

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
June 20, 2016 @ 5:15 pm

Councilors in Attendance: Durgin, Sprague, Nealley, Perry, Graham, Nichols, Baldacci

Staff in Attendance: Conlow, Cyr, Rudzinski, Collins, Webb, Little, Linscott, Courtney, Kochis

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Emergency Purchase – WWTP – Kenduskeag Pump Station Pump Repair

Motion made and seconded to accept consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Bids/Purchasing

- a. Transit Bus Advertising – Community Connector - ATA Outdoor

Currently the bus advertising work is performed by the Bus Superintendent. In most systems, this type of work is performed by a third party contractor. Questions were raised as to whether or not this would be financial beneficial for the transit system or increase advertising rates too much. Comments were made in support of this concept to allow the bus superintendent to focus on broader system issues. It was noted that most City contracts contain a provision to terminate for convenience.

Motion made and seconded to award the contract to ATA Outdoors. Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Pilot Wireless Project in the Downeast School Area

Staff reviewed the concept of providing wireless internet access via school issued devices in the area of Downeast School. The provision of internet was a priority previously identified by the Council. City and School staff have been reviewing the options and have developed a plan for a network to develop the internet access. Therefore, staff wanted to update the Council at this point.

The network can be established and funded with CDBG funding due to the population being served. There are many details to work out such as; internet provider, access, times of operation; infrastructure, etc.

Many noted the need to have internet access and the skills that can be developed through access.

Questions and comments regarding the plan were; why not available to all in the area, why limited to school issued devices, why access is monitored, could this be expanded beyond one neighborhood?

The overall goal of the project is to have a system up and running in time for the start of school this fall. The system needs to be appropriately sized and operational, this was viewed as a first step that can be reevaluated and tweaked in the future.

3. Agreements for Vendors to Sell Bus Tickets/Passes

Motion made and seconded to recommend an Order to the full City Council that would allow the City Manager to execute annual agreements with the vendors that sell bus tickets and passes. There are no fees associated with these contracts.

4. School Department Bond Issue

Staff reviewed the proposal from the School Committee to issue bonds to replace the roof at 14th Street School and fund improvements at Cameron Stadium. In 2013, the Council authorized \$1.2 million in bonds for improvements at Cameron Stadium. The plan included replacement of the bleachers, lighting system, new locker rooms and restrooms and equipment storage, expansion of the track and the installation of turf. At that time it was anticipated that a portion of the work would be funded with bond proceeds and the balance would be paid for by fundraising efforts. The replacement of the bleachers and lighting were due to life safety code concerns and therefore were a priority.

The City's Charter requires that the issuance of general obligation bonds for a single capital improvement be approved by voters if it exceeds a certain dollar threshold and does not meet one of the allowable exceptions. At the time of

the issuance both the bleachers and lighting portions of the project were deemed a life safety issue that needed to be addressed as an emergency. The bleachers were unsafe and likely to be put out of service and the lighting system was a hazard to participants and patrons alike. As there was no plan to issue additional bonds for this project, the bond order did not include the specific language citing the findings in support of the exception.

To date, the fundraising efforts have not produced the anticipated results, therefore the School Committee determined it would be necessary to fund the addition to the restrooms previously constructed for locker room facilities and equipment storage.

A concern was raised that this additional funding is in violation of the Charter provisions. Staff reviewed the situation with the City's Bond Counsel, who provided the direction that the 2013 bond order would need to be amended to clarify the emergency nature of the bleacher and lighting improvements. Based on the costs incurred for the restrooms in 2013 and the proposed financing under discussion, the project would not exceed the dollar threshold as defined in the City Charter. However, if additional projects came forward, it would likely require voter approval.

Many staff, School Committee members and Councilors spoke in favor of this investment. Many residents spoke in opposition and/or raised questions about the need for this project. Those concerns included whether or not a need truly existed – could the current arrangement remain in place, are there other areas where this funds could be invested that would serve a great population, how will the debt be paid for, etc.

Motion was made and seconded to recommend the issuance of bonds to the full City Council. Motion passed unanimously. Staff noted this action would be on the Council agenda for first reading the second Council meeting in July and scheduled for final action at the first Council meeting in August.

5. Request to take Possession of 73 Central Street

Staff reviewed a recommendation to take possession of 73 Central Street, a long vacant building within downtown. Until this past year, someone has consistently paid the tax liens just prior to maturing. There are other interested parties that have been notified of the City's intent. Once the City takes

possession, staff would look to develop an RFP to have the building redeveloped. Anticipated time line would be to have a redevelopment plan in place for the 2017 construction season.

Motion made and seconded to recommend to the full City Council to take possession of this property. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned 6:47 pm