



# CITY OF CONCORD

*New Hampshire's Main Street™*

**City Manager's Office**

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Thomas J. Aspell, Jr.  
City Manager

## **Parking Committee Minutes October 26, 2020**

### **Attendees:**

Byron Champlin, City Councilor, Parking Committee Chair  
Linda Kenison, City Councilor  
Nathan Fennessy, City Councilor  
Brent Todd, City Councilor  
Jim Bouley, Mayor

### **Staff:**

Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, & Special Projects  
Greg Taylor, Deputy Police Chief  
David Florence, Parking Division Supervisor  
Amanda Lombard, Fiscal Technician II, Parking Division

### **Public:**

Meredith Hatfield, City Councilor  
Erle Pierce, City Councilor  
Amy Proctor, Resident  
Woody Meiszner, Resident

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Champlin at 5:00 p.m.

Councilor Champlin read the Covid-19 public meeting procedures notice, which explained that, due to the Covid-19 "Coronavirus" Pandemic, and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, the Parking Committee is authorized to meet electronically. The City utilized the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting.

1. **Overview of Agenda:** Councilor Champlin provided an overview of the meeting agenda and welcomed members of the public.
2. **Adoption of Minutes:** Councilor Fennessy moved to adopt the minutes from September 28, 2020. Councilor Todd seconded. The minutes were adopted on a unanimous voice vote.

### **3. Requests and Referrals:**

#### **a. Jackson Street: Request from Amy Proctor to establish no parking near 21 Jackson Street.**

Mr. Walsh provided an overview of Ms. Proctor's request. Ms. Proctor is requesting that the City establish a no parking zone on Jackson Street, between Beacon and Tremont Streets.

Jackson Street is part of an older section of the city and is approximately 18 feet wide. Parking is currently only permitted on the east side of the road. It is less than the minimum required width for on-street parking in accordance with City Code of Ordinances 18-1-4.

On May 13, 2019, the City Council enacted Ordinance #3035, which established no parking on this section of Jackson Street during the winter season (i.e. January 1 – March 15 annually). This ordinance was enacted as a result of the Narrow Streets Study.

On August 3, 2020, Amy Proctor, resident of 21 Jackson Street, contacted the Parking Committee and requested that on-street parking for this section of Jackson Street be removed permanently. Her request was prompted by a minor vehicular accident which occurred while she was exiting her driveway. The accident involved a vehicle parked on the street opposite her driveway.

The Parking Committee initially reviewed Ms. Proctor's request on August 24, 2020. As a result of its review, the Committee requested that staff review the feasibility of a limited removal of on-street parking in order to address Ms. Proctor's concerns. The Committee also directed staff to notify all property owners on this section of Jackson Street prior to the Committee's next discussion of this item.

Mr. Walsh reported that Karen Hill, the City's Transportation Engineer, had completed her analysis of this section of Jackson Street. Mr. Walsh discussed a plan, which Ms. Hill prepared, and explained that, given the juxtaposition of driveways and on-street parking for this section of Jackson Street, a "surgical" removal of on-street parking would not be viable in order to address Ms. Proctor's concerns. Mr. Walsh also confirmed that a formal notice concerning this meeting was mailed to all property owners on October 9, 2020 per the Committee's previous request.

Councilor Champlin asked for public input.

Ms. Proctor reiterated her concerns and spoke in support of her request.

Woody Meiszner, resident of 21 Jackson Street, addressed the Committee. He reported that all properties located on this section of Jackson Street had off-street parking. He also stated that his driveway is the only driveway which backs directly into a parking space. If two vehicles are parked across from his driveway, he is unable to exit the property.

Councilor Hatfield asked Mr. Walsh if he had received feedback from any other residents or property owners. Mr. Walsh reported that he had not.

Councilor Champlin stated that he had spoken with another resident who was supportive of eliminating on-street parking.

Councilor Fennessy asked Councilor Hatfield whether she had received any input from residents regarding this request. Councilor Hatfield indicated that she had not received any responses. She also stated that it appears only one vehicle regularly parks on this section of Jackson Street. She elaborated that the location where this vehicle parks is problematic, and she spoke in favor of Ms. Proctor's request.

Councilor Todd asked how many spaces would potentially be eliminated. Staff estimated that approximately 3-5 spaces would be impacted.

Councilor Kenison moved to eliminate parking year-round on Jackson Street, between Tremont and Beacon Streets. Councilor Todd seconded the motion. Prior to the vote, Mayor Bouley asked the members of the public to confirm that removal of parking was truly what they wanted. Ms. Proctor and Mr. Meiszner responded in the affirmative.

The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

#### 4. **Delinquent Citations:**

##### a. **Police Department update concerning efforts to collect delinquent parking citations.**

David Florence, Parking Supervisor, stated that when the parking Committee began this discussion in June 2020, the citation collection rate was at 53.7%. He noted that this was significantly less than the City's historic collection rate of 80-85%.

Mr. Florence reported that, as of October 23, 2020, the rate had improved to 61.5%. The primary reason for this improvement has been assistance from the Police Department's dispatch staff, which has been running license plate information through the NH Department of Motor Vehicle "SPOTs" database during periods of lower emergency call volumes.

He stated that the dispatch staff will continue to assist the Parking Division for the foreseeable future. With their continued assistance, he is optimistic that the collection rate will return to historic levels of 80-85%. However, economic impacts of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic may also affect collection rates.

##### b. **Review of City's Standard Delinquent Citation Letter:** Mr. Florence briefly reviewed the City's standard delinquent citation letter with the Committee. He explained that a Statement of Accounts letter is sent every 45 days to vehicle owners with delinquent tickets in an attempt to collect payments for outstanding citations. He noted that the letter has not been updated for several years. He stated that staff is reviewing letters from other comparable communities and considering potential changes. The Committee suggested staff should consider simplifying the letter. Staff will present proposed revisions to the Parking Committee at a future date. The updated letter would then be reviewed by the City's Legal Department.

#### 5. **Financials:**

##### a. **September 2020 Financial Statement:** Mr. Walsh provided an overview of the September financial statement. He reported that, as of September 30<sup>th</sup>, a quarter of the fiscal year had

elapsed. Therefore, ideally, 25% of revenues and expenditures for the Fiscal Year would have been realized by the end of September.

- i. Revenues: Total revenues were \$509,000+/- as of September 30, 2020, or 16% of budget year to date. Important highlights included:
- Revenues from meter citations were at \$77,839, or 13% for the year, which was 11% less than budget. Revenues are lagging by \$26,000 +/- year-over-year.
  - Meter revenues were at \$178,790, or 12% for the year, which is roughly half of budget. Meter revenues are lagging by approximately \$135,000 year-over-year. Mr. Walsh stated that this figure is under-reported, as it excludes revenues from PayByPhone transactions, which are typically delayed for approximately 60 days.
  - Rental income was at \$159,000, which was 24% for the year, or 1% less than budget. Mr. Walsh stated that year-over-year is off by approximately \$152,000. He explained that this was not cause for concern, but rather reflected the timing of Q2 lease permit invoice issuance year-over-year.

Adjusting for the timing of Q2 invoices for leases and permits, revenues for FY2021 are approximately \$142,000 behind FY2020.

- ii. Expenditures: Total expenditures were at \$854,000+/- as of September 30, 2020, or 29% of budget.
1. Parking Division Expenses: FY2021 expenditures through September 30<sup>th</sup> were \$807,000, or approximately 32% of budget. This is in keeping with FY2020, which was \$818,655 for the same period. Important highlights included:
    - Compensation is under budget due to 2.5 vacant positions (i.e. 2 parking enforcement officers and a part-time meter tech).
    - Approximately 50% of principal and interest on debt service, totaling \$777,000 combined, was paid in July. This skews expenses for the quarter.
    - In addition, other contracts, such as property and liability insurance, as well as worker's comp, which are customarily renewed at the start of the fiscal year in July, and paid in full, also skew expenses for the quarter.
  2. General Services Expenses: Mr. Walsh reminded the Committee that the General Services Department is responsible for daily maintenance and minor repairs for the City's 3 parking garages, as well as the surface parking lots.

As of September 30, 2020, approximately \$46,000, or 11% of the General Services FY2021 Parking Budget, had been spent.

Mr. Walsh noted that compensation is essentially on budget at 24% year to date. He also noted that only 1% of the \$270,000 repair and maintenance budget had been spent to date.

Both trends were consistent with the FY2020 Budget.

In total, expenditures for FY2021 were within \$6,000 of FY2020 for the same time period.

**b. COVID- 19 Pandemic Financials Impacts and FY2021 Q1 Year End Financial Projections:**

- i. Covid-19 Revenue Impacts (March 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020): Mr. Walsh walked the Committee through several spreadsheets that detailed revenue impacts from the Covid-19 Pandemic. Highlights were as follows:
  1. Meter Parking Revenue: Since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic, as signified by Governor' Sununu's Emergency "Stay at Home Order" issued on March 15, 2020, the City has lost an estimated \$384,000 in meter revenue year-over-year through September 30, 2020. Prior to the on-set of the Pandemic, FY2021 revenues were slightly higher than FY2020.
  2. Meter Parking Citation Revenue: Since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic on March 15, 2020, the City has lost an estimated \$91,635 in meter revenue year-over-year through September 30, 2020. Prior to the on-set of the Pandemic, revenues were at 97% year-over-year.
  3. P-Card Revenue: Prior to the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic, P-Card revenues were lagging and were off by approximately \$43,000 from July – February year-over-year. Mr. Walsh explained that this was due, in large part, to a lack of contract between the State of New Hampshire and the SEA/SEIU labor union, as well as relocation of some State employees from Downtown to the Meldrim Thomson Office Park on Hazen Drive. This issue has been affecting the budget for the past 2 years.
 

However, for the period of March 2020 – September 2020, P-Card revenues were off by approximately \$20,000 year over year. Mr. Walsh stated that this is because of the Pandemic. A discussion ensued about recharging P-Cards. It was noted that recharging cards must currently be done over the phone, as the Police Station lobby is closed due to the Pandemic.
- ii. FY2021 Year End Financial Projections: Mr. Walsh then reviewed a memorandum, which projected FY2021 year-end revenues and expenditures for the Parking Fund. These projections were based upon the first quarter, which ended on September 30, 2020. Highlights were as follows:
  1. FY2020 Projected Fund Balance: The estimated FY2020 un-audited working capital (fund balance) for the Parking Fund was \$607,944. This represents a

projected loss of approximately \$68,000 from the FY2019 working capital balance of \$675,944.

Mr. Walsh discussed Covid-19 impacts on the FY2020 fund balance. He noted that during FY2020, which ended on June 30, 2020, the Parking Fund lost approximately \$283,000 in meter revenue and \$75,000 in meter citation revenues year-over-year due to the Pandemic. If the Covid-19 Pandemic had not occurred, the Parking Fund would have actually booked a net gain of approximately \$300,000 in FY2020, which would have increased fund balance from \$675,000 to approximately \$975,000.

2. FY2021 Year End Projection: Mr. Walsh presently estimates the following for FY 2021:
  - a. Revenues: \$2,427,496, which is \$642,203 less than budget of \$3,069,699.
  - b. Expenditures: \$2,772,544, which is \$399,131 less than budget of \$3,171,675
  - c. Fund Balance: A projected loss of \$345,000, which is \$243,000 more than budgeted in FY2021. A \$345,000 loss will reduce working capital ("fund balance") to approximately \$263,000 by June 30, 2021.

A discussion of the revenue and expenditure assumptions in Mr. Walsh's memorandum ensued.

Given the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, it is very challenging to predict FY2021 fund balance, given that three quarters of the fiscal year remains.

Although meter revenues have recovered significantly from the initial on-set of the Pandemic, they remain 25-35% less than pre-pandemic levels.

It was also noted that until such time as Downtown activity levels return to normal, the Fund will likely sustain continued financial losses.

Although the Parking Fund will likely remain solvent through the end of FY2021, if these trends continue, the Fund may become insolvent in FY2022.

Councilor Fennessy asked about the City Administration's strategy to counter these losses. Regarding revenues, Mr. Walsh noted that some preliminary options were included in his memorandum. These included having non-meter parking tickets accrue to the Parking Fund instead of the General Fund (as recommended by the Strategic Parking Plan), as well as withholding motor vehicle registrations for unpaid parking tickets.

Concerning expenditures, Mr. Walsh indicated that City Administration will likely keep vacant positions open, delay capital projects, as well as reduce maintenance for facilities in order to minimize losses for the foreseeable future.

However, Mr. Walsh noted that other costs in the budget, such as debt service, taxes, utilities and insurance are fixed costs. He specifically discussed debt service, which totals \$1.379 million, or approximately 45% of the FY2021 Parking operating budget. He noted that debt has been increasing in the past few years due to deferred maintenance projects.

He also discussed other fixed costs, such as credit card transaction fees, which have also been increasing significantly as 80% of all transactions are by credit card.

## 6. Other Business:

- a. **Review of Parking Division Staffing Summary:** This item was briefly discussed during the FY2021 year-end projection.
- b. **Review of metered parking transactions by type (coin, credit card, and PayByPhone mobile app).** This item was briefly discussed during the FY2021 year-end projection.
- c. **Restaurant Dining in Parking Spaces:** Mayor Bouley broached the subject of restaurants' free use of metered parking spaces for outdoor dining. He noted this had been occurring since the practice was authorized by the City Council in mid-May, and is scheduled to end November 15, 2020. He asked if staff had calculated lost revenues resulting from the use of spaces.

Mr. Walsh stated his recollection that approximately 15 on-street metered parking spaces had been closed for dining. He noted that use of public parking spaces for private use typically requires a parking encumbrance permit at a cost of \$15 / day. Presuming all were closed in mid-May, the estimated lost revenue to the City would be approximately \$30,000 through mid-October. The projected total cost through November 15<sup>th</sup> would be approximately \$35,000.

The Mayor noted that dining in parking spaces appears to have been well received by the community. He suggested the City may want to establish formal requirements for these so-called "parklets" for next spring to improve aesthetics and public safety.

Mr. Walsh stated that parklets were becoming popular in larger metropolitan communities prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic. He also noted that most communities, such as Portland, Maine, charge fees for parklets to compensate for lost parking revenues when spaces are used for outdoor dining.

- d. **Discuss topics for November meeting agenda:**
  - i. Councilor Champlin suggested that Covid-19 Pandemic revenue impacts be a reoccurring agenda item for the foreseeable future.
  - ii. It was the consensus of the Committee to include Phyllis Skafidas' recent communication to the City Council reiterating her request for a resident parking permit in a meter zone on Pleasant Street on the November agenda.

- iii. Staff noted that Becky McKeown recently contact staff seeking a resident parking permit for a meter zone on South State Street. It was the consensus of the Committee to include this request on the November agenda.
  - iv. Councilor Kenison requested an update on the status of the West and State Street intersection. Mr. Walsh stated that this will require a City Council approval of a no parking ordinance. Mr. Walsh stated he would work to get this on the City Council's November agenda for a December public hearing. He noted that possible winter conditions may delay implementation until the spring.
7. **Adjourned:** Councilor Fennessy moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Todd seconded. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Lombard  
Parking Division Fiscal Tech II