A regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held Tuesday, May 26, 2020, at 7:30 p.m. via teleconference.

President Lori Wilshire presided; City Clerk Susan Lovering recorded.

Prayer was offered by City Clerk Susan Lovering; Alderman David C. Tencza led in the Pledge to the Flag.

President Wilshire

As President of the Board of Aldermen, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor’s Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

   We are utilizing WebEx through the City’s IT Department for this electronic meeting. All members of the Board of Aldermen have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen in to this meeting through dialing the following number 978-990-5298 and using the password 273974. The Public may also view this meeting on Comcast Channel 16.

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

   We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, through public postings. Instructions have also been provided on the City of Nashua’s website at www.nashuanh.gov and publicly noticed at City Hall and at the Public Health Department.

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:

   If anybody has a problem accessing the meeting via phone or Channel 16, please call 603-821-2049 and they will help you connect.

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

   In the event the public is unable to access the meeting via the methods mentioned above, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let’s start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-To-Know Law.

Alderman Brandon Michael Laws was recorded absent.

Mayor James W. Donchess, Corporation Counsel Steven A. Bolton, and Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director were also in attendance via teleconference.

Alderman O’Brien
I am present and I can hear, I am alone and I am practicing social distancing.

Alderman Klee
I am here, I am alone at the moment, I am practicing distancing, my husband and greyhounds are in the house and can always make an appearance. Thank you.

Alderwoman Kelly
Good evening, I am here, I can hear everyone. I am alone and I am practicing social distancing.

Alderman Dowd
Yes, I can hear everyone and I am by myself, practicing social distancing in accordance with the Governor’s Order.

Alderman Clemons
Yes, I am here, this evening I am staying at home due to the Governor’s orders and I am participating via cell phone because I had trouble connecting through WebEx. I am by myself, thank you.

Alderman Lopez
Yes, I am here, I am alone, I am social distancing and I can see and hear everything well, the usual.

Alderman Tencza
I am present, I can hear everybody and I am alone.

Alderwoman Lu
Yes, I am here, I am alone, I am practicing social distancing.

Alderman Jette
I am here, I am alone in the room, I can hear everyone and I am staying home in accordance with the Orders.

Alderman Schmidt
I am present, I can hear everyone and the only thing with me is a parrot, otherwise I am alone.
Alderman Cleaver

I am here and I am practicing social distancing according to the Governor’s Orders and I am alone.

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

I am present, I am alone and I am practicing social distancing and I can hear you.

Alderman Wilshire

I am here, I am practicing social distancing, I can hear and I am alone.

Alderman Caron

Can anyone hear me?

President Wilshire

Alderman Caron?

Alderman Caron

I am here, I am sorry I could not get on-line, but I am here, I am alone and I can hear everyone, thank you.

Susan Lovering, City Clerk

President Wilshire, you have 14 in attendance.

President Wilshire

Thank you. Mayor Donchess, are you with us this evening?

Mayor Donchess

I am Madam President.

President Wilshire

Do you wish to address the Board?

REMARKS BY THE MAYOR

Mayor Donchess

Yes, I would, thank you very much. Of course there are a few things that I wanted to talk to you about tonight, Madam President. First of all, COVID-19 — currently Nashua has, I thought I’d give you a very brief update — about 386 cases, positive cases as of this morning. Many of those people have recovered; unfortunately 12 people from Nashua have died. This leaves us 75 active cases. Our public health nurses are, of course, working with those patients as well as doing to the contact tracing which we have talked about before. The public health nurses identify all of the people who have contact with a positive patient and then counsel, instruct those contacts as to how to proceed in terms of quarantining themselves and making sure that they do not spread the virus or make sure that they determine that they don’t have the virus before they go out into the public or encounter any other people.
We continue to see more cases every day, although that number has slowed down. New Hampshire seems to be doing pretty well. But I have to say that it has been a big thing that we've done together, Madam President, and all of us have contributed. Of course on the front lines are our public health nurses and those who are engaged directly with fighting the virus. You have seen that our Public Health Department along with the State of New Hampshire has been testing people regularly at various clinics around the City. But also, all of the people who have contributed to making sure that we contain the virus as much as we possibly can. That, of course, includes the Board of Aldermen, you’ve been as (audio cuts out) as you could be as far as appropriating money to make sure that we can keep people at City Hall safe and all of our employees who are out with public contact, making sure they are fully protected or at least to the maximum we can provide.

Also you, of course, helped with the mask ordinance and other steps that we have taken. So as we look back on this Madam President, I believe we will agree and realize that we have saved lives and we will look back and be proud of our community for everything that we did by working together.

Now we are not out of the woods yet, though, we are beginning the re-opening of the economy. Economic Development Director Cummings has worked very hard as have many staff people with our downtown business community in terms of enabling the outdoor seating in the one travel lane on each side of the street as well as on the sidewalks. So far that seems to have gone very well; people are very pleased and certainly the number of diners has increased substantially over what it would have been had the Board of Aldermen not authorized that step at the last meeting. So I want to thank you all very much; but we still need to be cautious because as people begin to come out more and they gather together, they need to be careful. They need to wear masks and make sure that we continue to limit the spread of the disease. Our Public Health Department and others warn that as the economy gradually opens, there could be a spike in cases, which needs to be dealt with through, again the contact tracing and cautious steps in terms of full opening.

But we here in Nashua, and I am sure at the State Level, they are evaluating all of the evidence, the facts, the scientific information, the opinions of the medical experts in deciding how to proceed and at what pace to undertake the return to some form or normal; although we know never be fully, probably not for a long time, exactly as we were before. So I want to say, Madam President, that the COVID-19 effort is going very, very well. And I know you are all interested too, I wanted to lead off with that.

I wanted to mention, Madam President, that Dottie Oliver, who you probably knew, you might have seen the obituary, she passed away recently. Although she moved to Durham and has not lived in Nashua for quite some time, she was a very, very significant Nashuan. The very for that was that in addition to many other things that she did, she found the Adult Learning Center and was the driving force behind getting that going and was the Director for the first dozen or so years. In those days, they did not have initially a home and the Crowley Street School, which is where they are now and I think Alderman Dowd, I am sure he is familiar with that school and Alderman Dowd may have actually gone there, I forget what Elementary School you went to. But that school had closed, so the City as a result of the very effective and important efforts of Dottie Oliver, transferred the building to the Adult Learning Center for $1.00. Now since those days, “they” the Adult Learning Center, has made considerable improvements, they upgraded everything. They have a done a fantastic job in adult education, with all of the programs they run. Mary Jordan exceed Dottie and was a long-time Director and now we have Carol Baldwin and she also has done a very good job. So Dottie is the first in a line of Directors of that institution that have done very important work for Nashua and for any adults, particularly those who need education and those who need a hand at the beginning of their careers.

I thought also, Madam President, I think I need to mention one item that is on the Agenda for the meeting and that is contract for firefighters. Now we all, of course, we all like the firefighters, we all respect the firefighters, but I have to be straight-forward and say that I don’t believe that the City can undertake a contract like this at this time in the midst of what we anticipate will be significant economic issue. Now I know that many people support the firefighters as I do. I have closed contracts with them certainly in the past and have been glad to do so. But looking at what we have been presented with, the average is a 4% raise, if you list at the costing sheet for 4 years compounded 17%. That would be in place by July 1, 2022 or a little over two years. Now the problem of course is that we don’t know what we are facing economically.
We have, right now, we have more than 8,000 people who filed unemployment claims in Nashua. Unemployment claims and they are out of work. Those are just people who are working for New Hampshire businesses. The people who are out of work who had been working in Massachusetts are not included in those numbers, so conservatively we can say that right this second there are 10,000 people out of work right in our community.

Now the full economic effects of that have not been felt yet, because the Federal Government in spending what trillions of dollars is providing, one thing they are trying to do, one thing that is a good thing that they are trying to do is provide $600.00 per person, per week for all the unemployed people. But that ends soon. That ends in July. We don’t know what we are facing down the road from that. Many cities around New Hampshire actually and around the country are actually laying off and furloughing employees. We have been lucky to avoid that so far. But we need to contain costs and be cautious as we go into the next year and years that follow. All the people, all the economic experts here in New Hampshire, those who understand the New Hampshire Property Tax, predict that the major impact will not be now, or even especially in the first part of Fiscal ’21 but will be in the year further on into the year and Fiscal ’22 and ’23. If we build non-sustainable budgets, that drive a Department up basically 17% in two years, I just don’t think that’s, I know that we cannot sustain that and that we cannot afford the kind of tax increases that would result.

