

**Rochester City Council Workshop  
May 21, 2019  
Council Chambers  
7:01 PM**

**COUNCILORS PRESENT**

Councilor Abbott  
Councilor Bogan  
Councilor Gates  
Councilor Gray  
Councilor Hamann  
Councilor Hutchinson  
Councilor Keans  
Councilor Lauterborn  
Councilor Torr  
Councilor Walker  
Deputy Mayor Varney  
Mayor McCarley

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Blaine Cox, City Manager  
Mark Sullivan, Deputy Finance Director  
Roland Connors, Deputy Finance Director  
Peter Nourse, Director of City Services  
Paul Toussaint, Police Chief  
Mark Klose, Fire Chief  
Andrew Watkins, IT  
Stacey Marchionni, Riverwalk Committee

**COUNCILORS EXCUSES/ABSENT**

Councilor Lachapelle

**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor McCarley called the Rochester City Council Workshop to order at 7:01 PM. Deputy City Clerk Cassie Givara took a silent roll call. All Councilors were presents except for Councilor Lachapelle, who was excused.

**2. Public Input**

Mayor McCarley invited members of the public to come forward and address the Council. No one came forward to speak.

**3. Communications from the City Manager**

No Discussion.

**4. Communications from the Mayor**

Mayor McCarley announced that the annual Memorial Day Parade would be taking place at 10:00 am on Monday, leaving from the Holy Rosary Church on North Main Street.

## **5. Department Reports**

No Discussion.

## **6. Update: Riverwalk Committee**

Stacey Marchionni, Chair of the Riverwalk Committee, gave Council an update on some of the projects with which the Riverwalk Committee has been involved.

Ms. Marchionni first detailed the kayak launch on Hillsdale Road. She stated that there is currently a \$25,000 CDBG grant for this project pending Council approval.

There are a few state requirements and regulations which need to be met before the project can be complete; the Department of Fish & Game had some concerns with a bald eagle nesting area along the river, but this concern may be allayed by installing and removing the kayak launch at strategic times of year to avoid disrupting the eagles' nesting schedule. The NH Heritage Bureau also had some concerns about the manner in which the dock was attached to the land, but Ms. Marchionni stated that these concerns seems to have been answered satisfactorily. The Riverwalk Committee is hoping for an August 2019 installation of the kayak launch.

Ms. Marchionni reported that the Committee raised \$1,000 at the Launch and Lunch fundraising event held the previous weekend and the event was able to continue on successfully even with unexpected clean-up of debris which had been deliberately scattered at the launch site prior to the event.

The money raised along with the \$1,200 currently in the account will be used toward the Phase 1B Environmental analysis which is required for the RTP grant for the Footbridge at Heath Brook.

Ms. Marchionni detailed the plans for an Outdoor Classroom in Hanson Pines. The plan is for a minimalist, natural classroom to be used by local schools; logs for seats, no clearing needed. The process of getting the space ready will be zero cost due to the help of volunteers and City staff. Maple Street Magnet School is also working with the Committee on developing educational placards for the classroom.

Ms. Marchionni spoke about the next phase of the Riverwalk, moving out of the Hanson Pines area and toward Downtown. She spoke about the viewing areas and boardwalks which were proposed and the greater expense involved in these

projects. Ms. Marchionni suggested to Council the establishment of a DDA. Currently the Riverwalk Committee is all volunteer and when they are getting into projects of this size and magnitude and involving applications for larger grants, there should be more investment from the City to accomplish these goals.

## **7. Discussion: Budget Adjustments**

City Manager Cox addressed Council and requested that if any adjustments were suggested, the appropriations be handled first for the ease and efficiency of the finance staff tracking the adjustments.

Mark Sullivan, Deputy Finance Director, stated that at this stage in the budget process the City is \$8,517 below the tax cap and the school is \$14,375 below the tax cap for an overall amount of \$22,893 below the cap. Mr. Sullivan reported that the chief assessor provided a reconciliation of the preliminary assessed valuation update which was an increase of \$43 million dollars over the draft number which was used in the tax cap estimate. This number will drop the estimated tax rate by 52 cents from \$1.07 resulting in only a 55 cent increase.

Mayor McCarley referenced an appropriation reduction from Chief Klose of the Fire Department.

Councilor Varney **MOVED** to reduce the Fire Department Medical services account #533004 on page 93 of the Operating Budget booklet by \$18,048. City Manager Cox clarified that this was related to the physical medical examinations which the fire chief had previously recommended. Councilor Bogan seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

Mayor McCarley suggested that Council review the document provided by the City Manager outlining all the included and excluded items in the budget and discussing any adjustments using this document as a starting point. Councilor Walker stated that he would prefer to go through the budget item by item for each department.

Councilor Keans referenced the \$4,000 for contracted services fees in the City Clerk budget and asked if this would be an annual fee for the updating of City ordinances. She also inquired why ordinance changes could not be done in-house. Kelly Walters, City Clerk, clarified that there is an annual maintenance fee of \$1200 with the additional funding being requested for any amendments needing to be made during the year as well as fees associated with the dog licensing software and other services. City Manager Cox further clarified that the City Codes are being maintained through a hosted service with the database being updated directly by the contractor via the website.

Councilor Lauterborn **MOVED** to amend the City Manager's O&M proposed budget for General Overhead Department, Page 70, subcategory "Other Services" account# 589025 "Health social services" by increasing the original proposed amount of \$47,826 by \$25,000 for a new total of \$72,826. Councilor Varney seconded the motion. Councilor Lauterborn indicated that this account was down \$15,000 from the prior fiscal year because SOS Recovery had been left off the budget this year. Councilor Lauterborn recommended level funding SOS from last year's amount. Councilor Lauterborn pointed out that there are currently no recovery services being supported in this year's budget and emphasized the importance and need for these services. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a hand count of 8 in favor, 3 opposed with Mayor McCarley abstaining from the vote.

Councilor Walker inquired regarding the cost of the warming shelter Rochester had opened in 2017 and indicated if there was a need for funding this type of shelter in the budget, this was the place to insert it. Councilor Hutchinson stated that the cost was minimal, approximately \$600 from the City because it was stated at the time that City was not going to fund these efforts.

Mayor McCarley said that she had been in discussion with the other Tri-City Mayors regarding involving emergency services and the County Commissioners to establish guidelines and criteria for opening a warming shelter. If these guidelines are established, there can be a one-time spend from Fund Balance to accommodate the need. The Mayor suggested waiting to see what the outcome of these discussion would be to determine the cost and what is needed before putting it in the budget. Councilor Walker expressed reluctance to wait too long and be unprepared when winter comes and the need for shelter is imminent. He indicated that there would need to be a discussion at Codes & Ordinances to affect ordinance changes, removing the previous barriers to opening a shelter.

Councilor Walker **MOVED** to add \$90,478 for a second deputy assessor. Councilor Bogan seconded the motion. Councilor Varney stated he was not going to support this motion, not seeing the need for additional staff where there have already been positions added over the past few years. There was a discussion regarding the potential need for this position given the workload during a reevaluation year and the reasoning behind the position not being included in the city manager's budget. Councilor Torr requested a roll call vote. The **MOTION FAILED** by a vote of 7 to 5 with Councilors Keans, Walker, Abbott, Torr and Bogan voting in favor and Councilors Gates, Lauterborn, Gray, Hamann, Hutchinson, Varney and Mayor McCarley opposed.

Councilor Varney inquired about the request for additional part time Human Resources employee and why this was needed. City Manager Cox stated that this has been building over the past several years with the HR department finding it more difficult to meet demands with required payroll reporting, federal reporting

and benefit enrollment.

Councilor Varney asked Chief Toussaint about the request for a Communications Manager in the dispatch center. He asked how the structure described in the 2014 MRI report had changed and how the dispatch center staffing was structured currently. Chief Toussaint said it was designed to have a person, in this case a sergeant, overseeing the entire center. There is additionally a supervisor on each shift. It was clarified the proposed position is a civilian position.

Councilor Walker asked Chief Klose about the request to upgrade secretary II to executive secretary. Councilor Walker inquired what the secretary's current duties entail. Chief Klose detailed the duties of the current secretary, many of which are more thorough and involved than the previous secretary and deal with confidential information, personnel and budgeting amongst a variety of other tasks. Per Chief Klose, these additional duties are outside of the secretary II pay grade. It was stated that there was a study done through HR and a report generated to confirm that this employee was in fact working out of her pay grade.

Councilor Keans asked for information on the requested part-time secretary for the Fire Prevention Bureau. Chief Klose said that the Fire Prevention Bureau is the Fire Marshal's office, inspection services and follow up. It excludes operational functions of the fire department. There was a discussion regarding the function of this part time secretary in scheduling inspections and completing reports and the time it will free up for the current secretary.

Councilor Walker read the request for the new position of Library Emerging technologies staff which is excluded in the City Manager's budget. Mayor McCarley **MOVED to INCLUDE** this position in the budget, but to make it a part-time position. Councilor Keans seconded the motion. Councilor Varney expressed concern that it may be difficult for the library to find a qualified IT staff member willing to work these limited hours. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 8 to 4 roll call vote with Councilors Hutchinson, Bogan, Gates, Varney, Keans, Lauterborn, Abbott and Mayor McCarley voting in favor and Councilors Hamann, Torr, Gray and Walker opposed. Mr. Sullivan indicated he would come up with the new salary amount for this half-time position and bring it back to Council.

Councilor Lauterborn referenced an item on page 62 for \$13,000 to improve the Community Room at the Library which is currently excluded in the City Manager's Budget. Councilor Lauterborn **MOVED to INCLUDE** this request in the City Manager's budget. Councilor Bogan seconded the motion. It was clarified that this is a cash capital item. Councilor Varney suggested it could be placed under "maintenance." Mr. Sullivan stated it could be put in the Library operating account or it could be placed in a multi-year fund. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 10 to 2

hand count.

The Council moved onto the CIP budget.

Councilor Walker summarized the action which had already been taken in the Wayfinding Signage system request following an adjustment at the last meeting. Currently, there is a request for \$125,000 for FY20. Councilor Walker asked if there were any other options as the amount seemed very high for signage. Councilor Varney suggested that there could be an additional presentation at Public Safety with the signage proposal before Council makes a decision.

Councilor Hamann said that if left in the budget, this item would be forgotten about and the money would be spent. City Manager Cox stated that he could commit to not allowing any of this money to be spent prior to the decision coming back to Council. There was a discussion about cutting the funding from the budget entirely.

Councilor Lauterborn **MOVED** to reduce the request for a Wayfinding System to \$100,000 which is half of the original request. Councilor Walker seconded the motion. Councilor Hamann **MOVED** to **AMEND** the motion to reduce the line item by the entire amount of \$125,000 (deleting FY20 funding entirely). Councilor Gates seconded the motion.

Councilor Keans suggested using some of this money to go towards downtown development to make the area more appealing and “exciting” for visitors instead of signage. Councilor Abbott asked, if this money is cut and goes back into the Economic Development Retained Earnings fund, could it be used throughout the year for projects, signage and otherwise. It was confirmed that this money could be approved in parts throughout the year.

Councilor Lauterborn said that quite a bit of work had already gone into this project and it was a shame to cut it completely. City Manager Cox spoke about the years of work which had been invested in this item with a consultant to design a logo especially for Rochester and to come up with a wayfinding system for uniform signage throughout the City.

Mayor McCarley called for a vote on the motion as amended, to cut \$125,000 from the Wayfinding Signage project. The **MOTION FAILED** by an 8 to 4 hand count.

Mayor McCarley called for a vote on the motion as amended to reduce the amount to \$100,000, returning \$25,000 back to the Economic Development retained earnings fund. Councilor Hamann stated he felt the cost for the wayfinding signs was grossly inflated and there could be signs purchased for

significantly less. Councilor Keans stated that one of the reasons for the high price tag was the logo being specially designed for Rochester.

The **MOTION CARRIED** to add \$25,000 back to the Economic Development Retained Earning fund resulting in \$100,000 for the Wayfinding Project in FY20 by a 10 to 2 hand count vote.

There was further discussion on the history of the Wayfinding project and the potential for spending less on signage than what is proposed. Councilor Varney recommended that the Council read the report submitted by Jen Marsh which included the suggestions from the Community Development Committee before deciding what these signs are worth.

Councilor Varney inquired about the \$90,000 cost for cameras in the CIP budget for the IT Department and whether or not they were for the police department. Andrew Watkins, IT, confirmed that item was for the upgrade to the police station cameras. Chief Toussaint addressed Council about the need for the new cameras and the poor quality and function of the system currently in place.

Councilor Keans inquired about the security cameras around the Hanson Pines pool and referenced that these cameras have not been working for several years. Chris Bowlen, Director of Recreation and Arena, confirmed that there have been problems with the pool cameras since their installation and they have not been functioning for years. City Manager Cox stated that replacing these cameras at the pool is part of the overall IT department plan to replace security cameras throughout the City.

Councilor Torr asked for an accounting on all non-operative cameras in the City for the next Council meeting.

There was a discussion regarding the City Hall sound reduction CIP request for 2<sup>nd</sup> floor offices outside the Opera House. Peter Nourse, Director of City Services, clarified that a consultant had come in to City Hall to evaluate the sound reduction needs. The solution which was settled on was the use of sound attenuating fabric panels to be placed outside the second floor staff offices.

There was a discussion regarding the funds requested for fencing around the cemetery on North Main Street. Councilor Keans stated that this is a historic cemetery and any fencing installed around it should maintain the historic character of the property. Mr. Nourse said that the idea was to replace the existing cyclone fence, which is in a state of disrepair, with a newer version with black vinyl coating. The estimate is based on this type of fencing, but the item can be brought to the Public Works Committee and alternatives can be discussed.

Councilor Walker **MOVED** to reduce the Fire Department CIP request for two Command/Emergency Management Vehicles (page 33) to one single vehicle. Councilor Lauterborn seconded the motion. There was a discussion regarding where the vehicle would be housed when not in use and the uses for said vehicle. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a majority voice vote.

Councilor Bogan referenced the Fire Department request to purchase two swiftwater Rescue Boats, one in FY20 and one in FY21, for \$28,000 each. She suggested that the Fire Department could perhaps purchase one boat as a cooperative effort to be shared with Dover and Somersworth.

Councilor Walker **MOVED** to reduce the FY20 request for Swiftwater Rescue Equipment by \$28,000. Councilor Torr seconded the motion. There was a discussion regarding the specifications of the proposed swiftwater rescue boat. Councilor Varney asserted that the current boat used by the Fire Department is unsafe for water rescue and that the Fire Department should be given the proper tools they need to do their job. Councilor Walker reiterated that he felt that, if purchased, the boat would spend more time in other communities for mutual aid.

Councilor Lauterborn stated that she felt the Council didn't have a clear picture on where they stand financially in the budget process and if there is room for this item. She also suggested the item should be tabled until Council has had time for further review.

Councilor Lauterborn **MOVED** to **TABLE** the swiftwater rescue equipment vote until the May 28, 2019 meeting. Councilor Abbott seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 7 to 5 hand count.

Councilor Torr **MOVED** to delete the CIP request for the Columbus/Summer Intersection (page 47) totaling \$140,000 in FY20. Councilor Bogan seconded the motion. Councilor Keans inquired if there was a Master Plan Committee for transportation who would weigh in on this matter. There was a discussion regarding having this item funded outside of the current fiscal year City budget. Mr. Nourse confirmed he had submitted a letter of interest to the CMAC program which, if approved, would allow a split of 80% federal, 20% City funding. Councilor Varney referenced the assertion made by Mr. Nourse that the Summer/Columbus intersection project would be ideal to do in conjunction with the Wakefield Street redesign. Councilor Varney asked if the Columbus/Summer intersection project is pushed out one year if it would be more in line with the Wakefield Street redesign.

Councilor Varney **MOVED** to **AMEND** the motion to change the Columbus/Summer Intersection project in the amount of \$140,000 to FY21. Councilor Bogan seconded the motion. The **MOTION** to amend **CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

Mayor McCarley called for a vote on the amended motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote to push the Columbus/Summer Street intersection project to FY21.

Council was referred to the cash request for "Pavement Rehabilitation Program" on page 51. Councilor Lauterborn indicated that in past years if there have been cuts made in the budget leaving extra room, money will be added to the paving projects. Councilor Lauterborn inquired if that would be an option this year. It was confirmed that this may be a possibility.

There was a discussion regarding the traffic lights at the intersection of Route 125 and Lowell Street. Mr. Nourse stated that DPW is aware of the issue and there will be adjustments made.

Councilor Torr inquired if the DPW Vehicle Replacement Program would entail trade-ins or new purchases. Mr. Nourse confirmed that the department typically trades in their older models.

Councilor Walker asked for an accounting of a total of all the bonded projects being requested to see where the budget stands on staying within the 4-3-4 plan recommended by the City Manager and detailed by the finance department at the start of the budget process.

Council was directed to page 81, the School Department's request for \$45,000 for cafeteria tables. Councilor Varney inquired how many tables were able to be purchased with the previous years' request. Superintendent Hopkins stated that the school department had not used the entire amount allotted the previous year, so there was still some leftover; with the additional amount in FY20, all the tables will be able to be replaced.

Councilor Walker asked about the School Department "door and hardware upgrades" project for \$125,000. He recalled Council approving a budget item for doors and security in a recent fiscal year. Superintendent Hopkins clarified that the previous request was for interior door locks, security, and classroom cameras. This request is a continuation of replacing doors and hardware which are rusted and in poor condition, and it's primarily for the exterior doors.

There was a discussion regarding the three separate School department projects for HVAC upgrades. Superintendent Hopkins clarified the intention of the three projects and gave more detail on what they entail.

Councilor Varney referenced the Water Department CIP request for "Cocheco Well Upgrades" on page 102. He inquired if the City needed this

increased capacity with the larger pump. Mr. Nourse indicated this larger pump in good for blending, especially in areas of East Rochester where they have DBP (Disinfection Byproduct) issues, and it allows the City to harvest more water.

Councilor Keans inquired about CIP requests for DPW being split between three funds: water, sewer and highway. She asked why a request for a Vac Truck would be paid for in part from the water department. Mr. Nourse stated that these trucks are used for hydro excavations when working on water mains, so there is a drinking water "duty" on this vehicle.

Councilor Keans asked if the NPDES project (page 127 CIP booklet) was being bonded due to the ongoing operating cost which will be rolled into the cost of any construction needing to be done. City Manager Cox answered that it is part of the overall effort to get a NPDES permit, so it will involve capital expenditure.

Councilor Varney requested more information on the CIP project "WWTF Septage Receiving Facility" bonded for \$825,000. Mr. Nourse stated that this project had been pushed out a couple times. He stated that due to the state of Lagoon 1 filling with sludge, the City cannot continue to send millions of gallons of septage there annually. This is tied into the biosolids dewatering project which is occurring this fiscal year as well as the lagoon 1 solid removal project. Councilor Varney asked about any sources of revenue at this facility. Mr. Nourse stated trucks and RVs from Rochester are allowed to empty into this facility which generates revenue. He would like to consider opening this up and marketing to other communities.

Councilor Walker referenced the Route 11 Pump Station project for the Granite Ridge Development (page 136). He asked if this \$1,200,000 would be bonded or if it was part of the TIF. Mr. Nourse indicated that the idea was the sewer fund would pay for the project upfront and then the TIF would repay the funds. Mr. Nourse stated that the pump station needed to be replaced because it was nearing 30 years old and they are trying to replace these stations every 20-30 years.

Councilor Varney inquired how much revenue could be generated from the Arena Indoor Turf project (page 151). Chris Bowlen, Director of Recreation & Arena, anticipated there would be a 5-6 year payback generated by indoor sports, early spring sports and senior programs which would utilize this substrate.

There was a discussion regarding the easement owned by the City in the parking lot of the YMCA and whether there would be any issues regarding this issue when the City paves and upgrades the parking lot. City Manager Cox stated that this easement had been reviewed by the City Attorney and it would benefit the City overall to have this parking lot paved; there will be no legal implications.

Councilor Torr indicated he had not seen anything in the budget regarding the water tower on Hussey Hill. Mr. Nourse answered that this project was already funded partially with money from a drinking water trust fund and the balance with a City contribution authorized via resolution. Mr. Nourse stated that this issue would be discussed at the Public Works Committee meeting in June.

Councilor Lauterborn **MOVED** to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (a) "personnel" at 9:23 PM. Councilor Bogan seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 12 to 0 roll call vote with Councilors Torr, Abbott, Varney, Hutchinson, Gray, Walker, Bogan, Hamann, Gates, Keans, Lauterborn and Mayor McCarley all voting in favor.

## **8. Other**

No Discussion

## **9. Non-Public/Non-Meeting**

### **9.1 Non-Public Session, Personnel, RSA 91-A:3,II (a)**

Councilor Lauterborn **MOVED** to exit the Non-Public Session and return to Public Session at 8:30 PM. Councilor Bogan seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote. Councilor Lauterborn **MOVED** to seal the minutes because it is determined that divulgence would likely render a proposed action ineffective. Councilor Bogan seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a 12 to 0 roll call vote. Councilors Gates, Keans, Lauterborn, Walker, Gray, Abbott, Torr, Hamann, Bogan, Hutchinson, Varney, and Mayor McCarley voted in favor of the motion.

Mark Sullivan, Deputy Finance Director, gave Council an update on the budget reconciliation as it currently stands: The City side is \$5,551 under the tax cap and the School side is \$14,375.00, for a total of \$19,970.00. Mr. Sullivan also gave an update on the bond numbers which had been requested by Councilor Walker. The City's Bond amount is at \$5,140,000.00, the School's Bond amount is \$1,025,000.00, Water fund is \$3,065,000.00, and the Sewer Fund is \$9,840,000.00. The tax increase remains at a 54 cent per \$1000 increase.

Councilor Varney asked Council to consider increasing the revenue of the line items for both Motor Vehicle Permits and Host Community Fees. He stated that they have conservatively budgeted and there may be an opportunity here to further reduce the tax rate.

Mayor McCarley solicited a sense of Council and it was determined that

Council would meet on the May 28, 2019 for one final budget adjustment meeting prior to the adoption of the FY20 Budget on June 4, 2019.

## **10. Adjournment**

Councilor Walker **MOVED** to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 10:05 PM. Councilor Bogan seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara, Deputy City Clerk