

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

March 21, 2000

5:00 PM

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Pariseau, Thibault, Hirschmann, O'Neil

Messrs: J. Porter, D. Prew

Chairman Gatsas called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Copy of a communication from Attorney Robert Ciandella to the Finance Officer submitting an outline of a recent presentation made to the NH Municipal Association Conference relating to the state of telecommunications infrastructure describing various approaches which can be used by the City to address these issues.

Chairman Gatsas stated I have one problem. Obviously, if you read through the letter it had a lot of salient points in the contract that we just gave to our negotiator for negotiating. I certainly would have liked to have seen it before now.

Alderman Hirschmann stated it is about a week late.

Chairman Gatsas replied it is a month late. It is three month's late actually. Some of the things that I think if you read this, we need to...there is nobody here from the Solicitor's Office. We should have somebody look at this because there is the rights-of-ways, there is legislation, I am talking cable, public service, telecommunications, etc.

Alderman O'Neil asked does this fall at all under some of the work that Mr. Epstein is doing for us. Should we refer this to him?

Alderman Gatsas answered it does but I think we should start taking a look at a different view here because there are revenues that the City has missed out on for an awful long time. They are now telling us in here that since 1996 there was a Dearborn, Michigan case that found in their favor that you can bill for the right-of-ways a percentage of revenues.

Alderman Pariseau stated that was discussed a number of years ago and the City Solicitor was of the other opinion.

Alderman Gatsas replied I can only tell you that there is the Town of Amherst versus Optima Point Communications, the Town of Rochester, AT&T Wireless vs. the City of Virginia. There is an awful lot of cases here and I think that we may...

Alderman Pariseau interjected if memory serves me correctly the City Solicitor was of the other opinion.

Alderman Gatsas stated maybe we could entertain a motion to ask the City Solicitor or Kevin Clougherty to send a letter to Donohue, Tucker & Ciandella. Obviously these people do this kind of thing, tell us what they think the fees would be for recapture and rights of way and see if we can do something on a proportionate basis. Instead of us paying them maybe we can give them a portion of the recovering fee.

Alderman O'Neil stated this outfit, I believe, was one of the four bidders, including Mr. Epstein, for our cable negotiations.

Alderman Hirschmann stated I think this is a competitor of Mr. Epstein in my opinion.

Alderman O'Neil stated it might make sense to have Mr. Epstein take a look at this. He is our counsel on this.

Alderman Gatsas replied I don't have a problem with that. I just think we need some dialogue with somebody telling us what our rights are and obviously I believe that there is some...I think we required the City Solicitor to draw up some rights-of-way contracts at one of our meetings to present to MediaOne or a new one. I believe there was something to that effect.

Alderman Hirschmann moved to refer the item to Atty. Peter Epstein.

Alderman Gatsas stated I would certainly hope and I would pray that he would have the knowledge of what is in this letter. If he doesn't know that this stuff is around then we have engaged the wrong person.

Alderman Hirschmann stated he worked on our previous cable contract as well.

Alderman Gatsas replied that was 10 years ago.

Alderman Hirschmann stated he has been in the business for 10 years.

Alderman Gatsas replied I am not questioning that. All I am saying is that I would hope that he knows about this.

Alderman Thibault stated let's send it to the City Solicitor and to Mr. Epstein.

Alderman Gatsas stated from what I understood, he was not of the understanding that we could claim rights-of-way.

Alderman Thibault moved to refer this item to the City Solicitor and to Atty. Peter Epstein and request a recommendation back to the Committee by April 4, 2000. Alderman O'Neil duly seconded the motion. Chairman Gatsas called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Gatsas stated on another item I believe that the auditor talked to the City Solicitor's Office yesterday. He received the information he needed from MediaOne. He told the City Solicitor to call him and send the word back that we would like the audit completed by next Friday.

Alderman Hirschmann stated on a related issue, could the Masonic Home be considered an elderly complex so that they are not...I guess MediaOne is trying to charge for every drop in that building. Did you see that letter?

Chairman Gatsas replied I don't know if we want to start jumping there because if you start dealing with that, you are going to be dealing with nursing homes and everything else.

Alderman Hirschmann asked didn't we ask already for elderly exemptions.

Chairman Gatsas answered we have but I don't know if we want to go to an outside building that isn't City controlled by MHA because then you will be looking at the Lemire building on Maple Street and I don't know if we want to carry the burden of yes, we will give you the senior centers but we won't give you X, Y and Z as part of the negotiations. I certainly don't have a problem looking at it once...if you want to bring it back up again when we get the contract back in the stages of still negotiating.

Alderman Hirschmann stated there is probably another service like a satellite system that would be cheaper for those people. If cable is going to charge for 50 drops in a building, that is kind of expensive.

Chairman Gatsas replied on the flip side we get 5% of those drops.

TABLED ITEMS

4. Departmental responses (Airport, Information Systems and Tax) to comments contained in the Melanson Heath & Company Management Letter dated 1/11/00 for year ended June 30, 1999.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Ms. Porter stated I am here to answer any questions you may have regarding the concerns that were mentioned in the letter.

Chairman Gatsas stated the big question is are the registered being opened.

Ms. Porter replied yes.

Chairman Gatsas asked and that is going to be resolved in the next two weeks. April 15 is the date that I remember precisely.

Ms. Prew answered in the next three weeks.

Chairman Gatsas stated now that I have someone here, could you tell me whose decision it was not to run a parallel system or why we didn't run a parallel system.

Ms. Prew replied the timeframe did not allow for it on the financial system.

Chairman Gatsas asked when you say timeframe, what do you mean.

Ms. Prew answered the decision was made that the financial system would be up on July 1, 1997. The contract was signed in December of 1996. It was six months to bring it up. When we were working with the School Department and getting everything together, there just was not time to run...the resources weren't there to run the financial system in parallel.

Alderman O'Neil stated but they did it at the School Department.

Ms. Prew asked did what.

Alderman O'Neil answered they ran their existing system.

Ms. Prew stated not during that period they didn't.

Alderman O'Neil replied that is not what I was told.

Chairman Gatsas asked are you talking from December to July. Is that what you are talking about, Ms. Prew?

Ms. Prew answered no from December to July the old system was running. When we went into the new fiscal year, the old system was there but they weren't set-up to run the new fiscal year.

Alderman O'Neil stated that is the question. Why weren't they, why wasn't there a parallel system run from July 1 on?

Ms. Prew replied there was no way to be able to set-up that system in that timeframe. What was happening during that period of time is we were trying to integrate the School Department and the City's financial system. Those issues weren't resolved until the middle of May. It was not possible to run parallel.

Alderman O'Neil stated the biggest problem now when we got into this discussion in CIP, we in the middle of March still do not have bond project balances because there isn't a, and correct me if I am wrong those of you who sat in the meeting, there isn't a comfort level that HTE is putting out a proper report and when the question got asked didn't you run the existing system parallel to it, the answer was no we jumped right into HTE.

Ms. Prew answered those bond balances that were there...

Alderman O'Neil interjected not specifically bond balances but any project balance.

Ms. Prew stated those project balances should have been entered into the HTE system.

Alderman O'Neil replied we are talking the last three years that we have been on HTE.

Ms. Prew stated those balances should by now have been straightened out. I mean the information as to what the balances were as of June 30, 1997, that information is available. The old system is no longer running but the information is available in reports. Those balances are available and you should be able to look at them and go forward.

Chairman Gatsas stated the tough question that I asked was who made the decision not to run parallel systems. That was the original question I asked. I will give you the two answers and you have no lifelines. Those being I don't know or a name. Those are your two answers.

Ms. Prew replied the resources were just not there, Alderman.

Chairman Gatsas responded the question I had was I am not asking did we have the financial capability of doing it. My question was obviously somebody said we don't have the money to do this so we can't run a parallel system. My question is do we know who that person was or don't we? I think that until we find out who made the decision...there is no company in the world with \$200 million in size changing systems that would not run a parallel. Do you agree with that statement?

Ms. Prew answered it depends on the circumstances.

Chairman Gatsas asked if you were changing systems...we could get 50 MIS people and sit them in this room and tell them that we are changing systems and 50 of them would say you need to run a parallel system.

Ms. Prew answered that is the ideal way to do it.

Chairman Gatsas replied that is the only proper way to do it. No ideal, proper, so that nothing is lost because we don't know if anything was lost. It comes back to garbage in and if people don't know what they are putting in, garbage in, garbage out.

Ms. Prew stated I would submit that the information on the balances was available.

Alderman O'Neil stated the problem isn't necessarily up until June 30, 1997. They can't get the information off of HTE from the last three years. That is what we were specifically told in the CIP Committee because we have waited 10 weeks for project balances and they are telling us now that they are going to give us a draft by the end of the week because they are asking the departments to reconcile their numbers. To me, we spent the amount of money that we did and that doesn't put a lot of faith in THE when we can't, three years later, get proper information out of it.

Ms. Prew replied, Alderman, I can't speak to the problems that the Planning Department is having with the project balances. I haven't spoken with them. Certainly, we will do that and see where the issues are.

Alderman O'Neil stated I believe and correct me if I am wrong, but they didn't have any idea going back under the old system. Do any of you remember that discussion? Alderman Gatsas, you sat in on CIP. We need, I would ask and I will make it a motion that you work with the Planning Department to get project balances before HTE and after HTE. They are telling us that they are having a hard time getting it.

Chairman Gatsas stated they have to do it manually.

Alderman O'Neil moved to have Information Systems work with the Planning Department to get project balances before HTE and after HTE and refer the information to the CIP Committee. Alderman Pariseau duly seconded the motion. Chairman Gatsas called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Gatsas asked, Ms. Porter, the bugs in the system that are being worked out by THE, it sounds like they are working on the problem.

Ms. Porter answered definitely.

Chairman Gatsas stated this problem has been here for four years.

Ms. Porter replied not for us.

Chairman Gatsas responded well collectively the bugs and the problems throughout the City and they may be different in your department...

Ms. Porter stated we didn't come on line until August of 1999. We have only been on it about six months.

Chairman Gatsas asked when do they assume that your bugs are going to be cleared up.

Ms. Porter answered we don't have a definite date.

Chairman Gatsas stated how about if I give you a date to give them and you can report back to this Committee.

Ms. Porter replied we are on the phone with them every Tuesday following and tracking all of these things. I will say that they are working on it and we are progressing. In fact, one of these issues where the general ledger problem was addressed, that was fixed yesterday in everybody's opinion but we are tracking it. We haven't closed the log out.

Chairman Gatsas stated that really disturbs me that the department that is taking the total source of revenues for this City reporting it to the general ledger is a problem and that is not your fault.

Ms. Porter replied some of these things sound a lot worse. It is not the entire general ledger that is affected. It is the lien payments that have been coming in; not all of them but some of the lien payments for some reason were not reporting right to the general ledger but in our office we had the correct information as far as the taxpayer calling and saying is my lien paid. It was fine in our office and then our bookkeeper managed to find out that somehow when it reached the financials upstairs it wasn't reporting the same way on the ledger. For awhile, HTE was saying that there was a problem with the way we set it up here so we were looking here. Finance was looking here and Colleen in our office was looking here. Info. Systems was looking over there to see if we could figure out what was wrong at our end and in January HTE informed us that it is on their end because they have another customer with the same problem. So, it was identified in January and as far as we know it was fixed yesterday.

Chairman Gatsas stated Ms. Prew maybe you can help me and maybe you can't or maybe the City Solicitor can answer this question. HTE, they have a bond I assume? Do we still owe them money?

Ms. Prew replied yes, I think it is close to \$200,000.

Alderman O'Neil asked what was their total contract.

Ms. Prew answered \$1.9 million I believe.

Chairman Gatsas stated \$1.9 million plus. Isn't it closer to \$4 million?

Ms. Prew stated the project that was undertaken in 1996 actually was made up of three areas. One was the HTE, the integrated financial and municipal system, the other was the metropolitan network throughout the City and the third piece was the desktops and PC's throughout the departments. That is where you come up with \$4 million plus.

