

CITY COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE

Budget and Finance

Thursday, October 29, 2009 –7:00 p.m.

City Council Conference Room

Present: Councilor Jason Grow, Chairperson; Councilor Joe Ciolino, Vice Chair and Councilor Steven Curcuru

Also Present: Councilor Jackie Hardy, Jim Duggan, Nancy Papows, Bethann Godinho, Gary Johnstone, Tim Good, Jeff Towne, Christopher Farmer, Melissa Teixeira, Robert Parsons, Bill Johnson, Marcia McInnis

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Items were taken out of order.

1. Memo from Community Development Director re: Acceptance of donation from Gloucester Rotary Club.

Councilor Grow stated he had told Ms. Sarah Garcia there was no need of her attendance this evening and proposed that they proceed directly with a motion.

MOTION: On motion of Councilor Grow, seconded by Councilor Ciolino, the Budget & Finance Committee voted unanimously 3 in favor, 0 opposed to recommend to the City Council to accept the Gloucester Rotary Club's donation to the City of Gloucester in the sum of \$600.00 for the purpose of the payment of the shipping costs of the proposed bike racks for the City.

2. Memo from Assessor Nancy Papows re: Tax Classification.

Councilor Grow recognized Ms. Nancy Papows, Principal Assessor to make a presentation on the Tax Classification for Fiscal Year 2010.

Ms. Papows reviewed the documentation contained in the “Tax Classification Information for Fiscal Year 2010” (a copy is on file) and explained some of the highlights and changes over the last year that went into making the final recommendation of her office to the Budget & Finance Committee. She pointed out that in terms of values, residential value makes up 89.6% for FY2010 and total value is down \$300 million based on adjustments of the market. Residential class went down 6.6 %, and depending on class, some were down 2% some up as much as 12%. Multi-families saw the biggest hit. Commercial/industrial was down this year only between 1% and 2%.

She noted that the NOAA building is now up and that was fully completed this year over which is \$8 million in growth on just that building which is leased and whole taxes are gained. Ms. Papows explained the personal values up this year

Councilor Curcuru asked why this was.

Ms. Papows responded that 2008 and 2009 Good Harbor Fillet was coming out of TIF and significant growth in utilities. There was not a huge difference in parcel count, but we have the summer homes that fluctuate from year to year.

Councilor Grow noted the City lost some commercial properties.

Ms. Papows said some mixed use went entirely residential. But net result is we're down a few parcels.

She noted that Proposition 2-1/2 increase and debt exclusion results in the tax rate for FY10 tax rate at a factor of 1:\$10.57. Last year it was a factor of 1:\$9.66. Tax rates are approximately at the shifting percentages, and the percentage of levy dollars.

Ms. Papows pointed out the chart on shift factors and tax rates and the excess levy capacity, depending on which factor is chosen. She went into detail on this chart and explained it more fully to the Committee. She noted that of all the communities who

shift in the state total 107. CIP percentages, 170 communities and 13 are going to shift. The shift percentages vary drastically by community.

She further stated that the open space discount is also a moot point. The only thing to adopt is the classification factor. The new graphs on file are illustrative showing what will happen with the tax rate and what will happen over the years on the tax rate, as well as historic shift factors.

Councilor Grow noted that 1.05 will give us the highest collection possibility.

Councilor Ciolino wanted to know what last year's shift number was.

Ms. Papows pointed out that it was 1.06.

Councilor Grow asked if there were any questions, and there were none.

MOTION: On motion of Councilor Ciolino, seconded by Councilor Curcuru, the Budget & Finance Committee unanimously voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed to recommend to the City Council a Tax Classification Factor of 1.06 percent.

Councilor Grow thanked Ms. Papows and her department for their continuing hard work.

3. Review recommendation from the School Committee re: North Shore Vocational Regional School District.

Councilor Grow stated that there was no recommendation put forward by the Gloucester School Committee at their most recent meeting.

Superintendent Christopher Farmer said the School Committee wanted to hear more at the November 17th public hearing and at the School Committee meeting that follows they'll defer a recommendation until the financial situation is more clear and whether the

City Council can handle it by mid-December, that being the date by which the Regional Vocational School District will have their projected 75% of committed communities behind them to persuade the MSBA of the commitment.

Councilor Grow thought the School Committee would have a decision by now.

Mr. Farmer said the School Committee was surprised by the continuation, and they wanted to hear what transpires at the City Council meeting.

Councilor Grow then asked where are we then.

Mr. Farmer said there is no recommendation. A policy was adopted to recognize the importance of vocational education and general education that meets the needs of these students and to provide a rigorous course of studies for vocational students to enable them to be successful and the wish to avoid duplication. To be cost effective. To work with community businesses to seek internships and partnerships and to ensure the programs relate to actual needs of employers. To attract Cape Ann students to the Gloucester vocational programs. To have a dedicated leadership for vocational education and to attract and retain a highly qualified staff. And importantly, to offer scholarships to Gloucester students who stay in Gloucester. We need to ensure marketing for these programs. The School Committee's subcommittee will make recommendations to establish a task force as to how we might best expand the existing programs.

Councilor Grow said there is a firm commitment to retain what we have and expand the programs at the high school. The questions he has about the process are the ramifications and on the basic mechanics of the funding and what we as a city are responsible for and the bonding requirements and who is paying whom back.

Mr. Farmer said the bonding is done by the new regional school district tune of \$3,000 per year. They become an incorporated body and then have the ability to borrow money.

Councilor Grow said he thought he understood that the community was responsible for their share of it.

Mr. Farmer said they're all learning quickly on how it works. They will recalibrate the distribution based on the population each year and recalculate and simply add in tuition for students going in the following year.

Mr. Towne said even though it is a separate organization, it might be part of our capacity issue. It sometimes happens because you still have a responsibility and may affect your levy.

Councilor Grow couldn't understand how they can borrow 8% of overall cost without knowing what our population is.

Mr. Parsons spoke about the cost difference between the local vocational program and regional program. He urged that whatever we do that we compare on an equal footing you need to know that way local program is operated in a poor system. It is very organized. Believes the current system doesn't offer enough dedicated time in the vocational classroom

Ms. Teixeira stated that studies in the past have shown children felt left out of the academic curriculum, and that students felt more engaged with the rest of the school's general population under the current system.

Mr. Farmer concurred that this is what studies show to work best. The students are expected to take general studies and pass the MCAS tests. It doesn't mean it can't be done as Mr. Parsons has suggested, but it has to be studied to see how it is to be handled. On the issue of cost, the methodology is to take the salaries and other commitments and then distributed 4/7 of the general education costs and apportion on a student number basis all the other costs including the City's expenditure on Schedule 19. We distributed all the districts and city's costs to figure it out which is available on the district's web site. It does show that our program is a very much leaner program than a technical high school, but we don't have their resources

Councilor Grow asked if we were to take a position and we weren't going to join new vocational school district as of December 15th, how prepared is the high school to broaden the high school program and what would the steps be to move forward to expand the program?

Mr. Farmer said we have a project development schedule of steps needed to be taken. The Commissioner of Education would have to approve or not approve this. The school is full. Quite lot teachers are without their own classroom. Young Families project is at an outside venue. They've talked to the Addison Gilbert Hospital about a medical assisting program. There are transport issues, but not too much needed. Culinary arts would need to have expanded space and more equipment. On the funding issues, while Chapter 74 will provide more than Chapter 70, there has to be some prospect that less students won't get into the Regional Voke only get in on space available. That'll reduce our costs and some prospect of students from neighboring district not going to Danvers. It could be a wash if not enough students don't get into the regional Voke.

Mr. Farmer said if we add one more program in our local vocational program, then we are required to hire a director for it and have to factor that in and some of our other expenses.

Councilor Curcuru asked about funding for the schools.

Mr. Farmer stated that last year budget reduced by \$300,000 but said that increases have been less than inflation. Funds out of direct tuition cover other costs.

Councilor Grow spoke of the mid-year cuts and adjustments that something could come down that could alter the local school budget. Once the vocational budget is set is solid and is not affected at all. The assessments are the same. They are insulated.

Mr. Parsons spoke of budget issues with regard to annual vocational school budgets. The cost factor has to be looked at more closely. Gloucester has had over 11 years to face this issue but made no move to improve their vocational program. Now [they're] looking for financing and approval from the state.

Councilor Grow asked **Mr. Farmer** how many teaching positions been lost in the last few years; he stated it was a total of 76.

Councilor Grow pointed out they're cutting every year and why that might not been a top priority. Now we're up against a time frame.

Councilor Hardy said that as to the regional vocational school, how much money? The state is promising \$75 million, MSBA's funding and the State with \$25 million for Essex Aggie's portion. Hypothetically, if Gloucester goes with the regional school that the state and MSBA is paying so much and then we get 9C cuts, how are we going to make up the difference?

Mr. Farmer said hypothetically then MSBA would have to cut whole projects out that it wouldn't cut that specific project out.

Councilor Hardy responded that the City of Gloucester is committed to a certain percentage if the State or MSBA is not going to pay their portion, then we'd have to pay more?

Councilor Grow said Director Craven stated that the issue is that the MSBA wants to see what communities are willing to commit. If the district doesn't have enough support, they will cut the cord. But they will commit to the district if they have enough interest and support in the project. They look for 75%. They will go to the next project if the support to this one isn't there.

Councilor Hardy responded that the Mayor explained she was hoping we would take our time and commit monies to stay locally. That's the assumption that is where the local vocational money will go. Now it is to be saved and go to West Parish. We don't know what our own administration wants to do.

David Anderson asked about numbers of students participating in different programs like school choice and vocational students.

Mr. Farmer stated said we were below the state average but have no way of knowing what it is locally now.

Councilor Grow asked if we seem to be heading for and the School Committee wants to not join now and to keep the conversation open and joining at a later date. What happens if we wait 2 or 3 years down the road with the assumption we have the option of joining at that point? Now it's a huge success, but now there's no room. Do we have a prospect that the door will shut?

Mr. Farmer said no the final date is June or to January on the year at it opens. They have to develop a budget. We will simply pay the non-resident rate. They have the enrollment criteria, and our freshman will be subject to that criteria.

Councilor Curcuru stated Peabody is not part of it and not allowed to send students there.

Mr. Farmer said no Peabody students are at North Shore Technical High School.

Mr. Johnson wanted to speak to the fact that with so many district students applying those non-district students wouldn't have a chance to get in. Nobody from Gloucester will get to go there.

Councilor Ciolino asked what are requirements for entrance?

Mr. Farmer said they have a point system for assessing students, including an interview and other data points to see what students most fit their criteria to enter the school.

Mr. Johnson responded as a former vocational student that they come and recruit you. You fill out an application with transcripts. He did not know the specific criteria. They give you a number, you go for an interview. After certain period of time you get a letter saying you got in or not

Councilor Grow asked can they send students back to the local district.

Ms. Teixeira said they can ask you to leave and send you back to the district if they are non-performing or are a discipline issue.

Councilor Grow said as current members of the district we continue to have kids going to the school and in January 2013 we have kids entering the district, in 2012 as regular members, they won't graduate until 2017; we are on the hook for those kids. If we send no more as of 2013 we'd have 4 years of students at a declining rate to pay for. The City is not released from its obligations until 2018.

Mr. Parsons said the main advantage of getting in on time is to have a strong voice on how the rules are drawn up as to how it's going to be run. He appreciates the Mayor's and Councils concern about withdrawing, but if you have a strong voice that you can have a say on the mechanism as to how to bail out, then.

Mr. Farmer said there is a bail out mechanism now but that the other members have to agree to the terms of the withdrawal. If a district has obligated to debt service that if want to withdraw they're going to want them to continue their debt service. Mr. Farmer stated his assumption is that the by-laws of all vocational districts are boiler-plated from the rest.

Councilor Grow asked if Superintendent O'Malley says she wants to engage Gloucester in this process, do you expect our concerns would be considered in this process moving forward, and they would listen to our worries

Ms. Teixeira said that she believes Ms. O'Malley and whole regional district school committee that as a group has everything such as funding and that they have wonderful things going on. Up until now they did not have a clear understanding of what we are dealing with. Councilor Hardy had a conversation with Ms. O'Malley who thought it would be easy fixes and now has a more clear idea of what we face. She emphasized that it is not a matter of do we want to join, the question is can we afford it, and is it fair to the rest of students of Gloucester. You can't take from one to give to another. How do we move forward? We do have potential of 48% to 50% for West Parish funding, but we have the consequences of Charter School. It's sad that we're faced with the opportunity at this time. How do we create the most opportunities for our children? We can't just benefit some and not others. Let's take some time. I have concerns to be committed to a 30 year contract. We are faced with an opportunity to change. We will have a task force to see what the community wants, and at the same time be mindful of the Charter School and the West Parish situation.

Mr. Farmer said they've recalibrated with regards to FY2013 and debt services FY 2014 and then we're looking potential of \$2.0 million then.

Councilor Grow assumes that there is no appetite to eliminate vocational education at GHS.

Mr. Farmer said that no, this is not an option.

Councilor Grow said he had an interesting experience with Mr. Crowley who spoke about his vocational experiences. He spoke to him the next day after the public hearing. He talked about kids in athletics as a basic root to keeping kids in school, and its saving grace for some kids. **Councilor Grow** asked how much do they pay for their privilege and in the Voke and found that it's zero. In our system it's \$380 a year now to play football, and if you have multiple children in the program you're paying some real money. We're paying for the kids to play football in the Voke and not in our system and that's just one example of the inequity. We know the Voke school is a great opportunity but at what cost?

Ms. Teixeira said there is a meeting the second Thursday of month for the next regional school committee, and she will engage the conversation that it's not an educational conversation but a financial conversation if we don't have a decision to the regional district committee by the 15th of December. Boxford took a vote. It's very active.

Councilor Grow said it's obvious that smaller school systems are jumping on board.

Councilor Curcuru said they can't be compared to Gloucester.

Ms. Teixeira said that Gloucester is unique in that we don't have the tax base. Hopefully, a year from now that it'll be a different conversation.

Mr. Johnson said that our vocational program can't do better on it's own than the vocational school can. So it is refreshing to hear. I hear what you're saying. We're making ourselves less attractive by having a lesser skilled population to businesses.

Councilor Grow said it's not that we're saying we can match the vocational programs offered. He then asked about culinary arts.

Mr. Farmer said there's a limit as to how far we can expand. We have a couple of courses. He doesn't see huge expansion. There will be limit to the number of students.

Ms. Teixeira stated they will look at diversification of programs.

Councilor Grow asked the Committee is there additional information from the Superintendent and before the next vocational school committee meeting needed? We can make a recommendation now for the City Council for the next meeting or make sure we have more information for the next Budget and Finance Committee Meeting. He said if district School Committee meeting is on the 12th he wants to hear some sort of report back what the conversation was and then the Gloucester School Committee meets on the 23rd. No public hearings are required on the process, but that was put in place to invite the public in.

Councilor Grow then called for a meeting of the Budget & Finance Committee on Monday, November 30, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. to take up reviewing all recommendations on the Regional Vocational School to pass on their recommendation to the City Council for their meeting on December 1, 2009. This meeting will be on the 30th as the regularly scheduled meeting would fall on the Thanksgiving holiday.

4. Other Business

- a. Memo from Superintendent Farmer re: Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)

Councilor Grow asked if there is there anything regarding the recertification?

Mr. Farmer said the West Parish project is the priority in the packet (on file). It has been determined that they can make a blanket recommendation rather than go through the entire itemized packet.

Councilor Grow asked for a brief update on West Parish on Kathleen Craven's discussion at the School Committee on the status of West Parish.

Mr. Farmer said Executive Director very forthcoming and will recommend West Parish be given serious consideration at the November 18th meeting of the MSBA and need the City Council finding the necessary resources, and for parts of the Fuller site which could bring \$0.5 million in debt service. He said the impression is \$6 million worth which the Treasurer will verify in due course. The plan is to relocate West Parish into the Fuller School while they knock down and rebuild school at the West Parish site. Beverly did

this. He's not suggesting this as the only solution but just one of several being considered. The resolution on West Parish is the priority. The Executive Director referred to a repair program and had a discussion regarding the school roofs which are 20 years old and that are now beyond their life expectancy. There will be some discussion with the MSBA about this.

Councilor Grow asked is there a way to estimate a timeframe that if there was a positive outcome on the 18th on West Parish what kind of site development planning do we need, etc.

Mr. Farmer said he doesn't have a sense of that yet. There would be a major feasibility study that would need to be done, which would take about 18 months to two years to complete.

Ms. Teixeira asked just that specific question and expressed the concern regarding funding of Charter school, vocational merger, etc. A design collection committee would be formed to go forward. Willingness would be important to demonstrate an ability to go forward determining and finding a site. At same time they would encourage hurrying up to start because construction costs are down now.

Mr. Farmer says this doesn't commit the City Council; it is just a request to outline planning for the State.

Councilor Ciolino says we're looking to the future and making a lot of promises. We're going to expand our vocational programs, then the expense of the West Parish School, then on top of that Voke Tech School joining expense, a lot of money going out.

Mr. Farmer said they will do what they can with the sources available and make priority decisions. We are not in a rush to make a judgment and wait to see what happens. The Charter School doesn't have a building yet. That hearing is on November 7th. School Committee said it wishes to explore the high school vocational program, etc. What we're doing is trying to position ourselves at this moment and wait to see what shakes out. He said that the School Committee's assumption is predicated on resources available and to use what they can. They need to research carefully how to allocate these resources. All this does is to open it up to a process.

Councilor Curcuru stated that we do follow through. This is a feasibility study.

Councilor Ciolino is that it needs to be clarified that this is an issue needing study.

Councilor Hardy stated we need to see real projections of the number of students for five and ten years out and do we do that?

Mr. Farmer said yes we do that and the further out you get the more it becomes an approximation. We have to supply the MSBA with this information. At moment schools are pretty full. With exception of one class room at Plum Cove, all elementary schools are fully occupied.

Councilor Hardy said she read recently there's been a decrease in population in the school system.

Mr. Farmer said if you go back to late 1980's the population grew and shrank like a wave, and we have gone back to the size noted in the '80's. There are 55 more students this year in kindergartners. We don't know at this point if this is a trend.

Mr. Parsons said if Fuller is good enough to put West Parish why isn't Fuller good enough to become the school for that area. It has everything you need there. Why aren't we utilizing that?

Councilor Grow responded that no one said it wasn't a good school. It is the philosophy of a neighborhood school system.

Mr. Parsons said they closed the neighborhood schools years ago. Economically it is the best thing is to reopen Fuller and put West Parish school children there. Bussing all the children there is cheaper than building West Parish from scratch. Very few walk to school. Most are bused anyway.

Mr. Farmer concurred that Fuller is convenient for a high school but is inappropriate for elementary school children. The MSBA classified West Parish, Fuller and O'Maley as the schools in the worst shape in the entire system. The view in the Mt. Vernon report in

'02 raises a whole series of concerns about the Fuller School. The West Parish site development with a new school might bring back some of the youngsters that go to Manchester/Essex schools. This could reduce our outflow of students.

Councilor Grow said some discussion about West Parish also have to take into account that future residential development will be in that district and that having a school to handle it would be an appropriate.

Mr. Farmer said there may well be a significant increase in the future in that area.

Mr. Parsons said that State requires certain land requirements. Does West Parish have the adequate land mass to do this school rebuild?

Mr. Farmer stated that the intention was one story but can go up to 3 stories.

Councilor Ciolino asked that they not repeat history. It is cheaper to go new than rebuild. Please don't consider remodeling.

Mr. Farmer stated that it may be the case at Fuller.

MOTION: On motion by Councilor Grow, seconded by Councilor Curcuru, the Budget and Finance Committee voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed to recommend to the City Council that the memo of the Superintendent of Schools and it's seven different motions be accepted as submitted and written on the Massachusetts School Building Authority 2009 submission.

5. Memo from Fire Chief re: Request to pay an invoice from FY2009 with FY2010 funds.

Chief Dench stated that a purchase order was cut prior to July 1, 2009 for some software from Firehouse Software with money they had to buy equipment, buying several modules. Because of our (his and his assistant's) inexperience in doing this they thought this was for the regular billing. When they got the bill they didn't have the money to pay for it.

Councilor Ciolino says this looked familiar has it come our way before?

Chief Dench said no it hasn't to his knowledge.

Ms. McInnis said this particular issue has not been before the Committee before. Issues like this came up before due to Chief Dench and his assistant being confused with the carryovers and two other invoices that came forward with similar situations. Municipal Resources spoke to us about Firehouse Software.

Councilor Grow said it was \$955 more than what the original invoice said?

Chief Dench said that nothing has been paid yet and entire invoice is \$2,535.00. He added that funds are coming from a budget line item for software.

Ms. McInnis said they had reserved the money to pay for this invoice, paid a similar invoice and now have no money to pay for this one. This has been languishing since the end of July. Due to the confusion it wasn't paid.

Councilor Grow asked what was the money intended?

Chief Dench said it was for laptops in the vehicles. It was in computer equipment.

MOTION: On motion of Councilor Grow, seconded by Councilor Ciolino, the Budget and Finance Committee voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed to recommend to the City Council to pay the P.O. #903935, 220.58780-058 from ACS Firehouse Software of Urbandale, IA for the total sum of \$2,535.00 to be paid out of FY2010 funds to pay this invoice in full.

6. COM2009-035: Letter from American Legion

Councilor Grow asked Chief Dench what has changed about the sprinkler system.

Chief Dench stated that if a function hall is not a direct part of the building's regular function then the Legion doesn't need the sprinkler system. As long the occupancy stays below 100 in their portion of the building, then they don't need it. They can rent out the function hall which doesn't need the sprinkler. They have to come back to fire department if they use the function hall for some kind of a night club atmosphere.

Councilor Curcuru noted they will supply a bar and a bartender. Is that considered a function that they control?

Chief Dench said Deputy Chief Aiello is more involved in it. The person who is hiring the hall is then the person hiring the Legion to provide the bar and an outside caterer.

Mr. Duggan says they're not piggybacking off their license.

Councilor Hardy said she'd like opinion from the Licensing Board.

Mr. Duggan said in his memo he noted they can have a function but that a Monte Carlo night is considered an inconsistent function if it were on an occasional Friday night. But it would be considered a function of their club if it was a regularly scheduled Friday night event, and that would then require them to be "sprinkled".

Councilor Grow said they could rent it out every single night with 150 people every single night so how is that different than the occupancy of the club itself.

Mr. Duggan said they still have to get a fire permit.

Chief Dench says it falls back on the legion. The function upstairs is totally separate. Downstairs at the legion the function is different. There is no spill over.

Councilor Grow said if they use the whole building then they would have to comply with the sprinkler system. Where were the appeals from?

Chief Dench said they were statewide.

Councilor Ciolino said what about them serving Thanksgiving dinners?

Mr. Duggan and **Chief Dench** said it is an inconsistent event, and is not an extension of the club and that it is two completely separate issues.

Councilor Grow asked about the liquor license.

Mr. Duggan said they no longer have a license. According to Licensing Commission, they are exempt above and beyond the City's capacity because it's a private club and a veteran's organization. There is some kind of exemption. They'd have to apply for a new license, and they'd get it.

Councilor Grow said they're not talking about the draft lease. The lease will come to the Committee as a referral.

Councilor Ciolino has concern about the fuel oil to heat the building would be part of the utilities,

Mr. Duggan said water, sewer, all of it. He had a discussion prior to the draft before the Committee. Mark Cole of the DPW had everyday maintenance, and now it's their issue. They're going to call their own people to take care of their problems. If they need a whole new system then it's on the City, but the day-to-day issues, it's on them.

Councilor Curcuru said the landlord would be responsible for overall maintenance of the building. The landlord is responsible, unless they're specifying it in the lease.

Mr. Duggan says the Legion contractor has to determine what the issue is, they bill the Legion; but if the contractor says it's a much more complicated problem, then it's the City's problem.

Councilor Hardy says it's not spelled out in the draft lease. Under #5 it needs revision. If it's not in there they have wiggle room... "in whose name it should be". It needs to be in the name of the leasers.

Councilor Curcuru said the City doesn't want to get "whacked: if they don't pay the bills.

Councilor Grow said the proposed lease is a 3 year lease at \$1/year provided they pay all the utilities. He recalled that when the process was begun the process they couldn't afford a bump in the rent as their membership was down. It is \$300 a month in rent and the utilities are \$18,000 a year.

Councilor Hardy said they asked for all this years ago to see if they could meet this obligation.

Mr. Anderson said they do not have the membership. This is not against the American Legion. That facility is just much too large. Seems we're talking about money, money, money. That facility could be used to generate income.

Councilor Curcuru said it is not as easy as you think. They can stay there if they pay the utilities. I'm not convinced they can do it. But what we are saying to them?

Mr. Duggan has spoken to Montserrat College, museums, that the Chamber go in there, a visitor's center, a private day care school. Why they wouldn't go there is parking. He also said that the whole issue of their inability to obtain a liquor license was because it wasn't sprinkled. One of the issues that's come to light is that they can make a go of it, they get a liquor license they turn it around with functions. But they've been in there for 90 years; it is a symbolic thing. We provide them with an opportunity. If they don't make it then they don't.

Councilor Curcuru asked if they could show proof of payment on the utilities monthly to see if they're falling behind.

Mr. Duggan said no problem with that.

Councilor Grow said one other thing to consider is that we're in the final stages of a facilities review. In one respect it might be premature to float this for two years. If the sentiment is to let them stay there right now, we should wait until the facility report is presented to the Council to make sure this is the right decision for the place.

Councilor Curcuru said we wanted a business plan and for them to pay their own utilities.

Mr. Duggan said you bring up valid points. He offered the Legion the option to go someplace else, to be part of a veteran's area and rent out the hall at the Legion; and they can keep that money to continue to operate. Annual dues are only \$30 a year of which \$17 goes to Boston and \$13 stays at the local chapter. It has come to a head. You couldn't do the utilities with sprinkler system issue. To their credit, they've come through with an exemption on the sprinkler system. They researched and found they can get the liquor license.

Councilor Grow asked for a document covering the sprinkler law

Chief Dench said he would give it to the Committee.

Councilor Hardy asked if back July 2008 an energy audit was ever done?

Mr. Duggan said no, it wasn't done. We only got so many free and that was not used for that building. The City wanted it for higher priority buildings.

Councilor Hardy asked about the oil burner. The heat has been on continuously, and they ran out of oil; and it was a real problem. The whole heating system is on its last legs. Why are we renting a building with this problem? Can we have an inspection of it before we rent it again? We need to also inventory the contents.

It was noted that the building is handicapped accessible from an entrance that leads directly into the elevator.

Councilor Grow asked is there an exit clause?

Mr. Duggan said this is a draft. We can put it in, and add rubbish removal, specific utilities, snow removal, etc.

Councilor Hardy said that also back in July of 2008 that liability insurance increased and thanked them for that.

Councilor Curcuru said we have had many meetings, and they [the Legion] didn't want outsiders in this.

Councilor Hardy said she got confronted at the senior center by a number of veterans. They didn't understand what the Legion higher ups are talking about. They don't inform the members; and if they did, then the process would be easier and their members would be more supportive of the City's effort.

Mr. Parsons wants to point out on parking that when the area was done over that there'd be no parking in front of the building. You can't see oncoming traffic around the circle due to their parking situation. There needs to be enforcement in that area.

Mr. Duggan said that he will take any suggestions to incorporate into the draft.

Councilor Grow reiterated that this needs to be considered in the context of the facilities study before we lease it for a 3 year term.

Councilor Curcuru said we could also bring this to the facilities committee.

At this time there is no action needed by the Budget & Finance Committee. The documents received on this issue are for information only and on file.

4. Other (Continued)

b. Maplewood School

Mr. Duggan said on the subject of the Maplewood School, they need to explain to the neighborhood and tell them what has happened about the proposal. The possible buyer said there weren't enough proposed units to make a project like that financially viable.

Councilor Curcuru said it all comes down to parking objections for the neighborhood, and a general discussion of the issue ensued.

It was moved, seconded, and voted UNANIMOUSLY to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana C. Jorgenson

Clerk of the Committees