

# BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 9, 2020

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Wednesday, December 9, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. via teleconference.

## Chairman Dowd

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

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

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

To access Zoom, please refer to the agenda or the City's website for the meeting link.

*To join by phone dial: 1-929-205-6099 Meeting ID: 874 0847 5829 and Passcode: 899544*

*The public may also view the meeting via Channel 16.*

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, through public postings. Instructions have also been provided on the City of Nashua's website at [www.nashuanh.gov](http://www.nashuanh.gov) and publicly noticed at City Hall and Nashua Public Library.

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

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

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

Alderman O'Brien called the roll and asked them to state the reason he or she could not attend, confirmed that they could hear the proceedings, and stated who was present with him or her.

The roll call was taken with 5 members of the Budget Review Committee present:

Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman  
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons, Vice Chair  
Alderman Ernest Jette  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.

Members not in Attendance: Alderman Jan Schmidt  
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly

Also in Attendance: Dorothy Clarke, Deputy Corporation Counsel

ROLL CALL

Alderman O'Brien

Alderman-at-Large Michael O'Brien is present.

Alderman Wilshire

I am here, I can hear you, and I am alone.

Alderman Jette

I am here, I am alone and I can hear the proceedings.

Chairman Dowd

I am here, I can hear the proceedings, and I am at home practicing social distancing. I think Ben was on mute, you'll now sign in.

Alderman Clemons

I am having internet connection trouble, so I am going to log off and come back on. I can't hear anything so I am going to log off and come back on.

Chairman Dowd

Alright.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, we have 1, 2, 3, 4 – 5 members present. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alright, so we have a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

**R-20-097**

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire  
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman Jan Schmidt  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman Thomas Lopez  
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright  
Alderman Skip Cleaver

**APPROVING THE COST ITEMS OF A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NASHUA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND NASHUA PUBLIC LIBRARY EMPLOYEES, AFT, FPE, LOCAL #4831 FROM JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2023 AND AUTHORIZING A RELATED TRANSFER**

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

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

The motion on the floor is to recommend final passage of R-20-097 to full Board of Aldermen. Is there someone here that will present the contract? Is there any, Attorney Clarke are you going?

Dorie Clark, Deputy Corporation Counsel

Yeah I would like to do a short outline of the cost items and then I'd turn it to Director McCormack to fill in a little more of the details related to the salary study.

Chairman Dowd

OK.

Attorney Clarke

So yes, actually the whole negotiating team is here tonight; it was myself, Director McCormack and Linda LaFlamme who is the president of the Board of Trustees for the Library. And then I also see Weston Bent is listening in, he's the current Union President for the Library Employees. So if I could go through, I did send a Memo, I've been trying to do that because I know it makes it easier to sort of, at least understand what the cost items are and then you can go look at the contract rather than trying to flip through it and find the red lines.

So just to briefly go through the cost items changes that we have tonight in the Library Contract. In Article 9, Work week and work schedule, we added some language relating to remote access work and curbside pickup, some of the changes that have been happening due to the pandemic. The only element of that that seemed potentially to be a cost item was that we did provide that for remote access work, necessary technology would be provided to the employee if they needed it.

In Article 14, Paid Leaves, with respect to Holidays, if an employee, one of their regular workdays was on the

Holiday, the prior contract language said that they would get paid straight time for that like as if they worked a regular day. So what ended up happening is that those employees would almost get paid like an extra day that week so instead we are going to make it that the employee would get a different day off during the same pay period. So essentially their pay would stay the same for that week.

In Article 15, the Article on Unpaid Leaves – we reduced the amount of time that the City would pay the City's portion of the health, dental and life insurance premiums during that unpaid leave. In the tuition reimbursement article, we broadened the degree programs a little bit that would be eligible for the partial reimbursement. It used to say "just required degrees" but now it will also be for relevant degrees. And we increased the maximum amount one employee could receive if there was money left over at the end of the Fiscal year.

In the Health Insurance Article, the Union agreed to make the changes to the current HMO that the Mayor and the Administration have been looking for. Those will be effective 7/1/21 similar to some of the other contracts you have recently seen. And we put in the language on the high deductible health plan so the insurance language was changed to be what the Mayor has been looking for.

In the Safety & Health Article, we added some language related to unanticipated emergency library closures sort of setting out some expectations for the employees based on how long that was going to be. And again, some of the issues that came up related to this pandemic, this Union was a little more interested than some of the other ones about talking about some of those and planning, hopefully, if it never happens again, but there is some language that would help guide what happens if anything happened in the future.

