

BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

APRIL 24, 2023

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Monday, April 24, 2023, at 7:16 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman, presided.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance.

Members of Committee present: Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr., Clerk
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman Ernest Jette
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly

Members not in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
Alderman John Sullivan

Also in Attendance: Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS

From: Kevin Burgess, Chairman, Board of Fire Commissioners
Re: Fire Apparatus Replacement - R-23-103

From: Kevin Burgess, Chairman, Board of Fire Commissioners
Re: Fire Apparatus Replacement - R-23-104

From: Chris Lynch, Airport Manager
Re: Request to be excluded from FY2024 Budget Committee meeting

From: Len Fournier, Superintendent, Woodlawn/Pinewood Cemeteries
Re: Requesting to be excluded from FY23 budget hearing meeting

From: Kenneth J. Lennox, Superintendent, The Edgewood Cemetery
Re: Fiscal Year 2023 highlights and objectives for Fiscal Year 2024

Chairman Dowd

The last three were there's no funds that they're requesting from the City budget so there's no sense bringing them in here for a meeting and they have explained a little bit about their particular budgets. The cemetery's budgets come from their trust funds and the airport has their own funds.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-23-103

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman John Sullivan
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman Thomas Lopez

Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY TREASURER TO ISSUE BONDS NOT TO EXCEED ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,700,000) TO PURCHASE ONE NEW LADDER TRUCK FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

Chief do you want to come up and answer any potential questions? You can just stay for the next one too. Are there any questions for the Chief relative to the motion on the floor to recommend final passage to the full Board? Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Not true - well I guess it is a question but if the Chief could explain to you mentioned in the public hearing that there was a motor issue too. Just pure curiosity what you were speaking of.

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

Certainly. So as you can imagine, it's a little bit complex to try to come and ask for funding projecting that our trucks build spots are scheduled for 28+ months out, 32+ months out. Adding to that, the EPA is going to be releasing a new emissions restriction guideline in 2027. The motor that we utilize in all of our apparatus is manufactured by Cummins. Cummins has done their research and development on the advances they're going to make in technology to meet those emission standards in 2027. They decided to release that motor in 2026. So as we sit here today, we cannot put hands on this motor. There is very little data, if any, in regards to this new generation motor. What we do know from past experience is that first generation motors sometimes have bugs or problems with them. We have gone down that road in the past. We end up spending some money. More importantly, the apparatus usually ends up spending a significant time out of service. So we have a three quarters of a million or \$1.7 million piece of apparatus that we can't use and we end up having to work with the manufacturer through some bugs. We're not opposed to the technology. We just would probably like to embrace it on the second generation or the second round.

So by placing our order at this point in time, we would get what I refer to as a "legacy motor". It's one that currently is on the road that we've been utilizing for several years and is probably not prone to any of the bugs that we think potentially could be an issue for us.

Chairman Dowd

Chief along those same lines, wouldn't you have to train your mechanics to be able to maintain a new engine because it's not the ones we currently have?

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

So yeah there would be some training and software upgrades that would go along with the new generation motor. This isn't just simply a motor upgrade. They've made some significant advances in technology with their big block engines that they're hoping will make them a competitor with the electric vehicle market.

So besides all of everything I just said and the problems that could potentially come with the first generation of it, the motor alone on these pieces of apparatus will see a price increase of a minimum of \$100,000.

Chairman Dowd

Okay.

Alderman Clemons

Yes just a quick follow up. So we're doing this ahead of time and I agree 100% with everything you've said. I'm behind this but just for curiosity sake, what would be the normal timeframe if we weren't under the gun to get this in and production wasn't backed up? Like in years past, what is a normal timeframe for us to reorder a truck or order a new truck?

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

So previous go back two years when we were in the pandemic still and just coming out of it, build times on apparatus for an engine was about 8 to 10 months and aerial apparatus was 12 to 14 months. Over the last year and a half, build times have exploded to what I currently laid out for you at 28+ months and then 32+ months.

Alderman Clemons

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions for the Chief? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman. So Chief you and I talked about this last week and I don't pretend to know much about fire trucks. Certainly not as much as you do and I wouldn't dare to second guess you about anything that you just said. I was disappointed when I talked to you only because not challenging or questioning your expertise at all but I was disappointed because the City has several years ago declared its intention to get away from burning fossil fuels as much as possible. That was confirmed and reiterated in the recent Master Plan that we just adopted - the Imagine Nashua - and then the Board of Aldermen just recently within a few months passed a Resolution that among other things asked that any vehicle purchases be reviewed by the Sustainability Department to see whether or not an electric vehicle would be a practical choice.

So when you first told me that one of the reasons for pushing this ahead, I don't question the need for the vehicles. They're on the CERF schedule but not until '26 or '27. You've explained that we're pushing this ahead because of the lead time required. Another reason that you gave me and you alluded to it tonight is that the EPA is going to require more stringent emission controls on these engines in the future. Not for the purpose of giving anybody a hard time but to help us get control of this climate crisis that we're all hearing about and we're all trying to avoid. So when I first heard you say if we do this ahead of time, we can get an engine that will be grandfathered and not have to comply with these new regulations.

So you've explained and I did talk to a Fire Commissioner who I looked at the minutes of the meeting when you reviewed this. The minutes are very sketchy so it didn't really tell me much. I wondered whether the Commission had really looked at it and considered this. I talked to one of the Commissioners and was reassured that yes the Commission did consider what I'm bringing up now. I was reassured by that. So I understand why you want to go ahead with this now and try to get this so-called legacy engine that's going to be grandfathered. I hope and I think you tried to reassure me. I think you did in the future anything like when you've got a lot of vehicles that I mean you've got a vehicle. The Deputy's got a vehicle, the fire inspector and there are other vehicles. That whenever those come up for renewal that you will be looking at EVs as a possible solution. In the future, more major equipment that you'll seriously look at.

After we talked, I went to the Cummins website and they talk about this new engine as the best thing since sliced bread. I know it's the manufacturer talking but they're raving about this new engine. I went to the Pierce website and I see that they are offering electric fire trucks now. These new electric trucks they have not only the battery for the electric part of it but they also have a new gasoline or diesel powered engine just to make sure that you don't run out of electricity while you're at a fire. You've got this engine that will supplement that so you're assured you are able to get to the fire, and pump the water that's needed, and get back home when necessary. So this seems like a great thing and they talk about one of the advantages of the EV pumper is its quiet. So on the scene, the communication among your officers is much easier, much better. So it sounds like it's a good thing. I understand your reluctance to jump into something brand new without its being proven. I respect that and understand that. But I hope as we move forward that you and the Fire Commission will be on board with this new technology and help us get away from fossil fuels that are doing so much damage to the climate.

So in the form of a question, can you say that yes you will do that?

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

So yes. First off after these two apparatus, the next apparatus we'll be ordering will have that new generation motor in it.

In regards to EV fire apparatus, that is on the horizon coming at us. I've already had a conversation with Doria Brown in regards to it. She has a tool that she utilizes to cost analyze not only the price of the equipment you're buying but also the infrastructure that you would have to install within your facility to support it. We're going to start doing some work in that area. As you know in our Master Plan within the Fire Department, it spoke to a significant investment in the Fire Department Infrastructure, i.e., our facilities in the future. I would say that one of the best things we could do is set ourselves up for the future, potentially EV fire apparatus, when we're remodeling, or rehabbing, or building new fire stations we actually would equip those with the infrastructure needed if we ever have the opportunity to go down that road. I will tell you that EV fire apparatus are still fairly new. They're not like electric cars that have been on the road for 5 to 10 years. The first one just hit the market about two years ago. They're mostly out west. Cambridge was actually looking at them at one point in time and decided not to go with them. But they're actually doing exactly what I just said and as they rehab their fire stations, they're investing in the infrastructure to support it for the future. Yes we will be utilizing that technology at some point in time in the future.

Chairman Dowd

All set Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Yes, thank you very much.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Yes Alderman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

I'll keep it brief. I just wanted to echo some of the questions most of them got asked. But I had similar questions around what we were going to do in the future given the new technology and just wanted to make the comment that I heard a lot of things from you that's what we're hoping to hear in terms of starting to build-up the infrastructure and start doing to get ready for it. Our intent wasn't to suddenly make every department have to be on the leading edge of technology and understand that reliability can be a little bit scary, especially when we're talking about fire trucks.

So I just wanted to echo that this discussion came up in the Energy and Environment Committee, and in general City departments and how they're going to start rolling in to our goals but also the new regulations. So I think this makes sense. I'm looking forward to us continuing to push forward and to my colleague's point, wherever we can make jumps if it's easier to swap out a truck that you drive around, I'd love to see that as well.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah, I would just like to say Chief I got to commend you and the Board of Fire Commissioners. I hear echoes of my father and the advice and being a shade tree mechanic myself. Never buy a car that is initially come off its native. Let them work the bugs out. I think you're saving the City an awful lot of money by doing this so good thought process.

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

So just one thing. It's not directly applicable but the United States government just built the latest aircraft carrier - the USS Gerald Ford. They put a whole bunch of new technology on it. It was four years late and billions of dollars over run because the technology when it to sea didn't work. They have now put in legislation all the companies that build stuff for the government that says you will not do that anymore basically without going into the details. Any other questions? Yes, Alderman, I mean Chief?

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

No thank you. I just wanted to bring to your attention that this is a very time-sensitive matter for us in the Fire Department. Because of the build times, there are only so many build spots left in the schedule. As of late last week, there was 14 engine spots available and 26 aerial build spots available. So I would request the Committee to move forward with a verbal report at the full Board tomorrow so we can move the funding mechanism forward and the Mayor can take the appropriate steps to get us...

Chairman Dowd

Should be on the agenda.

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

Thank you.

Alderman O'Brien

Equally concur.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Seeing none. Thank you Chief.

MOTION CARRIED

R-23-104

- Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman John Sullivan
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY TREASURER TO ISSUE BONDS NOT TO EXCEED NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$900,000) TO PURCHASE ONE NEW PUMPER TRUCK FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

The Motion on the floor is to recommend final passage of R-23-104 and I assume most of the arguments follow for this truck as it was for the previous one. Are there any additional questions though? Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. Pardon my not knowing much about your fleet. How many pumper trucks do we have?

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

So we have six frontline engines and we have three reserve engines. The reserve engines are actually utilized on the front line a very significant amount of time for us to do our preventive maintenance for when there's electronic issues or warranty work that needs to be done. At the end of the day, a used piece of fire apparatus after 15 or 20 years does not have much value. We realize the benefit from holding on to it so that we can actually put people in a truck. Alderman O'Brien can probably speak to a few days where he showed up to work and he was put in a station wagon or a van to respond to fires because they were out of fire trucks. Thankfully, we haven't been in that position for many years because we run the reserve fleet that we do.

Alderwoman Kelly

If I could follow up?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. I appreciate that. Obviously, do not have a whole grasp of the largeness of our fleet. The reason I asked is because I felt like we had just replaced a pumper. I feel like maybe last summer we did. Do we tend to try to get them more spread out than a couple of years apart?

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

So I think an important thing to remember here is the trucks we're ordering we're funding to order tonight will not be here for 28 to 32 months. So you are correct. We just received two trucks last summer but these ones under normal build conditions, we wouldn't be in front of you for another year and half two years so there would be a couple years in between them. Because of the build times, we have to order now to get them here in time for '26/'27.

Chairman Dowd

Any additional questions? Yes, Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

If we still were using station wagons, those could be EVs right?

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

Potentially.

Alderman O'Brien

Good one Alderman.

Alderman Clemons

If they made an EV station wagon, sure.

Steve Buxton, Chief Nashua Fire Rescue

Could we get that with wood paneling as well?

Chairman Dowd

Alright. Motion on the floor is to recommend final passage of R-23-104.

MOTION CARRIED

R-23-111

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$365,083.34 OF FY2023 UNANTICIPATED REVENUE INTO FUND #7024 “OPIOID ABATEMENT EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND”

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O’BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

Motion on the floor is to recommend final passage of R-23-111. Any questions? Yes, Alderman Thibeault.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you Mr. Chairman. This won’t show up tomorrow in the meeting, right? It will show up in two weeks or will it show up tomorrow?

Chairman Dowd

I think the only ones that we’re having a special review on are the fire trucks.

Alderman Thibeault

Okay good. I was just curious because the question has been brought up about having somebody there. Maybe in two weeks, somebody can speak to this a little bit more. I was curious about it and wanted to make sure that it was going to something that was helping.

Chairman Dowd

Either that or a note through Donna to everyone that explains it.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

All right. Any other questions? Alderman O’Brien?

Alderman O’Brien

Thank you. Yes just a statement. Too bad the Chief had to run so quick but the opioid abatement is still a front and center issue and anything to help out the cause with that. It’s still prevalent unfortunately within a certain segment of our community. This is a good way to try to help those that are affected.

Chairman Dowd

Any additional? Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. I was reading the Union Leader and I don't know whether it was Sunday's or today's paper but opioid overdoses in Nashua are up 80% over last year. So this is unanticipated revenue. I don't know where it's coming from. It's coming from the State but I don't know whether it's a grant or whether or not it's from a settlement or something. Regardless, we have an issue. It's not coming from City tax money so I think this is a good use of these funds because obviously we are not over that problem yet unfortunately.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

I'm reading the analysis provided to us by I think the Legal Department which says this is \$365,000 of unanticipated revenue which represents the City's proportional share of funds received from the State for all opioid related settlement funds or judgements. So I wasn't on the Board then but sometime in the past the Board retained a law firm to represent the City and the law suits that were against the opioid manufacturers. So this evidently is part of that money from the settlement of those cases. It's going to be put into the opioid abatement expendable trust fund. It sounds like it's going to be used against the fight of this crisis.

So I'm not against it. I don't want to do anything to hold this up. My comment earlier was it would just be nice to have somebody who knows as opposed to my reading a paragraph and interpreting it. It would be nice to have somebody who knows who could tell us exactly where this is coming from and where it's going. As Alderman Lopez pointed out, an opportunity to educate us and the public about this crisis which is really a crisis that we're as Alderman Clemons pointed out, it's not getting any better. It's getting worse so thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Thank you. Yeah I'm assuming I remember the State was part of a bunch of States that sued and that money goes to the federal government and takes forever to go to the State and even longer to come to the cities and towns. So it may have been done a long time ago. Hopefully, we get a detailed explanation. No other questions?

MOTION CARRIED

R-23-112

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$18,009 OF FY2023 UNANTICIPATED REVENUE INTO FUND #7026 "CAPITAL EQUIPMENT RESERVE FUND"

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE
MOTION CARRIED**

R-23-113

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$35,360.50 OF FY2023 UNANTICIPATED REVENUE INTO FUND #7026 "CAPITAL EQUIPMENT RESERVE FUND"
**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE
MOTION CARRIED**

R-23-114

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**RELATIVE TO THE TRANSFER OF \$5,000 FROM DEPARTMENT 194 “CONTINGENCY”, ACCOUNT 70100
“GENERAL CONTINGENCY” TO DEPARTMENT 144 “EDGEWOOD & SUBURBAN CEMETERIES”, ACCOUNTING
CLASSIFICATION 51 “SALARIES & WAGES”**

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

Motion is to recommend final passage of R-23-114. I'll give an overview real quick. Because of the number of Saturday burials this year, they're overrunning their overtime account and what we're doing is we're forwarding the money so they can pay their overtime. They're going to give the money back to use out of their trust fund. So it will be a zero wash for the City but they have to do that now because they're running low for overtime out of their current city budget. So if anybody has any more questions, we can ask Miss Lindner to come up but it's my cemetery and I've talked to the Trustees and I know what's going on. Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Could I just ask? These Saturday burials I mean I think Saturday is a popular day for funerals. It's a sad occasion and people want to do this when as many members of the family are available so I understand why there would be a lot of Saturday burials. Does the cemetery charge people extra in order to pay for the overtime or is that just worked into their budget?

Chairman Dowd

I'm not entirely sure exactly how they manage it but Saturday burials are overtime for their staff. They account for some in their budget but they had so many Saturday burials that whole new section they just opened up which is over two acres is filling up fast and they're running out of gravesites. They're going to make some - I forget the term for ashes exterior - they're like little monuments like they have up in Manchester but they haven't done those yet. But they're running out of gravesites and there's been a substantial number of deaths of the last year and a lot of them on Saturdays and that's overtime. They're running short and we can't allow them to run short of funds to pay their employees.

They had asked for at the last budget season, we had granted them some additional employees. Yes, Saturday burials are very popular and if it's done on a Saturday, that's overtime because those people are there five days a week anyway.

Alderman Jette

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Seeing none.

MOTION CARRIED

R-23-115

Endorsers: Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A FEDERAL AID PROJECT AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING AN ACCESSIBLE RAMP TO THE COTTON MILL TRANSFER BRIDGE AND TO ACCEPT AND APPROPRIATE \$300,000 FOR THE PROJECT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

Motion is to recommend final passage of R-23-115. Do we have someone here if there are any additional questions? Does anybody have any questions? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Thank you. If I could ask Miss Lindner if she could - so what this Resolution is doing is accepting \$300,000 State grant or federal grant but the total cost of the project is much more, right? If I read it, it's \$1,140,000. Can you explain where the rest of the money is coming from?

Amy Deroche, Economic Development

The rest of the money for the construction is coming from the Riverfront TIF bond that was previously approved for construction of the full project.

Alderman Jette

But all this Resolution is doing is accepting the \$300,000 from the federal grant?

Amy Deroche, Economic Development

Correct.

Alderman Jette

Okay. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Seeing none.

MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE - None

GENERAL DISCUSSION - None

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN - None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ADJOURN

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was declared closed at 7:52 p.m.

Alderman Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Committee Clerk