Chairman Gatsas asked the \$1.9 million that we spent with HTE really also was tied into Phase II because they recommended that we needed that. What was Phase II that you just discussed before the hardware?

Ms. Prew answered Phase II was the metropolitan area network.

Chairman Gatsas asked that had to tie into HTE I assume.

Ms. Prew answered before the financial system we had communications in place and we did that with LGFS. This was to provide the Internet and we got out to a lot of buildings higher speed connections so that we could receive e-mails and we are getting ready to tangle with geographic information systems. This is a high-speed network that we put in place that would have been put in no matter what financial system was selected.

Chairman Gatsas stated I guess the most difficult question is we spent \$1.9 million on the software package. How many dollars was spent in man-hours for problems created by HTE?

Ms. Prew replied whenever you do a project of this type there are...

Chairman Gatsas interjected I can hear that there are going to be a lot of hours. This dissertation that you are giving me.

Ms. Prew replied well I really don't have the number of hours to give you. There is an enormous amount of work that goes into any project when you do a conversion.

Chairman Gatsas responded I am saying after that.

Ms. Prew replied the situation that we had with HTE is that additional time went into that because we had a vendor that grew. It doubled in size from the time that we came on board and they didn't respond as they should have.

Chairman Gatsas stated that is not an impact that we should even have to worry about. We paid for a product and if we are not getting the product or the service, that service should have been terminated, done away with and we should have gone to the next issue. I don't care if they have gone from one employee to 50,000, we paid for a service and we didn't get it and we are still three or four years behind now.

Ms. Prew replied you started the project...

Chairman Gatsas interjected it started in June, 1997.

Ms. Prew replied that is right. That was the first piece and that was the financial system.

Chairman Gatsas stated and that one still doesn't work.

Ms. Prew asked it doesn't work.

Alderman O'Neil stated that is what I hear from some of your fellow department heads. There are still bugs in that system.

Ms. Prew replied I am not saying that there may not still be bugs but the financial information is being recorded and reports are coming out. The problems are being resolved. That is one module of what we...

Alderman O'Neil interjected but when the departments don't have faith in the reports that are coming out, that should send up a yellow flag that something is still wrong.

Alderman Hirschmann asked what are you talking about.

Alderman O'Neil answered this was talked about at the CIP meeting last week.

Chairman Gatsas stated Finance is not comfortable with the reports that they are getting.

Alderman Thibault replied School is certainly not comfortable.

Alderman Hirschmann stated what I heard Kevin Clougherty say is that it is implemented in a lot of departments and every department is responsible for running their own modules and some of them are probably not up to speed. As far as I know, Finance has closed out the books on this software. Is there a problem...there is nothing in the management letter about our books.

Chairman Gatsas replied sure there is. The management letter says that if you don't close out a year on June 30, you don't have the ability to do it on July 1. That is exactly what he said.

Alderman Hirschmann asked so you can't go back in time. That is what you are saying?

Chairman Gatsas answered that is a problem.

Ms. Prew stated that issue, I believe, has been resolved.

Chairman Gatsas stated all I am saying is that from the gist that we have got from a lot of the departments, they are not confident in the material that they are getting. I don't know if that is true or not and certainly I am not looking for...you didn't write the software and you don't have the ability to fix the bugs. You only have the ability to tell us them many people in HTE at City Hall aren't too happy.

Ms. Prew replied and we have done that.

Alderman O'Neil stated maybe they should pay us a visit. I have never met these people.

Ms. Prew replied the Vice President was here.

Alderman Pariseau asked did you get a copy of this letter that Mayor Baines sent to HTE.

Chairman Gatsas stated I think he sent a letter but at some point...

Mr. Robinson stated from the Mayor's standpoint if I can speak for the Mayor's standpoint, a lot of these problems really go back to the conversion and the lack of training. The reason these departments aren't having a comfort level with information coming out is because they weren't comfortable putting the information in. You can't go back and re-convert. I think what needs to be done now is an analysis of the reports to see what is really down.

Chairman Gatsas asked can we put you (Ms. Prew) on a mission because I know you don't have a lot of things to do. We will just give you one more thing to do and ask you to get some sort of idea from department heads as to whether they are comfortable or not comfortable with the system and let's see if we can do this in the next two weeks.

Alderman Hirschmann stated maybe they need refresher course training or something.

Chairman Gatsas that is something that Ms. Prew needs to address and get an answer on.

Ms. Prew stated the other thing that I will admit is that some of the problems are a reporting issue and we know those are there. The hardware is being upgraded. There is going to be a capacity so that we will be able to run reports in a more timely fashion. That has been a problem for some departments. I think what we may be able to do is work with the departments and see what they need for

information and develop additional reports for them. I think they are not feeling that they are getting the information out in a beneficial format for them.

Alderman Thibault asked isn't that why the School District wanted to get out of this thing, because they just couldn't get the information they needed when they needed it.

Ms. Prew answered School never wanted to be on this system.

Alderman O'Neil moved to have Ms. Prew report back to the Committee in two weeks regarding the problems that each department is having with HTE and where we are going.

Alderman O'Neil stated, Ms. Prew, this isn't to beat up on any City staff. In my personal opinion, I don't think that HTE has delivered what they said they were going to deliver but the problem is that we sit there and try to do a CIP budget and we asked for project balances on January 1 knowing that it was going to be a tough year and we might need to use some of that money and it is 10 weeks later and we still can't get a report on it because nobody is comfortable. Are you (Ms. Prew) comfortable with your CIP projects? Do you know what your balances are?

Ms. Prew answered for the most part I do. There are two that do not balance. I am aware of them and the reason they are not balanced is that I have not had the time to sit down with Finance.

Alderman O'Neil stated multiply that by 20 something departments and we could have millions of dollars sitting out there that we could be putting to work right now. That is where our frustration is when we ask for these things and we can't get it. That puts us in a bind.

Chairman Gatsas stated and before 1997 it is even worse because now you are asking them to go to microfiche to make sure that they are right and that shouldn't be happening.

Alderman Pariseau duly seconded the motion. Chairman Gatsas called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Alderman Hirschmann asked with the FY2000 budget and the FY2001 training dollars for the software, are there any training dollars in your budget or other budgets to do more training on this.

Ms. Prew answered this type of training is really not training. It needs to be put on by the Finance Department and HR. It is internal training.

Alderman O'Neil asked when is HTE scheduled to be up here next. I know the Mayor wrote a letter.

Ms. Prew answered there is no schedule.

Alderman O'Neil asked so if we brought them up it would cost money.

Ms. Prew asked if you requested the Vice President.

Alderman O'Neil answered yes.

Ms. Prew stated no.

Alderman O'Neil stated maybe they need to come up and get beat up by the best people who do that sitting here at this table.

Ms. Prew replied I would have to say that I think the Mayor did a very good job with the letter. They very much got the message. The response was immediate.

Alderman O'Neil asked that was the letter that was copies to two Vice Presidents of HTE.

Ms. Prew answered yes and there were immediately meetings there and you saw the results of that. We got a schedule. They have maintained that schedule.

Chairman Gatsas stated certainly Alderman O'Neil and I believe that the Mayor has sent them as harsh a letter as he could send and I will tell you that by April 15 if that cash register drawer problem isn't fixed, I will invite them up through a letter from this Committee and they will be thrashed very hard.

Ms. Prew replied you have to understand that the motor vehicle system is not part of HTE. It was never intended to be part of HTE. It is a separate system that was written in-house.

Chairman Gatsas stated obviously it is not compatible with HTE.

Ms. Prew replied it was never intended to be. It will make use of the equipment that is in the office. It will do that and it can activate the cash drawer. Motor vehicle registration is a unique application.

Chairman Gatsas responded than obviously what we are hearing are two different issues here. The issue is internal and has nothing to do with HTE.

Ms. Prew replied that is correct regarding the cash drawer.