And then it is a 3-year contract and then the remainder of the cost items are really in the wage article. So based on some issues the library had identified with hiring and retention and learning about what other library staff was getting paid, Director McCormack undertook a salary study. And then we showed it to the Union and negotiated on it and we are going to – there's a plan in place to adjust employee wages for Fiscal '21 pursuant to that salary study and then sort of formula on how to calculate where to put people in those new ranges taking into account their years of seniority. So I am going to have Jen talk more about that in one minute. I'll just finish up by saying and then in the subsequent two years, Fiscal '22 and '23, we have 2.25% general wage increases. So that's sort of the overview of the cost item changes and now I'll turn to Director McCormack.

#### Jennifer McCormack, Library Director

Great, thank you Dorie. Hi everybody, it's good to see you all. I wanted to clarify one point Dorie made and just add another item that I think is of interest. So related to the Holiday Pay, I think to clarify in the current contract, if a Holiday falls on an employee's regular day off, so anyone who was lucky enough to arrange to have Mondays off as part of their regular work schedule, when a Holiday falls on that day off currently they could get paid for that day and still work 5 days, so essentially have a six day work week. So we changed that so that if a Holiday falls on your regular day off you would just take a different day off during the week.

And the other item related to compensation is the way Sunday hours are compensated. Previously staff who worked on a Sunday, would be eligible to take double those hours off during the same work week, so a four hour shift on Sunday would mean you got a whole 8 hour day off during the week. And we would have to obviously fill in with other staff. So one concession our staff made is they have given up that and Sundays would be compensated either at time and a half pay or they could earn compensatory time, that time and a half, that 1.5 rate.

So the salary study as Dorie indicated, the Board and I identified a problem. We were posting positions and good example is the Supervisor of Youth Services Position, that's one of the latest professional positions we have posted and we got almost no applicants. I had individuals who know me personally reach out about the position to tell me the salary is just too low. We had a candidate who went through the whole interview process and we made her an offer and she withdrew because the salary was too low. And we anecdotally that it was in issue based on the quality of applicants and the number of staff that we had leave kind of for

greener pastures. So at the Board's instruction, I did a salary study and that salary study, we started that a year ago, it's been a long story.

You may have seen in the packet there was kind of a narrative so we identified communities to look at based on the communities that Larry Budreau, the HR Director had used when he did a review of the unaffiliated salaries a couple of years ago and then we added some other communities that were our direct competitors, like Merrimack, Lowell, Derry. So we had 11 or 12 communities that we looked at. And as a result of that study it was obvious that our salaries were below par in every single grade in the contract. I did a little bit of quick arithmetic today. So on average, our starting salary for all of the grids of the contract was almost \$8,400.00 below the median of all the other communities. So in order to identify the new hiring, the new salary ranges for this salary study, we took a median – so for Grade A we took a median of all the other communities and added 2% that was how we identified where kind of the industry is where, our target for where we should be. And our average, our starting salaries were about \$8,400.00 below that. So that was a little big discouraging.

So we identified the new salary ranges and in the library contract, different than some other contracts, those are actually hiring ranges, different than the salary grid that's in the unaffiliated. So that range is what we use to place people when we hire new staff. So the way I approached it once we identified the salaries that would be appropriate, we looked at every individual working in the library and placed them per grade in the new range that we had identified. And we did that using a formula that used their years of service and we adjusted that according to, because we have some staff who have been at work at the NPL for 43 years so we had to do a little bit of – we had to cap it and we did some adjustment. We ended up with a new salary grid, I don't like to say that but a new set of corrected salaries for our staff that accurately represents the length of service at the library and what competitive salaries would be for their particular position.

In one sort of anomaly is our IT Coordinator, we instead of placing him ... most libraries don't have a Weston, and IT Coordinator, so rather than put him in a grade with other librarians or library related staff, we looked at what the City job descriptions and salaries are for the City's IT Department. We identified a position for our IT Coordinator that was similar to something on the City's IT Department and so that one position has its own grade, that is our new grade 7. And as a result, with the corrected salaries, I think the number that you are kind of considering tonight is that cost of year 1, the cost of the adjustments to get our current staff in-line with where they ought to be. The cost is \$174,000.00. We had anticipated the salary study and I was able to budget \$116,000.00 in this Fiscal Year in contingency. So there is a bit of a difference and we are able to make up that cost in a couple of ways. First of all by leaving the page positions vacant, we laid off all of our pages at the beginning of the pandemic and we have postponed hiring the Supervisor of Youth Services and we will continue to postpone that probably until February. And that combined with leaving the pages vacant, the page positions vacant leaves us with a very comfortable margin to cover that Year 1 cost.

I am happy to answer questions, it's kind of a lot to absorb if you haven't been looking at it forever.

Chairman Dowd

OK so questions? Alderman Wilshire?

Alderman Wilshire

Thank you. Jen good job on the salary study and looking to bring those positions up to where they should be, it makes sense, it really makes sense. And I think you did a really good job, it sounds like a fair contract to me. So thank you and your negotiating team.

Chairman Dowd

And the whole story is in Appendix D in the contract. Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. I said this the other night about a different contract, but I mean it across the board. And what I said was, when you are comparing Nashua you should be comparing it because of exactly the reason why you did which is we are not doing good enough. Because we want to be the best, we want to be the best everywhere, we want to be competitive with our salaries. So you know, I don't want to be compared to the lowest paid Cities. I want to up there in the middle at the very, very least. So I am very happy to hear that this contract is taking care of that, putting these hardworking employees into higher grade. There's always a silver lining to every story and I guess the silver lining here is that we were able to make up some money because of COVID-19, you know, you take it where you can get it, I guess. I am happy to support this and I look forward to it going forward. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Yes, I too want to commend the Library Director and the negotiating team. I really appreciated seeing the salary adjustment narrative, comparing us to similar communities. I think this is a good example for all of our Departments and Unions to come with us with this kind of information. I hope that others follow this example. It's information that is very valuable for us in judging the appropriateness of contracts and what we are paying our employees. And I appreciate your being able to, you know, the resulting increase in the first year that you are able to manage a way of funding that in your existing budget. So I think this is very good, something that I hope we can all support. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Anyone else? Comments? Ms. LaFlamme?

Linda LaFlamme, Library Board of Trustees

Yes I just would like to commend Jen for the thoroughness of the salary study that kicked all of this off, because she not only looked at local NH towns around us but she looked south of the border, which is as you all know, a lot of our competition. And in addition, I think it's important to say on the record that although everyone working at the library just about receives a raise as a result of this salary study and contract. It is not a simple everybody gets the same amount, there was a lot of work both with on our side and on the Union side of the negotiating table trying to do this in a way that was equitable and put everyone at about the level we wanted them to be in comparison with the other folks in those positions. So there was a lot of thought behind the scenes in that little synopsis you got. I'm very proud of the whole team, Administrative and Library Staff on this project.

Chairman Dowd

Thank you. Anyone else? I really appreciate that work and what appeared in Appendix D, again, having echoed what the other Aldermen said that helps a lot. Attorney Clarke, you did a great job there in detailing all of the cost changes and the paragraphs in your Memo, again that's helpful, especially when we have new Aldermen because we only have authority to speak up on cost items, not anything else. So that part was good and looking at the equity across the Board from the study was very well done and I agree with Alderman Jette, we ought to do that on all our contracts. Anyone else? Seeing none, would the Clerk please call the roll?

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

Yea: Alderman Clemons, Alderman Jette, Alderman Wilshire  
Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd 5

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

**R-20-016**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright  
Alderman Thomas Lopez  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.

**AMENDING THE PURPOSE OF A FISCAL YEAR 2020 UNLIKE ESCROW FOR THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**  
(tabled at 4-20-20 mtg)

**R-20-017**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman Thomas Lopez  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright  
Alderman Skip Cleaver  
Alderman Jan Schmidt  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**RELATIVE TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$50,000 TO FUND A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE FUTURE REUSE OF THE ELM STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL BUILDING**

- Requires a Public Hearing which has not yet been scheduled

**R-20-028**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman-at-large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman-at-large David C. Tencza  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright  
Alderman Patricia Klee

**AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF NASHUA TO ENTER INTO A MASTER DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH LANSING MELBOURNE GROUP, LLC.**

(re-tabled at 8-12 mtg)

Chairman Dowd

Ok I have had discussions with the people that are involved in the City in the tabled items and there are none to take off the table this evening.

GENERAL DISCUSSION - None

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Chairman Dowd

I think we had a relatively short meeting for a change, some of the ones that we've had lately have been pretty long. By the way, last night after I got off the Aldermen Meeting the Zoning Meeting was still going on, by the way.

POSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Yea:	Alderman Clemons, Alderman Jette, Alderman Wilshire Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd	5
Nay:		0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 7:25 p.m.

Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Committee Clerk