

## BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 28, 2022

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Monday, November 28, 2022, at 7:25 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 June M. Caron  
Alderman Ernest Jette  
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly Alderman John Sullivan

Members not in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

Also in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Deb Chisholm, Sustainability Manager  
Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

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### ROLL CALL

### PUBLIC COMMENT

#### Marylou Blaisdell

Good evening. Marylou Blaisdell, 32 Webster Street, Nashua, New Hampshire. I'm here tonight to talk about the proposal for \$100,000 to go to the Downtown Improvement Committee. I would like to strongly ask for your support for this. The Downtown Improvement Committee as you know, we've been funded from line item 166 from the general fund anything over \$728,000 came back to our Committee. In the last few years with the barriers, with COVID, and with various other things, we received a flat \$100,000. We would like the support of that that Alderman Clemons has put before you.

I feel that our Committee is extremely diligent in how we use our money. We talk about any expenditure at length among all of us in our Committee. We have used our money for downtown. We have paid for pay and displays. The lights that you see out there right now for the holidays and the banners have all been paid for from the Downtown Improvement Committee. We've paid for extra street cleaning during the summer months. We've paid for interns. We helped paint the barriers. Over the years, we've supported GAD with the Stroll and their Farmer's Market. So every penny that we have received, we have put back into downtown in some form and we would continue to do that. So I would ask for your support in that this evening. Thank you.

#### Rich Lannan

Good evening. My name is Rich Lannan, 11 McGrath Road, Pelham with offices here in Nashua. As Marylou pretty much repeat what she said but I'm on the Downtown Improvement Committee as well but as a property owner of a couple of commercial buildings on Main Street. What I've seen the Downtown Improvement Committee do all the years that – Marylou just went through some of the lists and there's probably more than that. I think its money well spent. Because of all the reasons that you said with COVID, and you know the barriers, different changes which you know I personally support, it's just (inaudible) funded the \$100,000 so we at least knew what our budget would be.

So I fully support - unfortunately where we did not have the opportunity for an official vote from the Downtown Improvement Committee but I did talk to both Michael Buckley who is on the Committee but also as you know, owns a couple of restaurants on Main Street today. He said that I am welcome to give you his support as well that he thinks is a good idea for downtown. As well as Phillip Scentsas who is obviously a longtime business owner. Again, he is on the Downtown Improvement Committee but also fully supports. He made a suggestion that hopefully we look at this again maybe two or three years from now and just to see where it's at. We're hoping with the Performing Arts Center as you know was officially announced today. Hopefully most you folks got my email today but it's still only be three quarters of a year. So come 2024

when they're open for a full entire year, who knows at some point in time parking rates could potentially go up. So obviously, we would like to look at this and go back to the old way at some point. But I think for this year, maybe next couple of years, I think it's a good way to you know support the Downtown Improvement Committee to support downtown. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Thank you. Okay any other public comment? Seeing none.

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

**R-22-074**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess

Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr. Alderman Patricia Klee

Alderman Thomas Lopez Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons

Alderman-at-Large Shoshana Kelly Alderman Alex Comeau

Alderman Richard A. Dowd Alderman Derek Thibeault Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY TREASURER TO ISSUE BONDS NOT TO EXCEED THE AMOUNT OF ONE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,500,000) FOR TURBINE WORK AND VARIOUS REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE JACKSON MILLS AND MINE FALLS HYDROELECTRIC FACILITIES**

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

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman. I have several questions around this Resolution if I may. The first is to Director Sullivan. Great presentation tonight. My big question is why do we own these? Is it to generate electricity or is it to generate revenue?

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman, Alderman Sullivan. I would argue it's actually for both purposes. I can't speak to the conversations around the original intent when the facilities were purchased but my understanding is that it was really to enhance the city's renewable energy portfolio. However in taking on the facilities and making these investments and seeing the revenue that has come in, we realize them to in fact be a revenue generator. I do not believe they were purchased with the sole intent of being a revenue generator. However, I think there were really broader purposes in mind when they were acquired.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. During your presentation tonight, you mentioned there's a turbine in the Czech Republic that we own. Does the passage of this bond effect that coming to the States in any way?

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Sure. The answer is both yes and no. Perhaps that will be the theme to my answers to the questions this evening. The reality is that we do currently have adequate funding to ship that turbine to this location. There are complications, obviously, with the storage and the timing of the project that do not prohibit us from doing that but have led us to the conclusion that that's not in the best interest of the project. However, what we do recognize is that we have a shortfall in costs and other components of the project. So indirectly yes it will leave us with the shortfall in some component of the project but that could be a larger shortfall in the construction component or it could be a shortfall in the storage component, or the warranty component. We have really shortfalls that are in several pieces that need to be addressed.

Chairman Dowd

Just a little amplification. I should think Deb knows but years ago when we started having all the maintenance problems with the current generator, the city decided to for lower cost of maintenance over the years and the fact that this one could fail at any time and it's impossible to repair, we allocated the money via bond to have a new generator designed and built to fill the requirements of our generator. It's not a standard generator that you can buy off the shelf. It had to be completely designed to fit in the space, generate the electricity that we want to generate, and we now own it but it's sitting in the Czech Republic. So and I think it was - I forget how much it costs but it was pretty substantial amount of money and I think that it would be crazy for us not to get it here.

Alderman Sullivan

Continue with questions. Thank you very much.

In your presentation you mentioned that these two facilities together generate 15,000 megawatts of power which powers 2,000 homes. With these two turbines is it capable to generate more power thus generate more revenue?

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Mr. Chair I may ask Ms. Chisholm to comment a bit more on the energy side of things if that would be appropriate.

Deb Chisholm, Sustainability Manager

The current setup with the three turbines that we have generating power, they're pretty much generating the max capacity that they can. We don't necessarily hold back. We operate as much as we can. It really is dependent on the water flow. So when we're in a drought situation like this, we don't generate as much power. Last year when we had a rainy day, every day for the month of July, we had some really prolific generation last year. So it does - it sort of comes and goes. As I continue to look forward with, okay, we're replacing one of the turbines at Jackson with the same. It's still going to be a one megawatt turbine. When we go to replace the turbines at Mine Falls, can we afford to put in something larger? Maybe. I think that that is a design study that needs to happen before we just go ahead and replace with the same. It's a possibility.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

I would just add that one of the things that could be done more efficiently as we have had downtime due to equipment failures and other lifespan issues with the existing turbine at the Jackson Falls facility. You may remember a few months ago I came as part of the escrow process for a contribution to the Hydroelectric Trust Fund, which is really our emergency capital reserve fund. If something breaks that's a substantial cost. Those issues not only again impact us from having to pay for the repairs but they also make it so that we lose money that could be potential revenue. So as we put a new turbine in place that is more reliable, has less issues, that is a gained efficiency in revenue that we can't necessarily project and worse but we have not had a new turbine in place in our ownership of the facility and that might be an additional generator.

Chairman Dowd

One additional thing is when we designed this generator, it was designed so that different modules could be replaced without taking the whole generator apart and that we also bought spare parts to have here so it could be immediately repaired. In the past and when I went down, it was a year, a year and a half, or more to get it repaired. That won't happen anymore with a new one hopefully.

Alderman Sullivan

Two more questions if I may.

Chairman Dowd

Sure.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. You had mentioned in your presentation that I'm looking at now that our operating expenses are \$430,000 annually. I looked at the Fiscal Year '23 budget today online and it was forecasted that that was going to be about \$600,000. So what - is it 400 or is it six? Because the reason I ask is because the spread between what we spend and what we get back it's going to be either here or here.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Excellent question. We are obviously more conservative in our expense budget numbers and we are conservative in our revenue numbers actually that we included within the fiscal year budget as well. Part of the circumstances around this year's budget is that we were actually in the midst, and are currently in the midst, and you'll hear more about this in the coming weeks of negotiating a new contract with Essex Power who is our provider or maintenance entity or operating entity. We were not certain of what the terms of that contract might be. It was pre the proposal coming to us and so we were very conservative in the number that we included in the budget. So perhaps this is another yes and no answer from me. We anticipate that it will be somewhere in the middle. I will say that generally the contract has been around I would say right on the nose of \$400,000 over the past four year period, which is really the most reliable sample period of time. We are entering into a new structure of the contract and so there will possibly be a slight increase. But again, it's really dependent upon how much revenue that the city will be collecting. There is a revenue component to it but we're pretty confident we'll be somewhere between those two numbers but unlikely to be at the \$600,000 number.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

I just have a question for CFO Griffin if I may. I saw him in the audience.

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

Good evening. John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector.

Alderman Sullivan

My question is around the length of the bond. I was just curious why we would bond a million dollars over 30 years as opposed to maybe 10. I mean I would see a larger project, you know, we bonded 16 million, 5 million over however many years but I just thought maybe a smaller amount would be 10 years as opposed to 30. Why the difference?

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

If I may, Mr. Chairman. We actually discussed that internally with a few of us and thought that matching the million five or whatever the number was going to be to what was going to be useful as Director Sullivan indicated was a good match. I say that not only for this particular bonding initiative but also for the others that have been discussed with the other needs of the city. The options were take cash, buy with cash. So you're spending cash for something that's going to last 30 years plus. So that was kind of the consistency that we're looking for. When we package this probably next August with the other bonding requirements, it will match pretty nicely in that package that we can sell effectively to the market.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Additional questions?

Alderman Sullivan

Good for now. Yeah, thanks.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I totally support this. One of the first times I think I ever met you Ms. Chisholm when I was working on the net metering for these particular facilities. Let me tell the rest of the Board, these gems. I use the term a lot but we have two dams that a lot of municipalities don't have any. So like everything else that you have that's mechanical, there's going to be failures and everything and we may choose, maybe not to make the investment, but I think we can see at what loss, you know, what we get. I mean that's quite a substantial amount. What did you say 2,000 homes could receive power? So that's money that goes back into the grid system.

We did have this discussion with Eversource at the time and they determined the net metering. I thought we're gonna lose that one but they allowed it because of the uniqueness of the situation. So based on that, I think this is the best bang for the

buck. They're already in existence and it is the best thing for the taxpayers. So I'm going to totally support this

Alderman Jette

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, am in favor of any way that we can generate electricity without burning something I'm in favor of. I'm a little surprised - maybe I wasn't paying attention before to learn that we designed, and had built, and evidently are paying for a turbine that we haven't yet received the permit for. So what is the possibility that we won't get a permit and we're sitting on this turbine which cost how much? We've already spent how much on this project?

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

I do not believe it's possible that we will not receive a permit. It's very much a question of timing. To Alderwoman Kelly's question, we hope that that timing is next summer. But we are very positive we will receive a permit. We received no negative indication to my knowledge from the federal reviewers of any deficiencies within the permit application. It's simply a matter of volume and the number of reviewers actually available to look at permits of this type across the nation but nothing related to the actual quality of our application, or the facility itself, or the turbine itself. So we believe and are very confident that we will receive a permit.

Chairman Dowd

With the government's total emphasis on renewable energy, it'd be kind of crazy if they didn't allow us the permit.

Alderman Jette

With the current government, who knows.

Chairman Dowd

We've got a ways to go yet.

Alderman Jette

So I have another question.

Chairman Dowd

Sure.

Alderman Jette

When I look at your numbers when I add up the 980,000 for Mine Falls in the 480,000 for Jackson Falls, I come out with 1,460,000. When I look at the expenses of - if I read that correctly, 430,000 annually for operating expenses and 800,000 for debt service, I come out with 1,230,000. So the margin there is only a couple hundred thousand, right?

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Yes, that is correct and to Alderman Sullivan's questioning earlier, we recognize it's a very small margin but I do want to return to the idea that these were not purchased exclusively as an opportunity to generate revenue for the city. So it is possible if the rain gods if that's what you believe in are not generous to us in a year, we may operate a year at a loss with these facilities. However, we've had some tremendous years - very limited outages, very strong rainfall, very strong snowmelt where we've operated far and above beyond the revenues that I've even indicated here.

I actually had a very detailed conversation with Deb today about even presenting these numbers because they are simply so different from year to year and the limited sample size that we have. So Alderman Jette I mean only to say that we will potentially have some years where we operate at a loss just on the nature of these facilities but the years where we outperform, we've done very, very well in collecting revenue above and beyond. I'm confident that we can cover this gap moving forward.

Chairman Dowd

Another question?

Alderman Jette

And the way this is going to work, I mean, you talked about generating enough power to take care of 2,000 homes. We're not going to do that ourselves, right? We're just going to sell this to Eversource and then they distribute it to the homes and?

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

As of today, our intent is to maintain the existing arrangements we have which involve yes selling back to the grid. Yes.

Alderman Jette

Okay. And one last one.

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

Unless you'd like to be hooked up directly, we can make that happen Alderman Jette. Our intent is to maintain the existing arrangements.

Alderman Jette

No, my plan is to hook up to my wife's car.

And my last question is in spite of how much we've spent on this project already, this 1.5 I mean that money has already been spent, or borrowed, or that's already in the works right? This 1.5 we're talking about tonight is new money anticipating when we get the turbine and get the permit, this is the cost of actually installing it?

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

That is correct and other associated expenses with getting the turbine delivered to the site yes. I do want to point out, again, and we were quite deliberate about this in the language that it is a critical component of this funding to allow us to get a head start on the Mine Falls process as well. We would really like to begin that without returning back for additional authorization because design time and permitting time spent now as we're learning through this very painful process with the federal government is money well spent that can put us in a very competitive position or not competitive position but an advantageous position as we go into the next permanent process with the fed. So it really is simply to address a deficiency in the Jackson project but there are benefits to the Mine Falls facility as well.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? I think you've had a question, right?

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. So you answered some of my questions in the public hearing. I wanted to just dig in quickly about I know you can't project revenue but I wanted to talk a little bit about net metering and how that's helped us and if it if there's any capacity to get more revenue or if we're at max there? That's question one.

Deb Chisholm, Sustainability Manager

I'm kind of wishing I had Doria sitting next to me right now to talk about net metering. She is the expert on net metering. We do net meter Jackson and one of the things that when we originally had the turbine designed and Alderman O'Brien, State Rep. O'Brien, was up pushing that legislation forward to increase the size of the turbines that you could net meter, we found that we might be able to squeak a little bit more power out of that one megawatt turbine, hopefully. That's what we're shooting for anyways. We can net meter the Mine Falls facility. It's a three megawatt facility. We would have the ability now to do that net metering however, we are stuck in a contract right now until 2024. We are paying out at a very low rate. So we're hopeful that once that contract is up, we will be able to net meter that and our revenues - a bit back of the envelope calculation reveals a considerable increase in revenue once we can actually net meter Mine Falls. We have not actually gone through that whole process to determine if that's our best bet but that is something that we are thinking about.

Alderwoman Kelly

Okay, great. If I could follow up?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up question.

Alderwoman Kelly

My follow up question is around the new turbine. I know we talked about it like you had graphs is great. I'm assuming it's new so it'll be more efficient. So will we also make more revenue because it's a better system than what we currently have?

Deb Chisholm, Sustainability Manager

Well, I believe that just the fact that we'll have a - well it's not just a new turbine. It's a new turbine, it's a new generator, it's a new control system and having that being brand new means much less maintenance, much less downtime as Matt alluded to earlier. We're not going to have the amount of downtime with that facility once it's brand new. So fingers crossed that we can get that thing installed next year and have a much more efficient unit generating, hopefully, you know continuous power and not having to shut it down because there's a vibration noise that we're hearing. Shut it down because oh we've got a stick in the way. There are several reasons why we might have to have it shut down for any given amount of time and we're hopeful that that will be done once we install the new one.

Alderwoman Kelly

If I can follow up one more time?

Chairman Dowd

Sure.

Alderwoman Kelly

I do remember when you came here before it was offline for quite a bit. So this is the hopeful – this is that offline component will go away, correct?

Deb Chisholm, Sustainability Manager

Correct. Correct. Right before we started the project, the turbine at Jackson went down and we spent probably \$50,000 to put a big ol band aid on that thing and it's still working now as we speak. So that was that was money well spent. But as you know once the new turbine installation starts happening, that means we're at a loss for that revenue as well. So it kind of hits you twice. You have to pay to have that new turbine put in and while you're putting it in, you're losing revenue but I think we'll catch up.

Alderwoman Kelly

Awesome, thank you.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not on this committee but you know I saw a lot of some emails from social media directly and indirectly asking about this whole thing tonight I guess. I suppose once you're called dumb enough that you become an experienced Alderman. So I'm going to ask a dumb question and this is going to be through you to CFO Griffith.

So we're bonding again and the questions from our constituents out there is we keep bonding, we keep bonding, the tax rate is going up. We keep bonding. Tax rate is going up because of the bonding. Every time we bond something, that tax rate is gonna go up. Can you explain to us and the public how this will impact the tax rate and are we bonding too much? Is this an additional bonding that we shouldn't be doing? Should we be finding another revenue source? I guess that's enough of a question.

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

Sure Mr. Chairman. This project as shown by my colleagues here is a very worthwhile project for a couple of reasons. One - it's profitable which is an amazing thing - five years out, seven years out of our purchases. I was here back in '17, and '19, and the bonding. There was some folks that said, you know, let's buy them and sell them. But with the hard work of the team that's worked on this, the Waterways Managers, and Community Development Directors, and everybody in between this particular one is a very - I was pleased to attend tonight to support the team. So the 1.5 million seems to me without investing in this and without spreading the costs over the life of the investment, it's on average a \$92,000 a year expense. A little bit more in the first years but over time, 92,000. So for this particular item, it makes a lot of sense to bond and continue with the hope of getting non-burning, non-fossil fuel generating assets for the city. That's a lot – I was here like I mentioned, it was a lot to do with buying these. Forty year leases were running out. I think that's what Ms. Chisholm is talking about. With that smaller amount, I think its five cents. We're selling power for five cents. So as you can tell if things go the way they're going, that number is going to be dramatically increased.

