

## MINUTES

City of Concord Finance Committee Meeting  
May 28, 2020 @ 5:30 PM  
City Council Chambers

**Present:** Mayor James Bouley, City Councilors Brent Todd, , Jennifer Kretovic, Erle Pierce, Rob Werner, Byron Champlin, Fred Keach, Meredith Hatfield, Nathan Fennessy, Gail Matson, Amanda Grady Sexton, Keith Nyhan, Linda Kenison, Candace White Bouchard, and Zandra Rice Hawkins.

The Mayor opened the meeting at 5:42 PM and indicated the committee was meeting electronically due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04.

The Mayor noted that, in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order, the City had provided public notice of the necessary information for accessing this meeting, and indicated where this information could be found.

Mayor Bouley also noted that all votes taken during this meeting would be done by roll call vote.

Deputy City Manager LeBrun took the roll and asked committee members when stating their presence to please also state whether there was anyone else in the room with them, which is required under the Right to Know Law. In accordance with the Right to Know Law, all committee members indicated they were alone.

The Mayor explained that tonight's FY 2021 proposed budget review would cover the Community Development, Library, Parks & Recreation, Human Services, and CIP/TIF budgets.

The Mayor requested that the committee hold off on adopting the May 18 and May 21 Finance Committee minutes until the next meeting, which will be held on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Revenues, budget to budget, are down \$315,400 or 19.2%. This is mainly due to construction permits being down \$309,000; licenses down \$5,100; inspection fees being up \$7,000; timber sales being up \$6,000; and transfers being up \$44,700.

Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$89,900 or 2.5%. This increase is mainly due to wage and benefit increases and a contracted services increase.

We are holding the Associate Engineer position open for half the year in the Engineering Services Division and have allocated some resources in outside services to hire some outside help if necessary.

Transfer out is down \$33,800.

Councilor Hatfield asked for and was provided with an update on the Form Based Code project. Deputy City Manager Development Carlos Baia noted that Phase I will be presented to Council for adoption next month. Phase II has been delayed due to the pandemic.

Councilor Hatfield also asked for and was provided an update on building permit fees and the status of the urban tree inventory.

Councilor Fennessy asked why there was a decline in construction permit revenue for FY 2021. Deputy City Manager Baia indicated that in previous years permit revenue was impacted by projects being done by the State and School Districts, neither of which have any projects planned for FY 2021. Revenue was also impacted by Concord Hospital projects, which are also down.

Councilor Champlin asked what the City is doing to assist local businesses in finding funds to help them get through these difficult times. Economic Development Director Suzi Pegg explained what she has been doing to help the local business community, which includes conducting a regional business survey back in April and creating a resource page on the City website that is relevant to local businesses. She has also been working closely with Intown Concord and the Chamber of Commerce to get the word out to businesses about grant opportunities. She will be doing another survey next month to compare to the results from April.

Mayor Bouley mentioned the \$400 million Main Street Relief Program and asked if Ms. Pegg has helped the local businesses to apply for these funds. Ms. Pegg indicated that as soon as she learned the details about the grant, she shared the information with the business community. She said she has done everything in her power to push the information out.

Mayor Bouley asked if the Council could see the results from the survey done in April. Ms Pegg indicated that due to technical problems with Survey Monkey the sharing of those results have been delayed. Results will be shared with Council as soon as possible.

In general, Ms. Pegg indicated that businesses want to open back up, they are concerned about staying closed too long and they are also concerned about the work force.

**LIBRARY:** Revenues, budget to budget, are down by \$3,000 or 1.3% due to a reduction in fines for overdue books.

Expenses, budget to budget, are down \$84,400 or 2.1% due to changes in benefits. A Youth Services Manager is being held open for half the year to save on expenses.

Mayor Bouley asked if the Library had any plans to re-open with restrictions, like doing curbside book checkout and returns. Library Director Todd Fabian is working with the Reopening NH Libraries Task Force, as well as with the Governor's Office, to receive guidelines on how to go about slowly reopening. Reopening will occur in stages, with the plan to offer curbside checkout and returns during the week of June 8, provided the Governor approves.

Councilor Keach asked if there has been a reduction in staffing levels. Director Fabian indicated that a vacant Division Head position has been frozen and that seven part-time Library Pages have been furloughed.

There was a brief discussion about expanding internet services at the Library, to assist those who do not have internet access at home. Councilor Fabian noted that this would likely occur in the second phase of re-opening.

Councilor Matson asked about the Library's perpetual budget goal of finding new space for the Penacook Library. Director Fabian indicated that anytime a potential space becomes available, the City takes a look at it.

**PARKS & RECREATION:** Budget to budget, revenues are up \$80,300 or 6.4%. This is mainly due to an increase in Transfer In from Trust for cemetery maintenance of \$80,000. There are also some decreases in revenues and an increase in camp revenue of \$17,500, for which we have budgeted additional funds from new programs, keeping in mind that if the new programs do not occur, we also will not have the expense.

Expenses, budget to budget, are down \$11,900 OR .4%. This is in part due to a decrease in supplies, utilities, insurance and capital outlay. The expense side of new camp revenue has also been budgeted for. If the revenue doesn't materialize, neither will the expense. A Laborer/Truck Driver position is being held open for half the year.

There was a brief discussion about camps and other Parks & Recreation programming affected by the pandemic. Parks & Recreation Director David Gill responded that we currently have 500 kids registered for camps and that we are ready to go when the Governor lifts the orders. Camp counselors are ready to be hired. Director Gill indicated that we will have more information from the Governor about pools on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The City may have difficulty opening all the pools, as there is a lack of hired lifeguards. July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks have been cancelled at this time, but the Council could consider holding them later in the year. Director Gill indicated he hopes to have the Senior Center open by August.

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

Expenses, budget to budget, are up \$22,000 or 3.2%, mainly due to wage and benefit increases.

Also included in this budget is a Program Change Request (PCR) to increase the hours of the Administrative Specialist position.

City Manager Aspell indicated that he has been working very closely with the Human Services Director on all the issues regarding people seeking services and the difficulties of finding shelter or hotel space.

Manager Aspell noted that for any expenses directly related to Covid, the City will be seeking reimbursement from the available State funds. Based on the projected expenses for FY 2020, he believes we will be fine for FY 2021. However, these things can change quickly and we will always work to care for those that need the help. If necessary, we will tap into the contingency funds that the Council budgets every year.

Committee members asked if the Department is expecting an increase in requests for assistance, as a result of the pandemic, and if the Department will be able to handle the increased caseload. Human Services Director Karen Emis-Williams indicated that she is expecting an increase and, despite the fact that the office is small, they will be able to handle it. The additional hours requested for the Administrative Specialist position will be helpful.

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

Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects, provided an overview of the Tax Increment Finance Districts.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN:**

Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects, provided an overview of the projects in the Capital Improvement Program. Projects that spurred discussion are as follows:

- **Parking projects (CIP # 432, 595, and 627):** The Committee asked how our parking kiosks have compared in performance to other communities. Matt Walsh responded that no formal analysis has been done, but we use the same kiosks that are used by Portsmouth, Manchester and Nashua.
- **Parks and Open Space (CIP # 51, 52, and 567):** The Mayor asked about the condition of the White Park Maintenance Shed, the upstairs of which used to hold administrative offices. He asked if it made sense to put money into the building if there are other costly issues with the building. Manager Aspell indicated that the only issue he is aware of is some air quality issues on the second floor that need to be addressed.
- **Public Buildings (CIP #63, 65, 323, and 551):** Mayor Bouley expressed concerns with the City investing in buildings that are old and may not have much life left in them. He used the West Street Ward House as an example, which is a building that is mainly used for elections and not much else. Manager Aspell responded that the Public Properties Division is conducting a comprehensive review of all of the City's public buildings.
- **Streets New Construction (CIP # 18, Storrs Street North):** Councilor Fennessy and other members of the committee inquired about the impact of the 93 expansion on the timing of the Storrs Street North project. Manager Aspell noted that the City is working closely with the NHDOT. The State is aware of our project and we feel confident that we can do our piece and have our needs addressed as the State proceeds with the 93 expansion.

With no further discussion, Mayor Bouley noted that the next Finance Committee would be held on Monday, June 1st, 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 roll call vote and the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Stevens, Executive Assistant