

REPORT OF THE HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 20, 2006

A meeting of the Human Affairs Committee was held Wednesday, December 20, 2006 at 8:16 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Chairman Marc W. Plamondon presided.

Members of the Committee present: Alderman Richard LaRose
Alderman David MacLaughlin
Alderman Michael Tabacsko

Members not in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner, Vice Chair

Also in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large David W. Deane
Michael Mansfield, Asst. Fire Chief, Nashua Fire Rescue
Philip Costa, Nashua Police Department

Chairman Plamondon

Alderman Tollner is not able to be present this evening this evening. He is in Boston I believe for work.

COMMUNICATIONS

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN TABACSKO THAT THE RULES BE SO FAR SUSPENDED AS TO ALLOW FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A COMMUNICATION RECEIVED AFTER THE AGENDA WAS PREPARED
MOTION CARRIED**

From: Scott Slattery, Manager, Urban Programs Department
Re: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN TABACSKO TO ACCEPT AND PLACE ON FILE
MOTION CARRIED**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-06-130

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

**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$20,000
OBTAINED FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF
RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, DIVISION OF PARKS AND
RECREATION INTO SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT #352-6518 “NASHUA
RIVERFRONT PARK @ COTTAGE AVE.”**

MOTION BY ALDERMAN MACLAUGHLIN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Deane

Would it be appropriate Mr. Chairman if you amended the legislation in the title and body by removing the words “Nashua Riverfront” and replacing it with June Caron?

Chairman Plamondon

I did inquire on that a couple of days ago, and it was recommended that we leave it as is because this grant request was submitted I think it was 2 years ago to the State, and the wording on the grant was for Nashua Riverfront Park @ Cottage – so we don’t need to resubmit the grant, it was recommended that we leave it as is because the name change was very recent. That was the explanation I got.

Alderman Tabacsko

On the outline I am following from, the amendment that Alderman Deane just referred to is expected. I just wanted to make a note of that – what we are doing is moving to recommend final passage on the original R-06-130 without the amendment.

Chairman Plamondon

For the record, I spoke to Nick Caggiano on this. I can speak with him again on it, but that is what he recommended to be because of the process.

Alderman LaRose

I guess my recommendation would be to pass it as it is now, get Legal and Nick and if there is no problem, then at the full Board we amend it at that time to put in the suggestion that Alderman Deane just made.

Alderman Deane

As soon as we get the check we can change anything we want to change. Let's get the money in the bank first.

MOTION CARRIED

R-06-137

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner
Alderman Michael J. Tabacsko
Alderman-at-Large David W. Deane

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$7,986.55 OBTAINED FROM THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE INTO SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT #331-6243 "BJA 2005 BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT"

MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Plamondon

Are there any matching funds with this grant?

Philip Costa

This is reimbursement. They reimburse 50% of any monies that we spend to buy new vests, typically for new hires. The life expectancy on the ballistic vest is about 5 years so every 5 years or so we have to replace the whole inventory of vests. This helps us offset that cost. Typically over any given year we are hiring 4-10 officers so we don't go through all of those funds, but then come that 5th year anniversary everybody will need new vests.

Chairman Plamondon

After the life expectancy do we recycle the vests? Is there a return on them in any way?

Philip Costa

I don't know that. They are not going to be used as bulletproof vests somewhere. They might go out to training to test the materials or whatnot or they might get used in live fire type exercises for training, but their useful life is 5 years.

Alderman MacLaughlin

Roughly how many total vests in the department would you estimate?

Philip Costa

I believe everyone gets one issued and we have, we are budgeted at 177 I believe officers. Right now we are not at full strength. There are probably 165 or 162.

Alderman Tabacsko

I see that the next issue coming up right after this is going to be very similar it is just a different account number. Is it appropriate for me to ask the difference between the two – why they are separated?

Philip Costa

They are just different years' grants – one is '05 and one is '06.

Alderman Tabacsko

Thank you. I appreciate that.

Alderman Deane

The cost per vest?

Philip Costa

When I came on they didn't provide them. I paid I think \$560 when I came on 11 years ago. I think through economies of scale we are probably paying between \$400-\$500 per vest.

Alderman Deane

Is there a limit on what they will reimburse you for? Could you go out and buy 100 vests?

Philip Costa

Right. We may well have to. Whenever that anniversary is we are going to have to replace what has been issued. This program is not going to cover all of that. This is a reimbursement program they have out there, but the city and the police department has made an effort and they are going to provide vests to all of the officers.

Alderman Deane

Is this just for new hires?

Philip Costa

Currently right now this is for new hires, but come the anniversary – I am not sure when we recycle all of the vests, at what point that anniversary date is, the police department is going to have to go and purchase new vests for all sworn officers.

Alderman Deane

I am just looking at a supplant issue. If we had to go out and buy 100 new vests could we get a 50% reimbursement through this BJA Vest Partnership Grant?

Philip Costa

Generally we don't use all of this money because we are not buying that many vests in a given year except for on that 5th year anniversary.

Alderman Deane

You are not sure what...

Philip Costa

We will deplete whatever they let us use. Other years we don't go through all of that because we are not hiring as many officers.

Chairman Plamondon

Is it anticipated on the 5th year anniversary that we will be able to get a 50% match?

Philip Costa

We will be able to get a 50% match. I don't know what the award amount is going to be. As you can see it has been decreasing a little each year. After we go out and buy 150 or whatever vests then the years after that the award amount is probably going to be a little higher and then it will continually decrease, and by the time we need it again it is not going to probably cover it all. I don't know that for a fact. That is the way it has been going.

Chairman Plamondon

From the federal perspective, the BJA, we hear all the time about budget cuts. Is this an area that we would perceive budget cuts or in opposite vein with Homeland Security is this an area – I know it is a crystal ball type question, but do we perceive things are looking better for assistance from the BJA?

Philip Costa

I haven't seen anything that would lead me to believe that they are going to eliminate this program. I would think this is a popular program with all communities. Homeland money is a different animal that is being targeted more towards larger populations now versus coming to all of the states equally. They are looking more at targets versus every state will get X amount.

Alderman MacLaughlin

When is the fifth year estimated to occur?

Philip Costa

I believe it might be coming up next year, but I am not 100% sure. I would have to check with our firearms training unit.

Alderman LaRose

When it says bulletproof vests through 9-30-09, you have until 9-30-09 to purchase vests from this account? Is that what that means?

Philip Costa

Yes. The window is probably a four-year window. Generally some of the grants have different lifespans so we can continue to use those funds, and hopefully add them together.

Alderman LaRose

So you could be buying some this year, some next year...

Philip Costa

Using up the older ones.

Alderman LaRose

Up until 2009 with this account, and then it will be 2010 with the other account?

Philip Costa

Right.

Alderman LaRose

Thank you.

Chairman Plamondon

Under the Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance, are you aware of other grants besides grants for bulletproof vests that the city has gotten or might get or if there are any others that exist?

Philip Costa

We are always looking for new grants, and subscribe to services where every posting that comes out I get an e-mail first thing every morning. That is the first thing I go through. Newer grants are coming up. I haven't seen anything real applicable. There is a renewal for the domestic violence grant that we got a few years ago. We will be putting in a new application for that \$400,000 hiring grant that we got. I haven't seen anything similar to the bulletproof vests grants coming up, but some of them have varying lives. That domestic violence one was a two-year grant. Some of these bullet proof ones that come out every year and have a four-year lifespan. The JAG grant generally goes for four years, and we are also seeing that kind of drop off a little bit. We got \$55,000 and it dropped down to about \$40,000. I am not sure what it is going to be in the coming year.

Chairman Plamondon

These are all under the BJA?

Philip Costa

Not all through BJA, but they are all similarly administered grants.

MOTION CARRIED

R-06-138

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon
Alderman James R. Tollner
Alderman Michael J. Tabacsko
Alderman-at-Large David W. Deane

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$7,350 OBTAINED FROM THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE, INTO SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT #331-6244 "BJA 2006 BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT"

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN TABACSKO TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE
MOTION CARRIED**

R-06-139

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon
Alderman Michael J. Tabacsko
Alderman Daniel L. Richardson

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF UP TO \$50,000 FROM THE NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY, BUREAU OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INTO SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT #332-6323 FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING A WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION EXERCISE

MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman LaRose

This exercise of weapons of mass destruction, is that going to entail other fire departments in the area?

Michael Mansfield

The exercise already took place. It took place on October 5th of this year. The reason why we are putting the cart before the horse so to speak was due to the fact that the person who actually awards these grants through the Office of Emergency Management up in Concord, NH, was out for the entire summer. We were in the planning stages for this particular exercise for well over 8 months, and once we start the process it is very difficult to put the brakes on. We figured we would go ahead with the process. We knew we were going to get the money through the grant process from the Bureau of Emergency Management. This is just a follow through to that.

Alderman LaRose

Did it include other departments?

Michael Mansfield

It included every city division, other departments, other HAZMAT teams, other departments and divisions from not only State Government but from the Federal Government as well. BATF was involved, the FBI was involved, a couple of other federal agencies were involved as well.

Alderman LaRose

Thank you.

Alderman Deane

Through you to the Chief, so this exercise is funded out of different operating budgets, and this money is going to be taken and will replenish the different line items – is that what is going to happen?

Michael Mansfield

That is correct. I have a full expense report of what we expended. We expended roughly just a little bit over \$28,000, and we took it out of different line items. We pretty much exhausted the 535 account, which is our local emergency management account, and this is the money that will replenish that 535 account so we can continue on and do the necessary projects that we had planned for that money.

Alderman Deane

I saw the depletion in that one and it was drained.

Michael Mansfield

That is why that had occurred. We had many invoices coming in. It was an emergency management drill that tested the response capabilities of all the city divisions, and it was the first time that we actually opened up the emergency operations center and operated it out of the Nashua Police Department for the first time in 7 years. It was a well thought out drill at a 10 person planning committee that had representatives from every major division within the community here, and it worked out extremely well.

Alderman Deane

Will there be a report forthcoming on the overall event and the efficiencies and things we have to work on?

Michael Mansfield

I have the action report right here. I just received a copy of it not too long ago. I have had a chance to review it. I just sent out today copies to the other members of the planning committee, and have a review meeting scheduled for January 5th to get together and review this action report and also create a document as to how we are going to answer the few deficiencies that were identified. I must say that all the divisions and agencies that were involved in this exercise did extremely well, performed extremely well, and there are very few things that we have to really look at and improve on to make the response better.

Alderman Deane

That is good news. That means that is going to be a short meeting. Thank you.

Alderman Tabacsko

You had said something in the range of \$28,000 that was spent? Was it just that one line item or were there others that are going to total up to this?

Michael Mansfield

This is closed out, and I am just waiting for this legislative process to actually submit the overall invoice to the Department of Emergency Management up in Concord. It looks as though we are closing this out at \$28,618.65 total. It is 100% reimbursable. This exercise will not cost the city any money whatsoever. It is reimbursing for all of Nashua Fire Rescue personnel, all Nashua Police Department personnel, Rockingham Regional Ambulance personnel, the assistance that we received from the mutual aide hazardous materials response teams and the other folks that served as evaluators and controllers during the exercise. Meals were included, some security and so forth that we purchased for security for the event – everything. All of the expendables that we had are all reimbursable. It is quite a nice little thing to have for us to be able to do it and not cost us any money.

Alderman Tabacsko

Thank you very much. I look forward to the report when it comes out.

Chairman Plamondon

Are there any other questions?

MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES – None

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

DISCUSSION

The Committee expressed their deep appreciation to Assistant Chief Mansfield for his years of service to the City of Nashua.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Alderman Michael Tabacsko
Committee Clerk Pro Tem