

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

April 14, 2009

5:00 PM

Chairman O'Neil called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen O'Neil, Garrity, Osborne, Pinard, Murphy

Messrs.: M. Salomone-Abood, T. Clougherty, K. Kincaid, K. Sheppard,
J. Angell

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Communication from Chuck DePrima, Acting Director of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Department, requesting that the Fair permit fee be waived for the City's Independence Day Celebration.

On motion of Alderman Osborne, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to approve the request to waive the Fair permit fee for the City's Independence Day Celebration.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 4 of the agenda:

4. Communication from Mike Vecchiarelli, Program Director of SCA NH Conservation Corps, requesting that the Fair permit fee be waived for the annual Manchester Earth Day Celebration.

On motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to approve the request to waive the Fair permit fee for the annual Manchester Earth Day Celebration.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. Communication from Mindy Salamone-Abood, Purchasing Agent, submitting a Stationery Savings Report as requested by the Committee.

Ms. Mindy Salomone-Abood, Purchasing Agent, stated good evening. You have my report in front of you although I notice that I made a very bad error right off. I transposed the two numbers. If you look under the letterhead savings, where it says "by departments producing their own letterhead cost per page" it is \$.04, which would bring it to \$660 with a total savings of \$2,145.

Chairman O'Neil replied that is certainly an easy fix.

Ms. Abood responded yes and it makes the numbers look a little bit better.

Chairman O'Neil asked is there anything else Mindy?

Ms. Abood answered no. All of the numbers are there. The only other number that would change would be the total annual savings which would go from \$12,256 instead of the two \$11,000 numbers that are there.

Alderman Pinard stated on the business cards you show that you are saving \$2.00+. Am I reading that correct? \$30.49 for a one color card and \$37.11 for a two color...oh that is the price, I'm sorry.

Ms. Abood replied those are the prices we are paying under the contract.

Alderman Pinard asked so in one month you saved the City \$2,000 or am I reading this wrong?

Ms. Abood answered no that is for the copy paper and that is for a year.

Alderman Pinard asked in a day's time what actually do you do in purchasing? Now I brought up the point last week about buying the automobiles and trucks and everything else. Do you get involved in that?

Ms. Abood answered yes. Our division, the Purchasing Division, actually takes care of all of the MER funds so as far as the Highway Department goes. We bid out all of those products and again we manage the MER funds. As far as other departments are concerned, they usually come through us for bidding or for final purchase of their vehicles.

Alderman Pinard stated I would like to know in regards to vehicles what companies we are doing business with. I think that is something we should know because we are trying to hold the line as everybody is. If you could do that at the next meeting...Tim can you answer that?

Ms. Abood asked would you like the results of the bid that we sent out?

Alderman Pinard answered yes. I think that the way the automobile industry is we might be able to do some good bargaining. I think this is the time that a Purchasing Agent can bargain with these people.

Chairman O'Neil stated first I know that Mindy has posted just about all of the vehicle purchases – Fire and Highway. I am not sure that there were any others involved recently but those are all on...every specific item that was bid is on line from a grader, the bids you received for graders to front-end loaders, etc. That is all online. You can go on the website and look at that. Tim, did you have something to add to the discussion?

Mr. Timothy Clougherty, Deputy Public Works Director, replied just to expand on Mindy's answer to Alderman Pinard's question, we have bid out a substantial amount of equipment and rather than get back to the Committee I can provide you with some answers now as to what types of vehicles we are purchasing if that pleases the Committee.

Chairman O'Neil asked is that what you are looking for Alderman Pinard – the type of vehicles?

Alderman Pinard responded yes. Can you deal directly with GMC for instance or do you have to go through a dealership?

Mr. Clougherty replied we advertise publicly and we usually deal with their dealerships. They are the ones who respond to our legal notices.

Alderman Pinard asked have you ever tried to see if you could deal directly with Ford or GMC or Chevrolet? Maybe you should try just for the fun of it. That is why I am bringing this up.

Alderman Murphy asked can you tell me the savings that you anticipate in your report if that is reflected in the budget submissions by the departments right now or no?

Ms. Abood answered I would doubt it.

Chairman O'Neil asked Mindy if you had to put a percentage number to it are we receiving 100% cooperation from the departments? I know you have always said that you have been attempting to work with them but is there anything the Committee needs to do to reinforce our support of the Coordinated Purchasing Program in the City?

Ms. Abood answered no. I would say we are on top of it and people who we were having issues with we have taken care of. I haven't seen any lack of cooperation.

Alderman Lopez asked what do we do to cross-check with the departments? Do we physically go and check what they are doing versus what you are doing for them?

Ms. Abood asked as far as purchasing?

Alderman Lopez answered yes.

Ms. Abood stated I would think the easiest thing would be to get Finance involved and find out where they are making payments.

Alderman Lopez responded that is what I am talking about. You have savings here but I know that some departments are doing things by themselves on their computer and for example I think it was a very good question that Alderman Murphy asked. If you put \$4,000 in their budget for supplies and you are saving them money they can move that money around. Do you follow what I am saying?

Ms. Abood answered yes.

Alderman Lopez stated I was wondering if there was a cross-check here and apparently there is not so that's okay. That is just a comment.

Chairman O'Neil stated I suppose that is a question, Alderman Lopez, for every department when they come before us. I think the intent of the Coordinated Purchasing Program has been shown to be effective. Mindy has done a great job leading it. It was to find like items in departments. We have been doing that successfully. I think the program is serving the citizens of this City well.

Ms. Abood stated there is actually one more thing that I would like to comment on. Next month we would like to present a comprehensive summary of the energy purchasing and the natural gas purchasing that we have, in fact, brought contracts in for.

On motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Murphy, it was voted to accept the report.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 6 of the agenda:

6. Communication from the Manchester taxi industry requesting an increase of current taxi rates.

Chairman O'Neil stated Kevin, as you are aware when we had passed the temporary increase in support of the drivers during the period of high gas prices we had to sunset that. It actually went on a little longer than we had intended but during those discussions at the end the drivers had asked us to take a look at the rates. They hadn't been adjusted in some time. Do you have a recommendation for the Committee or some direction you are looking for from the Committee?

Mr. Kevin Kincaid responded yes, Sir. We would like to explore this further to see what a reasonable rate increase would be for them. I would like to work with the drivers and the companies and do some more research on what the going rates are in the area.

Chairman O'Neil asked is that something you think you can reasonably do in a month?

Mr. Kincaid answered yes, Sir.

On motion of Alderman Osborne, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to have Mr. Kincaid do some more research and come back to the Committee with a recommendation.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 7 of the agenda:

7. Communication from Kevin Sheppard, Public Works Director, requesting an amendment to Section 97.34(E) of the Code of Ordinances which addresses portable signage placed within the City's right-of-way.

Mr. Kevin Sheppard, Public Works Director, stated this is an item that the Board about a year ago wanted to move forward with allowing the portable sign boards within the right-of-ways as long as they had some type of permit from the City. The way the original ordinance was written, I guess there was an issue with the Zoning Ordinance; it conflicted with the Zoning Ordinance. We worked with the City Solicitor's Office to rewrite that ordinance. That is attached to your agenda. Originally it was written that the enforcement or the permitting of this would be under the Highway Department. We worked with the City Clerk's Office as well. Mr. Kincaid works with sign boards in the downtown area so the City Clerk's Office and we agree that it is probably best to put the whole program city-wide under the City Clerk's Office. That is what this proposed ordinance does.

Chairman O'Neil asked so that is the recommendation from Public Works as well as the City Clerk?

Mr. Kincaid answered yes, Sir.

Chairman O'Neil stated I have a question for the Clerk. Under normal circumstances are we referring it to the full Board who in turn would have to refer it to Bills on Second Reading?

Acting City Clerk Matt Normand answered that is correct.

On motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Osborne, it was voted to refer the ordinance amendment to the full Board.

TABLED ITEMS

14. Discussion relating to the potential merger of the Planning and Community Development Department and the Building Department.
(Note: Referred by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on 11/12/08. Proposal and updated information previously forwarded to the Mayor and all Aldermen under separate cover. Tabled 12/15/08 review of grades and responsibilities of positions to come from Human Resources. HR approved 1/22/09. Approved by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on 2/03/09.)

On motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Osborne it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Alderman Garrity moved to receive and file this item. Alderman Osborne duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

11. Communication from Alderman Lopez requesting reorganization of the Assessors Office.
(Note: Referred by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on 11/12/08. Response from the Board of Assessors attached. Tabled 03/16/09.)

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Murphy, it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Alderman Pinard stated I feel that the Assessors are doing a good job and I don't see the need to reorganize the office.

Alderman Pinard moved to receive and file the communication. Alderman Garrity duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

9. Communication from Jennie Angell, Director of Information Systems, submitting a cell phone policy for the Information Systems Department.
(Tabled 03/16/09)

On motion of Alderman Osborne, duly seconded by Alderman Garrity, it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Ms. Jennie Angell, Director of Information Systems, stated what this is is I put together a draft policy for cell phones within my office. First I want you to know that your Committee meetings haven't been really regular so I put this together and sent it on December 4, which was quite awhile ago. I have temporarily implemented this policy within our office but I am not obligated...we don't have any fixed contracts so I could get out of it if I have to. What we have is this is the cell phone policy that applies to salaried only employees. We do have a need for employees to have what is referred to as data service on their cell phones. We have a lot of equipment including Police and Fire computer dispatch emergency services and the equipment that we have to send out electronic e-mail alerts when there are issues going on with the network. We probably get about 15 of these alerts a day. These alerts are set up so they automatically go out to the cell phones of employees who would be tasked with making sure that the equipment and the services that we provide stay up and running. The cost of putting data service on a cell phone is about \$30 per month. The employees in the office do not want to be carrying around two cell phones – their own personal phone and a City phone because it is just not convenient for them. So what we came up was the situation that is the cheapest scenario for the City where the employees will be paying for the base price of cell service so they can use it for their personal cell phone and the City will be paying the \$30/month for the data service, which is what I need for them to have. So it is actually cheaper for the City than if they were providing the full cell phone that the employee could only use for City business. It is kind of like a cost sharing between the employee and the City because the City gets the service they need to keep the systems up and running. So that is what I implemented. Knowing that services change and the cost structure changes very quickly on cell phone service I wrote the policy up that we revisit it once a year to make sure it is still appropriate. Maybe we will need to change it. Over the next few years I think things will be changing quite a bit with mobile service so this will be something we want to watch.

Alderman Osborne moved to approve the policy. Alderman Pinard duly seconded the motion.

Chairman O'Neil asked if we are adopting this, this is City-wide correct?

Ms. Angell answered no this is a policy for Information Systems.

Chairman O'Neil stated you do reference the departments in your letter though. I guess I was a little unclear. You are talking exclusively about your department in support of other departments?

Ms. Angell answered yes.

Chairman O'Neil asked how many people are affected by this?

Ms. Angell answered I have six salaried employees and it depends on what they do and whether we decide it is something that we need for them to have.

Alderman Garrity stated I am going to oppose this at this time but I would encourage you to give me a call and convince me why they need to have this service. You don't have to do it tonight. I am going to oppose it tonight but if you call and convince me I will approve it at the full Board.

Chairman O'Neil called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Garrity being duly recorded in opposition.

8. Recommendation from Matthew Normand, Acting City Clerk, regarding a policy for street closures and license events.
(Tabled 03/16/09)

This item remained on the table.

10. Communication from the Board of Assessors updating the Committee on the changes in the Disability Exemption Law.
(Tabled 03/16/09)

This item remained on the table.

12. Communication from Thomas Clark, City Solicitor, regarding a Naming Rights Policy.
(Note: Referred by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on 2/3/09. Tabled 03/16/09.)

This item remained on the table.

13. Communication from Barbara Potvin, New England Sampler, requesting the City hold a public forum to discuss the process of closing off city streets and the impact that these closings have on local small businesses as well as the benefits drawn by the City of Manchester and its local citizens.
(Note: Referred by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on 10/21/08. Tabled 11/24/08 with recommendation to be submitted by staff; proposed policy attached - See item #8.)

This item remained on the table.

Chairman O'Neil stated Alderman Lopez you wanted to speak on item 11. We will give you the courtesy.

Alderman Lopez stated I am very surprised that the Alderman didn't tell me he was going to receive and file this for the simple reason that at the last Committee meeting it was requested and the record will show that it was requested that numbers come back before this Committee before a decision was made. We have an opportunity to save \$80,000 in that department. I am not questioning the Committee or any Alderman that might not go along with having three assessors but I think it needs its fair discussion just like we would do with any other department. Like I said we were just following the minutes of the last meeting to come back with numbers and show why it is better to have three assessors versus going to having two part-time. You have to remember that this department has increased so much with three assessors, an appraiser and another commercial appraiser over the last few years. This is just an opportunity to save \$80,000 and I think that out of courtesy the Alderman should have at least told me he was going to receive and file this, which was referred by the full Board.

Alderman Osborne asked who made that motion?

Alderman Pinard responded I did.

Chairman O'Neil stated Alderman Pinard did speak to me this evening coming in that he intended to bring it up and that he had concerns. I don't know if the whole Committee has had discussions with the assessors. I have spoken to them. I have spoken with Dave on numerous occasions about the pros and cons of it. I was prepared at some point whether it was brought up tonight or not and I don't want to speak for the other Aldermen. Alderman Garrity mentioned that he has had some background information on it. I don't know if other Aldermen want to speak about the issue.

Alderman Osborne stated Alderman Lopez evidently is not satisfied with it all yet. Is that it? You are waiting for what now – figures?

Alderman Lopez responded at the last Committee meeting it was recommended to the Chairman of the Assessors to bring back the numbers as to why it is better to have three assessors. That is \$250,000 that we are talking about and I think it deserves to be looked into. In the end, if the Aldermen decide that they want three assessors in the City then that is the vote and I understand it but I believe some of the information has not come to the Committee here even though some have preconceived ideas about three assessors and I respect that. But there is an opportunity to save \$80,000. That is what I am looking at. There is nothing being done for example in construction in the City of Manchester and if you understand the procedures of the cards and the revaluations they are all up-to-date. It is only the permits. If you get a permit then the appraiser goes and looks at it. That type of discussion has to be done before we...once we do it we have an opportunity and it is one of our policies to review when people leave. This is an opportunity that we could review. In the end if you want three assessors that is fine. That is \$250,000. Whether there is three assessors and two other appraisers, we have to take a look at this. It is an opportunity for us to revise things.

Alderman Osborne asked so the \$80,000 is the difference between a couple of part-time assessors and one full-time assessor versus three full-time?

Alderman Lopez answered the \$80,000 is in the assessor's position. For example, going into FY2010 there is \$80,000 for a new assessor. Now is that the direction we want to go in? That is what you have to analyze. You have a commercial appraiser. You have a residential appraiser. You have two assessors and you have other people down there. The assessors are appraisers at the same time and we have to understand that the City assessors...the only time they act as City assessors is when they do an abatement.

Alderman Osborne asked how long will we be saving this \$80,000, an eternity or a couple of years?

Alderman Lopez answered it could be a long time. You have a number of people versus the system.

Alderman Osborne asked so all we are going to save is \$80,000 if we don't keep the three assessors and go with what you are saying? Will it just be an \$80,000 difference?

Alderman Lopez answered no it is an \$85,000 salary and then the benefits so you are probably looking at \$115,000 or \$120,000 when you talk about benefits.

Alderman Garrity stated I have a suggestion out of courtesy to Alderman Lopez. I don't have a response in writing from the Assessors. If you would allow that for the next meeting I guess we could talk about it again.

Chairman O'Neil responded I think that is a great idea. Alderman Lopez, some of these things got tabled because we didn't have enough time at our last meeting. So I hope you understand that there was no disrespect to you on that. If we could get Alderman Pinard and Alderman Osborne to rescind their motion as a courtesy...I don't believe based on my discussions with you although it has been limited in my discussions with Assessors that it is going to change my mind but as a courtesy I am willing to allow that. Alderman Pinard as a courtesy...being up front it is not going to change my mind and it may not change your mind but as a courtesy to one of our colleagues can you rescind your motion?

Alderman Pinard stated I can see the savings maybe but we have two individuals right now with the time the way it is I can't see moving anything. Nothing. I can see where Alderman Lopez is coming from but this is not the time to make changes. As a courtesy to Dave Cornell and Alderman Lopez, as long as we can have another discussion I will rescind my vote.

Chairman O'Neil stated well the motion was receive and file so we can just revisit the issue again at our next meeting and ask the Assessors for a written response. What is easier? Should he rescind his vote?

Acting City Clerk Normand replied whatever is easier. If you want to rescind it you can bring it back...

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Osborne, it was voted to rescind the previous action on item 11 of the agenda.

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Garrity, it was voted to place item 11 back on the table with the understanding that if Alderman Lopez has any updated information it will be brought to the Committee and that Assessor Cornell provide a written response to the Committee.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Murphy, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee