

## REPORT OF THE HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

MAY 19, 2004

A meeting of the Human Affairs Committee was held Wednesday, May 19, 2004 at 7:05 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Chairman Lori Cardin presided.

Members of the Committee present: Alderman Marc W. Plamondon, Vice Chair  
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner

Members not in Attendance: Alderman David D. Lozeau  
Alderman Kevin E. Gage

Also in Attendance: Richard Wood, Nashua Fire Rescue  
Paul Newman, Manager, Urban Programs Department

### Chair Cardin

Alderman Lozeau did leave me a message that he could not attend tonight's meeting. I have not heard from Alderman Gage.

### COMMUNICATIONS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

### NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

#### **R-04-39**

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter  
Alderman Lori Cardin  
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner  
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon

**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF A FEMA FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$65,184 INTO SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT 332-6307**

### **MOTION BY ALDERMAN PLAMONDON TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

### ON THE QUESTION

#### Alderman Plamondon

I would like to see a little bit of where these FEMA funds are going.

Richard Wood

This is one of the tools that we would be purchasing along with the grant funds (speaking with the use of a voice distorter). Obviously when we are trying to get across messages we have to get them across on a level that the audience understands. To a 4-5 year old kid this is pretty cool. I am a little older than that and I think it is pretty cool myself. We recently brought this over to the pre-school Friday evening, and it was a huge hit. One of the things that this allows us to do is engage kids in a fashion that they are willing to be engaged. As we as parents know listening to us is probably not going to get the point across. Listening to the dogs and I can see Alderman Tollner here engaged right now because you are watching every word I say. It is amazing what happens to us when something that is animated like this comes into the room. Some of the features obviously we can spin around, we can look shy, we can say hey how are you doing, ... **tape inaudible** ... On Friday evening what I had the children doing was actually practicing what happens if their clothes catch on fire. As a dog in an animated fashion I am talking to the kids and I have him actually rolling around on the grass at the Greek Church. It was pretty cool. These are the types of things that we are looking to purchase. I can give some other examples.

I would just like to show you some examples. One of the other things that we are looking at as part of this grants is the purchase of a safety trailer. That trailer in the brochure that I shared with you allows us to actually practice real life escape planning. There is a little story that got e-mailed to me about 6 months ago and there was a gentleman whose first grader came home and he said Daddy, Daddy we had a fire at school today. The father said oh my gosh are you sure. Yeah we had a fire Dad I know. He said the funny thing is I knew it was going to happen. The father kind of looked at him and said how did you know it was going to happen. The first grader said well we have been practicing for it all year. The moral here is that at school we practice our escape and unfortunately at home for the most part we do not. What this will allow us to do is have a home type setup with real life animated type things – there will be a stove, one of the things that we are looking at is a handicapped ramp that will be set up to do presentations for both elderly folks and very young folks. There will be fake smoke, which is non-toxic. There are several of these in operation – a few in the State, one in Hollis. There is one in Milford, and Concord and Dover as far as I know.

The third item that is part of this grant for purchase is a sprinkler demonstration unit so that we are able to teach people what happens when a sprinkler head goes off because most people are very much unaware of what does occur when a sprinkler head does go off. Along with that part of the project is the funding to have personnel available. The total project cost is approximately \$93,000. I am not sure if that is outlined in the resolution or not. You can see where the funding match would come from based on the resolution.

Alderman Plamondon

I just want to add a couple of things. Again this is called Patches & Pumper. Patches is the dog and Pumper is the unit, and there is a reason for that. I was kind of hoping that Rick would show Alderman Tollner that the Pumper portion of the .. that didn't happen. The other thing that is neat about this is you know how young kids can be kind of timid in front of this and not know what to say so they might mumble. There is a microphone in the front of this and the operator can be in another room looking through a window watching, operating the whole thing, and can hear what the child is saying. I think that is so cool. It adds so much realism to this. I just think it is an awesome tool for fire prevention for our children as well as the smoke trailer and the sprinkler head demonstration. I want to commend Rick and Charlene and Nashua Fire Rescue for their efforts in fire prevention.

Alderman Tollner

The city match that we have the local match – we will probably be asked this at the Board of Aldermen meeting when this comes for final approval – this is a one year commitment right?

Richard Wood

That is correct. The commitment is down at the bottom – the performance period is April 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year through April 1<sup>st</sup> of next year. That is what the grant guidelines weigh out.

Alderman Tollner

No commitment beyond that.

Richard Wood

No. The personnel costs are not in hiring anybody it is overtime costs essentially in order to get this thing in the field. The smoke trailer for example is about a three-person operation so we did feel that because it is outside of what we normally have available that we should budget that in. That has been budgeted in as part of the project.

Chairman Cardin

Are there any other questions?

**MOTION CARRIED**

**R-04-40**

Endorser: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter

**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS IN THE  
AMOUNT OF \$1,200 OBTAINED FROM THE ELLA ANDERSON TRUST INTO SPECIAL  
REVENUE ACCOUNT 301-6004**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN TOLLNER TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Cardin

Just for the record, this money is to be used for the purpose of purchasing banners to support and acknowledge community volunteers.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**R-04-48**

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter  
Alderman-at-Large Paula I. Johnson  
Alderman Lori Cardin  
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner  
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon  
Alderman Kevin E. Gage

**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF GRANTS IN THE AMOUNT OF UP TO \$150,000 FROM THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION OF THE US DOT AND UP TO \$150,000 FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES OF THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE INTO SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT 374-7252 FOR JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE TRANSIT**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN PLAMONDON TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Cardin

Paul Newman is here to bring us up to speed on this.

Paul Newman

This is an endeavor that the city began in 2002. It is part of the National Initiative of Welfare to Work, and transportation is an important component of that to provide means for people to leave welfare assistance, seek jobs, apply to jobs, and to eventually be able to commute to jobs. The city with the cooperation of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission and several towns submitted a competitive proposal back at that time and was selected for funding. That was for the initial two years. This would be actually for the 4<sup>th</sup> year at this point in time for FY '05. That funding permits implementation of several elements; it adds one City Bus fixed route to our operations – what that does is enable us to reduce significantly the number of delays in transfers between buses, cover areas of the city that were not previously covered, and provide more frequent service to several destinations.

Additionally it funds the operation of one van in our system, which is the door to door type service, and that is used under this program to provide services like single parents or married parents that need to get the children to daycare, don't have access to an automobile, and that could be a major hurdle to keep them from getting to work and to keeping a job. We link up people with our van service, childcare, and in transportation to employment. The other component is the position of mobility manager, which is an outreach position – goes out into the community particularly to groups and agencies, training people how to use public transit, and also the trainer program, which again has a multiplier effect. We train people within these agencies who in turn can pass that understanding and knowledge on to other people. That has been conducted at the Area Agency and now most recently we have some graduates who will be finishing up the program for Boys & Girls Club on the youth end of it. That is of course a particular population that we are encouraging and seeking to get accustomed to using public transportation.

This would allow continuation of those endeavors. There initially for the first couple of years was also a component that provided commuter service to the Town of Milford through the towns of Merrimack and Amherst. The towns elected not to continue that so that will not be a component of this. All the services provided within this will be within the City of Nashua. As you can see the entire cost is from other than city sources. There is 50% Federal Transit Administration Grant and then through the State of New Hampshire the temporary assistance to needy families or TANIF will provide the matching funds. Of course we do generate revenues, which are also applied to the operation. If there are any questions?

Chairman Cardin

Paul the bus that was going to Milford is no longer doing so is that true?

Paul Newman

That is correct it ceased operation May 7<sup>th</sup>, which is effectively when the funding ran out.

Chairman Cardin

That is because Milford and Amherst opted not to participate in that program?

Paul Newman

Ultimately they did not put it on their Town Warrant for this spring so it was not even up for a vote for the period starting July 1. Otherwise the State Executive Council voted to cease funding of that as of March 10<sup>th</sup>. From March 10<sup>th</sup> to May 7<sup>th</sup> it was the balance of the towns' share that carried it through for that time period. It was both the State and the towns that affectively – it is ultimately their call. The city was acting as a cooperative neighbor and affectively as a contractor in providing the service. We do it at their bidding.

Chairman Cardin

Do we know what the ridership was/what the use was to Milford and back?

Paul Newman

The target was again not – it always takes some period of time to establish ridership in transit. Until people get the sense that it is dependable, regular, and it will be there to make their life decisions based on that such as taking employment. There were certainly a few people like that as you may have read in the paper that indeed had moved out there or taken jobs back this way because that was there. We had targeted around 3.5 riders per hour, which is modest – it is rather in the low end – our overall transit system is about 15 riders per hour, which is more typical of a city this size, and it got up during the better weather periods to 4.5 riders per hour. It was somewhat slower during those dreary winter months.

Chairman Cardin

Are there any other questions?

Alderman Plamondon

Paul you stated that the 1 bus is going to be added. Is this going to be an additional route or in addition to an existing route for say ½ hour service instead of hour service?

Paul Newman

Actually it started in 2002 so this – you won't see any new service from what we have now. This is a continuation of the increased level that started back then. We had at that time 4 city buses serving the entire city and decided a 5<sup>th</sup> bus which is effectively a 25% increase and that is what enabled us to reconfigure routes – back at the time required a total redoing of creating route 8, providing more frequent service to the Nashua Mall and Broad Street area, more frequent service to Northeastern Boulevard area where there is a lot of industry.

Alderman Plamondon

So the bus that you mentioned as being added is going to existing routes in other words for better service.

Paul Newman

It is a continuation of that expansion from 2002, but at the same level as we started back then.

Alderman Plamondon

To clarify funding you said 50% is federal and the other 50% is TANIF so there are no city matching dollars?

Paul Newman

That is correct.

Alderman Plamondon

Thank you.

Alderman Tollner

When you say we are going to add a city bus are we physically going to add an actual bus or when you say we are going to add a bus we are going to add another bus route so we have 4 physical buses now with us approving the acceptance of these grant dollars is the city going to purchase a new bus?

Paul Newman

This all happened in 2002 and it will be a continuation of the same – we did in fact put an additional bus on in January of 2002. This will simply enable the city to continue that level of service that was increased back then.

Alderman Tollner

So we are not adding a new bus.

Paul Newman

We have enough buses to do that. We do as you may know have in the capital improvement program one purchase of one additional replacement bus. We replaced 6 of them back then and there is one old bus about 16 years old now that we are going to replace in the near future.

Alderman Tollner

This is allowing us to “add a bus” so to speak. Can we use these funds to purchase that bus rather than take it out of capital Reserve Fund?

Paul Newman

No. We did purchase two vans through these funds at the start of the service one for Milford and one for the Nashua service so actually we did accrue the benefit of that one, which will no longer be needed for Milford. We can retain a certain number of them for spares because they have to rotate through preventative maintenance in the shop during the day.

Alderman Tollner

Talking about the van I think the van if I listened to you correctly provides a valuable service to the Area Agency and a number of other entities, but who owns that van, who is purchasing that van, is it a new van that we are purchasing or is it an existing vehicle that we will use?

Paul Newman

We are using an existing vehicle. It will be one of the two that were purchased through the Job Access Funding back in 2002. No new vehicles. It is all 100% paid for through this grant and it is essentially to enable the city to continue this level of service from 2002 into the future.

Alderman Tollner

In a nutshell we are just accepting the appropriation of grants both from the federal and state government. There is no contribution on the city’s part other than the commitment to continue to run these routes as well as enhance the routes so to speak.

Paul Newman

That is correct.

Alderman Tollner

Thank you.

Paul Newman

I should say briefly that through this service it provides over 30,000 trips per year in the city – passenger trips.

Chairman Cardin

Thank you Paul. Are there any further questions?

**MOTION CARRIED**

**R-04-50**

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter  
Alderman-at-Large Paula I. Johnson  
Alderman Lori Cardin  
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner

**AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS AND EXECUTION OF GRANT AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR GRANTS UNDER THE URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 1964, AS AMENDED, FOR FISCAL YEARS 2005 AND 2006**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN TOLLNER TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

ON THE QUESTION

Paul Newman

This is a form of authorization prescribed by our federal funding agency, the Federal Transit Administration, so it is one that has been – this form has been used and authorized by the Board of Aldermen since 1984. It authorizes the Mayor to apply – as you will note that there are no funding amount authorized – effectively what happens is by virtue of passage of the city budget the dollar figure that is in the city budget sets the amount that we are able to apply for. It does not in any way affect the authorization in terms of funding levels. You can see it brings in a lot of the federal requirements in terms of equal rights and disadvantaged business center prizes that we must agree to promote in return for receiving these funds. The practice has been for the last 6-8 years to authorize this for the two-year period to coincide with the term of the Board of Aldermen because it is very much sort of a routine sort of pro forma matter.

Chairman Cardin

Are there any questions on the motion?

**MOTION CARRIED**

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

DISCUSSION

Alderman Plamondon

I want to commend Paul and the Nashua Transit. They are doing a heck of a job. I notice the buses are with regularity full, and that is impressive for a city that started this not that long ago. I just want to commend Paul once again and his division.

Paul Newman

Thank you very much. Actually I didn't have a way to work this into my presentation, but some of you heard this at Budget Review Committee, but Nashua's transit system was chosen as one of the ten most improved in North American, which of course would include Canada, Mexico and so forth. We are very proud of that. This is a Trade Journal – I think the job access transit program contributed to that as well as the recently instituted evening service, our travel training program – we also implemented electronic scheduling of riders, which enabled us to realize substantial savings, and of course the introduction of the entire new bus fleet and new graphic look to our fleet and system. It was nice to be picked out in there.

I should mention also our General Manager, John Whittaker, was recognized by his company as the top general manager in their national company at their annual meeting this year in Denver. Unfortunately he was here for our two-day federal review on site so he couldn't even attend, but they brought back the award and trophy for him. That is out of about 60 some systems that he was picked from.

Chairman Cardin

Congratulations. That is quite an honor. The city is lucky to have people that are dedicated to their field, and we appreciate that. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN PLAMONDON TO ADJOURN  
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner  
Committee Clerk