

## FEE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Municipal Complex and via Zoom  
Portsmouth NH

February 2, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

**Present:**

***Fee Committee:***

City Councilors Petra Huda and John Tabor

***Staff:***

City Manager Karen Conard

Deputy Finance Director Andrew Purgiel

Public Works Director Peter Rice

Deputy Public Works Director Brian Goetz

Parking Director Ben Fletcher

Planning Director Juliet Walker

Deputy Fire Chief Pat Howe

Deputy City Attorney Suzanne Woodland

Assistant City Attorney Jane Ferrini

Director of Finance/Administration Judie Belanger

City Manager Administrative Assistant Joanna Diemer

Members of the Public: Patricia Bagley

Mr. Purgiel read that this is a Remote Meeting via Zoom Conference call. Per NH RSA 91-A:2 III (b) the Chair has declared COVID-19 Outbreak an emergency and has waived the requirement that a quorum be physically present at the meeting pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8 as extended by the Executive Order 2020-25 and Emergency Order #12, Section 3. Members will be participating remotely and will identify their location and any person present with them at that location. All votes will be by roll call.

Mr. Purgiel gave a brief explanation of the fee schedule.

A motion was made by Councilor Tabor and seconded by Councilor Huda to approve the minutes from the June 17, 2020 meeting. Unanimously approved.

Councilor Tabor made a motion to move the public comment section to the beginning of the agenda. Seconded by Councilor Huda. Unanimously approved.

Patricia Bagley stated that she would comment after hearing from the rest of the members.

1. Fire Department: Deputy Chief Howe recommended a new fee Hot Work Permit \$50/day and/or \$100/week. This is for Firefighters on call for Hot Work. He stated this is not to create revenue but to make sure code and safety procedures are followed. Councilor Huda asked about the Unfounded Emergency calls "no charge" up to 3 occurrence for no charge. Deputy Chief Howe stated that the goal is not to raise money but to reduce the number of calls. Councilor Huda suggested changing from 3 calls to 2 calls. Mr. Howe stated that they haven't found it necessary yet. On a roll call vote Councilor Huda and Tabor accepted the recommended the changes in fees for the Fire Department. Unanimously approved.

2. Highway Division: Public Works Director Rice requested a new fee for a Roadway and Utility Excavation Contractor Permit. These fees are to certify those contractors doing utility work. It is not intended to be a revenue creator but to keep track of the contractors doing work in the city and making sure they follow the city's protocols. The second fee change proposed is to delete the rental fees for non-profits for cones, trash receptacles, wood barricades, metal barricades and signs. For-profit entities do not rent these items as they provide them themselves. There was discussion regarding the \$0.05 fee for Encumbrance of City Property (31 days or more). The consensus was to leave the fees as is. On a roll call vote Councilor Huda and Tabor accepted the recommended changes in fees for the Public Works Department.
3. Parking Division: Mr. Fletcher requested changes to the Truck Loading Unloading Zone Commercial Loading Zone permit from \$100 to \$250 annually. Currently they have 65 permits. The idea is not to raise revenue but to use as behavior management. Mr. Fletcher asked to have the name change from page III-50 "Pass Late Fee" to "Late Fee" to match the description in the software. On a roll call vote Councilor Huda and Tabor accepted the recommended changes in fees for the Parking Division.
4. Water/Sewer Division: Brian Goetz gave a brief presentation of proposed Fee Changes of Fire Services pertaining to the larger services of 4" to 12" which are predominately industrial and commercial. They are also requesting a fee change for Hydrant Rental to Municipalities from \$300 annually to \$325 as they have been going up \$25 per year. Along with the Public Works Department they are also recommending a new fee for a Roadway & Utility Excavation Contractor Permit, not to generate revenue but to track of the contractors doing work. On a roll call vote Councilor Huda and Tabor accepted the recommended changes in fees for the Water/Sewer Division.

City Manager Conard gave a brief presentation on Councilor Tabor's request for discussion items which included Stormwater, Parking Stay and Pay, Parking Parrott Avenue Lot, hotel impact, commercial trash collection, and sludge. She stated at the outset of the conversation that these items were for brainstorming purposes and if any have merit they could be addressed at another meeting.

Stormwater: There was some interest in creating fees in the near future. Peter Rice stated there has been discussion about creating a stormwater enterprise utility. The City is in the third year of a five year permit which requires a master plan for future stormwater water quality projects. This is a significant policy decision that need to be considered in depth by City Council and that not action by the Fee Committee is required this year.. No motion was made nor votes taken.

Parking Stay and Pay: There was discussion about new software and resident rates. No motion was made nor votes taken.

Parking Parrott Avenue Lot: There was a brief discussion of the free parking at the lot. Mr. Tabor shared results of a survey he did of the parking lot on 1/27/21. He stated he interviewed 20 people. Of 20, 17 were employed in the downtown and 3 of the 20 were residents. He noted that there were 61 cars that parked overnight, it was a snowy morning and the cars were full of snow. He stated that it would roughly save \$99 annually per taxpayer if we could charge for the lot. City Manager Conard suggested that this would be best to send this conversation to the Parking & Traffic Safety Committee for review.

Councilor Huda stated that she would like to clarify the legality on the deed before we can move further with changes to the lot. Attorney Woodland stated that she spoke with Attorney Sullivan and he started to research this but stopped when it became a political issue with prior councils, but yes, they could look at it again if there was interest. After a brief discussion, Councilor Tabor made a motion to send this

request to the Legal Department for review and return to the Fee Committee with results and then the Fee Committee would decide at that point if they wish to send it on to the Parking & Traffic Safety Committee. Seconded by Councilor Huda. Unanimously approved.

Hotel Impact: Councilor Tabor gave a brief presentation on a proposed sewer fee for places with more than 6 or 7 bathrooms. It could be used to offset sewer rate increases and a way to defray costs. City Manager Conard stated that this cannot be seen as an impact fee. There is already a capacity surcharge fee that is paid at the time of application. The more you use the more you pay based on flow. The rates are tiered, this would be a third tier and a change in rates would not be supported at this time. Mr. Rice and Mr. Goetz agreed. Mr. Goetz said the most consistent revenue is by usage. Attorney Woodland stated that the sewer rates already take in to account the fees associated with treating the sewage. No motion was made nor votes taken.

Commercial Trash Collection: Mr. Rice gave a brief description of how the downtown trash collection is collected. He stated that most commercial businesses pay to pick up their trash. The City only picks up residential size trash for residents and commercial entities i.e. recycle bins and residential size trash cans once per week. The downtown businesses also pay for trash collection in their taxes. No motion was made nor votes taken.

Sludge: Mr. Rice gave a brief presentation on sludge and stated they were looking to reduced operating costs by looking into a dryer for the sludge. No motion was made nor votes taken.

McIntyre property parking: City Manager Conard stated that once the City has a clear timeframe on acquiring the property and being able to utilize the parking area, they would formulate a parking plan and send it to the Parking & Traffic Safety Committee. Councilor Tabor agreed and stated it would allow revenue while the property is developed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.