COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
May 6, 2025 at 5:15 PM

Chairman Morgan called the meeting to order.

The Clerk calls the roll.

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

Messrs.: J. Belanger, C. Michaud, T. Fleming, A. Alvarez, S. Garrity

1. Communication from Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, regarding the award of two grants from the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs and requesting the following:
1) Approval of an Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds from the Housing Infrastructure Municipal Grant Program in the amount of $116,753 for CIP 611325 231 Merrimack Street Affordable Housing Program; and
2) Approval to put $205,500 from the Housing Production Municipal Grant Program into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Chairman Morgan stated I would like to break these into two and look for a motion on the first request.

*On motion of **Alderman Burkush**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to approve the request for $116,753 for CIP 611325 231 Merrimack Street Affordable Housing Program.*

Chairman Morgan stated on the second request, I would like to see if we can transfer the money into the general assistance rental fund for Welfare.

***Alderman Burkush** moved to transfer $205,500 from the Housing Production Municipal Grant into CIP 810525 General Assistance (Rentals).*

Alderman Terrio asked why don't I see that on our agenda.

Alderman Burkush stated we are looking to add it to the Welfare Department's budget which will in turn reduce next year's budget for Welfare by that amount. I spoke to Jeff Belanger about this.

Alderman Terrio asked Jeff are you okay with that.

Chairman Morgan stated the question is can that money be used for other purposes and if so, what can it be used for.

Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, replied yes. I have gotten confirmation from Business & Economic Affairs (BEA) that the money is unrestricted and can be used for any municipal purpose.

Chairman Morgan stated the motion on the table is to transfer that money into the general assistance fund for Welfare and I will let Charleen explain what that is.

Charleen Michaud stated when I presented by budget to the mayor, my proposal was based on existing needs. I had made mention to him that it was existing needs only and if there were cuts at the federal or state level the funding I was requesting would most likely be inadequate. Since that time, we have found out about a few federal cuts that will impact our budget. One of those cuts has to do with SSI overpayments. Another one has to do with refugee cash. For example, right now if a refugee comes to the United States they receive refugee cash benefits of about $1,200/month for an entire year. The federal government has now changed that to just four months. These changes will ultimately trickle down to our office. Not dollar for dollar but certainly I anticipate seeing an impact and there are other changes we are anticipating that could be coming that again would impact our budget. Things like the Medicaid Expansion Program for example. I know that a few meetings ago someone came and spoke about HB 60 which would make changes to the eviction laws. There are a number of things. Changes to SNAP are potentially proposed and there could be subsidized housing vouchers that go away. Again, there are a number of things that will trickle down to us and we would need additional money in order to meet those expenditures. As you all know, you are required by law to meet our general assistance expenditures regardless of our budget.

Alderman Terrio asked Jeff did you have any plans for this money.

Mr. Belanger answered no. We applied for this because we found out about the opportunity. The Planning Department, Mayor’s Office and Economic Development all worked together to get these funds. We did not have any specific purpose for them. We were eligible for them because affordable housing was constructed in Manchester within a specific window of time. That was the genesis but we always knew that there were no restrictions on the funds.

Alderman Long asked so you don’t have the funds.

Ms. Michaud replied in our budget that the Mayor gave us, we have about $640,000 in general assistance funds for next year. This adds to that.

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

2. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of $20,000 for CIP 211425 School Based Dental Program - Medicaid.

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

3. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of $166,667 for CIP 411923 MPAL Juvenile Court Diversion Coordinator.

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

4. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of $18,902 for CIP C3000040125 FY22 Hazmat Additional Funds.

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

5. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of $23,493.62 for CIP C300040225 FY24 Hazard Mitigation Grant.

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

6. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of $24,893 for CIP C410020125 Bloomberg Opportunity Youth Collaborative - Amplifying Youth Voice.

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

7. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of $84,045 for CIP C330040025 BJA FY24 Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN).

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

8. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of $200,000 for CIP C300040325 Opioid Abatement - CRU 2nd Shift.

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

9. Communication from Caleb Dobbins, Highway Chief Engineer, requesting early approval for the following projects:

- $300,000 for CIP C500070226 FY26 Parks Paving (bond)
- $1,000,000 for CIP C500070126 FY26 School Paving (MSD bond)
- $6,538,000 for CIP C500070326 FY26 Roadway Program (bond, MTF, degradation fees)

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

10. Communication from Ryan Cashin, Fire Chief, requesting permission to obtain two additional license plates for the department's vehicle barrier trailers.

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

11. Communication from Adam Alvarez, owner of the property at 232 Conant Street, requesting that the $55,000 HOME Loan recapture provision owed to the City be pro-rated.

Alderman Kantor stated I would like some clarity on this because he is selling the property and making a profit.

Chairman Morgan stated it is my understanding that about nine years ago NeighborWorks came in and helped redevelop the house and put some money into it. They put this home and a number of homes on the market to allow low income people to purchase the homes. Mr. Alvarez was able to do that and with the market rates what they are right now, he is able to sell it. I know he has a family and is moving into a different neighborhood. Basically, he is asking us to prorate the penalty which is $55,000 so that he can recoup a little bit of that since he has been in the house for almost 10 years. That is basically what he is requesting and that would be about $35,000 off of the $55,000.

Alderman Terrio stated I am trying to do the numbers. It is saying we put $448,000 into the property.

Chairman Morgan responded that was how much is cost to redevelop the property. I guess it wasn’t in great shape at that time.

Alderman Terrio asked so the city paid $448,000.

Chairman Morgan answered it was NeighborWorks and that is what they do. They work with the city to get funds. If you want, we can have Jeff or Todd come up to explain it.

Todd Fleming, CIP, stated Alderman Morgan is right. Basically the city provided $448,000 in HOME funds to NeighborWorks to develop this property. The intent was that it would be purchased by a low income family. For a low income family to be able to afford that property, the purchase price was reduced by about $80,000. At that time, the market price was $205,000 plus around $80,000. The HOME funds subsidized the mortgage so a low income family could purchase the property. The HOME fund requirements have affordability periods. Basically, if the person holds onto the property for a period of 15 years, then there is no recapture. The requirements state that if you are not the principal resident for 15 years then you have to repay the recapture, which is the $55,000.

Alderman Terrio stated so the city put $448,000 into fixing it and then it was sold for $205,000 correct.

Mr. Fleming responded correct. The property was in pretty rough condition and pretty much a gut rehab at that time.

Alderman Terrio asked so the city is holding a mortgage of $164,000 on it.

Mr. Fleming answered we had a mortgage for the $205,000 for a 30-year term. The repayment is around $167,000.

Alderman Terrio stated so if he lived there another three years, he wouldn't have to pay the $55,000. If the city gets this money, what do we do with it? Do we use the money for more affordable housing?

Mr. Fleming replied that is correct. It is what we call HOME program income so then it would have to be used to develop additional affordable housing.

Chairman Morgan asked can you explain the proration.

Mr. Fleming answered the HOME rules basically state that the city has the ability, if they want, to prorate the recapture.

Alderman Terrio stated I understand that. So $55,000 for 15 years. I just want to make sure I have the number right.

Mr. Fleming responded the way I looked at it was I calculated a monthly proration of about $305 per month. I believe it is around 116 months.

Alderman Terrio asked and what number does that come out to.

Mr. Fleming replied my figure is around $35,443.80.

Alderman Terrio asked so the home owner would pay us $35,000 instead of $55,000.

Mr. Fleming answered no that amount would be forgiven.

Alderman Terrio asked so it would be around $20,000.

Mr. Fleming replied yes in round numbers around $20,000.

Alderman Kantor asked is this done often.

Mr. Fleming responded since I have been here, we haven't done a lot of home ownership projects. They are pretty complicated. This really hasn't come up before. To give you an example, we have a lead program and that program is a forgivable loan if a person or property owner meets certain requirements for three years. If they don't meet it, then they have to repay the entire loan amount. It is a little different. We have had instances on the CIP Committee before where property owners have come in and requested that loans be restructured or forgiven. There have been some instances but not quite the same as this one. When this project started, the HOME rules state that you can either do recapture or resale and the city has to pick one or the other. If they picked resale, then the owner would have to sell at a specific price to a low income family. With this particular project, the city ended up financing this because we couldn't get a bank that would finance the purchase of the property because of the HOME restrictions. I imagine it would have been the same if we put a resale to a low income family restriction in it. A bank would have never financed the mortgage to a buyer, at least based on my experience. That is a little history.

Chairman Morgan stated it is also important to note that he has put quite a bit of money into this - $80,000 to $100,000 for renovations and has been a great steward in the neighborhood since then. He has done a lot of good things. It has allowed him to own a home and now move on to a different home for his family. It has been a good program and I think that is the point.

Alderman O'Neil stated they appear to be selling it for $680,000. Why wouldn't they just pay the $55,000?

Mr. Fleming responded that is basically what the note says they should do.

Alderman O'Neil stated they are making a pretty good profit. Why don't they just pay it off? I don't understand it.

Chairman Morgan responded it is easy to make that calculation but I think you also have to look at the market rates for buying a new house. The rates have gone up. You can sell your house but then you have to buy another house for the same rate or even higher. It isn't like he is putting all of the money in the bank. I think he is putting it all into a new house.

Alderman Kantor asked is he staying in Manchester.

Jeff Belanger stated he is here and we could have him answer that.

Alderman Kantor asked have you come here to speak before.

Adam Alvarez responded I did and I have met you before.

Alderman Kantor stated I remember that you had a lot of great things to say. I am glad things have worked out. I think people need to hear the truth. Are you heading out of town or are you staying in Manchester?

Mr. Alvarez answered I am moving slightly out of town. Not too far because I am self-employed in town. I am looking to move to Goffstown. I belong to a church and all of my kid's friends are out there. A place came up right down the street from family and friends. It is an awesome opportunity and I had to jump on it.

Alderman Kantor replied I totally understand. I just think continuing to give back to Manchester is key so I wanted to hear your story.

Mr. Alvarez stated I will still be around three or four days a week. All of my work is here in Manchester.

Alderman Long asked would you say that nine years ago this helped you get to where you are today where you are better off.

Mr. Alvarez answered undeniably so. I would call this a transition of generational wealth. I could barely afford to get into the house at the time and now I am able to buy a single-family home.

Alderman Long stated congratulations.

Chairman Morgan stated the motion is to approve the amount from Planning which is $19,556.20.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted to approve the request duly seconded the motion and pro-rate the HOME Loan recapture provision for a new amount of $19,556.20.*

12. Discussion regarding the possibility of displaying a portrait of Frederick Douglass outside of the Aldermanic Chambers.

Alderman Kantor asked can we have Stan Garrity from the Heritage Commission come up to speak about the amazing plaque and the history behind it.

Chairman Morgan asked are we talking about the plaque or the portrait.

Alderman Kantor answered we are talking about the plaque and I am requesting a portrait to be placed with it. He is the one that installed the plaque.

Stan Garrity stated I came here to help you make a decision. I can help in any way. That plaque came about during my research about the black history of Manchester. We found out that Frederick Douglass spoke here. Not in this hall because it wasn't here back then but I thought it would be appropriate to put some kind of marker to honor that. That is how that plaque came about.

Alderman Terrio stated this building was built around 1845. He came here before 1845?

Mr. Garrity replied he spoke here in 1854.

Alderman Terrio stated City Hall was built in 1845.

Mr. Garrity responded right. He spoke at City Hall. There weren't many halls around at that time. He was invited by the mayor and aldermen at that time to speak here. I thought it was cool and that is where the plaque came from. The plaque cost about $800. It is not very big but weighs a lot. As far as a picture, I can research that and come up with something and we can do that.

Alderman Long asked does this fit into the black history scenario.

Mr. Garrity answered yes it is part of the black history of Manchester. That plaque came out of the CIP grant that I got. That grant is gone. People do still donate money to that cause so there might be a little bit in there to take care of this.

Alderman Long asked did I hear that a portrait and a plaque and you will advise us as to where it would best be placed.

Mr. Garrity responded the plaque is on the wall now and we will put the picture next to the plaque.

Alderman Long asked so the picture will be in the same spot.

Mr. Garrity replied yes. I have to take a look at it and City Hall staff would have to look to see the best place to put it and the best size picture. I think it would look good with a picture there. There are all kinds of pictures of Frederick Douglass that I am sure we would be able to buy and put there. It will be nice.

Alderman Kantor stated I would love to see a bold portrait of the ultimate freedom fighter.

Mr. Garrity responded there are many pictures; some when he was young and some when he was older. Before we pick out the picture, we will get it approved by the BMA.

Chairman Morgan asked so your request, Alderman Kantor, is to put a picture next to the plaque.

Alderman Kantor answered above it and large.

Mr. Garrity stated if we put it above it, I may have to lower the plaque. We will look and see where the best place to put it would be.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Kantor**, it was voted to approve the request to hang a portrait of Frederick Douglass near the current plaque.*

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

A True Record. Attest.

Matthew Normand

Clerk of Committee