As far as the other bonds, we've done a lot of public transparency about bonding. Bonding is a strategy used by municipalities, cities, and towns to invest in their community to be able to provide the services and other things that the citizens and businesses want to have us invest in. We also mentioned that there was a period of time where the debt service was hovering around 16 million, which with a \$300 million operating budget, that's not a large number. Some of the municipalities are around 10%. So not that I'm advocating it but there's room there to grow not only with that optic but also we're under the targets that are set by the State with regard to investments in school property and city property. So it's a mechanism to spread the costs of investments over the life of those investments. I read the same comments and, you know, everybody has good opinions. In this particular case, I would not recommend not investing and getting that turbine back on United States soil.

There's going to be other bonding events coming up. I mean, we have to sell the bond. This will not be sold until next August at the earliest. We have to sell bonds, as I mentioned to Alderman Sullivan, we have to package them and sell the remaining bonding of the middle school projects and other projects that you've approved. So hopefully that indicates a mechanism to spread the costs of the investments that are bondable. Bond council has to renew each and every project. It has to be attested to. It has to be - we have to keep every single receipt that goes into the bonding upon the IRS audit. So we haven't had one recently but the one we had was exemplary. So we're in good shape with keeping our records so. With that, hopefully that's responsive to your question. Thank you.

Alderman Thibeault

Just one follow up comment. Yeah I mean I support this and I don't have a vote on this Committee but its like Alderman O'Brien said, these are two assets in the city. It's important. Like you say, it generates revenue. I'm all for it so I just wanted to put that concern out there because we're going to hear it every time we have to bond something we're going to hear that and I want to make sure it's clear that it's not as dire as people think when we're doing this. There's a reason why we're doing it and it's important to keep this infrastructure in the city going so I appreciate that answer. Thank you.

Alderman Sullivan

So to that note, I would like to make a motion to table this resolution and I'd like a moment to speak to it please.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN SULLIVAN TO TABLE**Alderman O'Brien

You can't speak to a motion to table.

Chairman Dowd

No you can't speak to it. You make a motion.

Alderman Sullivan

And we can't discuss it?

Chairman Dowd

No. You want to make the motion?



Alderman Sullivan

I do.

Chairman Dowd

Motion is to table.

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

Yea:	Alderman Sullivan	1
Nay:	Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette, Alderman Caron, Alderman O'Brien Alderman Dowd	5

**MOTION FAILED**Alderman Dowd

Okay. I just want to mention one other thing. There was a great article not too long ago and it was in the municipal association's magazine that comes out that I hope everybody gets a chance to read. There are always important things. Cities and towns cannot afford not to bond things. If they do, their credit rating is shot and we would certainly go from one of the best run cities to the one of the worst if we didn't cover things that we need to do with some level of funding, including bonding. So in this instance, we're bonding something that's a revenue back to the city and its generating energy without burning fossil fuels and contaminating the atmosphere. So I don't see a downside. We've already invested in designing and building this turbine which fits in a unique position and a unique building. I think that we need to commit the following through.

Alderman Sullivan

If I may, the reason that I made that motion is because it seems that since the beginning of the fiscal year, we've been bonding a lot and we have. We've bonded close to \$33 million and when you add up all of the payments, that's \$2.4 million. That's without the passage of this. CFO Griffin spoke to other bonding projects. The reason that I wanted to table it was not because I was I'm not in favor of this. I'm in favor of it. I think it's a worthy project and I think it falls in line with my values of why you should bond money, which is to borrow money that either produce revenue or appreciate in value. However with all of the bonds that have come online, they seem to come quick through this Committee and then we do it. Then we look at merits of the project and we vote yea or nay. I voted for all these and they're all worthy projects - police vehicle, landfills, school safety, school renovations, and a fire truck.

But to CFO Griffin's point, you had mentioned that we have other projects and we weren't going to sell these bonds until August anyway. So I was asking that we table it so we could look at the bigger picture to see what else is coming down the line so we can then evaluate it and look at it and towards the bigger picture and that's why I wanted to table it just to hit the pause button since we weren't going to sell the bonds right away anyway. We do have time. It's December basically and we weren't going to sell these until August to allow us to take a look at other projects maybe over the next, I don't know, 12 months to see what else is coming online so we don't have to make decisions just based on our project by project but we can look at the bigger picture of what it is we need to bond as a city. Because I agree with you, I think bonding money is a necessary thing because you don't always have cash to do these things. You need to borrow it. If your credit rating allows and you have the revenue coming in that you can make the payments, then great you do it. I just want to make sure that we're looking at the big piece. I was surprised how much we bonded. I knew that we were passing bonds a lot. I didn't know it was that many and I didn't realize that when you look at the payments that it's \$2.5 million dollars on top of that. Then you add the 92 on top of that, so now it's starting to get up there and that was the reason for why I wanted it. I just did it backwards. Probably should have said that and then made my motion.

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

If I may Mr. Chairman, just one point to add to Alderman Sullivan's thoughts. In speaking with Director Sullivan and Ms. Chisholm, the authorization that you would provide is really - it doesn't matter when we sell. They need to be confident when they're talking to that company that they're working with that's going to basically be retained to do the work. That could not wait until next August when we sell. So there's a difference. So the authority you provide allows us to spend and commit to purchase orders. So that's a little bit different Alderman Sullivan than some of the other well long lived bonding events that we've done. This is more of an immediately need.

Chairman Dowd

So the city can't commit any funds to anyone unless we pass the bond authorization. When they sell the bonds is only when the city needs to have the money to pay back the bonds. A lot of times the bills come in they get paid out of cash until the bonds are sold. So the two are related as directly as that but in order for them to get going and commit the city's funds to these projects, we have to pass the bond.

Alderman Sullivan

I understand.

To my point about the bigger picture, is it possible to get a 12 month view to sit with city departments, to sit with whomever to get a 12 month view on bonds so we can - we got this resolution last Tuesday. I asked some follow up questions to Director Sullivan and he responded. He was great but I just kind of want to look at see if that's possible to do so we can look at the bigger picture so as these come along, we can speak to that.

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

If I may, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Dowd

Yes, Mr. Griffin.

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

That was specifically what we tried to show on May 5<sup>th</sup> of 2022. During certain times when I've been asked questions from you folks, the painting is never done. My great colleague and friend Dave Fredette, he'd say how many bond plans do we want to do? He'd like to do one only and then if things come in, we explain how this fits in. So for example, Director Sullivan and I said this fits into the 3 million at the bottom. It's not more than 3 million. It's 1.5 million of that 3 million. So we do have a good handle of things.

I've also witnessed Infrastructure Committee and need some help over at the garages. I watch in earnest at the library project that seems to be all encompassing, you know, between \$20 and \$30 million. This was not on the budget specifically the budget plan as I indicated and a few of those school projects weren't needs to adapt but the last thing we want to do is have a monthly update of the bond plan. We will commit to a new plan before the budget.

I would just like to say smaller towns, maybe smaller cities, they come in for the approval of bonds once a year. They don't come in during the year. What you have to do there is a whole heck of a lot of planning and know what you want to present and when. They have Town Meetings. They don't meet regularly. They have a Town Meeting in the spring and then a special Town Meeting to clean up the books in the fall. So we actually have the luxury of having you folks here twice a month. For the most part, we can bring in resolutions as we need them. But we will get to the point where we're gonna have to put these in and then we are able to go that six year road as Alderman Clemons spoke about to find out what the impact is and it is climbing. There's no question. That was the purpose of the May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting to understand bonding, why we do it, and what's the magnitude that we're experiencing. But to tie that up more tighter, we're gonna draw the debt service between a million and \$1.5 million a year with things we already bought and invested. If we paid cash for those things, we never would - you know, if there was like well why don't we use like unspent monies, you can't come up with enough.

There was something out there today. I'll speak to it. We have unfunded positions in this year's budget. Can we analyze that, take that money, and buy this turbine? I just explained that that turbine hopefully will last 30 years plus so. We don't do it in intra year. As you folks know, we close the books, put money into unassigned fund balance, put the remainder into assigned fund balance. It's hard to do in that period of time we're looking at. What would happen is we would come to you folks to take all those monies out of those departments and put it somewhere. Then you have to ask yourself, is it a timing issue? You're going to get the Police Department for example. Are we going to take, you know, ten officer's salaries and move it into some fund that can pay for this stuff and then they come to us and say well we're in the process of hiring them? So it's complicated. But I wanted to get that to you folks as well because you saw some of those questions and they're good questions. Thank you for letting me articulate.

