

## BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

MAY 16, 2022

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Monday, May 16, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber and via Zoom which meeting link can be found on the agenda and on the city's website.

Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman, presided.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. If you are participating via Zoom, please state your presence, reason for not attending the meeting in person, and whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-To-Know Law.

Members of Committee present:           Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien  
Alderman John Cathey  
Alderman Ernest Jette  
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly (via Zoom)  
Alderman John Sullivan  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

Also in Attendance:                       Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Mayor Jim Donchess  
Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager  
Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel  
Susan Lovering, City Clerk  
Tara Murphy, Emergency Management Coordinator  
Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager  
John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

### ROLL CALL

#### Chairman Dowd

Before we get started, this is the first of many Budget Reviews for the Budget Committee and it's an opportunity to meet with the different Division Directors and to ask them questions relevant to their budget. As I mentioned at the last full Board Meeting, everyone plays review the section before we're going to be addressing before the evening arrives so that if you have any questions you might have relevant to that part of the budget.

We are also going to have public comment this evening - before and after the meeting. The one before should only address items that are being talked about this evening on the budget, the Mayor's office, the Board of Alderman, Legal Department, City Clerk's Office, Emergency Preparedness, and Citywide Communications.

### COMMUNICATIONS

From: Len Fournier, Superintendent, Woodlawn/Pinewood Cemeteries  
Re: FY23 Budget Narrative

From: Trustees of the Edgewood Cemetery  
Re: FY23 Budget Narrative

***There being no objection, Chairman Dowd accepted the communications and placed them on file.***

#### Chairman Dowd

The Cemeteries have sent us their letters because we are not meeting with them. Their funding comes out of the interest earned on their trust accounts. It's just telling us exactly what they do and what they spend their money on but it's within the control of the Trustees of the Cemetery.

Before we get into Unfinished Business, I'll open it up for public comment. Anyone that would like to comment on anything related to this evening's agenda? Please state your name and address for the record.

PUBLIC COMMENTLaurie Ortolano

Laurie Ortolano, 41 Berkeley Street. I won't have time to go through all of these, but I'm going to start right away with the Legal office. I'd like some real scrutiny done there. I don't think the Right-to-Know Coordinator position should be in there any longer for almost \$90,000. That did its stint. It cost us a lot of money because it created a lot of litigation that came right from the responses from that Right-to-Know Coordinator. It almost appeared as if no one in the Legal office was supervising the position and the work that was coming out.

I also have some real questions regarding the expenses. I don't see where there is any consultation fees in here if other attorneys are consulted and office supplies. I know what it costs for me to print and go in with books. My Right-to-Know lawsuit in December supposedly the City had run off 50,000 pages of documents they wanted to present at court making numerous copies. I don't believe that supply budget of \$3,000 is accurate. There must be money coming out of someplace else because I understand litigation now and I understand the paperwork involved and that cannot be all inclusive and the same with litigation related expenses. So I'd like to know if there is some other part of the budget where consultation with other law firms is being posted and I'd like to get that position out of there for Right-to-Know Coordinator.

Back to the Mayor's Budget. I'd like to see a position cut from that budget. The services – it says "communicates and engages with the public". This Mayor only communicates and engages with likeminded people who are similar to him. I want to see an office that engages all of us and that's not happening. "Creates a welcoming atmosphere within city government". This is not welcoming. You come into City Hall and there's locked doors with buttons and no doorbells and plaques up saying "by appointment only". This is the only City Hall I've been in the State that is like that. You know what, its okay. That's the way he wants his City Hall run that's fine. I don't want to fund all the positions. Whoever the PR person is in there and I don't understand all those strategic positions, I'd like you to ask each one as a name, no job description. I can certainly Right-to-Know to get all that. However, I'd like this Board to ask let's get rid of the PR person because I don't think they're PRing the way they should.

Board of Alderman not too many issues there, but I will say the transcriptionist is still in the budget for \$44,000. We haven't had that position filled since September. Why are we still funding it? We're obviously not doing minutes the way we used. We're abbreviating them...

Alderman O'Brien

30 seconds

Laurie Ortolano

...we're not using outside services to do this. So I would like to see that \$44,000 removed from the budget and trim it down and just go with our Legislative Assistant, abbreviated minutes, and we're done, YouTube postings and we're good. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Anyone else for public comment?

Fred Teeboom

Fred Teeboom. I'm call you from my home and I'm glad you finally decided to have public comment during these budget hearings that have been held for decades in the past. I don't know what made you think you should not have a public comment period because there is no such definition as a special work session in the ordinances or anywhere else in the State law.

Now, and I'll assume there will be a public comment period in every one of your Budget Review meetings. Now I haven't got time to review a lot of stuff with three minutes allocated. I would like to say if you look at the Resolution R-22-035 which you are now discussing and the analysis which applied to every single discussion you're having on this budget. There's a statement that absolutely should not be there. Since the Legal Department was there and Mr. Bolton is there, you've got something in there that says that "Court decisions concerning Nashua's Charter suggest that a court may find that this provision, when applied to the budget resolution itself, is inconsistent with state statutes". What kind of business would suggest a statement of analysis and if so, it completely faulty that it deals with a memorandum with a Supreme

Court Case, the Manchester Case, which is obsolete and was upended by the State Legislature. So that's just one of the many, many problems I have with this budget. The three minutes (inaudible) and I'll do so in a memorandum. A ridiculous, ridiculous calculation on page 4 that has to do with appropriations are \$113 million under the cap. What insanity came up with that conclusion? I will analyze this further and somebody in the Finance office that put this stuff together ought to get their head examined and I know...

Alderman O'Brien

30 seconds

Fred Teeboom

...where this all started. This all started with the Legal office because Bolton proposed a resolution that included grants – and I'll get into it later - but this kind of stuff must stop. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Anyone else for public comment? Seeing no one. End public comment.

By the way, I just would like to mention that the reason we didn't originally have public comment is I was hoping these would be sessions (especially with the new Aldermen) to have more time with the Division Directors but evidently our ordinances don't allow for that type of meeting so at the current time, we will have public comment. This is primarily time for the Aldermen, particularly the new Aldermen, to ask questions and get familiar with the city budget so they can analyze the budget and have comments and questions that they'd like answered.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

**R-22-035**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman John Sullivan  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman Thomas Lopez  
Alderman Alex Comeau  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman John Cathey  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**RELATIVE TO THE ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NASHUA GENERAL, ENTERPRISE, SPECIAL REVENUE AND GRANT FUNDS**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO OPEN R-22-035 FOR DISCUSSION**

DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS OF THE PROPOSED FY23 BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NASHUA

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ON THE QUESTIONChairman Dowd

Okay. So the motion before us is the city budget which is R-22-035. We will leave that open and we will talk to it this evening on the portions that are mentioned in the agenda. After we're done talking citywide Communications, I'm going to entertain a motion to table R-22-035 until our next Budget meeting. With that, I'd like to call the Mayor up and Mr. Griffin. The Mayor is going to give us an overview and thoughts on the budget and Mr. Griffin will be here to guide us through the entire process.

Mayor Donchess

Well thank you very much Mr. Chair. First I would like to of course welcome our new Aldermen to the budget process. As an Alderman, I always found it very interesting and very educational seeing all the department heads coming before you and answer various questions.

I would like to thank the budget team that has worked very hard on this over a period of months. Those people include John Griffin, of course who is here, CFO and City Treasurer, as well as Kim Kleiner, Administrative Services Director, Megan Caron, who is in the Mayor's office and Cheryl Lindner.

Regarding presentation, you will see that regarding each of the departments and divisions there are explanations of what their basic duties are, and what their responsibilities are, and what they've accomplished over the recent months and last year. Now this is something we have worked to improve. Megan Caron especially is working on this and we can continue to improve this. A few years ago there was no explanation whatsoever. Just numbers but - and I found just looking at it that it's very hard to get into the budget if you're not working with it all the time. So we're trying to make it more accessible and more friendly to people who from the outside weren't meeting every night and getting into the deep details regarding the budget.

So what I will do tonight Mr. Chair is talk about an overview of some of the overview issues of the budget and usually then I answer any questions. I'll be here for the Mayor's office and really I leave it to the Budget Committee to work with all the Departments that will come before you tonight and the succeeding weeks.

This year we are affected by the inflation in various aspects of the budget. We've as you seen the price of fuel is way up and that cuts across many departments. The cost of natural gas is up, the cost of materials, the cost of construction. There are many areas that have been affected or are being affected by inflation. One area where we are seeing inflation, but we've been able to offset it to a great degree at least in the short-term, is the area of healthcare. It's an area where healthcare costs are going up for employers in general at a fairly rapid rate but as we've discussed before, the Administrative Services Division developed a reformed HMO Plan which has many advantages for City employees and certainly for the City. That has been agreed to now by a whole number of employee groups, including large groups - the contracts you have recently approved - teachers, police officers. As a result, the rate of increase has been greatly moderated in the healthcare area and we think in the years ahead we will be saving as much as \$3.5 - \$4 million per year as a result of those changes.

We've tried not to add additional positions, although there are some that seemed necessary. Before I get into that, we will be looking during the course of the year if it's possible to eliminate positions through attrition which we think will be possible during the course of the year. Additional positions, there are two in the Police Department proposed by the department. One is a prosecutor. They're being greatly challenged by the number of cases that are pending and the speed with which those are being handled by the courts. Number two, there is a person to handle the body cameras on a full time basis. The body cameras are something we added last year. Then Deputy Rourke and I worked to put that in the budget and the body cameras were incorporated in police operations this fiscal year. They've proven to be very successful. They, of course, help understand what happens in any interaction between the Police Department and a member of the public. The Police Department reports to me that in some occasions it has caused a person that they're encountering who's excited to calm down because they realize they are on camera. So the Department considers that a major success but they need someone to handle all of the recordings that are on the web and they need to catalog these and just handle the whole process. So you will see within the Police Department budget I added last year the body cameras \$350,000 were funded in the Capital Improvements Budget. This year I just switched it over to the Police Department budget. This year's cost is \$290,000, so I added to their budget \$240,000. Now I asked them if they could handle a \$50,000 cut and I think they'll tell you that's manageable.

Another area where we proposed adding an employee is in the area of Right-to-Know. A Right-to-Know Paralegal for the

Administrative Services Division. The reason for this is that over the last several years we have received at least 1,200 Right-to-Know requests. Those come more than one a day. Sometimes they can be answered quickly. Other times, they are hours or days to respond to those requests. What we're finding is that a number of employees are spending a quarter of their time, half their time just on Right-to-Know requests. It's burning people out. We've had people leave because of it. People work here for the City sometimes they receive pay that is not equivalent to what they might get in the private sector, but they work here because they want to serve the citizens of Nashua. Say as a Chief Assessor or some other job and they don't want to spend half their time answering Right-to-Know requests. When they encounter that, they tend to look for another job. So what this will do is it will help us give some relief to those who are spending as much time on these 1,200 Right-to-Know requests as they are spending and hopefully we can retain people in positions where they can serve the City and still enjoy the job and focus on the responsibilities that they feel are important.

Beyond that I made a few cuts. I reduced the School Department by \$100,000. I believe they can clearly handle that. The Fire Department by \$100,000. I have spoken with Chief Buxton about it. I'm not sure what his reaction will be when after he's had a chance to review it but one thing that I've tried to accomplish over the last number of years is I've tried to articulate the message that it's a budget problem when any department no matter how important they are and certainly the Fire Department is one of our most important departments. No matter how important they are if the budget goes up, double the cost of living year, after year, after year that is I don't think sustainable. So hopefully over time we can work on that issue.

Before I complete, I wanted to mention that sort of the overall City Hall. Last year we were faced with some very significant budget challenges at the beginning of the year. At least threatened budget challenges. Some of them came to pass and at first we were looking at an \$11 million hit from the State of New Hampshire. So in City Hall in order to save money and to set an example for everyone, we cut three positions and we reduced the budget for all the City Hall Departments together including everything in this building, Public Health. We cut the budget for those departments by 3% or 2.9 something like that. Public Works was 1%. Now those numbers are before the cost of pensions. Those are independent of the cost of pensions because last year pension expense, over which we have no control, it's a State-mandated State controlled system, the pension costs went up \$4.4 million with not having anything to do with any increase in city wages. So in terms of trying to decide how the departments forming in a budget context, you need to pull out the pension costs because otherwise everything looks like it's going up a lot, but the local departments, Board of Aldermen, the Mayor had no control over that. So when you take out those costs, you'll see that we presented it last year that the City Hall was cut 3%. Thank you to all the people who made those significant sacrifices to do that. This year it may be up a little bit but overall it's not much higher than it was two years ago. So we're trying to save money as we go along despite significant challenges that we're facing otherwise.

With that I will just comment briefly on the Mayor's Budget. It's up a bit, but again in the context of City Hall its part of the entire City Hall budget which over a couple years we've been hold almost constant. I'm here Mr. Chair to answer any questions about the budget as a whole or regarding anything I've discussed.

#### Chairman Dowd

So before I open it up, I just want to reiterate (inaudible) Mr. Griffin if you would just reiterate as well, fringe benefits you'll find them in each one of the departments but the departments don't have any control over those numbers. Those are all given to them. Fringe benefits are based upon salaries and other things. Mr.Griffin would you like to expand on that explanation?

#### John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

Certainly Mr. Chair and members of the Committee. John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector. We ended up several years ago putting the what we call "benefits and pensions costs" - FICA-Medi costs in the budgets because we thought it was good for the reader to see that the departments weren't just salaries, wages, and no benefits. What's interesting as the Mayor indicated, the pensions - especially NH Retirement System that's been a struggle since I've been here in 2010 – what's interesting is the benefits. We'll get into more detail when Director Kleiner comes here before you, but the benefits we've really done a nice job mitigating the significant increases that every corporation in America, and every public corporation, and every school district in America is facing. You'll see that benefit when we go through the entire budget. Just in summary that the employees once they're hired, and that's a challenge in of itself, that we can't not give offer them benefits. We can't not pay their pension - the City's portion, or the FICA-Medi to the Internal Revenue Service. Thank you Mr. Chairman for allowing me to explain that.

#### Chairman Dowd

Are there any questions for the Mayor concerning the Mayor's office budget or the budget in general?

Mayor Donchess

Mr. Chair, can I make one more general comment?

Chairman Dowd

Sure.

Mayor Donchess

One thing that people should understand that we are facing when it comes to the tax rate, which has to be a bottom line consideration for all of us, is that this revaluation is going to make property taxes for homeowners go up. The reason for that is that the homes have gone up so much in value over the last 3, 4, 5 years – 30, 40, 50%. A revaluation in terms of - what it does, and this is State mandated. This is required by the State of New Hampshire. We're under order to complete this. What it does is it bring all assessments to fair market value for all properties, including commercial properties, including homes, everything. What it does, it does not in of itself collect more taxes but can reallocate the tax burden if one segment of the market has gone up more than another segment. So right now homes represent about two thirds of the tax base, which currently is about ten billion dollars. That number will certainly go up.

Commercial properties are about a third of the total tax base but as I mentioned, residential values have gone up very significantly. Commercial properties much less so or not at all. The final results we don't have yet, but it's obvious that commercial properties are not going up in the same fashion. So what will happen is instead of two thirds of the tax burden, homes will bear something more than two thirds – 69, 70, 71% of the overall tax burden. These values will go up. The tax rate will come down but the tax rate will drop but it not offset the effect of the homes going up so much and the commercial properties not doing so. Some commercial property owners are arguing that their values went down and they filed a number of abatement requests which the legal office and others are contesting. That is going to have a negative effect and therefore Mr. Chair unfortunately the State mandated revaluation is going to affect our homeowners.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. I have a few questions. Since you just mentioned it, I did have that on my list. I didn't know if the market seems obviously inflated right now because of COVID and by all indications those numbers will start to come down. Does the revaluation process take into consideration those things or is just whenever the houses are re-evaluated and assessed that's the hardline number regardless of where the market goes after that. So if next year the houses come down 5%, those houses are locked into that rate as far as assessment goes. Does that come into play at all?

Mayor Donchess

So this is done pursuant to State law and not only does the State law dictate how the revaluation should play out, but the Department of Revenue Administration oversees and needs to approve the results of the revaluation. Now what State Law says is the values are fixed as of April 1<sup>st</sup>. So what this revaluation is doing is telling us what fair market values are as of April 1, 2022. That cannot change until there is another revaluation and this is State law. As an aside, anybody of course who believes that their assessment in the context of the overall market is too high has a right to meet with Vision, the assessing firm, and can always appeal their assessment. We do not have the legal option of reducing some values in the absence of an entire revaluation. So were that to come pass, were residential homes to decline, which I'm not sure that is inevitable, but were that to happen, maybe it would make sense to do another revaluation. Now this is a full measuring list meaning first time since 1991, which means that there are appraisers/assessors who offer to go into all the properties and physically have visited commercial properties.

You can do a more typical statistical revaluation which is much cheaper and quicker than a full measure and list. So I'm not so sure that experts would suggest that residential - maybe they may level off but coming down. There's a lot of demand pressure. So if that were to happen though, we could consider a revaluation more quickly than would otherwise be required which is 5 years from now.

Alderman Cathey

You mentioned new positions. Do you exactly how many new positions total that you were assessing about being added?

Mayor Donchess

There is a Mason in the Public Works. So, I believe, we're talking two people in the Police Department, a Mason in Public Works. Now remember Public Works cut their budget last year, and the Right-to-Know person that I mentioned.

Alderman Cathey

Okay. Thank you. One more. This is for Mr. Griffin. At some point, could you send us how the benefits work? How that number is determined or how you get those numbers delivered to you so we as Aldermen have an understanding of where that's coming from? I know you can't change it, but I would like to have a deeper understanding of the benefits and that process.

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

Mr. Chairman, the best person to answer that particular question would be Director Kleiner. She works very closely with our expert consultant in that matter and has a very high level grasp of the impacts of the rate, the employer rate, creation, the impacts on the employees, and employer.

Chairman Dowd

Perhaps hold onto that question until she comes before us. By the way, the process that we're going to follow is I'm going to call on budget people first until they've asked all their questions of somebody and then I'll take non-budget members.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you Mr. Chair. I have three questions for the Mayor. All in generally speaking with the budget, what is the proposed budget - total amount all in?

Mayor Donchess

It is \$300 and John can give you the exact number – 15?

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

So the General Fund is articulated on the Resolution - \$302,998,903 for the General Fund. The Enterprise Funds - \$44,082,794 and the Special Revenue Funds to include Special Revenue Funds, grants, and the TIFs is \$36,607,613. So the total proposed budget is \$406,663,584.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. My follow-up question is before we vote on the budget - Mayor Donchess I don't know if this is for you or you Mr. Chairman but before we vote on the Budget will this Committee know how the allocation will be done as we head into this year? So Mayor Donchess mentioned right now the 6633 in favor of residential to commercial. Will we know what that allocation is before we vote on this?

Mayor Donchess

Probably not because the values are going to come out after July 1 and then there will be board meetings and the people will be able to discuss with Vision their values if they think they're too high. Then the assessments will come out late summer/early fall. So the answer is really no. That's not going to be clear by July 1.

Alderman Sullivan

Last question. Is there any way that we accelerate that? My only concern is for lack of a better term "Christmas present" Nashua residents may get at a very difficult time at the end of a very difficult year where everything has been pointing up. That's my question. Is there another way to accelerate it?

Mayor Donchess

Well I think we can get Miss Kleiner to answer it more completely, but the real answer is going to be no. It's going to be

very difficult. I mean it's a big process. There is about 29,000 properties. There's not going to be a definitive answer by June 30 or July 1 when the next fiscal year ends but I suggest that you ask that of Miss Kleiner and she can give you more depth.

Chairman Dowd

Attorney Bolton?

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

The real problem is even the question that was asked that's not enough information to let anyone know how it will affect an individual's tax bill that they would get in December. The reason for that is it's not anyone local, it's not anyone that the City hires, it's not Vision, and it's the State Department of Revenue Administration that determines the tax rate. They won't determine that until sometime in October. Then that will be plugged into the computer which generates the tax bills and the tax bills will be mailed out somewhere in early to mid-November due for payment 30 days later. So knowing that there has been a shift in the percentage of property that is classified as "residential" from 67% to 70% is really not enough information to let you know or even estimate what any particular property will have their tax bill fluctuate.

Mayor Donchess

Now when I said 70%, that's just throwing out a hypothetical figure. But I should make it clear, a house that's gone up 50%, that does not mean that their taxes are going up 50% because the tax rate will definitely fall. I mean as we've already talked about, this doesn't do people who intend to stay in their homes their whole life any good but people have a lot more equity than they had before because their houses are worth so much. But in terms of trying to survive day to day over the next 6 months, or the next year, or 3 years, or whatever, it doesn't help in the daily life. You've got more paper value but the tax rate is what is most important in terms of trying to pay the bills.

Chairman Dowd

All set Alderman Sullivan? Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

This may sound like a very naive and dumb question but if the State determines the tax rate for the citizens, we don't know what their tax bills are going to be until it comes out. So we don't know how much revenue we're getting from the property tax so how then do we determine a budget without the total number of revenue that we will see in property taxes?

Mayor Donchess

Well the budget includes all of the appropriations that are proposed and you ultimately will decide that ultimate number and it includes revenue estimate - non-property tax revenue estimates and those will be used as a component of the tax rate calculation. To make up the gap between the appropriations and the non-property tax revenues, the tax rate will be set to exactly bring in the amount of dollars necessary to pay for the budget over and above the non-tax revenues.

Now once this revaluation is settled, and again that's not going to be tomorrow at all, but once that's settled, I mean Mr. Griffin will be able to estimate the tax rate. I mean the State sets it but he's very good at estimating what it's going to be. So once these numbers are set, then he will be able to estimate what the tax rate will be but again that will not be by July 1.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

All set?

Alderman Cathey

Yes.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Thank you Mr. Chairman. So Mayor this may sound completely surprising but I appreciate your wanting to keep the tax rate down but in doing a job of government - providing services that we want in Nashua and we want Nashua to be a first-class city that costs a certain amount of money. I hear you talking about reducing the School budget by \$100,000 and I hear you say how you to expect them to do that but we just passed several Teacher's Union Contracts which you and I were in favor of which increased. I think that's true that all of our departments, the main part of their budgets are personnel, salaries, and benefits, and all of that. So I see us raising - I can't remember the numbers exactly - but I see various groups in the City getting increases for the next three or so years of an average of 4%. Some years it's 6% for some of them and then you tell us you're going to reduce their overall budget by \$100,000, and you're going to reduce City Hall's budget by 3%, and you're going to cut positions. BPW down 1%.

As an Alderman when people call me and they complain about different things and I call on their behalf, I call a department and they say "we don't have the staff". You call Code Enforcement. How many Code Enforcement Officers do we have – two, three and we're expecting them to do a lot of work. They say we just don't have the staff. Then I hear you say we're going to cut. I know it's just a general overview here but I'm having trouble processing how we increase wages and how we cut overall budgets when wages are the bulk of the budgets.

Mayor Donchess

All right just to be clear, the 3% cut at City Hall was in the current budget. The one that we're doing now from the year before. So that's in Fiscal 22 compared with Fiscal 21. The same with Public Works. This year City Hall is up but similar up from but not much from two years ago. Certainly I agree with you completely that the quality of services is very important to the life of the City and the future success of the City no question about it.

The Teacher's contract was very important and we did support and thank you to the Aldermen for approving it and to those who negotiated it. But remember the School budget is significantly more than \$100 million dollars. So I just remember how did I get to \$100,000? I remember Dan Donovan, the person in charge of finances at the School Department, said last year "if I can't handle \$100,000 cut, I shouldn't be in this job". I don't think it's 1% of the School budget is well more than a million. \$100,000 is yes a lot of money but is a percentage of the School budget, it's a small number. If we put a few cuts here, a few cuts there, we try to keep things down as much as we can, I think we can still deliver the quality services, the quality schools that you are saying and I agree are important while at the same time saving as much as we can.

Chairman Dowd

All set Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Yes I look forward to hearing more detail about it. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Just one quick note. Having been Chair of Budget for the Board of Education for a few years, it's a complex equation with a whole lot of moving parts. This year they have some of the positions to help students get re-accumulated to education that are being paid for out of ESSR Funds. I'm not going to get into that tonight. It's in your book on the School budget. It tells what ESSR Funds are and when they come in, you can talk to it. So they're in a better position than they normally are because of that and they'll explain it when they come in.

Mayor Donchess

Alderman Jette I may not have been totally clear. When I said I cut the budget, the budget is not lower than the year before. I cut the requests by \$100,000. So the School budget is still up - enough to pay for the Teacher's contract and to pay for excellent schools but I cut the requests \$100,000.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Thibeault you had a question?

Alderman Thibeault

I'm going to let you do your thing.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Klee?

Alderman Klee

Thank you Mr. Chair. I just want to be clear. When we talk about the tax rate and the taxes that our citizens are paying, it includes beyond the City's tax rate, correct? It includes the County, the State takes a little share of it as well and that is on the Tax bill correct? Because I know the County is going up this year.

Mayor Donchess

Correct, but the State takes more than a little share.

Alderman Klee

Yes, I know. I'm being sarcastic.

Mayor Donchess

So we're paying \$35 million for pensions. We've gone over that year after year, but that used to be \$8 million not that long ago. The City budget for pensions was \$8 million you know a dozen years ago approximately, maybe a little more than that. Now it's four times what it was then and more. So that has been, I think, the single most pressure on local property taxes and on City budgets that escalation from a relatively small amount of the budget to now more than 10% of this entire thing. John just told you that the General Fund budget is \$302,000,000. Well \$35,000,000 or so goes to the State.

We also send \$20,000,000 to the County because the County budget is paid for out of property taxes. So everything is on the property tax and that is why property taxes are so high. Limited State Aid, less than most States or all States, pension bills that are going up. We pay for the County. The County budget is allocated according to tax base, so Manchester and Nashua pay equal I believe about 25% of the County budget each and the rest is distributed among the towns. So yeah there's a big bite out of it.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Klee?

Alderman Klee

Thank you and I say this for the public that's listening. The County budget is going up and I'm not poopooing that because if we think bad things have happened in the City because we don't put funds towards it, I can tell you that the same is happening in a lot of the County areas too. Even the County building that they have, they can't use an entire wing of it because it's almost technically condemned. I can tell you their tax rate is going to go up this year which will have an effect on us. They don't know the rate yet. They're still working on their budget but for everything we're hearing, it's going up based on the Commissioner. Perhaps Commissioner Soucy can address that but based on the Commissioners budget, it is going up.

Mayor Donchess

But again back to Alderman Jette. When I say I've cut these budgets, I mean Police Department \$50, Fire Department \$100, School \$100. I'm cutting their requests. They've all asked for an increase and I've simply reduced the increase by

those amounts. Not a lower budget than they had last year.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions for the Mayor? Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Just a process on how we go through this. Since we're going over the General Government Fund tonight is this the time to ask questions or explain please how we're going to proceed tonight?

Chairman Dowd

Right now we're discussing the Mayor's office and City Hall. I don't believe the Mayor is going to be here for one of our budget sessions so if you have something that you feel only he can answer, now would be the time to ask it. Not that it affects any other Divisions, they will be in on their own.

Alderman Sullivan

So my question goes to I was looking at full time employees year over year. I saw that the total head count in your office was the same. Is it basically the same people? Is it overall nothing has changed in your office, any changes year over year?

Mayor Donchess

Some of the people have changed. Cheryl Lindner started working in the Finance Department, so we got someone else. The number of positions have stayed the same as you said and it has been constant for some period of time.

On the process, Steve Bolton is here to talk about the Legal Department, Sue Lovering to talk about the City Clerk and answer any detailed questions about that. I'm not going to be in your face every meeting trying to argue with you over this and that, but I will come back at the end so that once you have more insight into what's proposed, you might have questions for me or it's worth discussing something at the time. Maybe there are things you want to ask me about or discuss changing or whatever. I will come back at the end. Usually at budget review sessions where once you've seen all the departments, you get together and talk about the overall picture and if you want it amended in some way. Anyway I will come back for that and then you will in the end have to vote on budget.

Chairman Dowd

So just to reiterate, some time ago I put out how the budget process works. We will have these meetings with the Division heads and discuss with them and at the end of that, we are going to have a Public Hearing on the budget where the public can come out and ask questions directly to the Division heads. They'll all be there and then after that, then we have wrap-up sessions. That's when we would entertain motions to either take from or add to any part of the budget. So when we do that, we change the Mayor's budget. Well we have two options I guess. We would just say we're happy with the Mayor's budget and it passes. Send it on to the full Board of Aldermen or we could modify it and send the modified version of the budget to the Board of Aldermen. There is a whole process that I had outlined in the sheet if everyone still has it. If you don't we can get one to you.

Alderman Sullivan

I need it at the top of my inbox. So I do have some questions. Is this the appropriate time to ask about the delta's in Board of Alderman, plus 18.6% Legal, plus 6.4% City Clerk, plus 7.8% in Parking, plus 11%?

Chairman Dowd

Well not parking but the others - the different people that are going to come up for the Board of Aldermen. Donna will come up and work with Lori, and then Legal Department, and then City Clerk. They'll all get a chance to address each one of them separately. Any other questions for the Mayor?

Mayor Donchess

In response to the question about the people. People work hard in the Mayor's office. They answer a lot of constituent complaints. We follow the legislature - all the bills. We work on the budget. The improvements and presentation which I believe, those aren't finished. We may be able to make headway on that between now and when the final budget is published in terms of the explanations. We're trying to make the budget more accessible to, again, a person who is not going to attend every Budget Committee meeting. Megan Caron does that. We have some software that we think can improve the presentation further. We communicate with the public. We don't have much of a news media as we used to. So the people there work hard.

Chairman Dowd

One other thing on salaries. If people are not affiliated, there is an unaffiliated schedule and they move up a step. So if there's an increase in somebody's salary because they moved up a step in the unaffiliated. If you look at individual salaries in the other Divisions that are in part of a union, then they have increases based upon the union contract. So we have no control whatsoever over anybody's individual salary.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. Can I ask a question about a salary?

Chairman Dowd

Sure.

Alderman Sullivan

Chief of Staff - so this is just an example. In the '22 budget, you had a Chief of Staff at \$98,000. This year according to the budget book, it's vacant but you're budgeted at \$71,000 so you're looking to hire one.

Mayor Donchess

We have someone serving in that capacity. We have readjusted the allocation of the salaries and therefore the head count is not going up and the total salaries are going up a little bit, but you know the total number but not a lot.

Alderman Sullivan

I just saw that as a big delta and then I put 2 and 2 together, so thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Did you want to pay them more?

Alderman Sullivan

No, I just didn't know if Chief of Staff was getting a large pay cut.

Mayor Donchess

Cheryl Lindner was the Chief of Staff and she went to work in Finance. So that's what happened

Chairman Dowd

And didn't take a pay cut. Okay we're done with the Mayor's office. We'll go to the Board of Aldermen.

Mayor Donchess

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. If members of the Committee have questions in the interim, you can always contact me. No problem before you get to the end.

Chairman Dowd

One other thing. If you ask anybody a question relative to the budget and hypothetically ask Mr. Griffin for something, a copy of that should go to Donna and Donna will give it to everybody on the Board so that no one has certain information that the rest of the Board doesn't have. Okay? So, Donna?

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

Good evening that you for allowing me to present my FY23 budget for Department 102 - Board of Aldermen which President Wilshire and I worked on. I do have an increase and I have a request that my part-time position be converted into a full-time position. The part-time was 20 hours per week and right now I do have a job share with the woman downstairs in Motor Vehicles that she is helping me do some of the transcription, but it's not full-time. It's whenever she can get to it.

The other line item that I have an increase in 55699 "Other Contracted Services". We went from \$200 to \$2,000 and the reason for the increase is because every two years when we have the new Board of Aldermen I have expenses – the individual photographs, name plates, name tags and everything that will truly represent is that we spend every other year. That's all that I have and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

You mentioned the part-time and you and I have had extensive conversations about this. We lost a part-time person and everything else, but the part-time person did a lot of dictation. I think the Aldermen here got to realize could you give us a ratio of one hour meeting equals how many?

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

Its 4 hours of transcription.

Alderman O'Brien

Four hour of dictation. One hour of a meetings equals four hours of transcription. So that's time consuming.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

That is correct. I do have a software program that helps me do some of the transcription, but I can't just put it out there because it's not adequate to put out there just to cut and paste to put into the minutes. It does cut down some of my time but it still takes time to go through it.

Alderman O'Brien

Follow up. And what you mean by that is you actually transcribe verbatim.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

Correct.

Alderman O'Brien

Not what the computer suggests, which could as computers we dealt with our phones or Microsoft my other good friends over there of how many times each and every single one of us is "oh darn spellcheck". You know what I mean? Thank you.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

You're welcome.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. This is more of a clarifying question. As Alderman Sullivan mentioned earlier, there is an increase of 18.75 in your Department but from what I can see, that is mainly due to a) that full time position and b) the increase in benefits, which has almost doubled. Is that the main two reasons why it's up so high?

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

That is correct.

Alderman Cathey

Could you just briefly describe what the difference between the transcription specialist and the stenographer services? Is there a difference or is that just to fill in when we need it?

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

That is correct. So back in the day before I came to the City of Nashua, I actually was City Clerk Sue Lovering's stenographic person for the overflow that they couldn't get to during budget season and unfortunately, I haven't had any takers on having to help me transcribe. So I haven't used that line item. So that will just go back to the General Fund. My part-timer left in August and some of my budget is being used for the part-timer for my part-time person downstairs.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Wilshire did you want to add anything?

Alderman Wilshire

Yes, it's been difficult to find someone to do the part-time job. The job was posted and it's really been tough to find somebody. The other thing is when Donna is not here, I mean she can't take time off because everything still has to get done. The City still has to do their business so it's been difficult not having another person in there. The job would probably be more attractive as a full-time position because the person would have benefits and they'd be able to fill in where needed and do the transcription.

Chairman Dowd

Just another thing. We've had occasional inquiries as to why the minutes weren't out or the minutes were late and it's because not enough hours in the day for Donna to do everything and do all the transcriptions. Now I'm not going to weigh in with my thoughts on this, but with the fact that we record our meetings today both on a recorder plus on TV, does it still make sense to do verbatim minutes, hard copies? So think about that.

Alderwoman Kelly

I have been quietly listening. A lot of people have covered my questions, but my question was around what you just asked. I wanted to know is Legal Counsel here? I was just wondering what to the letter of the law do we have to provide in terms of transcriptions and whether or not the abbreviated is okay or if we really are required to have full minutes for each meeting?

Chairman Dowd

Attorney Bolton?

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

The Right-to-Know Law only requires that members of the body in attendance and anyone else who addresses the body, and a description of the subject matter discussed, and any votes taken, decisions made. So that is substantially less than getting it word for word.

Alderman Kelly

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Klee?

Alderman Klee

Thank you Mr. Chairman. First I want to thank Donna for all the hard work she does, putting up with us and corralling us to get here. Thank you so much for everything that you're doing.

As far as the verbatim minutes, I realize that they're not required but I do have a number of constituents that are elderly and have a hard time hearing and listening to the meetings. They're not close captioned. So they always relied on the verbatim to understand the meeting. They understand that it's just not possible to do it now. I agree with what Alderman Wilshire had said, a full-time job is going to be a lot more attractive than a part-time job. So I agree that we should consider pushing that up to a full-time position and it would allow Donna to take time off and not have to work from home or on weekends. We all know you send Donna a message and you get a response on the weekend. So I know she's working almost seven days a week so thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

I don't want to get into the weeds on this, but in my business we deal with verbatim transcriptions quite a bit and there are companies that do this. You send them the tape and they have people that work for them usually from home who transcribe these things and you get the end result mailed to you. Have you looked into that? Is that a possibility if you're having trouble finding people?

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

I have not because we wouldn't have the money in our budget to fund it at this point.

Alderman Jette

Would you know the cost?

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

I don't.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions for Donna? Seeing none, thank you.

Next item is the Legal Department 103. Appropriations by line item are on page 54.

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

It's on page 54. As has been stated before, the year on top of year difference is almost exclusively due to increases in salary and wages and increases in fringe benefits. I have no say in all of that. These numbers are filled in and I do not have access to change them. So my understanding is that there is a schedule in the unaffiliated employee policy that explains how the grid will be adjusted over year-after-year with some index to inflation and then benefits are calculated because of the insurance that individual employees select, the health insurance working rates and that's calculated, and the pension expense, and Social Security, and Medicare that's the City's share of that is a strict percentage of the salary.

So after you take out all that which adds up to about \$850,000, last year the budget for various things like telephone, dues

and membership, mileage reimbursement, training, postage, office supplies, publications. All of those things I just mentioned total \$19,000. A couple lines were overrun, so we adjusted those up slightly. So this year on top of salaries and benefits, it's gone from \$19,000 to \$20,150. So a total of \$1,150 differential.

Chairman Dowd

Questions for Attorney Bolton? Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. As Mayor Donchess mentioned earlier that we've had quite a few lawsuits, are those covered under the Legal Department's budget or that is something different because they're lawsuits?

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

I don't know what you mean by "covered". We primarily are the ones responsible for trying those cases. We don't charge any extra for doing them.

Alderman Cathey

So they're just part of your day-to-day. There are no extra expenses that come out of having to deal with multiple lawsuits. Is that correct?

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

Well one of the things that we do a lot of, for example, is tax abatement cases. In many of those cases, we'll hire an appraiser to testify on our behalf or in fact render opinions to us that assist us in the settlement mediation process and sometimes we're able to settle those in a beneficial way. The Board of Assessors ultimately determine that. Those expenditures come out of the overlay budget so you don't see that in here. Yeah there's litigation that is one of the primary things that we do, but it doesn't necessarily impact what you see out of this budget. For another example, another example would be Public Works hires a company to lay some sewer or drainage lines. That contract they run into more ledge than they expected. The contract ends up running over. There is litigation over whether that should have been anticipated in the bid or was it an unknown in a noble condition which entitles the contractor to additional compensation. We might litigate that if the contractor ultimately prevails either by way of settlement or by way of a judgement that would be paid for out of the Public Works budget. Probably out of the capital budget for that project, which presumably would have a contingency amount in it. So there are other examples of things that we're involved in that could result in expenditures that would not show up in our budget.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Attorney Bolton you mentioned that you don't have influence over the amount that you pay the folks in the department unaffiliated.

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

We are all unaffiliated. It means we are non-union employees.

Alderman Sullivan

Correct. So can you expand on that a little more? Does that mean when I accept a job in your Department under that agreement I get increases every year is that what that means?

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

Well for the first about six years you would go up a step due to experience. It's like a grid pattern and you move along the grid. The entire table gets adjusted by inflation each year. Now that's nothing that I invented, control. I barely understand it as regards to my own pay, but once I determine who I'm going to hire into a particular position, everything else happens without any input from me if the person is performing up to the expected standard. I will tell you everyone is in the Legal Department. They are performing beyond minimum expectations. So I could prevent someone from getting a raise if I had a good reason to. I have no reason in the case of any employees there.

Alderman Sullivan

In your Department you have a Right-to-Know Coordinator going back to when Mayor Donchess presented his Department he talked about a Right-to-Know Paralegal that was under the Administrative Services.

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

I know nothing about that.

Alderman Sullivan

I just wanted to know if you knew what the difference was.

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

Well, the Attorney Right-to-Know Coordinator in the Legal Department is a licensed NH lawyer. What they intend to hire in the Administrative Services Department, apparently it's listed as Paralegal. I have not been consulted on that. In fact, tonight was the first I've heard of it. I have two Legal Assistants that probably, in other places, would be called Paralegals in my office and they've both been there for a number of years.

Chairman Dowd

All set? Anyone else? Thank you Attorney Bolton.

Next on the Agenda is City Clerk's Office. Miss Lovering. Before you get started, she is the only person we're talking to tonight that has revenues. The revenues are on page 29 and the appropriations are on page 57.

Susan Lovering, City Clerk

So I'll begin with just the revenues. The estimated revenues for Fiscal Year 23 are based a normal fiscal year. So Fiscal Year 2019 was used as a base for those estimations. I think what you will notice is an uptick you will see significantly in the marriage licenses and I believe that is for a few reasons and many is due to the pandemic. A lot of venues being cancelled and marriages being postponed and so I think people are rebooking and celebrating marriages. We also hear from a lot of people that a pandemic and other life events make them pause and reflect and a lot of people have chosen to form a union.

The other one is our dog licenses. I believe you will see that we are up on our revenue for that as well. During the pandemic, again, veterinarians a lot of them were closed and many felt that the vaccinations and the rabies were not considered essential and so they were closed and a lot of these folks did not have their rabies updated and did not license their dog. We were successful in migrating over our database of over 10,000 into new software and we worked hard to reach out to those people that have licensed over 9,000 for this fiscal year.

Turning to the budget which I think is on page 57. You will notice that two few increases which are the result of having two elections this year. This current fiscal year last November we had a non-Mayoral Municipal Election and in Fiscal Year 2023, you will have two State elections - the State Primary and the State General in November. So those will fluctuate it. Over time, about 2500 of those two additional elections, and the wages for election officials for going to two elections, and the election services which primarily is due to having police detail coming out of that. So you will have police detail which is over just about \$10,000 we pay for each election. Then you'll see a slight decrease in our other contracted services, line item 55699 and that is because we don't have an inauguration this year. So we reduced that amount. This budget, unlike others, will fluctuate every year. One year we'll have one municipal election, the following year there will be two, and sometimes more if you call for special ones. And that is basically a snapshot of the proposed budget. All of the line items,

I believe, are level funded except for the wages that we just spoke about that two unaffiliated positions and UAW Clerical. We did eliminate the temporary seasonal help by one four hundred and that is because the two ten-year mandates are now completed.

Chairman Dowd

Questions for City Clerk? Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. I know very well that dog licensing season is kind of hectic. I'm just curious if you knew roughly the percentage breakdown of how many of those dog license fees you actually get versus having to track down people to pay them and then in tracking down people to pay them, does that come out of your budget as well or does that go to collections or something like that where that is something that you don't have to worry about?

Susan Lovering, City Clerk

So the last question is it comes out of my budget. This year would be fully staffed and our software up-to-date we have collected 9,097 dogs have been licensed. So that's really successful. We have about 1,900 that are outstanding at this point. Now that is all governed by State law so June 1<sup>st</sup>, and we just sent out late notices last week to those individuals saying "please come in. It's \$7.50 if you're neutered or spayed and get licensed because after June 1<sup>st</sup> the late fees and State law requires us to come to this Board for civil forfeiture fine which is \$25.00, \$7.00 for servicing, and at the beginning of June 1<sup>st</sup> each year you get a \$1.00 late fee. Again all by State law that's mandate. We telephone people in our down time. We do postcards which is cheaper than the postage, put on our website. We try to reach people cost effectively and we are looking for a robo-call actually to start those as well to reach as many people as possible and get our dogs licensed.

Alderman Cathey

Two follow-up questions actually. I noticed that you said the temporary season wages went out, but would that then kick back in during elections or are you looking to hire more full time people when the elections roll around?

Susan Lovering, City Clerk

So the wages temporary and seasonal were stacked in staff and we are not. Wages/elections, we will staff more at the polls. The Board of Registrars, ballot inspectors that will be increased. State Elections and how many we staff are based on State Law when we get up to the State level and municipal ones are by NROs and our ballot elections don't have has much turn-out and we don't need as many. But you will see overtime increase in the employees in our office.

Alderman Cathey

And then the final question I have is, I know for a while you did not have all the people you needed in your office and that was fun. Are you currently fully staffed in your opinion in the Clerk's office?

Susan Lovering, City Clerk

Yes.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions for the City Clerk?

Susan Lovering, City Clerk

You're very welcome. Have a good evening.

Chairman Dowd

So the next is Emergency Preparedness. The appropriations are on page 132. Tara's is on Zoom.

Tara Murphy, Emergency Management Coordinator

Good evening everybody. So for the most part, the budget has stayed the same. The biggest changes are actually a reduction in the salary which reflects the elimination of the Director's position after Justin left. After he left, I've been working with the Mayor's office to re-evaluate the workload of the office and what other departments and agencies on the State and Federal level. So we've been monitoring the workload and reviewing with the Mayor's Office monthly. The State does a lot of the technical assistance stuff that this office used to do like emergency plans. So I've mostly been focusing on the fundamentals of emergency management.

I've been able to keep up with that workload which does bring me into the addition to the budget which is the other contracted services. Like I said for the most part, I've been able to keep up with this workload, but I would like to be able to bring on, expand and contract the department as (inaudible) for when we have bigger projects for help and we go back to the day-to-day and I don't need as much help. So that is pretty much the summary, short and sweet.

Chairman Dowd

Okay. Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Not that I don't love a reduction in a budget, but I'm curious why the benefits are so low. They went all the way down \$345 which seems really low.

Tara Murphy, Emergency Management Coordinator

So personally I am still in school and still eligible for my parents insurance so I don't take as many benefits as we previously had.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Cost savings, right? Any other questions? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So do I understand that we've decided we don't need a Director of Emergency Management? Is that what you're saying?

Chairman Dowd

It's an unfair question to ask her. I'd ask Mr. Griffin maybe.

Alderman Jette

I don't mean to ask you an unfair question, but you're here representing the department. If it's unfair, I'll refer it to someone else.

Tara Murphy, Emergency Management Coordinator

Yeah I've been working with the Mayor over the past few months and like I said reviewing the workload. This was something I noticed when I got my budget it wasn't fully finalized, but I had been functioning well and the workloads had been manageable over the past few months. So that was a decision that was made.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah thank you Mr. Chairman. Alderman Jette I'm going to attempt to answer. In a way, the casual observer would probably say we have a Fire Chief, and we have a Police Chief, and just currently up at the State House it was changed to expand in the case of an emergency to include first responders, Public Works employees, because when you look at a blizzard, it comes down to the guy in the plow truck to clear the way for fire apparatus and everything else. So it's an expansion. It's a brand new field. It's been evolving over the last several years but the thing is to keep in mind, you can have all the great tactics in the world. When I was a Deputy Fire Chief I had a lot of great ideas, but if I didn't have the logistics behind me. That's when the failure occurs. Part of the emergency preparedness is to take care and prepare of the logistics, such as like what happens when we get a blizzard, or hurricane, or other type of abnormal events. You've got to keep in mind 1936, I think the Nashua River overflowed its banks and there has been flooding in this City, particularly the good people of Walden Pond. It may not affect you, but I think they could tell you how they got flooded out a couple of years ago to which the emergency preparedness provided the logistical back-up. So it is very much a key with it.

Chairman Dowd

I asked a similar question and the response I got is "Tara is doing a great job!" Any other questions?  
Thank you Tara.

And last but not least, City Wide Communications. No stranger to the Aldermanic Chamber.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Bill Mansfield, the Radio Systems Manager for the City.

Chairman Dowd

You might just want to mention where you fall, where you report, and where you reside as far as your position with the City.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

My home away from home. I'm the Radio Systems Manager. I am housed at the Police Department. That is where the main radio system is - the brains of the radio system. I pretty much report to the Fire Chief, Police Chief, and the Mayor depending on what the incident is or what the issue is. I am evaluated by the Police Chief. He gives me my annual evaluations. Part of the radio communications is we have over 1,500 radios in the City. These radios are in DPW trucks, buses, police cars, portable radios that are utilized by every entity within the City - police, fire, every DPW worker, Health Department, Transit, schools.

So we're responsible for all of the radio equipment itself as well as the infrastructure. There are five sites within the City that we maintain. When I say that we maintain them, we have HVAC, we have generators, we have plows - we have to do our own plowing of the sites in the winter time, so basically we're soup and nuts. There are two of us in the Division. There were actually two full time employees last year. Right now there is a part-time employee with .80 FTE and the other one is a full-time employee. Over this past year, we had an employee retire and the Communication Division was very lucky to basically enlist and steal the IT Manager from the Police Department. So now he is on my staff and has been a considerable help since the majority of our equipment is all IT based today.

So the Budget itself has gone up a little bit. The reasons for this are because of cost. Everything from our maintenance contracts to our equipment has gone up at least 10% and that pretty much what it comes down to. Everything has gone up. Prices have gone up on everything and that's why the increases this year. So I'm not sure if you want me to go over line items and where they are but if you have any specific questions that would be great.

Chairman Dowd

Are there any lines that have gone up or down significantly? That would be one thing to cover.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

There is nothing really that has gone up or down significantly. Almost every line item has gone up somewhat. The payroll has gone down a bit because of the fact that we don't have the shared part-time employee who was a .20 FTE. He is now our full-time employee. So we absorbed him and he has been very beneficial. So that .20 it did go down a little bit from that on the wages. One thing that did go up and I'll bring it forward is under line item 51700 is stipends. It's not really a stipend. As salaried employees, we're not eligible for over time although in the contract we are eligible for a weekly stipend if we are called back and work on vacation, holidays, weekends, and things like that. So that is what that line item is. It was added this year because of the fact that of the call back we had last year.

Another is the maintenance - equipment maintenance. A large portion of that for those that don't know, our system every two years we get a infrastructure upgrade to our radio system and that keeps us current with what is – keeps the radio system current that so that don't fall into the trap that we did several years ago where we had to do what I call "a forklift upgrade". In other words, we had to replace everything from soup to nuts. So this keeps us maintained. Every two years there is a team from Motorola that comes in. There are seven of them as well as the two City employees and we work for almost a month to make this infrastructure upgrade happen.

Chairman Dowd

Questions? Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. Not that I find it to be outrageous, but the actual percentage right now is 9700, but your budget is for 6. Is there a reason why?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

So last year the employee that retired was out for approximately 8 months. So it was myself and the part-time employee that was trying to fill in and that's why it's considerably more.

Alderman Cathey

Okay thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. Regarding the people that work in this department I'm just going back to 2022 budget and I see the Radio Systems Manager that matches out, but then this year you have an assistant. Can you just revisit the employees in the department again? I know you explained it. Somebody retired. They're gone and you replaced him with somebody else. Could you please just revisit that?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

So in FY22 there was a full time employee and there was also a .20 employee that was shared with the Police Department. He was considered to be in that full time line item last year because he was not part time, he is a full time employee. He was 80% on the police side and 20% with us. So they rolled that .20 into the full time line item. I am the part time employee.

Alderman Sullivan

I think I see that. Okay.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan just for historical background. A couple years ago Bill was the only person doing all this work on the radios and the Board of Alderman determined if he got hit by a bus, we're up the creek without a paddle. That's why added additional staff for him so that we wouldn't lose our entire communications systems.

The other thing is if you could just explain the site for instance at Kessler Farm and how that works and has all kinds of back-ups to make sure we're always.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

So when I say we have responsible for five sites, three of the sites are actually infrastructure sites where we have antennas, we have towers, we have building facilities there. We have concrete buildings at those three sites. There is HVAC there. There is propane generators at each of these sites for back-up in case we lose power here in the City. We are responsible for maintaining those buildings and making sure that our radio communication stays up 24/7, 365.

The other two sites that I'm speaking of are police and fire dispatch. We have infrastructure equipment in those facilities. We have the dispatchers and three consoles at Fire. There's three consoles at Police. There's also radio rooms within those facilities. They have battery back-up for UPSs that we are responsible for and then the buildings have their own generators that are the responsibility of each department. We have at each of the three sites where the infrastructure is not only do we have generators, but we have approximately a week and a half of battery power out at those sites just in case. It's redundancy upon redundancy to make sure we don't lose communications.

Chairman Dowd

A year and a half ago I almost had a stroke when I told him they were tearing down the tower at Kessler Farms and the antennas were on top of it.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

We had to quickly fund it and get a tower up there.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions for Mr. Mansfield? Seeing none.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Thank you very much everyone.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO TABLE R-22-035**

Chairman Dowd

The motion is to table R-22-035 any discussion? Alderman Sullivan?

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. I see Department of Energy Management on here. Are we going to do that another night?

Alderman Cathey

That is Emergency Preparedness.

Chairman Dowd

That is Emergency Preparedness. That was Tara.

Alderman Sullivan

I see under Department Name, I see Mayor's Office, Board of Aldermen, Legal Department, City Clerk's Office, Department of Energy Management and Citywide Communications.

Alderman Cathey

If you look at the numbers, the numbers for Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Management are exactly the same, they are just labeled differently.

Alderman Sullivan

Could you repeat that please?

Alderman Cathey

The numbers 156, if you look Emergency Management is 156 and Emergency Preparedness is 156. Whoever wrote the Budget set or put the wrong word, so it's the same thing.

Alderman Sullivan

Oh, so that's over there. Okay.

Chairman Dowd

Any other discussion? Alderman O'Brien please take the roll call.

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman Wilshire, Alderman Sullivan, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette,  
Alderman Cathey, Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd 7

Nay: 0

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE - None

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Laurie Ortolano

Laurie Ortolano, 41 Berkeley Street. I take exception to what I heard tonight coming out of the Mayor. I have a real concern with this position that he said for the Right-to-Know Paralegal. I am equally concerned that Attorney Bolton would say that I knew nothing about this position. Why would we have a Right-to-Know Coordinator in the Legal Office and a Right-to-Know Paralegal under Administrative Services to handle Right-to-Knows when you've got Right-to-Knows in DPW? When you have Right-to-Knows in the Building Department. When you've got all these other Divisions that have them - Finance. John Griffin gets a bunch of them from a citizen. Why would you put that under Miss Kleiner? I am deeply concerned that Miss Kleiner would have any responsibility for anyone legal. I don't think she's qualified to do that. I see that as an enormous risk. I came out of court with her and I found her to be the most non-credible person in that court room. Please do not make this mistake again. Do not do that.

Also the Mayor said we've had 1,200 Right-to-Knows since 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. Let's look at look at 2022 and let me dispel the lies that this Mayor put out. One of the reasons the Right-to-Knows have to be filed is when I come into City Hall and ask for information that I could always get, they say "oh Laurie go home and write a Right-to-Know". Well guess what, I've put my foot down on that and I'm not doing it anymore. I'm coming in and getting the information that is available right away and taking it. I'm not writing a Right-to-Know so they can write back to me. It's absurd. When the Mayor says they have people who don't want to be here because they don't want to be dealing with Right-to-Knows, they don't want to deal with Miss Kleiner's crap on how to handle them and they're walking out because of her. Are you looking into that? Is anyone researching what she's doing? And let me say this, when the Mayor says the Chief didn't want to do it. Amanda Mazerole testified on the stand that my Right-to-Know request to assess help to get printed property record cards were ignored and when I said to her "did you answer my request just to send me a printed card" she said "no". I said why? Miss Kleiner told me not to. What did you do with them? I had to send them to Miss Kleiner and Rick Vincent. Then Rick Vincent was told to go do the clerical work and get the card printed and send it to me, which he didn't following up on because he's a Chief making \$125,000 who couldn't do that work. I wrote an e-mail to him and said "why are you

doing this...

Alderman O'Brien

30 seconds

Laurie Ortolano

Its clerk work. Its settlements. I had to go to Mr. Vincent to get settlement agreements. They were always in the minutes. They sealed them. I couldn't get them any longer. This is crap. This is ridiculous. This Mayor needs to go. He's fabricating stories and building it into the budget. Get rid of him and don't do this with our budget. There is nothing comical about it Mr. O'Brien. It's a sad story. You're birds of a feather.

Alderman O'Brien

Excuse me Miss!

Laurie Ortolano

I'm done!

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you.

GENERAL DISCUSSION - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Chairman Dowd

Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

Yes, as Clerk as you know I have to record and everything and that's to record the timing. Before I could end it, somebody accused of something else. There seems to be a lot of accusations going on and unfortunately all I was trying to do is my particular job in timing the events. I do not appreciate anybody that interferes with a public official. I think as we heard with the diatribe, we heard some complete slamming of people who we pay and we are solemnly supposed to defend. Now anybody can do anything wrong and when we do something wrong, yes we have the opportunity to correct it but just to go through a diatribe of slamming people because it seems to be convenient seems most unfortunate. I am sorry for your soul, but I appreciate the employees who work for this particular City. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ADJOURN**

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea:	Alderman Wilshire, Alderman Sullivan, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette, Alderman Cathey, Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd	7
Nay:		0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 8:48 p.m.

Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Committee Clerk