

A regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held Tuesday, June 11, 2019, at 8:02 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

President Lori Wilshire presided; City Clerk Patricia D. Piecuch recorded.

Prayer was offered by City Clerk Patricia D. Piecuch; Alderman Tom Lopez led in the Pledge to the Flag.

The roll call was taken with 14 members of the Board of Aldermen present; Alderman Gidge was recorded absent.

Mayor James W. Donchess and Corporation Counsel Steven A. Bolton were also in attendance.

REMARKS BY THE MAYOR

Mayor Donchess

Thank you very much. The main item on tonight's agenda is of course R-19-123 which is the Fiscal 2020 Budget. I proposed it at the first meeting in March; the Budget Committee has considered it carefully over a whole series of meetings. It has reviewed budgets of each Department with representatives that have come before the Committee; so I appreciate all of the time and effort that the Budget Committee has put in on this particular budget.

Some of the things that are proposed within the budget and which would be accomplished by it are we are going to be able to 30 miles of paving plus 31 miles of crack sealing this year in order to improve city infrastructure. We have discussed the paving many times but we went through a period of decades where not enough money was directed towards this portion of our infrastructure. I believe the Board of Aldermen and the City have done a good job in budgeting more, a lot more, for that purpose. We see the effects of that all over the City every day.

The budget would also, despite a major challenge that I will get to in a moment, would allow us to limit the tax increase to 3%. It maintains the quality of our services and does not cut back on services, in fact, adds to some. So that is always in the face of substantial budget challenges, just even maintaining the quality of services is always a challenge. The budget funds and Energy Manager for the first time, which will help us develop energy saving projects and make the City greener at the same time. I asked the Budget Committee and they are recommending a change to include half the cost of a grant writer, \$30,000.00, to pay half of the salary and compensation of a grant writer; the other half would be paid by the School Department. We would share the Grant Writer with them in order to bring back funds. Both that position, the Grant Writer and the Energy Manager, over time would pay for themselves.

I proposed that ELL Teachers, we put in escrow \$200,000.00 for ELL teachers, this is English as a second language teachers to make sure that some of these students that we have, and we have a lot, that come to Nashua without fluency in English, learn English as quickly as possible so they can be integrated into regular classrooms.

The budget would initiate "Imagine 2040" which is the first City-Wide Master Plan in 20 years. The budget increases Fire Dispatchers. The dispatch load, with the same number of dispatchers has gone from something like a few thousand calls a year to over 11,000 calls with the same number of dispatchers. The funding for the new dispatchers would actually be realized from the ambulance company, AMR as a result of the contract, the renewed contract that you approved at the last meeting of the Board of Aldermen. The compensation that the City is receiving from AMR is \$350,000.00 in the first year; that escalates over the term of the contract and that offsets the cost of the additional dispatchers. The rationale there of course is that the ambulance service is a big user of the dispatch team and therefore they are helping to pay the cost by covering the cost of the additional people that we would be adding.

Now the main challenge which we have talked about before is the \$3.3 million dollar increase and the cost of employee health care. This is an 11% increase, a huge budget challenge while we are trying to keep taxes and the budget increases as moderate as we possibly can. That is a single line item in the budget. Now the remainder of the budget is up only 1.6%. But because of the healthcare increase, the overall budget is up about 2.86%. Again if the health care had maintained a very modest increase, the whole budget would be up more like 1.6%. So that is the main challenge. As a result I gave budget guidelines to the departments of 2.25% for the major operating, major services providers; those being schools, fire and police. Those are the budgets and numbers that I held them to. The other departments were given targets of 1.75%. The \$200,000.00 for the ELL teachers is over and above the 2.25% that the School Department submitted. That, of course, would remain in the contingency account until the Board of Aldermen votes to release it to meet the purpose that the priorities that the School Department have articulated, which indicate that ELL teachers are at the top of the list.

So those are some of the things that we would accomplish by the budget. As always, the challenge is to balance the ability to pay with the needs for service in the community. I think we have reached an appropriate balance. I know the Board of Aldermen is considering some modest changes to the budget; but in the whole I think that the budget does accomplish what we had expected. We can achieve a 3% tax increase; we can meet the challenge of an 11% increase in health care costs; and we can make some improvements in both service and infrastructure at the same time. I hope that the Board of Aldermen will consider and pass the budget.

We do have a couple of appointments tonight; I want to thank them both for serving. We have Phillip Scontsas who is going to serve as an alternate on the Downtown Improvement Committee. Of course Mr. Scontsas and his family have operated a very successful prominent downtown business for generations, so I want to thank him very much for agreeing to serve. And Bob Hayden is going to serve on the Energy and Environment Committee; he has a great background for that Committee and I am glad that he has agreed to serve in that capacity. So I want to thank him as well.

And finally coming up on Monday there is Assessing 101 for any members of the public and the Board of Aldermen who wish to attend. Hopefully you can. The basics of assessing, the procedures, the principles involved, the reasons for assessing will be discussed at that meeting. So anybody in the public who is interested in that subject should come next Monday night to the City Auditorium. And finally, probably Alderman Lopez will mention this, but coming up on Saturday, we have a very exciting event, which is the Annual Tree Streets Block Party, starting I believe at 2:00. He can fill you in on all the details. I am certainly going to be there and I hope as many people as possibly can from the Board attend as well.

Thank you very much Madam President. That is all I have.

RESPONSE TO REMARKS OF THE MAYOR

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

Mayor Donchess, what time on Monday. Is it 6:30 / 7:00.

Mayor Donchess

I think it is 7:00 but we should check that just to make sure, I think it is 7:00.

RECOGNITION PERIOD – None

READING MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the minutes of the Board of Aldermen meeting of May 28, 2019, accepted, placed on file, and the reading suspended.

COMMUNICATIONS REQUIRING ONLY PROCEDURAL ACTIONS AND WRITTEN REPORTS FROM LIAISONS

From: Paula Johnson
Re: O-19-044

There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the communication and placed it on file.

From: Patricia D. Piecuch
Re: Proposed City Charter Amendments – R-18-073

There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the communication and placed it on file.

From: Kim Kleiner, Administrative Services Division Director
Re: Email sent to the Board, June 4, 2019, L. Ortolano

City Clerk Piecuch

“Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to correct some of the inaccurate statements which have been sent to the Board of Aldermen and Board of Assessors in the past week.

Attorney Mark Broth is conducting an independent investigation regarding the allegations against Mr. Turgiss. I am not seeking to influence that investigation in any way. I am seeking to correct misinformation. Accordingly, we respectfully request this communication be read into the record and placed on file.

We continue to receive multiple Right to Know requests, almost daily, from a member of the public regarding this matter. In an email dated June 4, 2019 Ms. Laurie Ortolano stated, "Greg [Turgiss] visited 3 properties in January, 3 in February... and 1 in March. The email then asks how Mr. Turgiss could have driven 660 miles in those 3 months .

Ms. Ortolano cites an AssessPro report as authority for the statement. This report was given in response to a Right to Know request, its intended use and the data it collects were not discussed .

Ms. Ortolano's statement is inaccurate because the AssessPro report in no way captures all of the work, or all of the properties visited, by any assessor in a given time. The report only indicates that during a certain time period the assessor used AssessPro to make corrections with respect to the listed property. An assessor typically performs a great deal more work and makes a great deal more property visits than are captured on this report . For one example, a visit may be in order for the investigation of a charitable exemption, where the assessor needs to evaluate if the building is being used for a qualified charitable purpose by the applicant. This would not warrant a change to the property card captured in this report.

The email from Ms. Ortolano also infers that Mr. Turgiss is checking work within the assessor's office. Mr. Turgiss is not in any supervisory role over other assessors or their work. The assessors are using a peer review approach where their work is reviewed by at least one or more other

assessors within the department. They often confer with each other on different cases, this results in a more equitable and consistent application on subjective items such as the condition of a property.”

There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the communication and placed it on file.

PERIOD FOR PUBLIC COMMENT RELATIVE TO ITEMS EXPECTED TO BE ACTED UPON THIS EVENING – None

COMMUNICATIONS REQUIRING FINAL APPROVAL

From: Mayor Jim Donchess
Re: Contract for Neopost IN700DS Mailing Solution

**MOTION BY ALDERWOMAN KELLY TO ACCEPT, PLACE ON FILE AND APPROVE THE PURCHASE ORDER LEASE WITH MAILFINANCE, INC., IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,231
MOTION CARRIED**

From: Mayor Jim Donchess
Re: Contract for Long Term Management of Wastewater Biosolids

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN JETTE TO ACCEPT, PLACE ON FILE AND AWARD THE CONTRACT TO RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, INC., IN AN AMOUNT NOT-TO-EXCEED \$1,507,050
MOTION CARRIED**

From: Mayor Jim Donchess
Re: Contract Award for Emergency Notification System

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ACCEPT, PLACE ON FILE AND AWARD THE CONTRACT TO ONSOLVE, LLC, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$66,000
MOTION CARRIED**

PETITIONS

The following Petition was read into the record:

Petition to Release Façade Easement

There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the petition as read and referred it to the Committee on Infrastructure

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

Appointment by the Mayor

The following appointment by the Mayor was read into the record:

Board of Assessors

Paul R. Bergeron (New Appointment) For an Indefinite Term at the Pleasure of the Mayor
15 Stanstead Place
Nashua, NH 03063

There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the appointment as read and referred it to the Personnel/Administrative Affairs Committee

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Budget Review Committee..... 05/29/2019

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the May 29, 2019, Budget Review Committee accepted and placed on file.

Finance Committee..... 06/05/2019

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the June 5, 2019, Finance Committee accepted and placed on file.

Personnel/Administrative Affairs Committee..... 06/03/2019

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the June 3, 2019, Personnel/ Administrative Affairs Committee accepted and placed on file.

CONFIRMATION OF MAYOR'S APPOINTMENTS

Downtown Improvements Committee

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared Phillip Scontsas, 169 Main Street, Nashua, duly appointed as an alternate member to the Downtown Improvements Committee for a term to expire December 1, 2021

Oath of Office administered by Corporation Counsel.

Environment and Energy Committee

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared Bob Hayden, 84 Dutton Road, Lyndeborough, duly appointed to the Environment and Energy Committee for a term to expire January 21, 2020.

Oath of Office administered by Corporation Counsel.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-18-073, Amended

- Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Brian S. McCarthy
- Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
- Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
- Alderman Jan Schmidt
- Alderman Tom Lopez
- Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws
- Alderman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CITY CHARTER RELATIVE TO FILLING VACANCIES ON ELECTED BOARDS BY MAJORITY VOTE OF THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THAT BOARD

Given its eighth reading;

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN CARON THAT R-18-073, AS AMENDED, IS NECESSARY AND THAT IT BE SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS BY PLACING IT ON THE NOVEMBER 5, 2019, MUNICIPAL GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT
MOTION CARRIED**

Resolution R-18-073 declared duly adopted as amended.

R-19-123

Endorser: Mayor Jim Donchess

RELATIVE TO THE ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2020 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NASHUA GENERAL, ENTERPRISE, AND SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

Given its second reading;

MOTION BY ALDERMAN DOWD TO AMEND R-19-123 IN ITS ENTIRETY BY REPLACING IT WITH THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS MADE BY THE BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE BY ROLL CALL

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Dowd

Just to clarify what the amendment is, when the budget was presented, an amendment was made by Alderman Kelly and the motion was to increase the Mayor's budget by \$65K to address the cost of two school paras? Correct?

Alderwoman Kelly

And a counselor.

Alderman Dowd

And a counselor if they can squeeze that in, in that amount of money. It passed and it now requires 10 votes to amend the Mayor's budget.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you I just wanted to follow up on that. The conversation for people who weren't at the Budget Meeting, I personally looked at the line items that they were looking at and wanted to see what we could do for them. The two line items that they didn't have any sort of plan for that they had pulled out of their budget was the paras and the school counselor, which still keeps us at 3% but allows us to give them a little bit more support. And I'm sorry, we actually voted to put that into contingency so that the money wouldn't be used unless we hired those people. So it will go into the same contingency with the \$200,000.00 for the other paras.

Alderman Jette

Just a point of clarification, didn't the Mayor add something for the grant writer?

Alderman Dowd

Yes but the Mayor added to his budget and we allowed that to go through but we didn't alter the Mayor's budget, that's part of the Mayor's budget. So we don't need to vote on that separately.

Attorney Bolton

You do but as long as it is captured in this amendment you'll be fine.

Alderman Dowd

It is.

Alderman Klee

Yeah while I want to give the school as much as much as we possibly can, I have concerns that we could actually hire 2 school paras, a school counselor for \$65K and it would not include any of the benefits. And then who pays for the benefits. And I have the same issue with the contingency plan and this. If we add to their budget, does that mean next year their budget is at least \$265,000.00 more because we can't ask these people to leave their jobs? Just a concern that having to bring everything forward; I know this is this year's budget but we have to think forward.

Alderwoman Kelly

I believe, and I'll ask Alderman Dowd, but that discussion came up as well in budget and we were told that if we put this aside, they are going to have to handle the benefit part of it, including the \$200,000.00. And I think the paras are part-time that are in there, and this was exactly what they brought to us, there was a Memo that was brought to us after we met with them that was sent through from Sue Lovering and that's where I got the numbers from. So I trust that they know that they know what they would pay somebody for those jobs.

Alderman Klee

Again I am looking forward. And I understand that they are going to have to take the costs of the benefits and part-time doesn't have the same benefit. I do respect that and I do understand that. But I am still looking at the \$200,000.00 and so on that next year they are going to have these bodies and whether they pay for them, the City pays for them, or however it is worked, I am just a little worried about the following year.

Alderwoman Kelly

No I apologize. I hear your concerns but when they were sitting here I asked them specifically what is really on your mind? And I believe the Board President said, "I'd love to hire 12 paras". So the need is there, whether we fund it this year or next year. This is the thing that I brought up in our meeting that they need to start thinking about hiring now. So it is not something we can "OH maybe we'll have some contingency later on" – they have to hire them this summer for the fall.

Alderman Clemons

Alderman Kelly did a great job on this because I think you know when you look at what is being proposed here, it's another school psychologist in a time when you know kids are facing a lot of things at home. We are a growing City, we are having more problems; and of course para-professional's go right in hand with that. You are talking about on the average \$300,000.00 house, \$3.00; \$3.00 more a year is what we are asking people to pay for these positions. I don't think it is too much to ask.

Alderman Dowd

Just so we stick at the moment to the amendment. The \$200K and the \$65K will be in contingency. It is part of the budget if it gets approved and therefore will become part of the School Budget when they come up with a person to hire. They will come to us and ask us to release the money from contingency to do that hire. But as far as the entire City Budget it's in there now, well it's in there if we pass the amendment and pass the budget. So another thing I want to point out is after we had our meeting and you will recall at the Budget Meeting I asked the CFO what the percentage increase was and he said 3%. I went to see him the very next day or the day after and we sat down with a spread sheet and it is actually 2.997% so it is under 3% for those that were concerned. I know that's not a heck of a lot under, but when I asked about the other changes, you'd have to do a lot more to get it any lower anyway. But it is 2.997% and right now we are looking at the amended budget.

So what we are voting on is the \$65K to put in contingency to allow the School Department to hire what they can in the areas of para or school psychologist. So that's what we are voting on right now, the amendment.

Alderman Lopez

So Southern NH has, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, one of the highest suicide rates in the country. We have all kinds of national dialogue about school shootings, about violence in schools, about bullying. Not only does that happen in schools but every time we have it in the national media, then kids are seeing it, they are viewing it, they are having trouble understanding what to do with it. This City is going through an SUD crisis, many of these children have experienced friends, families, uncles, aunts, parents, you know, suffering from Substance Use Disorders. We have recently have a pretty contentious discussion over smoking in schools and the difficulties that entails. I know we are not in the top 4 or 5 when it comes to college placement. These are all things that a School Counselor would be working on. I think our school counselors, their caseloads are like 3 or 4 times what is recommended, according to the School Counseling Association. I think they are overworked and stretched too thin. These are more than bodies. These are people who are force multipliers when it comes to how our kids are able to navigate the School System. Kids who have positive mental health can do better in school, they can score higher on tests, they can interact better with their peers.

So I think the presentation and the proposal being made here is a bargain. It is not a huge surge or increase; it is recognition that our school population needs more than it is getting right now. If that means in future years we have to continue to revisit the issue, I think we should. I think that needs to be a major part of the future budget's focus areas is how are our schools meeting the expectations that they have? It ties directly back to tax value, quality of community, every time we end up in Number 1 Best Place to Live on whatever app of the week is doing it, it is always related back to education and school safety. So I am in favor of that and I am also conscious of an ever expanding, diverse world. We are a welcoming City and the need for para-professionals to help people who have cognitive or behavioral challenges or cultural challenges, I think this is a very good reason to approve a small amount more in the budget.

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

First of all I want to thank the Mayor, I think you've done an exceptional job with the budget and preparing the budget for everyone. As I recall with the budget that the school came back with, they did get or they agreed to what was presented by the Mayor is that correct?

Mayor Donchess

Yes, yes.

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

So I realize that there are a lot of things happening in the School Department here. I think we are, I'm not saying baby steps, but I do believe that it takes time to get things in order. It is not going to be done overnight, in any situation. And I say that because I am not willing to go to 2.997% tax for the City. We have a lot of changes going on in the City, Assessing, the whole 9 yards, the tax change. I do believe that 2.7%, I really don't even want to be there to be honest with you, but I guess I could live with 2.7% and I believe that my constituents could too as well. But the 2.997% or 3.0% or whatever it might be, I would not be voting for that.

Alderman Dowd

I just want to make a correct, the Budget that was submitted by the School Department got a bottom line cut from the Mayor for \$380,000.00.

Mayor Donchess

I think they voted again then; their original budget was higher, then I went over there, we talked about it. They reduced their request to the

Alderman Dowd

Nut the \$380,000.00 was in the budget book.

Mayor Donchess

So maybe it was in the budget book; but they amended their request. You could take that either way.

Alderman Clemons

I kind of look at that argument like if you have a child and he wants to buy the king size candy bar but you tell him "No you can't buy the king size candy bar but you can buy the regular one". Then "OK, well I'd rather a candy bar than no candy bar right". So it is kind of like that cut that was done, was done so because we had to fit into this 3% goal. And I think it was done very well and you know it was a good budget that was presented, but it is missing a few things. It is off by a little bit; 3% to me I don't think is going to work. What is being presented in front of us right now, the amendment that is actually under that 3% and we are talking about on an average house, the average household of \$300,000.00, which that is average household in this City, we are talking about \$3.00 more a year. Three bucks. I don't understand the opposition, I just don't. If there is a taxpayer out there that \$3.00 is going to be the difference between them keeping their house and losing their house, then they have a lot bigger problems; there are bigger problems out there for them.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

I am going to support this. I think that if you look at what is happening in communities and in school today, we are aware of trauma that kids are coming to school with. We are aware of the importance of children having an opportunity to talk about what is going on and to form relationships. I think since Alderman Dowd and I were on the School Board years ago together, we and Alderman Clemons' father and I were on the School Board together, we have been talking about the need for counselors and even social workers in the schools. I am not talking about just the high schools; I am talking about the early prevention piece of having them available to our elementary schoolers. So I am going to support this. I think that the benefit to the community, it can't even be measured in terms of value. So I will support this.

Alderwoman Kelly

We talked through your concerns about you know the taxes and raising them; nobody wants to raise taxes, we all live here, we all pay taxes here. I've been on the Budget Committee for 2 years in a row which pales in comparison to a lot of people around this horseshoe. But every year we consistently hear from every department that they are under-funded or level-funded. The Fire Department has not had an increase other than wages for 14 years. So I think part of the budget is listening to them, hearing what they are saying, trying to keep that in a reasonable place for everybody but also deciding year-to-year what things can we invest in and keep going, because we can't consistently stay at this level, as our population grows, as our needs grow. We haven't for a long time been able to continually make sure people are at full force or have the resources that they need. So I advocate for the school because I have a daughter in the school; she has a para that she works with. I've seen a lot of young families who have left the district and said it was because it was the school not having enough resources, those types of things. And that is my own personal experience, but I think that it is real and I think that we have to step up and invest. And \$3.00 a household is not a lot.

Alderman Klee

And I agree \$3.00 a household is not a lot but I don't want the public to think that their tax bill is only going to go up \$3.00. Their tax bill is going to go up a little bit more because it is a little less than 3%, that's what it is going to go up. But I agree, the only difference is the \$3.00. And I am not disagreeing with this \$65,000.00. I came in saying "probably not" but I am listening. I do think, and as a person who has been playing crossing guard for the past couple weeks because we are down 6 ½ crossing guards; I understand that the school has its issues. They are not down that because they can't afford it, they are down that because they can't hire anybody. But I do understand that there are some big issues within the school and so on. I am not saying that I will say "no" to this. But I am concerned that we are just doing here and there. My hope is that next year that the State passes the budget and we see some increased funds in the second year of that budget. But in the meantime I do have some issues with nickel and dime and so on. But I just need to say that. Thank you.

Alderman Dowd

When I first started into the budget and had discussions with the Mayor and others, we set a goal of trying to keep the tax rate under 3% because two things were killing us. One was the 11%, the \$3 million dollar increase in health insurance, because we pay a lot more than that, but it is a \$3 million dollar increase. That's normally the increase in the entire budget just about. The other thing is the lack of State funding, not saying anything against any of the Reps here because I know they all support increased funding. Hopefully from what I've read, there is a change that we will be getting more State help and things might be better. We also have City employees that are pursuing reducing the \$3 million dollar health impact so that bodes well perhaps for next year. I supported the paras because as the liaison to the Board of Education and having close contact with a lot of teachers and people who work in the School District, including people who have my ear quite closely, like my daughter, they are woefully short of paras. Two is not going to even put a dent in it; but as long as it stayed under 3% and we could add 2 paras, I was OK with it. That's why I went and checked on just exactly where we were, the 3 digit level. And so I am going to support this. I think that let's work on the amendment and then we will have to work on the entire budget as amended.

Alderman Jette

I just want to clarify that the amended budget that we are voting on includes, does it include not only the paras that Alderman Kelly is talking about but the ELL teachers that the Mayor talked about?

Alderman Dowd

Yes.

President Wilshire

That it is in contingency Alderman Jette. \$200,000.00 in contingency for that purpose.

Alderman Jette

So this amended budget includes that?

Alderman Dowd

Absolutely.

President Wilshire

It does.

Alderman Jette

OK.

Alderman Tencza

Just a point of clarification with that, the \$200,000.00 is in the Mayor's Budget which only requires a majority of the Board to pass whereas the additional \$65,000.00 is in the amendment which requires 10 votes from the Board.

President Wilshire

The amendment only requires 8; if that passes, then the budget will require 10.

Alderman Tencza

So if I may just follow up with that. I mean I supported the amendment in Committee and I am going to support the amendment here tonight as well. I think that the paras are a group of employees in our City that don't get the credit that they deserve. We don't compensate them for the difficult work that they do and I'm not sure that we appreciate how much they mean to the schools for a lot of reasons. I have heard from teachers that this has been a particularly tough year for them for a lot of reasons but I think that having more support in the schools will certainly help not only them, but will help other kids in the classroom be able to learn as well and thrive. So I am supportive of this and I hope it passes the Board.

President Wilshire

Thank you. I have a question if anyone can answer it. This \$65,000.00 would fund 2 paras and a part-time counselor, Alderman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

The way I understood it was that the full time counselor, hold on one second I am trying to pull up the document. Because I remember when we asked for the suggested changes it says 2 para-educators and a social worker/counselor. So my understanding that it was a full-time.

President Wilshire

So there has been discussion about the paras, there are positions open now that they can't fill, is that what I am hearing?

Alderwoman Kelly

Yeah and actually that was brought up at budget, that was one of the reasons why we put it in contingency, so if they are unable to fill those positions, the money goes back to the General Fund.

President Wilshire

Very good and I am going to support that too. So we are going to vote on the amendment.

Alderman Dowd

Just one other point, just so people are aware, paras don't get paid very much money.

President Wilshire

That's an understatement.

Alderman Lopez

Neither do school counselors.

Alderwoman Kelly

To say the least.

President Wilshire

So the motion before us is to amend R-19-123 by replacing it with the proposed amendments made at the Budget Committee by roll call. Further discussion? Would the Clerk please call the roll.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea:	Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd, Alderman Klee, Alderman Laws, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Caron, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette, Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja, Alderman Tencza, Alderman Schmidt, Alderman Clemons, Alderman Wilshire	13
Nay:	Alderman Harriott-Gathright,	1

MOTION CARRIED**MOTION BY ALDERMAN DOWD FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-19-123 AS AMENDED BY ROLL CALL**ON THE QUESTIONAlderman Dowd

Now again, with the \$65,000.00 added it is under 3%, yes a fraction under 3% but in a budget of a size that we are talking about a small percentage is a lot of money. So it really in the Budget Committee just to refresh for people that weren't there, we had an amendment suggested by Alderman Clemons and I actually applaud him for bringing that forward. It involved \$113,000.00 for the Police Department and \$100,000.00 for the Fire Department I believe that amount. Believe me, it bothers me that we are not able to come up with that funding and stay under 3%. It bothered me so much that the next day, again, I had conversations with the new Chief of Police or soon-to-be new Police Chief and the Deputy and the Fire Chief and the Deputy. While they would love to have that money, they understand, they fully understand where we are at and can live with the budget as it stands in this amended budget. So to me, if they are willing to live with it and understand why we need to try to reduce the tax impact to the taxpayers of the City of Nashua, given the constraints that drove the budget to that level I am fine with recommending approval.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. I am going to make a motion to amend the budget by adding \$113,000.00 to the bottom line of the Police Department and \$100,000.00 to the bottom line of the Fire Department and I'd like to speak to that.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN CLEMONS TO AMEND THE BUDGET AND ADD \$113,000.00 TO THE BOTTOM LINE OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET AND \$100,000.00 TO THE BOTTOM LINE OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. So the reason that I am proposing this is that because during the Budget Committee, we had the Police Chief, so I'll address the Police Department first, that section of my motion first. We had the Police Chief come and tell us that basically they weren't going to be able to make payroll unless they had that \$113,000.00 in the budget or at least they wouldn't be able to hire or do the hiring that really a City that is growing the way that we are, should be hiring. So I am proposing that we put that money back into the budget for that reason.

Also at the Budget Committee, the Fire Chief brought up to us the fact that there is a problem where businesses are being, there is lengthy waits to get inspections done, permits processed, because we need a new Fire Inspector. That was a position that had been cut years ago and was something they wanted to add on to their budget. They actually wanted to add two. Now I understand the fact that of course they can live within the budget that we give them. Any Department would be able to live within the budget that we gave them because that is their obligation. However, we should take into account the fact that, and this is something that Nashua hasn't experienced in a long time, is the fact that the City is actually, the population of the City is growing. So between 1995 and 2015, the population in Nashua was stagnant. So the fact that we were under the spending cap and all that, was really how we were able to maintain these services is the fact that the City really never grew in population size. So you could have a Police Force that was the same size as it was back in 1995 in 2015. You could have a Fire Department that was the same size as it was in 1995 in 2015.

Now the City is growing; we are almost at 90,000 people. We are going to continue to grow. So we need to make the investments and we need to say "What are the things that we need to do as a City to help our Departments manage that growth". One of the things that we can do is certainly not shortchange the Police Department and make sure they are able to hire more Police Officers. So I think by adding that \$113,000.00 we achieve that. Secondly, the Fire Department, particularly the Inspector Position, we are a growing City. So the fact that the population is growing means that there are more permits, there are more things to inspect, there are more businesses that are going to be moving in to the City. That means we have to keep up with the pace of that and put back in to the budget the Inspector. So I believe along with the amendment that we just passed, if we were to add what I am proposing here, in total over what the Mayor proposed, we would be talking a total of a \$9.00 increase. So \$3.00 from the proposal from Alderman Kelly and \$6.00 from this proposal. That's \$3.00 for the Police; that's \$3.00 for the Fire Department and that's \$3.00 for the School Department on the average \$300,000.00 home. I don't think that is too much to ask our citizens either for a budget that the Police are going to be able to increase their presence in the City; to accommodate our growing population.

I think that is something that our citizens would want for an extra \$3.00 on their taxes and having an extra Fire Inspector I think is something that our business community would want, particularly because we are having slowdowns in that area of getting these permits issued and that has been going on for a very long time. It is an issue we can solve for again, \$3.00 over what the Mayor has proposed. So I think, overall, are we going over 3% with these proposals, yes, absolutely. But what are we getting out of it? Well we are getting fully complemented Police Department and we are getting a Fire Department that is better suited to meet the needs of a growing City. Now we can say "we will put this off to next year; maybe we will do this next year". But you know one of the things that my friends over in the Fire Department say year after year, they are always told it's not a good year. They have been told that for 14 years. Well when is it a good year, because you know in 2006 it wasn't a good year, then the economy tanked in 2008 and 2009 and that wasn't a good year.

The economy is better in 2016, 2017, 2018, it's not a good year. When is it a good year, when is it a good time? When are we going to fight for the people who fight for us? Well that's what this amendment is and I hope that you will join me in supporting it because again, we already gave \$3.00 extra dollars to the School Department, I think we can give another \$6.00 to the Police and the Fire.

President Wilshire

My two cents Alderman Clemons we will do that when the State stops passing costs down to us. That's my opinion.

Alderman Klee

Yes and I echo those words. I think it's more than \$3.00, \$3.00, \$3.00. I think it's probably in total closer to \$12.00 or even more. But putting that aside, the property owners that are taking the biggest hit these days are the smaller homeowners and the condos. I can tell you, for instance, mine went up 9% without this just because of the reassessment and so on. So we are not just looking at \$3.00 and \$6.00 and \$9.00 or \$12.00. We are looking at a total of really increasing it. But getting to the Police Department's \$113,000.00 I sat right next to Chief Lavoie when he said it and one of the things that he said and I think Alderman Kelly actually spoke to that was that they have never been up to complement because they couldn't hire. They are changing their new hiring practices with coming with something a little bit different. I'd like to see how those hiring practices go before we you know add \$113,000.00. And I agree with you, I'd love to see more Police presence, but if they can't hire, then this has been an issue to begin with. Maybe with this new practice they will be able to hire.

As far as the Fire Department is concerned, I agree it would be nice to have more inspectors. But I also believe that Chief Rhodes made a comment about he wasn't going to be asking for anything this year, but he would definitely be coming back next year. And to what President Wilshire has mentioned, it is time for the State to stop passing all that down to us. And based on this year's hopeful budget, we are looking at maybe a 3.7 in municipal aid and \$5 million in school funding; granted it will come in the second. And maybe that is the year we can do; so maybe that is the right year and the good year. And I agree with you, they are hearing it time after time after time and I speak to Firemen all the time also. And it is killing me inside, I feel my blood pressure going up just even mentioning that I can't support this. But I can't. I just can't keep nickel and diming, it was one thing to do, as you pointed to \$3.00. But not another \$3.00, \$3.00, \$3.00 because their taxes have not just gone up \$3.00. They are going to go up whatever this 3% is and whatever the assessment did. So I just can't do that to them.

Alderman Harriot Gathright

Nashua just received four new officers. What Alderman Klee was referring to was their training packets, what they are doing is they are hiring Police Officers that have already been trained to a certain degree. So that's why they can come in where they did come in.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you. I thank Alderman Clemons for bringing this forward, but I really can't support it, particularly looking at the whole picture. I agree with Alderman Wilshire, that the State needs to stop knocking everything back down. You've got to remember, they went from 35% in the Pension System is paying to 30% down to what 20%? And then down to practically nothing. The City, they never changed the law, half-massed it. They didn't change the law, they made "OH we are going to keep the rules the same, the City, you pay for it". And we did, and we have to now today. Some of these things, tax payers, you want to vote for a spending cap, you are going to get what you pay for. Some of these positions on the Fire Department that were cut, particularly the Fire Inspector was cut during the Bernie Streeter administration. There have been other positions, they are missing a mechanic. They are missing a lineman for the electrical division. They are missing a lot of things. And where did all those things go? There was no tax in the City of Nashua folks, where did those jobs vaporized?

It got vaporized with the spending cap and out of this particular chamber, that we didn't give enough money for them to operate. I hope those days are gone, but I am not going to make up 25 years of fiscal foolishness in one year, we can't although we really probably could, but we can't. Maybe if we change our attitude and get some decent people into this chamber that are progressive in thinking and looking and they are going to come up. With a City Budget of 3% I think the people of the City can take into account that the Mayor and this Board sharpened our pencils and we came up with something that was a darn good budget that was practical. And keep in mind, we went through something that the State also gave us down our bowling alley, was the reassessment that some people went through. So there were a lot of things that came in and affected us and I think we did good. But again, I think now we have some other, labor groups coming up for contracts and one of them is the Firemen and the Fire Fighters are doing the extra duty. I know the mechanics are working harder with only a limited amount of men to fix those trucks and they get used an awful lot.

You've got engine companies that are doing close to 3,000, 2,000 runs a year for an engine company. That's a lot of work. They are not sleeping folks, you know when you average out the call per day volume. So these things need to be addressed and maybe we should reward them for their good work as it comes down to. But I think if we take the budget methodically and slow and look and then in the future, Sarah Marchant said with the Grant Writer that they are going to look into a new study, particularly with the Fire Department. That I hope we listen to because that is going to come in with clear identification; what positions going to need to be filled and put the importance upon that. So I use caution, I respect the motion before us, I thank the Alderman again for putting the motion before us. But in prudence, I think staying underneath 3% I think is enough for the tax payers to chew at this particular time. Then we could look another crack in future budgets. Thank you.

Alderman Dowd

Just a couple things, again, I talked to both Police and Fire Chiefs. The one thing that Chief Lavoie took issue with over the years is that they managed their budget and stayed within the budget by managing attrition. At the end of the year they didn't hire somebody to make ends meet until the end of the budget. They also didn't have as big a problem with that because on a few times when they went out with tests, they got 100, 150 people to take the tests, zero became a Police Officer. So they had an issue hiring. That's why the Police Commissioners and the Police Department decided to change their modus operandi hiring and go out and hire people from other forces. They tended not to do that in the past; they try to get new officers and train them in the way they want them trained. Other Departments did that and that's why Nashua loses Police Officers to other cities and State Police and occasionally FBI. We train them well. So in talking to the Police Department they may have to budget that same way at the end of the year, through attrition to make their ends meet. If they have a major event in the year and they have a budget issue with it like that issue they had in Manchester, they will have to come back to us and ask for more money. If they don't, they don't. But that would be addressed downstream. The other thing is that Chief Rhodes actually called me and said that he didn't want anybody on the Board of Aldermen to get the idea that any business was delayed in being inspected because they are short a person. Their people work the extra hours, the overtime, and they went out and made that these people were inspected and they will still do that.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

Yes thank you. Chief Rhodes and I also has a couple conversations about the budget and my impression is the same as Alderman Dowd's. And to Fire Marshalls going out and doing inspections, I had conversations with two individuals who are involved in development and they were talking about someone from the Fire Marshall's Office coming out. And they said "Well how did that go; how long did you have to wait, I know they are really busy". And both individuals said "Oh no problem, they came out and it got done". And I appreciate the fact that they are working extra hours to get that done. I also appreciate the fact that all of our department heads and division heads have a fine balancing routine that we are all engaging in.

I think that we need to be very careful to make sure we keep the big picture in front of us because at the end of the day when businesses and families decide to locate here, they are looking at the big picture. Everyone has their own priority, just like every division head has within the City. So thinking about what our tax rate is and is it something that is manageable, knowing "manageable" means different things to different people. And yet trying to provide services that our constituents are happy with. I would tell you that probably DPW could use a few more people too especially when you look at overtime in the winter with plowing. And I know lots of people who say, "Why don't they have more plows on the road" and "Why aren't they out more often". And it's like, we've got a finite set of people and they do have to sleep. So I think we could look across the City and look at where we need additional resources in terms of bodies. But I do think we need to look at some of the areas that we've mentioned this year and aren't able to address and just make sure that we look at those first next year and see where the priorities are and balance out how we are moving forward. Thank you.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you I just want to I guess respond to a couple of things and I understand that I don't want to make anybody think that I don't understand that we have inspectors in the Fire Department and that yes, they address the business' needs, of course they do. But they are overworked. They are overworked. Do you know what it's like to work in a place that is overworked, where you are overworked? It is not a good environment. We can argue back and forth all day, I personally believe what the Chief told me, both of them, they were here, it was in a public session. These were the needs that they addressed. I have always said that I would never be religious to an arbitrary number as far as where we can go with the budget. I used to say that about the spending cap. You know, we'd come up with as former Alderman Teeboom likes to say "We'd come up with a number, what's the number we have to keep under". Saying it is 3% is really no different than that, it's the same thing, it is just a different number. I personally don't look at budgets that way.

When I sit on the Budget Committee and I look at different things, I look at needs. I understand that we need to be prudent. I think this budget is prudent. I think these amendments are prudent because they don't go fixing the spending cap problems overnight, they don't. It is taking it one step at a time. But it is taking it just a little bit further so we can address the fact that we are a growing City. But again, I am going to support the amendment obviously and should the amendment not pass, I might as well explain this now, I am going to vote "no" for the budget, because again, I can't vote for a budget that doesn't address all of the needs that I feel are important or doesn't fully fund all of our departments the way they should be funded. So just want to put that out there.

Alderman Klee

I just want to make one comment, we are an aging City and we are trying to find young people to come in, young people buy smaller homes. Those were the ones that had the biggest assessment so they are going to hit the highest taxes. Our elderly many of them are on fixed income, I can tell you I'm on a fixed income. So every dollar counts, every percentage counts. And I agree with you, 3% just seems like an arbitrary number. But I think it is something that the public feels more comfortable with. They would probably prefer the 1.6% and be the end with the health care. But that is kind of how they are feeling, because they are looking at their pocketbooks. But I think keeping it under 3% is good faith to our residents and yes it is an arbitrary number but it's something.

Alderman Lopez

So one of my earliest memories of confusion and then later understanding was actually Alderman Clemons voting against the budget because of the spending cap and he explained that he would stick to his principles and he felt that the spending cap was an arbitrary number. I think the one of the most important points made in that discussion when we had it, was that as Aldermen it is our job to do this. To have the discussion back and forth, to figure out budget items and what appropriate needs can be met and which ones need to be looked at and approached strategically.

I think we have been fair to both the Fire and the Police Department. Both are highly performing departments, they are recognized regionally as leaders. There have been new fire trucks, there have been increases in individual compensation, in the number of dispatch agents. And that is well-earned too. Our Fire Department has done amazing work with not only the Safe Station Program but in maintaining its response time to different fires and emergencies. They are recognized as a regional training leader. Same as for our Police, the entire State of New Hampshire is in the grips of what was being called the opioid crisis at the time and Nashua is holding its own and is making arrests when it needs to. Its Police Department is not so hurried that they can't take the time to talk to children. I just saw an intervention happening on Canal Street a couple days ago where I was impressed that the officers were entertaining children and family members while the officer was interviewing a parent so as to not create a negative impression. They take the time to hand out stickers to play basketball in the community, to do things that matter because they are not just in it for the job, they are doing an outstanding job. And I think we also recognized, much too late, that they needed infrastructure improvements too. That's something that we are tackling too. So I think we are recognizing the needs of the Fire Department and the Police Department. I do agree with Alderman Clemons with regards to an arbitrary number guiding our decisions, but I think this number, this 3% was conceived because of the State issues that were brought up earlier, the insurance and the need for an assessment. Both of those conditions had to come into play to impact our budget. And the 3% was created and it definitely didn't go unchallenged; Alderman Dowd went and made absolutely sure we were able to meet need when we saw it while at the same time staying under a goal. I think that's good budgeting, I think the discussion here has been very productive. We haven't all agreed 100% on any particular point but I mean we are politicians, there's a number of us for a reason. It's not just pick a number and then go for it. There has to be this discussion; there has to be disagreement. So I appreciate what Alderman Clemons is trying to do. I won't support an additional amendment, but I do want to voice my support for his intent.

President Wilshire

I agree Alderman Lopez; I think his intent is great. However, I can't support it either. Further discussion on the amendment to add \$100,000.00 to the Fire Department and \$113,000.00 to the Police Department. Further discussion on that amendment?

A Viva Voce Roll Call was taken, which resulted as follows:

- Yea: Alderman Clemons 1
- Nay: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Harriott-Gathright, Alderman Dowd
Alderman Klee, Alderman Laws, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Caron,
Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette, Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja
Alderman Tencza, Alderman Schmidt, Alderman Wilshire 13

MOTION FAILED

President Wilshire

The motion before us is for final passage of Resolution 19-123 as amended. Further discussion on that?

- Yea: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Harriott-Gathright, Alderman Dowd
Alderman Klee, Alderman Laws, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Caron,
Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette, Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja
Alderman Tencza, Alderman Schmidt, Alderman Wilshire 13
- Nay: Alderman Clemons 1

MOTION CARRIED

Resolution R-19-123 declared duly adopted as amended.

R-19-136

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws
Alderman Jan Schmidt

**AUTHORIZING THE FORMATION OF TWO VOLUNTARY NONPROFIT CORPORATIONS
UNDER
RSA 162-G FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**

Given its second reading;

**MOTION BY ALDERWOMAN MELIZZI-GOLJA FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-19-136
MOTION CARRIED**

Resolution R-19-136 declared duly adopted as amended.

R-19-141

Endorsers: Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman Tom Lopez
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**RELATIVE TO THE TRANSFER OF \$25,000 FROM DEPARTMENT 194 "CONTINGENCY",
ACCOUNT 70100 "GENERAL CONTINGENCY" TO DEPARTMENT 109 "CIVIC & COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES", ACCOUNTING CLASSIFICATION 56 "OUTSIDE AGENCIES" FOR THE PURPOSE
OF PROVIDING FUNDING TO THE NASHUA ASSOCIATION FOR THE ELDERLY**

Given its second reading;

MOTION BY ALDERMAN CARON FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-19-141

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Caron

Thank you. On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Senior Center, we really appreciate the Aldermen contributing this \$25,000.00 to the Center. As you know it is restricted for infrastructure maintenance only and repairs to the building as needed. We do know that the building belongs to the City but we try to keep it in good shape for the 1,500 seniors that utilize it along with other people. So again on behalf of the Board, thank you very much for your support.

MOTION CARRIED

Resolution R-19-141 declared duly adopted.

R-19-145

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman Tom Lopez
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.

**AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF NASHUA TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR EMERGENCY
AMBULANCE SERVICES WITH AMERICAN MEDICAL RESPONSE, INC.**

Given its second reading;

MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-19-145

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Klee

I just want to clarify this does include the dispatch, is that correct?

President Wilshire

The Mayor says yes.

Alderman Klee

To pay for the dispatching? So that is all part of this contract then, thank you very much.

MOTION CARRIED

Resolution R-19-145 declared duly adopted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – ORDINANCES

O-19-044

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

AMENDING THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN COMPENSATION ORDINANCE

Given its second reading;

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAWS TO AMEND O-19-044 IN ITS ENTIRETY BY REPLACING IT WITH
THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS MADE BY THE PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE**

ON THE QUESTIONAlderman Laws

If I could just speak to it real quick. So this is just to add maternity leave as an acceptable reason for Aldermen to miss time in the oval. Alderman Clemons had the brilliant suggestion to amend it to add paternity leave as well. So we passed that, that's what this amendment is.

Alderwoman Kelly

It also includes adoption which I thought was very progressive, so thank you.

MOTION CARRIED**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAWS FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF O-19-044 AS AMENDED
MOTION CARRIED**

Ordinance O-19-044 declared duly adopted as amended.

O-19-045

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman Tom Lopez
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

UPDATING THE FINANCIAL STANDARDS FOR THE CITY'S WELFARE GUIDELINES

Given its second reading;

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN HARRIOTT-GATHRIGHT FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF O-19-045
MOTION CARRIED**

Ordinance O-19-045 declared duly adopted.

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS**R-19-147**

Endorser: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman Tom Lopez

AUTHORIZING PURCHASE AND SALE OF CITY LAND AT 21 PINE STREET (MAP 77, LOT 17) AND LAND OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE D/B/A EVERSOURCE ENERGY AT 3 PINE STREET EXTENSION (MAP 77, LOT 2A)

Given its first reading; assigned to the COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE, the NASHUA CITY PLANNING BOARD, and the MINE FALLS PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE by President Wilshire

R-19-148

Endorser: Mayor Jim Donchess

AMENDING THE AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SALE OF LAND ON BRIDGE STREET AND SANDERS STREET

Given its first reading; assigned to the COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE and the NASHUA CITY PLANNING BOARD by President Wilshire

R-19-149

Endorser: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman Tom Lopez
Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza

CHANGING THE PURPOSE OF UP TO TWO HUNDRED THIRTY FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$235,000) OF UNEXPENDED BOND PROCEEDS FROM THE ROAD AND TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT ON AMHERST STREET BETWEEN CHARRON AVENUE AND DIESEL ROAD TO PAY COSTS FOR PAVING A PORTION OF PINE HILL ROAD AND VARIOUS STREETS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD IF FUNDS REMAIN AVAILABLE

Given its first reading; assigned to the BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE and the BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS by President Wilshire

R-19-150

Endorsers: Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws
Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja

AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF NASHUA TO ENTER INTO A LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR A PARKING AREA OFF ARTILLERY LANE, NASHUA ABUTTING MAP 63 LOT 45

Given its first reading; assigned to the COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE and the BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS by President Wilshire

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES**O-19-047**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman Tom Lopez
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja

ESTABLISHING AN ANIMAL AND DOG PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Given its first reading; assigned to the PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE by President Wilshire

PERIOD FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Laurie Ortolano 41 Berkley Street. I wanted to address the issue of uniformity and how important it is in the Assessing Office to have data capture be uniform. The office has some procedures in place. They are working on policies, but they have had some long-standing procedures that allow them to capture their data with uniformity. If a property card is being changed, an Assessor prints a card in its current form, takes it to the property, pencil marks or makes the appropriate changes on the card. It comes back to the office, is either changed in the data system, the Patriot System/Assess Pro by the Assessor or by a clerical staff member. The new card is printed, stapled to the old card, it is reviewed by the Assessor to make certain all the data is correct and it is filed. It is a system that actually works well. And if it used by everyone, it is a great system. But what you find is there a lack of uniformity in there and not everyone is following the rules.

If you don't have uniformity, you don't have equity and fairness in your assessments, it is that simple and it is that important. You received a letter that was read into the record by Ms. Kleiner regarding a clarification to a Memo I sent to the Board. I would like to make note of misinformation that she has provided you. She stated in this letter that AssessPro does not capture all of the work for all of the properties visited by an Assessor. It only indicates that during a certain time period the Assessor used AssessPro to make corrections with respect to the listed property. An Assessor typically performs a great deal more work and makes a great deal more property visits than are captured on this report. She gives the example that they might be investigating a charitable exemption where the Assessor needs to evaluate if the building is being used for a qualified charitable purpose. This would not warrant a change to the property card and is not captured in the report. In fact, that's not true. There are in this report that was given to me, three exemptions that were noted in April that this Assessor went to. All exemptions, whether they are religious or charitable exemptions come in in a form yearly, they have to be submitted to the Assessor's Office. And it is the clerical staff that handles those forms. They take those forms and they look at every charity or tax exempt business and they review them. A lot of them are repeats, they are just coming back and filling out their paperwork every year asking for their exemption, putting it on the record. There is no need for an Assessor to go visit.

So it's the clerical staff that actually assigns the Assessor the responsibility to go check these properties. Many of them are not checked. But when the clerical person received an A9 or an Exemption Form for a new exemption that hasn't existed before, maybe an exemption that has had a Building Permit, they've got to get out there and check the permit for the exemption. Maybe a property that is no longer to be an exemption. They are going to go out to it and look at the property card and make certain that it's all up-to-date for tax purposes. Those get assigned, and, in fact, our assessor that we are looking at here under a little bit of scrutiny, was assigned three exemption properties to go to. The Y was one, that's an exemption property, he went out there because the new building opened, was asked by the clerical staff "Please go to the Y on Northeastern Boulevard and check out that new property". 25 Cornell Road, which is right up by me is a facility that was going to be used as a parsonage for Tabernacle Church over in Litchfield. It had not been a parsonage before so the clerical staff said to the assessor, "go out and check on that ranch-style home as a parsonage". The third one was 41 and 43 Chandler Street which had been bought out, that's the big beautiful church up on Chandler Street that was closed for a while; Catholic Church, transferred a couple times. It is now under new ownership, it has a big building permit. It has got a building next to it, a ranch that's used as a parsonage.

Those properties needed to be checked because there are permits out on them. And, in fact, the clerical staff wrote a letter, religious exemptions that went to the Board of Assessors on the 29th of April explaining in this letter very clearly the property at 43 Chandler Street has been used on the A9 Form submitted as a rectory and is a ranch-style house assessed at 234. This has been exempt and an exemption is being requested for 2019, according to Commercial Assessor Greg Turgiss at the time of his inspection of the property last Friday, no one answered the door but he said that it appeared as if it was occupied. Then we went to the property at 41 Chandler Street, two structures; Mr. Turgiss inspected this property. He reported it. OK, these are exemption properties and they are, in fact, in the AssessPro report. She is not recognizing that these exemption properties are captured. And you have to ask yourselves when she makes note in her letter that there's a lot of other work that assessors do that may be is not documented in AssessPro, we need to be very, very concerned. Because I will tell you, there is never a reason for an assessor to be out at someone's property, either on it, looking at it, inspecting externally or internally and not be documenting it on the property card. First of all, you shouldn't want your people on somebody's property where it's not documented.

But that uniformity and documentation is what is so important on tracking where we are. Now if the assessor is going to go out to do drive-by, which really shouldn't happen at all and doesn't typically, the assessor is going to do drive-by's. That should be noted. KRT noted on almost all of the 1401 account, residential accounts, there's a note on almost everyone's property card that says field review. That was their drive-by. They didn't really come into your property and do an external inspection or list and measure. But AssessPro has a lot of codes, a lot of code names for you to go in and document exactly

what you are doing when you look at a property. It is always documented. Now when I saw this letter which was just in the last day, I said, "Hmmm, am I wrong, did I really give the wrong information". Well let me look at the residential assessors that went out to 79 properties in April. Well when I look at that AssessPro report she gave me; excuse me it was 89 properties they went to. When I added up the properties, it came out to 92. That's pretty accurate, OK? They missed 3 that they should have expensed, but they didn't overcharge and pretty much it's a pretty accurate report.

When I look at the other commercial assessor and the properties that he went to versus the expense report, it is off by a couple properties, pretty accurate. Some of them, because he was at a building that had 6 units that he was inspecting in the same building, it's not 6 trips, it appears 6 times because it's unit 12, unit 14, unit 16, unit 18. But you are literally going door-to-door looking at new properties. And that's how it is done; it is pretty darn accurate. But when I look at another assessor report and I am still trying to find 500 or 600 miles, that's when I see a red flag. And if Ms. Kleiner is saying that this assessor is driven around, he's just driving around, and you don't realize he's doing a lot of work but none of it is documented. Then I want to ask you to ask your administration, how do we monitor fraud, waste and mismanagement if we allow this to go on? How do you know you don't have a fraud, waste, and mismanagement process? If you are allowing this to happen and there's no documentation? That's never supposed to happen. And so the other thing she notes in here is that they are only doing a peer review process in there. Mr. Turgiss isn't operating as a supervisor at all; I disagree with that for a number of reasons. She's not down there daily; but they operate on peer review.

Now the two residential assessors are doing peer review work. That is very apparent to me looking at the logs and the data and everything. But the commercial assessors are not. And I want to know why. The most experienced assessor in there is a Certified Appraiser and has done probably 20 years of Commercial Assessing, which is a different beast from residential. You have different income statements and different approaches to take to value commercial properties. They are trickier and more difficult to do because you don't have a lot of data in a single category sometimes to assess these properties. So they are unique creatures. So we have one commercial assessor that has 20 years of experience and is a licensed appraiser. Our other commercial assessor, in question here, has only been at it 3 years and does not have a lot of experience. Why is there no peer review going on here? Why isn't the experienced one doing the peer review, what is happening here? I think I have an answer to that, but I'm not going to share that right now. Let's see what the administration says. But that is not happening and that is a very good question why we don't do that monitoring.

When I looked at again Ms. Kleiner's letter I thought to myself "well maybe I don't understand, maybe I missed what these assessors are doing". So I went back to the presentation that was given to you on the 30th. And there is what? Three pages in here on "What does an Assessor do". What is their primary work, what are they doing? And I went back and read this. And the primary work is permits, abatements, data capture from permits not collected and exemptions. The very things I am talking about right here that I am finding tracked in the data. So I am trying to say well did I miss something am I not seeing this clearly? But that report seems pretty detailed. Now I just received today from a Right to Know, the permit log, so I will be able to cross check all the open permits and who has gone to visit them and what has been closed. But to give you an idea on these exemptions that she's talking about that maybe they are going out to exemptions; remember exemption properties don't pay taxes so they are out of the tax base. It is important to keep up on your exemptions but from a priority standpoint, if you have a permit outstanding for a million dollars, that you need to go check or you have an exemption property that has been exempt for 10 years, the priority would be for them to go check the million dollar permit. Because that is the taxpaying property; you would worry a little bit less about the one that is consistently is not paying and hasn't made any changes. And that is to be expected. And that is what we should see going on. We don't see that all the time.

Now I referenced in my report you know, big property variations. The data that I received from AssessPro from Ms. Kleiner showed that our assessor really hadn't gone to very many properties. I pulled all the property cards on; I said I want to see what the documentation is. Well lo and behold I found out, you

know, the one at 41 Chandler Street, the exemption property that the letter was written to the Board of Assessors, there is no documentation on that property card that the assessor was there. Why? That should be an updated documented card. There were two mobile home properties visited, OK? And it was written up in the report that they had exterior inspections only. The assessor went there for exterior inspections only. Well when I looked at the property cards, they are blank, there's no building there because they are cleared lots and there was nothing on them. I drove out last week and there were mobile homes on each lot, on the trailer beds. When I called the mobile home company and I said, "Hey how long have these properties, have these mobile homes been here?" Well the lady said, "They are on the beds, they just got pulled in a week ago". I believe that.

So when I read on the report that I did an exterior inspection, how do you do that? I don't think there was anything there. And you did it while it was up on the bed? And the one property that is going to be taken off the bed is actually having a garage added that hasn't been done yet. So I look at that documentation and I say that assessor is telling me they went and inspected a property that was physically there. And when I look at a property card, I should see a drawing of a building there. There is no drawing, just a blank piece of paper. What that tells me is that it is a new property that's being established that nothing is on it yet. And in fact that is what it was. So as I am cross-checking these cards, I'm seeing a fair number of errors. And that concerns me because I don't see that with other assessors.

President Wilshire

Mrs. Ortolano, we have one minute left for our Public Comment period, can you wrap it up?

Ms. Ortolano Sure.

President Wilshire

Thank you.

Ms. Ortolano

I gave you an example of a property card up in Kessler Farms that is an example of everything done wrong. The permit was left open for 6 years, this is current, the assessor goes out, he says, he writes on the form "Went to the property in April, captured the permit". This was a year ago. The property owner ends up very upset, calling saying "you never came out and you raised my taxed \$900.00 for a basement refinish that I only finished a media room". So the assessor, after leaving a permit open for 6 years, never went and checked the permit file to see that the full basement wasn't finished. If they had checked the permit file they would have seen 1,500 feet wasn't finished, only 600 was. So they went and taxed them for the whole basement. The homeowner calls, fixed income retired people, outraged because their bill went up like \$900.00. Nobody came to the house. The assessor says "Oh I'll come out, I'll come out". Comes out then he looks at the property, then he writes on the card "Went to visit". Then he changes the whole drawing on the basement, but guess what? It's too late and they have to file an abatement. That took, you know, 16 months to clear up and meanwhile they had to pay the full amount. When you are on fixed income, I can tell you, these people were not happy at all. And I look at a property card like that and I scratch my head and I say why does it say you went and visited? There is no indication that you ever went to that property and if you did, how could the drawing be so wrong, how could you not know if walked down the stairs that only a little portion of the basement was done.

President Wilshire

Ms. Ortolano, our Public Comment Period is over.

Ms. Ortolano Thank you I waited very patiently to get here and I appreciate you giving me the time.

President Wilshire

Thank you.

REMARKS BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

Alderman Jette

I want to congratulate Alderman Clemons and Alderman Gathright for having the courage to be the sole nay votes on the two motions or two or three motions. I've been there and I recognize their courage in doing so.

Alderman Lopez

So in reference to the Mayor's comments about the Tree Street Block Party it is this Saturday at 2:00 p.m. We have closed off Ash Street between Central Street and West Hollis. We have a Reggae Band, Mighty Mystic who will be there. We have a barbeque that is being hosted by Revive and Riverside Barbeque. We have a number of non-profit organizations that are doing like carnival games for kids. We have Touch-A-Truck so it is going to be a great event. It is free for the community. Tickets are available for the reggae concert if you want to check out the event on Face book. It is really an even to kind of celebrate the diversity and community aspects of the Tree Streets that are unique to the Tree Streets so part of that is welcoming so you are all welcome to come and attend.

Additionally, Monday night during I guess the Assessor's Training, there is also a Ward 4 Town Hall, so I will be attending that instead of the Assessor's Presentation.

Alderman Klee

Yes I'd like to make two comments. One is the Ordinance O-19-047, I am really hopeful for this, "Establishing an Animal & Dog Park Advisory Committee" and I am hoping that they go a little further based on who they are going to have on their committee. I am hoping to add one more to it, I think a School Board or School Department person should be on that committee too. But in keeping with this, I think it is time we had a free dog park as well as a place where people can let their dogs go off-leash. We have issues in Mine Falls and we have issues in Greeley Park. So I think it's really, really important that we do that. And the other thing is that I'd like to thank and I feel because I don't have all the names of those people who stepped up to play crossing guards because they are not trained, so they weren't crossing guards, but crossing walkers where we would walk the students from one side of the street to the other side of the street. For those people on Manchester Street when I got half-way across and continued to go, I'm not happy. I think in all our school districts, we need to be very consciences that it is a 20 mile per hour zone and that we should drive accordingly. In order to get a sign up that would say what your speed is, we are looking at \$10,000.00. We can't afford to put those in every single school zone; I think we as adults and anybody who is driving should be more responsible and so on. I think the majority of people are; but just a reminder. Thank you.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you Madam President. I would like to thank the Mayor for coming up with, hard to describe it but practical budget. I know it was tough for you and I would really like to complement the people that we have working for the City; Division Directors who listened to you, that worked with sharpened pencils and scrunched the numbers and came up with something that I think all the citizens can live with. And I'd like to give a vote of thanks myself personally, I'm sure other members on the Board, to the men and women

of the City, whether you are doing clerking here at City Hall, any duty but keeping law and order, putting out our fires, teaching our children, picking up our trash, plowing our streets; we thank you. Wish we could get you more but we are trying and I think what we came up with is a good budget. I'd like to thank working with Chairman Dowd of the Budget Committee. It was my pleasure to clerk for you and I'd like to thank all the members of the Budget Committee. As with past budgets it is yeoman work, we meet a lot, but thank you guys, I think we came together and we did something good. Thank you.

Committee announcements:

Alderman O'Brien

On Monday June 17th immediately following the Special Board of Aldermen meeting, please do not run out, because following is Infrastructure and you are all welcome, thank you.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

Yes the June PEDC meeting is cancelled, thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN THAT THE MAY 14, 2019, MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN BE ADJOURNED
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Attest: Patricia D. Piecuch, City Clerk