

**Public Works and Buildings Committee**

**March 17, 2016**

**Council Chambers**

**7PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Councilor Ralph Torr – Chairman

Councilor Ray Varney- Vice Chairman

Councilor Donald Hamann

Councilor Thomas Willis

**MEBERS ABSENT**

Councilor Sandy Keans

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Councilor James Gray

Dan Fitzpatrick, City Manager

John B. Storer, Director of City Services

**MINUTES**

Chairman Torr called the Public Works and Buildings Committee to order at 7:00 PM.

**1. Approve minutes from February 18, 2016 meeting -**

The Chairman requested a recommendation on last month's minutes.

*Councilor Varney made a motion to accept minutes as presented for the February 18, 2016 Meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Hamann. The Motion passed unanimously.*

**2. Public Input**

None

**3. Utility Billing**

Mr. Storer stated that Mr. Paul Dumont from Church Street in Gonic had brought up the issue of monthly billing because of a water leak at his rental property. He stated that Mr. Dumont had filed an appeal with the Utility Advisory Board (UAB) and that he and Mr. Cox, from the Finance Department, had gone out to Mr. Dumont's house to meet with him regarding the issue. Mr. Storer stated that a significant leak had occurred at one of Mr. Dumont's rental properties, and that it had gone unreported for a period of time. Mr. Storer stated that the leak was found to be in a fixture. As the water had been used and that the water had gone into the sewer system, Mr. Storer stated that the UAB had given Mr. Dumont a 25% hardship credit which is consistent with past practices. He stated that Mr. Dumont was advocating for monthly invoicing as it would help property owners find leaks sooner. Councilor Varney asked Councilor Willis approximately how many appeals the UAB hears on a monthly basis. Councilor Willis stated six to ten appeals are usually heard. Councilor Varney asked how many of those appeals are in the thousands of dollar range. Mr. Willis said they have heard several yearly but the average is much

less, typically a couple of hundred dollars. Dan Fitzpatrick stated that appellants that are unhappy with the UAB decision can appeal to the City Manager. He stated he believes that happens less than 5 times per year. Mr. Fitzpatrick noted that he has found that UAB has made fair decisions and he has made few changes to those decisions. Mr. Storer stated that he has looked into the additional costs of monthly invoicing. He stated that he had looked at other local communities and some had gone to radio read, which would allow for monthly invoices, but would still raise the City's monthly fees for invoicing. He stated that he estimated those charges to be about sixty-two cent per invoice. He stated and that the current system being used would require the hiring of an additional meter reader and significant additional mailing charges. He also stated to purchase the radio reading equipment would cost about 1.5 million dollars and then additional staff would not be needed. Mr. Storer stated that some communities allow for abatements. He cited that Exeter was the only Community locally that seemed to be doing this. The abatement is given one time in a ten year period for an accidental release of water. Councilor Varney stated that the Council had decided previously that it would not be cost effective to go to monthly invoicing and they had decided not to invest in the radio read equipment. Councilor Varney suggested that UAB discuss the periodic abatement idea at their next meeting. Mr. Storer stated that staff will continue to encourage and educate property owners on how to read their own meters, as they can do this between invoices.

#### **4. Irrigation Pond on City Property in East Rochester**

Mr. Storer stated that the Planning Board had referred the issue of a non-permitted pond on the recently acquired City property at 828 Portland Street in East Rochester. He stated that an abutting property owner is applying for a subdivision permit and is attempting to address his drainage concerns on the property. Councilor Willis explained that the property in question had been used for horticultural purposes by the previous occupant. He stated that it is believed that they created a pond for irrigation purposes in a wetland area. Mr. Storer agreed with the assessment and stated that although he had not yet consulted with the Highway Supervisor, he believed that the city staff could drain and fill in the pond and create a drainage swale in its place. Councilor Willis suggested having the water tested for contaminants prior to draining and discharging water elsewhere. Councilor Willis also suggested that prior to permitting the new subdivision that the City staff needed to address the drainage to make sure that both of the properties in question have a drainage plan that will work as a whole for the area.

#### **5. City Hall Annex**

Mr. Storer stated that Oak Point Associates will deliver 100% design plans on April 8<sup>th</sup>. He stated that the City could then go out to bid and would likely start renovations in June. Mr. Storer stated that the design process had gone well with each department's and the City Council's questions being address along the way. He asked if the Committee needed to see the plans again prior to bidding. Councilor Willis asked about the overhead walkway to City Hall. Mr. Storer stated that it would be removed and possibly some of

the structure would be retained to be used to build a display area in the future. He said that there had been discussion of displaying some of the antique fire apparatus at the renovated building. He stated that due to cost and other structural factors those plans were not included in the current renovations, but that he really would like to look at the possibility of doing that as a smaller project later. Mr. Storer stated that he had the chance to see some of the antiques and that he was impressed with the historic vehicles and equipment. He stated that he believed that those antiques were important piece of Rochester's history that should be available for viewing. Chairman Torr stated that he had a chance to review the minutes of the Annex meeting that were included in the packet and he noted that there was a decision to erect a "cedar" fence between the abutting property and the Annex. Chairman Torr stated he would prefer vinyl fencing for maintenance reasons. He stated that there are many options now that could be used to accommodate the historic feel that participants were looking for.

***Councilor Willis made a motion to recommend that the full council approve the vinyl fence instead of the cedar fence. The motion was seconded by Councilor Hamann.***

Mr. Storer did not see changing to vinyl as an issue and stated that he could make that change. There was discussion of the need for the formal recommendation. The Committee conceded that Mr. Storer could make that change without a City Council action. The motion was withdrawn.

## **6. EDA Milton Road Sewer Ext Project**

Mr. Storer stated that the bids were opened today and that SUR Construction was low bidder. He reviewed different options that were included as bid alternates to reduce cost. There was option exclude the water replacement at the Highland Ave end of the project. There was an option to eliminate extending the sewer on the northern section of Salmon Falls Road and in the neighborhood of Denali Drive and Kodiak Court. Mr. Storer stated that there is an option to use PVC C909 instead of Class 52 ductile iron pipe. He stated that there is a significant cost savings in this option. Mr. Storer stated that he would recommend the C909 be used in this project. There was discussion of the options and the funds available. Mr. Storer estimated that with the cost for construction engineering the additional funds needed if we were to use the C909 would be approximately \$865,000. He stated that those funds would be split across the water, sewer and general fund basically the way the project was split now. Councilor Willis suggested that he has always been an advocate for ductile iron as it is easier to find once buried. Chairman Torr stated that they are now putting in a tracing wire with the PVC so that this is not an issue. Councilor Willis asked if the City Staff is trained to make the repairs to this type of water line and if we are currently carrying the stock to make repairs to pvc lines of this size. Mr. Storer stated that staff can make the repairs and that we would need to carry the additional materials in stock. The consensus of the committee was to fund the entire project with the C909 being used in lieu of ductile iron. The Committee suggested that

Mr. Storer write up an agenda bill with his recommendations and to site the specific cost per fund for a supplemental appropriation.

**7. Pavement Priorities:**

Mr. Storer stated that the packet contained updated numbers for the pavement priorities listing. He stated that it looks like with the remaining appropriation of \$174K and the \$750K currently proposed in the CIP we would likely have enough funding to do Whitehouse Road as planned and most of Lowell Street as the Committee had discussed. He stated that the lower part of Lowell Street from the culvert to Columbus Ave may have to wait. Councilor Varney suggested that the area of the culvert was the worst part of the street. Mr. Storer stated that Councilor Gates had asked him to look into the cost of paving Woodside Lane. He stated to do everything including the 18" sub grade work and install under drain this would be approximately three hundred thousand dollar project (\$300,000). If we only installed ditch lines and replaced existing pavement it would be in the range of a two hundred and twenty-five to two hundred and fifty thousand dollar project. He stated the current conditions would likely come back in about the same number of years. The Committee discussed the limited amount of traffic on the road as compared to other areas of the City needing paving. Mr. Storer stated he would leave Woodside Lane on the list to be considered at a later date. Councilor Varney stated that there was discussion about funding the paving in advance of the CIP and how that would work in a way that would not adversely affect budgeting with the tax cap. He stated that the committee wanted to be able to get the paving done much earlier in the season when temperatures were optimal. Mr. Storer stated that he would still have time to discuss this with Finance and come back to the Committee in April with information on how funding in advance might work. He stated he would then be looking for the supplemental appropriation at the May Regular City Council meeting which would allow for paving in May or June when the contractor is in town completing Gear Road and Ledgeview Drive.

**8. FY2017 Budget**

Mr. Storer stated that department had worked hard to meet the level funding directive from the City Manager on the O&M Budget. He stated this agenda item is for him to stress the importance funding both large trucks in the FY17 CIP. These would be six wheelers and they are used mostly for plow operations. Mr. Storer stated he was surprised to discover that the department had not replaced any of the large trucks in the past 3 budget years. He stated the keeping the vehicle replacement plan funded was important and he discussed the advanced age of many of the trucks. Mr. Storer stated that he had looked at not replacing one truck and pulling a plow route instead and he found that it just wasn't recommended. He stated that each route is 3-4 hours long and extending those routes would not be a good idea as safety would become an issue. There was discussion about the the storage conditions at the DPW and possible standardization on the brand of trucks. Councilor Varney stated that the department did not need to award to the lowest bidder if they could present sound data supporting the reasons for

awarding to a higher priced vehicle. Chairman Torr stated that he would support a recommendation on something other than what they had been purchasing the past couple of trucks. Mr. Storer stated that in FY18 we are looking at replacing the grader and that cost is estimated at two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, so pushing a truck to next year is not an option as there are significant problems with the grader and major repairs have been done in the past couple of years to get it through. Mr. Storer also stated that he had added a comprehensive pavement condition assessment to the CIP. He stated that he estimated and budgeted the cost to be seventy thousand dollars. Mr. Storer said that the assessment would assign a numerical value to the road conditions and would be updated annually. He stated that this would be a tool used to determine roads to pave each year and it would give the City an idea if they were currently funding too much or too little each year to keep the roads at a predetermined condition level. Councilor Varney stated that the City should only invest in the study if they City Council committed to using it to determine the paving to be implemented. He stated that Councilors would not be able to advocate for roads based on location and wards.

9. **Class IV Roads**

Mr. Storer stated he wanted to let the Councilors know that the Department would be posting and restricting motorized access to the Class IV roads. He stated that NHDES had received complaints from the property owner that abuts the Two Rod Road regarding damage being cause by motorized vehicles traveling the Class VI roads. Mr. Storer stated that NH DES had indicated to City Staff that the City is responsible for damage caused to wet land on these roadways. Chairman Torr asked what the cost of posting and restricting access to the roads would be. Mr. Storer stated he hadn't put a number to the cost, but it is basically staff time and some signage. He did not see a problem with funding. Councilor Varney stated that the RSA has language that can be used for restricting motorized access

10. **Tiger Grant Applications**

Mr. Storer stated that the staff had looked into making a grant submission for the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant Program (TIGER). The grant submissions need to be in prior to April 29. He stated the minimum grant awards for urban areas like Rochester are about 5 million dollars. He stated that when staff was looking for a project that might qualify they decided that the connector road and bridge from North Main to Chestnut Hill Road might be a good project. He stated that the City had looked at this several years ago and he thought that updating the report and submitting for the grant would be minimal effort with the possibility of a large return. The Committee supported the idea. Mr. Storer asked if the Committee had any concerns about this project having impacts to the Wakefield Street project. He stated if the bridge/connector was built it may impact the type of design that we would have on Wakefield Street based on either bringing traffic to the downtown or routing it around the downtown. Councilor Varney stated that the connector was on the Chestnut Hill Road

and should not significantly alter anything on Wakefield Street. Dan Fitzpatrick agreed stating that the two projects could be kept separate. Mr. Storer stated that prior to submission the Council would need to give approval to submit. ***Councilor Varney suggested Mr. Storer prepare an agenda bill for the April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting for approval to submit the grant.***

**11. Wakefield Street**

Mr. Storer stated that the current design plans for Wakefield Street were at the 30% and that the project had been put on hold until the funding and priorities had been discussed. He stated that he would like to know if the Committee was on board with proceeding with design and bidding. Councilor Varney stated that discussions with the Finance Department showed the ability to financially fund the project so he suggested proceeding. Councilor Willis asked who is doing the engineering. Mr. Storer stated that Tighe and Bond Engineers were working on the project. He stated that the City had gone out for RFQ's in 2014 and that the department has a qualified group of consultants to go to and the distribution of projects was well proportioned. The Committee consensus was to proceed with design and bidding.

**12. Gonic Mill Removal – NHDES Project.**

Mr. Storer stated that staff had been approached by the state regarding the next phase of the Gonic Dam Removal Project. He stated that they are encouraging us to again act as a pass through for a grant. He stated that we would not be spending any City funds and that we had checked with legal to be sure that by working with the State we would not be accepting any ownership of the property nor would we be responsible for future site cleanup or mitigation of contaminated soils. He stated that there may be a request for a supplemental appropriation within the next few months to accommodate the next phase of the site investigation, which is a groundwater quality assessment. He stated the supplemental will be grant funded through NHDES

**13. Other -**

**Fieldstone Village Water Meter** - Mr. Storer stated that he had met with the City contracted service vendor in regards to the project. He stated that they had come up with a plan that is well within the limits of the current funding. He stated he had also met with the Co-Op Officers regarding their ability to participate in cost sharing. He stated that it was not likely they would be able to contribute financially and thought he should let the Committee know.

**William Allen Elementary School Area Parking Concerns-** Mr. Storer stated that the signs are up in the no parking areas as planned and that the bus routes would be changing next week. There have not been any issues since the signs went up.

***Chairman Torr made stated if there was no objections he would adjourn the meeting. Stating there were no objections Chairan Torr adjourned the meeting at 8:47 PM.***

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lisa J. Clark, City of Rochester Office Manager.