

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

December 19, 2000

5:00 PM

Chairman Gatsas called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Messrs: M. Normand, Deputy Solicitor Arnold, F. Thomas

TABLED ITEMS

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to remove Item 3 from the table.

Appeal of taxi license denial.

Alderman Pariseau moved to enter into non-public session under the provisions of RSA-91:A-3 paragraph 2(c). Alderman O'Neil duly seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

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

Non-public session ensued with Mr. Peryer, the operator, Committee members, Deputy Solicitor Arnold, Matt Normand and the Clerk present. On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to approve the taxi license application.

Alderman O'Neil stated there is a taxi issue that I want to discuss. Matt, how do things seem to be going and I may have mentioned this in our last meeting that I did a ride along with a legendary driver, Louie Applebaum and I will tell you having been with him I have some concerns about the partition, although I think in general it is the right way to go. Certainly with him, he carries on conversations with his passengers and I can tell you that there wasn't one person that he picked up from a bar...there was some Airport related stuff and some professional people taking the cab. My other concern is whether or not these charges are going to be

passed onto the driver and make it more expensive for them to drive the cars. I am just curious if you have any feedback on that and what you are hearing from the drivers out there.

Mr. Normand replied last week I talked to both companies and some of the drivers and first of all they claim that regarding the \$1 increase that they were granted, the customers have not complained about that. As far as the partition, they all say...well not all of them but some of them say that it is a little cramped. Not all of the cars are outfitted with them at this point. There is one car from each company that has done this. The owners still insist on going forward. Not only do they have to, but I think they are comfortable with it now. As you said, Mr. Applebaum and drivers like him who like to carry on conversations, maybe that will prohibit it but I think at this point when this issue first came up we were talking about safety and I think that has gone a long way towards having a safer vehicle. I have had some feedback from some passengers or fares in the City and most of them are comfortable with what we have done as far as the larger cars and...

Alderman O'Neil interjected every passenger he told them I was the taxi commissioner or something but he asked everyone about the fares and not one person complained about them. My concern is the passing of...help me out here, Matt.

Mr. Normand stated the shift fee that they have to pay to the company is going to go up. To this point...

Alderman O'Neil interjected now I understand that one of the companies has already done it.

Mr. Normand replied that is right, Simon Musat and Queen City Taxi. I think Louie drives for them.

Alderman O'Neil responded I don't think they had yet when I went out with Mr. Applebaum.

Mr. Normand stated they have gone up to, I think it is \$100 per shift from \$90 and I believe that City Cab at 151 Elm Street is still at \$90 as of last week.

Alderman O'Neil asked is there anything legally that we can do to regulate those types of things because they are squeezing more out of the drivers. I certainly recognize the high cost of fuel and when I was in Baltimore this summer they had posted per the order of the Aldermen or the City Council in Baltimore, a

temporary increase in fares to cover the increased fuel costs but I am worried about the little guy getting squeezed here. It is not a real glamorous job. The first \$90 or \$100 comes out of their pocket. I am just wondering if there is anything legally we can do to regulate that so that the owners of these companies don't keep squeezing the employees. They will claim well gas costs because we forced the bigger cars but I don't buy that.

Mr. Normand replied I know that our position in the office in the past has been that we haven't been able to get involved in those day-to-day operations of the business but certainly Tom is here and he may be able to answer.

Deputy Solicitor Arnold stated it is difficult to get involved in the dealings between the cab company and the driver. Nothing comes off the top of my head as to how we could approach that, but I can certainly take a look at it.

Alderman O'Neil replied it is nothing that is an immediate concern, but could we ask the Solicitor to take a look at it to see...I am not trying for us to get into a big regulatory agency but I hate to see that every time something changes they squeeze the driver.

Chairman Gatsas stated well I think we ought to probably just hold on to it and remember that we gave them the \$1 increase in fares. I don't think it should be a double dip.

Alderman O'Neil replied well that is what they did. They are getting the increase, plus they squeezed...and I believe it is both of them now and I don't know that actually but they squeezed the drivers for \$10 more a shift so there is more money going in their pockets. There is no question about it. We have some good drivers out there that...hopefully this doesn't force them out of the business because as I said it is not a real glamorous job.

Mr. Normand stated well certainly if you do 20 rides per shift, 10 of it is going to that increase and the other 10 is going in their pocket. It seems like a wash to me.

Alderman O'Neil replied if they do that.

4. Communication from Alderman Lopez requesting that the Board of Assessors provide information over the next 60 to 90 days on processes for updating assessment of City properties.
(Tabled 9/18/00 pending report from Assessors.)

This item remained on the table.

5. Communication from Alderman Hirschmann requesting the Board adopt a new policy mandating that before any construction project passes through the Finance Committee the Board is made aware (in writing) of any fiscal impacts to future budgets.

(Tabled 6/22/00)

On motion of Alderman Hirschmann, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to remove Item 5 from the table.

Alderman Hirschmann stated I like what Leo Bernier put together. It is something very easy and it is not constricting to anybody. I really wasn't looking for...the thing that Kevin put together is too much. There is too many line items. I think we just want a general cost estimate for the new expenses if they are going to put a building together.

