

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

Mitchell Greenwald, Chairman
Terry M. Clark
Thomas Powers
Randy Filiault
Kris E. Roberts

Staff Present:

City Manager, John MacLean
City Attorney, Thomas Mullins
IMS Director, Rebecca Landry
City Engineer, Jim Donison
Finance Director, Steve Thornton
Public Works Director, Kurt Blomquist
Parking Project Manager, Gary
Lamoureux
Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries
Director, Andrew Bohannon

Councilors Present

Carl B. Jacobs

Chair Greenwald called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

**1. MEMORANDUM: Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Director -
Acceptance of Donations**

- **Skate Park Design and Estimate**
- **Mural at Recreation Center**
- **Sumner Knight Chapel**
- **Ashuelot River Park**

Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Director, Andrew Bohannon addressed the Committee first. Mr. Bohannon stated that the first donation is a donation towards the skate park design one from the Mountain Corp. for \$1,750 and the other for \$2,000 from an anonymous donor. This brings their efforts towards funding a skatepark design to \$4,000. After these donations go through the City, the project will be going out to bid. The Chairman asked whether there was a location for the park yet. Mr. Bohannon stated that the design firm will be able to firm up that discussion.

The second donation is for \$500 from the Savings Bank of Walpole to create a mural for the Multi-Purpose room at the Recreation Center. Mr. Bohannon stated that the City is working with Jean Marie Aires, a muralist. This would involve several community members being involved in the work and the mural will be created on 8 x 11 plywood

sheets which will be mounted on the wall. The project would cost about \$3,000 and the City is looking at other grants as well.

The third donation is from the Dragon Fly Shop in the amount of \$75 for the upkeep of Sumner Knight Chapel. The final donation is for \$50 from Kathleen Rooney in honor Marsh Nims for the upkeep of Ashuelot River Park.

Councilor Clark made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Filiault.

On a vote of 5 - 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept a donation(s) of \$3750.00 for the Parks & Recreation Department to hire a design firm for the creation of a skate park; a \$500.00 donation from the Savings Bank of Walpole to create a mural in the multipurpose room at the Recreation Center; a donation of \$75.00 from the Dragonfly Shop of Keene, LLC for the upkeep of the Sumner Knight Chapel; and finally a donation of \$50.00 from Kathleen Rooney for Ashuelot River Park in honor of Marge Nims.

2. MEMORANDUM: Public Works Director - 2013 Homeland Security Grant - Water Treatment Facility

Public Works Director Kurt Blomquist stated this request was for the acceptance of a homeland security grant for the water treatment facility. Since September 11th, Homeland Security has shifted its focus on primary emergency services and has begun to identify critical infrastructure and key resources. In this case, critical infrastructure and key resources would include water treatment and wastewater treatment facilities, chemical facilities and dams. Basically if something were to happen to one of these facilities, it would have a negative impact on a community's social, economic, health and wellbeing.

Mr. Blomquist continued that Keene was fortunate to have participated in water and wastewater facility reviews by Homeland Security – both at the State and Federal level. They took a look and identified potential liabilities and put Keene on a list if funding became available.

This particular grant is for security and access control. Mr. Blomquist explained there are 2.5 individuals who work at this facility and the staff is also responsible for the water storage tank, the well house and booster tanks. Sometimes there might only be one person on a particular shift. One of the challenges that person has is there is no way to know if someone is at the facility entrance. Today a buzzer is used to announce that someone is at the door, which Homeland Security identified as a vulnerability. This particular grant will improve the overall safety and access control at the water treatment facility by providing local cameras at the entry door and at the gate entry. Cameras would not be installed around the perimeter of the facility.

Councilor Clark asked whether this was similar to the access control at the wastewater treatment plant. That improvement was more than \$12,500 and he inquired whether anything more than the \$12,500 will be spent. Mr. Blomquist state the cost of the cameras has come down and most of the expense would be the wiring for the SCADA system used for remote access into the system.

Councilor Clark stated that Homeland Security comes up with Federal funds for real questionable things and the City government should not be enabling the Federal government to waste money. Councilor Roberts responded that as a military engineer – two of the easiest things to damage a community would be to shut down the water and wastewater facilities.

Councilor Powers made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Filiault.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and execute a Homeland Security Grant for security measures at the Keene Water Treatment Facility.

**3. MEMORANDUM: Project Manager - Parking & City Engineer
- Commercial Street Parking Lot Reconstruction**

Parking Project Manager, Gary Lamoureux addressed Committee next. Mr. Lamoureux stated that in 2014 there was a project put forward for a mill-shim-overlay of the Commercial Street parking lot. For \$99,000 what it would have resulted in a new asphalt surface for this area. As staff has gone forward, they have found that there is some increased scope of work which would bring this lot to higher safety standards. The additional scope of work has a price tag of about \$85,000.

City Engineer Jim Donison was the next speaker. Mr. Donison stated that the additional work would include concrete sidewalks along the front of the parking stalls, granite curbing and the replacement of some of the trees. This would be at a cost of another \$85,000. The \$85,000 would also include the removal of the existing guardrail in front of the skate park and the installation of wheel stops. The access onto Gilbo Avenue and Commercial Street will also be paved. Mr. Lamoureux also referred to the Wilson Street area where there are going to be some additional parking spots created where there is no sidewalk, which is also going to be changed.

Councilor Clark referred to the access onto Commercial Street and noted that this is a private access.

Councilor Powers stated this would be a major renovation and improvement to that area and asked for confirmation that there is no future consideration about placing a major development in that area. Mr. Lamoureux responded that his understanding is that the Commercial Street parking area will continue to be used for parking. Although there is

discussion about a Gilbo Avenue parking structure; it is intended that this area will be ready for that displaced parking.

Mr. Lamoureux stated that they are also looking at bringing a few more innovative things into this lot, for instance an electric charging station. He indicated that staff has just found out that there are grant opportunities for a project such as this and they are also considering making this one of the *Spirit of Place* projects.

Councilor Clark asked whether this would mean that they will they be digging up what would have already been put down. Mr. Lamoureux stated that they will coordinate these projects. Chair Greenwald clarified that no taxpayer money will be going into the electronic charging station project. Mr. Lamoureux answered in the affirmative.

Councilor Powers asked whether parking meters will be going back in or whether there would be an alternative method of payment for this lot. Mr. Lamoureux stated that there are several options are being considered such a “pay by place” or “pay by plate.” Staff is working with vendors to look at these various options.

Councilor Powers asked about lighting. Mr. Lamoureux stated that there is cobra lighting that already exists on utility poles, which is sufficient for the lot. Staff did look at a lighting plan which is estimated at about \$100,000 for underground lighting and staff might consider laying the underground conduits themselves. The lighting being considered would more closely match the ornamental lighting being used downtown.

Councilor Roberts asked what the long range plan was for the skate park. The City Manager stated that there is no plan as of yet. Keene State College is looking to make some improvements to the adjacent dirt parking lot formerly owned by the Grange. Once Keene State has made some decisions, perhaps the adjoining lot could be folded into some other uses.

Councilor Roberts stated that he has no problem using a kiosk, but he felt some people will have issues with putting in their license plate numbers and a concern from some about the City storing license plate information. Mr. Lamoureux stated that he shares the same concerns, but with the “pay by space” people often seem to forget where they are parked. He added that the up and coming norm is the “pay by plate” technology. The City however, is still at a discussion stage and regardless of which option they go with, the units can easily be changed from one to another which is very inexpensive. Mr. Lamoureux added that the downtown merchants are excited about the effort the City is putting into these projects.

Chair Greenwald referred to the alley behind Curry Copy – the strip that goes from that location to the parking lot and indicated that it is important for the City to coordinate with the property owner and pave this area as well. Mr. Lamoureux stated he was not certain who the property owner was, but the staff would identify the property owner and contact them to determine their intention.

Councilor Powers asked what the plan for the meters were. Mr. Lamoureux stated that the intention, if the City was to go with a different payment technology, is that there will not be any meters in this lot, which will greatly help with maintenance and manual servicing.

Councilor Filiault also referred to the access from Curry Copy and felt this is something the City needs to get clarification on.

Councilor Powers stated that this is a great project but he felt there was a need to give staff more direction. He stated that he supports reconstruction but not the reuse of meters. The Councilor added that when digging does happen that conduits be placed as well.

Mr. Lamoureux stated that staff's anticipation is to start the bidding process in February so construction can start in the spring prior to the Farmers Market coming back. He indicated that staff is looking at the kiosk system and at the same time they can come back with a report on the conduits.

The Manager asked whether this matter could not go forward at this point and staff can come back with a cost estimate for the conduits within two meeting cycles.

Councilor Clark asked whether staff will be seeking donations from the public by February. Mr. Lamoureux stated that this issue is in process at this time.

Councilor Roberts made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On a vote of 5 - 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the increased scope of work to the Commercial Street parking lot be approved and direct staff to prepare a Resolution to appropriate \$85,000 from the Downtown Infrastructure Capital Reserve fund for a new total not to exceed \$184,090.

**4. RESOLUTION: R-2014-34: Fees for Registration Permits -
Transportation Improvement Fund**

Finance Director Steve Thornton addressed the Committee next. Mr. Thornton stated that this Resolution request is to help fund various transportation improvements to roads, bridges, sidewalks and trails. The improvements will be funded by a \$5 vehicle surcharge as outlined in RSA 261-153. The City registers about 20,000 vehicles which will generate about \$100,000. The projects to be funded will need to be approved by the Council through the CIP, budget process or some other formal action.

Mr. Thornton added that antique (greater than 25 years) motorcycles and vehicles as well as ATV's and snowmobiles are exempt from this fee.

Councilor Clark stated that he has had many phone calls opposing this fee and asked whether any prior fees levied have come back to the City. Mr. Blomquist stated that a similar fee structure, which provided funds to the City through the Highway Fund was

eliminated by Statute in 2010. Councilor Clark pointed out that in this case the City will be capturing 100% of the funds collected. The Finance Director noted that the fee cannot exceed \$5.00.

Councilor Filiault stated that he will vote against this item and added that this is not an item that has gained a lot of media attention, but he was contacted by many taxpayers. For most people, they view this as another fee to pay.

Councilor Powers stated that he too got a few phone calls from concerned citizens. However, he felt many are misinformed as they think it is a renewal of the resident tax, which it is not. Many think that all the funding is going towards bicycle paths, which it is not. He agreed that money is tight but this is the only way to give back to the citizens without raising taxes. The Councilor continued he is opposed to the inclusion of "parking" as an improvement that could be supported with the fee.

Councilor Roberts felt that this fund should not cover parking and he felt this is a fee that is going to benefit citizens of Keene. The Manager noted that the reference to parking comes from the State Statute, but he felt the Committee could amend the Resolution to say "except for parking". Chair Greenwald asked why the word parking could just not be deleted. City Attorney Mullins explained that if the word is just deleted someone could take it as the word was just omitted by mistake, but if the intention is that parking be excluded then it should be so stated. The Councilor continued that the fund could also be used to leverage other Federal dollars.

Chuck Redfern of 9 Colby Street stated that the media coverage this item has had so far has been fairly accurate. He felt that if the language of the Resolution said the funds were exclusively for trail systems, for instance, then there could be some negative feedback. He further stated that he has not heard too many negative comments. He felt that this could leverage significant matching funds from the State and help reverse the downshifting of costs the City has previously seen.

Councilor Powers made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Filiault.

On 4-1 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends an amendment to the Resolution, which would delete the use of the funds for parking improvements so that the language of the resolution would read: to allow the City to fund, wholly or in part, improvements in the transportation system including roads, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and intermodal facilities *except for parking* in accordance with RSA 261:153, VI to be funded by a surcharge of \$5 on motor vehicle registrations. Councilor Filiault voted in opposition.

Councilor Clark made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 4-1 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the Mayor schedule a public hearing on R-2014-34-A at least 15 days but not more than 30

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days before the question is voted by the City Council. Councilor Filiault voted in opposition.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker