

**City Council Workshop**  
**February 23, 2015**  
**6:30 P.M.**  
**City Council Chambers**

**Councilors Present**

Linda Cohen, Mayor  
Brad Fox  
Thomas Blake  
Maxine Beecher  
Melissa Linscott  
Claude Morgan  
Patricia Smith, Absent

**Staff Present**

Jim Gailey, City Manager

**MINUTES**

Mayor Cohen opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. She reminded folks that members of the public are invited to comment on each item as it comes before the Council for a period of no more than two (2) minutes. All questions or concerns would be made through the Chair and if they wished to address the City Council they would be asked to please raise their hand and upon being recognized would state their name and address for the records.

- 1. Audited Financial Statements Presentation**
- 2. Fire Department Presentation & Policies**
- 3. City Property – Main/Westbrook Streets**
- 4. Executive Session** - A motion may be made to go into Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. & 405(6)(E) to discuss a pending litigation matter, Portland Pipe Line Corporation, et al. v. City of South Portland, et al., with the Corporation Counsel.

**1. Audited Financial Statements Presentation:** Jim Gailey, City Manager explained that Hank Farrah of Runyon Kersteen Ouellette (RKO) would make a presentation on the results of the City's June 30, 2014 audit. The audit covers the fiscal year July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014.

Enclosed was a copy of the audit letter, the School Department's Financial Statements, reports required by Government Auditing Standards and OMB Circular !-133 as well as the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

**Hank Farrah**, Runyon Kersteen Ouellette who is one of the main contacts regarding the Financial Audits for the city. He added that they have audited the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the City of South Portland, Maine for the year ended June 30, 2014. Professional standards require that they provide the City with information and OMB Circular A-133, as well as certain information related to the planned scope and timing of the audit. He added that they have

communicated such information in a meeting with the Mayor on June 11, 2014 as well. He explained that professional standards require that they communicate to the City the enclosed information related to the audit. He further discussed the following areas included in a Significant Audit Findings:

- Qualitative Aspects of Accounting Practices
- Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit
- Corrected and Uncorrected Misstatements
- Disagreements with Management
- Management Representations
- Management Consultations with Other Independent Accountants
- Other Audit Finding or Issues
- Other Matters
- Restriction on Use

He further discussed school lunch audits and finding one child with a free lunch program that could actually have be paying for lunch for some time now. He further discussed auditor opinions after this is completed, journal entries, other findings and issues as well.

**Councilor Fox** asked if this would be fixed by the school.

**Councilor Blake** asked about this being presented to the School Board? (Yes it will be, did not yet)

**Councilor Morgan** asked about the free lunch waiver for children and how this is done (verification process is used).

**Greg L'Heureux** Finance Director discussed the one-page summary titled "Unassigned Fund Balance" which excludes the school and dated June 30, 2014. He further explained what funds are used, held over, untouched, comparisons, and a triple-rate standing. He further discussed Reserves, setting aside funds to go in other reserve funds, restricted and unrestricted funds. He further discussed Debt and how we stand with this right now; he added that the City has about 53 million in debt and working on paying this down within a few years.

**Councilor Blake** asked if the bond issue was included in the debt. (No it was a one-time borrowing, FY 2017)

**Councilor Beecher** discussed borrowing, low interest rates, and if and how much it would be going up.

**Councilor Morgan** discussed Municipal Bonds, AAA Bonds and how they have gone down so dramatically. Discussion ensued on how many other communities do this, maybe 4 or 5.

**Greg L'Heureux** discussed lower balances, rates, fund balance and keeping tax rates down.

#### **Public Comment Opened:**

**Russell Lunt** Brigham felt that this was a good bond rate and good fiscal planning being done.

#### **Public Comment Closed:**

**Councilor Blake** asked about next steps and Jim Gailey explained that this would be posted to the City's Web Site as a public document and questions would be posed to staff as well.

**Mayor Cohen** felt that this was a great job, well done keeping the bond rate down, and that staff does a wonderful job with the Finances, great work.

**2. Fire Department Presentation and Policies:** Jim Gailey, City Manager explained that The City Council had a presentation from Police chief Ed Googins on the preparedness of the offices and the policies that govern large group demonstrations. The City Council had now invited Fire Chief Kevin Guimond to present the Fire Department's policies on large group demonstrations and the training firefighters receive in preparedness if such an event took place within our community.

**Kevin Guimond**, Fire Chief gave a presentation on updates regarding policies, etc. He added that everything people need to know and would like to know is right on the City Web Site and has everything listed there for what they do. There are maps included, response plans, special hazard and plans of what they do with responding.

**Dept. Wilson** South Portland Fire Department discussed the hiring process and the 4 weeks of training that is required as well as EMS training, ropes, hazmats, technology training as well. He added that each year they repeat the training 10,000 hours per year and felt that they could manage a large, tragic event if one were to occur.

**Public Comment Opened:**

**Russell Lunt** Brigham Street **felt** that this department does a fantastic job, they have a great team and the Fire Chief has provided lots of information to learn from, he is proactive in his work.

**Public Comment Closed:**

**Councilor Morgan** asked about training to help a citizen that is culturally different?

**Kevin Guimond** understood this concern and agreed that this does occur and is on the increase in this area. He added that 80% of their calls are EMS and added that they will be taking care of patients on site that may not need to be transported to the hospital as well as the extreme cases where the patient may have passed already the funeral home would be called and folks from "TIPS" would stay with the family.

**Councilor Linscott** asked about calls that would need the Police to arrive as well such as drug overdose, guns and concern for the safety of the paramedics and wondered if we have folks trained for this? (Yes there are 3 trained for this)

**Councilor Blake** discussed how calls have changed since the 1980's as well as the quality of lives here now. He further discussed updates, original dates thing were done, CO2 meters in homes, generation gaps, poor communications and ways to help with this.

**Kevin Guimond** discussed the use of I-phones, emails, bulletins and a program called "I Am Responding" which all helps with keeping everyone completely up to the minute of what is going on. He added that there is a diverse work force and having the three stations can make it harder to communicate as well. He thanked all of the residents for helping to keep the fire hydrants clear this winter as it has been very hard with all of the snow to keep up with this and everything else.

**Councilor Blake** asked about folks within the department carrying weapons and if our firefighters did so? (No only Swat Paramedics do)

**Councilor Beecher** had concern with not having enough volunteer firefighters around the state and asked if we do here in South Portland?

**Kevin Guimond** discussed trying to improve on this and that the Willard Station would be the place to have the volunteer work out of, he would like to fix this station up for this reason. He

further discussed an incentive program and added that they have 43 volunteers and felt fortunate to have them with a great working staff as well.

**Mayor Cohen** thanked the Department for all of their wonderful work and felt that people do fully support our Fire Department.

**3. City Property – Main/Westbrook Streets:** Jim Gailey, City Manager explained that the City Council had requested an opportunity to discuss the future of the City-owned parcel at the corner of Main Street and Westbrook Street. Last year, this parcel was being reviewed as a possible alternative location for the Dunkin Donuts that abuts the property to the north. The abutting property owner, the Congregation Bet Ha'am, has a landscaping and parking easement encumbering a portion of the City-owned property. Additionally the Congregation has a right of the first refusal on the purchasing of this parcel. This right is in effect until December of 2015.

The property is split by the Limited Business District and Residential District A zone line (please see attached air photo). The property is what remains from the former Sawyer Elementary School playground. A small manmade skating rink occupies a small portion of the City property; however, it has not been flooded in decades.

**Mayor Cohen** added that there is not a proposal open currently and would ask for input.

**Public Comment Opened:**

**Kate Lewis** South Portland Land Trust was in support of the City to permanently protect this parcel of land and further discussed funds to maintain this as well. (Enclosed letter)

**Kay Loring** Bluff Road discussed the land sitting there and felt there was a good amount of open land, a safe location and not a lot of shrubs. She further discussed Dunkin Donuts and Howard Johnsons possible interest as well.

**Russell Lunt** Brigham Street asked about the ice skating rink and felt that this was a nice piece of land that he was unsure what they would do with it.

**Carter Scott** Vincent Street/Land Trust felt that open space is very important here and hoped that this would be kept open as it is so important to have near our residential area.

**Lisa Munderback** 23 Coach Road/Land Trust was in support of the easement in place and having the Land Trust maintain this open space which is very important to the City.

**Rachel G.** 17 Churchill urged the Council to keep this as Open Space for the City, a park, a place to sit and relax.

**Eric Hamlin** 15 Thirlmere Ave. added that it would be hard to develop this lot as cars would have to turn very close to Bet Ha'am and felt that green space would benefit storm water and good function for the City.

**Devin Dean** 17 Thirlmere Ave. understood the concerns from all and respects the green space. He discussed business in this area that would be nice if it was one that people welcomed like a bakery but not a pawnshop. He liked the idea of business re-development and would like to see this discussed as well.

**Public Comment Closed:**

**Councilor Fox** liked this open space and would like to see it kept as a park.

**Councilor Blake** felt 100% positive toward preserving this space, people want more open space, more parks and it is very evident. He further discussed the westward expansion not being as fast as they hoped but it would be valued as a park and felt that this end of the City has very little so this would be a great benefit. Asked about the two zones and the relevance to this space, as well as the spot needing improvements and wondered if the Land Trust would fund that as well and would support next steps on this.

**Councilor Morgan** was in support of keeping this open space and for the public. He further discussed a buffer for this space, a fence to keep the areas separated. He felt that the neighborhoods in this area are nice and this could help to have a park space. He felt that this is needed in the area and guarantees it, he further discussed the outreach component and inviting the use as well as being in support of easement and open space.

**Councilor Linscott** discussed the comparison of this area to what they have accomplished in Knightville, fixing the street scapes, adding nice landscape, lighting, etc. She thanked Mr. Hamlin for his comments to the Council and further added that community gardening in this area might be a nice addition as well. She asked about this being a park and having a listing of sex offenders living near this area.

**Councilor Beecher** asked what would happen if they City moved ahead with a park for this space, she wondered about the communications with Dunkin Donuts and if they still had an interest.

**Jim Gailey** explained that there is no liability that it was only communication and they have not had any further talks since last fall so he did not see them pursuing this.

**Councilor Blake** asked if this district would be eligible for CDBG funding, he felt the need to get a jump on this process and added that it makes perfect sense.

**Mayor Cohen** agreed with keeping the open space here and wondered about a park name or not.

**Jim Gailey** discussed improvements to the park, and in this regard passed on a request from a contractor that will be working in this area on the stormwater projects. They would like to use this space for a laydown area during their work time and would need to know very soon. The work to be done over the next year out there would not allow for the park to be worked on and used right away and this may be an opportunity to have them do the work on it after they are done.

**Councilor Fox** asked if the Congregation had been talked to about disruption with this construction.

**Councilor Blake** was ok with the laydown use.

**Jim Gailey** explained that this project is very disruptive all along the Main Street corridor.

**Councilor Beecher** felt that people in this area have gone through a lot during this construction project, dirt flying everywhere, bumpy roads, etc. She had concern for further disturbance.

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The City Council Workshop Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.