

City Finance Committee Minutes

May 31, 2018

City Council Chambers – 5:30 PM

Present: Mayor Bouley, Councilors Todd, Herschlag, Kretovic, Champlin, Werner, Grady Sexton, Shurtleff, Coen, Keach, Nyhan, Kenison, Matson, White-Bouchard, and St. Hilaire.

The Mayor opened the meeting at 5:30 PM and explained that tonight's FY 2019 proposed budget review would cover the Community Development, Library, Parks & Recreation, and Human Services budgets.

Motions were made and seconded to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2018 and May 24, 2018 Finance Committee Meetings. The motions passed with a voice vote and the minutes were unanimously approved.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Revenues, budget to budget, are down \$152,000 or 8.8%. This is mainly due to building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing permits, which are down a total of \$150,000. The State of NH is no longer securing building permits from the City for their building projects and this has a significant impact on the building permit revenue stream. Manager Aspell noted that although the revenues are down, the number of building permits issued is expected to remain relatively consistent, if not slightly higher in FY 2019.

Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$202,000, mainly due to wage and benefit increases, and includes \$103,000 for the Code Division reorganization.

Other recommended items to be funded include:

- \$775,000 for storm water improvements;
- \$200,000 of additional funding for development permitting software;
- \$116,000 for GIS improvements for phase 6A of the tax map update, as well as to replace a large format digital plotter/scanner;
- \$100,000 for phase 2 of the zoning update – creation of form based code;
- \$60,000 for a storm water enterprise mechanism;
- \$55,000 for traffic signal and traffic operation improvements on North Main/Bouton Streets and I-393;
- \$25,000 for bridge and dam maintenance repairs;
- \$5,600 for iPads for the Planning Board; and
- \$103,000 for Code Division reorganization.

Funding for the following projects are presented in the CIP as asterisked items, either looking for direction from City Council to proceed with securing donations or funding sources, or waiting for commitment from other funding sources:

- \$1,000,000 for Merrimack River Greenway Trail Project;
- \$700,000 for Langley Parkway;
- \$300,000 for replacement of CAT buses; and
- \$230,000 for North Pembroke Road bridge replacement.

Councilor Herschlag noted his concern that the Building & Code Services Division needs more staffing. With reduced revenue projected, he asked if the Division still needs additional staffing and if it will allow Code to be more proactive. Manager Aspell responded that reorganizing Code and replacing part-time staff with full-time staff will allow Code to provide better customer service and respond to things in a timelier manner, but it will not allow Code to be proactive in the sense of going out and conducting inspections. That would take a lot more staff to accomplish.

Councilor Kretovic asked about the replacement of the CAT buses, specifically where things are at with the three year project. Manager Aspell indicated that this will be the third of three buses to be replaced. The bus itself costs \$300,000, but the City only pays 10% (\$30,000). The remaining funding is provided by the State (10%) and the Feds (80%). Although we are budgeting the money now, it may be a year before the new bus arrives. In response, Councilor Kretovic asked if we could hold off on budgeting the money until the bus is delivered. Manager Aspell responded that the City has to commit the funds now in order for CAT to order the bus.

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

Resident Roy Schweiker expressed his concern with the housing developments the City is encouraging. He feels that these developments attract families with children and, in turn, the school taxes will increase. He feels the Community Development Department should be encouraging projects that will have a positive effect on the tax base.

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

LIBRARY: Revenues, budget to budget, are flat. Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$99,000, mainly due to wage and benefit increases, and includes the staffing requests for the Library effort at the new community center.

Other items that are included in this budget are:

- \$100,000 for the replacement of tiles and flooring, painting, replacement of doors and windows, and hardware upgrades; and
- \$10,000 to replace a microfilm reader printer.

Councilor St. Hilaire questioned why there is a line for insurance expenses in the Library budget. Deputy Manager LeBrun indicated that the cost of the City's property liability insurance is distributed among all Departments, and that the liability portion is allocated according to overall wages paid by each Department. In response, Councilor St. Hilaire asked if our property liability insurance included cyber security, to which Deputy Manager LeBrun responded that it does.

Councilor Herschlag brought up security at the Library and the need for the Library to have more security cameras. He asked if new cameras would tie-in to the Police Department. Manager Aspell indicated that the plan for any new security cameras, whether they are at the Library or the new Community Center or other City facilities, will be to have them all tie-in together to the Police Department.

Councilor Kenison mentioned that she has received much positive feedback about the Library's book sales.

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

PARKS & RECREATION: Revenues, budget to budget, are up \$536,000, of which \$136,000 is for operating revenues and \$400,000 is a transfer from the Recreation Reserve. The operating revenue increase includes \$91,000 in new program fees, and \$47,000 in building rentals.

Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$376,000 and includes \$213,000 for new staffing and upgrades of positions. It also includes \$123,000 in services, supplies and utilities. The remaining increase is due to regular wage and benefit increases.

The new community center is expected to open in June, and funding for the remaining FY 2018 expenses was approved by City Council earlier this year.

Other programs that are supported by this budget are:

- \$30,000 to replace White Park basketball court and hockey rink lights with energy efficient LED lights;
- \$60,000 to install 2,000 linear feet of paved pathway at Keach Park to connect the new community center to the parking area adjacent to the playground;
- \$60,000 to renovate the basketball courts and install new acrylic backboards and fencing at Rolfe Park;
- \$70,000 for phase 2 of the stone wall repair along Broadway Street at Rollins Park;
- \$85,000 for citywide recreation facility improvements, including \$45,000 to repair the granite stairs, repair concrete foundation, and repoint exterior masonry at the West Street Ward House; \$20,000 to install a pre-action fire suppression system at the Green Street Community Center; and \$20,000 for electrical improvements at the City Auditorium;
- \$20,000 for pocket parks; specifically to crack seal and stripe basketball courts at the West Street, Fletcher Murphy, and Thompson Street play lot parks;
- \$50,000 for Memorial Field improvements, including \$30,000 for a structural engineering assessment of the football stadium and Doane Diamond bleachers; and \$20,000 to crack seal and stripe five older tennis courts;
- \$40,000 to replace two 60" out front mowers for cemeteries;
- \$105,000 for cemetery improvements, including \$60,000 to pave select roads at Blossom Hill (phase 2 of 6); and \$45,000 for repairs to the Blossom Hill Chapel;
- \$6,000 for the installation of trees in parks;
- \$3,200 for the installation of fence guards for a portion of the fencing at Memorial Field;
- \$500 for porta-potties for the July 4th celebration; and
- \$6,900 to mow Langley Parkway on a weekly basis.

Councilor Kretovic asked how Parks & Recreation is doing with their hiring of summer help. Parks & Recreation Director David Gill responded that as far as Lifeguards go, they have hired enough staff. However, many are unable to get into a Lifeguard certification class until a week after the pools open. As a result, the Department may not be able to open all 7 pools the first week. All other summer positions are sufficiently staffed.

Councilor Herschlag asked what the City's plan is for the assessment/replacement of the bleachers at Memorial Field and Doane Diamond. Specifically, he asked if the plan is to replace all the bleachers, or move bleachers from the football field to Doane Diamond. Manager Aspell responded

that the plan is to take a fresh look at the need/demand for bleachers at each location in order to determine the number needed and if it makes sense to have bleachers that can be moved from one location to the other. The City would be potentially looking for some funding from the School District to expand beyond the City's needs for construction.

Mayor Bouley asked how often the School District uses Memorial Field. Parks and Recreation Director Gill indicated that use is about 70-80% School District, 20-30% public.

Councilor Kretovic mentioned that there may be many members of the public that wish to testify about the bleachers at Memorial Field, and asked the Manager to confirm that the public hearing for this matter will be held on the night the Capital Budget is reviewed. Manager Aspell confirmed this, and indicated that the CIP budget will be reviewed on Thursday, June 7th, at 5:30 PM.

Councilor St. Hilaire noted that the insurance expense in the Parks & Recreation budget is less than the Library, and wanted to know why, considering that the Parks & Recreation Department is at more risk for claims than the Library. Deputy Manager LeBrun indicated that the breakdown among departments has nothing to do with the amount of risk or coverage provided to each Department. The City allocates to each Department based on the total overall wages paid by each Department. Councilor St. Hilaire asked Deputy Manager LeBrun to delve into the matter and provide a detailed explanation of how insurance expenses are paid for.

The Mayor opened a public hearing on the Parks & Recreation budget.

Ayi D'Almeida, Youth Coordinator for the New American Africans; Rosecel Arevalo, NHTI student; and Samrawit Silva, undergraduate student at UNH and member of Change for Concord; thanked the City Council for its support and improvements of Keach Park. They indicated that they will be back to testify next week about the need for lights at Keach Park.

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

HUMAN SERVICES: Revenues, budget to budget, are down \$5,000. Because direct assistance is down, the Department doesn't anticipate as much reimbursement from clients.

Expenses, budget to budget, are down \$77,000 or 9.8%, due to a decrease in the direct assistance budget.

The Mayor opened a public hearing on the Human Services budget.

Resident Roy Schweiker indicated that he feels it is inappropriate for the City to provide funding to the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness for the homeless shelter. He suggests the \$30,000 be put into the Human Services budget instead.

Mr. Schweiker also expressed that he feels before the City refers unpaid ambulance charges to collection agencies, the patients should be referred to Human Services to see if they qualify for Medicaid.

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

Motions were made and seconded to tentatively approve the Community Development, Library, Parks and Recreation, and Human Services budgets. The Community Development, Library, and Parks and Recreation budgets passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Councilor Coen asked what has changed since 2008 in the type of clients being seen and services being provided by the Human Services Department. Human Services Director Karen Emis-Williams noted that there is a decrease in the number of people coming in for assistance – possibly due to the economy, and possibly due to the fact that there are many multi-families living together. Director Emis-Williams indicated that there's nothing specific to Concord – this is a trend across the state.

Councilor Herschlag made the comment that up until recently, many people from outside of Concord were coming to Concord because they knew they could receive services, and that has now stopped because the City put its foot down. Mayor Bouley responded that up until recently, we received funds from the State and, as a result, had to take anyone who needed services. We no longer receive funding from the State and have been able to focus on serving Concord clients.

Councilor Keach asked how much collaboration occurs with other surrounding communities. Director Emis-Williams indicated that they try to work with other communities, but that her office doesn't hesitate to hold other towns accountable when applicable.

A motion was made to tentatively approve the Human Services Budget. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Mayor Bouley noted that the next Finance Committee would be held on Monday, June 4th, 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.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Stevens, Executive Assistant