Alderman O'Neil asked why haven't we done anything with this yet.

Alderman Hirschmann answered because we were waiting for them to report back to us. Kevin Clougherty made up a form and Leo made up a form.

Alderman O'Neil stated I think the saying Keep It Simple Stupid could be the motto of this place. If you are looking for a motion, Alderman, I will make it on the one done by Mr. Bernier.

Chairman Gatsas stated I think what you are looking at...the difference is that Leo has verbally expounded his and I think Kevin's is what you would see if you were actually doing the report. Now, I think Kevin's may be a little bit more in depth but it doesn't leave anything out to chance. If you look at some of the things in here that he has included, you may not see those in the general expense numbers. That is all I am saying. If you look at the restricted items and how that impacts it.

Alderman O'Neil asked, Mr. Chairman, can we put Mr. Thomas on the spot. I don't know if he has even had a chance to look at this so this may not be fair.

Mr. Thomas asked what are we talking about.

Alderman Pariseau answered we are looking at a cost projection worksheet.

Alderman Hirschmann asked do we want to use both forms.

Chairman Gatsas stated I think the problem is that Kevin has projected this out too many years. I think what we are looking for is the initial impact. I think that this at least gives you the items where somebody might say data processing, they need another 10 computers to make this work which is another \$60,000 and that is not spelled out in there. So, it is actually making someone put a number to something. I don't want to use both. I would rather use one. I think this one here really states what Leo is asking for. Leo is telling you to put this thing down on paper.

Alderman Hirschmann asked can Leo's be the cover sheet for it.

Chairman Gatsas answered yes I guess you could use it as an explanation. I don't have a problem with that.

Alderman Hirschmann stated, Frank, what my intention was is that anytime there is a new building being built and the example I gave was a new fire station, how many firefighters, etc. would be needed so that before we vote to build a new fire station the Chief would tell us how many firefighters are needed, how many captains, how many benefit packages, how many apparatus and machinery, maybe some overhead costs and put that on a projection sheet so that when we are doing the budget we can say okay we can afford that building or we can't afford the building or maybe we can afford 3/4 of the building. That was the intent.

Chairman Gatsas replied right so we are looking at a true cost instead of somebody saying it is \$1 million for the building and by the time it is up it is another \$500,000.

Mr. Thomas responded I support that notion. The reason being that over the years various things have been added to my operation and typically they were never funded properly afterwards. I see this to be of benefit to the departments by being able to identify some of these ongoing costs - not only for a fire station but for redoing Elm Street or building the Riverwalk. There are going to be long-term costs connected to these projects.

Alderman O'Neil asked, Frank, couldn't it have been used not only for capital stuff but for consolidations or stuff like that. For instance, when you took over...at one time Parks & Recreation picked up garbage in the parks and then it got transferred to you.

Mr. Thomas answered that is what was in the back of my mind. We picked up the trash collection in the parks and we received one junky old refuse packer and we received three additional employees, which were cut out of our budget the following year. That is why I support this notion. I think it is good and again the one thing that I have always preached is that if you are going to build something

like the Riverwalk or redo Elm Street, there is going to be ongoing maintenance. You just can't wash your hands and walk away from it. If a department head identified some of this stuff up front, it is certainly a basis for asking for additional money in the operating budget.

Alderman O'Neil asked could this type of form have been used when you took over PBS as well or were asked to consider taking over PBS.

Mr. Thomas answered fortunately, when we took over PBS I had the opportunity to reorganize and restructure it and I came into the HR Committee and the Board with some recommendations and as part of that consolidation, if you remember, Dick Houle had actually three people who were basically inspecting the custodian's work and writing up delinquency slips, which was non-productive. Through that consolidation and reorganization, I was able to take two of those three people and put them in areas where they would accomplish something. One was an HVAC technician. He is doing that type of work now. One was an electrician. He is doing that type of work. To answer your question in a nutshell, yes, if a consolidation takes place hopefully somewhere in the process you can identify things along that line to show that there is either savings or costs connected with them.

Alderman Hirschmann asked should we...I don't know if the City does this but should we issue this a form number. Do you give it a name or a number so that people can identify this as an instrument?

Chairman Gatsas stated we can call it the CIP Cost Projection Worksheet.

Alderman O'Neil replied but it might not necessarily be CIP.

Mr. Thomas stated I haven't reviewed this stuff but the one thing I would try to keep in mind is to try and keep it as simple as possible. First of all, I think you will run into less opposition from the department heads and I think you will get a better product by keeping it easy.

Alderman Hirschmann asked so we will call it the Impact Worksheet.

Chairman Gatsas asked do we have consensus from the Committee that they would like to use the two forms together.

The Committee members answered yes.

On motion of Alderman Hirschmann, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to recommend that both forms be utilized.

Chairman Gatsas asked does CIP have to see this.

The Clerk answered it will go on the January 2 Board meeting as a report from the Committee on Administration.

Chairman Gatsas requested the Clerk to send the forms to all department heads before the next Board meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk