

## BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 8, 2023

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Wednesday, February 8, 2023, at 7:00 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, Sr.  
  Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire  
  Alderman June M. Caron  
  Alderman Ernest Jette  
  Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly (via Zoom)  
  Alderman John Sullivan

Members not in Attendance:

Also in Attendance:                       Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons  
  Alderman Patricia Klee

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### ROLL CALL

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Lou Blaisdell

Good evening. Mary Lou Blaisdell, 32 Webster Street, Nashua. I Chair the Downtown Improvement Committee and I've spoken to you before. I'd just like to speak again tonight on encouraging you to continue to fund the Committee. I have a couple letters I sent to you Chairman Dowd.

Chairman Dowd

They're on the record.

Mary Lou Blaisdell

They're on the record from a couple of business owners downtown. Also on the record, you had a list of all of our expenditures from 2015 through 2021. We didn't spend during COVID much at all. I think we've been very diligent of the monies that the City has awarded us. We've used it to reinvest it back into downtown every single time from everything from the banners to the Christmas lights funding. We did a trolley study one summer. We have funded an intern to talk about outside dining with diners. We have funded overtime to keep the streets clean all summer long. We have funded Great American Downtown Farmers Market and the Stroll. So we really try to be very diligent of the monies that are given to us and how they are spent. We tried to make sure that we are inclusive of everybody downtown and of what the needs are. I just hope that you can continue to fund us and so we can continue to keep these projects going. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Anyone else public comment?

Tim Sennott

Tim Sennott. I live at 62 Underhill Street in Nashua. I am also a member of the Downtown Improvement Committee. I believe the newest member and just because it came up in discussion, I was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of the Great American Downtown.

I'm here tonight to also speak in favor of O-22-019 which would continue the funding for the Downtown Improvement Committee. I'm not a downtown business owner. I am on the Committee as a representative of downtown consumers. I'll be fully candid that I did not fully appreciate the magnitude of the work that the Downtown Improvement Committee did when I first signed up to volunteer to join that Committee but having worked with them for just under a year now, you've got something really special here. You've got a Committee comprised primarily of downtown business owners who have taken significant steps to invest a lot of their own personal time into the surrounding area around their businesses beyond their storefront. I don't think that can be diminished when we look at our downtown.

The downtown is only as strong as the folks that reside down there, and do business down there, and to have such an investment back into the City from that business community, some of them don't even reside in Nashua, I think there's a great deal of value to that and I think it would be a shame to see the funding for this Committee go by the wayside. I think this is a very tempered and reasonable approach to the funding that's consistent with recent changes that have been made in the City in terms of the outdoor dining program and I would be very happy to see it continue for the foreseeable future. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Anyone else public comment?

Melissa Coppola

Good evening. My name is Melissa Coppola. I live at 45 Majestic Ave. in Nashua. I am the current business owner for Vibe Yoga at 182 Main Street and Aerial Moon Yoga Studio at 85 West Pearl Street. I just would like to speak for a moment on how the grant that I received from the Downtown Improvement Committee helped me maintain my business. I've worked at BAE System for 17 years in the community and quit in November of 2019 to open my own business. I signed the lease at 182 Main Street in January of 2020, took a couple months to get ready, and was ready to open in April, and delayed the opening due to COVID until July 5, 2020. For the beginning of opening my business thank goodness I didn't have expectations of what it was to open a small business. I taught the majority of the classes and didn't pay myself for about a year. The grant allowed me to hire more teachers and allowed me to start collecting some salary. When I was dealing with COVID like everyone else, I was not allowed to get a lot of the other grant money that other companies were allowed to receive because you had to show a loss of revenue from 2019 to 2020 and I wasn't open in 2019. I wasn't going back to my corporate job either.

Aerial Moon also received grant money and I recently took over that business this January. I'm very excited to be on both sides of the Center for Performing Arts. I'll just add that I've seen a lot of new people who are new to Nashua move into the community over the past few years and a lot of them see the yoga studio on Main Street, come in looking for that community. A lot of people who have been in Nashua for a longer time have mentioned often the improvement they've seen over the last ten years or so in downtown Nashua. I've lived here on and off since 2003 and very excited to be part of the downtown businesses. I will add I'm also on the Board for Great American Downtown and so I'm looking forward to seeing the collaboration between all of these groups so we can keep Main Street and Nashua moving in the right direction. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Thank you. Anyone else? I don't see anyone.

COMMUNICATIONS

From: Downtown Improvements Committee  
Re: Minutes from 12/9/22 meeting with motion to support Ordinance O-22-019

From: Alderman Ben Clemons  
Re: Downtown Improvements Committee Expenses

From: Alderman Ben Clemons  
Re: Where Downtown Improvements Committee money is spent

From: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Re: In support of Ordinance O-22-019

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS - None

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO REMOVE FROM THE TABLE O-22-019, BY ROLL CALL**

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

Yea: Alderman Sullivan, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette, Alderman Caron,  
Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd 6

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**O-22-019**

- Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
- Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
- Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
- Alderman Alex Comeau
- Alderman Richard A. Dowd
- Alderman Derek Thibeault
- Alderman Thomas Lopez
- Alderman Patricia Klee
- Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**CHANGING THE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS FUNDING PLAN**

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

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

So this evening, we've always for many years given the Downtown Improvements Committee funding. We're just looking at a different scenario on how they get the money. Is there anyone who would like to comment? Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. I guess I'm going to just leave this open. The Committee had a lot of questions last time. I hoped to get most of the answers to you in the communications. There was one that did not come over and it was a question of what the parking revenue was so and I wanted to clarify that before we get into the rest of the discussion. So the way that the calculations for the Downtown Improvement Committee go now before this ordinance change, if it's adopted, is that we take a calendar year of parking revenue. So it's parking revenue from leases, fees, and meters. As of 2022, the City took in on the calendar year basis - so from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, \$610,435.80 in parking revenue. So the way that the ordinance is written now is that anything over \$728,000 would go towards the Downtown Improvement Committee. Since 2020 with COVID and the changes that we made on Main Street with the barriers, we have not surpassed that threshold. In years past we have and in fact in I think 2018 and 2019, we were at \$125,000 over that threshold. So that's how that figure is calculated. It's a calendar year basis and then in the budget that's crafted by the Mayor whatever that figure is over \$728,000 goes to the Downtown Improvement Committee historically.

So the reason for this ordinance obviously is because we have not reached that threshold in a while and it's because of the changes that we have done. So I wanted to clarify that portion of the conversation because I know that was not in the communications I had sent over. Other than that, I guess I would be curious to see what the other members think having

read the information that was sent over.

Chairman Dowd

So Alderman Clemons in your opinion instead of it being from January to December now, it will become part of the budget and be available in July of the calendar year because it will now be out of the budget specifically?

Alderman Clemons

So if I could answer that, yes. So it's always been on the budget year. It's just that the calculation for the amount was done on a calendar year basis. The reason for that is because if you think about it, you're constantly taking in parking revenue throughout the year, right? So that's a money that is always coming into the City. It's not like property taxes where it only comes in twice a year. So the theory behind the calendar year was that once you got to January 1<sup>st</sup>, you would know how much money from the previous year you've collected and that money could then be set aside and budgeted into the following budget. So it was always a year behind if you will when you budgeted that. What we're suggesting now is that rather than waiting to find out what the amount is, we're just going to take a flat sum of \$100,000 every year and allocate that to the Downtown Improvement Committee. That's based on historical allocations.

Chairman Dowd

Other comments? Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. I want to thank the Downtown Improvement Committee as well as Alderman Clemons who I know heralded some of the questions we had from last time. I don't think that it was ever a question in my mind whether we were going to fund it. We just wanted some additional information in terms of the (inaudible) and also what the Committee has been up to. I as a downtown business owner have seen all the great things we did but I wanted to make sure that everybody knew what they had been up to. So it was very nice to see so many downtown business owners come out this night - tonight in support of the Committee. They've done a lot of great things. So I am going to support this. I think it's the right move. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. I'm just curious about the ordinance itself, the history of it, how we picked such a crooked number of \$728,000 why that was? I don't know if anybody can speak to? You can, great.

Alderman Dowd

Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Yes. Thank you. So when the original – sorry we have to go back to 2009 when a committee was formed to study what we could possibly do with downtown and to get some reinvigoration down there and some money towards different projects and things that we could do. What was initially come up with was we will take parking meter revenue and allocate that towards downtown. The concern at the time though was that if you had looked in the budget book prior to 2009 for probably six or seven years prior to that, there was always an amount of \$728,000 that was budgeted historically for parking meters. So the idea was we were going to raise parking meter revenue. So it went from .75 cents an hour to \$1.50 an hour on Main Street. We created the zones. There was zone 1, 2 and 3. The idea was that while we were raising the parking meter revenue on the folks who come downtown, the commitment by the City at that time was to say anything extra that the City gets off of that revenue, we will ensure to put it back into downtown.

So in other words, it was a compromise to say that what had been historically budgeted was going to stay within the City coffers to do things like paving, sidewalk projects, things like that. Anything above and beyond that would go to downtown and be dedicated to downtown improvements. That was the commitment at the time and so hopefully that answers that

question. I'm going to add to it if the Chairman will allow me to, to say that...

Chairman Dowd

Sure.

Alderman Clemons

I believe now we still owe the people that commitment. The reason I say that is because we're not here discussing reducing the parking meters down from \$1.50 to .75 cents again. I don't think anybody here would want to do that because we'd end up really taking a hit but we do owe the people that commitment to say that hey we raised those meters a long time ago and the extra money that you are paying still should go downtown. Some of it should and that's kind of where we're at today.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. Follow up please?

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. When this is apportioned in the budget, what's the flow? Does it come out of revenue line, then go into a trust fund, and then go out to the Downtown Improvement Committee? Because I did notice in the detail, which is fantastic, that everything was in a trust fund and everything was paid out of the trust fund. Is that how it's going to go on the go forward"?

Alderman Clemons

Yes if I could answer that. Yes, so it would. It would continue to be that way and actually the interesting part of this process is that even though the ordinance states how we do the calculation and all of that, it's actually part of the Mayor's budget. Historically through Mayor Lozeau and Mayor Donchess has been a part of their budgets. So they follow the ordinance and budget that amount every year. It comes before the Board of Aldermen in the Budget Committee, you folks generally approve it, and then the last few years, it's gone into that trust fund and that's where it stays. Anything that comes in or out is tracked through that trust fund.

Chairman Dowd

All set?

Alderman Sullivan

All set thanks.

Chairman Dowd

In talking to Mr. Griffin if this passes, then there'll be a line item in the budget for the \$100,000 and it will be subject to the budget review. There will probably be a couple other things we normally do by legislation and it will also be in there in the same area. But anyway, that's for another budget. Any other questions? Yes, Alderman O'Brien.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I'm going to support this. I compliment Alderman Clemons for the good work that you did with this. I think this is good. Its clean hands. It's transparent. Taxpayers when it's designated into its own fund it's easier for the taxpayers to track this. I think that that's a step in the right direction. The other way was kind of murky. You would have had to get a little bit into the weeds.

But the other thing is let's look at the parking issues. I'm not going to get deep into it. It's the wrong discussion and the wrong venue but however, that money that was saved with this now can go back to try to make the Parking Department

healthier than what it exists right now. So I see the ends justifying the means. This satisfies the Downtown Improvement agency and at the same time allow us to do our good job and to watch the parking meters because right now, the City of Nashua leaves money in the street because we don't have enough personnel to collect the finage. So this is definitely a step in the right direction. It will be the best for the taxpayers. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

I'm glad you didn't get into the parking study because that would have been awful. That would have been off the dart board.

Alderman O'Brien

No releasing cats out of the bag tonight.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman Wilshire?

Alderman Wilshire

I don't have a question. Happy to support this legislation. I know Alderman Clemons worked on this many years ago and he is still working on it. I give him plenty of kudos for that. It's important. I think helping our downtown merchants is important. They make the feel of downtown welcoming. I just can't say enough. There were many years where downtown was almost looking like a ghost town. Lots of stores were boarded up. People just weren't down there and I think we owe it to our citizens to do this. So I'm going to support it.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Caron?

Alderman Caron

Thank you. I don't talk too much but I want to thank Alderman Clemons too for doing this. I think one of the things as Alderman O'Brien said, it's consistent. It will be in the budget. Future Aldermen that will be sitting here will know that this is \$100,000 that they're getting. I really appreciated the budget to get a look at what you spend it on. I mean I've been involved with downtown programs for a long time but there were some things in there that I didn't realize you took care of. So I think that's a great segway and the parking meter funds can go somewhere else and hopefully that will be a good thing. So I really think that's great.

Just a heads up, Summer Fun is celebrating 50 years so you might want to think about that. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Thank you. I have several questions. Some of them probably aren't – if you're trying to solve a particular problem but if you wouldn't mind my asking some broader questions.

Chairman Dowd

As long as we don't get into the specific things they're spending it on because that's not a part of the equation. It's whether we're going to fund them or not fund them. How they spend it is once we give it to them is their purview. Unless you have a specific thing that you're really hung up on them not spending money on, you can mention it but it's not part of this legislation.

Alderman Jette

May I continue?

Chairman Dowd

Continue.

Alderman Jette

So if I could through you to Alderman Clemons. The history of this thing wasn't there a time when the City was trying to get the same types of things that the Downtown Improvement Committee are doing. The City was trying to get the merchants or the downtown property owners, more specifically, to help pay for that by creating a special - I forget what it was called - some special tax district for downtown and where the property owners of the downtown area - and I don't know how extensive it was and what it included - but they would be charged an extra fee and that money would be used for these purposes. My memory is – and I don't know if this is accurate – my memory is that the downtown property owners rejected that notion and this plan to use the parking meter revenue was the kind of a substitute for that. Do you remember that?

Alderman Clemons

That's correct. So I believe it was the BIDA Committee I think it was called or Business Improvement District something. Yes so the idea was to study that to see if there would be an overlay tax on the downtown area which would be paid by the property owners in the district. That idea was not popular for a number of reasons. So an alternative plan came to say instead of charging the property owner, we'll charge the consumer who comes downtown. In turn, their money that they put into the parking meter they will see a return on investment through the Downtown Improvement Committee and the different things that committee can fund. So rather than do it on the property owner, it was given to the consumer instead via parking meters and the rest is where we're at today.

Chairman Dowd

I remember some of that conversation. There was a problem of who is going to collect? What happens if somebody doesn't pay? It was an administrative nightmare. This is much simpler.

Alderman Jette

May I continue?

Chairman Dowd

Sure.

Alderman Jette

So the difference is that instead of the property owners and because the property owners would pass them on to the tenants by charging them more rent I assume, but the downtown business people would be paying for this as opposed to the consumers or the taxpayers. So currently, we have the Downtown Improvement Committee. We also have Great American Downtown. I think the Great American Downtown is also funded largely by the taxpayers is it not?

Chairman Dowd

Partially. Not thoroughly but partially yes. It has been some monies given to GAD every year in the budget but it's an entirely different organization, entirely different goals. Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Yeah, so just a little bit of context on that. So like this year, the Budget Committee decided that there was \$100,000, I believe, that was allocated to the Downtown Improvement Committee. The Budget Committee this year took \$50,000 of that and allocated it to Great American Downtown and put the rest back to the taxpayers actually. So there has been times when the City does fund Great American Downtown. It might be \$50,000 every year, I think.

Chairman Dowd

It was funded recently because of COVID.

Alderman Clemons

Right and there are times as well when the Downtown Improvement Committee independent of the Budget Committee here will fund different things that Great American Downtown is organizing such as the Farmer's Market. There were some concerts in the past that they would put money towards. So the two groups worked together but Great American Downtown is funded primarily and mostly by the private sector. Its role is different than the Downtown Improvement Committee in the sense that they work, again, with the private sector to do different events and bring people downtown. Whereas the Downtown Improvement Committee is really focused on making sure that we have vibrancy, that the downtown is clean, they do the lights, things like that. If there's money, they'll fund things on occasion like a concert here or there or contribute to the Farmer's Market that type of thing.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up?

Alderman Jette

Please. So I asked Jill Stansfield, the Parking Manager, if we took \$100,000 from parking operations how would that affect them? She said for similar to what you said for 2021 the calendar year, the revenue for last year she said was \$632,663.87. A little more than what you said but a similar number. The expenses were \$326,812.45. So that gives a difference of \$305,851. So she said that they could afford the \$100,000 but as I understand it, parking operations, that revenue is the meters, the rental fees, and that type of thing. The expenses are – I'm not sure what the – I guess it's the people who manage the parking garages and that type of thing. Also part of parking is parking enforcement which is when people get a ticket I think and they pay that ticket. That's the parking enforcement revenue which was \$348,000.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette, I think I can clarify this. If this legislation passes, it's no longer part of the parking revenues whatsoever.

Alderman Clemons

That's not entirely true. It is an offset but...

Chairman Dowd

I thought it was going to be a separate line item in the budget?

Alderman Clemons

It is, and it always has been, and it will continue to be. It's just that it's a flat amount now. Every year it's a flat amount.

Chairman Dowd

Right but it's not necessarily going to be subtracted from parking revenues?

Alderman Clemons

Correct.

Chairman Dowd

So the parking revenues will all go to the parking group.

Alderman Clemons

Mr. Chairman, can I clarify that?

Chairman Dowd

Sure.



Alderman Clemons

So it has never truly been from the parking revenue. It's always been a calculation of sorts that comes from property taxes. So it's an offset right. So you figure you have \$100,000 in parking revenue that has to go towards paving, or street maintenance, things like that and you have \$100,000 in property taxes over here. Basically, we do an accounting swap and move them from one to the other. It's been done for years, and years, and years because that's what State Law makes us do. It will still be that swap, it's just that it's going to be \$100,000 even every year.

Chairman Dowd

So if I understand at least talking to Mr. Griffin if this passes, the \$100,000 will be in the budget.

Alderman Clemons

Correct.

Chairman Dowd

For the Downtown Improvements Committee.

Alderman Clemons

Correct.

Chairman Dowd

And it makes no difference how much the parking revenues is.

Alderman Clemons

That's correct and truly it never has.

Chairman Dowd

So they're not directly related anymore. That subtraction to get the \$100,000 is no longer.

Alderman Clemons

Right.

Alderman Jette

So as I read the ordinance it says and this is what we're being asked to pass, starting with the Fiscal Year 2024 budget, an amount equivalent to the sum of parking revenue of \$100,000 shall be appropriated annually in the budget to be used for the purpose of improving the downtown -1 zoning district. Sounds to me like it says it's coming from parking revenue doesn't it?

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. No, it's an equivalent sum of money. So in other words, what that means is that the way that it was written before was that whatever over \$728,000 - let's say it was \$100,000, so you had \$828,000 right. Then \$100,000 of that equivalent sum of money would be appropriate to the Downtown Improvement Committee. It's not different now. It's just that instead of it being contingent upon whatever is over that amount, it's just \$100,000. So it never really truly was parking money. It was always an equivalent sum of money that was substituted one for the other. So that is still going to be the case. It's just that it's going to be flat amount every year.

Chairman Dowd

But what we're saying the ordinance is regardless of what the parking revenues are, \$100,000 goes to the Downtown Improvement Committee.

Alderman Clemons

Correct.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

If I could ask one more question? So I think that maybe not all of the other departments but I think most of other departments every year they come up with a budget and they say this is the amount of money we need. The Mayor either agrees with them or doesn't agree and he presents a budget to us. We on the Budget Review Committee go through it, question it, and then we make a recommendation to the full Board and the full Board acts accordingly. But here instead, we're saying – we're not asking the Downtown Improvement Committee to come to us with a budget and saying this is what we want to do and this is how much it's going to cost and then we either agree with them or don't agree with them. What we're doing here is we're saying okay you're going to have \$100,000 and they've always been frugal. I don't think they've ever used the money in a bad way but we're saying to them here's the \$100,000 so they spend it however they think is appropriate. It seems like – and I'm just thinking out loud with all you who are more experienced with budgets than I am but how do we justify doing it that way for this committee as opposed to all the other departments?

Chairman Dowd

A bunch of people want to answer the question. I'm going to let President Wilshire as President of the Board answer it.

Alderman Wilshire

Thank you. We do the same thing Alderman Jette with review and comment money. We do the same thing with the Nashua Senior Activity Center. We give them \$25,000 a year and say here you go. We don't question them. We don't bring them in and have them you know - we know it's going to a good purpose. We know they're going to use it for their property to maintain things. The same concept here with this.

Chairman Dowd

They're not a City department. We have no control over them.

Alderman Clemons

No.

Chairman Dowd

They're not a City department. I don't care. What are you going to say Ben?

Alderman Clemons

Can I add something?

Chairman Dowd

You can amplify.

Alderman Clemons

What I want to say is actually all of the money that is spent by the Downtown Improvement Committee is either expended

by the Mayor or his agent. It is subject to the laws of this City, the Ordinances of this City, and if it's over \$25,000, it comes before the Finance Committee and get approved there. So there is not a case where any of that money is not being expended by someone in the City. If the Committee votes and says we want to spend the money on this, the Mayor has to agree and in some cases depending on how much it is, the Finance Committee has to agree.

Chairman Dowd

The question that Alderman Jette was getting to is they don't come to us and provide us a budget and we approve what they're going to spend it on. No, they're not a City department but you're right. It does go through spending authority regulation. You all set Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Yes, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. So I guess I'm really just parsing language here but in the last exchange, it did make me re-read the ordinance. So if we look at the \$100,000 when you first read it, you think that we're paying for it out of parking revenue. That's not really the case when I re-read it based on that last conversation. In essence, we're portioning the money. It's coming out of tax revenue. It's in the City budget FY2024, you're not going to see an expense line in the parking department less the \$100,000 to Downtown Improvement. You're nodding. Does that mean I'm right or you are going to see it?

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Clemons do you want to answer that?

Alderman Clemons

That's correct. You're not going to see it come from there because it's not parking meter revenue. It is an offset. The theory behind that is you spend that money. Basically, we spend enough property tax money on things like paving every year where instead of spending \$100,000 extra on paving, we'll take that from the parking meter revenue and spend it and replace that money. So we spend millions of dollars on paving on that kind of project. So what happens is traditionally every year whenever we would take that \$100,000 from property tax revenue to whatever allocation of the paving there was right say for example \$1 million. \$100,000 or whatever that sum of money was would go from parking meter revenue over to paving. So it's an accounting mechanism. Unfortunately is required us to do that because of State law. So it's basically a calculation that we take and then we say okay we're going to swap out sums of money.

Chairman Dowd

Another way to look at this is the vast amount – I won't say all – but the vast amount of parking revenue is generated because the merchants have spent money forming their businesses and their customers are paying for this. So this is to help attract the downtown so they get more customers which increases the amount of parking. Alderman Klee?

Alderman Klee

Thank you Mr. Chairman. A couple of things. Adding to what Alderman Clemons had said. Yes, I think State law says that you can't write a check out of a revenue fund. So if I'm not mistaken, that's why we did this swap. It's something...

Alderman Clemons

It has to do with you can't spend meter money on some of the things that the Downtown Improvement Committee...

Alderman Klee

...will be doing, right but that's a State law.

The other thing to add about GAD is that they are a 501c unlike Downtown Improvement which is a City committee that's created for that. The other thing about the budget that I wanted to comment on, I know that annually that they spend their money on certain things such as the lights and so on. If someone said they had to budget but the other thing is they also don't know what might come up? There could be a special celebration that the City suddenly decides they want to do and Downtown Improvement helps with that. Downtown Improvement helped fund some of the studies for the Performing Arts Center. So these are things that you don't necessarily budget for because you don't know if they're going to come down and that's kind of one of the things that makes them a little different than a department per se. I just wanted to add that.

One of the questions that I have if I'm not mistaken, Miss Stansfield's very understaffed, department is also paid out of the meters and so on so that's part of what's doing that. The study that they're doing for the parking garages comes out of the meter monies and so on. Am I correct with that?

Alderman Clemons

Yes.

Alderman Klee

So that's why part of the reason why we'd also said the \$728,000 and I think you had said it was historical. We're now using that money also to cover that department so that doesn't come out of taxes. It's supposed to be a zero sum game type of thing if I'm not mistaken.

Alderman Dowd

Any more questions before we take a vote? Seeing none.

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

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

Yea: Alderman Wilshire, Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Kelly, Alderman Jette, Alderman Caron, Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd	7
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Nay:	0
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#### **MOTION CARRIED**

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

I just want to thank everybody who's here and everybody on the Committee for their patience and for their vote in favor tonight. I'm sure that the downtown merchants and I know the Downtown Improvement Committee thanks you for that and your support and hopefully we will continue to do great things in the future. So thank you all.

Chairman Dowd

Any other comments? I just want to say I've lived here a few years and over the years the way the downtown was taken care of was like a sinus wave. Since the Downtown Improvement Committee has had it, it's pretty level and very nice so congratulations to them. You're doing a great job. Any further comments?

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Klee?

Alderman Klee

Thank you. I could have made this comment prior but I want to thank Miss Blaisdell for her hard work. I know she owns her own business downtown but she also works very tirelessly on the Downtown Improvement Committee as well as some of the other City committees, especially with the PAC and so on. So thank you so much for all you do and all your volunteers too. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

As I was looking into this for this meeting and part of my comments really aren't anything to do with the Downtown Improvement Committee but I don't want us to lose sight of the fact that when you look at the numbers as I was trying to explain earlier, the money we're getting from parking from meter revenue and parking enforcement - the revenue is not meeting the expenses of parking operations and parking enforcement. Vice Clerk O'Brien as he pointed out earlier, we've got some big expenses coming up and something that he mentioned earlier about how parking enforcement and we're not enforcing the parking regulations as parking ordinances right now as much as we should because of lack of staff. They really need to hire more staff which is going to cost more money. We're becoming aware of the deterioration of the parking garages. We're doing a study and we're going to have to spend quite a bit of money bringing them up and so...

Alderman Clemons

Where's the parking study?

Alderwoman Kelly

I don't think it exists.

Alderman Jette

I just want to bring up the fact that the parking is going to cost a lot more money than it has been and that money is going to come out of if we spend what we should, the argument that you've got to take care of what you have. It's less expensive to maintain what you have rather than rebuilding what you've lost. So these are among the many problems the Budget Review Committee will be dealing with as we go along.

Chairman Dowd

So as we discussed the FY24 budget which will be coming sooner rather than later and which this is related to as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Performing Arts Center is opening. If we have 750 people there for every performance, all those people have to pay for parking. So parking revenue should go up because you normally don't have that many people downtown on nights and weekends. If things go well, parking revenue should increase.

Alderman Jette

Could I follow up?

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

In order to make that happen, we're going to have to change the parking ordinance because the fees for parking end at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Dowd

Not in the garage though do they?

Alderman Klee

Yes.

Chairman Dowd

Yeah, we can change the ordinance.

Alderman Jette

Right. So we ought to do something about that.

Alderman O'Brien

It's already been done. Let me caution you. I don't want to let the cat out of the bag but when the parking study gets released, I'll warn you. It's everything you wanted to know about parking that were afraid to ask. Okay. Now you bring up several different subjects. How can you get somebody to be - this ain't the era of the Beatles with Lovely Rita the Meter Maid you know. They can make more money at McDonald's. It's a competition for that particular labor force at this time and then looking. Nashua's got a pretty good bang for the buck for what we're charging right now. So all this will be discussed. It will be before your perusal before anything becomes activated. I'm kind of like in agreement with Director Cummings. Instead of letting it out piecemeal and let the argument ensue, I think the smart way is to deliver the product at once, allow it to be properly vetted by this Board, and believe me you're going to be very busy. This is going to be several meetings within the Infrastructure and everything else because it's a complex issue. It's a lot of moving targets with it. So be careful what you wish for but it is coming.

Chairman Dowd

Any other Aldermanic comments? Seeing none Alderman O'Brien your favorite Motion?

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Yea: Alderman Wilshire, Alderman Sullivan, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette,  
Alderman Caron, Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd 7

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 7:53 p.m.

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