

BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

JANUARY 22, 2024

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Monday, January 22, 2024, at 7:06 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman, presided.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance.

Members of Committee present: Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Vice-Chair  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire  
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly (via Zoom)  
Alderman Tim Sennott  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Alderman John Sullivan

Members not in Attendance:

Also in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons  
Alderman Ernest A. Jette  
Dan Hudson, City Engineer

---

ROLL CALL

ELECTION OF CLERK

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN WILSHIRE TO NOMINATE ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO SERVE AS COMMITTEE CLERK FOR THE 2024-2025 TERM**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN WILSHIRE TO CLOSE THE NOMINATIONS BY ROLL CALL**

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Thibeault, Alderman Sennott, Alderman Kelly,  
Alderman Wilshire, Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd 7  
Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN DOWD CARRIED TO ELECT ALDERMAN O'BRIEN AS COMMITTEE CLERK FOR THE 2024-2025 TERM BY ROLL CALL**

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Thibeault, Alderman Sennott, Alderman Kelly,  
Alderman Wilshire, Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd 7  
Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

**R-24-002**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**RELATIVE TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$547,326.33 OF FY2024 UNANTICIPATED REVENUE INTO FUND #1001 "CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS", DEPARTMENT 160 "PUBLIC WORKS – ADMINISTRATION & ENGINEERING"**

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

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

All right. Motion is on the floor. Any questions?

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. Just a question about the, and it's through you to Mr. Hudson I think, so this can't be used to - because I know that the bridge project, the Hudson Bridge, we're bonding some of that. We can't use this to reduce the bond at all or can we?

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

Thank you. So that's a good question. Funding for that project we already appropriated and awarded but the good news is that project was 80/20 - eighty percent federal through the State, twenty percent being a municipal match of which the twenty percent is split ten percent to Nashua, ten percent to Hudson. We actually received money through a previous similar legislation, Senate Bill 401, where the city received over a million as part of that previous distribution and we used a portion of that as a ten percent match. So that bridge is being done with no local taxpayer funds other than what was spent on the design which we also split 50/50 with Hudson.

Chairman Dowd

Follow-up Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Yeah. Okay my follow up to that is do you have anything on the radar that you're looking to spend this on?

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

An excellent question. Yes, we do. So we're gearing up to award the replacement pedestrian bridge behind Nashua High School South. The Board may recall that bridge. We observed a critical issue. We had to close the bridge, remove the bridge, put up a temporary bridge. So we have bid that project out and we have a contractor which we're bringing forward for contract approval. So funds from that bridge fund that this money is getting deposited into will be used. I think that project can all be done with "cash in hand" so to speak but in the same time, we've used some of the money to advance design on other bridges or assessment. We've been looking at the Water Street Bridge. That bridge is in pretty serious disrepair. It's going to need some improvements so certainly these funds together with the previous funds we received will be used towards that project.

Alderman Clemons

Great, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. So as I look at the financial statements through November. So I understand these probably aren't up-to-date exactly but it's got about \$1.7 million left in the budget so we're going to add that into that budget. Are there any other bridge repairs in that capital improvement budget that you've outlined or is this amount of money only going to take care of those?

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

Well we've been going through assessing all the bridges. Water Street is the next most critical one as I noted but there are other pedestrian bridges in Mine Falls that are going to need work. The money can be used toward maintenance. One of the things we've contracted our engineering consultant for is to develop a basically bridge maintenance plan for us. The State comes and evaluates all the bridges on a periodic basis, vehicular bridges that is. You either pass, or go on the red list, or they tell you what the rating is but they don't really tell you the specific things you should be doing to maintain that bridge so it doesn't fall into that sort of situation. Some of things are intuitive. Others are not so intuitive.

So we're working with a consultant to develop a bridge capital plan to give us a better idea going forward exactly what we should be budgeting, and what types of maintenance, and repairs we should be making, and at what time. So that all is in the works so to speak. The \$1.7 million I don't think reflects the pending award of that bridge. I was just mentioning the one down at Mine Falls. I think that's going to use about half a million dollars of the bridge funds towards that project. This will replace that so I guess we'll be basically back where we were but yeah it is a good pot of money that we have that we can keep evaluating and advancing bridge maintenance, and repairs, and construction efforts where needed.

Chairman Dowd

Follow-up question, Alderman Sullivan.

Alderman Sullivan

Thanks just for clarification. So we're getting money about a half of a million dollars from somewhere else to take care of south bridge to replace that one and then this money from State bridge aid, House Bill 2, is going to go towards probably Water Street. Just want to clarify on that.

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

Yeah, it's just a timing thing. They're both - the money we receive and this money are going into the same local fund basically so all bridge money we've been receiving is going in there and will get spent out of there. Where this money goes exactly, I think you're probably correct in just the timing of things. I think this money will go into the fund. Probably will go toward Water Street or a future project not the pedestrian bridge at the high school.

Alderman Dowd

So just for clarification like any time you want to use this money for a project, Legal will make sure it falls in line with the State requirements of the House Bill and I assume that any contracts coming out of this will go through Finance.

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

Yes, correct on both points. Luckily the strings so to speak that come with this money are very broad. They've enabled municipalities to use this pretty freely which we really welcome because it enables us to be creative to get projects done but you are correct, that is the case.

Alderman Dowd

Alderman Thibeault.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Chairman Dowd. So my question is kind of a dumb one. How many bridges do we have in the city?

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

I feel dumb because I can't give you an off-the-cuff answer. I apologize for that. We have on the order of a dozen +/-

bridges. Yeah, I don't have that answer off the top of my head.

Alderman Thibeault

Follow up.

Alderman Dowd

Yes, follow up.

Alderman Thibeault

So you had mentioned bringing in a consultant to kind of look at the bridges and determine. It's something we've done with parks and things that we've done with the fire stations or we're going to do with the fire stations. So you're saying right currently you know the worst is Water Street but do we have a kind of a – do we have a list of like this one will be next, this one will be next?

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

Yeah very good question. First with everything going on the waterfront area, we knew we wanted to look at Water Street and Main Street right away because of the timing of everything. We didn't want to finish the Water Street or the waterfront works and then have to do a bridge rehab project so we accelerated those two. We had them take a deep look at Water Street and Main Street. We found problems with both bridges as we would with anything. The Main Street problems are less severe. Those can be dealt in the future down the road.

Water Street we recognize we do need to do a rehab and we need to do it as soon as we can. So we enter into a design of the rehab project that's underway we're hoping to have a package together that we can advertise end of this month, beginning of next month, and then have that hopefully if we get bids be under construction first thing in the spring but we also contracted the same engineer to look at all the bridges - kind of do that deeper dive in all the bridges and that they'll do to help us develop the capital program but we've certainly accelerated these other two bridges as a first effort towards that.

Alderman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Thibeault

Yeah, one more. I'll ask two questions in one so I don't have to ask again. One is are all the bridges in the city our responsibility or the State's? The last one is Water Street you said as soon as possible. Is there any danger there of in the meantime while we get ready to that because you know even though we're getting the money now and all that, that stuff doesn't happen overnight? So those are my last two questions.

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

So all the bridges are like you said our responsibility, or the State's, or jointly with another municipality. The bridges that connect us with Hudson, they're responsible for half of those bridges. Yeah most all the other bridges are either/or but even at that the ones that are Nashua's responsibility, there are these State aid bridge programs where we can obtain funding towards the repairs. So that doesn't mean if it's our responsibility it doesn't necessarily mean it's 100% our responsibility for funding of future projects.

Water Street. So we've asked the consultant that because I've had a number of meetings with them and they've shown me pictures of the cracks and shown me the bearings that have a problem. It's kind of a unique bridge because it's curved, it has straight steel girders underneath, and the bridge is on a curve so when things heat up, contract the bridge moves and that creates a few problems as well as salt getting through some of the existing joints that have failed and deteriorating concrete. So it has a number of issues but we've asked that question and they're very comfortable that no it doesn't need to be closed. It's not of an urgent nature to that degree. Repairs do need to be made. The bridge was rehabbed back in the late '80's. That rehab or basically back to where we were before that rehab was done so we're looking to rehab it again but do it in a way that hopefully we prevent future recurrence of those issues in such a quick frequency. I say quick, I mean it's been 40+ years but still in bridge life you'd like to get more out of your repairs than that.

So we're looking at a system such as capping the concrete piers so that if any water intrusion does get through, it will shut off instead of eating the concrete and things like that, looking at redesigning the bearings so they can better accommodate the movement that the bridge has so yeah, it needs the repairs urgently but not to the degree that we need to shut it down or anything like that.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you.

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

You're welcome.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman O'Brien.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you. Mr. Hudson, could you tell us historically at one time the Trellis Bridge which is down by BAE that runs from Spruce Street area is that a municipal bridge completely outright?

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

Are you talking the railroad bridge?

Alderman O'Brien

The railroad bridge because that's going to be part and parcel of further development of the rail trail or the walkway down by the river at that point.

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

So my understanding is it is the railroad's bridge. The pedestrian walkway has kind of been built with extensions, pieces off of that bridge. That work also is not in great shape but in evaluating that area, we've come to the conclusion that a new pedestrian bridge crossing Nashua River probably should be done so that we would own it. We would maintain it. Right now, we're kind of there almost at the pleasure of the railroad through an easement but still it's not we think for a couple of reasons it makes sense long term to build a separate new pedestrian bridge crossing across the river. It's a vision to be west of that existing crossing. It is part of the riverfront plans for the loop portion that's on the east side of Main Street which isn't the part that's going to construction immediately but it is in our future plans. We are looking at future grant opportunities both for downtown, the riverfront, and that bridge as well.

Chairman Dowd

Any further questions?

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So are the bridges that go across the Everett Turnpike are those city bridges or State bridges?

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

The ones that go across the Merrimack or the ones...?

Alderman Jette

The Everett Turnpike.

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

Okay. So yeah those are State bridges. They're in control of the bridges. When they did the work on the turnpike, they re-did those bridges. When we pave, we pave for the most part, I think, we pave up to them. I can't remember exactly the (inaudible) but I know they are their bridges.

Chairman Dowd

Follow-up, Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So the bridge that Route 111 and West Hollis Street that goes across the highway recently there was a sign. I don't know what happened it fell over. Do you know what happened?

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

So I don't know exactly what happened. I saw the news like everybody but there was a large sign structure that blew over. It was during that snow squall that came through, you know, high winds. So I don't know exactly what caused that to fail. It's still on the other side of the guardrail over there. I'm sure they're trying to figure out the same thing. I'm sure they're doing forensics on what happened and how to repair, or remove it, and replace it but that was the State's structure and thankfully when it did fail and fall onto the roadway, it didn't impact anybody which we are very thankful for. It was a large structure and it would have been damaging if it did fall on anybody.

Chairman Dowd

Follow-up, Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So besides the State looking at bridges, and red flagging certain bridges, and telling us that we've got to do certain repairs do they look at their own bridges and the structures around it like the signs and stuff that - I guess I'd like to reassure the people that they're not going to get hit over the head with a sign.

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

Yeah, it's a good question. I know they do look at their own bridges just like they look at all the bridges in the State. So I know they're inspecting the bridges. Sign structures, mast arms, all those things I don't know what their program is. I'm sure that this event that just happened, I'm sure that will give them pause and they'll probably be taking a more extensive look at everything in the area. Not knowing exactly what happened, I don't know what they mean. The State has a lot of infrastructure just like we do and as much as we'd like to look at everything, often we just don't have the resources to do that and I'm sure they don't either. I'm sure that is something they'll be looking into carefully.

Everything also is designed to a level so you would think it would be pretty high level. That sign structure had a lot of surface so it was a wind sail sort to speak. So if we have high winds that was susceptible to being overloaded would be my guess. So that would be something but I don't know what it was designed to. I don't know what the wind was that came through and knocked it down if that was the cause. I'm sure they're going through a review now of structures like that to see if there are any others that might be hazardous that should be looked at.

Alderman Jette

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

All set? Alderman Wilshire.

Alderman Wilshire

Thank you for coming tonight. What about the bridge on Canal Street. Is that the one you were talking about? No?

Alderman O'Brien

No.

Alderman Wilshire

No. So that bridge recently got repaired. I noticed that maybe a car went down on the right side, the southerly side of the bridge because I saw that they were doing some concrete repair over there.

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

So that bridge - thank you for the question and thank you for coming tonight. We had just the one item on the agenda so I appreciate everybody coming out so that we could accept this money, hopefully, if you chose to. The Canal Street Bridge was on the State's red list for municipal bridges so it had fallen into a category that needed to be looked at or soon we were going to have to look at down posting and things like that. The issues that had were mostly on the concrete under the bridge on the abutments and along some of the piers. There was some concrete that had scoured so we did contract a few years ago contracted a company to come in, chip away the concrete, dowel it, you know repair it but a car did hit the bridge rail up top and so we added that work into the project. It wasn't part of the bridge being red listed but while they were there, it was time to make that repair. So we had them do that as well. So as you go through there, you might notice concrete is a little different color because it's newer but yeah that was done as well as a little bit of sidewalk work in the same vicinity where that rail had been impacted.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up Alderman Wilshire.

Alderman Wilshire

I know several years ago I think when Donna Lee was the Mayor, I asked her to look at lighting both of those lights because it's really dark walking in that section. The lights still appear to be not working. I mean they were working. One of them was working for a while. I don't know if they need to be rewired which I'm assuming they probably do which is why they've been out so long but it's a dark stretch right there if you walking so, you know, keep in the back of your mind.

Dan Hudson, City Engineer

Something to think about. Yeah that wasn't part of the previous project but something to think about. We can look at that going forward. I don't know what the opportunities there are. It's an old system doesn't mean it can't be reworked, you know, so I appreciate that input.

Alderman Wilshire

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

All set? Alderman Sennott.

Alderman Sennott

I was going to ask about Bridge Street so thank you Alderman Wilshire.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman O'Brien.

Alderman O'Brien

On that particular bridge itself if I remember right, we tried to get the special lighting to match what was originally on that bridge on those towers and so far, it worked but why - that is exposed unfortunately to weather.

But Mr. Chairman, a little house cleaning. I just want to make sure for the record I did make the pending motion to

recommend final passage which opened up the discussion on this particular bill.

Chairman Dowd

So, any other questions? Seeing none.

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Thibeault, Alderman Sennott, Alderwoman Kelly,  
Alderman Wilshire, Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd 7

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

Chairman Dowd

Thank you, Mr. Hudson. Thanks for the tree removal on Tinker Road.

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE - None

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Alderman Clemons

I just want to remind everyone to go out and vote tomorrow. It's Primary Day in New Hampshire so polls are open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Alderman O'Brien

Very timely, I hope we're not electioneering but it's a good thing to vote. I just had to get that punch in.

Alderman Thibeault

I was going to save this for remarks by Alderman but it seems like a good time. So I warned Alderman O'Brien that he was going to get the names Thibeault and Thibodeau mixed up so I knew it was coming.

Alderman O'Brien

I apologize if it offended anybody.

Alderman Thibeault

I knew it was coming so I had to think twice about voting you for Clerk but I did.

Alderman O'Brien

Did you want it back Sir?

Alderman Thibeault

No, no, no, no. You're trying to vote in \$543 million so I'm okay with that.

But to the point of voting, tomorrow is Primary Day. It's the biggest day usually in New Hampshire's voting cycles over the four years. You know one party decided to take kind of that away and so go out tomorrow. Vote the way you want. Don't let either party and both parties are out there trying to kind of curve this to one candidate on each side. That's not how it should be. The reason why we're here, democracy. That's what it's all about. It's about picking candidates otherwise you become other countries that have an autocratic ruler and that's not what we're looking for. We're looking for people to lead this country and everybody should be able to decide on their own what they want either side. So go out and vote. It's



your right. It's important. New Hampshire, I think, will be important in the general election so please come out for the Primary tomorrow. Thanks.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN - None

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ADJOURN BY ROLL CALL**

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Thibeault, Alderman Sennott, Alderwoman Kelly,  
Alderman Wilshire, Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd 7

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 7:33 p.m.

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