

BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

MAY 19, 2022

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Thursday, May 19, 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 John Sullivan
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
Alderman Ernest Jette

Members not in Attendance: Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly

Also in Attendance: Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Comm. Services
(via Zoom)
Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse
Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer
Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

ROLL CALL

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS - None

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO REMOVE FROM THE TABLE R-22-035

Chairman Dowd

The motion is to remove the budget from the table so we can talk about it this evening.

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Dowd

Before we do that I want to open it up to Public Comment. I don't see anyone in the audience is there anyone on Zoom. Seeing no one.

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

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

	<u>PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES</u>	<u>Appropriations</u>	<u>Revenue</u>
171	PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES	142	
172	COMMUNITY HEALTH	146	
173	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	149	37
174	WELFARE ADMINISTRATION	152	32
175	WELFARE ASSISTANCE	153	38

Chairman Dowd

By the way so for anybody that wasn't here earlier, Director Bagley is in the airport in New Orleans and only has until 7:30, so if you have questions for her that's your timeframe. Otherwise she'll miss her flight. Director Bagley are you going to oversee all of them?

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

Yes, thank you Alderman Dowd. Bobbie Bagley, Director of Public Health and Community Services. I want to thank all of you for taking the time to hear our budget review. You will hear from all of the managers in each of the departments this evening as they talk about their budgets and they will also cover the details of the revenue reports for each of their departments.

As you know, the Public Health Department has worked very hard over the past couple of years to keep our community safe and to do so, we've started to see a little bit of an uptick in cases of COVID. We've seen that over the last couple of months. So we anticipate that we will continue to see those cases. With that said, we're also seeing other things that we particularly pay attention to such as an increase in other communicable diseases, homeless population, mental health, and all of the other issues that we focus on with our businesses and food services. So you'll hear from each of the Manager's as they will go through their budgets.

I am starting on page 142 and will go through the Community Services budget. I'll start first at salary and wages line where you will see there has been an increase related to the cost of living and they put those budget amounts for FY23 based on those increases. You will also see on line - I'm just going through the differences of increases. Under public services 54100 - electricity you will see that has increased. Thanks to the renovations at our building which makes us more energy efficient, we switched over to full electric. So you'll see a significant increase in the budget from 22 to 23 to cover the cost of that switch over. You'll also see a decrease in the heating and oil line because we no longer need fuel so we don't have to cover cost of that. 54141 for water - according to amounts for FY23, there is an expected increase in water so I went ahead and increased that line. In our actual line for 2022, you can see the difference between what was allocated in the initial budget in 2022 and that was not enough. So it was increased to make sure we can cover that cost.

And under other services under 55118 - under the telephone cellular. There is an increase in that line to cover the Health Promotion Specialist and myself. We do have quite a bit of cellphone usage for remote work that is still being done on occasion and so I want to make sure we can cover that cost so that will cover the reimbursement for my cellphone as well as the Health Promotion Specialist that has been added to that.

Also have increase in dues and membership lines. We have a highly educated public health workforce. As a result of that, we have to maintain our credentialing and so there are certifications that we need to maintain so that cost has gone up to maintain those certifications and to also cover our memberships and our dues associated with those costs as well. Also we go and do presentations at conferences that we also cover. We have to pay the membership fee for going to the conference, so that also covers that as well. We've had quite a few of our abstracts accepted at National conferences and so that covers that cost. What that allows for us to do is puts Nashua on the map for the quality work that is being done over here in little old New England and our State, but we get to be nationally and they can present the work that we do.

You'll also see an increase in the mileage line 55307. Because of the changes now even though there are still things that are done remotely for some of the commissions that I serve and some of the other staff participate in, I do have to go to Concord to attend meetings in person in order for them to be affirmed, so face-to-face means attendance is required. I serve a couple of Commissions as appointed by the Governor as well as our State Health Community Assessment Plan which again require face-to-face meeting.

Employee certification and training. Although we need to maintain our certification, we were able to just keep that down just by \$100. The conferences, some of them are held online, some in person but even when they are held online, there's still a charge. It's just been a little bit lower. There has been a slight increase in other contracted services. This includes us paying for some of the outside technical assistance or training from other subject matter experts on topics that we have been increasing our staff about which include topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion to meet the criteria and the expectation of the public health staff to be able to perform our services using an equity lens and so we do bring in outside facilitators to support us in that work. So that's why you see a slight increase in that line.

Marketing and outreach line went down just a little bit and that's because we've had an increase in the number of grants that help cover marketing and art which are a big part of what we do in public health is about primary intervention and primary services which includes a breakdown of education and dissemination of information through our billboards, radio. We use social media. That has decreased a little because we have more money from events to help cover some of those costs.

Miscellaneous supplies. We did have to increase that line by \$500 and again that's to help support the additional supplies that were purchased to support the activities and work we are doing in the community that fall under a grant line. So for instance, some miscellaneous supplies included. One of the things that I use some of the miscellaneous funds for acknowledging our staff for their good work over the pandemic period. So I expect that we will continue to work that way and I'd like to be able to continue to provide recognition to our staff for that work. So there's a little bit of an increase in there for that.

Subscriptions stayed the same. The only other cost that looks like it went up here in this budget our community health improvement plan. In the fall, we will start our community health assessments. This is something that we do on a three year cycle and this costs us about this amount when we did it three years ago. We tend to do a survey in the community which is little bit costlier, so we had an increase of this amount. This will also be supported by some of the funding that we get from the hospitals because we do the community health assessment in conjunction with their community benefits that needs to be done. So the hospitals also contribute to this work as well.

And then lastly under 68320 under Community Health Intervention or the CHNS, this has been increased by \$10,000 to support a partnership that we have with the Youth Council. During the course of the year, they recognized that there was an increased need for services for the youth. As a result of increase at mental health issues, they needed more counseling and so we have increased that line by \$10,000 for support that organization for our youth in the community. So those are the differences in the Community Services budget which covers mostly myself along with our Promotion Specialist and covers hours of our Epidemiologist and all the other staff under Community Services is supported by the grants. Any questions?

Chairman Dowd

Any questions for Director Bagley? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Director Bagley under the second to the last item 171 Community Services, there's a number in parenthesis there - \$27,905 I think it says.

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

I'm sorry Alderman Jette which line number is it?

Alderman Jette

171, page 143 at top of page.

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

That is indirectly received from some of the grants. It's usually put into this budget.

Alderman Jette

I'm sorry I didn't understand you.

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

So there's an indirect charge that were put against the grants and that's what you see here. This ended at \$27,905.

Alderman Jette

It's in parenthesis. Does that mean it's a loss?

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

Well see I'm not an accountant. I think when I usually look at the parenthesis, it means a negative and sometimes that's interpreted very differently from our Finance Manager, but that's an additional amount of money that's coming to the City because that's the indirect charge that we charge to the grants.

Alderman Jette

So that's money that's coming into the City so it reduces your budget by that amount. Is that?

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

I believe so. How they use that in accounting, would assume so because using the parenthesis there, that's what that means. So I'm going to assume that that is correct. I know that Janet is not here to answer how they figured all that out indirect cost.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you.

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

I can get that answered for you. I will send an e-mail out tomorrow through the Clerk to Donna.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman Sullivan.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Director Bagley just one question on really the top line. I'm back on page 14 - lines 171 through 175. There is a column in our budget books that shows total spent through it looks to be about ten months. There's two months remaining in the Fiscal Year and that's about \$1.9 million. If you were to annualize that out, that would be about \$2.2 - 2.3 million and yet the appropriation request for 2023 is \$2.6. The question I have is that the department ran if you were to forecast it out at about a \$2.2 - \$2.3 million and you're requesting \$2.6. Can you help me answer that?

Chairman Dowd

I think I can answer that. We always have that issue with that number because there are a lot of expenditures in the budget that happen towards the end of the year. Dues and subscriptions are one. Conferences are another and all the expenditures happen after that number came out. So that's true on all the departments. When they're going over their budget with the Mayor and Mr. Griffin, they take that into account. Because there are a lot of expenses that happen from that date and July 1st that aren't showing.

Alderman Sullivan

Understand. Do you think it would be possible to have Department Heads forecast where they think their budget is going to finish? I mean if you have outstanding invoices and what not for the final two to three months, is that possible to forecast that so we can at least have?

Chairman Dowd

I'll ask CFO Griffin if that's something we can do.

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

If I may Alderman Dowd. So our Finance Manager, Janet Graziano, usually does do that forecast for us. So is the Alderman asking if that's something that they can see?

Alderman Sullivan

Yes. I'd like to get a better understanding because right now I'm just looking at through the end of April. The total spent by the department is \$1.9 million. All I did was take that number, divided it by 10, and multiplied by 12, and I came out with \$2.2 - \$2.3 million. Then I go all the way to the right and I see an appropriation request for \$2.6. So my question when I looked at it was you ran the department well below what you had asked for, so I was just curious to why you are asking for \$2.6 again.

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

Alderman Dowd am I able to answer that? Yes, that would require for our Finance Manager to run those projections. As Alderman Dowd said between – from what you see here in April up until June, there will be other costs that will occur because some of the things don't get spent until the last May and June in our budgets. Some supplies aren't bought until May and June and in fact our Health Officer can speak to that. Some of the supplies that they buy, they don't buy them until late May early June. Some of the health promotion and the educational things we do – for instances, I'm in New Orleans this late in the year. A lot of our conferences aren't scheduled until late in the year and that's when we get to spend some of those dollars down as well as some of the other costs incurred. We try to spend down the dollars in the grants first and then we use the money that's in the budget from the City budget. So that will also show that there's a – it will look like there is an increase in expenditure in our budgets in May and June from our departments.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Also Divisions can't spend in the negative. So it's very difficult to exactly pinpoint the pennies. The monies that are leftover in any of the budgets go into an account that will be used to offset taxes and other things that the Mayor will explain when it gets to that point. So for instance, the School Department budget they can't - only once that I can remember did they ever overspent. That was a confusing time but they can't overspend. If they were getting to the end of the year and they needed more money, they'd have to come back to the Board and get a new appropriation but that normally doesn't happen because they don't budget to the exact penny to try to finish the year.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

Alderman Dowd just for Alderman Jette. For Alderman Jette he had the question about the \$27,905. Alderman Jette if you look at under "other expenses" and you look at 68200, it showed an indirect cost allocation that 54405 and under that the \$6,500 for the Community Health Improvement Plan and the CHNS is deducted from that and then you'll see the \$27,905 is what's the difference of those indirect dollars that are leftover from the grants.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. I just have a few questions. How many positions were added specifically related to COVID, and are those positions still filled, and are they still needed because obviously the pandemic is not as heightened as it was two years ago or even last year. So I'd like to know if that's where you're at with the positions just related to COVID.

Chairman Dowd

Director Bagley?

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

Yes. So is this a question about the positions that are under the grants or positions that are under the City? All of the positions under the City budget, all of those positions responded to the COVID pandemic. It was an "all hands on deck" approach. Some positions spent more time than others, but everybody at the Division that's paid under the City budget responded to COVID. Now even though it may look like the intensity of the pandemic is over, we are still doing a great deal of work as a result of the impact of the impact of COVID on people in the community. You'll hear some of that from the other managers as they go through their budgets. So all the City employees are still (inaudible) and doing work related to COVID.

As far as additional staffing Alderman, that staff is still there. That staff was paid for by funding that we got through the State which is a passing through the Center for Disease Control to continue to sustain the workforce that we currently have. So we have a total of 34 individuals at the Division right now and we have funding to maintain those 34 individuals.

Alderman Cathey

I got two more.

Chairman Dowd

She has a flight to catch.

Alderman Cathey

I'm aware. I'm looking at the time. Real quickly, you mentioned the electricity improvements. Maybe this is a question for the finance person you spoke of earlier, but do you anticipate or have any anticipation of how much that is going to save you long term spending this money up front and then would we be able to find out a projection of spending the money up front how much you're going to save on the electricity since you're making all these improvements?

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

So we haven't been in the building for a full year yet. We moved back into the building in June which was over this summer. This June will be our first full year and so we probably won't be able to see the difference in the cost savings until next year. Also Doria Brown who is our Energy Director will probably be able to help us understand what has been the savings but we haven't been in for a full year yet to be able to do any assessment on how much efficiency or what we're saving. The building right now is the most efficient that it's ever been because of the upgrades in our HVAC and switching over to electricity as opposed to paying for the fuel.

Alderman Cathey

Okay, thank you.

Last question. I noticed looking through the salaries and wages, and this department is not the only department that I've noticed this, but there is a 6% increase in your salary alone and that's happened in a couple different departments. I'm wondering how your salary is determined because I'm thinking not a lot of citizens are going to get a 6% increase in their pay in an inflationary year. It would be hard to justify that sort of an increase. So I'm wondering how that increase is

determined.

Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Community Services

We have a 6.09% increase of cost everyone that's at the City. We all got the same increase not just my salary but everyone in the City got the same. It's a cost of living included with the 4% increase that everyone has gotten across the entire City. So my salary is no different than anyone else's and all of our salaries at the Division as well as across the City, we all got that same increase.

Chairman Dowd

So that will be across the board. You'll want to ask CFO Griffin that.

Alderman Cathey

I'm good with her. I can talk to you later.

Chairman Dowd

Anybody else have anything or can we let Director Bagley go? Thank you very much.

Alderman Cathey

Mr. Chair may I ask you a question? Is that an "unaffiliated" contract increase?

Chairman Dowd

Yes.

Alderman Cathey

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

And those numbers were set by the Board of Aldermen. Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

Just to let you know as a former Deputy Fire Chief, I was in the unaffiliated. There's been years these people didn't get a raise because I can testify and show you the...

Alderman Cathey

You weren't part of the union?

Alderman O'Brien

Nope not as management because I was a Chief Officer. So I'm happy to show you pay stubs because I saved them of years I didn't get a raise.

Alderman Cathey

You didn't frame them.

Alderman O'Brien

No. You don't live 25 years under a spending cap without any ouch.

Chairman Dowd

Okay, next department is 172 Community Health. Who's up on Community Health?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Can you hear me? Sorry about that. You'd think I'd figure this out by now. So good evening. I want to thank the Board for allowing me to speak to the budget this evening. My name is Kim Bernard. I'm the Chief Public Health Nurse for the City of Nashua Community Health Department and I'm also the Manager for the Community Health Department. I am going to go through and talk about the changes to our budget for this budget year coming up '23.

Under "salaries and wages", we currently have five FTE's under the City budget and three that are fully grant funded. The increase is based upon the five FTE's under City funded. This increase is based upon the unaffiliated rate wage and salary grid.

Under Property Services, we've had a slight increase under disposal services for biohazard disposal. This supports partial payment in conjunction with grant funding that we also receive.

Security Services - again a slight increase and this is for our alarm system for our vaccine storage unit and it's reflecting of the change in pricing with updates to security after our (*inaudible*).

Vehicle Repairs & Maintenance. This line has decreased about \$1,500 and this is due to the fact that we did complete some planned upgrades to our outreach van during the FY22 period with City and grant funding. We've decreased that line for the upcoming year.

Under "Other Services" dues and memberships, we have a slight increase for staff that belong to professional organizations.

Conferences and Seminars, we have increased this line and that is to fund professional development for staff and for partial funding for our conference for our local partners running public health topics. This is something that we do every year but for the past few years we have not been able to hold these conferences and that's reflected in the FY22 budget. So that's why you'll see that larger increase there.

Postage and Deliveries - a slight decrease there. We have a new electronic medical record thankfully that we rolled out in the fall and we're able to utilize technology through this (*inaudible*) system to contact our clients.

Under "Supplies and Materials", the decrease under educational supplies. This funding here in the City grant supplements grant funding and the amount that we have would be appropriate for what our needs are for the upcoming year.

Under "Miscellaneous Supplies", a slight increase here and that line we use items as Director Bagley had mentioned for items that just don't fall under other funding lines or grants and things for such as supplies, snacks, and water for clients during outreach events that we hold in the community. And those are all the changes to our budget and if you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

Chairman Dowd

Does anyone have any questions? Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Under "Salaries and Wages", you have an overtime line and it's quite low. I was just curious why it was so low. You have proposed \$5,000 and through April you've used \$531.

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

And your question is what? I'm sorry.

Alderman Sullivan

I was just curious as to why it was so low. Why there was no overtime or what not used.

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Most of our staff is salaried so we don't need a lot of overtime hours.

Chairman Dowd

Anyone else? Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you. To follow up on Alderman Sullivan's question, and it's a good one, but compared to other years when you done the budget last year when we were under COVID. That did have an impact on some of the overtime because some of the things were done virtually, inter-office, and not so much out there on the street exposures that you have done in the past. Would that be a fair summation on why some of those numbers could have been lower as well?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

We did not get overtime for that work.

Chairman Dowd

It's probably because of unusual circumstances. Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. Just a general question for folks in this department. I know that some City employees count on overtime. Sometimes they use it as part to help their income. Is that the case in this department? I mean you have \$5,000 set aside and do they count on that as part of their yearly income?

Chairman Dowd

I don't think so.

Alderman O'Brien

If I could answer. As a firefighter, I used to get called in either to pilot or something if a fireman was injured at a fire. We had to backfill that position. That would be overtime. Nobody really goes there and does an illness, or sick dance, or accident dance God forbid. I don't think Public Works really does snow dances praying for a blizzard, you know what I mean. So these things that naturally kind of pop up. But like in the case of the State, the State of NH just realized just so you know recently that the Public Works employees are now classified in this State as "first responders" because where they do come in during these type of emergencies and like everybody else, I hate to say it, but a lot of our City employees are family type people. They have children. Some of them may not have the best teeth. They need an orthodontist and so little fairies don't mind driving the plow trucks. They do need to be compensated for some of these things. Nobody really relies, per se, on the overtime. It's nice, my father brought me up to say never refuse it but I don't think anybody does a blizzard dance or anything else.

Chairman Dowd

The majority of overtime spent is by salaried union employees that have it in their contract.

Alderman Sullivan

In this case since there's nothing appropriated or requested for Fiscal Year 2023 is it better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it? And I'm not saying that she should put in \$5,000, but I'm saying maybe there should be \$1,800. I don't know. I'm just throwing that out there.

Chairman Dowd

I would suggest that you ask Mr. Griffin on that as well. You'll find sometimes when we have line items that are zero funded or not funded and it's difficult to remove a line item in a budget. He can explain that to you. I'm not going to try and explain it to you. It's easier to leave it in.

Alderman O'Brien

Alderman Dowd I do have a question, perhaps maybe to help out others. Every single department would come before us with their particular budget. The first thing is the key is the Mayor sets the tone basically for the City and the question #1 should be are you under what the Mayor recommended for your particular division. Then looking at that at the end of the Fiscal Year, it's the City of Nashua not a business. The place was never intended to run like a business. We're supposed to be providing services to the community and that's where the tax dollars basically go. So the money at the end of the Fiscal Year goes back into the general account. So if it is appropriated and if it doesn't get used, it will go back into the general account come July 1st.

Chairman Dowd

We have a whole series of likes and appropriations that the Mayor will make relative to reducing the tax rate and other things but that's after the budgets. Once the budget is closed sometime in August-September, that's when you'll see the monies that weren't spent for this year will be reallocated somehow.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

I think we're all set unless someone else has other questions. Thanks Kim.

Next up is Environmental Health.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Good evening. I'm sorry I have this obnoxious cat who wants some attention so bear with me.

Alderman O'Brien

Good luck Heidi.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Heidi Peek-Kukulka - Nashua's Health Officer. Thank you for allowing us to present on our budgets. I'm actually going to go through our revenues briefly if you don't mind.

Chairman Dowd

Sure. Revenues are on page 37.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Yes. Our pools expired at the end of April. We just started collecting the license fees. Our food service licenses probably going to be close to our target amount. It's been a very interesting year during and post COVID. Well we're not post COVID but things still continue to affect food service but we see an awful lot of change of ownerships. Solid waste licenses expire at the end of June. We've just had a new one come in and that's about it. Our septic fees are higher than normal and that just indicates a lot of activity in that market.

We have not been issuing tickets recently. We've been working with food service establishments to get them back on their feet and we will start doing that. We hadn't collected re-inspection fees for a while after the reopening of food service. Miscellaneous fee – that's for copies pretty much. Everybody wants information on (inaudible).

Chairman Dowd

Any questions on revenue? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

I noticed that your fees when I looked at the ordinance establishing your fees like for inspections, the last time that was amended was in 2006. So it's been what 16 years. Isn't it time to re-assess that and isn't it time for -when you talk about helping restaurants get back on their feet and not issuing permit fees, or fines, or whatever, the thing that comes to my mind and I don't want to offend anyone but what authority do you have to do that? If the ordinance says they're supposed to pay a certain amount and if they violate the ordinance and if they're not protecting the public and they're supposed to get a fine - I'll be honest with you. It bothers me that your Department would just decide that people don't need to pay those fees. I think that if that's appropriate and I don't think it is, I think these people are in business to make money to support their families. I understand to support their employees. I understand that but it's a cost of doing business.

The other way of looking at it is that we the City in order to protect the public, we're inspecting these places. We're teaching them what temperature they should have their refrigerators at, what temperature they should be cooking their food to, and all this stuff. We are assisting them to protect the public and help these people make money and it's only, I think, appropriate that you should charge and ask the Aldermen to amend the fees so that we're charging what it costs to do this service. That's a long way of asking you are you looking at your fee schedule and making recommendations to us to bring that up to what the standard should be today.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Mr. Chair shall I go ahead and answer?

Chairman Dowd

Yes go ahead.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

I think you said yes?

Chairman Dowd

Yes.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Okay. Thank you. Yes we have a couple of models that we're looking at to update the fee structure and we want to get away actually from the specific old fashioned way of describing the individual facilities. So it will be a lot more current and so we've got a couple of things and we do want to bring that before the Board of Aldermen soon. Was there another part to that question?

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

No. I'm satisfied to hear that you are looking at revising the fee schedule and you're going to be coming to us and asking us to update that. That's good enough. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Also in fairness to Heidi, she works under Director Bagley and Director Bagley has guidance from the Mayor. So just throw that out. Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. Being new to this department, the 1,033 inspections is that all new inspections, or the yearly inspections, or are you going to some businesses multiple times? How often do you have to inspect or can you inspect every month if you wanted to? Just not clear on that process.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

I'm not sure what number you were referring to as far as inspections. That's in the packet that we put together.

Alderman Cathey

Yes, sorry about that.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Yes, I'm looking strictly at these numbers. There is a little bit of variation. Pools and spas are ideally checked twice a year. If we have an opportunity, we will do an extra run through of the indoor pools and spas around Thanksgiving time.

Food service is typically anywhere from two to four times a year. There is a mandatory requirement for two times a year, which is sometimes difficult when it's a strictly seasonal type of operation. FDA recommends four times a year for more complex places or places that serve more vulnerable population.

Alderman Cathey

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

And to follow with the overtime and everything too, Heidi you know we've worked together on many different calls. This is one of our divisions such as if the Fire Department has a situation and there's been many. I remember one snowy night a tractor trailer truck caught fire on the highway and he was delivering chocolate - full of chocolate candy bars. Well you can't let that go because the chocolate with the smoke and the fire has been contaminated and unfortunately turn out - do you remember that incident Heidi? It turned in to be Nashua's problem. What a sweet deal but it couldn't be sold. So this particular Division comes out in the wee hours with the Fire Department as required by State law to recertify a business that they clean up and meet the code standards and everything. Very appreciative of what you do Heidi in your Division. Thank you.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Wilshire?

Alderman Wilshire

Heidi I appreciate your work, your staff. I mean I know they come to my business where I work and they do food service inspections and they're thorough and they're fair. If we have something that's not marked, they'll write us up for something that's not marked but it should be marked. So I find them very fair and easy to work with and I want to thank you for that.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

That means a lot. Thank you. I will relay that to our staff. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

And I worked directly with Heidi on some restaurant stuff and she is very thorough. Also, they also inspect our schools - all of our school cafeterias. Thank God they get very high marks. Any other questions for Heidi? Thank you. You have to go through your spending.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

I'll be brief. I'll just give you the highlights on significant changes. You will see under "Consulting Services" that we've gone from \$6,000 to \$7,000. For our newer Aldermen, that is for mosquito surveillance. We hire with Dragon Mosquito and from approximately the first of July and up until mid-October, they conduct mosquito surveillance for us - trapping, identification mosquitos and submission to the State lab. That's our best way of knowing that we have West Nile Virus in our community. Knock on wood, we have not had EEE in Nashua that we know of. So that is probably one of the biggest changes.

Under other services 5500 Communications Data - that was data to support our tablets in the field with the CivicGov Software. That has not worked out really well for us. We need a more specific program for the inspections. So we're going to cease that this upcoming budget.

Dues and Memberships have gone up \$100. We are trying for some National Environmental Health Association specific credentials and we get a cost break on some of the trainings they offer if we're all members. So everyone but our Office Manager is now a member of NEHA.

We dropped the "Employee Training and Certifications" down by \$200. You'll see that has not been expended. A lot of our recent trainings have been free of charge and virtual. FDA has just put on some really good ones recently that have been very beneficial to our staff.

We boosted our "Laboratory Supplies" because reagents have gone up for pool testing – well pool sampling analysis and then "Miscellaneous Supplies" that pays for say the paper that the licenses are printed on. If we need more for educational supplies and that's really about it. Those are the highlights.

Chairman Dowd

Questions. Seeing none. Thank you Heidi.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Next is the Welfare Administration. Before that, I have a text message from John Griffin and he said for the "unaffiliated" salaries that the next meeting with Kim Kleiner, you should ask her because that's been here bailiwick. Okay. So Welfare that would be Bob Mack.

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Yes, good evening. My name is Bob Mack. I'm the Welfare Officer for the City of Nashua. Thank you for the opportunity to present tonight. I will be presenting on 174 Welfare Administration budget as well as 175 Welfare General Assistance Budget.

As you can see from the Welfare Administration budget, basically the primary expense that we have is with our staff. It's kind of similar with all the departments. The departments within our Division - our staff are our greatest assets. In the Welfare Department, you will see as noted the salary increases are in accordance with the Fiscal Year '23 salary grid. Our staff – we're made up of six full time staff in the department, including myself. We have three case technicians - a Senior Case Technician and an Intake Worker. As I mentioned, they are our greatest asset. They have various experience working with social service agencies coming from social service organizations with case management, with customer service, bilingual-bicultural experience, and the like. So that is again our greatest asset in the Department. We have some general expenses. There aren't really any significant changes in our other services. We had one slight increase in Training and Certification of \$100. So you will see a very minor adjustment in that line. That is about it for the Welfare Administration. I don't know if there are any questions?

Chairman Dowd

Questions? Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you very much. First a comment. Mr. Mack we had a homeless encampment in Ward 9 back in the woods and your team helped us alleviate that situation. So I wanted to say thank you. Hopefully you can speak to this but I jump back to revenues under “Welfare Administration”. Can you explain Welfare Recoveries?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Certainly. Welfare Recoveries are basically - we're lucky if we get anything. In accordance with the Statute if a client that is eligible for and receives assistance is able - returns to income status and was able to meet their basic needs and can repay the City, they are expected to do that. As you can see, I think our recoveries was identified of like \$12,000. We've got \$1,000 in revenues. We occasionally get personal reimbursements from the clients that we assist.

One of the other aspect of recoveries would be if the person owns any real property or assets, we are required by law to place a lien against those assets. If there's any activity that takes place with say a piece of property home is sold or refinanced, we may get reimbursement from any sort of lien placed against that property. Those are the basic ways that we collect any revenues or recoveries. We don't count on it very much but, again, whatever we get we consider it kind of a bonus. I hope that answers your question.

Alderman Sullivan

It does. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. Under the “Welfare Assistance” first line “Assistance for Shelters”. I see that right now through ten months you've only spent \$200,000 but for this upcoming year you're asking for an additional 150. I'm just wondering why it went up that much when you didn't even get close to the 400 from the previous year.

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

So as far as the “General Assistance” budget, you do see what was appropriated for this current Fiscal Year, what our expenditures are, and what our proposed budget is for the upcoming Fiscal Year. A lot of the expenses that we predicted - it's been an interesting couple of years for everybody. What has come through this COVID situation is there was a lot of funding that was injected into the economy. A lot of funding came down from the federal government through the States. One of the primary areas of assistance was around rental assistance. So a lot of money came to the States for rental assistance. When I mentioned the staff earlier, I think a lot of the time they spend that they would have spent historically providing direct assistance to help somebody pay their rent, they were spending that time identifying need and identifying other resources that they may be able to be referred to get that assistance instead of getting it directly from (inaudible).

So a lot of the funding that we did not need to spend was because of those programs that currently exist in the community. Now those programs are time limited. One of those main programs is overseeing and managed by the NH Housing Finance Authority and administered through the Community Action Programs or CAP agencies such as Southern NH Services here in Nashua. They will provide rental assistance for a rather extensive period of time for those that qualify that have COVID related hardships. So that is why we saw a pretty significant decrease in our need to spend that line in particular for this current fiscal year. With that in mind, we're not sure how much longer those programs are going to last. They were funded pretty significantly but they've also spent a significant amount of money assisting a number of clients and it's not just for Nashua. It's for the entire County and State if you will.

So being conservative so we don't run out of money because welfare as Chairman Dowd had indicated, it's not good to go over budget. Welfare is one of those Departments it's a State mandate according to RSA 165. We can't just say “we don't have the money, so we cannot assist you”. If people are determined eligible, then they must be provided the assistance that they are eligible for. I don't want to get too much into the history of it, but 20 years ago when I started with the City there was a \$650,000 general assistance budget. I started in January and they had already spent close to \$1 million on that general assistance budget, because they could not say “no” for the people that were applying for eligible for that assistance. So to avoid that, we try to budget accordingly and make sure that we have sufficient funds to cover payments for those that are eligible. I don't know if that answers your question?

Alderman Cathey

It does. Can I get a follow-up Mr. Chair? This is more of a curiosity. I notice the “medical” line that line went down significantly, can you speak to that?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Yes. The “medical” line is primarily prescription assistance. Most folks we are able to direct to apply for different insurance programs that are offered through the State. If people don’t get it through their employment, if they’re unemployed, if they’re receiving State benefits there are a number of different insurance programs offered through the State. So as I mentioned before, the staff spend a great deal of time assessing need, directing people to those resources so they don’t need our general assistance.

Now there are occasions where people experience a gap in that insurance coverage and we may have to work with them to assist temporarily with a cost of a prescription so they don’t go without the medication they may need. It’s a rather low expenditure. Years ago we had spent significant amounts of money. We had spent \$80 - \$90,000 a year because people didn’t have these insurance programs. So that, again, is the focus of getting people connected with some of the insurance programs that now exist.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman Wilshire?

Alderman Wilshire

Mr. Mack you’ve been with the City for 20 years?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Yes, it’s been 20 years. Twenty wonderful years.

Alderman Wilshire

I remember when this budget was \$1.5 million. Since you’ve been at the helm, I think you’ve done a really good job at managing the budget, at referring people to other resources, staying on top of other resources, and kudos to you.

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Thank you. If I may respond Mr. Chair. I do appreciate that Alderman Wilshire and you’ve been very supportive of us. Again, I go back to what we were able to do initially. When we were spending a lot of money, we had to bring on staff to spend more time with these clients, (*inaudible*) and also identify those alternative resources. We have some great community partners out in the community. A lot of the non-profit organizations, the hospitals, medical providers, what have you, shelter programs, food banks, food pantries, fuel assistance programs, etc. So if not for those partnerships and the efforts that our staff make to develop those partnerships, and gain knowledge about those programs to connect people to those resources, we could be looking at much different situation and circumstance. Again, thank you very much!

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions for Mr. Mack? So, you’ve also covered Welfare Assistance. So thank you very much. So with that, I’ll entertain a motion to table R-22-035.

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

Chairman Dowd

Now we'll entertain Public Comment. Is there anyone in the Chamber or on Zoom?

PUBLIC COMMENT

Laurie Ortolano

Yes. Hi. Good evening. Laurie Ortolano, 41 Berkeley Street. I know the next meeting - I don't know if it's Monday or Tuesday I didn't check the calendar - but there's a lot budgets coming in for that meeting under Administrative Services Director and I want to share with you my concerns at little bit and hope that there are some questions asked about the Right-to-Know Paralegal. You know that Right-to-Know Coordinator position when it was hired in December of 2020 was pretty distressing to me. I did not want to see that come in because I felt that position would present hurdles and obstacles to the public getting information as we wanted it and it did. It resulted in four lawsuits over an eight month period. One was the sanctions that were won - one other citizen one, a Right-to-Know and two pro se put in by me. The final judgment isn't in, but the City did acknowledge there was wrongdoing there in Court. So that presented for legal actions and I wasn't a fan of that.

Now I see this Right-to-Know Paralegal coming in. There was no job description. Some of you might have seen that I tried to put it out to the Budget Committee that I have asked for the job description for that. When I look up what a paralegal does, I don't think it belongs under Administrative Services Director. I'm very concerned by the tracking that continues to go on for me. These are the assess help e-mails that were sent to me from my last lawsuit that were only sent to me two days before the trial, which was records I was supposed to receive a year earlier. This is one of three batches of records the City had that they didn't provide me. These are all e-mails sent to assess help for help. I had nine e-mails I sent in. I was trying to find mine. I didn't know what other people sent in, but I have nine pages of this were all three batches. Look at all of these in here. This is one abatement the way they're clipped. So it's clearly citizens were sending in a lot of information to that line because the Assessing office was closed. When I see my questions pulled out and shipped up to Miss Kleiner and then sent to a Chief who has to respond to them, frankly it just infuriates me and I hear the Mayor say "Chief Vincent left because he had to deal with Laurie's Right-to-Knows".

My questions were sent into assess help and I call them Right-to-Knows because they were just questions. They were acknowledged...

Alderman O'Brien

30 seconds

Laurie Ortolano

...as 91A issues at all. They were just questions like these citizens and what they sent in but mine got pulled out and flagged. Chief Vincent always said he was going to be here a year. I was aware of that. He stayed 14 months. I'm not certain I want to play the blame game on what citizens did, but I'm really opposed to what I see going on with positions and that position in there. It will be another battle and I don't want to go through it. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

I see no other public comment, so General Discussion?

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Alderman Sullivan

I saw a lot of e-mails going around and just wanted to finalize the budget meetings that we have next week - meetings like this. It's my understanding that we have one on - is there one on Monday or is that just a special Budget meeting?

Chairman Dowd

The one on Monday is just a regular Budget meeting and the agenda was too large to include Administrative Services with that agenda. We would have been here sleeping overnight. So the Administrative Services got moved.

Alderman Sullivan

I think its Wednesday the 25th.

Chairman Dowd

I think you're right. Yes because it was going to be an Infrastructure meeting that got cancelled and we took the date. There aren't a lot of open dates.

Alderman Sullivan

Right. Okay.

Alderman O'Brien

You owe me the favor. I did give you an extra date and delayed an Infrastructure meeting so we could get this done. But I think maybe if we in the past, I do remember trying to come up with a master sheet. I know sometimes it's hard to completely follow. I haven't seen that this year yet. So it did come out. So you did get that Alderman?

Alderman Sullivan

I did. I just wanted to make sure I had it tight.

Alderman O'Brien

I found it convenient because then you could do your homework and get ready for each individual.

Chairman Dowd

Any other general discussion. Seeing none. Remarks by Alderman? Alderman Cathey?

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Alderman Cathey

I just wanted to thank the Department Directors for coming in and speaking to their budgets and answering our questions. Thanks!

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was declared closed at 8:09 p.m.

Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Committee Clerk