Alderman Clemons

Yeah, thank you. Just briefly, I just want to say I appreciate CFO Griffin. I know that you come before us quite often and always are available to answer questions. I know that you presented that bond plan twice, I think, because I think you did it once in May and then I think you did it again a couple months ago if memory serves me correctly. We had a pretty lengthy discussion about what the plan was and how it's going to grow in the future. You even accounted for unanticipated things in there. So we have a pretty good plan. So I didn't want that to go unsaid.

Alderwoman Kelly

So some of what I was gonna say was already said but I think that knowing that this particular contractor is so niche and that the need is going to be there no matter what and we've already invested millions on this turbine that's sitting in the Czech Republic, this is a prudent thing for us to bond so that we can get this contractor who's going to install it.

Chairman Dowd

Okay. I had one question. Do we know if the company that manufacture or is overseas has any resident maintenance people in this country that we might hire to do the installation?

Matt Sullivan, Community Development Director

I do not believe they have any crews are capable of doing the installation directly. I don't believe they have maintenance staff per se in the United States. They do have regional representatives that we have worked with to some extent, including one in New Hampshire if I'm not mistaken. I'm sure they have preferred contractors for ongoing maintenance but none that are capable of doing the installation directly to my knowledge but I defer to Ms. Chisholm.

Deb Chisholm, Sustainability Manager

I would like to say that when that turbine comes over and is actually ready for the install, the company that we'll be using to "do the install", they're the ones that will be doing the site work. They'll be doing installing a coffer dam to keep water away from the facility. They'll be demolishing the power house. They'll be pulling out the old turbine and getting rid of it but Mavel who is the company that manufactured the turbine, they will be sending a representative over to us when we're ready to actually do the installation of the turbine and to start hooking it up. There will be somebody there from the manufacturer who will be helping us with that.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan, yes we probably do have to look at reining in some of our bonds. For instance, you wouldn't have done the two schools - Main Dunstable and Birch Hill if it weren't for the fact the government is paying for half of the project and we can't get that deal anytime in the future. We've gotta take it now. So we wouldn't have done both those schools and may not have even done one. Sometimes things come up that it's far beneficial to the city take advantage of. But yes, we have to look at pushing some things out perhaps and stay physically responsible. So something we can look at.

Alderman Sullivan

I appreciate it. Thanks.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions?

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

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN/CLEMONS TO REMOVE FROM THE TABLE O-22-019  
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**ON THE QUESTIONAlderman Clemons

Thank you. Thank you for the Committee for hearing this this evening. It's been on the table for quite some time now. Because there's a couple of things in the works that kind of put this on the table, which the main one was the parking - the infamous parking study, right, which we all know has not yet come out. Part of that study was supposed to be a rate recommendation. I'm gonna put it to you that way of what to do with meter fees downtown. That has not come to fruition yet and we're hopeful that it'll be coming maybe around the first of the year. But again, that could be delayed even further.

So I'm gonna backtrack a little bit here because the original intention of the ordinance was when we had COVID 19 came about that fiscal year, well, I should say the calendar year of 2020, the parking revenue took a nosedive for a number of reasons. One is we did the barriers but two - traffic in general downtown even when the barriers weren't there when everything was shut down was just there was no traffic, right? So there was nobody parking. There was nobody coming down. I mean it was a ghost town if you went through in April of 2020. So that got a little bit better when the barriers came out that year and we actually ended up doing okay. I think it was - instead of doing 728 or normally we do 828,000, I think we made 700,000 that year.

2021, that calendar year, we knew after going through 2020 that Downtown Improvement Committee was not going to get any funding because they didn't reach the minimum threshold to get anything. So in 2021, I introduced a resolution which passed which changed this ordinance temporarily to give the Downtown Improvement Committee \$100,000 out of parking revenue knowing the fact that we were doing the barriers again and that the parking revenue likely wasn't going to be at that or above that 728,000 where it normally is. Call it an 828. So we went through that calendar year, Downtown Improvement Committee (inaudible) touch it (inaudible) \$100,000 that was passed by this Board. 2022 - a lot of the funds that were in there were not spent right because we didn't do the Holiday Stroll. We didn't do a lot of the events because most of 2021 we were still in COVID, right, and people were worried about crowds and things like that. We did some things but not everything. So there's and also carried over from 2020, there's quite a bit of cash leftover. So it was my recommendation actually knowing that the parking study was coming out, hopefully I thought, and we might do something with the rates. If we funded, if we took that \$100,000 that we were going to give the Downtown Improvement Committee and gave it to GAD, we could reduce the amount and help the taxpayers out a little bit this year. So actually, there was no funding put into the Downtown Improvement Committee this year in this budget. So they're now waiting so now we're into next budget season.

So the question became what do we do because we know that in April, we passed the or the end of March we passed the barriers and we know that that's now going to be a permanent thing for the next few years the foreseeable future. So we know that the revenue was decreased. It's probably going to be decreased because of that project. We thought, okay, they're gonna adjust - we're gonna get some kind of study that looks at that and adjusts that revenue. That study never came. So we're still waiting for that. So what this proposes to do is to simply take \$100,000 of parking revenue with the equivalent of some of parking revenue and put it towards the Downtown Improvement Committee for the foreseeable future. If we're honest with ourselves, any kind of study that's going to come out, we're going to have to debate. The way that the legislation is written is that it takes the previous calendar year of revenue and it says anything over \$728,000 goes to the Downtown Improvement Committee. Well, we're already into December and we're close to when the free parking starts downtown. So we're not at 728,000. We're below that for this calendar year. So next year, they're not going to make the threshold again. So we've got to do something at least in the short term to shore that up, especially considering the fact that they didn't get any funding this year.

But then it calls into question well what do we do in the future years? Well if by January and February, and I'm hoping that we have that discussion, we still don't have an answer as to what we're going to do, now we're eating into the next calendar year when we start calculating the sum of money that goes to the Downtown Improvement Committee. So my thought on this Ordinance is this is a stopgap for the next couple of years to give them the funding that they pre-pandemic got pretty much every year on the average. Some years it was 120,000, some years it was 66,000. It all depended on what the traffic was downtown and how much people were parking there. So on average, they got 100,000 pre pandemic. This just proposes let's take that amount of money out of the parking meter revenue and dedicate it to them. We can then discuss

what we want to do with this Ordinance.

In years ahead when we figure out what the revenue actually is going to be, if we even decide as a Board of Aldermen to raise parking revenue because we might decide we don't want to do that. We don't want to mess around with the parking rates. That's a perfectly in these times - in these economic times, that might be a reasonable decision. So the thought here is to stabilize the program - to stabilize what we're giving to the Downtown Improvement Committee every year starting with the next fiscal year, fiscal budget, and then hopefully for the next few years and we can review this on a case by case basis.

The last part of this that I'm going to say is nothing in here. This is just a commitment that we are making to downtown. It's a commitment that we are making to the businesses and to the people who patronize downtown and put their quarters into the meters. They put their credit cards into the app. and they pay for the improvements and the things that the committee does. So this is our commitment to them. There's nothing that precludes this Board of Aldermen from saying we're not going to fund you this year. I hope we wouldn't because we did that last year. I think it was the right move. I supported doing that but there is nothing that precludes us from not doing that. What the ordinance does do is it says this is our commitment to downtown. We've done this commitment for, I believe, that the first year was 2013. So I hope that I can get this Committee's support and the support of the Board of Aldermen because, again, it's something we've traditionally done. It goes to very good things. We all hopefully enjoyed the Stroll this last Saturday and we enjoy the other things that happen downtown. So I hope I can get your support and I'm open to any questions or comments.

#### Chairman Dowd

So basically what you've said is we're going to continue the support that we've been giving the Downtown Improvement Committee for the last number of years?

#### Alderman Clemons

To sum it up.

#### Alderman O'Brien

Yeah I have more a comment Mr. Chairman and that's got to be I'm gonna support this because at the very least like you have said, this follows our tradition of what we have supported in the past. I would like to speak briefly on the parking study. We were very fortunate to hire this particular company. However, like everything else, several Aldermen come up with their own particular concerns involving their own particular Ward which has extenuated the scope of the study. Parking rates have been discussed. Overnight parking has been discussed. Even structural and quite unfortunately, the pay scale of what we as a city pay the parking lot attendants. I think you can greet at Walmart for more money than you can with all the grief in the world as a parking lot attendant in the City of Nashua. So therefore, you know, I think this can go through with no problem. It does not handcuff or binds the hands of future aldermanic endeavors if they should see fit. So therefore, I have no problem and it helps out. Wonderful organization that I haven't worked with in my involvement with the Infrastructure Committee so I'm going to support this and thank you Mr. Chairman.

#### Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. So I just want to distill what you said. So before what we did was we didn't start putting money towards the downtown improvement until we got to \$738,001.

#### Alderman Clemons

28,000.

#### Alderman Sullivan

Yeah, thanks. And then we started counting. Basically what you're doing is we're gonna start counting right away and according to what I see here on the fiscal statements, we've collected to date \$186,386 in parking funds so far through October.

#### Alderman Clemons

Much more than that.

Alderman Sullivan

Well that's through October. So that's probably a month behind.

Alderman Clemons

Mr. Chairman, I know, we've collected more than that. I'm not sure why the fiscal note says that.

Alderman Sullivan

No, this is parking operations through October 31, 2022. Revenue to date - 186. I support this. I'm not, I'm just reading what I see here.

Alderman Clemons

Okay.

Alderman Sullivan

But to the bigger question of the trust funds that we have for downtown improvement, we have a balance in there of about just under 150,000. Where do those go? What do we do with those? I mean is that kind of in case of emergency? What happens there?

Chairman Dowd

You'd have to see who the spending authority is.

Alderman Clemons

I can answer that.

Chairman Dowd

You want to answer that question because Alderman Jette is next.

Alderman Clemons

Yeah I can answer as far as the spending agent and as far as the Downtown Improvement Committee Trust Fund goes, the expending agent is the Mayor with the Economic Development Director. The Committee has an advisory role over that so anything that is spent out of there should go to the Committee. They make a recommendation. Sometimes requests come in from like GAD for example, sometimes requests come in from the city itself, sometimes they come directly from conversations that happen at the Committee level, and then they go and they're brought - if they're under the threshold of the 25,000, they wouldn't go before Finance but if it's over 25,000, they go before Finance and the Finance Committee has the ultimate authority.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So I have a lot of questions about the whole idea of how we support our downtown. We've supported the downtown, I think, very generously. Since I've become an Alderman, there are several projects that we've undertaken. The biggest of which is the Center for the Arts which is a \$25 million project. Not all of it just city money but quite a bit of city money. The Center for the Arts was a performing arts center but now the Center for the Arts was supported for the idea that this would be a, for lack of a better term, a magnet to attract people to downtown to help support the downtown merchants. That's a lot of money that we're spending to support the downtown merchants.

We also support the Great American Downtown. I'm not sure how - Great American Downtown you know I went to their website and I couldn't figure out, you know, they do have a page where you can, you know, they're soliciting contributions. I don't know if they have a membership, if the downtown merchants are members of Great American Downtown, if they contribute any, you know, financially to support Great American Downtown. I'm not sure about that but I have that question.

We also support - we haven't had the Stroll for the past couple of years but this year we did. I don't know how much we spent on the Stroll. I don't know if the DPW trucks, the snowplows, and everything that were blocking the streets, the DPW employees that were there, the police, the officers that were there, the firefighters. You know, I don't know if, I know we

spent I don't know 20,000 comes to my mind but I'm not sure if that's accurate. I don't know if that's the money that was spent on those things - paying for the police, and the fire, and the DPW. I know the Stroll, you know, I went to the Stroll. My wife and I enjoyed it. It was it was a great event but up and down the street there was Fanelli amusements. They had this little thing where you roll a ball, and it falls into a loop, and it advances horses, and the winner of the horse race wins a little doll of some sort. I was watching and that cost \$5 a play. There was 14 spots. So every time they ran a race, it was 70 bucks going in there. I don't know if Fanelli paid anything to the city or Great American Downtown. To kind of have the opportunity to make that money, there were a lot of food trucks that were doing a big business. The bars were all packed. Some of the retail stores were open, which was nice to see and there seemed to be a good amount of traffic. I know that some sales were made. My wife did buy something. So, you know, I look at it - and even the merchants who - there were people that were selling home improvement windows, roofing services, and I don't know if those people paid to be on Main Street to be able to do that. It was it was a great opportunity for you know the stores. We went into places that we didn't even know existed. I see it's a great benefit to the merchants. I'm wondering are the merchants helping to pay for that, for the benefits that they receive?

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette I think we'd have to have somebody from GAD come in. It's not the Downtown Improvements Committee. You'd have to have somebody from GAD come in and explain it. So I'm not sure it's related to this particular Resolution.

Alderman Jette

Okay. I think it is. I think how we support downtown is part of this and when this was tabled, I thought that part of the reason that it was tabled was to have those people here to answer these types of questions.

Chairman Dowd

Well I think that the Downtown Improvements Committee people here if you want to ask a question about how they spend this particular money, you can ask them that question.

Alderman Jette

Okay. So following up on Alderman Sullivan's questions, the last time I looked in the Fiscal Year 23 budget book, I noticed that there was close to \$250,000 in that fund. Has that been reduced now to 150? So where did that 100,000? Could I ask that question of them? Where did the 100,000 go?

Chairman Dowd

Can somebody from Downtown Improvements Committee answer that or? Please introduce yourself.

Marylou Blaisdell

Marylou Blaisdell, 32 Webster Street. I Chair the Downtown Improvement Committee and I'm sorry I don't have my printout in front of me of what we have available. We have still some outstanding expenditures we're going to pay for lighting the trees and so forth. But every month in the budget that you will see online, the revenue expenditures from that you can see exactly what we authorized to be paid. This past year, we've been very conservative with our money because we haven't had anything for the last year. So this past year, the only thing that we have done is we've bought all new holiday banners for downtown. We have paid for all the installation of lighting the trees for Christmas. We paid for an intern that worked all summer long to talk to diners that were out and about on the benefits of dining downtown and the barriers. We paid extra to DPW to have the streets cleaned from May to September. They clean them once a week. We paid for them to have additional cleaning two times a week so that downtown would be a lot cleaner than it is during the summertime. So those are just a few of the things that we have used over the past year to pay for through the money that's been allocated.

We're a total separate entity from Great American Downtown. Great American Downtown is an event organization and what their task was, according to their Board of Directors is to put on events that are held downtown. They are to raise their money through sponsorships for the Stroll, paying for the Taste of Downtown through selling tickets. You asked if the vendors that were out on the streets at Saturday night in the past and I'm sure it applied this year, they do pay a fee to be downtown. All of those fees go back into Great American Downtown's budget. That budget has no overlap with the Downtown Improvement Committee at all. It's not even as a city budget. It is the Great American Downtown's budget. The city does fund them and I believe last year you funded them \$50,000 into their coffers. That probably pays for their Executive Director's salary I would assume or help pay for that.

We're two entirely different organizations. All of the funds allocated to us, we put back down into the infrastructure of downtown in some way. We feel that that money is generated by customers who do come downtown who do eat downtown, shop downtown. People who come to see attorneys, and accountants, and so forth. As I said earlier, we tried to be extremely diligent in how we do spend that money. I think we are. I'm very proud of the way our committee discusses expenditures. We never take it an expenditure lightly. We have very in depth conversations on how that money is going to be spent.

I can't speak to Great American Downtown. I will then what I do know from being a prior board member years ago on that but I think that downtown needs support. If we didn't have a Downtown Improvement Committee, if you didn't fund Downtown Improvement Committee, I don't know how you would pay for the holiday lights. It have to go into somebody else's budget within the city. I don't know how you pay for the banners. I don't know how you'd pay for extra street cleaning, or interns, or consultant. We did consultant studies. We paid for a trolley service years ago. So everything we do is to help and benefit those people who come downtown to use downtown if that helps.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up question.

Alderman Jette

So does the Downtown Improvement Committee - do you solicit money from the merchants themselves?

Marylou Blaisdell

No. We never have. That wasn't the intent of our committee at all. Our committee was set up in the very beginning when our committee was established, it was established on the basis that anything over \$728,000 in line item 166 would come back to the Downtown Improvement Committee. Any monies that were ever solicited from downtown merchants came from GAD. Nothing has ever been solicited nor will it ever be solicited from our committee.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up question.

Alderman Jette

I wasn't an Alderman then when this plan was - I wanted to say - I'm trying to think of a better word than "scheme". I don't mean it derogatorily but this plan to the 728,000 and then the extra parking revenue. My memory not having been an Alderman at the time just a citizen, my memory is that there was an effort by the city to establish a business district that where the property owners in the business district would somehow pay extra taxes, extra property taxes. From those extra property taxes, you know, that money would be used to plow the sidewalks, clean the streets, put up lights, and take good care of downtown to provide a good environment for the benefit of the other merchants, stores, and the restaurants, and everything. That didn't pass and this came up instead of that.

