

**COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

**August 31, 1998**

**5:30 PM**

Chairman Pariseau called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

**Present:** Aldermen Pariseau, Rivard, Thibault, Girard, O'Neil

**Messrs.:** Asst. Solicitor Arnold, Paul Bergeron, Kevin Clougherty, Chief Driscoll, Chief Kane, Lt. Mike Tessier

On motion of Alderman Girard, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to enter into non-public session under the provisions of RSA-91:A-3 Paragraph 2(c) to discuss the denial of a license to operate a taxicab.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Girard, it was voted to return to public session.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to grant the issuance of the license to operate a taxicab to Mr. Hopkins, noting that if there are any further complaints the license be revoked and the matter brought before the Committee.

Chairman Pariseau addressed item 5 of the agenda:

Communication from Christopher Cannon requesting authorization to operate a food vending establishment in front of The Spider's Web located at 23 Amherst Street.

Alderman O'Neil stated, Mike, we granted one for the Brimmer at one time and I generally don't stay out late at night, so I don't know if that actually...

Lt. Tessier replied it's the same individual.

Chairman Pariseau stated he's going to move from the Brimmer to The Spider's Web.

Lt. Tessier replied on different nights (Tuesday's). Our only reservation is and we want to be cautious in the event that this causes some problems, not brought on by himself but just the fact that the establishment that he's in front of...problems develop. We want the right to come back to the Committee and take another look at it.

Alderman O'Neil stated I think we put another similar condition on The Brimmer and can't remember how we worded it, but if there are any problems the license would be revoked immediately.

Alderman O'Neil moved to grant the request noting should there be any problems reported the license would then be revoked immediately. Alderman Girard duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Pariseau addressed item 6 of the agenda:

Communication from Messrs. Arnold, Kane, Driscoll, and Clougherty relative to the ambulance contract renewal.

Alderman Girard moved to the staff committee recommendation. Alderman Pariseau duly seconded the motion for discussion.

Alderman Thibault moved to table the staff committee recommendation noting that there were still some major questions that he would like answered.

Chairman Pariseau stated I am not going to recognize that motion at this time.

Alderman Thibault asked why not.

Chairman Pariseau replied I think we should discuss whatever our concerns are with the committee, I don't know what we're going to achieve by tabling it.

Alderman O'Neil stated I met today with the representations of AMR and I think out of courtesy to the other two firms, I'd like to meet with them also. AMR asked for the meeting, I believe they met with some Aldermen last week and I think it would be appropriate to table it, one more month isn't going to make or break the process.

Chairman Pariseau asked what are they going to say or do that would assist the Committee that was put together, we have to address the concerns of this committee and I think if we get too involved in the process we're micro-managing the whole concept of what our intent was. Initially, we advised the committee to negotiate with Rockingham, but because of concerns expressed by a number of this Committee we decided to ask the committee to send out for proposals from whoever wanted to submit the proposal to the city, they've done that, they've met...the way I understand it according to Tom Arnold's letter, the staff letter...they met with three of those companies that sent in proposals, addressed the staff committee and the committee made a recommendation.

Alderman O'Neil stated based on my discussion with AMR today, I called the Chief this afternoon, Chief Kane, and there were some issues that came up, Chief, there was one in particular that you said was never discussed before your committee, correct.

Chief Kane replied that one of the issues that you brought up, I never heard of.

Chairman Pariseau asked what issue was that.

Alderman O'Neil replied is had to do with training firefighters as paramedics.

Alderman Girard stated they already have EMT training, don't they.

Alderman O'Neil stated it's not what they have, it's what was said to me today at the meeting, so I'm going to vote against it tonight and you may have the votes, you may not have the votes. All I'm asking is that we table for one month, I would like to meet with the other two firms out of courtesy to them.

Alderman Thibault stated that was my purpose for saying I wanted to table it before.

Chairman Pariseau asked have you met with AMR, Alderman.

Alderman Thibault replied yes I have last week.

Chairman Pariseau asked who hasn't met with AMR. I was contacted, but I couldn't make the meeting.

Alderman Girard stated I haven't been contacted. We assembled a committee to take and review proposals and make a report back to this Committee. None of us here have the expertise that the folks lined up here do, they are people who were part of the process five years ago when we went out to bid and we took Rockingham services over Chaulk which is now AMR...it seems to me that if individual companies are going to start lobbying individual members of the Board and it's the desire of individual members of this Committee to meet independently with each member or with each company that has bid that we have got absolutely no process here and I, for one, am very comfortable with the staff assembled here that's made the recommendations. I don't see why we would second guess them as a Committee and start calling all of the ambulance competitors into this Committee to speak if Alderman Thibault or any of the Aldermen here have specific questions that they'd like to address, I would say to you it appears that most of the players are here and certainly the Ambulance Committee is here, we should address it tonight and just as a closing comment I would like to remind this Committee that back in 1990 or 1991 city staff made a recommendation that a company called Don Law handled the City's Concert Series, but this Committee which was lobbied knew better than the city staff that made a recommendation and you all know how many concerts and how much money we've made since this committee ((except one) chose not to follow the recommendation to the city staff and I have a real problem with this and I don't know if anybody else here, but I've had friends and I've had family who have needed ambulance services and from what I have reviewed, from what I have seen, and from what I have gathered from members of the committee, not to mention my own experience in the Mayor's Office, I see no reason why we don't accept their recommendation. Rockingham has provided an excellent service, the issues that the Aldermen have regarding price and other matters and the administrative staff had with the contract, I gather have been remedied, we're going to waste a lot of time and I don't think we're going to do what should be a very structured and public process and justice whatsoever.

Alderman O'Neil stated I want to make it clear that nobody and I'll speak for myself; that I'm not questioning Rockingham's quality of service because my mother was treated by Rockingham a number of years ago when she received very high quality service, but I was asked to meet with a company, I met with them, and they provided some new information. I followed up immediately and spoke to Chief Kane. One of the items he was not aware of was never discussed.

Alderman Girard asked well, what is that item.

Alderman O'Neil replied I just said it and you interrupted me, it had to do with paramedic training for firefighters. It may be a legitimate question, I only found it out today. I spoke with the Chief briefly this afternoon, but I believe out of courtesy to the other two firms, I would like to meet with them based on meeting with AMR today.

Chairman Pariseau asked, Chief, relative to this training...

Chief Kane replied the only thing I can comment on in regard to the training is that it's never been discussed in front of our staff meetings, it was not in the proposals, and currently we do not do that when we're training in the fire service. So, I really don't know what their proposal is. If AMR wants to come in and train all of our firefighters to be paramedics, I would assume that it's a fairly substantial task, but I have no idea what the proposal is because I've never seen it.

Alderman Thibault stated the thing that I'm concerned about and I know I certainly have no problem with the staff and some of their recommendations also, the problem is as Alderman O'Neil has said before we have met with Rockingham, we have met with the others, why can't we give them the same format as we gave Rockingham.

Chairman Pariseau stated we left it up to staff. You didn't meet with Rockingham, you met with AMR.

Alderman Thibault stated I'm not talking about last week, I'm talking about in Committee we had someone from Rockingham bring us that contract about five or six months ago and then after that we said that we should be looking into more...as a matter of fact, I was the Alderman that brought it up that we should look at other ambulance services. So, a member of Rockingham was there that night to give us their proposal.

Chairman Pariseau stated he was there but made no presentation or made nothing. Alderman, we didn't meet with Rockingham. The issue of ambulance service was coming up, I guess it was April or whenever it was, they were part of the Committee.

Alderman Thibault stated that was before we had instituted this committee.

Chairman Pariseau stated no. It was that night that we...the issue came before the full Board from Chief Kane...sent a letter advising the Board of Mayor and Aldermen that the contract with Rockingham was due to expire December 31st or whenever, it was referred to both Public Safety Committee and Administration, it was determined by the City Solicitor's office that the Administration Committee handled contracts, so we acted on that letter from Chief Kane advising the committee that they negotiate with Rockingham. After that happened, someone got to you...

Alderman Thibault interjected no, nobody got to me. I asked that we should get other people to bid, that's what I asked.

Chairman Pariseau stated only because you had heard complaints.

Alderman Thibault stated I heard different complaints, yes.

Chairman Pariseau stated it came back to Committee and we asked the subcommittee to request proposals and they got what four or five.

Assistant Solicitor Arnold stated I think more appropriately this committee came back to the Committee on Administration and asked to go out and request proposals.

Chairman Pariseau stated correct, that is what we did.

Alderman Girard asked, Chief, as part of the RFP was there a solicitation for the training of the City's firefighters to be paramedics.

Chief Kane replied no.

Alderman Girard stated you did not request that service. Mr. Chairman, here I think illustrates the real problem that I have. After the committee has been through its process, after it's gone through its deliberations, interviewed all of the companies and had prepared and made recommendations, we now have one of the companies that was not recommended coming around speaking individually to some Aldermen and making all kinds of offers of service that weren't even part of the original bid process. So, why are we going to go through a process and consider companies that are now adding services onto their proposal after the fact, after not having been recommended and entertain this. What are we using an RFP for, what is CarePlus going to come through and offer the City, what are we going to force Rockingham Ambulance to do to try to maintain a competitive atmosphere in what was a structured competitive process. Anyone can come up with anything after the fact...are we going to invalidate...a question for the City Solicitor...if we start negotiating or entertaining services that weren't included in the RFP do we have to toss it all out and go all over again.

Assistant Solicitor Arnold replied we certainly have a prerogative to negotiate on that basis, however, I guess what I can say is that each of those companies was given a sample contract and asked at that time if they wanted to make any additional proposals which the committee fully considered. The paramedic training, whatever that is, wasn't one of them that was made at that time.

Alderman Girard stated so after entertaining every proposal, after interviewing every company you gave them each the opportunity to come forward with additional areas of service or adjustments to their proposal, you gave them an open opportunity to say we think we can do this or we think we can do that or we think we can do this better.

Assistant Solicitor Arnold stated at the time we asked for the proposals, we asked that they bid on the contract we presented so that we could compare apples to apples, so to speak. But, we also encouraged them, if they thought they had any additional proposals that would benefit the City, increase system inefficiency...for instance, one of the things that we suggested was training the police officers; that they were encouraged to make those types of recommendations in their proposals and the proposal that was submitted to the committee which we have and those were all considered.

Alderman Girard stated if I may ask the committee generally, Mr. Chairman, maybe we could ask them to give a brief presentation of what they've done and why they've come to the recommendation they've come to although I think it was very well summarized in Mr. Arnold's letter. They had the opportunity to make other recommendations and they didn't. So, you evaluated based on what was on the table.

Assistant Solicitor Arnold stated absolutely. We evaluated on the proposals that were before us, yes.

Alderman Girard stated, Mr. Chairman, if Alderman Thibault or anybody else has got additional questions they should ask them of the committee here today, it's not right to keep putting this thing off.

Alderman Rivard stated in the package that I received at my home probably Saturday...I didn't get to it Sunday because I was away signed by Arnold, Chief Kane, Police Chief, and Kevin Clougherty after considering each of the proposals, the staff reached a conclusion that the additional benefits offered by CarePlus and American Medical Response do not justify the time and the expenses switching provider; that is a very interesting sentence, I was hoping to have an opportunity to discuss what the additional benefits were with these individuals to find out why it doesn't justify the time and expense. So, obviously I support a motion to table which Alderman Thibault has proposed.

Chairman Pariseau asked are you proposing that question to the Committee.

Alderman Rivard replied no, I'm just telling you why I support the tabling of this at this time because I'd like to find out what the benefits were and the justification of time and expenses of switching providers.

Alderman Girard stated, Mr. Chairman, if the Alderman Rivard won't ask, I will. What are the additional benefits you don't feel warrants it.

Assistant Solicitor Arnold replied they were essentially laid out in the letter. CarePlus offered to dedicate a fourth ambulance to City use for 12 hours-a-day...as the committee said in the letter we felt that the other two bidders certainly in the past and perhaps Mr. Kane could speak to this better than I has dedicated resources over and above that called for by contract the City needs; that we were also assured by AMR that they would do that also if they were called upon to do so and that was the additional benefit offered by CarePlus. The other additional benefit

that we felt was offered referred to in the letter was the offer to pay for advanced life support services rendered by the Fire Department on scene. We took a look at that and our system and, quite frankly, felt that those payments given the design of the system here in the City would probably be very minimal. The contract itself calls for an ambulance to be on scene within seven minutes or less from the time of dispatch. Typically, the ambulance and the fire trucks are dispatched at the same time. So, that as a practical reality here in this City the ambulances and the fire trucks arrive very close together. Certainly at maximum probably within a matter of minutes. The past statistics that we looked at from Rockingham show an average response time of approximately five minutes or less and that you will recall is the same response time being used by the fire trucks to get to the scene. When a fire truck arrives at the scene protocol isn't just immediately to begin rendering care, the firemen do things such as making sure the scene is safe, make sure there is not gasoline spilling, taking care of fire suppression, traffic safety...that type of thing so that I think that practically speaking instances in which firemen could render advanced life support services even if they were trained to do so would probably be minimal.

Alderman Girard stated, Mr. Arnold, I received a letter as I gather you did from Mr. Stawasz, Rockingham Ambulance, saying that the provision to negotiate revenues is also contained within their proposal.

Assistant Solicitor Arnold stated there was language that they interpreted that way. As you can see from my letter that they certainly were willing to negotiate with the City, I have not seen that particular letter. It probably came after I left the office on Friday.

Alderman Girard stated it came on Saturday. So, basically that being the case the only additional benefit here from any one of the providers was CarePlus saying that they'd dedicate a fourth ambulance to the City for 12 hours and apparently our current level of service is already given that to us anyway.

Assistant Solicitor Arnold stated as I said the contract doesn't call for it, but I think that Rockingham has certainly done that in the past and AMR made clear that they would be willing to do so.

Chairman Pariseau asked do you have any other questions, Mr. Rivard.

Alderman Rivard replied no, thank you.

Alderman O'Neil asked do you want a motion to table.

Chairman Pariseau replied, I don't know why...

Alderman Girard asked are we going to bring all of the bidders to the Committee to discuss their proposals or are we going to go through this round robin where some of the Aldermen get talked to by members of whatever bidding groups and others. I didn't even receive a phone call from AMR to say that they were interested to talk to me. So, I have a very real concern over what appears to be a very haphazard approach by one bidder who's going around the process to individually lobby Aldermen.

Alderman O'Neil stated I would like to meet as I did with AMR one-on-one with CarePlus and one-on-one with Rockingham.

Alderman Girard asked why wouldn't you want to meet in public with them, Aldermen.

Alderman O'Neil replied I don't care, but I met with AMR in private so that's up to them. If they want to meet with me publicly that's fine, I'll meet with them publicly.

Alderman Girard stated, Mr. Chairman, I don't think private meetings with companies and individual Aldermen do any justice to the integrity of public process. If there's a motion to invite each one of the companies in to come discuss their bids and make a presentation to the Committee that's only fair to the company that hasn't made any lobbying calls and that has been our service provider...if we're going to give AMR or CarePlus or anybody else the opportunity to speak, we should have Rockingham come too.

Alderman O'Neil moved to table the ambulance contract renewal.

Clerk Bergeron stated, Mr. Chairman, right now there is an active motion on the floor to accept the committee's recommendation made by Alderman Girard, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau.

Chairman Pariseau called for a vote on the motion. The motion failed.

Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion to table. The motion carried with Alderman Girard duly recorded in opposition.

Alderman Thibault asked at this point could we instruct all of the people to come in and make a presentation to the Committee.

Chairman Pariseau replied, Alderman, I really don't know if that would accomplish anything only because we've delegated a committee and they handled it.

Alderman Girard stated maybe we could ask the companies to go back to the ambulance committee with whatever proposal revisions they want and have the committee report back.

Alderman O'Neil stated I am going to meet and I don't need the permission of this Committee with Rockingham and CarePlus one-on-one.

Alderman Thibault stated I can meet with them too if they want me to, if they don't that's fine too.

Alderman O'Neil stated that is if they want to meet.

Chairman Pariseau stated do what you want, it will be on the agenda at the next Administration Committee meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee