

**City Council Finance Committee Minutes**  
**June 1, 2015**  
**6:50 PM**

Attendance: Mayor Bouley; Councilors Todd, Herschlag, McClure, Champlin, Grady Sexton, Shurtleff, Coen, Keach, Nyhan, Bennett, Matson, White Bouchard, and St. Hilaire.

Excused: Councilor Werner.

**Bonded Debt**

Deputy City Manager Lebrun provided a brief overview of bonded debt for the General Fund, as noted in the Capital Improvement Program of the proposed budget.

The Mayor opened a public hearing on this portion of the budget. No testimony was received.

Councilor Bennett moved tentative approval of the bonded debt portion of the Budget as presented. Councilor Coen seconded. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

**Capital Improvement Review**

The Mayor made some brief opening remarks regarding the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Specifically, he proposed that the Finance Committee forgo its normal review process which entailed reviewing capital projects by category. Rather, the Mayor proposed reviewing the CIP by using the “Budget Listing by Funding Source” table included on pages 22 – 28 of the “Tax Increment Finance Districts and Capital Improvement Program” section of the “white budget book”. It was the consensus of the City Council to proceed per the Mayor’s recommendation.

Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects, provided a general overview of the CIP, as well as certain projects of special interest within the CIP by Fund.

Specific projects discussed by the City Council were as follows:

- CIP 63 City Wide Recreational Improvements: Mr. Walsh noted that the CIP contemplated replacing all 7 neighborhood pools over the next decade at a cost of approximately \$2.6 million. Councilor Herschlag asked several questions concerning the proposed prioritization of pool replacements, as well as the anticipated public involvement process for replacements. He also asked whether the City should replace all 7 pools in kind, or consider alternative aquatics facilities, or even consider consolidation of facilities so the City would no longer have 7 pools. The City Manager and Mayor responded to these questions by indicating that the schedule of pool replacements in the out years of the CIP would be evaluated on an annual basis, and adjusted as needs and rate of physical deterioration dictated. They also indicated that whether the City decides to replace pools “in kind” or to consolidate facilities is a policy decision that the City Council will make as the replacement effort moves forward.

- CIP 571 I-393 / Horseshoe Pond Drainage Improvements: Councilors Shurtleff, Todd, and Herschlag made several comments about the status of this project, and spoke on behalf of the Morrill Family which has an agricultural operation adjacent to Horseshoe Pond. Mr. Walsh provided a brief historical overview of the project and proposed additional funding to supplement funds appropriated in FY2015. Carlos Baia, Deputy City Manager – Development, provided a detailed status report for the project and discussed the current preferred alternative to alleviate flooding issues by constructing a new drainage system which would route storm surges through new drainage mains within North Main Street to Horseshoe Pond. He also indicated that the State and City are considering dredging silt from the outfall of the pond at the Merrimack River to improve flow. Several Councilors offered their opinions concerning how the drainage system should be designed, as well as what items should be included in a potential watershed study for the Horseshoe Pond area. Councilor Champlin mentioned the negative impacts the current drainage situation has upon the Kimball Jenkins School of Art.
- CIP 65 City Hall Renovations: Councilor Coen discussed the City Administration’s proposal to convert the City Hall Campus from steam to natural gas. He wondered if this move would be consistent with the City’s desire to use “green fuels / technologies”. He also discussed concerns of how the City and State’s decisions to leave the steam system could impact the viability of the steam utility and other customers in downtown. Mr. Walsh noted that the \$600,000 conversion has a pay back of approximately 5 years, and would save the City \$150,000 per year. He also explained that the conversion would likely entail the installation of gas fired steam boilers which would allow the City to continue to use the existing heating system distribution within City buildings. City Manager Tom Aspell noted that the City delayed the conversion project for several years in order to give Concord Steam maximum opportunity to pursue construction of a new facility. Despite financial concessions by the City, the project, which has been pursued for approximately 8 years, failed to materialize. The City Manager added that any decision to stay with Concord Steam would purely be a political decision, as there is no financial benefit to the City to remain with Concord Steam. He added that despite a Concord Monitor article that ran on June 1, 2015, in which Peter Bloomfield claimed to have a \$17 million renovation plan for the existing steam plant that could be underway in a matter of months, the City had no knowledge of any such plan. Some Councilors expressed concerns about potential impacts on downtown property owners and suggested the City should explore a low-cost loan program to assist with conversions from steam to gas.
- Councilor St. Hilaire mentioned a recent automobile accident which caused a traffic signal on Loudon Road to be out of commission for a few weeks. He asked about the City’s approach to repairing that damaged signal and whether the City had an adequate supply of spare parts. The Manager noted that the City will pursue repair costs for the signal, estimated at \$60,000, through the offending driver’s insurance company. If that is not successful, the City may seek reimbursement through its insurance provider or the City’s “self-insurance” fund. He added that because the City has so many different types and vintages of traffic signals, it would be financially impractical for the City to maintain a supply of spare parts for all signals.

- **CIP 580 City Snow Dump:** Councilor Herschlag inquired whether this project could be delayed for 1 year. Mr. Walsh responded with a history of the project. He noted that funding was provided a few years ago to relocate the snow dump from Terrill Park to another City-owned property located on Terrill Park Drive. The goal of the relocation was to comply with Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund restrictions associated with Terrill Park. However, after preliminary engineering was completed, City staff concluded that the proposed location was not acceptable for a variety of reasons. Therefore, the project was suspended and funding was revoked. Last year, the General Services Department was able to find a temporary, one year solution, using private property on Langdon Avenue. Mr. Walsh noted that the new plan is to construct a snow dump on property at the City's Old Turnpike Road Landfill, which is not encumbered by solid waste. Having a permanent dedicated location near downtown is critical for snow removal operations. Delaying the project could impede the City's ability to remove snow from downtown neighborhoods next winter.
- **CIP 586 Parking Meters:** Councilor Herschlag inquired about the plan to acquire additional parking meters for the Complete Streets Projects, as well as possible adoption of "pay by cell" technology. Mr. Walsh reminded Councilor Herschlag that City staff was meeting with other municipalities and vendors of potential "pay by cell" on June 10<sup>th</sup> and that he would be able to respond to the Councilor's questions more fully after that meeting. Councilor McClure inquired about plans to heat the 24 Cale Kiosk units on Main Street for the Complete Streets Project and whether the City had plans to heat other units. Mr. Walsh responded that this was being done as a pilot project to see how well the units performed. He noted that the City owns approximately 80 kiosks. If deemed a success, and if the City decided to continue to invest in Cale units, the City could explore installing heaters in all units.

**Public Hearing:** The Mayor opened a public hearing on the proposed FY 2016 CIP.

Rob Morrill of Morrill Farm addressed the Finance Committee concerning CIP 571. He provided a detailed account of his experience with drainage issues associated with I-393 and Horseshoe Pond over the last 20 years and offered his ideas for potential solutions. He encouraged the City Council to work with the State of New Hampshire to resolve the situation as expeditiously as possible.

Sherilyn Young, member of the Kimball Jenkins School of Art Board of Trustees, addressed the Finance Committee and encouraged the City Council to work with the State of New Hampshire to resolve the ongoing drainage issues as expeditiously as possible.

Roy Schweiker, Chapel Street resident, addressed the Finance Committee concerning the proposed conversion from steam to gas for the City Hall Campus (CIP 65), proposed pool replacements (CIP 63), Langley Parkway (CIP 40) and a project to be undertaken by Concord Hospital related thereto, and the Community Center Project (CIP 443).

The Mayor then closed the public hearing.

**MOTION:** Councilor Grady Sexton moved to tentatively approve the Capital Improvement Program as presented. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem St. Hilaire.

DISCUSSION: Councilor Shurtleff asked whether the City could guarantee Morrill Farms that a drainage solution would be implemented and maintained. The City Manager responded that it could not, as the City does not control drainage for I-393 or the permitting process for drainage improvements to Horseshoe Pond. However, the City Manager did state that the City would use its best efforts to work with the affected parties and the State of New Hampshire to resolve the situation as expeditiously as possible.

VOTE: The motion then passed unanimously on a voice vote.

The Mayor then called for a vote to accept the minutes of the May 18<sup>th</sup> Finance Committee meeting. A motion was duly made and seconded, which passed on a voice vote.

Councilor Grady Sexton moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Champlin seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matthew R. Walsh  
Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, & Special Projects