

**MINUTES  
WORKSHOP  
DOVER CITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
WEDNESDAY  
DECEMBER 4, 2002  
7:00 PM**

Those present: Mayor Nossiff, Mayor pro tem Taylor, Councilor Dunnington, Hofemann, Whitmore, Tweedie, Hindle, and Christenbury. Councilor Quigley is absent.

## 1. Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) Overview

The Mayor called the meeting to order, Jeff Harrington asked them to turn to page one of the CIP booklet. He proceeded to explain the differences between the CIP projects and the operating budget items. The purpose of the financial criteria is to save money. If the city continues to bond annually it will eventually pay more to debt service than you do to the actual project amount which is what we are trying to avoid. He stated that on page 18 of the summary is how all the projects come together by financing source and by year with 69% financed by debt, 18% through the Operating Budget, 6% Capital Reserve, 5% grant funding and 1% is existing money. He explained that we save \$8 million in interest by funding through the Operating Budget finance and Capital reserve instead of bonding those items. The top 3 projects are, the Woodman Park School, Police facility and Tolend Road landfill remediation project. On page 8, they tried to project the impact to both the property tax and utilities; each year is increased over the prior year. The thing about year one if you look at the impact, the majority is not coming from the projects in this book it is coming from what was authorized for last year, on the school, 14 of the 16 cents is from last year. The water fund is up 18 cents and the sewer fund is up 38 cents, 56 cents of the combined is from last year's CIP. On page 11 and 12, it shows the legal and policy debt limit information which is set by State statute. The city council came along and set policy limits, historically we have only exceeded the policy once when we built the new school. The credit limit rating is on page 13. The City has an A3 rating which is very good. He would like them to consider where rates are today, if they hold back today, they may be missing out. He ran some ratio sheets that cover four main points of the budget. (See handout in folder). The mayor asked for any questions, Taylor asked if we received the grant today from the Executive Council for the traffic study. Mr. Beecher stated he will check.

## 2. Finance Advisors Presentation

Jeff then introduced Cynthia McNerney from First Southwest Advisory. She will go over general information with comparison to other municipalities. She stated that other cities in New Hampshire they represent include Nashua and Portsmouth. Cynthia has several handouts, they are the third largest advisory company in the country, and she listed the other cities in the state she serves. Standard and Poors is another rating agency, that one does not rate this city but they had a commentary she would like them to read. She has 4 handouts and will pass them out after she speaks. The city amortizes debt at the annual rate of 75%, the standard is for only 50%, and the city has a very aggressive schedule. She proceeded to go over the comparison schedule she had passed out briefly. See handouts in folder of 12/4/2002. She continued explaining about the debt service. The City Manager asked about Dover's undesignated fund balance and for her to explain this issue to them, she said the rating agencies are looking for the

total fund balance and not just the undesignated as opposed to the designated fund balance. She mentioned that a lot of close by communities that have experienced growth have taken the opportunity to position themselves and take precautions to keep a sizable fund balance set aside to be prepared for when economic times go down again

### 3. Zoning Ordinance discussion

Next, Mr. Beecher asked Christenbury to introduce the zoning ordinance. Christenbury stated Whitmore wants us to maintain the rights of farmers in the I-4 zone. Stancel gave the background on the 41 proposed amendments; this is the culmination of over 3 years work by the planning staff. There has been a rapid growth here in the City; he mentioned the goals that the council has stated at the beginning of this year. He continued to explain how they came to this final proposed rezoning ordinance stating all the meeting dates that they had discussed this issue. He noted that not all of the amendments passed the planning board. He indicated that it will take a 2/3 vote of the council to overrule the planning board's vote. The Mayor asked about the 537 approved units on the board right now, he wondered if they are condos, apartments or single housing units and how he continued about how many of these lots have not been built on yet but are able to be built on, Stancel says it is split about 50/50. Christenbury clarified the issue is not one that the Planning Board was attempting to stop growth, what we can do thru zoning changes is manage our growth. He explained the misconceptions that continue to be brought up, if you remain at your property the rest of your life, we do not take that land, development won't occur in several of these areas for many, many years. People have inherent property rights, zoning never makes everybody happy. But, because of citizen involvement this time, he feels there will not be as many problems. Whitmore asked for clarification that the public hearing only will be held on December 11, 2002. Christenbury stated the public hearing and possible vote. Stancel says history tells us what can happen, three years ago the Planning Department went through a comprehensive rezoning process to rezone several areas which the Planning Board approved but when it came before the Council it didn't pass and since that time there have been 166 units either built, approved or in the pipeline now in the areas that would have been rezoned which equals 80 kids and 4 classrooms. He stated we need to have better balance, The Mayor asks again about the number of apartments, condos and residential units. Dunnington asked at what point will this take effect if someone has already applied for a building permit in a rezoned area. Stancel says there is a state law that grandfather all approved projects for 4 years with the stipulations that they have to start construction within one year of approval and have to have completed substantial improvements within a certain time period He stated a good many of these projects that are in the pipeline have not been started yet but may be grandfathered. Whitmore asked about the protective covenants for the city-owned waterfront property on the Cocheco River and when will they be ready and will it affect the decision making on voting on the zoning ordinance. Stancel stated there has been a volunteer group working on them and they will have a draft by the 11<sup>th</sup> but not definitive approval. The Mayor followed up on protective covenants, Stancel says they are in legal format now. Stancel feels the ordinance could be voted on the 11<sup>th</sup> but he feels it is important to get the underlying ordinance in place. Whitmore feels this would be putting the cart before the horse, she would like the covenants taken care of first. Stancel disagrees about this but feels we can move forward with the zoning ordinance. The Mayor explained this is mostly aesthetics. Tweedie wants the estimated completion dates for those projects in the pipeline. Stancel stated he can give the times that the projects will become defunct. Christenbury touches on the protective covenant issue explaining this is in reference to the waterfront area and the "bluffs" in the area. He continued, if the zoning is not going to be approved there will be no need for the covenants. The Mayor wants a draft of the protective covenants, Christenbury says he will ensure that there is an appropriate buffer in that area. The Mayor says this is the crown jewel of the City right now, so he wants to see the whole picture. Whitmore clarified that the Cocheco Waterfront District allows for significant development of a lot with zero (0) lot line setbacks so it is conceivable that someone's property

could about a development right on their property line and feels we are working towards a very reasonable and workable solution, but it is only one of the issues involved.

## Other Business

Taylor still wants to ask about a CIP project, she is concerned about the Broadway Street drainage improvements project and why this has been stretched out and pushed back for the next 5 years.

Mr. Beecher says this is a fairly comprehensive project and will take most of the season to complete. The drainage is the most critical, she continued, as the City Manager is aware we have a major employer on that street and it is in her ward. Christenbury says the Planning Board has not approved the CIP as yet, so there could be changes to that document before the final presentation. Tweedie is trying to locate numbers for the projects, he took a tour of the downstairs. He stated a report from the Police Chief says we now have an 11,000 sq ft area to work in and we should have a 38 sq ft area, the place is dilapidated, the facilities are insane the vaults are crammed. This project should be moved up to this year. He would like Beecher to schedule a walk thru to make sure all the councilors are aware of the problems down there. The City Manager says they had asked him to prioritize the projects with a max of 2.5 million dollars and as Cynthia has pointed out this is the time to bond if we are going to. Everything ends up costing more because we put it off. Tweedie asked if we have looked at refinancing our debt with regards to the low interest rates right now. Christenbury says what the Planning Board does is to fit this to the City's master plan. When it gets to the council level all hell breaks loose. At the Planning Board level they ask does this fit with the master plan and the great scheme of things. We all have projects we would like to prioritize on this list. Hofemann magnifies the comment that Tweedie made on the police station, he knows first hand of the space crunch, as he used to be a volunteer. Dunnington feels we need to be cautious, can people afford to pay just because money is cheap. He agrees that the Police Department is a priority but they are accredited each year and this is a balancing act. Hofemann says to settle that, he feels the council should have the opportunity to tour the Police Station. Whitmore suggests to the City Manager when the Planning Board prioritizes the CIP list if he would go by the resolution that passed last month. Hofemann then announced "operation fix up" of the senior center, they will call in the fire department who has volunteered their services to fix the center up, this will be under way very shortly. Mr. Beecher wants the fire department to fix up the Police Department. The Mayor has a couple of things he wants to take a look at, the public hearing on the zoning is 12/11, and the public hearing on the CIP if we don't act on it on the 11<sup>th</sup>, it will go to the new council. He then asked Dunnington about the dumping and rubbish ordinance that is supposed to be on the December agenda. Dunnington wants this withdrawn from the upcoming agenda.

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded by all. All in favor.

Judy Gaouette  
City Clerk