We know that others will be looking for the same kind of contract if it is granted to one employee organization. And again, Madam President, I mean I know that we as a group, I know the Board of Aldermen have many personal friends that are firefighters. We have had a good relationship with them over the years. I don’t like having to say this, but I believe it is my responsibility to the entire community to do so. We cannot build non-sustainable budgets that we just can't support in the years to come. So I don't want to elaborate further, but I wanted to be forthright, put it on the table right at the beginning and let you know what I believe the picture facing the City is. I know that if we work together, if we continue to right the virus, if we support the business community as we have been doing, if we help the small businesses recover, maybe we won’t see — hopefully, we pray we won’t see a big decline in property values or that most people will get back to work quickly and the strong economy that we had some months ago, pre-COVID19 will return. But we don’t and I am confident that it will, but we don’t know when. It might take a while. So I want to be optimistic but I think we need to realistic and cautious. In any event, Madam President, that’s what I have for you and I would be, of course, willing to answer any questions if anybody has any.

President Wilshire


RESPONSE TO REMARKS OF THE MAYOR - None

RECOGNITION PERIOD - None

READING MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the minutes of the Board of Aldermen meetings of May 12, 2020 and May 20, 2020 accepted, placed on file, and the reading suspended.

COMMUNICATIONS REQUIRING ONLY PROCEDURAL ACTIONS AND WRITTEN REPORTS FROM LIAISONS

From: Laurie Ortolano
Re: Assessing Concerns and the Hiring of a Chief

From: W.R. Sutton
Re: Budget
From: Robert Guzas
Re: PAC project

From: Laura Colquhoun
Re: Need to put a hold on the Art Center

From: Laurie Ortolano
Re: Pandemic muzzling of the public

From: Laurie Ortolano
Re: Misapplied Mason Rules are used against the public

From: Jim Tullis
Re: Outside renovations of the Arts Center

From: Donald C. Davidson, Board of Fire Commissioners
Re: Board of Fire Commissioners Approval of the IAFF Local 789 CBA

From: Sue Newman
Re: Ordinance O-20-018

From: Kim Kleiner, Administrative Services Director
Re: Administrative Services Division/Nashua School District – Response to Budget Review Questions – Grant Writer

From: Dave Winchester
Re: Proposal for mandatory face masks

From: Adam A. Marcoux, President, Nashua Teachers' Union
Re: Approve the Board of Education’s Request for a 2.25% increase in the FY2021 Budget

From: Joshua Twohig
Re: Mask Mandate

From: Linda McGhee, Deputy Planning Manager
Re: Referral from the Board of Aldermen on proposed R-20-028, authorizing the City of Nashua to enter a Master Development Agreement with Lansing Melbourne Group, LLC.

From: Linda McGhee, Deputy Planning Manager
Re: Referral from the Board of Aldermen on proposed R-20-033, authorizing the Mayor to execute a confirmatory deed to Pennichuck Water Works

From: Tammy Cates
Re: AGAINST mandatory mask requirement

From: Marcy Norse
Re: Masks
From: Matt Sexton  
Re: Face masks

**There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the communications and placed them on file.**

President Wilshire

Alderman Klee?

Alderman Klee

Thank you very much. Madam President, there is one communication there for Mrs. Laurie Ortolano relative to the pandemic muzzling. I’d like to either have it be resubmitted with signature from the sender or to make note that Mrs. Ortolano said that she, in fact, was the author of the blog that she referenced.

President Wilshire

OK, well I move to accept all communications and place them on file except for that one.

Alderman Klee

Thank you very much, I appreciate that.

President Wilshire

You’re welcome.

PERIOD FOR PUBLIC COMMENT RELATIVE TO ITEMS EXPECTED TO BE ACTED UPON THIS EVENING - None

The public has access to contemporaneously listen in to this meeting through dialing the following number 978-990-5298 and using the password 273974. The Public may also view this meeting on Comcast Channel 16.

If anybody has a problem accessing the meeting via phone or Channel 16, please call 603-821-2049 and they will help you connect.

You may also submit your comments via e-mail which will be accepted and placed on file with the minutes of the meeting. Please e-mail your comments to: BOA@nashuanh.gov

President Wilshire

Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

So as I understand it, the correspondence that was referred to by Alderman Klee, you were asking if there was no objection that all of that list of correspondence that you read would be accepted and placed on file and the reading waived. Alderman Klee objected so there’s an objection, so if I could ask Attorney Bolton, does that mean that the proper step now is to vote on whether or not to accept that communication?
Attorney Bolton

The way I recall what occurred, the Clerk read all of the communications and before the President did anything, Alderman Klee raised some concerns about one of those communications. The President indicated that she would exclude that from the ones she would accept and place on file. She has indicated that all of the others, unless there’s an objection, would be accepted and placed on file. I think the appropriate thing at this point in time, is that if anyone has objections to any of the other communications they be raised. If not, there is one communication that is still unaddressed. So people could, any member of the Board could move that be accepted, could move that anything else be done with it, it could be referred to a Committee. It could be responded to in an appropriate way. But before you now is the President’s indication that she will accept and place on file all of the other communications. So the most immediate thing facing you is whether anyone objects to any of those communications.

Alderman Jette

I have no objection to any of the others. I thought you had said if there was no objection, they would all be accepted, except the one referenced to by Alderman Klee. So I guess I would like to make a motion that that communication also be accepted and placed on file and the reading waived.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN JETTE TO ACCEPT MRS. ORTOLANO’S COMMUNICATION BE ACCEPTED AND PLACED ON FILE WITH THE READING WAIVED

ON THE QUESTION

President Wilshire

Further discussion on that Motion? Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam President. My objection to this particular is that it very specifically states, please include this Blog, and goes on to print the Blog that was there. I believe that the Blog was, in fact, written by Mrs. Ortolano, I asked her, the comment to the effect that it was. However, this is going into the public record. If the public were to pick this up, they could it was nothing more than a Nashua Telegraph article, rather than someone’s personal opinion, the person that in fact is asking for it to be there. I just want to make sure that this communication when it goes in, anybody reading it now or in the future, understands that this was, in fact, written by Mrs. Ortolano. It is not signed on the bottom as if it is hers. It is nowhere said “this is my Blog” and this is why I object to it. I have no problem, once she indicates that this is her Blog for the Public Record to have it put into the file.

President Wilshire

Do you have anything further Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

So if she admitted that it was hers, can’t we just note that it was from her? I mean this is just a communication from a person in the public it doesn’t mean that anything in it is accurate or inaccurate or true or untrue. The public has a right to communicate. I just don’t understand why we would exclude that. But I would, I see you have your hand up so I'll wait and hear what you've got to say.
Alderman Klee

Thank you very much and I don’t disagree with you Alderman Jette. The public has the right to put into the public record any of their opinions and so on. I just want it to be noted that the opinion of the Blog is, in fact, that of Mrs. Ortolano and that it was not a third party. It wasn’t something perhaps that was written by the Nashua Telegraph or the Manchester Union or any other, even a third-party Blog. I very specifically asked her who is the author of this. Her comment to me, in an e-mail, was you know that it’s me. I did not know that it was her and if it were her, I don’t understand why she didn’t specifically state, “I would like to have my Blog put into the public record”. And that’s my objection and I apologize.

President Wilshire

Alderman Lopez and then Alderman Schmidt.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah, I just wanted to double check with Attorney Bolton’s opinion on two different questions. The first is if we do refuse to accept the communication can we stipulate what goes in there, because it seems like this is just Mrs. Ortolano’s comment so it should just be accepted as coming from her, regardless of its voracity. But then the second thing is if we did either refer this to Committee or hold it until the next meeting to allow her the chance to elaborate on it, it is still already in tonight’s Agenda, it would still be included as part of that so as an end result she just has her comment (inaudible)?

Attorney Bolton

I think Alderman Lopez is correct in everything he said.

Alderman Lopez

Can somebody make a note of that?

Alderman Schmidt

Thank you, Madam President. Whenever somebody writes to me, I always write back. If they have not included their name and address, I think that’s essential only because in the days before the pandemic we had people come to speak with us who had to give us their name and their address. Very simply I don’t think we should accept anything that comes to us unless they have identified who they are and where they live. It is just simple rules that we have followed since I began. I don’t care if it gets included this time or not, it’s pretty clear that it is hers, she sent it to us. I don’t have a problem with it but I really think that we should vet the e-mails that come to us to be assured that they are from someone in our City. Thank you.

Alderman Kelly

I didn’t have my hand up if that’s what you thought.

President Wilshire

Oh I thought you did, I’m sorry. Alderwoman Lu.
Alderwoman Lu

Thank you, Madam Chairman, the way it looks to me is that a resident in Nashua who either wrote or saw something that they feel that they would like to come to our meeting and read, they feel that it is relevant. I don’t know that is germane to our decision whether it was her idea or someone she knows. She would like to have read it before us and I think that’s all that matters.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam President, I am willing to remove my objection as long as we make note in the record that this Blog was, in fact, written by Mrs. Ortolano.

President Wilshire

Well it’s going to be in the minutes now because you’ve discussed it.

Alderman Klee

Fine by me, thank you very much.

Alderman Dowd

I assume that there’s not a link, that it is something that is just written in the letter. Ok because if there were a link, I would have an objection to it because then we can’t control where the link would take public to. I have no problem with accepting the communication as long it is indicated that the comments are from the sender.

President Wilshire

OK, so the Motion now, Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Well in view of the fact that Alderman Klee has withdrawn her objection, if I withdraw my motion, will it not just be accepted and placed on file without objection?

President Wilshire

No, your motion is still in order because we already didn’t accept it. So your motion would be in order. The question is to accept the communication, place it on file and suspend the reading.

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


Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED
COMMUNICATIONS REQUIRING FINAL APPROVAL

From:  Tim Cummings, Director of Economic Development
Re:  Contract Award for Professional Engineering Services related to the Nashua Downtown Riverfront Implementation Project to Hayner/Swanson, Inc.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN HARRIOTT-GATHRIGHT TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES RELATED TO THE NASHUA DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT TO HAYNER/SWANSON, INC. IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $24,000 BY ROLL CALL

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


Nay:  0

MOTION CARRIED

From:  Mayor Jim Donchess
Re:  Contract for Two Year External Audit Contract with Melanson Heath

MOTION BY ALDERMAN KLEE TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR TWO YEAR EXTERNAL AUDIT CONTRACT WITH MELANSON HEATH (YEAR ONE COST IS $122,500 FOR FY2020 AND $125,000 FOR FY2021 BY ROLL CALL

ON THE QUESTION

President Wilshire

Discussion on that Motion? Alderwoman Lu?

Alderwoman Lu

Thank you. I am just uncertain, what is an external audit?

President Wilshire

It is done by an outside firm, in other words, it is not internally doing, so it is an outside firm coming in to do that audit.

Alderwoman Lu

Is this something that we do every year.

President Wilshire

Yes.

Alderwoman Lu

Thank you.
President Wilshire

You’re welcome. Any further discussion? Seeing, none, would the Clerk please take the roll?

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


Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

PETITIONS - None

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

The following Appointments by the Mayor were read into the record:

Energy and Aggregation Committee

Robert Blaisdell (New Member Appointment) Term to Expire: May 31, 2023
24 Railroad Square
Nashua, NH 03064-2278

Lawrence Lutton (New Member Appointment) Term to Expire: May 31, 2023
47 Concord Street
Nashua, NH 03064

There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the Appointments by the Mayor as read and referred them to the Personnel/Administrative Affairs Committee.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Human Affairs Committee................................................................. 05/11/2020

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the May 11, 2020 Human Affairs Committee accepted and placed on file.

Budget Review Committee.............................................................. 05/13/2020

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the May 13, 2020 Budget Review Committee accepted and placed on file.

Budget Review Committee.............................................................. 05/19/2020

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the May 19, 2020 Budget Review Committee accepted and placed on file.

CONFIRMATION OF MAYOR’S APPOINTMENTS – None
UNFINISHED BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-20-037

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O’Brien, Sr.
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Skip Cleaver

AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF NASHUA TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE SOUHEGAN VALLEY TRANSPORTATION COLLABORATIVE FOR TRANSIT SERVICES

Given its second reading;

MOTION BY ALDERWOMAN KELLY FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-20-037 BY ROLL CALL

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

Yea: Alderman O’Brien, Alderman Klee, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Dowd,
Alderman Caron, Alderman Clemons, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Tencza,
Alderwoman Lu, Alderman Jette, Alderman Schmidt,
Alderman Cleaver, Alderwoman Harriott-Gathright, Alderman Wilshire 14

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Resolution R-20-037 declared duly adopted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – ORDINANCES

O-20-017

Endorsers: Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly

AUTHORIZING FREE PARKING AT METERS AND PAY STATION SPACES THROUGH NOVEMBER 15, 2020
(tabled at May 21, 2020 BOA mtg)

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-20-039

Endorser: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O’Brien, Sr.
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza
Alderman Richard A. Dowd

AUTHORIZING PENNICHUCK CORPORATION AND PENNICHUCK WATER WORKS, INC. TO ISSUE TAXABLE BONDS OF UP TO $75,000,000

Given its first reading; assigned to the BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE by President Wilshire
R-20-040
Endorser: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Jan Schmidt

AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY TREASURER TO BORROW FROM THE NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND AN ADDITIONAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED TWO MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS ($2,500,000) FOR PUMP STATION UPGRADES

Given its first reading;

MOTION BY ALDERMAN DOWD TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF O-20-040 BY ROLL CALL, ASSIGN IT TO THE BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE AND THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS AND THAT A PUBLIC HEARING BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN BE SCHEDULE FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020, AT 7:00 P.M. VIA WEBEX

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


Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

R-20-041
Endorser: Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman Skip Cleaver
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman Skip Cleaver

APPROVING THE COST ITEMS OF A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE MAYOR AND THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE AND LOCAL #789, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS FROM JULY 1, 2019 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2023 AND AUTHORIZING A RELATED TRANSFER AND SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION

Given its first reading;

MOTION BY ALDERMAN TENCZA TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF O-20-041 BY ROLL CALL, ASSIGN IT TO THE BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE AND THAT A PUBLIC HEARING BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN BE SCHEDULE FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020, AT 7:00 P.M. VIA WEBEX

ON THE QUESTION

Attorney Bolton

Madam President, before we get there, I think you should inquire of Alderman O’Brien if he really means to be a sponsor of this? I think that might have been inadvertent.
Alderman O’Brien

No there’s other people that who do have some affiliation with other people that are employed by the City, but the thing is I thought I could (inaudible) I cannot vote on it, and I recuse myself of a vote, but I can definitely sponsor something. I was under that impression or can you explain to me the difference between sponsorship and actually voting in favor of something?

Attorney Bolton

I think, Alderman O’Brien, if you have a conflict, you ought to recuse yourself from any involvement in the measure including sponsorship and including voting and advocating for.

Alderman O’Brien

Well. let us the record clear so that my constituents who have duly elected me completely understand what the problem is. My son works for the Fire Department. He is over the age of 18, he is emancipated, he does not live with me. And as we all know in some families, some people get along, some people don’t But in this case, my son has no financial (inaudible) until when I die and I hope he doesn’t kill me, but the thing is I think this is taking great affect to my constituents who do support me and expect me to do the right thing and harboring my ability my ability to vote and speak for my constituents with this. I think it is unduly, particularly with other members with some ties to different functions. I could see it, I always recuse myself, my wife who was a para who worked for the School Department as much as the former President of our Board, Brian McCarthy. Both of us recused ourselves, because it was a financial impact. But having one’s son just as a job, there’s no financial ties and I think the flavor of that Ordinance that keeps me from doing this I am not in favor. So under protest, I will take the advice of counsel and I will recuse myself with deep regret and apologies to my constituents, thank you.

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

Yea: Alderman Klee, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Dowd,
     Alderman Caron, Alderman Clemons, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Tencza,
     Alderwoman Lu, Alderman Jette, Alderman Schmidt,
     Alderman Cleaver, Alderwoman Harriott-Gathright, Alderman Wilshire  13

Nay: 0

Ms. Lovering

You have 13 yeas and one abstention (Alderman O’Brien).

MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES

There being no objection, President Wilshire suspended the rules to allow for the first reading of an Ordinance received after the agenda was prepared.

O-20-019

Endorser: Alderwoman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO PERMITS FOR FIREWORKS DISPLAYS

Given its first reading

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O’BRIEN TO SUSPEND THE RULES FOR A SECOND READING OF O-20-019
ROLL CALL
ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Klee

Madam President, I just want to make sure I have this. Yes this is the Ordinance relative to Bishop Guertin displaying fireworks during their celebration of their drive-through diploma. Just for the public I just wanted to make sure that they understand what this is, in fact, doing and that is actually a short, I think it is non-commercial type of fireworks and Atlas will be setting those off for what the Fire Marshall...

President Wilshire

I'll get to that if we can suspend the rules.

Alderman Klee

I'm sorry, I forgot. My apologies, yes.

President Wilshire

No need to apologize. Anyone else? The Motion is to suspend the rules to allow for a second reading. Would the Clerk call the roll?

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


Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Ordinance O-20-019 was given its second reading;

O-20-019

Endorser: Alderwoman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO PERMITS FOR FIREWORKS DISPLAYS

Given its second reading

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF O-20-019 BY ROLL CALL

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman O'Brien

And if I could speak to my motion?

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you. This seems to have been brought forward by the good people of Bishop Guertin in order to assist them in celebrating in this terrible time that we are living in with the COVID-19. What they were looking for is to be able to enhance the graduation ceremony. They are Class C fireworks; they are the ones that people can buy. And as the good citizens of Nashua know, no one is supposed to light any fireworks off
in the City of Nashua according to the Fire Marshall, and I know you all do it, but you can do it when you are permitted. So this is Bishop Guertin asking for the permit. The display they said would not last longer than 8 minutes, which seems to be somewhat adequate. They will be under the supervision of the Fire Marshall. I wish we could have done it for our North Municipal high school students, but unfortunately with the way things are, that cannot be. So I would like to say at this time, although this will affect the Bishop Guertin Cardinals, I do with the Titans (audio cuts out). But we will go with that.

President Wilshire

We couldn’t hear you, you cut out.

Alderman O’Brien

I don’t know, must be the bandwidth.

President Wilshire

OK so I was approached through the Fire Department by Bishop Guertin to have a 5 to 8-minute fireworks display done professionally. They are going to set up a drive-through type setting in their Fieldhouse and each graduate is going to go by car, through the field. They are going to project the graduate’s picture up on the wall and then after their ceremony and they get their diplomas, they are just going to have a 5 to 8-minute display of fireworks, which I thought was reasonable. So I agreed to sponsor this for them. Any other discussion on that?

Alderman Clemons

Yes President Wilshire? Thank you. Actually I have a question on this, so the way that, and correct me if I am wrong, but the way that the Ordinance is written, this would allow for not just Bishop Guertin this time but any organization or anyone to get a permit to display fireworks by the Fire Marshall is that correct? Or would it have to come to the Board of Aldermen?

President Wilshire

I would have to defer to Corporation Counsel.

Attorney Bolton

It sets standards for when the Fire Marshall can grant a permit. So yes, other groups or organizations or entities would be eligible to apply as well.

Alderman Clemons

OK thank you. Yes thank you, I think that’s reasonable. I think it takes the politics out of it which I like. I don’t have any objection to BG doing this. I don’t have much objection to another organization doing it either, particularly because it is going to be under the supervision of the Fire Department. So I think this is just good policy and I support it.

Alderman Jette

Yes thank you, Madam President. The idea or the proposal made by Bishop Guertin for a short several minute firework display under supervision etc., that all sounds good and I would hate to oppose anything like that. However, the Ordinance that has been submitted to us, constitutes a complete change in the way the City deals with fireworks. Right now, under the Fireworks Ordinances no fireworks without permit is allowed. And no permits will be issued except to the City of Nashua for programs and displays under its control.
I believe this was something with a long history, it goes back to primarily the use of fireworks at Holman Stadium and the neighbors in that area objecting to it.

And back then the Board of Aldermen then set a policy that fireworks displays would not be allowed except those done by the City. Right now, no one can get a permit to do a fireworks show other than the City of Nashua. This Ordinance would allow anyone to apply for a permit from the Fire Marshall. The Fire Marshall the Ordinance says, can issue permits as long as there are proper safety procedures put into effect, that whoever is doing it, indemnifies the City for any damage and have proper amounts of insurance to cover it. Other than that, the Fire Marshall has no discretion as to who he, he can’t deny any permit in a non-discriminatory way. So nothing limits him from, and nothing enables him to limit how many fireworks shows there are put on in the City. You know, I hate to use an exaggeration to make the point, but the only standards he has is – Is it Safe? Did the applicant sign an indemnity agreement? And did the applicant get proper insurance?

If those conditions are satisfied, I believe and I defer to Attorney Bolton on this, but if those conditions are satisfied, I don’t think the Fire Marshall could deny anybody a permit and he can’t deny, there is no limit on who can get these permits, how often they can get them. So we have completely different look or way we regulate fireworks. Fireworks could be done every night at Holman Stadium. They could be done every night anywhere where it can be done safely. So I hate to rain on Bishop Guertin’s parade but this Ordinance doesn’t say that the display that Bishop Guertin wants to do, as limited as that is, this Ordinance doesn’t say that it is limited in any way. It would permit the Bishop Guertin show and it would also permit a whole bunch of other displays, fireworks displays being used. So I think, you know, this is one of the problems that we run into when things are presented to us at the last minute and an Ordinance is drafted very quickly, presented to us without a proper discussion and vetting by a Committee. I just think is bad Legislation. I think it sets a bad precedent for the City. As much as I would like to allow Guertin to do what they want to do for their graduation, I cannot support this Ordinance.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam President. I have to somewhat agree with Alderman Jette. I do feel uncomfortable that we are setting this up that it could be a display that would not be able to be denied. The truth is that I get many constituents that contact me, even from this weekend, fireworks were going off throughout the City. They don’t want to call the Police to ask them to come chase them down, because they know, especially nowadays there’s so much going on and you don’t want to put anybody in harm’s way. But year after year, we have personal homes setting off fireworks. Not if it is suddenly if an organization is going to be able to do this, I have no problem with Bishop Guertin, I have no problem with this one-time thing, if it were able that we did an Ordinance that allowed this one-time, I would not have that issue. But to give a carte blanche, and to say that anytime, for any reason, as long as it meets the criteria that Alderman Jette outlined, I do have an issue with it. I want Bishop Guertin to be able to do this, I just don’t want to give that much power. I’m sorry. I do have that issue. Thank you.

President Wilshire

OK, Alderman Lu, did you have your hand up?

Alderman Lopez

I had mine up as well.

President Wilshire

I see you Tom.
Alderman Caron

I do too.

President Wilshire

Ok.

Alderwoman Lu

Thank you, Madam Chairman. I simply wanted to offer to my the Ward 6, I actually thought that this was being held last weekend and I, if I had known that I had time to go out and speak with people, I would definitely got some feedback and reached out to people because my concern with this, the broadness of the Ordinance, is we have all kinds of neighborhoods that could be subjected to just unforeseen noise. I don’t see the time duration, the duration of this was a limitation in the Ordinance. My understanding is that’s what Bishop Guertin wants in this particular instance, but you know, what if they were longer? So I just wanted to speak an apology to Ward 6 that I didn’t reach out to discuss this with them. Thank you.

Alderman Lopez

So I really like the intent behind this for Bishop Guertin, I think this is a very difficult time for children who are graduating and that they deserve something special, to recognize their accomplishments to give them that sense of community that they get from graduating and that transition from this to you are graduating, you have accomplished something and the community recognized it. So I am in favor of letting Bishop Guertin launch their fireworks but like the Alderman that spoke before me, I don’t see that this is a good idea to lump that one-time situation, which I think should be special. It should be unique; it should be Bishop Guertin’s idea and their effort. Into a broader change in Ordinance that we can’t fully vet, we need to do this in a timely manner to that Bishop Guertin can enact it, but at the same time, we have a Citywide change. So my question to Attorney Bolton is if we amend this Ordinance to be specific to the problem before us which is Bishop Guertin….

President Wilshire

Alderman Lopez, can I interrupt you for a second? Whoever just joined the meeting, can you please mute yourself. Thank you, sorry Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

That’s ok, if we amended this so that is specific to Bishop Guertin, do we have to reintroduce the Legislation completely in order to get it to the Committee or does somehow passing that restrict what we can propose to the Board of Aldermen?

Attorney Bolton

I don’t think that’s the problem. I think the problem is that if you pass Legislation it allows the Roman Catholic Organization to do something while keeping in place a restriction against any other religion doing that or any other ethnic group or civic organization or social club or for-profit organization, I think you run into a serious discrimination on the basis of suspect class.

Alderman Lopez

That makes sense. So in your opinion, if we amended the Ordinance to make each application subject to Aldermanic Approval for now and then maybe went back at this at a separate time and said, let’s appoint a specific committee like the Special Events Committee to vet these and approve them with an Aldermanic
Liaison that still leaves a mechanism for neighborhood concerns to be brought in. But at the same time, it lets us get this done so that Bishop Guertin can have their graduation?

**Attorney Bolton**

I think neutral standards are probably the way to go. So if you wanted to limit the length, temporal length of the display, 10 minutes, or 12 minutes, I think something like that would be appropriate. I think if you wanted to say any entity could obtain permits for no more than one display per year, two displays per year. I think those sorts of neutral restrictions would be appropriate. Requiring organizations to come before a political body, one at a time, I think that’s problematic.

**Alderman Lopez**

OK then my last question is, there’s still the opportunity because we are the ones creating this Ordinance to amend this later on to add those stipulations that you suggested, right?

**Attorney Bolton**

You could introduce another Ordinance at your next meeting to add restrictions, relax restrictions, provide more standards, different standards, alter the insurance requirements, provide more guidance to the Fire Marshall. Any of those things can be done this evening, at your next meeting or any future meeting.

**Alderman Lopez**

So Madam President, this is my last comment, I think my priority personally is to make sure that we don’t interrupt a graduating class that has already had a pretty bad hand dealt to them. But I am also extremely aware of how this could potentially impact the Tree Streets if say every nightclub or every casino or whatever could launch fireworks. You have several places downtown that are safe but they are also kind of a nuisance for neighbors. So I do share Alderman Jette’s concerns that this is being pushed through in a way that is not timely but now I understand that it is because we are trying to avoid any preferential treatment. So I would just suggest to the Board that we continue forward with this Legislation and then introduce additional amendments that we can vet very thoroughly in a Committee setting.

**President Wilshire**

All set Alderman Lopez?

**Alderman Lopez**

Yes, thank you.

**President Wilshire**

You’re welcome; Alderman Caron?

**Alderman Caron**

Oh thank you very much. One of my concerns that I mentioned this morning when I saw this was the fact that the residents live so close to that baseball field and as Alderman Lu said, she probably would have time to knock on doors or try to find out, do we have any sense as to how the neighbors feel. My other concern is the same with Alderman Jette, I mean I have been involved with fireworks for an awful long time. I know the problems and situations that we have gone through and that’s why that Ordinance was put in, that fireworks would be performed by the City. And as you know, 4th of July is going to be here before we know it, and once this is passed, you are going to see a lot of people come out looking for permits for that time period. And I am just not sure this is what we should be doing as a last resort.
I appreciate BG’s idea but maybe if they had known about this a little bit earlier, we could have vetted this a little bit more. But I really do have some concerns as Corporation Counsel about all of these people who are going to come out and be looking to shoot fireworks. And I know, I get plenty of calls, especially at 4th of July of close quarters of people shooting fireworks. So I appreciate what they are trying to do but I really am hesitating approving this. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Alderman Dowd?

Alderman Dowd

Yes, a couple things. One, I work with the Fire Marshall on a number of occasions and trust me when I say that they will ensure any time that they grant a permit for fireworks, that all safety measures will have to be met including space, distance, type of fireworks, having a truck standing by and all of that. Also, they probably could have just gone out and bought fireworks and in this kind of display and lit them; off because they are the Class C, they are the ones you can buy up on Amherst Street if you want to go by them. But they wanted to do it right and they wanted to have the Fire Marshall there and the Fire Department there and make sure everything was done safely. I would like to see us let them have this occasion and if want to bring back into a Committee and discuss it further and put more t’s and c’s in it, we can do that, but again, I think if tomorrow they decided to do a graduation at Holman Stadium for Nashua High which I don’t think they can do because they are still a larger class, you know, an 8 minutes display or 6 minute display is pretty short. I can tell you on the 4th of July I’ve seen displays going on at Charlotte Avenue School that are probably 45 minutes to an hour with no permit. So I think we would be, let’s give these kids something.

President Wilshire

Alderman Klee and then Alderman O’Brien.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam President. I have to say I do have a concern that we are opening a Pandora’s Box and I know for a fact that many people are constantly wanting to celebrate this and celebrating that and while I don’t blame them, currently they do it without Fire Marshall approval. I hear them going off constantly, I see them on the Civic Sounding Board. I just don’t want to open it up that you can say yes to this and the Fire Marshall can say yes to this but there is no saying no. We look into, ok well you said it as Attorney Bolton said, you said it for this Catholic Organization, why aren’t you saying it for this Muslim Group or these other groups and so on. While I want them to have this special celebration, I am not feeling comfortable, I feel like we are just opening up a Pandora’s Box and I don’t want to go there.

President Wilshire

Alderman O’Brien and then Alderman Tencza?

Alderman O’Brien

Thank you, Madam President and if I cut out, I don’t know what’s wrong with the bandwidth but I had to re-sign on. As most of you know, I’ve had a lot of experience with this particular subject matter. I don’t know if many of you know it, but many of our citizens enjoy a campfire in the backyard. In order to have that campfire, whether you are Catholic, Protestant, Muslim or whatever, you have to petition to have a permit and it is by State Guidelines. The State has directed the State Fire Marshall and the State has appointed all the Lieutenants and Captains and Deputy Chiefs as Fire Wardens and they are able to go out and give the permits. Now they have to go out and physically come out and look at the facility that is going to have that particular bonfire to make sure that certain criteria such as that the fire has to be 25 feet from any one structure and everything else.
And I feel comfortable with this, because I fully trust the Fire Marshall if they want to do this, that if they want to come out, if somebody is getting a permit, that’s a far cry from somebody doing it illegally. And there is a lot of illegal activity and that’s where we get into trouble. That’s where we had the fire that had four buildings and four alarms several years ago by children playing with fireworks illegally. But in this type of situation, if the person gets the permit, that means the Fire Marshall has the right to establish a certain amount of criteria that needs to be followed in order for them to have this particular display. And that goes across the board for many different groups or social groups. Some permits may be denied because of a close proximity to other structures, combustible structures, and everything such as less than 25 feet away from combustibles when you have a fire pit.

The other good thing with a permit is you are asking permission to have the fire. So therefore, as the same rules with a fire permit, if a neighbor calls up and complaints that the smoke and everything from the fire permit is a nuisance, then the engine company goes out and terminates the permit. And if this is a case where neighbors call up, they are able to, I’m sure the call will go back to the Fire Marshall to which they will immediately cease the display from it to be done. So it seems with a permit, seems better than somebody going out and doing it. If the Fire Marshalls want to take that type of responsibility, I fully entrust them with the safety of the City and I feel that they are capable of doing that. It will do a lot of work, I understand, but it is one of those things that they are capable of doing if they so wish. And I feel a lot more comfortable if it’s permitted. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Thank you, Alderman O’Brien. Alderman Tencza?

Alderman Tencza

Thank you, Madam President. Just to bring up one thing that Alderman Jette said about the Fire Marshall having or saying that it is safe and that would be enough. I would just have to disagree with that. I think there is a State Law on what is safe and what people are able to do as far as fireworks are concerned, especially in a private display. The State Fire Marshall’s Office also has regulations that the City Fire Marshall would abide by so it wouldn’t be left up to the opinion of the City’s Fire Marshall it would be in guidance according to the regulations to State Law. And then, you know, a lot of the issues that people are talking about, I think Alderman O’Brien just hit on this but the people who are letting off fireworks in our neighborhoods are not going to get a permit, they are not going to go through the insurance requirements, but if there are other groups that may this 4th of July, you know, private groups or public groups be able to get a safe display together for their group and are able to go through the permitting process, I think it may be a good thing even though it is, as someone said, the 4th of July will be here before we know it so I think we may be overthinking this a little bit too much. It seems like people want Bishop Guertin to be able to do this, so hopefully we can pass this tonight for them, because if not they will lose that opportunity.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. I have a question through you to Corporation Counsel. Would it be possible under your, do you think that it would overly discriminating if the City were to put a limit on how many of these could apply? So in other words let’s say the City set a limit of 10 permits and it was first come first serve?

Attorney Bolton

There’s nothing on the face of that that’s discriminatory. If it turns out that every year 10 Irish Groups apply for St. Patrick’s Day and that ends up with – those are all the permits folks. And when Bastille Day comes along the Lafayette Club has been held out, I think that becomes a problem. So maybe you want to do so me kind of rotating system or something like that so it’s not the same group every year. So it becomes, you know, how does it work in actuality as opposed to on the face of it. But if you want to say that there will be 10 permits and in and of itself, I don’t think that’s wrong but we would have to monitor to it as experience shows.
Alderman Clemons

Ok, I guess listening to the conversation my concern is that some people have a concern that is legitimate that we don’t want too many groups rushing to do this all the time. I don’t have a problem with fireworks in general. I think the City of Nashua does a good job regulating them as far as the legal ones go. So if a group were to come forward and they were to go through this process, I have all the confidence in the world that the fire department would put on a safe display and everything like that. I don’t have any concerns about that and I would hope that most of my colleagues would agree. I think what the issue seems to be is the amount of fireworks that could possibly happen and the length of time and things like that. So with all of that said, I am going to support this Ordinance as it is written tonight so we can have BG do their graduation with the fireworks. And I am going to hope that we don’t get a lot of applications between now and the next time we can bring Legislation forward and then hopefully we can come to some sort of compromise. Because I think it is a good idea to allow a limited number of groups to do these types of displays, not all the time. But I don’t see personally anything wrong with a fireworks display here and there after a Holman Stadium Baseball Game, stuff like that. If there’s a big celebration and there’s room to do something, I think we should allow or try to allow groups to do this. But I certainly understand the hesitation that we don’t want to open up the flood gates either. So for now I am going to go with supporting this and basically echo what Alderman Lopez had said, which is let’s do this tonight and then we will get some Legislation later to tighten it up. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Without objection, I understand that Chief Rhodes has joined us and would like to weigh in on the conversation. Chief Rhodes?

Fire Chief Rhodes

Good evening and thank you Madam President, can you hear me? Yes, this is not something that the Fire Department takes lightly. Our Fire Marshall has surveyed the site at Bishop Guertin. It falls within the parameters of the State as well as City Ordinances for a safety zone. I cannot speak to the notification of abutters, but I can speak to the safety of the site. There are very, very few sites in the City of Nashua that have the square footage that would accommodate a Class C or Consumer, I forget the exact term Consumer Grade or whatever it is called type fireworks. But I also believe that there are very few entities in the City of Nashua who could meet the assurance requirements to hold an event like this. We are comfortable with this from a public safety standpoint because we do have the area, safely discharge those. We will, as we do with events at Holman Stadium, we will have a Fire Department presence on scene, our Fire Marshall will be on scene and will inspect the set up. Just to reiterate, this is not something that the average citizen could request and meet all the requirements to do this. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Thank you Chief. I have Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

No you don’t. I never said anything.

President Wilshire

So you’re all set Alderman Lopez, I’ll cross you off. Alderwoman Lu?
Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam President. One of the questions if Chief Rhodes is still there perhaps, he could answer These will always be this Class C – they will never be the big ones that we see at Holman Stadium, correct?

President Wilshire

Steve?

Chief Rhodes

I believe, even the fireworks we see at Holman Stadium are classified as Class C or Consumer Grade.

Alderman Klee

OK, I guess my concern is a little bit of the nuisance, I'm not quite sure how I'll vote, I'll know in a few seconds. But I have to be very, very specific here that the calls that I get from my – for the illegal ones, I know they are illegal, which are quite loud, I have had them set right off at the end of my driveway from neighbors and so on, is what it does to our PTSD Veterans, what it does to just neighbors in general, what it does to children, what it does to animals. I do respect the fact that Chief Rhodes said that it is probably not going to be as widespread as we think it is going to be and I did feel much more comfortable with that. Now I am kind of going towards the other way. But I do have to say that I am worried about what this will do to the current Ordinance. We have a hard enough time telling people, “No you can’t do it, it's illegal”. They don’t believe you; no matter how much you show the Ordinance they are going to do it anyway. I’ve said enough, thank you.

President Wilshire

Alderman Gathright.

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

Thank you, Madam President. I am going to vote for this and I am really excited and happy that the Chief was able to get on the phone to give us some clarity as to the process and all that the fire person goes through to ok something like this. I do believe that it does need to come back to Committee. I am willing to vote for the school to have the fireworks on the 31st, I think it was the 31st. But I would like to see it come back if people wanted to do some more vetting about fireworks going forward.

President Wilshire

Alderman Gathright it is May 31st with a rain date of June 1st, just so you are aware. Alderwoman Kelly?
Alderman Kelly

I was trying to find our 4th of July Ordinance while everyone was speaking. I am just wondering why it is not specific to the day like the 4th of July one is that we have to do every year?

President Wilshire

I'm not sure what your question is?

Alderman Kelly

Everybody says “what”. Each year we have to approve the 4th of July Fireworks, correct?

President Wilshire

Yes.

Alderman Kelly

And it is specific to the date. Is there any reason why this Legislation was not drafted the same way, that it would just be the one time?

President Wilshire

I would have to defer to Corporation Counsel.

Attorney Bolton

I don’t see where it says in the existing Ordinance that the Board of Aldermen approve it every year. I basically wrote an amendment to the existing Ordinance.

President Wilshire

What we approve is the funding.

Alderman Kelly

Ok, I guess I am also referencing other times when we have waived the ability to do it after 10:00 pm etc. I am just wondering why this is different than other times when we’ve made a one-time allowance.

President Wilshire

Yeah, I don’t know.

Alderman Kelly

Ok.

President Wilshire

Alderman Klee?
Alderman Klee

In reference to Alderwoman Kelly’s comment, I think in the past what we voted on is the time, going beyond that 10:00 time zone because there’s been a game or something like that that could extend it. And I think that’s why we had to do it. And in the past, it’s always been the City that has been putting it on, it’s not a private entity and a private organization so I think that’s why we have voted on it for the cost and the time to suspend the time. And we’ve done a public hearing I think and so on in some cases. I believe that’s what it was.

President Wilshire

Anyone else?

Alderman Caron

President Wilshire?

President Wilshire

Yes, Alderman Caron?

Alderman Caron

Yes thank you. In thinking what Alderwoman Kelly has just said, through you to Corporation Counsel, why can’t we make this amendment for a one-time only so that BG can do this and then wait and send this Ordinance back to Committee so that they can look at it and really put some good wording in there for future requests that come down the line. At least we will have taken care of BG for the moment but it is gone and then we can work on it for later. I just think we are going to get overwhelmed with requests. And I appreciate Chief Rhodes comments, because I know how they do their due diligence with fireworks but you also have those people, as Alderman Klee mentioned, that do things even though they are not supposed to. So that’s my question, if we could just say, this is for BG one time and then go forward, I would not have a problem voting for it. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Attorney Bolton.

Attorney Bolton

You can do that if you want. I will tell you that I would be very concerned if another religious organization came before you and you turned them down. I would be very concerned.

President Wilshire

Anyone else? Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

So following up on that, Madam President, could I also ask Attorney Bolton if what is before us tonight were limited in time to for an example, June 2nd. Would he be concerned about that violating the non-discriminatory portion of the Constitution that he’s worried about?

President Wilshire

Attorney Bolton.
Attorney Bolton

I don’t think you would be fooling the American Civil Liberties Union or a Federal District Court Judge at all. It’s not so much this time, it is what happens next time, when a Jewish Organization is turned down, or a Hindu Organization is turned down, or a Muslim Organization is turned down. That’s what I would be worried about. I don’t think some kind of short window just to allow Bishop Guertin to do it is going to fool anybody.

Alderman Jette

OK follow up. I’ve never had any good experience fooling a Federal Judge and I don’t want to try now. I just want to answer some of things, some of my fellow Aldermen may have misunderstood what I was saying about the Fire Marshall, not having the discretion to turn anyone down, other than if he feels that what they are proposing is unsafe. I understand the Fire Department, you know Chief Rhodes, you know I understand how seriously they take the safety and that’s not the issue. The issue is that generally speaking this Ordinance the issue that people, I think, a lot of people don’t like the noise. It’s the noise that is the problem. I am sure that the Fire Marshall will make sure that any display complies with all of the safety rules, it’s the noise that irritates people. And when Chief Rhodes talked about how this would be limited because organizations cannot afford the insurance, I want to point out to him that the insurance policy that is being provided in this instance is being provided by the fireworks company, not Bishop Guertin, it’s the fireworks company that has submitted the Certificate of Insurance to cover the insurance. That fireworks company, you know, they have insurance in place, and they would be able to issue that same Certificate of Insurance for as many organizations that area willing to pay them to put on a fireworks display.

I just think that the problem with this is that there are a lot of questions. I like the idea of some of my fellow Aldermen talked about, you know, let’s bring this back to Committee and fully vet it, but we will allow it to go head to allow Bishop Guertin. I’m just, that doesn’t take into account that citizens in that neighborhood, that surround Bishop Guertin, we don’t know, hopefully they are all looking forward to this show if they know about it. They probably don’t know anything about it. We didn’t know about this until this afternoon. So I doubt that the people in that neighborhood, I would love to learn that Bishop Guertin itself went around and talked to the neighbors and told them about their plans and asked them what their reaction was. I would love to hear that. But right now, I don’t know that, I don’t know how the neighbors feel about this. And I just think it is a bad precedent which just files in the face of a number of years of policy that we’ve had in Nashua about fireworks displays and fireworks shows. So I still can’t vote for it, thank you.

Alderman Lopez

Well just in respect to the comments that just made, since we are the ones granting a permit in theory here, it would probably be appropriate for the City to alert using the Emergency Alert System or some kind of mechanism to inform residents that this is going on. Because you don’t want to startle them, but it’s also an 8-minute show. I think if people had a little bit of warning, they could probably endure it. I had a question to Attorney Bolton; do you happen to know if Bishop Guertin is a 501(c)3?

Attorney Bolton

I don’t know that. I think they are probably exempt from taxes under other provisions of the law. But I don’t know.

Alderman Lopez

I just had the idea that we maybe we could limit this to 501(c)3, that way we sidestep the whole religious organization angle. But in a practical sense, trying to find out if they are a 501(C)3, doing all that in a week is not likely to happen. So just an idea.
President Wilshire

Are you all set, Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

Yup.

President Wilshire

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

I have been sitting here thinking and going back and forth and saying I trust our Fire Department and so on. I have anxiety about opening up a Pandora’s Box. I think I have to vote “no” against this. And in deference to Alderwoman Lu and her constituents there. I know what it is like to live with Holman Stadium in your backyard and the fireworks display and so on and what it does to some of the neighbors. My fear is that someone would say, we want to do a fireworks display and can we have it at Holman Stadium. It’s a big enough place, we always do it there and so on. I really do, I have anxiety that this is going to end up literally in my backyard and I can’t see it. I feel horrible because I want these kids to have a wonderful, special, they are truly, truly a special group of graduates, but I just can’t do it. I can’t open up that Pandora’s Box and I know Ward 3 will suffer for it because I know it will happen at Holman Stadium, I just know it. So I can’t vote for it. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Anyone else? Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. I too am a resident of Ward 6 and I live right down the street from BG, I drive by every day. I saw them kind of setting up this afternoon. I think what Alderman Lopez said about maybe using the emergency management system to call people or just somehow getting in touch with the neighborhood I think would be a good idea. As a neighbor, I am kind of exciting for it, I might even go down and watch my show myself if we do allow this. So just one Ward 6 constituent perspective.

President Wilshire

Anyone else? Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

I guess I have two comments about what was just recently said. One is, if we do send an emergency call out there it is still after the fact; we are telling them to prepare themselves for it for this thing to happen, and that’s one. And just what Aldermen Clemons just said, I may go out and watch it myself, which means we could end up with a crowd. So just putting it out there again, thank you.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you and I appreciate the debate on this. I currently am struggling with supporting this right now and in its current state, I don’t know feel OK supporting it. I don’t want to be punitive to the students, I know it has been a rough number of months for a lot of people. But I want to make sure that if we are making sweeping changes to Legislation that is being vetted and is being vetted properly through the process. I think there’s a difference between suspending the rules to get aid quickly to people and suspending the rules in this case,
to open up as has been said, a Pandora’s Box in this City going forward. So I will not be supporting it in this current state. But I am open to suggestions from other Aldermen.

President Wilshire

Anyone else? Alderman Cleaver?

Alderman Cleaver

Yes, I am very much in favor of this. I would like to see it passed so they can go forward with their celebrations. I agree that it needs a lot of work and I would like to bring it back just as soon as possible to address all the fears and concerns that have been addressed here tonight. But I think our first and foremost responsibility is for us to get these kids a graduation and a celebration worthy of their efforts. And I would like to pass it on and then deal with it later.

Unidentified Speaker

Sorry to interrupt but we have lost the bridge, this could be a minute.

Alderman Caron

Hello?

President Wilshire

We are recessed for a minute until they fix the bridge. The Motion is to move the question.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN CLEMONS TO MOVE THE QUESTION

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


Nay: Alderman Caron, Alderwoman Lu., Alderman Jette 3

MOTION CARRIED

President Wilshire

Madam Clerk, are we at motion for final passage?

Ms. Lovering

Yes.

President Wilshire

OK the motion before us is for final passage of Ordinance 20-019 by roll call. Would the Clerk call the roll?
A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:


Nay: Alderman Klee, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Caron, Alderwoman Lu, Alderman Jette

MOTION CARRIED

Ordinance O-20-019 declared duly adopted.

PERIOD FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

Alderman O’Brien

Thank you, Madam President. I was going to apologize for my little outburst earlier but I am not. And the reason is because those of you who are (inaudible) know, a conflict of interest is a lot different, a lot wider than what exists on this Board. I know that this is highly prejudicial, I wonder if my son was a priest, could I have voted on this last Ordinance because it has to do with a Catholic Organization? The point is this, I did not (inaudible) my son’s (inaudible). I am capable I am responsible to the voters who have duly voted for me. And if I do vote wrongly, I think the voters will have their say at the polls if they feel that there is anything showing any type of conflict. So I am not going to really apologize, I am going to fight it, I will look to prepare an Ordinance following more what is following on the State Guidelines, that many of you who are former Representatives, who are currently State Representatives, currently follow in the State House. I think we are all mature, I looked at some members of the Board, some of you came from other Boards such as School Department. But you show no prejudice.

But this Ordinance, excuse me, this thing where I can’t and I have to recuse myself I think is highly prejudice to me and to the voters who duly elected me. I am a fair guy, I think I could do it right and, in all fairness, I think with the Fire Department, yeah that is my experience. I spent 10 years as a firefighter, 10 years as an officer and 15 years as a Deputy Fire Chief. So 35 years, I think I paid my dues and I think what is good and what is bad within the Fire Department. But this is limiting my ability to vote for it. And also, too – in the Mayor's remarks, I did note that I think the Mayor probably without any malice and I'm sure it was without any malice but he said “17% at 4% for four years”. But from what I understand and from my education and my experience on the Fire Department, I think it is actually and correct me if I am wrong, 3.5% at 14%. I don’t think I would have supported a 17% raise but the 14% seems to be accurate and maybe the Mayor misspoke.

Attorney Bolton I am looking to perhaps maybe working with you in the future to change this inequity that is prejudicial to anybody in the future that comes. Just because of what my son chose to do for a career that I cannot vote, I find it entirely prejudicial and I am looking to change that. And then also too, while I've got the floor, while we are changing some other really ideas and things that have happened in the past, I am really looking forward to working with Alderman Ben Clemons if he so wishes. We’ve got to fix this umbrella thing down on Main Street. I don’t know (inaudible) when we walk by Peddler’s Daughter that you are going to see a Guinness Umbrella. OK? And I think that could be done, I mean I think anybody knows that they are working by a barroom, I don’t think an umbrella is really going to cut the mustard there. So I think we really need to look at that. So I thank you for your time in listening to my little diatribe, thank you.
President Wilshire

Thank you, Alderman O’Brien, Alderman Tencza?

Alderman Tencza

Thank you, Madam President. I just wanted to mention as we know yesterday, we celebrated Memorial Day as a day we recognize and remember all the service members we have lost in service to our country. In the past, the Nashua Elks have displayed flags as a memorial in all the City Cemeteries for the veterans who are there. Unfortunately this year because of the COVID-19 they were not able to do that and I just wanted to recognize the group that was headed by Jackie Leonardi here in town and the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts that she works with in both fundraising to supply the flags and distributing them yesterday or over the last weekend so that service could still be available to all the veterans and service members that have been lost.

I also just wanted to say to the families in town who have lost a service member, thank you for your sacrifice and as we start this unusual summer, you know, we will remember them in all of the things we can be thankful for individually as we move forward. Thanks.

President Wilshire

You’re welcome. Alderman Dowd?

Alderman Dowd

Yes, just a couple quick things. Sunday I was curious, I just took a ride downtown to see how the new set up was looking and all of the restaurants, large and small, were fully seated at all their tables. All the servers were wearing masks and people were having a great time. I am glad to see that the businesses downtown now can recover some of the lost revenue. It may take a long time but it looked like people were following the guidelines and enjoying themselves. Also, relative to the fireworks thing ending up at Holman Stadium, if anybody wanted to use Holman Stadium, they would have to pay for the rent, they’d have to pay the Police and they’d have to pay the firemen. So I don’t think that will be too often. And the other thing is we have two Public Hearings on June 10th with the two Ordinances and one of them is the Fireman’s Contract. We will have the Public Hearing and then go directly into the Budget Meeting afterwards and take up those two pieces of Legislation. Also, on June 2nd, we will have our first wrap up session on the Budget and if we don’t get anywhere, the next one will be the 4th and then we have, I believe, another one the following week. So hopefully we can do it in one night but we will see where we are at. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam President. I wanted to also comment about the umbrellas. Over the weekend I was bothering Attorney Bolton with my e-mails asking him why we couldn’t do this, and so on. I hope we can work towards that if there’s an Ordinance I am more than happy to cosponsor that. I drove through Manchester on Monday and every single place that was open had the umbrellas with different types of liquors and beers and Guinness etc. on it. So I didn’t think it was detracting and under the circumstances, to help support these businesses at $100.00 an umbrella and they can be donated, I think it’s the right thing.

I also did want to talk about Main Street. I have been working with the United Way in giving out masks. They have been doing City Hall up until today. Today they started City Hall and Railroad Square and they will be there until the 31st, 10:00 to 2:00 every single day. I gave a record 1,250 masks away on Friday and
today 786 at Railroad Square. The majority of people were grateful to get these masks and it is for anybody within the family, so please go to right in front of City Hall or Railroad Square. I was there watching all of the things happening on Friday with them putting in barriers and so on. There was a little bit of chaos and I have noticed some chaos on Water Street. That’s about the only thing I can say and I know that they are working on it and they are going to be moving some of those barriers on Water Street – at the Water Street/Main Street exit. But it was a beautiful sight to see and literally warmed my heart. So I hope that people go down and celebrate with social distancing and masks on Main Street. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Alderman Gathright?

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

There’s a family, I think it is one of these location, Smokey Lane I believe that’s the area, the McCullough family, Elmina, she lost her husband at St. Joe’s. He had been there for about a month and he finally passed away on Sunday. My heart goes out to the family; they’ve been residents of Nashua for about 40 years. They have one adult son that lives in Manchester. His name was Roy McCullough. And that’s about it. Thank you.

President Wilshire

You’re welcome. Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

I wanted to talk about a couple of things. So if you have not seen the Pride Community has decided to go forward with a Virtual Pride. We have been working diligently as a Committee to come up with what the plan would be in COVID-19 Era, and we decided that it was important to still celebrate our LGBTQ Community and so that will be happening June 27th, from 2:00 to 4:00. It will be a live stream of the drag show as well as other things. So you can go to the web site and check it out, hopefully we will get a good group of people hopping on and enjoying that day. It will be a little different than the last couple of years but I think it will still be a lot of fun.

I also wanted to talk about downtown. I wanted to thank DPW for how quickly they acted and this has been a group of everyone coming up with creative ways of going about it and how quickly we were able to implement it. I’ve seen a number of comments and articles talking about how we are sort of the baseline that people are looking to us because we did that so quickly and we are supporting our downtown businesses. So I thank people very much for that.

I was also contacted about the umbrellas. I am willing to support and vet the move to make an undue hardship of these restaurants go away. So I agree with you Alderman O’Brien, I don’t think (inaudible) on the umbrella is going to hurt. So I think we should look at that and definitely move that forward.

Lastly, I just wanted to say congratulations to all of our seniors. We have spent a significant amount of time on Bishop Guertin, but all of our seniors are going through graduation of a very different setting and I just want to make sure that they know we understand and celebrate their accomplishment. And then I would just end with I want it to be clear that my “no” vote was not against the fireworks at Bishop Guertin, I understand what they are doing. I just want to make sure as we continue to work, to where we are working remotely and through this crisis, that we are being very discerning about what we decide to suspend the rules on. Do we will still spend the time in Committee doing the work. So I know everyone feels similarly but I just wanted to say that. And that concludes my remarks, thank you.
President Wilshire

Thank you. Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

Thank you, Madam President, I think that we’ve had a long tradition of allowing public comment at our meetings, which we had to unfortunately suspend because of the way we are doing meetings now. But we recently had the public hearing on the Budget and I thought Alderman Dowd, as Chairman of the Budget Review Committee, did a great job at that meeting, the public was able to speak through the WebEx System, just like we are able to speak now at these meetings. I think that showed me that we are capable of allowing public comment even though we are doing these meetings in this new format. I would like to recommend that we restore the public comment periods as provided in Section 5:14A, subparagraph 9A and 16. I would encourage you, Madam President, to talk to the IT Department about whether or not that can be done. I think the Budget Review Public Hearing showed that it can be done. And so I would encourage us to explore that with the IT Department. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

So with respect to the idea of public comment, I would like to hear or see some kind of solution to that too. I would be concerned about the bandwidth because I’ve noticed that both President Wilshire and Alderman O’Brien are on limited bandwidth with a little like alert mark next to them. Is this OK with me? Because I think I just watched Alderman O’Brien low his nose in low Resolution. But I wanted to additionally express my gratitude towards the people of Nashua for putting up with basically all the stuff going around with COVID-19. We talk about the Public Health Professionals, we talk about the First Responders and how they are putting themselves in the lines, but the everyday Nashuan has accepted enormous discomfort out of the thoughtful of others whether it is struggling with your children to make sure that they can pass a completely reinvented school system; doing homeschooling, whether it is struggling economically to figure out how to make ends meet under completely new circumstances or simple things like pulling together to make and produce masks.

After last week’s meeting, I was aware that there was a protest that was going to be held on Saturday night that was being organized by anti-mask protestors. I was in the area so I stopped by to talk to some of them and they were passionate, they disagreed specifically with me when I identified myself as a sponsor of the mask ordinance. But they were civil and they, as much as we disagreed where they were coming from, they were involved, they were sharing their opinions and they were doing something to exercise their Constitutional Rights in their own type of passion. So I appreciate that. And then the next day I was at the mask give out event for United Way at City Hall. I agree with the umbrella proposal because I got sunburned pretty bad. But I was very impressed with how many people came by and took masks not for themselves but for their loved ones, shared that they were really concerned and they were trying to make sure they could go shopping safely. I asked Latha Mangipudiif she had any of her homemade face masks through the New Hampshire Maskateers and she was able to have 100 of them right on the spot. So I am just really impressed with how people are pulling together in their own ways., whether it is making sure that we support each other in this current time of COVID-19 or whether we support each other and making sure that we do transition from this time because these times can’t last forever and we do need to get the economy back on track. We have to do it in a way that's safe for all of our residents. But I think in Nashua, everybody is doing their best to look out for each other, even if they don’t all agree on the way, we are a community that cares about each other. Thank you.
President Wilshire

Thank you. Alderman Dowd?

Alderman Dowd

Just a couple of things quickly, at the last meeting I was over at the Planning Board and the Fairgrounds Middle Schools Project has been approved by the Planning Board, but we had a 45-minute delay when we lost the bridge. We lost the bridge tonight in this meeting. I think we should have the IT Department look into having two call in numbers for people to call in because the 45 minutes almost required cancelling the Planning Board Meeting. They are trying to catch up with cases. And the other thing is this Thursday is the Joint Special School Building Committee Meeting. Just so everybody that is on that Committee please join us at 7:00 on Thursday.

President Wilshire

So Alderman Dowd, you all need to speak when I ask for Committee Announcements then, right? I think you just announced them all.

Alderman Dowd

I didn’t see it on the Agenda so I figured I’d jump ahead.

Committee announcements:

President Wilshire

It's there. Anyone else? Remarks that I've missed. Now I'll call for Committee Announcements all of you except Alderman Dowd.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to Alderman Lopez for noticing with my allergies that I blew my nose on TV. I appreciate the rudeness, Alderman, thank you. There is a meeting tomorrow night of Infrastructure and PEDC jointly and at 7:00 and hope to see all of the people there, thank you.

Alderman Caron

Yes, thank you. Personnel will be holding a meeting next Monday, June 1st at 7:00 to discuss the two appointments that the Mayor has brought forward today. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Any other Committee announcements, Alderman Dowd? Ok. Alderman O'Brien, do I have a Motion?

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN THAT THE MAY 26, 2020, MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN BE ADJOURNED BY ROLL CALL
A viva voce roll call was taken to adjourn the Board of Aldermen meeting which resulted as follows:

Yea:    Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Klee, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Dowd,
        Alderman Caron, Alderman Clemons, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Tencza,
        Alderwoman Lu, Alderman Jette, Alderman Schmidt,
        Alderman Cleaver, Alderman Harriott-Gathright, Alderman Wilshire    14

Nay:                    0

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was declared adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Attest: Susan K. Lovering, City Clerk