Marylou Blaisdell

I think what you're referring to it was a bid. It wasn't any additional property taxes assessed to the property owners. It was a business development which would have gone through Great American Downtown. When Great American Downtown when it first started, it was under another name. There was a bid and merchants paid X amount of dollars into it if they wanted to be part of Great American Downtown. Many merchants that was not something they opted to do. That hasn't been in effect for many years. Downtown - one thing I think people should understand, the city services that we do receive is yes we get the streets plowed, the sidewalks plowed. Although most of us plow our own sidewalks, we pay for our own trash pickup. We don't have any city services for trash, or recycling, or anything. All of that we do pay ourselves. So we do pay for a lot of services that homeowners or residents in the city receive. We do not receive those. We pay for them ourselves.

Alderman Jette

And that's true of all, you know, maybe the merchants on Amherst Street, and the merchants on the Daniel Webster Highway, the merchants on Northeastern Boulevard, you know they pay for all of those services themselves to but they don't get what you're getting down here as far as city support. That's something I'm trying to justify in my mind. It's something that people ask me.



Marylou Blaisdell

Well I think we are the heart of the city. Downtown is the heart of your city. If you have a downtown that isn't successful or isn't vibrant, then I think the whole pulse of your city suffers. So in my opinion, you know, it is important to keep the pulse of the city strong, and to keep your nucleolus of your city, your part of your city strong. I think we as downtown business owners work hard to do that in our own businesses. I think that other areas in the city don't have parking meters and we do downtown. I think that sets us apart from other businesses and other business districts within the city.

Alderman Jette

Except for the business districts have their own parking lots.

Chairman Dowd

I think it's time to go to somebody else.

Alderman Clemons

I just wanted to answer a question that Alderman Jetty had and that's that he asked originally how this came up. You are correct, it did come up as a business improvement district was what it was called. Manchester has one. Basically what it is, is it's a tax overlay. So you have, you know, you have your taxes that everybody pays and then within the district, there's a sub tax. It's an overlay tax that everybody pays. What happens is, is that tax goes into the essentially what we do here with the Downtown Improvement Committee. It goes into a fund that, you know, goes from year to year. They have a committee that expends the funds, things like that. That's how Manchester decided to do it.

We down here do a little bit differently. We decided that rather than tax the property owners' downtown, that we would collect the fees from those who visited downtown and who utilize downtown. So in other words, the people that came to downtown paid a parking meter somewhere. They're the ones who are going to benefit from any improvements that are being had. They're the ones who are going to bear the cost of that. That's what was decided years ago as opposed to doing a business overlay, or a property tax overlay. So that decision was made years ago and where the \$728,000 comes into it was that was a compromise because at the time, there was concern that we were going to eat away at the parking meter revenue that was coming in to pay for things like paving, to pay for improvements to sidewalks, and things like that.

Now in in 2011 and 2010, those were legitimate concerns because we didn't have the paving program as we know it today where we bond \$5 million every year, right? So you would take \$300,000 of that money and it would go towards paving a couple of streets, or doing this year, that, and the other thing. Now we have a different program. We have a different way of paying for that. It's not so much a concern of where that's coming from because it's such an astronomical number. By doing things, in my opinion, by nickel and diming that way, we got so far behind in the paving then now we have to catch up.

I think that this still meets the spirit of the ordinance because the goal here is to get us back to at least \$728,000 a year in parking revenue. That is the goal of the parking study. That was the goal to incorporate how do the barriers affect that, what do we have to do to improve the parking at the garages, how much revenue do we have to raise knowing that all these factors are here? We don't have the answer to that yet. We don't know what the political will of this body is going to be yet. If we don't act tonight on this, we're going to fall two years behind in being able to make up any significant money to go towards the Downtown Improvement Committee. So it's not that I don't think that the original commitment of anything over and above 728,000 goes to the Downtown Improvement Committee. I think that's still valid but I think we're in a situation here where we need to make sure that we're funding the things that we funded in the past since 2013. We're making sure that we have a stable fund for the downtown and this is the best way to do it, in my opinion, because you're still taking the money from the original source.

Chairman Dowd

So are there any other people that have questions.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. Actually one of my questions - I didn't realize this was coming off the table this evening so I apologize that I did not get these questions out in advance. I wanted to know something similar to Alderman Jette. I'd love to see a list of projects that have happened. I support this committee. I know they've done a ton of great work downtown. Even just looking through their minutes, I'm unclear as to what has happened. I know some of it right and so that was my question. One – I would like a list of projects that have happened and where the money has got so that we just can say to people this is why we're allocating the money.

We're also talking about being fiscally responsible. It's a really hard year. What if the revenues don't come in? People don't come downtown parking. If that's not a typo, then we're basically handing over the entire amount of parking fees that have come in this year to this committee. I know we have the ability to change that but I do have concerns about that if we don't know what the revenue is at this moment. I know that COVID changed how parking was happening downtown, and that wasn't the same, and there's been construction, and all those things but it makes me really nervous to just say yup we're gonna flatline this budget without knowing some of those answers.

Then I also had another question. So about the list of projects, my second question was in looking at this year, the last set of minutes I see is in May. Has the committee not met since May?

Marylou Blaisdell

I can answer that. The committee did not meet in July. We have met since May many times. All of those committee minutes are sent to the designated email at City Hall that we are instructed to send it to and that office at City Hall is responsible for posting them. We are not allowed to post because we are not city employees to the city website. All the minutes from every meeting we have are here at City Hall.

Alderwoman Kelly

Can I follow up on that?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderwoman Kelly

That's an interesting point. So if there is not a city person sitting on the board, does that delay? Are there other committees that are coming up against this?

Marylou Blaisdell

No. The Economic Development office used to have another person that did take our minutes and posted them. Our committee now takes our minutes. We send them to the City Clerk's office. From that point, either I assume they post them or they send them to wherever within the City Hall they need to be posted. Every set of minutes from every meeting that we have been submitted to the city.

Alderwoman Kelly

Okay. I'd love to see what the hang up is there because it's really important that people are able to see them.

Marylou Blaisdell

I don't know what the hang up is but I know they all are here. I have them all timestamped and I know they're here.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you for doing that.

Chairman Dowd

Alderwoman Kelly you'll have to direct that question City Clerk's office.

Alderwoman Kelly

I'm happy to do that. I would love to know where they are and I'd love to have them before we take a final vote of this board.

Chairman Dowd

Well this will go to the full Board for...

Alderwoman Kelly

Unless it gets tabled.

Chairman Dowd

Excuse me? Yes.

Alderman Caron

Thank you. I appreciate that. A few things and I don't have any problem with giving them some money. My understanding was that we were supposed to be getting notified that the parking study was coming to the full Board some time in December. I think considering everything that's going on, we should be getting some. I know you're Chair of Infrastructure but I think it's important that we should have been getting something even if it was just little things. This is what was going on. I know as the Alderman for the last two years, I have told people within my Ward that until that study was done I wasn't going to try to bring in legislation to give somebody on street parking, etc, etc. So I think it's important that we get that number.

The second thing is, I'm really disappointed that we're not posting these minutes because it's unfair to that committee to feel that they're doing their job, and we're not doing ours, and they're getting beat up by the public because of it. I support this. I think that giving a flat amount at this point is a good idea because of everything. Until we have the parking study. I don't know if maybe we should look at it a smaller amount until we see. I don't feel that we want to tie future Aldermen's hands that this is a, you know, a done deal.

And finally because I put in legislation of a year for \$25,000 for the Nashua Senior Center to do ongoing things that the city doesn't do at the end of the year, I make sure that the Executive Director gives the Board of Aldermen a list of what they spent that \$25,000 on so you have an idea of what that expenditure is. So I agree with Alderman Kelley. Maybe in December if that committee would put together and say okay you gave us \$100,000, this is what we did. We bought new lights. We did this. We got extra sweeping done, what have you - although it is the responsibility of the city to plow the streets because it's not - the businesses don't own the streets the city does. So we shouldn't, you know, nobody should be charging them for doing their due diligence

Also as far as GAD, they do charge for people to be at the Strolls and different things because I've worked with them forever, you know, and on some of these bigger projects. So it's not a freebie. You can't just set up your hotdog stand without paying some kind of fee. It's like going to the fair. You have to pay a fee to be there for the three days. But I think those are very important - the parking study, getting some information, and finding out why IT isn't getting that information out so that the public is not making statements that they're not doing their job as a committee because I think they do a very good job. I have no complaints. Thank you for letting me go.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I'm not on this Committee but I'm gonna make a couple of comments. So I thought of the Nashua Senior Center in the same way I think of GAD. They have an Executive Director though they don't report directly to the city where this is more to me like a committee like a lot of the volunteer committees we have. So as far as the minutes, you know, I mean if we read our emails, we see that these minutes haven't been coming up that fast because there's been Right to Knows on them.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Thibeault, minutes aren't part of this particular motion.

Alderman Thibeault

It came up.

Chairman Dowd

It came up but it shouldn't have come up because it's not part of this question.

Alderman Thibeault

Well yeah, no, no. I'm sorry.

Alderman Kelly

(inaudible) to allow it because it's the only way we can see where they're spending the money.

Alderman Thibeault

Yeah well I'll tell that right now...

Alderman Kelly

Because we have no idea what they're doing.

Chairman Dowd

Exactly. Keep it in that context.

Alderman Thibeault

And that's exactly the context I had it in. I mean if we don't have minutes, we don't know what they're spending it on, right? I mean you're the budget head. You should know this stuff, right? So I mean we all should know. I support this 100% but now you've got me going down a different road here with this. We get these Right to Know request on this and if we don't see the minutes, how are we supposed to get that back to our constituents on what these committees do? We give \$100,000 to a committee whether I support it, or whether I agree with it or not, I get constituents that probably don't agree with it. I'm sure we do. I'm not a Ward that's on Main Street. So I'm sure there's plenty of people in my Ward like Alderman Jette's that probably question it. I mean we had Alderman Jette talk about GAD for like 20 minutes and that's not part of this either.

Chairman Dowd

I know it isn't.

Alderman Thibeault

Okay. So that's - you can have any committee. I'm done.

Alderman Clemons

Yeah, thank you. So it's not like the financing or the spending is done in darkness. I'm sure that there is a list that CFO Griffin has that, you know, everything that comes out of that account is spent. It's just a matter of requesting that. I didn't bring it tonight because to be honest with you, I don't think that it necessarily - it's not a surprise. We know what the Downtown Improvement Committee has done over the last 12 years. Ten years. They've funded things like the banners. They funded things like the lights. They've done the street cleaning. They've done at times concert. Sometimes they've supplemented some of the things that GAD has done. They funded the study for the Performing Arts Center. It's all public record and it's out there.

I did have Donna Graham put this on the agenda last Friday anticipated to be taken off the table because I wanted people to have the opportunity to know that it was happening. I wanted the public to know. To me, this is just a law of averages. We generally fund the Downtown Improvement Committee \$100,000 every year. What they spend the money on isn't done in secret. It's done in public meetings. I'm sorry that for whatever reason why the minutes aren't posted, I don't know but the list is available. All of the accounting from that expendable trust fund is available and you can get that from the CFO at any time. To me, this is a not so much what is the committee spending the money on? To me, this is does the committee have the money to spend on anything? Our commitment to the downtown years ago was to make sure that the money was there. I think that the committee does a very good job funding the money.

So the question for me tonight isn't what they're spending the money on, it's do they have the money to spend on anything and do we want to continue to do that? In my opinion, I think this is a very good and justifiable cause. It's a commitment that we made years ago when we raised parking meters and charged people \$1.50 on Main Street. We said to them, part of the reason that we're charging you \$1.50 now is because that money that you put in that you pay is going to come right back here. So to not honor that commitment, well, then we ought to reduce it and call the committee quits. I don't think that's the right thing to do. I think that puts our downtown in a perilous position. So I would recommend that we move

forward with this. If you want the information, I'm sure you can get it from the CFO and to me, this is about whether or not we're going to keep our commitment to the people of this city that we made years ago.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions?

Alderwoman Kelly

It is a comment. I know that the previous speaker was the person who put this committee together. I think it's a great idea. I think they've done great work. I think that some of the things that were just said are not clear like saying that we all know where the money is going is not clear. I'm not trying to nickel and dime anybody but as someone who's sat on Budget and someone who sat on Finance, anything that goes through the city over \$10,000, we looked at to the cent. So if we asked a committee that we give \$100,000 to what have you done? How hard is it to give us a list of what they've done? I mean GAD would come in and present what they did on their \$30,000. What did they do this year for the \$30,000 we give? It was just so that we knew what was going on so if someone says to me what is the Downtown Improvement Committee doing, I can give a very clear and honest answer knowing what's going on. I just feel like the conversation tonight was like actually trying to make that not happen in multiple ways and I don't understand why.

Alderman Clemons

If I could briefly respond to that? I like I said, it's a public record.

Chairman Dowd

I mean I would assume that has to be in the record of expenditures approved by the Finance Committee every...

Alderman Clemons

Correct.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. I think to that point is so the ordinance says this is not binding. So we can say okay we're going to do it and then June rolls around and we say we're not going to do it. But to your point, Alderwoman Kelly if we had an expenditure and let's just say that we wanted to make an amendment to pare down by \$50,000 the amount that we give, it would be good to know a historical record to say well this committee has run quite well on \$50,000 a year and \$50,000 a year will cover it. So we're just going to appropriate \$50,000 for downtown improvement and then we know what we're talking about. Just to tie it all in, I think that that is important.

Alderman Clemons

Well I agree with Alderman Sullivan on that point. We're to have that discussion is when it comes up in the budget every year. So if we say okay and that's what happened last year. To be fair, that's what happened last year, right? There was \$100,000 in there and rather than spend it, the Budget Committee decided to take \$25,000 of it and supplement GAD and cut the other \$75,000. So there's precedent there for that to happen. I think that's - you have to have some sort of baseline to have that discussion and I think that's where the 100,000 comes in and then you have your discussion at Budget Committee. Like the previous speaker said, there's no reason why you wouldn't be able to adjust that if need be. A

Alderman Jette

Yeah so I'm looking at the ordinance and I don't see where it says it's not binding. It says starting with Fiscal Year 2024, an amount equivalent to the sum of parking revenues of 100,000 shall be appropriated annually in the budget to be used for the purpose of improving downtown, etc. So we shouldn't pass legislation and then say well we can always - it's not really binding. We can always change it. Well we shouldn't pass it. I'm not necessarily against this but I think there are a lot of unanswered questions here. I think what I don't like about this is that we've got this parking study that's about to be revealed and there's no urgency. I mean we're talking about Fiscal Year 2024. So we've got the parking study that's going to come out any week now. Then we've got a budget that the Mayor and the department heads are going to put together and submit to the Budget Review Committee. This is saying that we're going to give the Downtown Improvement Committee \$100,000 no matter how much parking revenue there is. I don't like the idea of binding the people who put the budget together ahead of time.

So I think there's some unanswered questions. So I don't know how far this will go but rather than forcing me to vote against this tonight because of these questions, I'm going to move that we table this so that we can get the answers that we're looking for and then when we do vote on it, we can vote on it enthusiastically or not but we'll know the answers to the questions we have.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN JETTE TO TABLE, 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**

Alderman Clemons

Yes so I have a question. Can the committee come up with a list of things that they would like to see at the next committee meeting?

Chairman Dowd

Alright.

Alderman Clemons

So that we can get that prepared. I can have Marylou get that prepared.

Chairman Dowd

Please submit any questions you have to me and Donna so that Donna can we get them to the Committee to get back to us before it's considered again.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you.

Alderman Clemons

And is there any way we can find out if that parking studies going to be presented next month?

Chairman Dowd

There's actually a meeting. He can tell you.

Alderman O'Brien

Again, the company, the vendor that we hired did an exhaustive study. There is a draft out and I can get you the draft. I do not recommend it as bathroom reading because you're going to be in there a while. It is that comprehensive. Okay. It involves like I say, the salaries for the Parking Department, the infrastructure, and the need for infrastructure repairs, and comparative costs to parking meters, for example, such as what Manchester and other communities are paying. It also looks at on street parking. A lot of questions. Many of our streets aren't wide enough for overnight night parking. So this was a pretty comprehensive study. It's done correctly. It's in the final review with certain people - Community Development and it should be coming out relatively shortly for your reading pleasure.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Clemons. Are you all set with your question?

Alderman Caron

Well I understand it. It's comprehensive but even if someone from parking came and said we're at this stage and we should be here with some final approval but here's some tidbits. Okay. Because parking and the meters is, I think, one of the prime pieces of that. Even if they gave us a little bit of a hint so we know what we're doing. If they're looking at a large sum for meter fees is that what we're going to take into consideration? So I just feel that, you know, we've been hearing this since I came back on the Board every month that this was ready, this was ready, and then I got told I asked the question and they said definitely in December. So I'm just asking if that could be part and parcel of this because this has been tabled a long time.

Chairman Dowd

So it's a question to Alderman O'Brien.

GENERAL DISCUSSIONAlderman O'Brien

Yeah, it's out. Like I say, it's in the hands of others. But with many of your questions, all this within the parking study is a recommendation. The full authority rests with the full Board of Aldermen. So to come up with anything would be short at this particular time, piecemealed or whatever would be short sighted. There's going to be many different subjects that are going to need to be vetted by this not only Committee of Infrastructure but by the full Board of Aldermen. Case in point in an example like you say, the parking meters. Do you want to be like Manchester and go up into the rates or, you know, for right now, the average citizen in Nashua gets the bang for the buck.

I would also like to clearly state, there's nobody in the United States. There's no city, there is no town that really uses parking meters as a source of revenue. They're intended for one purpose and one purpose only is that's to have a flush of customers and create organization so that the vendors, you know, the people, the stakeholders on Main Street in the example can have people coming into the shops and stuff like that. If that was the case, that's why they chase you. You don't want an employee backing out in front of your business if you ran the business. That's not a good way to treat your customers. So to guard against that, that's why the parking meters.

Chairman Dowd

So I'd have to say that this is under general discussion since we already tabled that other one.

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah I would say so.

Alderman Clemons

Yes, thank you. In regards to the parking meter study, I would just caution this to relate too heavily on what we're doing with my ordinance with that. Not to say that they're not related because they are, but there's a lot of discussion that has to be had. So let's say it does come out in January, right? There's gonna be a lot of discussion as to how much money a) do we raise the meter revenue? Do we raise the meter rates? B) Where do we raise the meter rates? Like there's three different zones right now, right? C) Are we raising the rates to not only fund the Downtown Improvement Committee as the ordinance exists now which anything over \$728,000 would automatically go to them if we did that? So mind you if we raise the rates, we don't change this ordinance the way that it's written right now is if we raised the rates and we started to make a million dollars, then they'd get \$350,000 a year.

So the question isn't what are we going to do with that? The question is what are we going to do for next year? The way that it's calculated, it will be that by the time January rolls around, that calendar year has already passed and the amount of money that would be allocated to them is determined and it's going to be whether Alderman Sullivan's right or I'm right and it's more closer to, you know, \$600,000, either way it's not going to get to that point where they're over that threshold.

Chairman Dowd

Don't go too far down because...

Alderman Clemons

I don't want to go too far down but I'm just saying that the question before you is really what are we going to do for next year because again, the ordinance can always be changed.

Chairman Dowd

Okay.

Alderman Clemons

I think there's too many variables to say well we want to do for certain...

Chairman Dowd

Until its back off the table.

Alderman Clemons

Until we know what the parking study is but this is more of a stop gap to say okay in June, we're going to fund this much to the Downtown Improvement Committee.

Chairman Dowd

So my position on this is if we're concerned about giving them \$100,000 in all in one fell swoop, the ordinance probably should have been written to give them a percentage of the monies collected for parking. It can be given out more than once a year. You could say when it gets to that amount, you give them this amount if we're going to tie it to parking. I don't think we ought to go down too much detail here because it's tabled. So did you have a...?

Alderwoman Kelly

I was actually gonna say almost the exact same thing. I was going to ask the historical significance of the \$728,000. We can talk about it when it comes off the table but I was wondering if that's even a relevant number. Where did it come from?

Chairman Dowd

The other thing I wanted to mention is I get – I forget if it was an email or text message from Alderman Sullivan about an article in the Union Leader, which I happen to be reading at the exact time I got the message that the new performing arts center in Laconia is absolutely thrust the downtown in Laconia, which believe me is not something that's a lively place into a great place to visit. Every show - six shows - I think it was six or seven. Every one has been sold out. 750 seats just like ours and it's run by the same company as ours - Spectacle. It's doing great and it's improving the entire economy of the downtown. So things may change significantly we hope when the performing arts center – I don't know if you want to comment on that same thing.

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah, Alderman Dowd as you know, I do have connection with Laconia. Over the years, I saw vacant storefronts. One of my greatest fears, you know, some of the newer Aldermen but some of the older Aldermen, we really feared the COVID. I really thought that there was going to be plywood up on the storefronts and stuff like that. Thanks to the wisdom of everybody involved, we survived it. Laconia did not fare well and there was many vacant storefronts. I'm happy to say that every storefront in the Laconia area, I don't think you could get a storefront now. They've all been repopulated and selling. A friend of mine owns that consignment shop that's right down the street. He says you won't believe the offer that was made for his property. But he says this is my part time fun. I'm retired. This is what I like to do. So there was many shops, you know, I was in my internal request or looking for my quest to look for cast iron frying pans. I had the fetish for cast iron since I've been on the Fire Department. It's the original nonstick let me tell you. The thing is now what used to be like secondhand store, they're all now bakeries and other things.

There's another thing that came into play – CAKE which is Chaos and Kindness. They opened up another theater there too. So you know as we lead into discussion in the future, Elm Street possibly something to put in the back of your mind as well. I think the average citizens in Nashua is going to see the difference and the proof in the pudding so to speak. Thank you for submitting that. We heard a lot of, you know, the naysayers. Let's see how it goes. I would like to sit on that fence and giggle and say well at least look at it. We're doing all right.



Alderwoman Kelly

I just wanted to thank, I believe it was Alderman Sullivan who shared that. I actually grew up there as well. So I used to go to that theater when it was a movie theater. I don't know if you've ever been to the soda shop but it just reopened. That was the big place I went when I was a kid. They had the little things in the front. Anyways. It was lovely to see that they're having a vibrance downtown because of it. I'm looking forward to our performing arts center opening.

Chairman Dowd

Yeah it's been a Sleepy Hollow. Any other general comments?

Alderman Jette

Yeah, thank you. Just to my fellow Budget Review Committee members, I'm sure you as like me have received many communications from our constituents about the effect of the combination of the revaluation and well because of the revaluation, the tax rate went down but the net effect on people - and I don't know if it's most cases, but a lot of people are getting tax bills higher than what they were paying before. So I think for a long time, you know, and people have pointed out that we're limited as to what we can do. We have to play the hand that is dealt to us by the State but we have to do whatever we can to deal that hand skillfully.

One of the things that I think that we can do is try to generate more revenue. One of the ways of generating more revenue is, and I think we've been doing that, is some of the departments have reviewed their fee schedules and so we're seeing some increase in that regard. With all due respect to the Chairman of the Infrastructure Committee, it is true that there are parts of our parking scheme. Again, it's not a derogatory word - a parking plan. Like on Main Street, we do charge more for Main Street and the time is more limited for the purpose that you indicated - to increase turnover. But we do have parking areas where there's all day parking. There's 10 hour parking. So those areas are not designed for turnover. They're designed - that's where we hope the employees go and park all day long and leave the Main Street spots open. So, you know, there are parts of our parking plan that does have revenue as one of its objectives. That's how we pay for maintaining the parking garages. Hopefully providing funding for the Downtown Improvement Committee. So the more money we can generate reasonably, you know, not gouging anybody but charging a fair amount and for service that's worth it is something that we ought to look more at and not just dismiss out of hand. Thank you.

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah thank Alderman Jette for bringing that up. But I would like to stop anybody for those internal search for the 10 hour parking spaces. They don't really exist for the public. I think what you're referring to Alderman Jette is some of the municipal lots are rented out to individual businesses. You can see it. It's the green tag that has a number on it on the wall. That spot is selected and rented by that particular business for their employees or whoever so therefore, you're not really supposed to park there. It is not meant for the public uses but it allows them to park there for an extended period of time. The rest of us are confined to a meter. So just a clarification.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I got up this morning 4:30 to do a 5:30 interview for the United Way telethon, which is a great event and tomorrow is the Day of Giving. And then, you know, came home, worked till six o'clock tonight, came to the Historic District Commission meeting 6:30, came here to the Board of Aldermen meeting, and now I'm here at a meeting I don't really have to be at. I could have been home two hours ago having dinner with my children, my wife but I'm not. I'm still here at 9:25. When I come to these meetings, I'm here for my constituents. I'm not here because they're enjoyable watching everybody argue about something. I'm here to ask questions, to listen, to understand what's going on, and while everybody else is filibustering, I should be allowed to say what I need to say are the questions I need to ask. And so if I don't need to come to these meetings anymore, I won't. If I'm not part of this Committee, maybe I shouldn't be part of this Committee and shouldn't be coming in here. I can stay home and the five of you, seven of you however is on this committee can vote and I'll just rubber stamp whatever you guys want when it gets to the Board of Aldermen meeting. You guys tell me.

I thought the right thing is to come to these committee and to debate these issues that we're talking about so we can make a decision. I wasn't happy with the decision made tonight but I certainly is what the Committee is there for is to debate issues and to decide where you want to go with it, whether approve it, or not approve it, or go to table. So that's why I come to these meetings. I come here because that's what I was elected to do is to understand what goes on in the city and to ask the questions I need to ask and to understand the things I need to understand so I can go back to my constituents and tell them. I assume that's what we're all here for but that's all I got. Good night.

Chairman Dowd

That's fine as long as you stay on topic. You mentioned about GAD.

Alderman Thibeault

I didn't mention GAD. I did not mention GAD. That came from over there.

Chairman Dowd

Yes and I stopped him from talking about GAD. So it goes both ways. That's the job of the Chairman is to keep us on track. Keep us on point.

Alderman Thibeault

I know. You want to get home. I got it. You can move on.

Chairman Dowd

Alright. Any other general discussion? Seeing none. There's no public comment. There's no one here.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN - None

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was declared closed at 9:26 p.m.

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