

## **Public Works and Buildings Committee**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**December 9, 2019 7PM**

**Council Chambers**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Councilor Ralph Torr, Chairman

Councilor Ray Varney- Vice Chairman

Councilor David Walker

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Councilor Geoffrey Hamann

Councilor Sandy Keans

#### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Blaine M. Cox, City Manager

Peter C. Nourse PE, Director of City Service

Daniel Camara, GIS / Asset Management

### **MINUTES**

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

#### **1. FY20 CIP Playgrounds Project**

Mr. Nourse discussed the project and the bidding process. He stated that there several submissions that were reviewed and the company to be awarded to is Obrien. He stated that Lauren Krans and Art Jacobs Recreation Department were here in support of the selection of Obrien as the vendor. He stated that he and members of the Recreation Department had gone to several sites that were Obrien Projects in the area to look at the equipment. Mr. Nourse also discussed the structures and the ADA accessibility. He stated that these are quality structures and have been pre-approved the City's insurance carrier, PrimexNH. Lauren Krans stated that the Recreation Department liked the Obrien Companies designs and sited that it is important that they do not detract or overpower the landscape at the Common or Hanson Pine Park. She explained many of the features incorporated and spoke highly of the sensory and educational elements within the design. Art Jacobs discussed the ground structure vs. the woodchips. He stated this is much safer for children when they fall. Mr. Jacobs stated that he had discussed Obrien with other recreation departments and they were all pleased with the construction projects and the equipment installed. Councilor Varney asked if the Recreation Commission had seen the designs. Ms. Krans confirmed that they had.

2. **Approve minutes from the November 21, 2019 Public Works & Building Meeting.**  
Chairman Torr requested comments or a recommendation on last month's meeting.  
*Councilor Walker made a motion to accept minutes as presented for the November 21, 2019 Public Works & Building Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Varney. The Motion passed unanimously*
3. **Public Input -**  
None
4. **DPW Facility**  
Mr. Nourse stated that he had no further information but he put this on the agenda in order give the Councilors and opportunity to discuss and ask questions prior to voting on the 3.9 million dollar supplemental appropriation for the project. Mr. Cox distributed a spreadsheet for informational purposes. The spreadsheet showed the original construction cost estimate and what that would be now considering the construction cost index escalation. The spreadsheet displayed the anticipated debt service cost. He also discussed that the 50% general fund, 25% each water and sewer allocations has been looked at again and found to be appropriate. Councilor Varney stated that the 4 million dollar impact to the debt schedule would be offset by the reduction of the approximately same amount due to additional state funding for the Vocational Center at the High School. Councilor Varney asked if all large vehicles could be store inside. Mr. Nourse Stated yes they would. Councilor Varney asked about the cold weather impacts to vehicles and plowing operations. Mr. Nourse stated this is an issue and described the process of bringing staff in to start vehicles ahead of storms. He stated they are all plugged into block heaters and staff has had to warm them with salamander heater just to get them going in the extreme cold periods. He discussed the impacts of the cold on hydraulics of the plow vehicles and the additives used in the fuel to keep the diesel from congealing. Mr. Cox stated that he had Chief Assessor look at the current market value of the current DPW and that came back as \$2.1million.
5. **Sidewalks FY21 CIP**  
Mr. Nourse stated that this is the first opportunity to discuss the sidewalk reconstruction project plan for FY2020-2021. He stated that Strafford Regional Planning had completed the sidewalk survey. He displayed a graphic that showed a color coded map showing the sidewalks and their conditions. Red indicating the sidewalks most in need. Mr. Nourse stated he did not need any decision this evening but wanted to start the conversation. Councilor Varney suggested getting a list to all Councilors for the sidewalks that are in need of repair. He suggested each Councilor would then be able to visit and assess the needs within their respective wards.
6. **Personnel**  
Mr. Nourse stated that he thought it was important to let the City Council know that we are having staffing issues. He stated that there are several reasons including our ability to provide competitive wages and work at home alternatives. He stated the department has

recently lost three skilled Secretary II positions, a B&G Technician and a Light Equipment Operator all due to better wages. He stated that he understood that this is not a unique situation, it is happening in several municipalities and when the economy is good private businesses have a better opportunity to compete for the skilled personnel. He said he is not suggesting that the City Council solve the issue as these positions are part of collective bargaining groups, but he thought it was important to let the Council know that there is an issue. Mr. Nourse also discussed the vacant Assistant City Engineer Position. He said that the need is great but the position has been vacant for over a year now.

Mr. Nourse discussed the NHDOT Public Works Memorial and stated that he attended the dedication ceremony last spring and that since that time he has been working with the DOT to have a former Rochester employee name be added to the memorial. He stated that currently there are 37 names etched into the memorial stone to commemorate municipal DPW employees that have died while on duty. He stated that he is pleased that the State has approved the addition of Kenneth Guild from the Rochester DPW be added to the memorial. Mr. Guild passed while performing his duties for the City of Rochester in 1981.

**7. Community Center DHHS Lease Extension**

Mr. Nourse stated that the State of NH has requested a two year extension to their lease at the Community Center. This Agreement includes a 2.5% increase in the lease payments and He stated that the State of NH has made this request to allow additional time for them to find an alternate location for their offices. Mr. Nourse explained that a vote of approval from the full city is required to complete the extension agreement and that this will be on the January agenda.

**8. Other**

**Southeast Land Trust Water Department Conservation Properties** – Mr. Nourse explained that the property transfers were nearly completed to the Southeast Land Trust Organization (SELT) and that the City owned parcels will be put in permanent conservation status, which in the end will reduce the escalating tax rates. He stated that the Farmington properties had been in a “current use” status for years and that in recent years that had changed and the taxes had risen from minimal to more than \$30,000 annually.

*Councilor Walker made a motion to adjourn at 7:40 pm. Councilor Varney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

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