

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

November 1, 2010

5:45 PM

Chairman O'Neil called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen O'Neil, Ludwig, Shea, Craig, Greazzo

Messrs: T. Clougherty, T. Arnold, T. Soucy, J. Hoebecke

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Communication from Dennis Anctil, Design Engineer, submitting a draft agreement between the City and the NH Department of Transportation for funding for the Gaslight District project.

(Note: Referred by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on October 5, 2010.)

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Greazzo, it was voted to discuss this item.

Chairman O'Neil asked Alderman Shea, are you looking for someone to speak on this item? Tim Clougherty is here. Would you like Tim or someone else?

Alderman Shea replied he is fine. Tim, could you give us a little progress on this, where the money came from and was it an earmark or what?

Mr. Timothy Clougherty, Facilities Division Director, replied I don't think I'm going to get into how the money comes to fruition, but it is a grant from the Federal government.

Alderman Shea asked that was through the local congressional person?

Mr. Clougherty replied I believe that was part of the motivation and the funds coming to Manchester.

Alderman Shea stated Tim, would you explain a little bit about where it is now so that we can get some idea of where this particular project is. Has it started yet? Is there some kind of planning going on?

Mr. Clougherty replied the project hasn't started yet from a construction perspective. This is a grant to get the project moving along, the Gaslight District just south of the Verizon Wireless Arena on the west side of Elm Street. There are some pretty significant capital improvements that would be made to that corridor as well as the area to the west of Elm Street. This would get that project started.

Alderman Shea asked what would be entailed in getting the project started, for the general public? There's a lot of money involved here, \$1 million almost.

Mr. Clougherty replied there are general streetscape improvements that would be made, improvements to the sidewalk. There are also contemplated some improvements to the infrastructure. There has been talk about utilities going underground or remaining as they are, and general betterment of that area as it is currently not susceptible to betterment or economic development.

Alderman Shea asked merchants who are interested in improving their properties or in purchasing, is there any money set aside for that or is that just the money that is set aside, just for what you've described, sort of infrastructure improvements?

Mr. Clougherty replied I don't know the answer to that specifically, Alderman. I could certainly look into that and get back to you. I haven't heard that that was part of the program, but we can certainly look into that and I could get back to you.

Alderman Shea stated thanks a lot.

Alderman Craig stated I was wondering if we could hear from the City Solicitor. It looks like this is coming before us to the indemnification clause, and I was just curious as to whether this is different than what we typically see or is it consistent.

Mr. Thomas Arnold, Deputy City Solicitor, responded I don't believe it is different from what you usually see. It's just that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen is the only body in the City that has authority to indemnify other parties so we require it to come here for approval.

Alderman Craig asked so it is consistent with what we typically see?

Mr. Arnold replied I guess what I would say is there is nothing very unusual about it. These types of indemnity agreements differ somewhat, but it's within the realm of the normal ones that we usually see, yes.

Chairman O'Neil stated we're accepting the agreement, and if I understood the letter from Dennis, Tim, there will be a further presentation, things will keep moving and you will be making a presentation to the CIP Committee at a later date. You probably said that to Alderman Shea.

Mr. Clougherty replied that's correct.

Alderman Shea moved to approve this item. Alderman Craig duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 4 of the agenda:

4. Communication from James Burkush, Fire Chief, informing the Committee that five grant requests previously submitted to the State by the Fire Department have been approved.

(Note: Provided for informational purposes only; no action required)

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

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. Communication from James Burkush, Fire Chief, requesting permission to accept funds in the amount of \$178,976 to support the Radiological Emergency Response Plan (RERP).

Alderman Shea moved to accept the communication. Alderman Ludwig duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 6 of the agenda:

6. Communication from Leon LaFreniere, Director of Planning & Community Development, on behalf of the Police Department, requesting approval to accept grant funds in the amount of \$153,007 from the United States Department of Homeland Security to purchase equipment for buffer zone protection. [Police-new funds]

Alderman Shea moved to accept the communication. Alderman Craig duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 7 of the agenda:

7. Communication from Sam Maranto, CIP Manager, on behalf of the Airport, requesting approval to accept grant funds in the amount of \$310,000 from the State to be used towards the financing of the MAA Property Acquisition Project. [Airport-new funds]

Alderman Ludwig moved to accept the communication. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 8 of the agenda:

8. Communication from Sam Maranto, CIP Manager, on behalf of the Highway Department, requesting approval to accept funds in the amount of \$5,886 to be added to the Infrastructure ADA Access Improvements Project. [Highway-budgeted funds]

Alderman Shea moved to accept the communication. Alderman Craig duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 9 of the agenda:

9. Communication from Leon LaFreniere, Director of Planning & Community Development, on behalf of the Health Department, requesting approval to accept grant funds in the amount of \$141,988 from the Department of Health and Human Services to be used towards the Homeless Healthcare Project. [Health-new funds]

Alderman Shea moved to accept the communication. Alderman Craig duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 10 of the agenda:

10. Communication from Leon LaFreniere, Director of Planning & Community Development, on behalf of the Health Department, requesting approval to accept grant funds in the amount of \$8,275 from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for planning activities associated with the Safe Routes to Schools Project at Weston School. [Health-new funds]

Alderman Shea moved to accept the communication. Alderman Ludwig duly seconded the motion.

Chairman O'Neil stated items 10 and 11 look the same.

Mr. Timothy Soucy, Public Health Director, stated let me first introduce Jaime Hoebecke. Jaime is a Senior Public Health Specialist with the Health Department who manages the Safe Routes to Schools Program. She will be glad to answer questions you have.

Alderman Shea asked the type of program that you're going to start, is that children walking to school and also the routes they're taking? Is this a program that if it were successful, could be incorporated into other schools that have walkers that obviously would benefit by any research? Could you explain a little bit about it along with what I've said, or in addition to that, so that we have a grasp on what this program is really going to do?

Ms. Jaime Hoebecke, Senior Public Health Specialist, replied basically Safe Routes to Schools is a national program to encourage kids to walk to and from school. The funding is used to support infrastructure changes like sidewalk improvements, lighting, crosswalks, and ADA ramps, things of that nature to support safe walking to and from school. As a part of the program, they also

include encouragement activities to support group activities, like meetings at parks and students would come together to actively walk to school. It would also provide pedestrian education and bike education for the students but also for the families. So there are some family education nights built into this program as well. This program actually already runs at Wilson Elementary School, and we've based the Weston Elementary School model on that program, so it definitely is a program that could be replicated in other schools within the community.

Alderman Shea stated children now aren't transported unless they live within 1.4 miles or 1.2 miles. Would you actually be working with the parents? Today I live near Jewett School and the cars are lined up. There is a traffic jam around Hallsville even though kids aren't transported by bus. What you're indicating is that it would be a better situation for the children's health if they were to walk, and you're encouraging that, but you're not requiring them to do that or participate in your study. Is that correct?

Ms. Hoebecke replied exactly. It is all voluntary and it's encouraging students who currently walk to school within a mile and a little under a half to walk to school on a regular basis, and also to reduce some of the congestion that you were referring to around the school. So we would look at some of the pick-up and drop-off as well to improve safety of the pedestrians.

Alderman Ludwig stated I'm looking at item 10 because item 11 seems to speak a little bit more...it's not a lot of money...to things that you may be able to purchase to help out and so on and so forth. Is that right?

Mr. Soucy replied that's correct.

Alderman Ludwig stated I know at Weston Elementary School they even buy some "No Parking" signs at Home Depot right now and things like that. But in item 10, I'm just trying to understand to what level you take this and then who would take this information. As Alderman Shea has said, traffic around all schools is very difficult. Weston has been an issue for quite some time. It is getting worse, as it is all over. Is this a recommendation that before it gets to the hardscape where curbs get cut back, and then is that something that you would turn over to the Highway Department for future engineering having looked at circulation around the property, walking patterns, driving patterns, and all those things, and they would then take it from there? I don't want your \$8,000 study to go on a shelf; I want it to go someplace.

Ms. Hoebecke replied basically the way it works is we're able to do a travel plan, which is sort of the study that you're referring to. We can then take it back up to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for additional rounds of

funding and potentially go for money to support some of the infrastructure improvements that would be within the plan. But it will also be a plan that will be shared with other City departments and folks who are doing this planning on a regular basis to try to incorporate it within their existing efforts.

Alderman Ludwig stated so there could be a second part of funding to this, which could improve improvements to the actual improvements.

Ms. Hoebecke replied yes.

Mr. Soucy replied and that's what happened at Wilson. I think we got \$190,000 in the second round that we were then able to give to Highway to do road construction and sidewalk construction. So this plan doesn't get tabled. We then go after more money to support the infrastructure.

Chairman O'Neil asked am I correct to say that maybe the very first program was actually Hallsville in the City? That was Safe Routes to Schools. Alderman Shea you'll correct me if I'm wrong; I don't think it required a lot of infrastructure improvements but I know Police worked with Principal Davenport and Highway and I think Southern NH Planning Commission actually carried it out. I think you referenced that you would contract with Southern NH Planning Commission for that first phase.

Ms. Hoebecke stated correct.

Chairman O'Neil stated so I think this would be the third school in the City.

Ms. Hoebecke replied yes, it would be.

Alderman Shea stated if I might add, Chairman O'Neil, I think that a lot of the concentration at Hallsville was with the parking adjustment in terms of lining up the cars that were picking the children up, not that it wasn't ensuring safety, but I think that that particular focus was more on the cars on Hayward Street, on Jewett Street and on Merrill Street and so forth.

Mr. Soucy stated Wilson was chosen really because it is an almost 100 percent walking school, so we were more concerned with the infrastructure around sidewalks and Weston is kind of a combination of the two.

Chairman O'Neil stated I would think that there wouldn't be a cookie cutter for any of our elementary schools. Each one is going to bring a unique situation.

Chairman O'Neil stated the Clerk has suggested that we move on these separately because they are separate resolutions.

Chairman O'Neil called for a vote on the motion to accept \$8,275 in grant funds from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the Safe Routes to Schools Project at Weston Elementary School . There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 11 of the agenda:

11. Communication from Leon LaFreniere, Director of Planning & Community Development, on behalf of the Health Department, requesting approval to accept grant funds in the amount of \$4,075 from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for activities associated with the Safe Routes to Schools Project at Weston School. [Health-new funds]

Alderman Ludwig moved to approve this request. Alderman Craig duly seconded the motion.

Chairman O'Neil asked this is the implementation money, correct?

Mr. Soucy replied not the construction, but more of the small ticket items.

Chairman O'Neil called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 12 of the agenda:

12. Discussion relative to the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.
(Note: Communication from Sam Maranto is attached.)

Chairman O'Neil stated this is for informational purposes only.

Chairman O'Neil addressed item 13 of the agenda:

13. Discussion relative to the First Time Homebuyers Review.

There was no discussion on this item.

TABLED ITEMS

14. Communication from Sam Maranto, CIP Manager, regarding funding for the Friends of the Manchester Animal Shelter.
(Note: Tabled 10/4/10)

This item remained on the table.

15. Presentation from Peter Capano, Chief of Parks, of the Stormwater Analysis Report – Ray Brook Stormwater Study.
(Tabled 8/2/10; to allow the Chief of Parks to meet with the State and research grant opportunities.)

This item remained on the table.

16. Presentation by Kevin Sheppard, Public Works Director, regarding a vehicle locator system.
(Note: Tabled 6/7/10; additional information to be provided by the Highway Department regarding the cost changes and cost savings in relation to the MER Bond.)

This item remained on the table.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman O'Neil stated there is one item of New Business. I will take responsibility that this did not get on the agenda. It should have. The summaries and the original got sent to me. I thought I was being copied. It has to do with the MER.

Mr. Clougherty stated thank you, Mr. Chairman. We appreciate you allowing this item to come forth. As the Committee may recall, either last month or the month before we came in front of you, talking about the MER program and some of the sedan-type of vehicles and our plans for replacement of such. It came to our attention that there was some funding that was coming available that had previously been put back in the MER account that we could utilize for maintenance and purchase of small vehicles, and this is unrecognized revenue. As the letter states, the department currently undertakes disposition of surplus property through auction, and we've done that for quite a while. The average proceeds over the last two years have been about \$31,000 annually after expenses. The auction happens twice a year, once in the spring, and once in the fall, and we actually just got the results of that auction this week. We're able to realize about \$44,000 in revenue from the sale of surplus property. When I'm talking about surplus property, it's those vehicles that we deem no longer suitable for our fleet.

It could be things like snow plows, signal boxes, some old tools and things like that which will bring \$50 and \$75. But we did realize a net of about \$44,000, and because of that, and also recognizing some of the changes that had taken place, we would like the Committee to consider designating these funds currently and in the future to go toward the MER program. What our intention would be is to use those for the smaller departments that aren't currently formally recognized under the MER program. There are a number of City vehicles that we talked about used by Building, Health, and Information Systems that are in desperate need of replacement. There are actually three vehicles right now that were taken off the road, and we'd like to use those funds specifically to replace those vehicles.

On motion of Alderman Ludwig, duly seconded by Alderman Greazzo, it was voted to discuss this item.

Alderman Ludwig asked would money from these vehicles that are being taken out of service typically go back into the General Fund?

Mr. Clougherty replied it did last year. Previous to that is my understanding that it went directly into the MER but there was some sort of a change that was made last year. I don't really know the details or the history of that.

Alderman Ludwig stated but now the City has entered into or basically made an effort to bond the MER account so that we have a constant replacement type program going all the time. Isn't that correct?

Mr. Clougherty replied that is correct.

Alderman Shea asked Tim, when the money goes to the General Fund and you need to get funding for a vehicle, that comes before the CIP Committee and you usually get that or is that something that doesn't happen now. In other words, right now the money that goes to the General Fund, if you want to get a vehicle for a department, you have to go before the CIP Committee and ask them for the money. Is that what you're saying, that rather than putting it into the fund that you're requesting that it be put in so that you would then still have to come to the Aldermanic Board to buy a vehicle, but it would be in a fund separated from the General Fund. It would be in your MER fund. Is that correct?

Mr. Clougherty replied yes, that's correct. What we would do is ask for the Committee's latitude so that the Highway Department makes these purchases on behalf of the other departments because we're responsible for managing the MER account, and we would come back and report to the Committee on such purchases.

Alderman Shea stated it is probably six of one, half a dozen of the other as far as I'm concern, since you really have to come back to the CIP anyway. I would say, we'll probably put the money into the MER fund. I'll make that motion.

Alderman Greazzo asked Mr. Clougherty, would you be coming to the committee before or after you bought the vehicles?

Mr. Clougherty replied it would be our recommendation that we report back to the committee after we had contracted for purchase of the vehicles.

Alderman Greazzo asked why wouldn't you report before that you needed the vehicle?

Mr. Clougherty replied if the Committee desires that we come before you for approval for the replacement, that's fine with us as well.

Alderman Greazzo stated thank you.

Alderman Craig asked I know Bill Sanders was here earlier, but where are we in terms of revenue? How would we affect the General Fund if we were to put it there versus going into the MER account? I'm having a hard time sitting here weighing whether we should buy two cars or if this goes into the General Fund, what we would do with that money.

Chairman O'Neil stated when the MER was put together, it was generally based around four organizations: Fire, Police, Public Works, and Parks. To be honest, I don't think we thought about some of the smaller departments as part of it, and they have vehicle needs. They are using old vehicles and it is costing them a lot of money to run some of these older vehicles. I personally don't have a problem with it going to the MER. I don't know the mechanics of how that happens, that's what I don't know without Finance. Attorney Arnold, do you have any thoughts on this?

Mr. Arnold replied not beyond what you have expressed, Alderman.

Chairman O'Neil stated I think we can move this forward; it will go to the Board at the next meeting on the 16th. That will give us time to figure out the mechanics of how to make this happen. Nothing is being referred tonight. We can at least send it to the Board and keep it moving and let the mechanics of this get worked out. Does that make sense?

Alderman Ludwig moved to refer this item to the Board of Mayor and Alderman at their November 16, 2010 meeting. Alderman Greazzo duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Alderman Shea said before you leave Tim, when you buy a car for a department, you don't get a new one, do you? You get a secondhand one?

Mr. Clougherty replied these would be new vehicles that we would be purchasing.

Alderman Shea asked what do you pay? In other words, if you had \$44,000 and you buy a new vehicle, how many can you buy?

Mr. Clougherty replied roughly three vehicles. Two of the vehicles that are currently contemplated for purchase are Ford Ranger pick-ups. Those are about \$15,000. There is another one here that's a Ford Focus sedan and that is \$13,600. That's the magnitude of the dollars that we're talking about for vehicles.

Alderman Shea stated you get a good deal.

Mr. Clougherty replied we think that we're getting good deals. We put them out to bid and we get competitive pricing from area dealers.

Chairman O'Neil stated it is certainly much better than driving around in an eight-cylinder Crown Victoria, former Police cruisers.

Mr. Clougherty stated I appreciate you bringing that up. That's really the impetus of why we're here. We were asked to put together a plan that contemplates replacement of the eight-cylinder vehicles with maximum of six-cylinder vehicles, as well as looking at the rest of the fleet. I've got a list in front of me of about 31 vehicles. And like I said, we currently have three vehicles, two of them from Building and another one from Info Systems that were deemed non-inspectable, and those would be the priorities for replacement currently.

Chairman O'Neil asked Tim, do you know the staff that uses those three vehicles? Are they using former police cruisers?

Mr. Clougherty replied the one for Info Systems I don't think that they have one right now. That's actually a minivan because they're hauling the computers around department to department. Leon is nodding back there. We have P=police cruisers. We have roughly five sedan-type vehicles that we allow departments to use either in situations such as this or when vehicles are getting serviced. They'll drop their vehicle off and have a vehicle to take and perform their daily work.

Chairman O'Neil asked are those pool vehicles all Crown Victorias?

Mr. Clougherty replied they're not all Crown Victorias.

Chairman O'Neil stated I'm certainly not bashing Ford Crown Victorias. It's just for many of our functions they are not very efficient.

Alderman Shea asked Tim, would those be considered surplus and can you get some money back from them? In other words, let's assume that you replace three vehicles.

Mr. Clougherty replied exactly. The three vehicles that we call junked would go to auction in the spring and that's really the proceeds we're talking about tonight. From the list I have in front of me, Alderman, just to answer your question, I see at least three of them are Crown Victoria's that are our pool vehicles.

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

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee