

BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

JUNE 27, 2022

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Monday, June 27, 2022, at 7:33 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber and via Zoom which meeting link can be found on the agenda.

Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman, presided.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. If you are participating via Zoom, please state your presence, reason for not attending the meeting in person, and whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-To-Know Law.

Members of Committee present: Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman John Cathey  
Alderman Ernest Jette  
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

Members not in Attendance: Alderman John Sullivan

Also in Attendance: Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

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ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS

From: Laurie Ortolano  
Re: Interest Paid for Abatement Appeals not settled expeditiously

From: Lisa Fauteux, Director of Public Works  
Re: Referral from Board of Aldermen – R-22-038

***There being no objection, Chairman Dowd accepted the communications and placed them on file.***

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

**R-22-038**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.  
Alderman Thomas Lopez  
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons  
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly  
Alderman Alex Comeau  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman Tyler Gouveia  
Alderman John Cathey  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY TREASURER TO ISSUE BONDS NOT TO EXCEED THE AMOUNT OF TWO MILLION AND FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2,450,000) FOR WALNUT STREET OVAL INTERSECTION PROJECT AND WEST PEARL STREET STREETSCAPING**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

Is there anyone who would like discussion? Alderman Comeau?

Alderman Comeau

Yes, thank you. Since we are in Budget Committee now, I have a couple more questions for Director Cummings if I could? Just a couple quick questions and thank you for indulging me. So again, my understanding of the project was that the ultimate goal was the reversal of West Pearl Street. It seems like I understand we can't reverse it until we redo that intersection so there's an order of operations that have to happen. I'm just wondering why the last step in the proposal that we talked about in Infrastructure why the last step isn't the reversal of Pearl Street. It seemed like we were all pretty much on board with that. If it's a matter of analyzing traffic patterns, do we not already know how many cars come off the Broad Street Parkway? They're just going down Factory Street instead of Pearl Street. That traffic data already exists. Have we not already done that study before we started to entertain the idea of reversing because we can't count how many cars are going to come down once it's reversed until we reverse it? So didn't we already do a study to determine whether the reversal was feasible in the first place?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

May I Mr. Chair?

Chairman Dowd

Yes.

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

Yes. Yes we did. As I understand it because it all pre-dates me, these studies were done back in the 2013, 2015, 2010, 2008 timeframe. It was done, as I understand it, in the lead-up of the parkway being constructed and then it was done after the parkway was constructed. There was some preliminary study done to evaluate the idea of reversing West Pearl Street. But when I say preliminary study, it hasn't been brought to a level yet where I believe the City Engineer feels comfortable in actually moving anything forward in terms of a reversal.

Chairman Dowd

All set or follow up?

Alderman Comeau

I guess I'm just confused. If we're not sure that we're going to reverse the road, then why do the infrastructure needed to reverse the road in the first place? I thought that was a foregone conclusion.

Chairman Dowd

Director Cummings?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

Yes, again, when I say that the reversal of West Pearl Street is a priority, that is what has been represented to me by the Board of Aldermen over the last 4 or 5 years as well as others in the community. I would suggest that is separate and apart from actually the need to do the West Pearl Street streetscaping because that infrastructure is old and needs to be rehabilitated because it's beyond its' useful life if you were to go and take a look at that roadway. We have not gotten to the point of actually designing the squaring off of the oval. When I say that the intersection of Walnut, Central, and West Pearl is going to be a full intersection, that's because of the very preliminary data that we got back from the engineers when they looked at it and they said City if you ever do want to reverse West Pearl Street, you need to be aware this is going to be an impact that you're going to need to consider and be aware of. So I fully expect when we do the Walnut Street squaring off that will be one of the inputs that actually gets decided that we actually undertake.

At the end of the day if it rises that folks don't want to reverse West Pearl Street, then you'd still do the reintegration of the street grade with the squaring off of the Walnut Street Oval. You'd still, I would recommend do the West Pearl Street streetscaping. What would occur most likely, my guess is, the intersection configuration at that Walnut, Central, and West Pearl Street area would not just look what it might need to look like if you were to reverse West Pearl Street.

Alderman Comeau

Last thing then. If we do this and we don't immediately reverse it and life goes on with Pearl Street going the same direction as it's going now, will it be significantly more difficult to reverse it later?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

No. That's one of the things West Pearl Street streetscaping took into consideration.

Alderman Comeau

No, I mean the intersection itself. The infrastructure of the intersection will that be difficult to reverse?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

Which intersection?

Alderman Comeau

Walnut, Central, and Pearl.

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

I don't know because we haven't designed that yet. However, I would make it a priority to preserve the option so you could. What do I mean by that? I would want to make sure that land is available and so you had enough right of way planned so if you needed to accommodate additional improvements 5, 10, 15 years down the road in case someone decides to reverse West Pearl Street and actually undertake that project, you wouldn't have to redo everything.

Alderman Comeau

Okay. Thank you. I just hope we don't have to rip the whole thing up and start over.

Chairman Dowd

Having been around for those studies, I think that it wasn't an issue on that end. I think the issue was on Main and Pearl Street. It was my understanding, and this is also going to be a question, that you have to turn all the lights around and you have to affect the timing of the intersection. Is that cost included in this?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

No. That cost would not be included in this.

Chairman Dowd

That would definitely need to be done before you can reverse the streets. Do you have a follow up?

Alderman Comeau

No. I was under the understanding that the reversal was part of the project. So it's news to me that we'll revisit it later that's all.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you. From what I remember it being at many Infrastructure Committees with Mr. Cummings, some of this you said is a phased project. So this will probably be definitely looked at, at least when we're doing from Elm to Walnut Street because that's when it's really going to become incredible. By right now physically, a car cannot get off the oval and to get on Pearl Street there's maybe futuristic negotiations. Some of the property has changed hands. There's been selling. It's under new tenants and everything else, so I think the picture is all part of the puzzle has yet to be put together through negotiations and trying to get this square off and correct. So I think that's going to be done. Subsequently, and I'm sure Mr. Cummings, this will come back to Infrastructure where the finalization to make the final recommendation to the Board on this matter.

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

If I may Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Dowd

Yes, Director Cummings.

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

I just want to say I apologize. I thought I had made it clear that the West Pearl Street streetscaping had always been designed to accommodate the future reversal of West Pearl Street. If I didn't make that clear early on, I again I apologize. But all I was trying to emphasize is that this streetscaping and this work on West Pearl Street anticipated and would be designed in a way to be as efficient as possible. I would suggest that will be the exact same thing that will be done with the Walnut Street squaring off.

Chairman Dowd

So again, I think the biggest thing in reversing the street would be the intersection would be the lighting switch around on Main Street and Pearl Street and the timing. Perhaps because it would reduce pollution, there might be federal funds available to do that at some point. Just a thought. Any other questions? Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. Director Cummings having not been here a super long amount of time and may before others edification as well, what are the benefits to squaring off the oval? What are the problems we have now? I've been around that oval but I haven't encountered a lot of my own problems. So what benefit do we get?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

Sure if I may Mr. Chairman. So that is - I get excited when I get a question like that. It just shows you I'm an urban planning geek. That is a great example of urban renewal gone awry. So that is not a very pedestrian friendly area in Nashua that we really should be looking to reintroduce the street grid to accommodate pedestrians. Multi-mode of transportation, introducing the street grid would be just safer from a public safety standpoint but also it would actually create potentially some development opportunities because you'd be accessing land right now that is undevelopable and potentially being able to turn land back to the tax rolls and try to spur infill type development. It wouldn't be large scale by any imagination, by any stretch but it would be potentially some opportunity to bring the land back into some more productive use.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. Out of my own curiosity, would this affect the Pennichuck building at all or is they're just going to lose land, gain land? I'm not sure how much of that oval that they actually own. So I'm just curious about that.

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

Sure. Well first just to clarify, they don't own anything. They lease it. But to your point though, the landowner depending

on how the City owns that land, I don't want to get too technical but if we have a fee interest, it would revert to the City. If it's just some sort of right-of-way usage, then that would depending on where the center line is revert to the owner that had the fee. So yes, there's a strong possibility particularly on the most southerly end of the oval that some of that land would revert back to the private property owner that abuts it.

To the land to the north actually, I believe the City actually has a lot of fee interest from basically 25 Walnut Street, which is the Pennichuck building, around the Factory Street area, to the Clocktower. So that would be City property that, again, I think might be potential for development. If a private owner wanted to develop along the southern end, that's a conversation to be had.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

The only thing I can state is having heard it several times is Pennichuck is highly in favor of this.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Cathey do you have follow up?

Alderman Cathey

No, I'm good.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Comeau?

Alderman Comeau

I promise this will be my last one. If the plan hasn't been developed yet, how do we know how much to finance?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

Thank you. Great question. Because we have engineers looking at it doing very high level studies to give us cost estimates. But specifically actually for the squaring off of the Walnut Street Oval, we are precluded because we'll be taking federal funds to actually designing it until we actually receive the funds that what's referred to as "an LPA Agreement with the State". They don't want you to prejudge an issue to solve a problem. They look at it as being fair and equitable. So they give you a budget that they believe is appropriate and then you actually study the issue, design it to a certain degree, then you reassess to see if that budget that originally set out is accurate.

Alderman Comeau

As usually, a perfectly reasonable explanation. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. So we can't design it because of the State, right?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

You can't design it just yet, but you will design in theory in the next year or so.

Alderman Cathey

When do we get those monies - question #1? Question #2 - do we have to have this Resolution in order for them to give us the money sort of a like a good faith type of thing or would they give it to us anyway?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

I'm going to answer your question a couple ways. So it's a reimbursement. So they reimburse us after we spend it. I would never recommend that the City of Nashua enter into an agreement with the State when we owe 20% of the project and not have the money available as a source of funds. That's what I would suggest would be a bad practice.

Chairman Dowd

It's not too dissimilar to what we get involved with the airport where the federal government pays 90%, State pays 5%, and we pay 5%. All the legislation has to be in place before the federal government trusts you to go through with the project.

Alderman Cathey

Are we paying that money first for the airport and getting reimbursed or are they paying the bill?

Chairman Dowd

No it works a little different. They want all the money up front, especially where they're paying 90% of it. Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So just to clarify. There are two parts to this. One is the Walnut Street streetscape and the other is the oval. As far as the Walnut Street part of it, I looked at the Capital Improvements Plan for Fiscal Year '23 and when I pull up the plan, all I see is the Walnut Street. There's only like \$30,000 or so that's put in there. So I'm think maybe it was amended and after this it says FY'23. The amount that you're talking about is \$1.895 million. So how did it go from \$30,000 to \$1.895 million? Is something missing there?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

If I may Mr. Chair. I'm going to guess because I don't know for sure because I didn't do it, but I believe our DPW Department submitted the request and they did it well in advance of actually knowing if this money was going to come forward or not. And so I believe they probably put in some money for most likely the design.

Alderman Jette

Yes, it does say "design".

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

So that's probably a partial request whereas because we're moving forward with the project, we are asking for the entirety of it to be authorized.

Alderman Jette

Okay in the Capital Improvement Committee, as you know but for anyone else, there's A, B, C, D and this was in the "B" area. There are a lot of projects in the "A" area that this is jumping ahead of so how do you justify that?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

I don't know if I do justify that. I am not responsible for that ranking system. I didn't even know that this got ranked as a "B". I'm not even sure what the criteria would be to rank this compared to the other projects at hand. I'm sure all projects are worthwhile though and need to be done.

Chairman Dowd

I think it also has to do with monies that are going to be coming forward under the capital improvements budget versus a separate bond. I've seen a lot of things over the years that are ranked in the Bs or low Bs that get funded because the

project becomes more viable than when it was presented. I can't say for sure because I wasn't there but it's happened before. As far as I'm concerned, I think we ought to fund all the A projects but we don't have enough money. In this instance, it looks like one of the B projects rose to the top.

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

If I may Mr. Chairman. I can absolutely find out and get back to you but I'm not intimately familiar with the capital improvements plan but I'll look into it and get back to you.

Alderman Jette

Okay. You're talking about the traffic reversal plan. I agree. I was under the same impression as the previous speaker that there was a study done a number of years ago that recommended the reversal of our current one-way system for the limited area of West Pearl Street, but it included changing the direction of West Pearl Street to allow access from the Broad Street Parkway, but also it talked about reversing the direction of East Pearl Street. So you'd have eastbound traffic going from the Broad Street Parkway across Main Street, down West and East Pearl Street, to Temple Street, and then coming westerly Temple Street would then become westerly across Main Street, Factory Street would be westerly, and going back to Chestnut Street, and then to Central Street, back to the Parkway. I thought that was all – you know the studies were done. That was the recommendation. The only thing standing in the way was cost. So when you talk about further studies being necessary, I'm wondering how many studies do we have to do. It's coming up with the money that's the problem, isn't it?

Chairman Dowd

Director Cummings?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

I would say that's one of the problems. Gaining consensus with the community is another one to make sure everyone is in agreement. I'll give you an example. That study that you're referencing makes it very clear that we should actually abandon Water Street. It says it's unnecessary. We shouldn't have it. I think that there's some people who would suggest that is not the best conclusion. Public safety in particular but nonetheless, that is what that study says. So often times you have a lot of studies before there is enough confidence and data to move forward with one prevailing thought.

The study that you are specifically referencing for those of you who don't know it's on our City website. It's called the "Downtown Circulation Study". It was done back in 2015 by VHB and actually has a lot of differing recommendations in that document about what the City could do to improve the flow of vehicles and traffic in the downtown area because you're absolutely right. One of the things that the professional staff will recommend is to move away from one-way type of circulation.

Chairman Dowd

All set Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Okay, that last part came as a surprise. We're talking about reversing direction and now you're talking about making the streets two-ways instead of one-ways. Is that what you just said?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

Yes. Again, a big component of that study. The major thrust of that study was to actually try to move away from one-way traffic flow and try to institute two-way traffic flow where possible.

Chairman Dowd

Which was an even more expensive option then.

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

And a loss of parking.

Chairman Dowd

Lots and lots of parking. Any other questions? Seeing none.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**R-22-042**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.  
Alderman Thomas Lopez  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**RELATIVE TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$320,000 FROM FY2022 ASSIGNED FUND BALANCE INTO DEPARTMENT 152 "FIRE", ACCOUNT 51330 "SHIFT COVERAGE"**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman O'Brien

Mr. Chairman I've just come to some knowledge from what I understand that there seems to be this number here that is for this motion may not be enough so therefore I would like to amend the motion to read instead of \$320,000 to include it to the dollar amount of \$355,000.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO AMEND THE DOLLAR AMOUNT TO \$355,000**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

Miss Evans is on the line. Would you like to explain why the larger number Miss Evans?

Rose Evans, Comptroller

Thank you Mr. Chair. This Thursday is our last payroll of the Fiscal Year and we ran the payroll numbers today and they were higher than we had originally anticipated when we put forth the first amount of \$320,000.

Chairman Dowd

Weren't we also expecting some FEMA monies that may come in later but aren't going to come in before this week or did they change the way...

Rose Evans, Comptroller

Correct. It's a couple of items. I was on the phone with FEMA this week and they will not cover overtime to cover somebody that was sick with COVID if you were under the impression that they were going to cover that. Low and behold, they're not so that's part of it. We are anticipating eligible FEMA recovery for other eligible cost but they're not going to come in this Fiscal Year.

Chairman Dowd

Okay. Thank you. Questions?

Alderman Comeau



We should have let the Chief go first. This is an easy one. No disrespect Director Cummings.

Chairman Dowd

He's not getting paid by the hour.

**MOTION CARRIED**

Chairman Dowd

We will now have the amended R-22-042 where it will read:

**RELATIVE TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$355,000 FROM FY2022 ASSIGNED FUND BALANCE INTO DEPARTMENT 152 "FIRE", ACCOUNT 51330 "SHIFT COVERAGE"**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE AS AMENDED  
MOTION CARRIED**

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE - None

GENERAL DISCUSSION - None

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN - None

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was declared closed at 8:03 p.m.

Alderman Michael B. O'Brien, Sr., Committee Clerk