

## **CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS**

PUBLIC LIBRARY – LEVENSON ROOM  
DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2017

PORTSMOUTH, NH  
TIME: 8:00AM

Present: Mayor Blalock, Assistant Mayor Splaine, Councilors Perkins, Lown, Pearson, Spear, Cyr and Denton

Absent: Councilor Dwyer

### **Budget Summary**

Mayor Blalock called the work session on the FY18 Budget to order at 8:00 a.m.

City Manager Bohenko said various departments will be coming in throughout the day to present their department budget to the City Council. He indicated that after today we will be holding a public hearing on the budget on Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at 6:30 p.m., in the Eileen Dondero Foley City Council Chambers at City Hall. He provided an outline of the other budget meetings/work sessions that will be held with the adoption of the budget scheduled for Monday, June 5, 2017. City Manager Bohenko addressed the Joint Budget Committee's guideline for the budget that called for an increase of no more than 4%. He reported that this is our 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Budget Award and thanked Finance Director Belanger and her staff for their hard work. He said that the budget documents are available on the website for residents to review. He spoke to our long term financial planning and policies that are in place. He reported on our triple AAA bond rating and said our unassigned fund balance is currently at 13%.

Finance Director Belanger said the staff did a great deal of work with the Joint Budget Committee on their guidelines. She reported that the Operating side of the budget is 77% with the Non-Operating being 23%. She stated that the City Manager's recommended General Fund budget for FY18 is \$109,755,205.00 representing an operating budget increase of 3.99% and a non-operating budget decrease of (3.79%) for a total net increase of \$2,292,361 or 2.13% over FY17. Finance Director Belanger addressed new retirement rates and health insurance and stated that salaries and benefits make up 84% of the Operating budget. She said there are 16 Collective Bargaining Agreements and due to the uncertainty of negotiated salaries and benefits associated with the four (4) unsettled agreements, the FY18 proposed budget includes a \$100,000.00 appropriation to reserve funds to offset costs. She addressed the retirement rate increases which is almost \$1,000,000.00, due to the rate increase and we have seen an increase of \$12.6 million over the last 9 years. She stated that 70% of the increase is due to the unfunded mandates from the State on retirement costs. Finance Director Belanger reported we will budget 5.53% for an increase in health insurance. She also spoke to leave at termination fund and stated that the liability will eventually disappear. She indicated the utility costs represents a decrease of \$81,980.00 or 3.6% from FY17 and that worker's compensation costs are increasing by 6.9%. She reported on an increase in IT equipment. City Manager Bohenko said our dispatch system is over 15 years old and we have a combined dispatch center. He indicated we will be leasing the product and this expense is necessary.

Finance Director Belanger addressed the county tax obligation and said we do not receive that until right before the tax rate is set. We pay the highest portion of tax to the county. She stated over the past 10 years, the total Rockingham County obligation has increased over 21% while Portsmouth's share of this tax obligation has increase more than 45%. She addressed our debt service policy to stay below 10%. She said in FY18, the use of \$1,850,000.00 is scheduled to be utilized from committed fund balance to help offset the use of property taxes. She spoke to the parking revenues and said that they keep our tax rate down. She stated it helps with the revenue and expenditure side of the budget with the use of parking revenues. Finance Director Belanger advised the City Council that the estimated tax rate for FY18 is a \$.68 increase.

City Manager Bohenko said if the City Council chooses to reduce this proposed tax rate, it would require a reduction in expenditures, increase in revenue or a combination of both from the City Manager's recommended proposed budget keeping in mind that every \$.1 change in the tax rate equates to approximately \$48,000.00. He reported that Portsmouth ranks #39 as having the lowest equalized tax rate out of all 234 taxable communities as compared to the previous year when ranked #42. He indicated that 66% of all funds raised in New Hampshire are from property taxes.

Councilor Spear said in years past we have a budget increase and the tax rate would go down. He asked City Manager Bohenko to explain why the tax rate is 4% and no lower. City Manager Bohenko said new growth is less than what we have had in the past and it really is about new growth. He said the policies that were put in place to lower the building heights and now we are seeing a decrease in new growth. Councilor Spear said having an increase in the budget is too high.

Assistant Mayor Splaine would like a list of the \$35,000,000.00 growth including the height and how it may have impacted the money.

### **Police Department**

Police Chief Mara said all the development has effects on how the department plans ahead. He spoke to sector boundaries that will affect our plans and changing sectors to provide the fastest response times. He spoke to the large number of events in the City which bring in thousands of people. He said our daytime population goes from 40,000 – 45,000 people versus our population of individuals living in the City being 21,000. He said it is important that the Police Department is not left behind. He reported that the City currently has 64 officers in the department and the departments resources are being stretched by events and the influx of people. Chief Mara said they're working on recruiting more reserve officers. He said he is asking for 2 additional officers to bring the number up to 66 and they would go directly to the patrol unit. He informed the City Council that not all areas are covered 100% a day.

Councilor Pearson asked to talk about the needs in the summer and then what is done in the winter. Chief Mara said one extra officer is placed in the downtown during the summer and we pull that officer back in the winter. He said the 2 officers are needed to plan for the future but also because we need to staff patrol adequately. He said that other officers are called in during big events.

Councilor Perkins thanked Chief Mara for thinking towards the future. She asked what the estimate is for the department going into the next 5 years. Chief Mara said we need the numbers to increase to the levels we had in 2002. He said there is one person that works on the department's information technology needs and in the past there were 3 people. He said we need additional staff.

Councilor Denton asked if Chief Mara has thoughts about going to the State Dispatch Center versus the City's system. Chief Mara said the State system is for 911 calls and State calls not local calls. City Manager Bohenko spoke to the County Dispatch and we were too large to take on.

Chief Mara reported that they are looking for an increase of 5.79%.

Mayor Blalock asked the length of time it takes to be an effective officer on the street from the time of hiring. Chief Mara said approximately 1 year.

Councilor Lown asked what affect, if any, would 2 new officers have on the overtime budget. Chief Mara said 2 new officers will have an effect on the overtime expense.

### **Fire Department**

Fire Chief Achilles reported that the department has 4,899 total incidents for 2016 which is an increase from 2015. He stated the total incident activity is 5.6% higher than last year and up almost 12% over 2014. He said there were 1,403 fire related incidents and 3,496 EMS incidents. He informed the Council that they are seeing a continued increase for services. Chief Achilles reported that the ambulance revenue are at a 76.7% collection rate over last 5 years. He said the ambulance has brought in \$882,709.00 in revenue to the City. He stated that the number of overtime hours is down 10%. Chief Achilles indicated the department will have 61 officers for FY18. He informed the City Council that the department is on pace to reach 5,000 responses in 2017 and the length of incidents have increased by 10% in committed time with a 28% increase in committed time for all ambulance calls. Chief Achilles addressed residential growth and development. He reviewed the goals and objectives for the department and said the FY18 budget request is \$8,762,022.00 which represents an increase of \$421,124.00 or 5.05% increase over FY17. Chief Achilles stated that going below 5% impacts would be significant and they would start cutting the department. He also said it would lead to stations closing and required training only, as well as rotating equipment out of service. He said they will request an additional 4 firefighters (1 per shift).

Councilor Pearson asked Chief Achilles to address the 10% increase in committed time on calls. Chief Achilles said with Medicare calls and calls to larger facilities are taking longer and with Medicare calls are more complex.

Councilor Spear asked about the impact of having sprinkler systems in buildings. Chief Achilles spoke to the current fire code which does not require sprinkler systems. Councilor Spear asked if there is something we could do with loan programs to get older buildings to have full sprinkler systems. He said it could be a revolving fund and he would like to propose the fund for this year. Chief Achilles said the federal government is looking into things such as that.

Assistant Mayor Splaine said he is interested in another Fire Inspector Officer in the budget and starting the person in January. Chief Achilles said yes he could but right now he is having a hard time keeping up with places of assemblies and reviewing plans. He said this would be more of a challenge going forward.

Councilor Lown said he sees that overtime is a big factor. Chief Achilles said to maintain coverage they need 13 positions every day and there is not a lot of room to fill vacancies and by contract they get time and a half. Councilor Lown said he would like to see the Fire Department consider going to part-time firefighters. Chief Achilles said overtime is not an issue in his department and it has decreased over the years. He further stated he could have proposed a budget to add more people but it would be over 5%.

Assistant Mayor Splaine said he has to leave to go to work and he would watch the televised version of the meeting later.

At 10:00 a.m., Mayor Blalock called for a brief recess. At 10:15 a.m., Mayor Blalock called the meeting back to order.

## **Public Works Department**

### **Highway Division**

Public Works Director Rice said the Public Works Department is made up of 4 divisions and that highway and parking would be discussed today. He informed the Council that the proposed FY18 budget is \$6,634,940.00 which is an increase of 3.23% of which 56.2% is made of salaries and benefits. He addressed what services make up the Highway Division. He spoke to budget highlights and initiatives worked on for this year are as follows:

- Solid Waste Operational Changes
- Road Maintenance Efforts
  - Continue Preventive Maintenance Efforts
  - Adjust Staffing within the Division to meet Changing Needs
- Explore Options for LED Street Light Conversion

He spoke to using data informed decisions through Portsmouth Click N' Fix. He reported they have adjusted operations such as Solid Waste Collection times, shifted staff to address greenery and parks across the City and they're augmenting staff to address beginner areas with landscapers. He said we have addressed all street lighting outages and he is creating a younger truck driver mentoring program.

Councilor Denton spoke on organic weed control for the City going forward with avenger. Director Rice said they are looking at another product and are taking a 5 to 1 ratio with a citrus based product.

### **Parking & Transportation Division**

Public Works Director Rice spoke to the guiding parking principles for the Central Business District which was adopted by the City Council on March 19, 2012.

### Overall Principles

*A balanced mix of retail/restaurant, office and residential uses is key to downtown vitality.*

*A downtown parking supply that is convenient, viable and central to downtown destinations is key to the short-term and long-term health of the City's retail, restaurant and office economy.*

He addressed the FY17 accomplishments which are further implementation of the Walker Parking Consultant Report recommendations:

- Automated Monthly Pass Holder Registration/Billing
- Upgrade Citation Management
- Explore Mobile Pay Options to Augment Easy-Park
- Install Garage Wayfinding
- Updated Single Head Meters to "Smart" Meters

Director Rice reported on the staffing levels for Parking & Transportation. He said the proposed FY18 budget for Operating and Non-Operating & Capital is \$5,203,195.00 which is a 39% change with salaries and benefits making up 37%.

Councilor Spear asked if we could move the snow removal fund into parking. City Manager Bohenko said we are building reserve in the area and we justify the snow removal for the downtown but we could not justify the snow removal for Citywide. He said he is cautious about putting another \$350,000.00 into the parking side. Councilor Spear said he would like to reduce the tax rate. City Manager Bohenko said he would like to look at cash flow after the second garage is built.

Director Rice addressed contingency funding in order to adequately fund changing priorities. Items under current consideration include:

- \$150,000 School Bus Support
- \$100,000 Percent for Art
- \$150,000 New Parking Initiatives
- \$70,000 Potential Staffing Changes

Parking and Transportation Manager Eby spoke to transportation initiatives:

- Traffic Signal Upgrades
- Collect Traffic Data and Complete Traffic Analysis to Improve Function of City Road System
- Street Design Template
- Traffic Calming Guidance
- Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Manager Eby said all new equipment will be put in place on the Woodbury Avenue corridor and Islington Street will have some signal increases. He said they're working with the Planning Department on Street Design Program and we are creating guidelines. He spoke to the program to work on traffic calming in neighborhoods.

## **Recreation Department**

Recreation Director Wilson spoke to his proposed budget request of \$870,554.00 which represents an increase of 2.85% from FY17, due to contractual and benefit obligations. He said the department employs 4 full time employees who are included in the budget, along with dozens of part-time and seasonal employees. He indicated that the department operates 5 facilities, supervises hundreds of programs throughout the city and is responsible for the athletic programs at the Portsmouth Middle and High Schools.

### *Spinnaker Point Recreation Center*

- *Open 7 days per week*
- *1,500 members annually*
- *Annual budget of the center is \$265,480.00*
- *Revenues of over \$240,000.00*
- *One full time supervisor*

### *Connie Bean Recreation Center*

- *Open 7 days per week*
- *Combo Middle School physical education/community youth use*
- *Sports leagues for all sports preschool through high school*
- *Open court for parents and children*
- *One full time supervisor*

### *Portsmouth Indoor Pool*

- *Open 7 days a week*
- *Partnership with SIPP, new 5 year agreement recently signed*
- *Numerous capital projects over the past several years including a new roof, new HVAC system, & new gutters*
- *Total capital investment will exceed \$1,000,000.00*
- *Operating budget over \$414,000.00*
- *Revenue exceeds operating budget*

### *Peirce Island Outdoor Pool*

- *27,000 square foot pool, 1'-6' deep*
- *9 week season*
- *Lessons for 700-800 kids in the mornings, free for residents*
- *Open swim for 25,000 people in the afternoon and evenings, free for resident children*
- *All part time staff*

*Peirce Island Boat Launch*

- Staffed memorial Day through Labor Day
- Weekends average 25 trailers per day (parking lot is full)
- Free for residents
- \$10-\$20 fee for non-residents

Director Wilson addressed the summer recreation program and special events such as the fireworks which will be a partnership with Wilcox Industries this year. He spoke to the Senior Citizen Center and said there are 900 members with 60% use is residents and 40% non-residents. He said the department is working to establish a new center at the Doble Reserve Center. The operating budget is \$158,757.00. He also addressed Portsmouth High and Middle School Athletics.

Councilor Spear asked if the \$150,000.00 for the pool is separate from the Recreation Department. City Manager Bohenko said it is separate. Councilor Spear said he would like to consider making this a Parks and Recreation Department. City Manager Bohenko said he is looking towards establishing that but it would require a change to the administrative code. Director Wilson said we want to get everything under one roof.

**Planning Department**

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff said many departments are working with the Planning Department. She spoke to the Planning Department highlights:

- New Planning Director, Juliet Walker
- 2 New Staff Planners – Peter Stith & T.B.D.
- 2025 Master Plan Implementation
  - Housing Committee Zoning Recommendations in May
  - Land Use Regulations update
  - Open Space Plan
- Major Development Proposals – Deer Street, Vaughan Street, McIntyre Reuse...

Planning Performance Measures:

- North End Vision Plan and Character-Based Zoning
- West End Vision Plan and Character-Based Zoning
- Master Plan
- Wayfinding Program Implementation – Phase 1
- Wayfinding Program Implementation – Phase 2
- Wayfinding Program Implementation – Phase 3
- Middle Street / Lafayette Road Bicycle Route Design and Construction
- NH Seacoast Greenway (Hampton Branch) Rail Trail
- Housing Committee Report and Recommendations
- Bicycle Boulevards Design

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff reported that the Planning Department is requesting a budget of \$819,893.00 for a 4.37% increase.

Planning Director Walker said zoning land use regulations will kick off in July for FY18 and they will be working with a full omnibus idea. City Manager Bohenko said we could provide an update on the scope of services.

Councilor Spear spoke to all the construction taking place. Director Walker spoke to the small residential projects which receive administrative approval. She reported there were 125 approvals this year.

### **Inspection Department**

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff reported that there is a staff of 5 in the department. She spoke to the on-line permitting process and reviewed the department's highlights:

- Stream Lining Operations and Permit Process
- Viewpoint Cloud On-Line Permitting
  - Reduce visits to City Hall
  - Reduce waiting time
- 100% Permit Close-out
- Inspection of High Occupancy Uses with Fire
- Back-up electrical and plumbing/mechanical inspectors

Councilor Perkins asked about the feedback from customers on the new system. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff said there is a station set up in the department and staff will help customers step by step. She indicated the Council will be discussing the Building Code updates at the June 3, 2017 Retreat. She reported that total permits are on track with \$1,000,000.00 of construction value. She said permit fees will be over \$1,000,000.00 and the budget request for FY18 is \$480,102.00 which equals at 6.7% increase.

### **Health Department**

Nancy Colbert Puff spoke to the mission of the Health Department that is to protect, promote and enhance the health and well-being of Portsmouth residents, visitors and environment by:

- Environmental Health planning/services
- Public Health Emergency Response planning

She addressed the Health Highlights:

- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSR)'s Community Assistant Panel
- United States Air Force's Restoration Advisory Board
- Governor's Task Force on the Seacoast Cancer Cluster Investigation
- Safe Harbor Peer Supported Recovery Center
- Climate change, emerging pathogens and emerging contaminants
- Community recovery planning and response
- Regional sheltering and plan for local sheltering

She reported that the department had issued food service permits for 27,906 restaurant seats. She informed the Council that the department also has an on-line system.

Councilor Cyr asked if the on-line information for a restaurant's inspection score could be made available. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff indicated upon request. City Manager Bohenko said that should be discussed on June 3, 2017 and we need to make sure what is out there is consistent information.

At 11:45 a.m., Mayor Blalock called for a lunch break. Mayor Blalock called the meeting back to order at Noon.

### **Finance Department**

Finance Director Belanger that the level of staffing is 22 full time and 2 part-time position. She spoke to new functions that have been put in place in the Finance Department:

- Trustees of Trust Funds: Treasury and Bookkeeping
- Benefits Administration – Administer all benefits offered to city employees
- CDBG – bookkeeping function to Finance Department
- Incorporate the School Payroll function within the Finance Department

She reported that the Proposed FY18 Budget request is \$4,436,248.00 which equates to a 3.99% increase.

### **Assessing Division**

Director Belanger reviewed the responsibilities of the Assessing Department:

- Annual Assessment of all City Properties  
Compliance with:
  - NH State Statutes
  - NH Assessing Standards Boards
  - DRA monitors all communities based on these standards
- Process Exemptions and Credits
  - Elderly / Disabled / Blind Exemptions
  - Veterans Credits
  - Solar Exemptions

She reported that there are 8,567 annual assessments of properties in the city and the number of building permits has an effect on the Assessor's Department.

### **Tax & Revenue Collection**

Finance Director Belanger said the Tax Department has 5 full time employees. She said there are 23,874 registrations annually with the collection of \$4.1 million in revenue.

Councilor Cyr spoke to the increase in motor vehicles registrations. Director Belanger said the increase is because of the increase in the economy. She stated we do not want to overestimate on these numbers. City Manager Bohenko said they are extremely conservative in the numbers. Councilor Cyr said ownership of vehicles will be down 80% in the next 15 years. He said there will be a difference between the numbers of owners versus leases.

### **Information Technology**

Finance Director Belanger reported that the Information Technology takes care of 406 computers and 19 servers for the City with 24/7 technical support. She indicated that there are 470,572 City website users and that there were 263 number of broadcast meetings with 22,662 viewers.

### **Accounting Division**

Finance Director Belanger spoke to the responsibilities within the division:

- Purchasing
- Benefit Administration
- Water/Sewer, & Miscellaneous Billing
- Treasury Function
- Tax Rate Setting – MS-reports files to DRA
- Bond Issuance
- Annual Audits

She outlined the various publications that are under the division:

- Capital Improvement Plan
- Annual Proposed Budget Document
- Comprehensive Financial Report (CAFR)
- Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR)

She spoke to the 11 GFOA Awards received for the budget beginning July 1, 2006 – 2016.

