

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

May 7, 2024 at 5:30 PM

Chairman Morgan called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Morgan, Terrio, Kantor, Long, Burkush

Messrs.: F. McNeill, A. Thomas, L. Drabik

1. Summary of abatement requests submitted by Fred McNeill, Chief Engineer.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to approve.*

2. Communication from the Chief Engineer requesting approval of an updated sewer abatement policy.

***Alderman Long** moved to approve. **Alderman Burkush** duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman Terrio stated I know that Chairman Morgan requested this change. Basically this is a formality. You come to this committee and we approve what you have done. You are not going to change anything correct?

Fred McNeill, Chief Engineer, responded correct. This is really just a streamlining of government approvals.

Alderman Terrio asked is there an appeals process.

Mr. McNeill answered yes it is.

Alderman Terrio asked are we still going to be in the loop on that.

Mr. McNeill replied the appeals process actually goes through the court system. I am looking to see if it says that in the policy. Yes, it says the abatement policy is governed by RSA 5:08-4 and under that there is an appeals process I believe.

Alderman Terrio asked so they have to go through the court. They can't go through the city?

Mr. McNeill responded that is correct.

Alderman Terrio stated I will vote to approve this tonight but I can't imagine someone is going to go to court over \$200 or \$300.

Chairman Morgan called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

3. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$1,007,731 for CIP 210623 Public Health Preparedness.

*On motion of **Alderman Terrio**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to approve.*

4. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$1,282.35 for CIP 211623 NACCHO Implementing Overdose Strategies at the Local Level.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to approve.*

5. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$39,203.96 for CIP 212124 Oral Health Program.

*On motion of **Alderman Burkush**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to approve.*

6. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$631,400 for CIP 212524 TB Prevention, CIP 212624 Immunization Grant, and CIP 213024 Workforce Development - Public Health Crisis RSP-ARP.

Alderman Long moved to approve.

Alderman Kantor stated I have a few questions regarding the vaccinations. Do you have a list of them?

Anna Thomas, Public Health Director, responded we do and it is on our website. It is primarily childhood immunizations. We do flu shots and those kinds of things. We no longer do Covid vaccinations. That is handled through PCP's and pharmacies.

Alderman Kantor replied okay I just wanted that to be clarified.

Alderman Terrio duly seconded the motion. *Chairman Morgan called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

7. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$182,328.75 for CIP 213122 Primary Care Services for the Homeless.

Alderman Long moved to approve. **Alderman Burkush** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Kantor asked do we do an audit on this money and I was wondering if it goes directly to CMC and if you pay salaries and pay for the services. I was just wondering what the breakdown of it was.

Ms. Thomas answered we have been doing this with CMC for about 40 years. This particular pot of money actually is DHHS money coming to us and then there is federal money that comes directly to us that does not go through the state. The DHHS money has a focus on maternal and child health so we do pay for staff and services to serve expectant mothers who are also experiencing homelessness. That is what the primary care portion is. The rest is the federal funding we get, which funds the entire program soup to nuts – staff, supplies, and if you want I can give you the budget breakdown. I can supply whatever you need.

Alderman Kantor responded I was just curious on how it worked with Medicaid. Is this like double-dipping?

Ms. Thomas replied we actually assist with that because we are almost like the fiscal agent and then we subcontract with Catholic Medical Center to provide the services. So they submit all of the Medicaid reimbursement and we help on the backend as far as the documentation is concerned. In some cases, you can make money off of Medicaid but unfortunately we don't. The one thing we do with these grants is we charge and indirect so that we do bank and we add that into a health reserve account which is up to about \$500,000 right now. We are trying to make some money off the money if you will.

Alderman Kantor asked so this takes care of anyone who doesn't have Medicaid.

Ms. Thomas answered this takes care of anybody who is experiencing homelessness. They may have Medicaid or no insurance whatsoever. They may even have VA benefits or private insurance. It depends on the scenario and it is all ages. Depending on their situation, in some cases some people have insurance which we can bill for through this mechanism.

Alderman Kantor asked does all people mean even people who do not have citizenship.

Ms. Thomas replied what happens with the refugee resettlement program is the state receives refugees and we just had a conversation with the state office regarding this, and because they are new Americans gaining citizenship, they are allowed to be seen through this program. We had a real uptick just recently that I let the Mayor know about because all of the sudden we had 60 additional patients in one month and it was from the refugee resettlement agencies having them served through that mechanism. Now what happens is they start with us and then we convert them over to the other federally qualified health center, which is Amoskeag Health, for their ongoing care but because they are sort of in this unstable environment where they are first coming in as new Americans, they have them come through Healthcare for the Homeless first. That is a good question.

Alderman Long asked annually what do we spend on health care including everything. Is it like \$4 million?

Ms. Thomas asked do you mean how much we actually get for funding. We get a few million dollars and that is for all of the services. It had a little bit of an increase during Covid like a lot of the programs did across the country. It is about \$1.5-\$2 million

depending on the year. We had a couple of years where we had capital improvement grants come in to upgrade Families in Transition and then the location for integrated health over by the Hoitt building. The goal is we keep it as tight as possible and CMC has been a fantastic steward of the process. We do have a street medicine van that is also paid for through that mechanism.

Alderman Long asked what do we do as far as oral health.

Ms. Thomas replied because CMC also has the Poisson Dental Facility, if they have somebody who is in high need, which is often the case especially among the adult population who have not been in to see the dentist for quite some time, they can refer them into the Poisson Dental Facility. As far as children are concerned, we can see them through our dental program which we are also receiving dollars for. They kind of go hand-in-hand.

Alderman Long asked so about \$2 million a year.

Ms. Thomas responded yes collectively I would say that is a ballpark figure. It varies from year to year but \$2 million is a good figure.

Alderman Kantor stated you mentioned the refugees. What if someone just crosses the border? Can they get this medical treatment?

Ms. Thomas asked are they homeless. That is the qualifier. If they show up in this community and they are unsheltered or if they are in one of the shelters we can see them and as any healthcare provider does in the city, they are not turned away because of lack of citizenship. If they showed up in the ER they would be served there as well.

Alderman Kantor asked so no matter what, they will be treated.

Ms. Thomas answered right but I will tell you that I don't think there is proportionately a large number that we see through that program. That is one of the reasons I contacted the state refugee program because we keep hearing across the country there is this swarm that is happening and overwhelming communities so we wanted to get ahead of that to see if the state was anticipating any additional resettlement for Manchester that we don't know about. Right now, they are telling us status quo, whatever that means.

Alderman Kantor asked do we have the data on how many that we are actually treating and the breakdown.

Ms. Thomas replied yes. We have refugee data. I can send you the link to the state refugee site. What is a little frustrating and one of the other reasons we contacted them is I happened to notice that Nashua was no longer receiving refugees. I was asking why that was and the explanation I was given was because Nashua was experiencing a housing crisis and the rents are too high. Somehow, we are still receiving the refugees. Again, I brought this to the Mayor's attention and I believe he is following-up with the state on that because there are very few communities in the state of NH that receive refugees. I don't want to sound like I am anti-refugee, I am just saying it is a resource issue and there is only so much any one community can handle as far as new

Americans. I don't know why we have become the focal point just like with other things that happen with the city that we suddenly have to be the recipient of. I just feel like there is not enough of a shared responsibility state-wide.

Alderman Kantor responded I totally agree. So CMC and any other hospital accepts refugees or just CMC?

Ms. Thomas replied by law if somebody shows up in an ER or a hospital of any type, they can't turn them away if they are in need of care regardless of their citizenship status.

Chairman Morgan called for a motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

8. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$1,642,325 for CIP 213124 Homeless Healthcare.

*On motion of **Alderman Terrio**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted to approve.*

9. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$120,000 for CIP 510624 - Bass Island Park Erosion Mitigation.

*On motion of **Alderman Terrio**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to approve as revised.*

10. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$12,000 for CIP 611424 Gaslight District Historic Resource Survey.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to approve.*

11. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$124,592.03 for CIP 710024 Annual Street Reconstruction (CDBG).

*On motion of **Alderman Burkush**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to approve.*

12. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$1,500,000 for CIP 710121 Road Construction: S. Commercial to Elm.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted to approve.*

13. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$9,129.80 for CIP 710124 FY24 Roadway Program.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted to approve.*

14. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$274,758.40 for CIP 712720 South Manchester Rail Trail.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to approve.*

15. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$76,500 for CIP 713221 Weston Road & S. Willow Street Intersection Improvements.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted to approve.*

16. Communication from Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, requesting approval to subordinate city liens for three properties:
- 462 Lake Avenue
 - 665 Second Street
 - 260 Central Street

Mike Intranuovo, Clerk, stated it has been brought to our attention that these are not ready to be brought forward so we would look for a motion to receive and file.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to receive and file.*

17. Communication from Lisa Drabik, Human Resources Director, requesting an extension of the completion date for CIP 810924 Compensation Study to June 30, 2026.

Alderman Terrio stated I was under the impression that this was going to be done by now.

Lisa Drabik, HR Director, stated the reason I put in this request is when the project funds were originally authorized they had an end date of 6/30/2024 so the end of this fiscal year. We are still working with the consultant and haven't paid all of their bills because the work is ongoing and will likely continue at least through this summer and fall. After that, should there be an implementation scenario at some point, the funds are intended to go through that implementation period because we may have legal bills and that sort of thing with regard to checking some, and I don't want to get into the details, but FLSA statuses and those sort of things. It is really to take us through the period of

implementation. It was just meant to be an administrative request to extend the date so the funds would continue to be available.

Alderman Terrio asked how much of the work would you say is done. Is it 80% or 90%?

Ms. Drabik answered I would say 65%.

Alderman Terrio stated I don't want to wait two years. So you are thinking maybe late summer or early fall?

Ms. Drabik replied the goal would be to present the results to the BMA sometime in late summer or early fall. Thereafter, it just depends on what the Board would like to do and what implementation scenarios would look like and that sort of thing.

Alderman Terrio asked can we change your deadline to like August. Is that okay and then we can move it again if we need to?

Ms. Drabik replied if the committee would like to do that you can. Again, it just depends on the timing of when the consultant's bill comes in and that sort of thing. We pay as we go meaning they have to complete a certain portion of work before we pay the bill. I was intending to get some flexibility on the availability of the funds, that's all.

Alderman Terrio stated I am trying to think of the best course of action. Two years is too long.

Ms. Drabik responded if we could get it extended at least through the end of the next fiscal year, again, it is intended to pay the consultant for the portion of the work they are doing but then there is going to be work on the back end as well. It is not just paying the consultant. Let's say, for example, that we adopt a whole new wage structure. We are going to have to build that into our system. There is a lot of work on the front end, middle and back end.

Alderman Terrio asked but I am talking about just the report and not necessarily putting a wage structure into the system. I would like the report of what the new compensation is going to be. I would hope that would be done before then.

Ms. Drabik replied that is correct but the way the project was written, the funds were intended to cover not only the consultant's fee but I also have a project manager in HR who is assisting me with this and an internal employee project manager, as well as any legal fees we might incur. We built in a bunch of intangibles at the end to be able to implement this.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, stated another option is you could extend it out to 6/30/25 and if Director Drabik isn't finished at that point, she can come back and ask for another extension.

Alderman Terrio stated I would like to extend it to late summer or early fall.

Alderman Long asked is this ARPA funding.

Ms. Drabik answered no.

Alderman Long asked so none of it is ARPA funding.

Ms. Drabik responded no.

Alderman Long stated I agree with Alderman Terrio that if we can extend it to 6/30/25 and then if in March or May you see that you don't have the finances to finish up you can come back to CIP and we can extend it. Would that be okay?

Ms. Drabik replied sure.

Alderman Terrio asked if we receive and file this now, where does that leave us.

Ms. Drabik answered the funds would expire 6/30/24, the funding for the project so I wouldn't have the funding to pay the consultant as the work is ongoing.

Alderman Long moved to extend the project until 6/30/25.

Chairman Morgan asked is there any chance that this study will come back with salary or wage decreases.

Ms. Drabik responded no.

Chairman Morgan stated so based on the taxpayers, which I am looking out for, I would like to receive and file this.

Ms. Drabik replied the funding is necessary to complete the contract with the consultant to get the results and have the presentation in front of the Board and that sort of thing. Keep in mind if you would that it wouldn't just be okay here is perhaps a new wage table to cover every classification in the city. There may be recommended ordinance changes that go along with it because right now the ordinances spell out how people move within the system. It is a lot bigger than just salary ranges if you will. It is a whole system, which is one of the reasons it is taking so long. We have over 450 job classifications in the city and we are going systematically through each one to make sure that we are doing this right.

Alderman Long stated I respect your interest in the taxpayer, Chairman, however, my interest is with the workers that the taxpayers depend on. I would like to see this move forward and I would like to know where we stand as far as compensation for our workers. Again, I would like to see this extended until 6/30/25.

Chairman Morgan stated based on my feeling for the taxpayers, I would like to see this motion to receive and file. I don't accept the motion to extend until 6/30/25.

Alderman Long asked how much have you spent thus far Ms. Drabik.

Ms. Drabik answered I think there is a balance right now of \$538,575 of the \$750,000.

Alderman Long asked so the \$250,000 would have been spent for nothing if we receive and file this extension.

Ms. Drabik responded right and we do have a contractual obligation.

Alderman Long asked which we have to pay.

Ms. Drabik replied right.

Alderman Kantor asked they must have a deadline.

Ms. Drabik answered there is not a hard deadline in the contract because this is a very large project. A lot of it is outside of the consultant's control because we are trying to compare our data to 20 other municipalities and it takes a while to get that information from them. We can't force them to do it, if you will, in a certain timeframe. We have done all of the internal hierarchy work and have just recently been able to finalize the data set from the comparable municipalities. They are now analyzing the data and, in fact, I have another meeting with them in two days to get a status report on where they stand in regards to our external comparables and how we layer that over the internal data. After that, we would come forward with potential implementation scenarios in which case they say here are the results and they would cost out certain ways the city could make changes and there could be various options. So it is a lot of analysis that we are paying them to do.

Alderman Terrio asked how long have they been working on this.

Ms. Drabik replied we started in late August of 2023. A study like this, just to give you a generic answer if you will, normally takes about a year and a half. We are trying to do it as quickly as we can.

Alderman Terrio asked was it projected to end in June of this year.

Ms. Drabik responded I think that was because of the time the money was originally set aside. They did 18 months from that date. I wasn't able to do the RFP that quickly. I had to interview consultants and bring them on and enter into a contract to get going.

Chairman Morgan stated we have five minutes left so we have to move on this.

Alderman Terrio moved to receive and file. Alderman Kantor duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Long stated again so that means that \$250,000 went down the tubes as well as whatever outstanding bills there are. We are going to have to come up with that money and that will affect the budget and the tax rate. We will have to pay those bills because we have a contract. I just want you to know what you are doing by receiving and filing this.

Chairman Morgan stated I understand but I think that would be far less than the overall cost for the taxpayers in the long run.

Chairman Morgan called for a vote. The motion carried with Aldermen Long and Burkush duly recorded in opposition.

18. Communication from Caleb Dobbins, Highway Chief Engineer, requesting approval of the FY25 Roadway Program in the amount of \$5,300,000 and the School Parking Lot Rehabilitation in the amount of \$1,000,000.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to approve.*

TABLED ITEM

19. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$184,630 for CIP 610024 Winter Emergency Shelter.
(Note: Tabled on April 2, 2024.)

***Alderman Terrio** moved to remove this item from the table. **Alderman Long** duly seconded the motion. Chairman Morgan called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Kantor being duly recorded in opposition.*

Alderman Terrio** stated this is the money for the shelter. I know the Mayor needs this money in order to pay the bills at the shelter. I **move to approve it and send it up to the full BMA tonight.

***Alderman Long** duly seconded the motion. Chairman Morgan called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.



Clerk of Committee