

**Committee of the Whole Budget Workshop
Community Room
James W. Foley Community Center
150 Wakefield Street &
Remotely via Microsoft Teams
Immediately following the Regular meeting
8:27 PM**

COUNCILORS PRESENT

Councilor Abbott
Councilor Belken
Councilor Bogan
Councilor Gray
Councilor Hamann
Councilor Hutchinson
Councilor Lachapelle
Councilor Rice
Councilor Walker
Deputy Mayor Lauterborn
Mayor McCarley

COUNCILORS ABSENT/EXCUSED

Councilor Hainey
Councilor Lachance

OTHERS PRESENT

Blaine Cox, City Manager
Katie Ambrose, Deputy City Manager
Terence O'Rourke, City Attorney
Mark Klose, Fire Chief
Timothy Wilder, Deputy Fire Chief
Jared Wheeler, Deputy Chief of
Operations
Peter Nourse, Director of City Services
Lisa Clark, Administrative Services,
& Utility Billing Supervisor
Michael Scala, Director of
Development/Economic Development

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mayor McCarley called the Committee of the Whole Budget Workshop meeting to order at 8:27 PM. The following preamble was read at the Public Hearing earlier in the evening.

Good Evening, as Chairperson of the City Council, I am declaring that an emergency exists and I am invoking the provisions of RSA 91-A:2, III (b). Federal, state, and local officials have determined that gatherings of 10 or more people pose a substantial risk to our community in its continuing efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. In concurring with their determination, I also find that this meeting is imperative to the continued operation of City government and services, which are vital to public safety and confidence during this emergency. As such, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body physically present in the same location.

a.) **Public Input:** Due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19, the City of Rochester will be taking extra steps to allow for public input, while still ensuring participant safety and social distancing. In lieu of attending the meeting, those wishing to share comments, when permitted, with the City Council (Public Hearing and/or Workshop settings) are encouraged to do so by the following methods:

- **Mail:** City Clerk/Public Input, 31 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867
(*must be received at least three full days prior to the anticipated meeting date*)
- **email** PublicInput@rochesternh.net (*must be received no later than 4:00 pm of meeting date*)
- **Voicemail** 603-330-7107 (*must be received no later than 12:00 pm on said meeting date in order to be transcribed*)

Please include with your correspondence the intended meeting date for which you are submitting. *All correspondence will be included with the corresponding meeting packet (Addendum).*

In addition to the above listed public access information, the City Council will be allowing the public to enter the Community Room and speak in person during the Public Input portion of this meeting. In an effort to adhere to CDC guidelines: enter only into the right side door on the Chestnut Hill Road entrance at the rear of the building and exit through the opposing door. Please adhere to 6-foot social distancing while inside. Hand sanitizer and facemasks will be available at the Community Room entrance. The public will be allowed to attend the meeting in-person. Please note, seating will be provided that is arranged such that 6-foot social distancing can be maintained.

At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting by phone. The public can call-in to the below number using the conference code. This meeting will be set to allow the public to "listen-in" only, and there will be no public comment taken via conference line during the meeting.

Phone number: 857-444-0744 Conference code: 843095

b.) **Roll Call:** Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their name (and/or ward), also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law. Additionally, Council members are required to state their name and ward each time they wish to speak.

City Clerk Kelly Walters took the roll call. All Councilors were present and indicated that they were alone in the location from which they were connecting remotely except for Councilor Hailey who had been excused and Councilor

Lachance who recently submitted a resignation.

2. Public Input

Mayor McCarley invited the public to come forward to address the City Council. No members of the public came forward.

3. Budget Presentations:

3.1. Fire

Chief Klose introduced Jarrod Wheeler, who is the new Deputy Chief of Operations. He added that Devon Pageau has also been promoted as Fire Lieutenant.

Chief Klose said, as part as the department's succession plan, he is having Deputy Fire Chief Tim Wilder give the budget presentation.

Katie Ambrose, Deputy City Manager, explained one clarification on the Fire Department's O & M section of the budget booklet. She indicated that the "change" column on the far right needs to be adjusted. She handed out a revised form. Councilor Lauterborn understood this to be a correction of about \$56,000. She questioned how this would impact the bottom line of the Fire Department's budget. Ms. Ambrose confirmed that the actual bottom line totals are unchanged, it is only the actual appropriation amount (far right column) that has changed but she reiterated this line does not have an impact on the bottom line of this budget. The City Council discussed the matter further.

Deputy Fire Chief Wilder gave a PowerPoint presentation of the Fire Department's budget.

Councilor Walker asked why the Travel line has increased by \$6,000. Mr. Wilder said this was adjusted to be set back to the previous amount established prior to the pandemic. He confirmed that it is the same amount as previous years.

Councilor Walker asked about the increase to staff development. Mr. Wilder said the Fire Department submitted an Issues and Options request for EMS training, which has been included (\$5,000) with the City Manager's proposed budget.

Councilor Walker asked how many times the rescue boat has been used,

other than for training sessions. Chief Klose replied that it has been deployed at least five times; however, one time, it was canceled en route to the scene.

Councilor Rice asked a question about one of the items under Issues and Options (Other Operational Supplies increased by \$5,000 EMS Supplies. He asked why is this such a large increase. Mr. Wilder explained that with the previous contract with the Ambulance Services a great number of supplies was available to City staff; however, now the City is responsible to keep those supplies stocked.

Councilor Walker requested to receive an email copy of the PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Wilder concurred.

Mayor McCarley thanked the Fire Department for their presentation.

3.2. Public Works, Public Buildings, Water, Sewer, Community Center

Katie Ambrose, Deputy City Manager, distributed an excluded Issues and Options request which was recently submitted by the Department of Public Works.

Peter Nourse, Director of City Services, and Lisa Clark, Administrative Services and Utility and Billing Supervisor presented the six budgets associated with the Department of Public Works. The questions for Mr. Nourse are as follows:

Public Buildings:

Councilor Belken questioned what is the figure associated with the cleanup action for the homeless camps. Mr. Nourse said that figure is \$5,500 under the Contracted Services Line.

Mr. Nourse spoke about the need for an additional full time Buildings and Grounds Laborer. This is the third year that this request has been made. This request has been included in the City Manager's proposed budget.

Councilor Rice asked a question about a \$5,300 increase to the electricity line. Ms. Clark stated that this line item has been over extended for some time and this adjustment has been made to bring it in line with the a more realistic estimate for the coming year. She added that it has been mostly underfunded in the areas of City Hall and the Annex Building.

Public Works:

Councilor Lachapelle requested that notes from the Household Hazard Waste Day be emailed out to the full Council. He questioned if notes had been taken about figures associated with the towns/cities who had participated in dropping off hazardous waste. Mr. Nourse replied that notes were taken and he would send those notes out to the full City Council.

Councilor Walker gave reasons why he would be in support of hiring a budget a project inspector in this year's budget. Councilor Walker **MOVED** to add a part-time Project Inspector to the FY 22 budget, in the amount of \$52,986. Councilor Hamann seconded the motion. Mayor McCarley asked if there would be a reduction elsewhere in the budget to accommodate this request. Councilor Walker replied no, not at this time. Mark Sullivan, Deputy Finance Director, explained that the Issues and Options request shows a partial revenue increase of \$22,000, which should be included with the motion. Councilor Walker agreed to make the partial revenue increase of \$22,000 to his motion. Councilor Hamann seconded the addition to the motion. Councilor Lauterborn questioned the job of "Clerk of the Works" for larger private developments. Councilor Walker clarified that the City pays for its own inspectors to inspect any/all project developments. He gave details about how backed-up the inspections are currently. Councilor Lauterborn asked why the developers are not paying for the inspections. Councilor Walker explained that the City charges a fee of \$75 for each inspection, which is the reason this action would result in a slight increase to revenue.

Mayor McCarley said this is the first budget adjustment. She requested a roll call vote on the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous roll call vote of 10 – 1 with Councilors Abbott, Belken, Lachapelle, Gray, Walker, Bogan, Hamann, Rice, Lauterborn, and Mayor McCarley voting in favor of the motion. Councilor Hutchinson voted against the motion.

Councilor Rice questioned the \$4,100 increase to the Communications line, which was attributed to the escalating costs of Verizon and piloting a tracking program. He asked if that cost was split between multiple budgets. Mr. Nourse said it was a split cost between several budgets. Ms. Clark clarified that the increased costs is not as significant in some of the other budgets. He indicated that it is just in the piloting stages; however, he would give a report on the findings once established.

Councilor Rice assumed that the plotter (Engineer copier) cost would be split between several departments and questioned how old is the current plotter. Mr. Nourse recalled that it was a 2012 model. He added that the current machine would be repurposed at the Planning Department and the new one will be kept at DPW.

Councilor Lachapelle asked questions about the tracking (GPS). Mr. Nourse said eventually it would be expanded to the larger vehicle; currently, it is a pilot program for some of the smaller vehicles. He added that the GPS system could be beneficial for the larger trucks and notifications could be alerted about when the plows actually begin the route; however, this pilot program is in the early stages. Councilor Lachapelle supported the idea and shared his experience about gathering a lot of information from such a GPS system.

Mr. Nourse gave a brief overview about an Issues and Options request, which is included with the City Manager's proposed budget, which is the addition of an Environmental Engineer.

City Lights:

Mr. Nourse reviewed the budget and stated that the investment with the LED lights has shown to be of a great cost savings. Councilor Rice asked about the solar fields being installed and what the cost savings might be. Mr. Nourse agreed to get back to the City Council with more information.

Water Department:

Mr. Nourse gave a brief overview of the Water Department budget and the one Issues and Options (discussed earlier), which is the addition of an Environmental Engineer. He said the net impact on this budget is \$34,609.

Sewer Department:

Mr. Nourse gave a brief overview of the Sewer Department budget and reviewed some of the upcoming projects. He added that the one Issues and Options (discussed earlier), is the addition of an Environmental Engineer. He said the cost net impact on this budget is \$34,609.

Councilor Rice asked about the software and maintenance increase. Mr. Nourse explained this is the View Permit software and is split between several budgets. Ms. Clark clarified that the split includes the Code Enforcement General Fund budget and both Water and Sewer includes a 10% contribution for that contract. This is the cost of the increase to the contract fees.

Councilor Rice asked about the increased cost under the rental equipment line item. Mr. Nourse said this year the cross country sewer lines would need to be cleared. Ms. Clark confirmed this was a bi-annual event. She added that another item driving that cost up this year was a stand by generator. Mr. Nourse confirmed that there is a permanent increase to this

budget in order to be prepared to rent an emergency generator in the event power is lost at the facility.

Councilor Lachapelle asked Ms. Clark if videos were taken during the Household Hazardous Waste Day event this year. Ms. Clark stated that Celeste Plaia, Government Channel Coordinator, did attend the event; however, the event turned out to be chaotic and no videos were able to be taken.

Community Center:

Mr. Nourse gave a brief overview of the Community Center budget.

3.3.Economic Development

Michael Scala, Director of Economic Development, gave a brief overview of the Economic Development budget.

Mayor McCarley asked if there is enough funding in the budget for the amount of development within the City. Mr. Scala said a large portion of the budget has been switched over to the "Consulting-Other" line item, which he has found very helpful in planning his budget. He expressed his comfort with the figures associated in this line item at this time. He hoped that at some point, there could be easier access to some of the funding within the Economic Development Fund to help with smaller projects. He gave reasons why this would be beneficial for the department and how that might work. City Manager Cox explained that the changes with the Economic Development Fund would require an ordinance change. He suggested that Mr. Scala bring forth a recommendation to the Codes and Ordinances Committee to review. Councilor Gray asked if it would be possible to utilize the City Manager's contingency account to avoid the ordinance change. Mr. Scala felt those are tax dollars as opposed to the Economic Development Fund. The City Council discussed the matter. Mr. Scala agreed to bring forth a proposal to the Codes and Ordinance Committee sometime in the future.

3.4.Information Technology

Sonja Gonzalez, Chief Information Officer, gave a brief overview of the reorganization efforts within the Information Technology Department and some of the recent projects, including moving the Tax Collector's Department to the Community Center. She introduced Andrew Watkins, Deputy Chief Information Officer, to assist with presenting the proposed budget.

Ms. Gonzalez presented the O & M budget, which includes some of the Issues and Options that have been included with the City Manager's proposed

budget.

Councilor Gray said at some point there should be a discussion with the School Department about joint purchases/license agreements and/or other equipment purchases which might reduce the cost of such expenses. Ms. Gonzalez was agreeable in pursuing that conversation with the School Department's IT Director.

Mayor McCarley questioned if the license for Teams had been paid for by the Federal Grants in this past year. Ms. Gonzalez gave a brief history about how the City started a pilot program with Teams prior to the pandemic. The City did take advantage of the free licensing software through October 2020; and now, continues to pay for the licenses once that agreement expired.

Ms. Gonzalez reviewed the Issues and Options and opened up for questions.

Mayor McCarley thanked Ms. Gonzalez and Mr. Watkins for the presentation.

4. Other

No discussion.

5. Adjournment

Mayor McCarley **ADJOURNED** the meeting at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Walters, CMC
City Clerk