

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 8, 2018

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

Mitchell H. Greenwald, Chair
Carl B. Jacobs, Vice-Chair
Thomas F. Powers
Terry M. Clark
Bettina A. Chadbourne

Councilors Present

Gary Lamoureux
George Hansel
Janice Manwaring
Margaret Rice

Mayor Kendall Lane

Staff Present:

City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon
Public Works Director, Kurt Blomquist
City Engineer, Don Lussier
Asst. Public Works Director, Donna
Hanscom
Parks Recreation and Facilities Director,
Andrew Bohannon
Police Chief Steve Russo
Fire Chief Mark Howard
Asst. Finance Director, Merri Howe
Human Resources Director, Beth Fox
Finance Director Steve Thornton
Facilities Manager, Scott Martin
Solid Waste Manager, Duncan Watson
Asst. City Manager/IMS Director,
Rebecca Landry
Water Treatment Facility Manager, Ben
Crowder
Utilities Maintenance Manager, Tom
Moran

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

**1) American Legion Ballfield Agreement - Parks, Recreation and Facilities
Department**

Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director Andrew Bohannon addressed the Committee and stated this item is in reference to the use of the ball fields by the legion. The legion has been on a one-year agreement with the City for the past few years.

Councilor Clark asked whether the city has discussed multi-year lease options with the legion. Mr. Bohannon stated this has been raised with the legion and this is something they would need to coincide with their processes.

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

On 4-0 vote, Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a control and use agreement between the American Legion Post #4 and the City of Keene for softball fields located at 797 Court Street.

Councilor Chadbourne was not present for this vote.

2) Capital Improvement Program

City Manager Elizabeth Dragon explained the CIP is a strategic planning document the city uses for projects that exceed \$20,000 and have a useful life of at least five years. This document is a living document that is reviewed and updated annually and is a document that is subject to change as the needs of the community become more defined. The CIP provides for advanced project identification.

This year departments have looked at projects with an eye toward economic development and redevelopment of the city. Ms. Dragon went on to say everything this city does is tied to the quality of life of its residents and the impression it leaves on visitors. The plan being presented today, takes into account the Council's fiscal policies, the master plan, Council goals and the economic development action plan. The plan aims at striking a balance between the needs and priorities of the City Council and the community and at times these needs and priorities are in conflict and finding that balance can be a challenge. She concluded by saying departments have been asked to provide a summary for each of their projects, but staff is always open to questions from the Committee.

Finance Director Steve Thornton stated this plan is funded by current revenue, property taxes, utility fees, intergovernmental revenue, rooms and meals tax, fees and charges, motor vehicle registration and issuing debt.

He called the Committee's attention to new debt listed on page 34. Page 32 refers to what the city's debt balance would be at the end of this year and at the end of the life of the CIP (FY22). He noted the outstanding debt would go down about 25% (10 million dollars) over this period of time.

Councilor Clark asked whether this CIP is based on the "pay as you go" as discussed last year. Mr. Thornton stated what the Councilor is referring to is the presentation made in 2017 about the road rehabilitation program and added this CIP won't have a change in how the road rehabilitation program is funded. Councilor Jacobs added from that presentation what he understood was that there could be some money saved from that approach but that approach is not being used in the CIP; however it could be used to

accelerate the chart shown on page 32. Mr. Thornton stated what was referred to during that presentation was just road repaving and on page 34, there will be about 17 million in new debt issued over the life of the CIP and more than half of that is for road rehabilitation.

He further stated road programs are paid over a period of ten years; each year ten bond issues are being paid off but what was suggested was by not impacting the tax payers too much to transition that program from being paid through current revenues rather than through debt funding; this could save money over time. He added however, what the issue is this could have a good impact on either the property taxes or the work being performed each year or have a smaller impact on both.

The Manager added when the road presentation happens, there will be an option B and C that will be discussed which would take into consideration the additional dollars received from the State to move some roads forward and the Council could then look at whether it would like to reduce debt by some or by all of that amount. After this discussion, the issue of Marlboro Street came up and whether or not a portion of money should be used for this project. She added what is seen in the book is maintaining the status quo – what has been done in the past but there are options which have been prepared for Council to look at. Councilor Powers noted until Council takes action none of these changes can be made and it would be up to the Council to decide how it wants staff to move forward.

Fire Department:

Ambulance Replacement Reserve – Fire Chief Mark Howard stated this has been a long-standing capital replacement project for ambulances. Currently, these vehicles serve on a nine-year rotation. In 2017, there were 3,315 ambulance responses involving 5,871 unit responses.

Capital Reserve for Apparatus Replacement – Chief Howard stated this item handles major fire units, brush units and one of the utility trucks. This replacement range is from 15 to 20 years, Relative to the first request is in FY20 for ladder 1, it will be 23 years when the replacement begins because it has been delayed for a couple years.

Regarding other future projects, refurbishment of a brush truck is proposed in FY21, replacement of a tanker in FY22, and in FY23 the replacement of second brush truck, refurbishment along with a utility truck.

Portable Radio Project – Chief Howard stated this is the third year of the four-year project – FY19 the request is for \$52,500. This replaces 66 portable radios – total project cost over the four years is \$189,268.

Self-contained Breathing Apparatus – Chief Howard stated this is the only new project, and it is slated for FY24 in the amount of \$847,676. The units by that time would have reached the end of their useful life and because of DOT regulations the units have to

be destroyed by that time. This is listed as a bonded project, but staff is trying to get a grant prior to FY21 for replacement of these items.

Community Development – Station 2 – This is a study of the West Keene station. The city continues with the acquisition of the property. The study is not quite fully defined yet.

Chair Greenwald asked the Finance Director whether these expensive apparatus purchases should not be grouped together. Mr. Thornton stated staff did talk a lot about asset management last year to look at a longer range forecasting of such purchases. He noted this is the first time this item is appearing in the CIP document and it is six years out .

Councilor Powers stated he would like Council to talk about a process. He stated it is difficult to have a capital reserve when no money is put in the first year but are looking for a million dollars the next year.

The Manager noted the city would have to transition to this program over time; the city is not accommodated to accomplish this at this time.

Police Department:

Purchase of Portable Radios – Police Chief Steve Russo stated this is slated for FY19. The last time these radios were purchased was in 2006 through a grant program. It has been since 1998 that the city had to actually pay for radios. The total request is for \$220,491 over a period of three years, with the intent to purchase 21 per year. Chief Russo talked about the new radios which have better features like geo-fencing, GPS response, Bluetooth capabilities, more channels that allow better communication with outside agencies, etc.

Councilor Jacobs asked whether fire and police radios are bundled together for a better purchase price. Chief Russo stated he wasn't sure but this is something they were looking into. He added these radios have a certain lifespan and after a period of time the distributors stop making repair parts.

Councilor Hansel stated in the past emergency equipment have been grant funded and asked for clarification. Chief Russo stated they are and will continue to look for grants and items are entered into a CIP only when all such resources are exhausted. Chief Howard added that post-911, communication was an issue and grants were available at the state level. Since that time Chief Howard has been able to sit on the grant committee at the state level, and for the last several years unless any communications, unless it is major infrastructure for a something like a dispatch center, the funding has not been allowed. Things like portable radios have not been considered for grant funding. Chief Russo added these will need to be replaced again in another 10 years or so.

Solid Waste:

Assistant Public Works Director Duncan Watson began by stating the solid waste fund is a special revenue fund and any money raised for improvements is raised through revenues received in the solid waste fund (tipping fees and sale of commodities). There are no projects for the upcoming fiscal year, but there are several future projects.

Separator and Horizontal Baler – The separator separates non-metal items without an individual having to manually separate these items, saving labor costs. Mr. Watson noted this equipment is serviced on a regular basis and even if the equipment is listed in the CIP for replacement, unless there is a need it won't be replaced until necessary.

Weight Scale – Mr. Watson explained everything that comes in and leaves the solid waste facility is weighed. This will need to be replaced at some point.

Refurbishing the interior of the facility – This facility was brought online in 1994, other than a couple of coats of paint nothing more has been done to it. The facility is beginning to show its age. Councilor Powers asked what is the rationale for waiting until FY23 to do this work. Mr. Watson stated the area is still in working condition, even though it could be improved. Mr. Watson stated they don't have exact plans for this yet but will work with the Finance Director to see what can be done about moving this up.

Councilor Chadbourne asked whether staff has looked at increasing the hours on Saturday to accommodate the need which seems like there is quite a bit. Mr. Watson stated this site was not designed to accommodate the public but there are things that could be done operationally versus increasing the hours of the facility to improve the need.

Councilor Clark noted that during a cold weather day the scale froze and asked whether this was an anomaly. Mr. Watson stated this was certainly an anomaly and in extreme conditions it can freeze up but there are things that can be done to thaw it out.

Roof Replacement – This roof is 24 years old and the leaks are repaired as it happens. The roof is assessed every year and there is guidance provided by a roofing company each year. This is something that would need to be replaced sometime soon.

Councilor Clark asked why this was not a capital expense. Mr. Thornton stated the solid waste fund is one of the few things that done have tax support. The last few years there has been some success seen and money has been put away in a capital reserve; most funding is driven by tip fees and expenses at this facility are reviewed as they come in. Issuing bonds is on the lowest of things the city prefers to pursue.

Pavement Replacement – The pavement is beginning to show its age – by FY24 this area would need to be replaced.

Water Department:

Assistant Public Works Director Donna Hanscom introduced Water Treatment Facility Manager Ben Crowder, City Engineer Don Lussier and Utilities Maintenance Manager Tom Moran. Water and sewer assets are valued at more than 200 million dollars. The CIP is a mechanism to maintain these systems and ensure we are producing good quality water. The city has many miles of water and sewer main and ongoing maintenance of these systems reduces water loss through mains, less water needing treatment, less clogging and a reduction in electrical use due to this maintenance. Keene's water and sewer rates are comparable to other utilities and have been kept as low as possible. The average bill is about \$92 per month and is in line with the state average.

Water Storage Tanks - All the tanks were evaluated in 2013, the work being suggested is to keep the dams working properly. In FY20 there will be some pre-work done on all the tanks, in FY22 one contract will be put out for work on all the dams.

Black Brook Water tank repair and Chapman Water tank repair – FY20 is when the evaluation will be done and FY22 is when the actual work will be done.

Dam Improvements – Babbage Reservoir is under construction, Woodward Dam is set to begin construction in FY 19 – it is a 107 year old water dam.

Drummer Hill Tank Replacement – This tank has some deficiencies such as leaking seals. FY20 is when the evaluation will be done and FY22 is when the work will be done.

Water Booster Station (Fox Avenue and Glen Road) – This project replaces the online monitoring system located at each of the stations.

Water Distribution Improvement Program – In FY19 we would be replacing and renewing two different water mains on Marlboro Street. In FY 22 larger projects will be addressed.

Water Utility Work for Bridges – This is the consequence of state DOT bridge program not paying for work for utility as a result of bridge replacement. FY 19 will include the Winchester Street over Ash Swamp Brook project and FY 22 will include work on George Street.

State Bypass – Work between Pearl Street and existing roundabout scheduled for construction in FY19-FY20. Provides \$250,000 for water utilities as part of this project. There is a likelihood this work will be rolled into the Winchester Street project.

Water Main Cleaning and Lining – This work has gone through a transition, originally the work included cement lining and this was good for the purpose of addressing water quality. Cement lining however, does not address structural defects.

Water Gate Valve Project – More of the valves are operational now than before. However, at the current funding level a gate valve will need to last 135 years before it can be replaced. Mr. Lussier stated he hoped that more funding can be allocated to this as

other projects get closed out. Valves are exercised each year (the new ones) to get the maximum life out of them.

Well Field Upgrades – The city has two well fields; West Street and Court Street. FY20 – evaluation. FY23 – design for rehabilitation or construction of a new facility. FY 25 – The work that would need to be done.

Water Storage Tank Repairs – Needs membrane between the top of the tank and the grass area to keep leaks out. It has to be brought to current conditions as the water in this tank is treated water. FY20 – evaluation, FY 25 – necessary work.

Water Storage Tank Repairs - This is an older and bigger tank so the price tag is higher. The tank has been in service since 1952. A study is going to be done this year. The money appropriated is for either repair or replacement.