Alderman O'Neil asked why isn't that report THE though. Then somebody has to sit down and take balances of whatever the activity was in a particular cash drawer and then put that information into the HTE system?

Ms. Porter answered our bookkeepers have to input the information on registration into Info. Systems or Finance.

Alderman O'Neil stated I am just curious and I don't know a lot about computers but there isn't a program out there that ties into the municipal reporting system automatically.

Ms. Porter replied HTE, I believe, does not allow us to add another program into it.

Ms. Prew asked what is she putting in.

Ms. Porter answered motor vehicle permits, motor vehicle titles, etc. probably about seven.

Ms. Prew stated so we are talking about inputting seven balances. It is possible to automate anything. It is a question of for seven balances is that worth the money it would cost to do it.

Alderman O'Neil replied I guess I go back to the statement I made earlier. I think that HTE promised us the world and didn't deliver.

Ms. Prew responded they never promised us motor vehicle.

Alderman O'Neil stated they promised us a lot of stuff that they didn't deliver on or were very slow delivering on.

Chairman Gatsas stated they charged us \$1.9 million and I don't think this problem should still be going on for three years for that amount of money. In general terms, for \$1.9 million these problems shouldn't have been going on since June of 1997.

Ms. Prew replied I won't argue with that.

Chairman Gatsas stated we could go to Quicken Books and we could probably get the same product.

Alderman Hirschmann stated before you end this discussion, there are two items in the management letter that we never even discussed. Item 7 we are supposed to be talking about a conflict of interest policy and Item 8 we are supposed to be talking about policy and procedure manuals.

Chairman Gatsas replied I was going to take that up today with Finance. He was supposed to get back to us. I think Mr. Clougherty was supposed to get back to us with some resolution on that about four weeks ago and that was at the full Board and you recommended it to my Committee. It was supposed to be done in a timely manner but I guess you need to put dates on things around here to get them done in a timely manner. We will leave it on the table and I will certainly ask that question tonight when I get into new business.

On motion of Alderman Thibault, duly seconded by Alderman Hirschmann, it was voted to put the item back on the table.

5. Communication from former Deputy City Clerk Bergeron submitting information regarding licensing procedures and police and fire staffing arrangements at selected civic centers in New England.

Alderman O'Neil moved to take this item off of the table. Alderman Hirschmann duly seconded the motion. Chairman Gatsas called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Hirschmann, it was voted to receive and file the item.

Alderman Pariseau stated I think the purpose of this correspondence from Mr. Bergeron was to determine...remember the argument we had about police coverage at Singer Field and that was the purpose of having him go out and find out how other people do it. We still haven't resolved it.

Alderman Thibault stated well that is the same thing that Alderman O'Neil was asking about the civic center.

Alderman Hirschmann stated the Civic Center Committee is addressing that too.

Alderman O'Neil stated the Civic Center Committee wanted to report back on services inside and outside the building. I happened to talk to Tom Clark about another issue yesterday and they were meeting on that I believe.

Alderman Hirschmann stated when I read Deputy Clerk Bergeron's notes about talking to Worcester or somewhere, one thing we are going to have to discuss in this Committee is every event that is at the civic center we are going to charge a license fee and we should determine a rate for the fee per event. \$100, \$150, \$300, whatever it is going to be. It is a revenue source for the City Clerk's Office.

Chairman Gatsas replied absolutely and I don't think it should be \$100.

Alderman Pariseau stated if you are talking about a 10,000 seat arena, it should at least be \$1,000.

Chairman Gatsas stated we get \$1,500 for one poker machine.

Alderman Hirschmann asked, Leo, do you have any ideas at all about that issue.

Clerk Bernier answered I will have to research it and see how other communities do it.

Alderman Hirschmann moved to have the City Clerk look into this issue and report back to the Committee. Alderman O'Neil duly seconded the motion. Chairman Gatsas called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Alderman O'Neil stated I don't know if any of you read *The Boston Globe* on Sunday, but there was a pretty good detailed thing on taxis and how other cities are doing it so I was going to ask the City Clerk to make copies and get it out to everybody.

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

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee