

**MINUTES
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
APRIL 6, 2005**

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
6:00 P.M.**

The City Council will be meeting in non public session to discuss Labor Negotiations.

NOTE: This meeting is not open to the public per RSA 91-A:2 (b).

7:00 p.m.

WORKSHOP:

Councilors Present: Mayor Scott Myers, Mayor Pro Tem Jason Hindle, Councilor Otis Perry, Councilor Darlene Colwell-Ellis, Councilor Matt Mayberry, Councilor Robert Keays, Councilor Robert Lewis, Councilor Dean Trefethen and Councilor Doug DeDe.

Staff Present: Acting City Manager Mike Joyal, Planning Director Steve Stancel, Community Services Director Pete Lavoie, Planner Bruce Woodruff, Public Works Supt. Doug Steele and City Engineer Paul Vlasich.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor Mayberry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Myers explained that the order of the agenda will be rearranged and then introduced School Supt. John O'Connor to give a brief school budget overview.

Dr. O'Connor reviewed some of the legislation that is affecting school adequacy funding and could result in a \$1.6 million shortfall for Dover. The School Board Chair recently mentioned layoffs in the Foster's but he feels that this could also be looked at as a tax on the community to provide adequate education. He stated that \$34,000,000 is needed to maintain what we currently have and last year 12 staff members were laid off. He reviewed previous years stating that the school department had several years where they had decreases in their budget but stated that they already have a 33 cent increase in this year's proposal and with the expected shortfall, this will be 65 -75 cents higher.

Perry stated that King's bill had a reduction in State property tax and asked if the current bill is looking at that as well and if so, is it the same amount as what we will be losing in funding and then there wouldn't be a big impact.

Lewis asked what the date is that teachers have to be notified of layoffs and is there a contingency plan in place.

O'Connor stated April 15th and at that point the School Board has to craft a plan. He explained that the average cost of a teacher is \$50,000 which would mean 30 teachers, but they would look across the board and perhaps lay off 20 staff people and 20 teachers. Other ideas include no transportation for high school students as this is not required by state law, no middle or high school sports, level fund technology, and then look at staffing levels.

Lewis wonders if we are now paying the price for past concessions to keep the rate down.

Mayberry asked about our State legislators and their reactions.

O'Connor stated that only one legislator showed up at the hearing and then left when he saw that he was there. Others have told him they voted in favor of the bill in order to bring it forward for discussion. Senator Estabrooks' assistant indicated that the Senator is against the bill and understands the impact.

He stated that the bigger cities seem to be the ones with the greatest losses but 200+ towns/cities will be maintaining or even gaining.

Mayor Myers stated that 10 days ago he put out an e-mail to the representatives encouraging them to testify and out of the 9 e-mails he heard from Senator Estabrook and Rep. Goodwin.

Discussion ensued regarding the lack of response from the Dover representatives.

O'Connor concluded by stating that 10 months ago Dover received additional adequacy money after the budget was passed of \$1.2 million but the budget had already been cut by \$1.1 million originally. He stated that \$500,000 of this money went towards much needed infrastructure repairs, and \$600,000 went to the tax rate.

As a postscript after Dr. O'Connor left the Chambers, Councilor DeDe stated that Dr. O'Connor was one of only 2 superintendents at the meeting.

2. Coast Bus

Steve Wells of Coast Bus gave a general overview of the Coast Bus operations (see handout in 04/06/05 meeting folder for power point presentation).

He stated that ridership has increased over the last several years with 256,000 riders in the last year. He then introduced Tim Roach, Senior Transportation Planner from the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Roach discussed air quality and its relation to public transportation and conformity requirements for federal funding. He explained that if we lapse in our conformity the federal funds become frozen and will cause delays and ultimately make projects more expensive. In 2002 COAST helped us meet our conformity and in the future there will be new standards set by the EPA and he feels that COAST will be critical in helping us meet these.

Steve Wells then discussed the Funding Formula for the 2006 request for Coast Funding and referred to page 3 of the handout which explains how they determine each community's fair share. He concluded by asking the Council to fully fund the COAST request and to consider public transit as a part of the development process.

Mayberry stated that for the last 4 of the 5 years on the Council he has been asking about the bus stop shelters and expanding the number of enclosed shelters for example at the Care Pharmacy stop.

Wells stated that anything they can do to make transit a better choice is a good thing to do and they are working on standardizing benches, shelters etc. but doesn't feel they can put a shelter at every stop.

Mayberry asked about any overlap in services with the Wildcat Transit.

Wells stated that Wildcat has 3 public routes but explained that they coordinate with Wildcat and have an agreement for student rider ship.

Mayberry asked about switching to busses that aren't petroleum dependent.

Wells stated that there were compressed natural gas busses tried recently at Pease which turned out to be the worst experience. He feels that technology isn't there yet for other fuels and feels that perhaps a bigger organization such as the MBTA would be better to experiment.

Mayberry asked that the COAST bus schedule be televised on Channel 22 and Mr. Wells would like to run "How to Ride" videos as well.

3. Downtown Transit Loop

City Planner Bruce Woodruff reviewed the project history and then introduced Ed Pigman of Transit Resource Center, the author of the Dover Transit Study prepared for COAST (See 04/06/05 meeting folder).

Mr. Pigman explained the services provided by his company to evaluate and develop transportation options and improve current services. He recently worked with COAST in the Portsmouth and Pease areas with great success over the last 3 years. He has since been working closely with Mr. Woodruff and Mr. Wells to develop a plan which allows flexibility and inclusion of outer neighborhoods while still keeping costs down. The basic principal is that there are primary routes run daily but people who are not near these routes would be able to call and make an appointment to be picked up at a certain time to be brought to a destination along the route. The vehicles would be smaller and less intrusive than the traditional busses.

He distributed a packet of examples of these types of services from various cities which utilize "flex zones".

Discussion ensued regarding this concept.

Chamber of Commerce President Jack Story stated that he had not used the bus prior to being involved with the COAST Board of Trustees but now uses it frequently and feels that you get used to planning ahead in order to use the service.

Joyal asked Woodruff to let the Council know what is expected from them next in this process.

Woodruff reviewed the financial information provided (see 04/06/05 meeting folder).

The concern is that future Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) funding from the State government is no longer going to be available in the future and therefore, they are formulating a plan to be able to implement this without using tax dollars.

DeDe asked what is the inflation factor used. Woodruff is not sure of that figure at this time.

Lewis asked about having to pay for the vehicles even if we decide to discontinue this program.

Wells explained that the FTA establishes the life for each vehicle and it is rated over a number of years and depreciate accordingly. If after 3 years we decide to discontinue the program and we are using 5 year vehicles, the City would be responsible for the remaining 2 years, but they could be leased out.

Discussion ensued regarding the time frame for making a decision.

Wells stated that he would need 9-12 months to order vehicles.

Next, discussion ensued regarding the cost and where funding would come from. Joyal explained that there is already money that is collected from vehicle registration which

currently goes to existing transportation projects but because the TIP funding will be drying up we need to decide where to go from here.

Perry feels that this is an important transportation improvement.

Lewis agrees and feels that every time we look at public transportation the focus is on if the public supports it or not, but feels we have to go past that because it is important.

RECESS/RECONVENE 8:50 – 8:55 PM

4. Roadway Maintenance Analysis Report

Joyal introduced City Engineer Paul Vlasich to give an overview of the Roadway Maintenance Analysis Report.

Vlasich explained that there are two levels of analysis; network level and project level and tonight he will be explaining the network level which gives the overall big picture. He stated that since 1988 they had used the Road System Management developed by UNH but recently switched to MicroPAVER system developed by the University of Illinois which allows for predicting of future conditions, develops budget scenarios and has GIS interface capabilities.

He reviewed several slides showing various levels of road deterioration and explained the ratings. He explained that there is a level at which the roads should be repaired before they fall into the critical category. The cost at this level would allow for 5-6 roads to be repaired as opposed to one road once it has reached the lower level.

There are 5 steps in the process which include: Inventory and rank, Inspection process which is done in 2,500 ft sections, Condition Analysis of distress types with 48% of the roads in unsatisfactory condition, Condition prediction and budget/work plan.

He continued to explain the cost to repair all roads if there were unlimited resources, but that it would be \$1.1 million to maintain current road conditions without any improvements. He would need \$1.8 million a year over 10 years to bring up the levels of the unsatisfactory roads and \$2.2 million a year to eliminate the backlog. (See handout in 04/06/05 folder for budget plan and consequence of budget plans).

He also reviewed the recommended projects for 2005 (see handout). He explained that factors not included in this process include traffic accidents, school locations and traffic congestion points which are considerations of the Planning Department.

Keays asked about Sixth Street cracking after only 3 years. Vlasich feels it is temperature cracks.

Discussion then ensued regarding truck routes.

DeDe asked what the cost assessment is based on and what is the inflation rate.

Vlasich stated it is based on square footage at last years rate plus 3% inflation.

DeDe asked if the work is all done by outside contractors. Vlasich stated typically yes.

Myers asked about the recommendations list and clarified that Henry Law Ave isn't included because it is already a CIP item.

Trefethen asked about the 2006 list and will the roads that are in the bottom part of the list be addressed at that time.

Vlasich stated no they won't because they get more per \$1.00 repairing the roads before they get to that point.

Joyal stated that this program allows for money to be spent most efficiently.

Myers asked what do we tell the people who ask about those roads and should the Council be allocating money and specify that a certain amount go to those particular roads.

Joyal stated that the Council should take the advice of the staff and spend the money where it makes the most sense and feels that the more serious roads will be addressed in the CIP.

Mayberry asked about the rate of growth of street acreage with all of the new developments and will they be able to keep up with it.

Vlasich feels that the new roads are holding up well. He explained again that this overview is the network level, but the project level gets more specific and takes other things into account.

Discussion ensued regarding potholes and the pothole hotline.

5. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Valerie A. French
Deputy City Clerk