

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

January 19, 2010

6:00 PM

Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Lopez, DeVries, O'Neil, Corriveau
Mayor Gatsas

Absent: Alderman Osborne

Messr: J. Angell

Chairman Lopez addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Communication from Steven Hermans, Attorney, submitting 1850 Associates Limited Partnership Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive Application.
(Note: Referred by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on December 15, 2009. A summary of findings submitted by Jay Minkarah, Economic Development Director, is attached.)

Chairman Lopez stated as the members are well aware, this was referred to our Committee at the last Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting. At this time, I will ask the Mayor if he would like to make some comments.

Mayor Gatsas stated thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good evening members of the Committee. I have been talking with representatives from the Pandora Building over the last two weeks and have attempted to come up with an understanding of what we can do going forward. We have come to an agreement with the assessed value going forward for a five year period, if the Board so chooses, that would be \$5 million. It would be a fixed amount for five years and then it would go to 100% of the evaluation.

Alderman O'Neil asked Your Honor, do you have the proper wording or action that might be required of us?

Mayor Gatsas replied I think the action would be that we would move forward with the assessed value of \$5 million over a five year period, starting in April of 2010 and going to April of 2011 and for four years thereafter. The property would be assessed at its full value at that time. It would not have any intent, Alderman...there have been discussions about a garage being built there. That would be over and above that \$5 million. There is also the evaluation for the lot that the City sold them so it would be \$5 million plus those two figures as they go forward.

Alderman O'Neil asked Matt, did you get that motion?

City Clerk Matt Normand replied yes, but I didn't understand the last two figures that the Mayor is referring to.

Mayor Gatsas stated the last two figures would not be part of the motion. I was giving Alderman O'Neil some information along with the rest of the members. The additional funds that were paid for the two lots and the garage are not inclusive in that piece.

Alderman O'Neil moved that the Committee would move forward with the assessed evaluation of \$5 million over a five year period, starting in April of 2010 and going to April of 2011 and for four years thereafter. The property would be assessed at its full evaluation at that time. The motion was duly seconded by Alderman DeVries.

Alderman DeVries asked is it your understanding that with the application that they would like to have those additional properties be part of this?

Mayor Gatsas replied no. I want to make sure that there is an understanding that if they do build garages that that isn't part of the \$5 million. My understanding is that they are looking very seriously to move forward with those two projects.

Alderman DeVries asked it is your understanding that this will in no way hamper the project, which is an important one for a very important building?

Mayor Gatsas replied with the negotiations we have had, I think they can move forward and be very content with the situation that they are in.

Chairman Lopez called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion passed.

Chairman Lopez addressed item 4 of the agenda:

4. Communication from Jennie Angell, Information Services Director, introducing the Information Systems Department to the Committee.

Ms. Jennie Angell, Information Services Director, stated I wanted to take this opportunity to briefly go through who we are and what we do. You are my Committee that I go to so I wanted to give you some background. We have one new Alderman. Sometimes I think a little information can be helpful. As you know, my name is Jennie Angell. I am the department head. I was appointed the interim director in January of 2007 and was made permanent in December of 2007 so I have been in this position for two years. There is an Ordinance in the procurement code where all computerized and technological purchases come through my department. We either do the actual purchasing or departments get a waiver. The system has worked well because we have a standardized network. We do a lot of resource sharing. We know exactly what is out in all the departments. If there are facilities or equipment that is no longer needed in one department we can reallocate it to another department. We currently have 15 employees in the department that you can see from one chart that I passed out today. That is down from 19 in 2006. I also want to bring to your attention that both Water and Library have eliminated their tech positions and we took over their duties in that area. In 2006 there were 25 tech employees and right now we have 19. I also provided a graph to give you an idea of the funding that we have. In 2006 we had a budget of \$1.8 million and the proposed for next year is \$1.4 million. The budgeting is tight. We would like to have more money, but we are managing the budgets that we have and we have been able to keep things moving.

Chairman Lopez stated very good.

Ms. Angell stated the last graph is technology money. You will see this in the CIP process. This is for technology replacement funding. I'll go through what we are responsible for. This is the funding that is put aside for us to maintain and upgrade existing systems. We had been at a level of \$250,000, which was marginal, but in the last two years we have gotten less than \$150,000. This will be discussed more during CIP. I do want to talk briefly about what we are responsible for. That is the summary of department responsibilities. I'm not going to read all of this, but some of the highlights include the Police and Fire computerized dispatch systems, the City's website and GIS.

Chairman Lopez stated you will be coming before the full Board. Could you save that for the full Board when you come with your budget?

Ms. Angell replied yes.

Chairman Lopez stated the rest of the new Aldermen will be here.

Ms. Angell asked what we are responsible for?

Chairman Lopez replied yes and I think it will help them in understanding the budget if that is okay with you.

Ms. Angell asked would you like some of these parts also?

Chairman Lopez replied yes, that's fine. I think it might help all the new Aldermen. The technology is going to go into the CIP Committee, but if it is okay with you, for time. Is there anything else you want to go over with us?

Ms. Angell replied not really, other than this is the summary and you can read it. It is a comprehensive list of applications. I don't need to go down them, but I was trying to give you a heads up of some buzz words because you are going to hear HTE and ask what it is. It is on the list of applications and it lists what they are.

Chairman Lopez stated I think when you come before us with your budget, all 14 Aldermen will be here, including the seven new Aldermen. Otherwise, they are going to keep asking you questions and I think it would be an appropriate way to lead into your budget for 2011.

Ms. Angell stated I can do that.

Alderman Corriveau stated as one of the new Board members who at least tries to be a little tech savvy, could you explain the process of how often the City website gets updated? I noticed that the new re-launch, which I think has helped a lot, is a hot button that makes it easier to find a department or pay a bill. How often does the department reevaluate? I think it is very important that, with the age we are in now, accessibility to City government is done more and more through things like the internet. How often does staff look at things like accessibility issues, where visitors are going on the webpage and how to best direct them there?

Ms. Angell replied that is a continuous process. It gets updated daily. We are a resource for departments. We help design the pages, but the departments maintain the content themselves. We did do a homepage revamp with the new administration. We're also in the process, which is now pretty much done, of merging Planning with Building so we redid how that is working. We're in the process of redoing how Parks is presented. Now there is a lot of information on Parks and they have been working on that for quite a while. We also have a project

that we are working on to provide more options for bill paying. During the last administration, the Board approved security training that we need to do for credit cards. Finance is going to be going out to bid for credit cards. This is to take more credit cards, both at the counter and on the website. It is a continuous process. Any ideas or thoughts that you may have, feel free to send them to me because we are always moving forward, changing and trying to improve. Websites are not static.

Alderman DeVries stated I don't know if you want to get into this tonight. It might be more helpful to put some of the hot button issues or problems on paper for the new Aldermen to see. For myself, I'm just coming back onto this Committee. I would like to see some of the difficulties you had bringing some of the functions online like credit card issues. Tax dollars can't be used for the changes. Some of the background for the issues that may still be there for you. I think there were other problems with keeping track of some of the overdue bills. We also ask the same questions that if someone owes a bill to the City in one department why don't all the other departments automatically know. I think that is something that comes up at Accounts.

Ms. Angell asked do you want me to bring all that up at tomorrow night's meeting?

Alderman DeVries replied no. I'm thinking that it might be background for these Committee members if you have enough data of something that is holding you back or is an issue or a reason why things don't happen. I would like some background on paper so that might save those questions. It would serve as an update for members like myself who haven't heard those answers over the last two years.

Ms. Angell stated just so you know, one of the ones that you alluded to is the credit card, the fees and who pays those. Finance is going to be going out to bid and from that we'll be looking at fees to see what our options are and we'll be bringing that back to this Committee and then to the full Board. We don't know what they are yet.

Alderman DeVries stated it has moved a bit in the past two years, but not a lot.

Ms. Angell stated it has moved and when you approve the security policies it will move. Those are still out there.

Alderman DeVries stated I'm just suggesting the background on the issue because it might help.

Alderman O'Neil stated number one, I want to thank Jennie. I was chair of the Committee for four years so I want to thank her and her staff. They don't have as many as they once did, but they are still doing a great job for us so I want to thank you. Regarding the new age and new Aldermen, I had the pleasure last week of sitting next to Alderman Corriveau and for the first time in my experience, I saw someone taking notes on his laptop as the budget presentation was going on. I cannot say on that end of the table that Alderman Porter, Pinard or I ever did that. We are in the new age and I appreciate someone bringing that approach to the BMA. Thank you, Alderman Corriveau.

Alderman Corriveau asked how many City employees have laptops? I don't know if you provide things like blackberrys or any mobile technology devices that allow City employees to remain in communication with their departments in City hall.

Ms. Angell replied I don't have the breakdown of laptops with me. We have about 1,000 PCs and laptops. I can get you those numbers. I can get you the numbers of the blackberrys that have been configured to talk formally with our blackberry server, but not all phones are. Some department heads are paying for their own phones so I don't have all that information because phones are one thing that has not come under our control.

Alderman Corriveau asked does Information Systems or Finance handle purchasing of those items? You do? Have you noticed in the last year or so a demand from departments or City employees for more connectivity, especially people on the road?

Ms. Angell replied we don't have a huge mobile force, but we do have inspectors in the Health Department, Building, and Highway. I have presented, for several years in a row, requests for systems that would allow them to be mobile and give them the connectivity that they would need to be able to do that out in the field without having to come into the office. I have not been successful in convincing the Board that it is worth spending money on.

Alderman Corriveau asked would all that come out of the technology replacement fund?

Ms. Angell replied no, but some of it might. When we have money and we are replacing someone's desktop we don't automatically give them a PC. We go in and look at what they are doing and if it makes sense to give them a laptop with a docking station we try to do that. We have done that with a number of department heads who take their stuff back and forth. Building for instance, for several years in a row we have been trying to get...we have put these projects in place that we are trying to do. There is a CIP request for this year to give them the mobile

connectivity. There are some things out there now with cell phones and GPS coordinate systems available where the employee can punch a time clock on their cell phone and you know where they are and where they started and these are some of the things we think would be appropriate for the City to help save some staff time which equates to money. It has been a tough sell for the past few years, but I'm sure you will be leading the charge.

Alderman Corriveau asked does the department deal with a number of different telecom companies, for example Cisco, Verizon, or Fairpoint?

Ms. Angell replied yes, we have Fairpoint, Segtel, and Choice One. Some of the departments use Sprint some use Verizon Wireless. The mobile provider that you select should really depend on where you are going to be.

Alderman Corriveau asked have we ever looked at whether we can get cheaper rates by using a central company?

Ms. Angell replied that has come up. I don't believe it has been done for a while. The plans change. It is something that needs to be looked at every six months to a year because what is out there changes. There is no one size fits all because depending on what you are doing and where you travel and if you are someone who needs to be on call 24 hours a day it also includes where you travel on weekends. There are places where Verizon works well and where Sprint works well. One size doesn't work for everyone, but it might be something that would be worthwhile. Most of the purchasing is done off of GSA contracts so the pricing is pretty aggressive. I'm not saying we couldn't get better pricing, but we get much better pricing than a general consumer would get.

Alderman O'Neil stated Jennie is absolutely right. She has presented this to the Board for many years. She mentioned Building specifically. I think we figured out at one point that we might handle the same piece of paper four or five times. It has strictly come down to, not her making the Board aware of it, but funds available to carry out these projects. We probably can do a lot better, but it is going to take investment of some funds to do it. In the last year or two they haven't been there. That is the bottom line.

Ms. Angell stated we keep trying.

Alderman O'Neil stated to her credit, she keeps bringing these items before the Board which is the right things to do.

Chairman Lopez stated thank you very much, Jennie. We have tabled items, but I would like to discuss those at the next Administration meeting to either receive and file or get rid of them.

TABLED ITEMS

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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 recommendation to be submitted by staff)

This item remained on the table.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee