

Public Works and Buildings Committee
City Hall Council Chambers
Meeting Minutes
April 21, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilor Donald Hamann, Chairman

Councilor Jim Gray- Vice Chairman

Councilor John LaRochelle

Councilor Steve Beaudoin

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilor Chris Rice

OTHERS PRESENT

Peter C. Nourse PE, Director of City Service

Lisa J. Clark, Administrative Supervisor

Dan Camara, DPW GIS

Jennifer Marsh, Economic Development

Ed Verge, Evans Road

Alan Brown, Evans Road

Peter Von Zweck, Jacobs Engineering

John Rickerman, Jacobs Engineering

Douglas Miller, Jacobs Engineering

MINUTES

Councilor Hamann called the Public Works and Building Committee to order at 7PM

1. Approval of March 17, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Gray made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Councilor Larochelle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Public Input

No Public Input.

3. Evans Road – Paving Request

Mr. Nourse had pictures of this roadway displayed on the monitor that had been sent in by an abutter. He stated that this is a rural road on the west side of the City that it is approximately 3500 feet long and approximately 90% of the road is a gravel road. Mr. Nourse described the DPW's current practice of grading the road and adding materials as needed during the spring and fall. He stated that the road has been graded once so far this spring and that it will be graded again next week when it is less wet. He stated that there is significant ledge in the area, stone walls, silty and some clay materials that make up the roadway. Mr. Nourse noted that there may be an underground water spring in one section making that area wet. Mr. Nourse stated that this is on the agenda at the request of one abutter for the road to be paved. Mr. Nourse stated that there is not a planned project to do that at this time and he stated that this dirt road has been maintained as such

for many years. Councilor Hamann stated that he had driven the road prior to this evening's meeting and he did not see some of the conditions depicted in the pictures and assumed that staff had been out to grade since the pictures were taken. He stated that he had also driven it prior to grading and it was rough and there was a considerable amount of water on the sides of the road. Mr. Nourse had pictures displayed that he had taken prior to grading and noted the wet areas and some rutting. He stated that there are approximately 15 homes on the road. Councilor Hamann explained that the former Public Works Committee Chairman has informed him that there has been previous request for paving this road and that at that time there was a majority of abutters that preferred to leave it unpaved. Councilor LaRochelle recalled in his previous tenure on the City Council there was a demand for paving of Evans Road and that he personally had gone door to door to speak with some of the residents. He stated that it was true many abutter's did not want to have it paved and he stated that the demand had not come from an abutter but from someone that used the road as a cut across to Crown Point Road. He stated that the road is used by many as a short cut or through road and that many of the residents were opposed to paving it as it might increase traffic and speeds. Councilor LaRochelle suggested that a survey of the residents be completed. Councilor Hamann asked if some reclaimed materials could be used to keep it smoother longer. Mr. Nourse stated that they likely could use grinding for this, he would look into that. Mr. Nourse agreed that a survey should be done with the abutters of the road. He stated that this had occurred on another dirt road and it was determined by survey that there was only the one abutter that wanted the road paved. Councilor Beaudoin asked if re-established road side trenches/swales would help the conditions. Mr. Nourse stated that it would and noted underdrain may be needed. Councilor Beaudoin stated that he had driven the road and noted a rutting issue at the crest of the hill. Councilor Gray asked if the freeze / thaw conditions and spring rain were causing the current issues of rutting and mud. Mr. Nourse stated that yes that was likely the cause. Councilor Hamann suggested that Mr. Nourse send out the survey and depending on the results, the City could look at the road for a future CIP Project. Mr. Nourse agreed stating that these types of projects are budgeted as standalone CIP projects and not part of the Paving Rehab Funds that are used for currently paved roads. The Committee discussed the scope of a project like this. Mr. Nourse stated this would need consulting and a recommendation of construction / paving company. Mr. Verge of 35 Evans Road spoke and noted he lived about 1/2 down Evans Road in the area of the spring. He thanked Councilors Hamann and Gray for getting the discussion started. He stated that he has lived there approximately 20 years. He noted that each spring there is mud and ruts and that make it difficult to travel the road and cause vehicle damage in the long run. He mentioned a year where mail service was suspended for 2.5 weeks as the mail service would not deliver due to road conditions. Mr. Verge stated that he is aware that this is not a quick fix and that it may take a couple of years to get this project going. He stated his intent to keep this request for paving on the horizon as a project. Mr. Verge stated that there has been a lot of turnover in the homes and that he has talked to some of the neighbors. He stated that he believes that the majority of his neighbors may be in favor of paving and he would be ok with a majority ruling on paving. Mr. Verge also discussed the maintenance issues and suggested work on the ditches could be done again and he discussed how difficult it is to keep private ditches clean. Mr. Brown of 51 Evans Road also spoke to the Committee. He stated he

has been there 11 years and he has been working from home the last 2 years. He expressed that he has been discouraged as he has witnessed the grading now and he notes that this year the DPW does not add new materials to the road when it is graded to build up the road after it has been graded down numerous times. He believes conditions would improve greatly with annual grading and adding materials.

Mr. Nourse stated he would start with the survey and get back to the Committee with the results.

4. Pavement Moratorium Request – Union Street

Mr. Nourse stated that this request is from the owner of 73-77 North Main. He stated that the owner is converting the buildings upper floors to residential apartments and the ground floor for commercial space. He stated that to tie in the new water line required they would need to cut into Union Street that had a pavement overlay in 2018, which is one year shy of the 5 year moratorium. He stated that if the Committee and Council approve the waiver to the moratorium the DPW would require the Departments standard pavement patch be made. Councilor Beaudoin stated that he was in favor of the waiver. He stated that the City approved a one year extension to this owner's 79E approval in order to get this project completed and that this water line is required for him to complete this downtown rehabilitation project.

Councilor Beaudoin made a motion to recommend that the full City Council approve the requested pavement moratorium wavier on Union Street for the service tie ins at 73-77 North Main Street with the condition that the pavement patch be made as directed by the Department of Public Works. Councilor Gray seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Potters House – Foot Bridge Request

Mr. Nourse stated that a restaurant establishment on Chestnut Hill Road has requested to install a temporary footbridge across a wet area between the Community Center and his establishment. Mr. Nourse stated that this area is entirely on City property. He had pictures displayed the area. Mr. Nourse explained that the pallets that are on the ground in area are being used as a makeshift bridge to go back and forth. Mr. Nourse stated that he had discussed this with the City's insurance provider, Primex NH, and they stated there would be no objections if the City entered into a lease agreement for the area with the adjacent property owner similar to the lease agreement at Factory Court. Mr. Nourse stated that he understands that the lease would state that they build, install and maintain the bridge. Ms. Marsh confirmed that to be her understanding as well. Councilor Beaudoin asked if there would be wetlands issues. Mr. Nourse stated he would check but did not believe there would be any issues. Councilor Gray inquired about winter maintenance or required removal of the structure. Ms. Marsh stated that this questioned had not come up previously, but could be discussed with the City Attorney and if necessary covered in the lease language. The Committee stated a desire to get this on the next City Council agenda without delaying another month.

Councilor Beaudoin made a motion to recommend the full City Council approve and enter into a lease agreement with Potter House Bakery and if the City Attorney deems it necessary, the lease include language about winter maintenance or removal of the Bridge. The motion was seconded by Councilor LaRochelle. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Water / Sewer Work Force Study

Mr. Nourse stated that this Workforce Study was an FY2021 CIP Project. He stated that the intent of this study was to have a 3rd party review of current workforce structure, resources, and performance to determine what requirements may be needed for the City to meet obligations to the water and wastewater customers as well as to meet regulations now and into the future.

Mr. Nourse discussed that this review is necessary due to Water and Wastewater infrastructure growth over the past few decades, increased environmental regulations and the City's rapidly increasing development requiring infrastructure expansion as this growth occurs. He stated that it has been long known that the City has been understaffed in the Utility Maintenance division where they are maintaining 250 miles of underground water and sewer lines and at the Wastewater Treatment Facility where we are in the process of adding \$15 million in infrastructure. This \$15 million includes the addition of 2 facilities, the Carbon Storage Facility and Biosolids Dewatering Facility. He stated that Carbon Storage Facility is necessary to meet general permit requirements for the reduction of nitrogen. Mr. Nourse stated that additionally the WWTP Draft permit was received this week and it contains a very restricted phosphorus limit and if this limit makes it to the final permit this could result in an additional \$15-\$20 Million in future infrastructure upgrades, plus an additional \$1 million in operations and maintenance (O&M) costs. Mr. Nourse stated that on the water side we know that due to growth and environmental regulation the City's drinking water supply will be exceeded by demand in approximately 10 years. He stated that the distribution system continues to grow and environmental regulations are driving a resource need to treat our water for new contaminants. The revised letter for lead and copper rules may require we place more pressure on our limited resources. Mr. Nourse stated that this was an extensive study that included review and recommendations on staff structure, staffing levels, skill sets and experience levels as well as staff retention and incentives. Mr. Nourse stated that Jacobs Engineering was selected after an in depth qualifications based selection process. He stated that the Jacobs staff consists of engineers and water and wastewater operators. He noted that they currently operate 300 or more facilities for municipalities and that they have performed more that 1000 of the assessments on facilities across the country. Mr. Nourse mentioned that this was a six month review process that began in September 2021 with the final report, which was attached to the agenda packet, presented to the DPW in February 2022. Mr. Nourse stated that some findings and recommendations in the report are to be implemented and are funded in the FY2023 proposed budget. He introduced Peter Von Zweck, John Rickerman, and Douglas Miller of Jacobs Engineer, who are here to provide a brief overview describing the process, findings and recommendations. Mr. Von Zweck discussed the approach to the assessment. He stated that there was a project kicked off workshop meeting with DPW staff to discuss the scope, schedule and logistics for the study. Data was collected included detailing current and pending facility components and structures, current staffing, organization flow charts, position descriptions with pay scales and job functions and schedules. He stated that they then went on to interview all water and sewer staff. He noted that over a 4 day period they had conducted 29 interviews. Mr. Von Zweck summarized the process of analyzing the data and bench marking current practices with similar utilities to identify gaps and opportunities to better address the current and changing conditions in Rochester. Once

all of this had been completed they were able to produce the report findings on what Rochester does well and where improvements should be made and a plan to implement the recommended changes. Mr. Miller spoke to the Committee about interview findings and recommendations. He listed the need for enhanced management at both working force level and the professional management. He stated the need for succession planning and employee retention that could be obtained with compensation updates along with current staff training and development. He stated that due to the growth and the higher degree of maintenance driven by new regulations, Jacobs saw a need to split the two division, Water & Sewer, and work toward strengthening the separated divisions with clear levels of management and additional work force positions. Jacobs suggested adding a Deputy Director that would manage the separate Water and Sewer Utilities Divisions. Mr. Miller stated that a considerable amount of the current City Engineers time is spent on managing Utilities and that his time could better be spent managing the engineering division. Mr. Miller suggested the addition of Superintendents in each Water and Sewer as well as Coordinator for the GIS Division to lead the growing need of GIS and Asset Management. Mr. Miller stated that these positions would lead to an enhance management structure of the divisions and lead to clear paths for growth within the department and succession planning for the future. He spoke about the aging workforce and the need for advance planning for each divisions future personnel needs. Mr. Miller also spoke about the workforce needs. He stated at the Water Treatment Plant there are no trained mechanics working on the various system components, pump, equipment and infrastructure. He stated that Treatment Plant Operators are working on the equipment and with additional infrastructure coming on line this need will be even greater. He mentioned that 29 pump stations in the collection system that are managed at the Wastewater Treatment Facility and only 3 Pump Station Technicians. He stated there is a need for a working Pump Station Lead Position and with the additional facilities coming on line additional operators and maintenance mechanics will be needed there as well. Mr. Miller stated that the current structure of one Utilities Supervisor and combined staff does not allow for focused maintenance on either the Water Distribution System or Sewer Collection System, adding a Supervisor and splitting the Utilities at this level will enhance the abilities to maintain the infrastructure within the systems. He stated that Jacobs also saw a need to add on a Light Equipment Operator to make to balance these divisions with a full crew on each utility. Mr. Rickerman discussed how Jacobs came to these findings and how the bench marking process is then used to compare or confirm those findings. He discussed the data originally collected is then compared to regional and national data collected on similar systems to produce the benchmarking findings. He stated that the data and information used for the benchmarking was collected from the Water Environment Research Foundation, New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission Models, Regional and National Peer Utility Surveys and he explained that Jacobs Engineering currently manages over 300 municipal facilities and gives them unique insight as to managing in the most efficient and cost effective way to optimize similar facilities. Mr. Rickerman displayed regional staffing data and explained that differing infrastructure eliminates comparing Rochester staffing levels to communities that do not operate the same size systems or the same types of treatment systems. He mentioned that Rochester's best regional comparisons for staffing are with Portsmouth or Concord and this data confirms that Rochester's has a significantly leaner

work force than those communities. He stated that it is striking to note that even though some of the other communities, such as Dover, do not have comparable facilities, yet they have a similar levels of staffing with much less facilities and infrastructure to maintain. Mr. Rickerman explained that this benchmarking is done separately from the data collection recommendations noted by Mr. Miller and when comparing the results the needs come out nearly the same. He stated that the bench marking process confirms the findings and the recommendations in the report. Mr. Rickerman stated that Jacobs also looked at the compensation data in the regional area. He stated that it was noted during data collection that there is significant turnover of staff in Rochester that occurs soon after they have been trained and certified. He stated again looking at regional peer organizations, Rochester's staff compensation is operating at approximately 18% less than the regional average. Mr. Von Zweck then discussed a possible implementation path for the recommended changes. He stated annual equity adjustments could be made to the employee compensation for next 5 years. He presented a 5 year path to implementing the standup the of the two separate utilities under the direction of the Deputy Director for Utilities.

Councilor Gray stated that his preference for a flatter Management structure. He stated that it appeared that many more supervisory positions were being added than workforce positions. Councilor Beaudoin stated his concern for the cost of this plan to rate payers. Councilor LaRoche also noted a factor of 5 management positions and expressed his concern as well. Mr. Von Zweck stated that the information collected during the interview process and the benchmarking lead to the recommendations. He stated that the information was driven by the current growth rate, the additional regulations and and required oversight, and he stated that these recommendations are in line with the regional peer community structures. Mr. Miller stated that at the WTP and WWTP they saw the need for the Superintendent positions to see to the future planning, capital improvement planning and System Oversight. He stated that the current Chiefs seem to be balancing both what Jacobs is proposing for the Superintendents and the day to day plant operations and then reporting to the City Engineer, where Jacobs recommend a Deputy Director of Utilities. Mr. Nourse stated that the Departments implementation plan does not follow the Jacobs plan in this instance. He stated that the Departments plan is to upgrade the current Chief Operator positions to be the Superintendents as that is the scope of their current duties. He said a later date when all the new infrastructure has come on line and the other changes are made, we would re-assess to see if there was a need to re-implement the Chief Positions. He stated that these changes are included in the City Manager proposed budget with minimal impacts. Mr. Nourse explained that the recommendations from Jacobs had been considered by the Department and a plan was devised that could implement some of the changes in a more cost effective way. Mr. Nourse explained that the City is looking at approximately \$30 million dollars of additional infrastructure that will be coming on line to meet the EPA's permit requirements. The additional staffing will cost a fraction of that and the current utility rates will need to be adjusted accordingly. He noted that the Communities that have already been issued these permits and have made the system upgrades have significantly higher rates than Rochester and this is the reason why. Councilor Hamann asked if all of the Departments request were in the City Managers Budget. Mr. Nourse stated that the Superintendents & GIS Coordinator is in the City Managers proposed budget but the

Lead Pump Station Technician is not. He stated that if that isn't included in the final budget then it will be pushed back another year, maybe pushing back some of the request planned for next year, but we will continue to plan for the work load that we have and what is coming. Mr. Nourse stated that implementation of these positions does not guarantee that we can fill them. He stated we have positions open that we haven't been able to fill for a year. He noted that the industry is shrinking and the average age is 58. He stated that compensation is an issue with retention. Mr. Nourse mentioned that we spend a considerable amount of time and financial resources training staff only to lose them to higher paying organizations in the area. Jacob discussed the high cost of turn over to an organization. Councilor Beaudoin discussed that job descriptions would help him determine what the implications are. Councilor LaRochelle agreed that this would be helpful. Mr. Nourse stated that those position descriptions have not been developed yet. Once the position changes or addition are approved with the budget they would be created prior to going to the Personnel Advisory Board for approval. He stated that he would use the descriptions from other Communities as an outline to draft our own. The Committee requested the comparable job descriptions & pay scales for the Superintendents, Chief Operators and other proposed positions not provided in the packet.

7. DPW Management Optimization

Mr. Nourse explained that there is a memo in the packet that is from himself to the Deputy City Manager. He states that the memo describes the need to address Management Optimization, succession planning and employee retention. He stated that this memo discusses examples of the existing challenges and recommendations to address those issues. The memo proposes that to improve management of the department a Deputy Management Structure is needed. He stated that based on resources and employees the DPW is the largest department within the City yet it is one of the few, if not only without a Deputy System. He noted that the Deputy Directors positions are common in other DWW structures and the natural division of the organization places Operations and Administration on one side and Technical Services on the other. He mentioned that the previous workforce study presentation supported and also mentioned the need for the Deputy Director for Utilities, or as in this proposal the Deputy of Technical Services. Mr. Nourse stated that the City Manager has supported this need and that these positions are included in the City Manager's proposed FY2023 Budget. Mr. Nourse stated that he wanted the Committee to see the memo and all of the documentation that had been submitted, but he noted it was too much information to put in the Issues and Options (I&O) book that is given to City Council. He noted that in the memo the position grade proposals are different. He had originally proposed both Deputy positions as Grade 16 in the Rochester Municipal Managers Group pay scale, but in the Issues & Options they are a Grade 15 for Deputy of Technical Services and Grade 14 for Deputy of Operations and Administration in the City of Rochester Non-Union pay scale. He stated that the memo also discussed the reinstatement of Office Manager position and removal of the Admin & UB Supervisor position, but after discussions with Human Resource Department this position will be left as is to accommodate recruitment or succession of a qualified internal employee. Mr. Nourse explained that these position changes from the original proposal were results of discussion with the Human Resource Department and while he believes they should both be the same grade (15) as there

should be parity between the two where they have roughly the same qualifications and will be charged with same amount of employees for supervision, they are submitted as a 15 and 14 per recommendation of the Human Resource Department. Mr. Nourse stated that implemented Deputy Positions give staff such as engineers or middle managers a path for growth and promotion. Councilor Beaudoin asked that Non-Union pay scales and others are sent to the Committee. There were further Committee discussion regarding roles and recommendations to the Director with the delegation of direct reports of the two Deputy Directors

8. Other:

Stafford Square – Mr. Nourse stated that the Utility Relocation Phase of the project has resumed work and it is anticipated to be completed in June. He also mentioned that the next phase for the Roundabout Construction has an expected bid opening date in June prior to that month's Public Works Committee Meeting.

WWTP Draft Permit. Mr. Nourse stated that the Draft Permit has been received and that the phosphorus limit is of concern and there will be more to follow. Councilor LaRochelle asked questions regarding specifics of the draft permit. Mr. Nourse stated he would send it to him for review.

Rt202 / Estes Road Intersection - Mr. Nourse stated that NHDOT is waiving the Road Safety Audit and will start working with the City on a Highway Safety Improvement Project that will be funded 90% NHDOT and 10% City and will upgrade this intersection.

Paving - Councilor Gray stated that the Finance Committee and Council had agreed to the paving of Bickford Road, Fiddlehead Lane, and Winkley Farm Lane and asked if it was approved for additional funds in FY22 would the department be able to get additional paving completed this year or should additional funding be considered for FY2023. Mr. Nourse stated that additional FY2023 Funds would work best.

Councilor Hamann adjourned the meeting at 8:49

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lisa J. Clark, City of Rochester Administration and Utility Billing Supervisor.