

MINUTES

Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee
August 21, 2017 / 4:30-6:00 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room/City Hall

In Attendance: City Councilors – Mayor James Bouley, Candace White Bouchard, Mark Coen, and Amanda Grady Sexton; City Staff – Tom Aspell, City Manager; Brian LeBrun, Deputy City Manager-Finance; Carlos Baia, Deputy City Manager-Development; Rebekah Dougherty, Management and Budget Analyst; Suzi Pegg, Economic Development Director; and Jennifer Johnston, Director of Human Resources.

Excused: City Councilors Keith Nyhan (Chairman), Dan St. Hilaire and Fred Keach.

- 1) **Approval of April 17, 2017 Meeting Minutes:** Mayor Bouley called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM and requested a motion to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2017 meeting. **Councilor Grady Sexton moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Councilor Coen. The minutes were unanimously approved.**

- 2) **Impact Fees:** Deputy City Manager Baia discussed impact and development fees with the committee, seeking direction as to whether to propose changes to the existing fee structures in an effort to strengthen the City's economic development competitiveness.

Councilor Coen asked who would pay for the improvements if there were no impact fees. Deputy City Manager Baia indicated that they would typically be paid for from the General Fund, likely through debt service.

City Manager Aspell suggested eliminating impact fees on commercial developments and large scale multi-unit apartments or condominium projects, and keeping impact fees for single family homes. He noted that single family homes will soon see a dramatic reduction in their fees with the elimination of the Concord school impact fee in 2018.

At the end of the presentation and Q&A the following options were discussed:

- a) Do nothing;
- b) Look to refine impact fee categories and charges;
- c) Eliminate the "special" water/sewer investment fees;
- d) Examine options for additional targeted impact fee waivers;
- e) Implement a Manchester/Nashua model where non-residential development is not assessed an impact fee; or
- f) Eliminate impact fees altogether (keep option in ordinance for future).

The committee recommended that staff bring forward to Council a proposal that would emulate the Manchester/Nashua model, whereby impact fees on non-residential development could be waived. No changes to the other development fees were recommended at this time.

- 3) **Communications:** Deputy City Manager Baia discussed the possible creation of a City Information Office, with a new City Information Officer position, and that would incorporate the existing Communications Coordinator position (currently in General Services) into this same office. This office could potentially be augmented by a shared Concord TV staffer who could serve as a video specialist providing the necessary video material to be distributed across a variety of internet and social media platforms.

Councilor Coen asked what will be accomplished by having the communications person. Deputy City Manager Baia stated that this person would be responsible for strategically and comprehensively organizing, composing and distributing the City's external communications across a variety of social media and internet platforms. Based on best practices, this position would work very closely with all City departments, particularly the larger, more external-facing departments, to monitor and report on emergent issues, promote products and programs, inform the public about projects, and respond to posts in short order. Mr. Baia noted that the expectation from much of the public today is for information that is current, available, and responsive almost 24/7. Mr. Baia also stressed that if the City is not in control of its own message, others will control and dictate it for the City and this may not be in the best interest of the community.

Councilor Grady Sexton said that marketing the City is the best way to show what it has to offer.

Councilor Bouchard stated that keying in travelers that Concord is a great place to stop and spend a day for lunch and shopping will help local businesses.

City Manager Aspell said that the City needs to push information out to people, anticipate questions they may have, and be prepared for the responses. He explained that we need to let people know every day about things that are going on, like the Exit 16 construction, pools opening and closing, the Loudon Road project, or whatever else may be happening in the City. He noted that with the decline in traditional media coverage, much of the good things going on in the City aren't getting conveyed to the community.

Councilor Coen asked how success will be measured. Councilor Grady Sexton and Deputy City Manager Baia both noted that the analytics capabilities of social media platforms provide for very granular, target-specific data, which, today, the City doesn't take advantage of. Mr. Baia noted that such analytic data allowed one community to determine that its target audience for Parks and Recreation advertising was women, aged 25-45, who were online on Saturdays after 9 pm.

Mayor Bouley stated that the City is in the service business; plowing, library, recreation, road improvements, etc. and, therefore, communication is very important.

Economic Development Director Suzi Pegg said the City needs to effectively manage its social media, as it is a reflection of the City when businesses and site selectors are looking at Concord.

Councilor Grady Sexton said that with the decline in the staffing levels at traditional media, it is even more important to put out information in social media appropriately, since such posts are many times now picked up automatically by the newspapers and TV outlets.

The committee recommended adding the communications position and funding it with the Economic Development Reserve Fund for FY 2018.

- 4) **ERP Update** – Deputy City Manager LeBrun updated the committee on the status of the new ERP. The City is currently finalizing contract negotiations with Munis. The negotiations have taken a little longer than planned due to back and forth contract discussions. We believe that we are very close, have only a few negotiating items remaining to be ironed out, and expect to have a signed document in the very near future.
- 5) **FPAC Agendas iLegislate** – Deputy City Manager LeBrun discussed putting future FPAC agendas on iLegislate, the same software agenda system that is used for City Council, Finance Committee (budget) and Planning Board agendas. This system would eliminate any future paper copies of either the agenda or backup materials. The committee was very much in favor of the change, as most members currently use their electronic devices instead of paper anyway.
- 6) **September Meeting** – Deputy City Manager LeBrun indicated that he has a conflict with the September 18 FPAC meeting. Two items of significance are planned for the September agenda, preview of the FY 2017 financial results and a presentation by Weston and Sampson on Utility Rate recommendations.

Three options exist for September – have the meeting as planned and postpone the financial results discussion until October, reschedule the meeting to another date in September, or not have a September meeting and address items at the October meeting.

The committee agreed that the meeting should be cancelled and the items be presented at the October meeting. Deputy City Manager LeBrun will consult with Chairman Nyhan to be sure he is OK with cancelling the September meeting.

- 7) **Golf Fund** – Deputy City Manager LeBrun discussed the preliminary ending results of the Golf fund. This fund is anticipated to lose approximately \$100,000 for FY 2017. Based on the pro forma budget, the working capital is \$31,427 and the Overhead charges were \$76,260, a total of \$107,687. Based on the final adjustments still to be made, the loss is anticipated to be something less than \$107,687 and would be sufficient to cover it.

The committee agreed to using the General Fund overhead charges to help reduce the deficit. Deputy City Manager LeBrun will do a report to Council for its September Meeting on the action and the adjustment that will need to be completed.

- 8) **Other – None**

- 9) **Adjournment:** A motion was made by Councilor Coen to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Bouchard. A unanimous vote brought the meeting to an end at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian LeBrun Deputy City Manager – Finance