Water Treatment Plant - came on line in 1993, the media has not been replaced since that time. Over time more material has been added but nothing has been replaced – there are three units which will be replaced over three years.

Instrumentation Upgrade - Last year for replacement of online analyzers.

WTF Pavement Replacement – 25 years old and it is time this pavement was replaced.

Councilor Jacobs left the session at 6:40 pm.

Water Supply Master Plan – This would not only address not just the capacity of the well fields but also how these well fields act in a drought situation. This money is to identify a location for another well, and then dictate the amount of treatment it needs. This plan to evaluate the community's needs for water.

Purchase of three emergency generators – one for Chapman Road, and one will be portable, and the third at the water treatment facility.

Sewer:

Headworks Treatment – this equipment is so that those things that are not supposed to be flushed down the toilet don't end up at the treatment plant or clog up the equipment. Councilor Clarke expressed his frustration with people not paying attention to the advice provided by the city and asked whether there was anything the city could do prevent the sale of flushable wipes. Ms. Hanscom explained this equipment does not only remove the wipes, even if you could ban wipes there are other things that end up being flushed. She further stated the grinder also needs to be replaced.

Councilor Chadbourne stated these wipes are a nationwide issue and there is a law being worked on to change the labeling of these wipes.

Replacement of Back-Up Generator – This is 30-year piece of equipment at Martell Court and it powers Martell Court when there is no power.

Martell Court Roof Replacement - This project has been seen for a number of years as it keeps getting pushed out. This roof would need to be addressed at some point, but staff is monitoring it each year.

State Bypass Utilities for Sewer – This funds the sewer piece along Winchester Street between Pearl Street and the roundabout.

Sewer Improvements – Similar to water distribution improvements and would pay for those bigger items related to sewer. FY 19 - \$650,000 is budgeted for three independent segments of sewer along Marlboro Street.

Chair Greenwald asked whether residents would be offered the opportunity to replace their lines. Mr. Lussier stated as part of this work, the line from the end of a property line to the main will be replaced. The city is looking into some sort of program they could offer property owners. Chair Greenwald clarified a homeowner is responsible from the main to their property line. Mr. Lussier agreed this would be the case for sewer, but for water the city owns from the main to the curb stop. Councilor Clarke felt while the project is going on, letting property owners know won't be a bad idea. Mr. Lussier stated this would be a good idea, but don't have details to offer today. Councilor Clark added internet conduits are going to be part of the future and asked whether this is something that would also be considered outside the downtown footprint. Mr. Lussier stated the IMS Director has been working with a vendor on a broadband study. Ms. Landry stated there is a cost to install broadband infrastructure and agreed every time the city digs a hole broadband conduit should be installed but there is a cost to doing so.

Councilor Powers asked where these improvements being planned for next year will be happening. Mr. Lussier stated the sewer portion will be in three segments between Grove Street and the bridge. Councilor Powers stated his main concern is electric; between Main Street and Grove Street and stated this is something that should be kept in mind. Mr. Blomquist stated the city invested close to \$800,000 in electric underground in the Main/Marlboro/Winchester Street area but none of it is being used yet.

Councilor Powers noted Blossom Street was on the list for this year and asked whether this was for the entire street. Mr. Lussier stated this was just for sewer improvements.

Bridges:

Pays for the relocation of sewer utilities as the bridge work is being done and the only one affected is Winchester Street bridge over Ash Swamp Brook.

FY22 – the George Street Bridge will be worked on but there are no sewer lines in this area that would be affected.

Page 122 – Sewer Structural Repair Lining program – reduction in storm water flow has an impact on this project.

Page 123 - Sewer Manhole Program – this is a new program – man holes are in reasonable shape and the bricks hold up well but the mortar that hold up the bricks tend to get degraded by the acidic environment. This program looks to line the bricks with a certain kind of mortar.

Page 124 – Blower Replacement WWTP – This project replaces three blowers over a three-year period.

Page 126 – WWTP Generator Replacement – This project will coincide with the generator replacement at Martel Court.

Page 127 – Nonpotable Water System - Refurbishment of this system. This is water that is treated but before it gets discharged into the river – this is not water that is used for drinking.

Transportation:

Mr. Blomquist began by commending his staff.

Page 131-133 - Consolidated Infrastructure - FY 19 – Marlboro Street is getting some funding from the road rehab program, as well as the curb and sidewalk, drainage and water and sewer. Same is the case in FY20 for Roxbury Street.

Pages 134 and 135 – Bridge Rehab and Replacement Program. There are 13 bridges on the red list, of the 13 four of them are in the pipe line to be addressed. Main Street over Route 12 the contract is under way. Winchester Street/Route is through the design process. Roxbury Street design work contractor has just been selected. Island Street is part of the Winchester Street work.

Page 136 and 141 – Sidewalk Program – These are similar projects. FY19 – mostly for Marlboro Street and FY – mostly for Roxbury Street.

Pages 137, 138, 139 – Road Preservation and Rehabilitation Program – what is in the CIP is Plan A and it presumes the funding will be the same as in prior years. Gunn Road and Red Oak Drive have been expedited because of SP38 monies. FY19 – seven or eight streets are being suggested for preservation which are in decent shape today.

Councilor Clark noted Court Street was reconstructed about six years and asked what sort of rehabilitation is envisioned. Mr. Lussier stated perhaps a 3/8th inch overlay and noted by this time it would be beyond a seal coat; this work will smooth out some of the ruts, and seal in some of the cracks to keep water out.

Page 140 – Guardrail Replacement Program – This is the 2nd year of a three year program for poor and failed condition guardrails.

Pages 142 and 143 – Keene Swanzey Bypass Program - FY19 is the construction on Winchester Street. This is an 80/20 program with the state. Another project being proposed is the reconstruction of Winchester to the Swanzey townline which is a heavily travelled route.

Page 144 – Traffic Signal Replacement Program – These signals are managed by the Police Department and Public Works takes care of these signals. Most of these signals are close to 25 years old and are mechanically managed. Today’s technology has leaped forward and can be controlled via wifi, radio etc. First area being recommended is Central Square. This is a seven year program and there are close to a million dollars worth of signals that need to be replaced.

Page 146 – Main Street Crosswalk Improvements - Last fall was an interim solution, the proposal in FY23 will make it a permanent feature (curb extensions, median island in the center of the road, pedestrian activated signals).

Mayor Lane asked whether the city has had a discussion with Keene State to share the cost to move this project up. Mr. Blomquist felt perhaps this is something the Mayor would like to take on with the President of Keene State. Keene State may want to participate if it can be moved up. Councilor Manwaring echoed what the Mayor said. She stated she would really like to see this project moved up. Councilor Chadbourne agreed the college might participate and used the National Grange’s participation with the city as an example.

Page 147 – Marlboro Street Corridor Improvements - This is a project that pays for some of the street scape on the corridor. \$171,000 in the program is to implement the short term solutions outlined in a report in 2012; This is for bike lanes, improved cross walks, but not a wholesale reinvention of Marlboro Street.

Councilor Manwaring asked what happens with the “Chuck Tax”. Mr. Thornton stated these funds go into the Transportation Capital Reserve (page 64). Overtime these funds have been used for Emerald Street, this year \$171,000 for Marlboro Street, design work for Victoria Street extension. This fund brings in \$100,000 per year.

Parks, Recreation and Facilities:

Mr. Bohannon stated all these projects derive from the Comprehensive Master and the Active and Passive Recreation Plan. He talked about the importance of keep up with the Parks and Recreation projects in a community.

Carpenter Field - Part of the east side development and will be an asset to the community.

Robinhood Pool Improvements – this is a smaller community pool which is used a lot.

FOP Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2018

Skate park – a younger group has come forward to do some fundraising. They are looking at a budget close to \$250,000 - \$300,000. It would be community driven and are planning on staying downtown.

Municipal Park Improvements – There are things that need to be enhanced or redone; some parks are looking tired.

Mr. Bohannon commended the work of the Facilities Manager who has done a lot to manage the building improvement program and addressing the aging infrastructure. Councilor Clark asked what the common issue Mr. Martin sees. Mr. Martin stated what he sees most is just wear and tear. Mechanical systems that need to be upgraded.

Councilor Manwaring thanked Mr. Martin for his work as well.

Councilor Powers clarified Page 186 is just for general fund buildings. Mr. Martin Agreed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker