



CITY OF DOVER

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Meeting Type: Workshop Meeting
Meeting Location: Council Chambers - 288 Central Avenue, Dover, NH 03820
Meeting Date: **Wednesday, April 18, 2007**
Meeting Time: **7:00 pm**

Present: Mayor Scott Myers, Deputy Mayor Jason Hindle, Councilor Bob Keays, Councilor Doug DeDe, Councilor David Scott, Councilor Catherine Cheney, Councilor Harvey Turner and Councilor Dennis Ciotti. Councilor Trefethen is absent this evening.
Also Present: City Manager Mike Joyal, City Attorney Alan Krans.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Deputy Mayor Hindle led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Before beginning the workshop the Mayor thanked City Manager Joyal for his leadership during the most recent flooding situations and asked him to give an update.

Joyal stated that the appreciation belongs to his staff and that this event was similar to last year's Mother's Day floods but were compounded by the astronomical high tides that occurred as well as there being debris built up in some areas of the rivers. He stated that the area of Snow's Court and Prospect Street were affected during last year's floods, they rebuilt, then had this happen again. He then reviewed different areas of damage throughout the city and stated he will come back to the Council with firm estimates of repairs. He stated there has been \$45,000 in overtime to this point. He stated that last year flood damaged items and debris were accepted at the recycling center but he would like the Council to authorize a city-wide roadside clean-up due to there being a wind storm and snow storms in addition to this event and people have a lot of tree limbs etc that need to be dealt with.

DeDe asked if any portions of the costs are recoverable.

Joyal stated he is not aware of any funds being available at this time but this was declared a federal emergency. He stated the "Flood Hotline" number is 516-6140 and asked that people call this number to get advice in dealing with their flood issues and to be referred to agencies that may be able to help. He then thanked the staff who had been working for 30 hours straight to get things back to "normal" and stated he was also impressed with the many neighbors helping other neighbors stating this is what makes this community a great place to live. Finally he asked for everyone to have patience as there is a lot of road damage throughout the city and the potholes that were there before are even worse now and there are even more. Next, he stated he has a question for the Council stating that last year the money for the repairs from the storm came out of the road paving account, but he is not recommending doing that this year but instead would like to use the general fund balance and would like an informal consensus if possible.

Cheney asked how much it will cost to pickup throughout the city.

Joyal stated it is approximately \$50,000 and he would like to give a week or 2 notice to the residents and then it will be collected on the regular trash day.

Cheney then discussed the road conditions stating that it is the common feeling that the computer program doesn't support the citizens concerns for road repairs and puts 80% on top instead of the bottom and now we have to fix the storm damaged roads and wonders how many of these roads would have been on the list anyway.

Joyal stated none of them are on the overlay list.



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Discussion ensued regarding road conditions.

Turner stated he thought that we used to provide a wood chipper and enclosed truck to get rid of the debris and feels that this could be done by our own people over a couple of weekends. Joyal stated the staff used to pick up the yard waste and junk but we don't have the manpower to do the chipping ourselves as there is a lot of debris from the various storms that have occurred.

Discussion ensued regarding the scope of the clean-up.

Joyal stated he will have a resolution drafted for the next meeting to address the appropriations and will have a schedule for the clean-up.

Cheney thanked the Dover Baptist church and the volunteers there who helped the flood victims.

Hindle stated that Senator Gatsis is working on State level funding for the flood damage.

2. BUDGET DISCUSSION:

A. SCHOOL

Superintendent John O'Connor began by introducing Business Administrator Laurie Verville, who will be making the presentation with him and also recognized School Board members Dorothea Hooper, Doris Grady and Audra Lurvey in the audience. Dr. O'Connor explained the process that he and the School Board has gone through up to this point and that the budget being presented is supported by them all. He then began the power point presentation (See 04/18/07 Council folder and Docutron).

Slide 4 regarding Adequacy funding history, Dr. O'Connor stated this goes down every year because the legislature decides what is "adequate". He stated the \$4.7 million figure could change if the new plan is adopted which would mean a \$250,000 - \$500,000 decrease in the funding for Dover.

(Mayor Myers interrupted the presentation asking for the Council's full attention)

O'Connor continued stating that if there is a change they will come back before the Council but it will not be for money to spend but to offset the taxable portion of their budget.

Slide 6 regarding Revenues generated by the School District – Turner asked about the number of outside students and the fee charged per student and does this include debt service.

O'Connor stated it is \$9,500.00 per student and yes it includes Capital costs. He stated there are approximately 500+ Barrington and Nottingham students.

DeDe asked how much we are sending out to Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy.

O'Connor stated nothing as that comes from the State Education Trust.

Slide 8 – Changes in Benefits – 56% increase in NH Retirement – DeDe asked have the employee contributions gone up at all.

O'Connor stated not this year but there is legislation in Concord to address this issue.

The Mayor asked how much was the increase.

O'Connor stated over \$400,000.

Ciotti asked how many people are in the retirement on the school side.

O'Connor stated 425 out of 600 total employees.



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DeDe asked about health insurance and has there been any feedback regarding the potential civil union legislation.

O'Connor stated he hasn't received any from the insurance company, but their current carrier Cigna does allow for same-sex benefits but this has not been negotiated into the contracts.

The Mayor asked if this increase is the maximum it could be.

O'Connor stated yes the rate is set at 7.9% and is firm.

Discussion ensued regarding insurance rates, negotiations, etc.

Slide 9 – Changes in Operational Costs – Hindle asked about piggy-backing with the city for similar services i.e. field maintenance.

O'Connor stated this has been discussed with the City Manager but there are issues with different needs and different timing but they will continue to look at this.

Hindle stated this Council should be looking at this area as well as technology for pooling of resources and savings.

Cheney asked about the 107.3% increase in replacement equipment and what type of equipment is being replaced.

O'Connor explained that this is everything from televisions to vacuum cleaners as they haven't replaced equipment for a long time and now they must replace it. He explained there is no e-mail or internet access, or there is still dial up access at some of the schools so the technology needs to be upgraded, etc.

Slide 10, Changes in Student Services – O'Connor explained that Dover schools have done an outstanding job of keeping Dover students with special needs in Dover but it does require a specialized staff. He explained that we must also provide education to homeless students by federal law regardless of where they are physically located if their last address was in Dover, which means providing transportation as well.

Slides 11 and 12, Transportation Budget and Transportation Services – O'Connor explained that they will be going with First Student Bus Service instead of Laidlaw next year. He stated they also utilize the COAST bus system for high school students.

Cheney asked how long had we been with Laidlaw.

O'Connor stated this was our second contract in 10 years and explained that First Student may be buying Laidlaw Transportation as they are a big company from Europe buying smaller companies here in the U.S.

Slide 15 – Enrollment History and Projected Enrollment – O'Connor explained that up until 2 years ago we counted the 50-60 home-schooled children because we received funding for them but we no longer do.

Discussion ensued regarding enrollment figures including Nottingham and Barrington Students, Technical School students, Pre-school and Kindergarten students and special needs students.

Scott thanked Dr. O'Connor for his presentation stating it was easy to follow and work with the information provided. He then referred to Slide 13 – Percentage of School Services Chart – stating this shows where the cuts need to be made as the personnel salary and benefits



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continues to increase 5-6% every year. He asked why staffing is up 20% as this seems excessive even with all of the federal requirements.

O'Connor stated that there have been many initiatives by the school board to reduce class size in the schools as this was a priority for them and therefore there are more teachers needed to accomplish this goal.

Scott stated that they should take a good look at whether lower class size really is producing better results as he feels the statistics don't show an improvement.

O'Connor concluded through Slide 23.

Ciotti asked if the increase in the Dean's Secretary's hours at the middle school will eliminate the voice system.

O'Connor stated no, it will not eliminate the voice system, but it will help.

Hindle stated he would like them to provide the amount of money spent on technology, custodial and field maintenance services because we should be able to combine those with the city and find savings as the taxpayers pay one tax bill and not two separate bills.

Turner stated this was a great presentation but he stated that on Slide 17, Dover School District Salaries, he had asked the question before as to what would be the budget increase every year when the teacher's contract was approved and was told 4% and now it is showing 5.1%.

O'Connor explained that he was responding to the teacher's contract specifically and this includes all personnel increases

Scott stated that looking at the budget overall and the 7.1% increase on the school side and the 6.9% on the City side, is too much for the taxpayers. He continued that they can't help the debt services but all of the other expenses including people they need to cut back and there should only be a 3% increase.

O'Connor stated that he doesn't remember Councilor Scott attending the Joint Fiscal Committee meeting at which they did talk about 3% and 2% and regular budget options which he presented to the School Board. He stated the School Board was provided with those options and the cuts involved for each and these options were unacceptable to the School Board.

Keays stated when he went to school there were 4 main courses offered and wonders why we offer so many different types of classes with only a few students in some of them as he feels that the teachers should be teaching full classes. He asked if these classes are reviewed each year as to whether or not they should be offered.

O'Connor stated that we offer these classes because we have a wide array of students from one end of the intellectual continuum to the other and they all need to be educated.

Mayor Myers asked if the all-day kindergarten was included in this budget.

O'Connor stated no, but if it is implemented then he will have approximately \$145,000 in savings for transportation from the morning/afternoon bus runs for ½ day kindergarten.

Myers asked about the collective bargaining unit that still needs to be settled.

O'Connor stated it is the custodians and they are at impasse, but the money is in there.

Ciotti asked will the redistricting cost more with the First Student bus contract.

O'Connor stated no.



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Mayor Myers asked Dr. O'Connor to explain the importance of early input from the Council on the school budget.

O'Connor stated that they have to hand out "pink slips" for any teacher lay-offs by the Friday after the second Tuesday in May so if the Council is going to cut money from the budget they need to have enough notice.

The Mayor then reviewed the upcoming budget schedule.

O'Connor clarified that some of the questions asked by the Council this evening regarding course evaluation etc. were not in their purview as they have only the bottom line authority.

Recess/Reconvened 9:00 – 9:05 p.m.

B. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Recess/Reconvened 9:00 – 9:05 p.m.

Joyal stated his plan is to review the budget department by department without any department head presentations but that they will be here to answer any questions.

He then read his memo regarding the 0% and 2% budget options as requested by the Council resolution in November 2006. He stated that he does not recommend doing the budget in a piece-meal line by line manner and that if there is going to be a reduction in services it should be done by looking at priorities and programs. He stated that education, safety, transportation network are the priorities, the library, recreation programs, culture are all nice but are not necessities and therefore, the areas that are first to be reduced. He continued to review proposed reductions at 2% and 0%, stating that many of the proposals are sensitive issues and people will come out against them as they have in the past.

Cheney asked about the Police teen center reduction of \$171,000 and is any of that a part of matching grant funds. Joyal stated there are none at this time for these positions and continued to review the various positions within the teen center division.

Cheney asked about the senior citizen program stating it was her understanding that they paid dues and had their own account, and are we subsidizing this group.

Joyal explained that when the Senior Center was moved from Third Street to the McConnell Center part of the commitment from the City was that we would provide more senior activities i.e. fitness, speakers, etc. and there is revenue for the senior center space. He stated they have their own part-time person who organizes trips, etc. and there is the new senior volunteer program in place as well.

Joyal then moved on to the budget document itself beginning with making various corrections to typos in the document.



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Executive Department

City Council – he stated that there is an increase in 4240 staff development for volunteers training, board and commission members seminars, supplies increased by 50% due to the upcoming changeover of the Council and the materials that will be provided to them, Grants and Subsidies there is an increase in COAST bus because it was under funded last year.

City Manager – no major changes other than an increase in advertising because this used to be taken out of various departments but are now centralized under the City Manager.

City Clerk - he is proposing combining the City Clerk/Tax Collector position which will eliminate one position.

Elections – there are 2 elections budgeted for the upcoming fiscal year.

Legal – there is an increase of \$10,000 for Legal Services although there has been a sizable reduction in outside legal services since hiring the City Attorney.

Hindle asked for a breakdown of the \$50,000 for specialized legal Council and also on Page 160 \$10,000 for Tax Assessing Specialized Council.

Joyal stated the \$10,000 in Assessing is for land use cases.

Scott asked where the money paid to Attorney Peltonan appears in the budget.

Joyal stated it is out of Capital Projects – Tolend Landfill.

Discussion ensued regarding legal expenses.

Business Assistance - Joyal stated that this position will be eliminated and re-established through a grant and the focus will be shifted from Enterprise Park which is basically at capacity to downtown development. He reviewed the past history of the economic development/business assistance divisions.

Hindle stated that when discussing this division he would like to have the \$93,000 allocation justified and a breakdown. He would also like to see this division moved under the Planning Department.

Cheney stated she would like to know the difference between the organizations i.e. DIDA, DBIDA, DEDC etc and get copies of the by-laws.

Joyal stated they are essentially the same just the name was changed to add Business to it.

Finance Department

Scott asked if the Finance Director candidates will be introduced to the Council during the recruitment process.

Joyal stated no. He continued to explain he had hired a Finance Director who then backed out so now he is in the 2nd round and hopefully will have someone in place by July 1st.



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Joyal explained that in the Finance Department there is an increase for technical services for bank check reconciliation fees and for GASB 34 Fixed Asset Software which is an auditor recommendation.

Tax Assessment – Joyal reviewed the makeup of the department which is contracted out for Assessment services and has 4 city employees as well. He is recommending the elimination of the data technician.

Keays stated we are paying the contracted Assessor \$87,000 to work here 3 days a week and the Assistant \$62,000 for 40 hours a week. He wants to know how we know that the Assessor is here for 3 days a week.

Joyal stated we get the results we are looking for in that department. He stated that this company provides a scope of services and the current contract is up for renewal on June 30th and he is considering going out to bid because it hasn't been done for a few years if that is the Council's direction. He stated that if we renew with the current company it will go up 3.1% per the current agreement but if this goes out to bid then the current contractor will be bidding again and it may come back significantly higher.

Hindle moved to suspend the rules to go past 10:30 to 11:00 p.m., seconded by Ciotti. Motion passed on a 5-3 roll call vote, DeDe, Keays and Turner opposed.

Myers stated he has reviewed the pros and cons of contracted out services and he does feel it should be put out to bid.

Hindle stated that they should put the department as a whole out to bid.

Joyal stated he can do that as one of the options.

Scott agrees this should go out to bid and asked if we are guaranteed the assessor is here 3 days a week because he rarely sees him there.

DeDe asked if there is sufficient time to do an RFP before the existing renewal option expires. Joyal stated that if we go out to bid, all bets are off and he feels that when the results come back it will show we are getting a good deal now.

DeDe questions how all bets are off if we do this before the 06/30/07 expiration date and is it worded that way in the current contract.

Discussion ensued.

DeDe stated he has received favorable comments on Corcoran Associates although he is not happy with the State of New Hampshire assessment process, he will support renewing with Corcoran if that is the will of the Manager.

Myers clarified that the Council consensus is to go out to bid.

Tax Collector – Joyal stated he will use some of the savings of combining this with the City Clerk to hire part-time staff. He stated in order to make this work he will need the cooperation of the Council when the space needs study comes out to move this forward.

Hindle asked when the study will be done.

Joyal stated at the end of May.



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Hindle asked if this is really enough time to review the document and vote on this proposal a week later as they go hand in hand. He stated if it is not feasible to find a way to combine the resources in one area conducive to the public, then it would be pointless to make the change. Joyal explained that the report will include a whole set of recommendations and series of options. He stated he is reasonably comfortable that the options will be there for the combined offices, maybe by removing a wall, and he is asking the Council to sign off on the concept. Hindle stated he would like a preliminary report on that aspect prior to the final report.

Cheney asked the City Manager to be sure to include the City Council on communications from the Police, Fire and Community Services Department in situations such as the recent flood.

C. RECREATION - NOT DISCUSSED

3. ADJOURN

Hindle moved to adjourn at 10:47 p.m., seconded by Ciotti and approved unanimously.