

## MINUTES

City of Concord Finance Committee Meeting  
May 23, 2024 @ 5:30 PM  
City Council Chambers

**Present:** Mayor Byron Champlin, City Councilors Nathan Fennessy, Fred Keach, Judith Kurtz, Brent Todd, Michele Horne, Stacey Brown, Jennifer Kretovic, Karen McNamara, Amanda Grady Sexton, Jim Schlosser, Kris Schultz, and Jeff Foote.

**Excused:** City Councilors Paula McLaughlin and Ali Sekou.

The Mayor opened the meeting at 5:30 PM. He asked for a motion on the May 16, 2024 and May 20, 2024 draft meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve both sets of minutes, and they were approved unanimously with a voice vote.

With no other business to take care of, Manager Aspell began his review of the budget. He noted that tonight's FY 2025 proposed budget review would cover Community Development, Library, Parks and Recreation, Human Services, and CIP/TIF.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Revenues, budget to budget, are up \$240,000 or 14.6%. Construction permits are up \$192,000; other permits are up \$105,000, a shift from inspection fees below, which are reduced by \$100,000 overall; and licenses are up \$40,000, including food licenses (\$10,000), outdoor seating (\$15,000), and application fees for health and licensing (\$15,000).

Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$272,000 or 5.8%. This increase is due to wage and benefit increases of \$243,000 or 13%.

Also included in this budget are the following:

- In the Code Administration Division: Upgrade of a Permit Technician position, \$2,800; and an increase in Professional Development, \$4,000.
- In the Engineering Services Division: Elimination of a Permitting System Coordinator position, \$124,000; addition of a Civil Engineer/Project Manager position, \$135,000; a new computer, \$2,500; a magnetic manhole cover lifter, \$1,100; and funding for aerial imagery, \$8,500.
- In the Planning Division: Increase in Professional Development, \$2,900; and purchase of Adobe software licenses, \$1,000.

**LIBRARY:** Revenues, budget to budget, are down \$3,500 or 1.5%, mainly due to a decrease in overdue book fines of \$4,500. Non-resident library fees are up \$500 and other revenue is up \$500.

Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$166,000 or 7.7%, mainly due to changes in wages and benefits, \$148,000; library books and materials, \$6,100; professional services, \$9,200; as well as staffing, \$89,000, and condo management fees, \$9,600, for the new Penacook Library.

There was a brief discussion about library cards, and the number of cards that are issued to residents and non-residents. Councilor Brown commented that she was impressed with the Library's service indicators and the amount of traffic at the Library.

Councilor Todd asked what the hours would be at the new Penacook Library. Library Director Todd Fabian responded that he and his staff are still working on the schedule.

**PARKS & RECREATION:** Budget to budget, revenues overall are up \$133,000 or 11.7%. This is mainly due to increases in camps, \$29,000; aquatics, \$10,000; program fees, \$31,000; and cemetery trusts, \$63,000.

Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$279,000 or 7%. This is due to wage and benefit increases of \$238,000, which includes additional staff; a reduction in professional services for tree work, \$20,000, which was a one-time FY 2024 expense; electricity, \$8,700; and natural gas, \$5,700.

Also included in this budget is funding for staffing the Penacook Activity Room, \$65,000; overtime reduction, \$15,000; chimney inspection and repairs, \$9,000; panic button upgrade, \$3,500; sprinkler system inspection, \$4,000; a new laptop, \$2,100; and staff training, \$3,000.

Councilor McNamara asked for information on camp scholarships. Parks and Recreation Director David Gill indicated that he didn't have exact figures with him, but that the Department generally provides about \$15,000 in camp scholarships each year.

Councilor Brown asked about the number of volunteers the Department utilizes. Mr. Gill indicated that the Department receives about 1,600 volunteer hours per year. He did not know off hand how many volunteers make up those hours.

Councilor Fennessy mentioned the reduction in rental fees the Council approved last year for groups using the Citywide Community Center. He asked what the impact was of that rate reduction. Mr. Gill indicated that there has been a large increase in users, but with the reduced rates, they lost about \$6,000 last year. This year, they are ahead by \$9,000. He said they currently have about 120 groups using the community center.

Councilor Todd asked about the Parks Crew Leader position that was requested but not funded by the City Manager. He asked what the importance of this position is. Mr. Gill indicated that it was requested for planning purposes, taking into consideration aging staff and increased use of parks.

Councilor Fennessy mentioned the fact that there are often no parking spaces available at the Community Center, requiring users to park on the street. The potential for future expansion was discussed. Councilor Brown asked if there was a bus stop at that location. Mr. Gill stated that the closest bus stop is on Loudon Road.

Councilor Kretovic asked if the cemeteries are in good shape for the upcoming Memorial Day weekend. Mr. Gill indicated that they are.

**HUMAN SERVICES:** Revenues, budget to budget, are flat.

Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$248,000 or 30.3%. The main drivers for this increase are wage and benefit increases, \$87,000, mainly due to the Administrative Specialist position moving from part-time to full-time; new software maintenance, \$14,000; and increased costs for rent, \$130,000, due to increased needs, as most outstanding funding for rents has disappeared.

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

Tim Thompson, Assistant Community Development Director, provided an overview of the Tax Increment Finance Districts. At the committee's request, he provided an explanation of TIF Districts and their purpose.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN:**

Assistant Community Development Director Tim Thompson provided an overview of the projects recommended for funding in the FY 2025 Capital Improvement Program. Projects that spurred discussion are as follows:

CIP #383, New Airport Terminal Building: Councilor Todd shared his concerns that the current airport terminal is in a historic district and that we will be demolishing a historic structure. City Manager Aspell indicated that the FAA is treating it as a designated historic district, and the City is meeting all of the FAA's requirements for permitting. He also noted that the City's Heritage Commission is involved, as well as the Airport Advisory Committee. Manager Aspell indicated that this is one of the biggest economic development projects the City has ever seen, and that the new terminal provides the potential to change the nature of this community for the better. However, we have a small window of opportunity and need to move fast in order to receive federal funds.

CIP #4, Fire Department Vehicle Replacement: The Mayor asked how many miles are currently on the Assistant Fire Marshal's vehicle, which is the vehicle to be replaced. Fire Chief John Chisholm indicated that the vehicle is an SUV with 53,000 miles on it; however, that is not the vehicle being traded in. The Fire Department has an older vehicle, with higher mileage, that is being traded in for the new vehicle. The new vehicle will be an F-150 pick-up truck and will be better suited to carry the tools and equipment needed for fire investigations.

CIP #235, Golf Course Grounds Improvements: There was a brief discussion about the irrigation project. Golf Pro Phil Davis and Deputy City Manager Brian Lebrun answered questions about the size of the golf course, the number of rounds played, and the difference between a GO bond and a Golf bond.

CIP #643, New Police Headquarters: There was a brief discussion about the amounts budgeted, and whether those cost estimates could potentially increase or decrease.

Councilor Schlosser shared his concern that the City is not spending enough to maintain its Fire Stations, and asked if there is a plan to make facility improvements at the Fire Stations. Manager Aspell responded that there are proposed improvements to Heights Station and Central Station in the outyears of the CIP.

CIP #91 and CIP #275, Sewer Main Rehabilitation & Construction and Sewer Pump Station Improvements: Discussion ensued about the cost for the proposed improvements to the Heights sewer collection, as well as the proposed improvements to the Steeplegate Mall pump station. Councilor Kretovic suggested the creation of a TIF District for the Heights sewer main rehabilitation. Councilor Brown suggested impact fees, to which Deputy City Manager Matt Walsh

noted that impact fees cannot be used for maintenance, only for new infrastructure. He said the City doesn't charge sewer impact fees, only connection fees.

CIP #78, Annual Highway Improvement Program: Councilor Fennessy asked when Manchester Street improvements would occur. It was noted that improvements to Manchester Street will occur in conjunction with the State's I-93 project.

Mayor Champlin opened up a public hearing on the Community Development, Library, Parks and Recreation, Human Services, TIF District, and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budgets.

Sam Evans Brown, Concord resident and member of the Ski the Beav' organization, spoke in support of their snowmaking proposal, which is programmed in the outyears of the CIP. He indicated that the proposed snowmaking equipment will be funded by donations, but that they need City collaboration. He is concerned that this project will be pushed out further and said he would like to see the project moved up. Councilor Kretovic asked if Ski the Beav' would find it reasonable if the project were moved up to FY 2026. Mr. Evans Brown indicated they would. Councilor Brown asked if Ski the Beav' would be willing to share the funds they raise with the golf course for the clubhouse. Mr. Evans Brown said he is willing to work with the golf community; however, he would not want the funds raised by the ski community to support the clubhouse.

Tracy Bricchi, Penacook resident, spoke about the City pools, noting that last year there wasn't enough lifeguards. She said she doesn't want to see any pools closed this year, or at least not the same ones. She also spoke about the airport, indicating that she does not want to see the Concord Airport being like Manchester. And lastly, she commented that we can no longer say that the golf course is revenue neutral.

Parks & Recreation Director David Gill was asked to provide an update on the lifeguard/pool situation. Mr. Gill indicated that he is hoping to open all the pools, but as of now, he is still short on lifeguards and does not have enough to open all pools. He said he will develop a pool schedule over the next few weeks. He noted that the number of pool users at each pool play a factor in which pools are closed.

Ted Rice, President of the Concord Skateboard Association, spoke in support of the skatepark. He said they have started fundraising and the hope is to raise \$500,000 in donations and apply for a \$500,000 federal grant.

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

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 8:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Stevens, Executive Assistant