She addressed Finance Initiatives:

- Redesign City Website
- Ability to broadcast meetings in Conference Room A
- Improve Customer Conveniences
- Statistical Revaluation of all Property – Tax Year 2017 (FY18)
- Long-Term Initiative for Preservation of Historical Documents

### **Welfare Department**

Welfare Administrator Tully reported that the direct assistance has increased slightly. She indicated she tries utilizing all resources and the largest item in her budget is shelter. She said the total proposed budget for FY18 is \$339,410.00 which represents a net increase of 2.83% from FY17.

Administrator Tully spoke to outside Social Services that are provided by the department and new this year is CASA. She reported the budget request for Social Services for FY18 is \$168,052.00 which equates to an increase of 8.74% over FY17.

Councilor Cyr asked if we are providing some funding to Seacoast Outright. City Manager Bohenko said they have not submitted any requests. Councilor Cyr said last year we passed a Resolution for Seacoast Outright and discussed providing them funding through the Social Services budget. City Manager Bohenko said he will research the Resolution that was passed and what the motion was.

### **Human Resources Department**

Human Resources Director Fogarty said the proposed Human Resources Budget for FY18 is \$544,696.00 that represents an increase of 2.03% over FY17. She indicated the majority of this increase is due to the cost of living increase, the increase in retirement and workers compensation. She reviewed various statistics for the department relative to recruitment, labor relations, classification and compensation and risk management. She reported she processed 250 step increases, 51 reclasses/promotion, wrote or revised 23 job descriptions and participated or conducted numerous salary surveys. Director Fogarty advised the Council that the office wrote a 504 Plan for an employee with disabilities. She reviewed the status of negotiations and addressed the goals for FY18.

### **Legal Department**

City Attorney Sullivan said that the department will do the same functions as last year with the same employees and within the 4% guideline.

### **City Clerk / Elections**

City Clerk Barnaby reviewed her mission statement with the City Council. She indicated the City Clerk's office is made up of three individuals. Herself, Valerie French, Deputy City Clerk II, and she is excited to add Kimberli Kienia to her staff as the Administrative Clerk. City Clerk Barnaby said the proposed budget for FY18 is \$251,807.00 and this represents a net decrease of -0.88% from FY17. She informed the Council the budget decrease is the result of the retirement of a staff member.

City Clerk Barnaby spoke to the Election budget which is proposed for FY18 \$61,213.00 which equates to a decrease of -3.16% from FY17. She stated the reason for the decrease is there is one election this year and that is the Municipal Election scheduled for November 7, 2017.

She also spoke to the wide variety of service the Office of the City Clerk performs:

- Creation and preservation of vital records
- Issuance of a wide variety of permits and licenses
- Furnish support services to the City Council
- Update the local Boards & Commissions List
- File and safeguard all City Documents
- Voter Registration
- Maintain Voter History
- Administer Elections as the Chief Election Officer

She reported on the number of registered voters in the City and provided the breakdown by party affiliation. She also reported on State Primary and Presidential General Election numbers informing the City Council that the total percentage voted in the Presidential General Election was 71%. City Clerk Barnaby also spoke to the various FY16 Election Statistics including the number of absentee ballot processed.

City Clerk Barnaby spoke to the 2016 Preservation Project of records and with the use of the PowerPoint she showed the Council one of the 22 volumes that has been preserved by KOFIL Technologies. She indicated that this is our earliest Town Records 1645-1713 which are safeguarded for future generations. She stated that this slide shows the encapsulation of pages used in the conservation process of these fragile documents. She reviewed the excellent work completed thus far by KOFIL Technologies and this being the first of the three phase project.

City Clerk Barnaby reviewed various City Clerk data and Election information with the Council for Calendar Year 2016:

**City Clerk Data**

Vital Records Issued 4,781  
Marriage Licenses Issued 334  
Ordinance Adopted 8  
Resolutions Adopted 20  
Attended City Council meetings  
And Work Session 33  
Prepared 22 City Council Binders  
Dog Licenses Issued 2,799

**Election Information**

1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District  
Senate District 21 (Durham, Lee  
Madbury, Newfields, Newington,  
Newmarket & Portsmouth)  
The City of Portsmouth has 7  
State Representatives that make  
up Districts 21-31  
District 31 is a Flatorial District  
In Ward 3 that shared with  
Greenland, Newington and North  
Hampton  
The City of Portsmouth is made  
Up of 5 Wards – Polling Locations

- New Franklin School – Ward 1
- Portsmouth Middle School – Ward 2
- Robert J. Lister Academy – Ward 3
- Dondero School – Ward 4
- Little Harbour School – Ward 5

She also reported that the City Clerk's office has a new dog software system which allows for the first time, customers to license their dogs on-line. This has been very successful. Currently we have issued 585 licenses on-line which equates to 20% of our licenses. We also have 180 customers signed up for paperless next year which means the customer will receive an e-mail notifying them that they may register their dog on-line. This will reduce the number of renewal notices that we have to send out next year.

## **Portsmouth Public Library**

Library Director Butzel thanked the City Council and various staff members for their leadership. He said the building turned 10 this year and he spoke of all the activities that were held to recognize and celebrate the occasion. He addressed areas of growth and reported there are 40,000+ downloadable eBooks and audiobooks.

Director Butzel said over 1,200 people trained in computer class. He addressed individual assistance and stated that 400 individuals helped with electronic devices and over 38,000 informational and genealogical assistance sessions. He reviewed areas of high performance and stability:

- Visits to the Library 352,962
- Circulation of Materials 413,734
- Number of Downloads 33,409
- Study Room Usage 2,705
- Wireless Network Use 36,850
- Museum Passes Borrowed 1,289

Director Butzel said the FY18 Library Budget request is \$1,847,130.00 which is a 4.0% increase over FY17.

## **Portsmouth Schools**

Superintendent Zdravec reported they are at a 4% increase for the School Department budget. He addressed the vision and mission of the schools and the goal setting process. He spoke to student achievements and teacher effectiveness. Superintendent Zdravec discussed accountability:

- Establish a baseline for “Model NH” metrics, including post-secondary success, college and career readiness, and opportunity / achievement gaps between socioeconomic groups
- Review school-level systems of internal accountability for student growth on student achievement goals

Councilor Spear said he supports the pre-school concept. Superintendent Zdravec said the School Board just created a Pre-School Committee and we would need to have the discussion on the program.

Assistant Superintendent Shea spoke to the percentage proficient for English, language, arts and math. He reported that we have the top 2 elementary schools in the State. He said the drop-out rate remains stable and there is staff that works to find path ways for students to stay in school.

Mayor Blalock asked for the reason for the drop since 2007. Superintendent Zdravec said the drop-out rate was raised to age 18.

Superintendent Zadravec outlined opportunity gap:

- Late State/Breakfast
- “TASC” Block-Portsmouth High School (40 mins of dedicated time to receive help from teachers.
- After School Programming (extending to other elementary schools)
- Preschool Committee
- Robert J. Lister Academy Committee
- Free and reduced student opportunities

He addressed the School Department budget request is \$46,855,063.00 which is a 4.86% increase. He outlined the budget adjustments:

- Out-of-District Tuition
- Health Insurance Adjustments
- Federally-Funded Positions
- Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA)
- Modest increase to Speech and Occupational Therapy (OT)
- City Support-Bus transportation cost assistance due to school start time changes was generously funded through Parking and Transportation. The School Department’s Budget will gradually assume the cost over the next three fiscal years

Councilor Spear said if we postponed the late start by one year we could have preschool. Superintendent Zadravec stated or we could start talking about preschool next year.

Councilor Lown asked about part time salaries and whether substitute teachers are under that line item. Business Administrator Bartlett confirmed that substitute teachers fall under part-time salaries. Councilor Lown asked how much of the line item is for substitute teachers. Business Administrator Bartlett said about \$500,000.00. Councilor Lown said he would like to know the number of days the substitutes are used and are they expected to take over where the teacher has left off in their lesson plan. Superintendent Zadravec said that we have a stable substitute pool and the quality is high.

City Manager Bohenko reminded the City Council that next Wednesday we have the Public Hearing on the Budget at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kelli L. Barnaby, MMC, CMC, CNHMC  
City Clerk