: Mayor Bouley, and Councilors Fennessy, Grady Sexton, Keach, Champlin, Nyhan, McLaughlin, McNamara, Pierce, Todd, Matson, Kretovic, and Bouchard.

Councilor Brown motioned to move CIP #235, Golf Course Grounds Improvements, out to FY 2025. The Committee discussed the motion and Mayor Bouley asked for a vote. The motion failed with a roll call vote of 2-13. YES: Councilors Rice Hawkins and Brown. NO: Mayor Bouley, and Councilors Fennessy, Grady Sexton, Keach, Champlin, Nyhan, McLaughlin, McNamara, Pierce, Todd, Matson, Kretovic, and Bouchard.

With no other discussion, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The Mayor indicated that they would take a break and reconvene as the City Council for a public hearing and adoption of the budget.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Stevens, Executive Assistant