

FINANCE COMMITTEE LEWISTON, MAINE

Minutes of
May 6, 2019

PRESENT: Councilor Michael Marcotte, Denis Theriault, Melissa Simones Landry, Matthew Shaw and Councilor James Lysen.

OTHERS PRESENT: Public Works Director Dale Doughty, Assistant City Administrator Denis D'Auteuil, Purchasing Agent Allen Ward and Asst. Finance Director Ralph Lenfestey.

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by the Chairman.

On motion of Councilor Marcotte, seconded by Mr. Shaw it was

VOTED:

(055-2019) To approve the minutes of the previous meeting dated April 22, 2019 as presented and to accept and place them on file as presented by the Clerk.

VOTE: 5-0

On recommendation of the Asst. Finance Director and on motion of Councilor Lysen, seconded by Mr. Shaw it was

VOTED:

(056-2019) To ratify the FY 20 Municipal Budget recommendation from the Finance Committee to the City Council as follows:

The Finance Committee has agreed upon the following recommendation of the 2020 Municipal Budget, to be ratified at the May 6, 2019 meeting:

As required by Lewiston City Charter, the Finance Committee has reviewed the FY20 Lewiston Municipal Budget and provided our recommendations and concerns at this time.

The Finance Committee again takes this opportunity to remind the Council of our previous recommendation regarding the FY20 LCIP, and how it will affect this and future budgets. FY20 requests far exceed what we have seen in past years and the current projected bonding would defeat our pay down mechanism at a time when we are not seeing a strong for-profit business development stream.

We remain concerned with the current bidding system, as it appears to favor the bidder more than it does the city. While there is likely, little that can change, a system which allows the bidders to know in advance how much money can be devoted to an item or service might not provide for the best bid. This comment is not a condemnation of any individual bidder who we have or may work with, but instead an observation of an area that could be exploited. We also recommend that the City carefully review each bid proposal to ensure that we maintain as much flexibility as possible in terms of timeframes and project scope, design and materials to ensure the most bidders possible and more favorable pricing.

The Finance Committee is pleased that the Rental Registration Sub-Committee has developed a program to help our residents to feel safe in their housing with increased code enforcement and Fire Department involvement. Because the Sub-Committee rejected a fee-based system, it is important that the City provide some resources to make sure the program is implemented in a timely manner.

*Public safety remains a top priority. The Finance Committee has two City Councilors on our Committee. Councilors Marcotte and Lysen were also both on the Rental Registration Sub-Committee. During discussions at our most recent Finance Committee meeting, it was the stance of members that with respect to new positions in the FY20 budget that it made more sense to fund the requested **Fire Inspector position than the Assistant Fire Chief position**. Timely inspections will require additional staff, especially “boots on the ground.” The new Fire Inspector position will also cost **\$62,829** less than the assistant fire chief position. We strongly urge the City Council to consider this recommendation.*

There needs to be a very detailed assessment of the current Deputy Fire Chief position before consideration of the New Assistant Fire Chief position. The recent document (LFD ASSISTANT CHIEF/BATTALION CHIEF JUSTIFICATION) provided to the Council does not provide an adequate picture of workload distribution within the Fire Department. A number of the listed items are already functional responsibilities of Captains, Lieutenants, and Staff. Clarity of existing positions may be a better direction than adding a position.

Example: *A closer look at (RMS) Record Management System which was purchased a year ago with the intent to reduce management time in training reports, maintenance of work orders, inventory, incident reporting, etc. to date is not up and running. Could the simple implementation of the existing, purchased, ready RMS be an answer to not adding an additional administrative position?*

Suggestion to reduce load:

*Shifting Fire Inspection duties to an elevated Senior Fire Inspector position would release the Current Deputy Chiefs workload at a minimal cost upgrade. There are many alternatives that can be achieved if a **Team environment** exists!*

We recommend that any future negotiations with the various unions set more realistic targets equal to what the private citizens see in their daily lives. Finding a metric such as Social Security COLAS and looking to what private employers require their employees to pay as a share of insurance and other benefits seem fair given the struggle our local citizens are undertaking as they are forced to contribute to the community treasury.

Lastly, our recommendations are developed knowing that decisions by the state on revenue sharing increases may also come after our budget is finalized. We should carefully evaluate any potential additional revenues, dedicating a significant portion of those revenues to reducing the property tax rate.

For example, the schools have indicated some uncertainty in portions of their funding; and by rule, any budget they produce cannot be changed later should they need additional funding from the taxpayers (it can be decreased but not increased) thus it is likely we would see a “worst-case

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 6, 2019

scenario” budget. Should that occur, we strongly urge the City Council and the School Committee understand those portions of the budget. Should the local match end up being less than the average in the budget, the overages should not be spent on other items or needs not included in the original budget but instead, returned directly to the taxpayer by decreasing property taxes.

Thank you for your consideration of the Lewiston Finance Committee’s recommendations for the FY20 budget.

VOTE: 5-0

On recommendation of the Asst. Finance Director and on motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Councilor Lysen it was

VOTED:

(057-2019) To conditionally award Bid 2019-010 City Marketing Consultant Services, upon the Selection Review Committee’s recommendation, to The Brand Collective, Auburn, Maine, at their fee not to exceed \$30,000 subject to a favorable vote of the City Council on the FY20 Fund Balance allocation at their meeting of May 7, 2019.

VOTE: 5-0

On recommendation of the Asst. Finance Director and on motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Ms. Landry it was

VOTED:

(058-2019) To authorize Change Order #5 to Bid 2018-046 for the 2019 Street Resurfacing and Rehabilitation Program with Glidden Excavation and Paving for an estimated cost of \$114,900 to include the additional work scope as follows for:

- June Avenue (Pond Road to Dead End);
- Old Chadbourne Road (gravel section to Sabattus);
- Old Lisbon Road (South Lisbon to railroad tracks); and
- South Lisbon Road (Dyer Road to Crowley Road)

For an updated bid award amount of \$1,741,302.50.

VOTE: 5-0

At this time, there was discussion between the Finance Committee and Public Works Director Dale Doughty.

VOTED:

To adjourn at 7:08 p.m.

Allen Ward
Clerk
Finance Committee