

**Manager's Report
City Council Meeting
Tuesday, January 19, 2010
City Hall at 7:00 p.m.**

TO: Mayor Walter Ash Jr. and Members of Belfast City Council
FROM: Joseph J. Slocum, City Manager
DATE: Friday, January 15, 2010

Non Agenda Items:

City Audit:

The audit ending FY-June 30, 2009 should be in your hands and on your agenda for February 2nd meeting. We hope to have numbers for you on Tuesday night (January 19th) on where we are with undesignated fund balance or "Surplus". Consideration of a "Surplus" Policy will also be on your agenda February 2nd.

Committee Reports:

Parks and Recreation Commission will be present to inform the Council of two items: First they have developed a conceptual idea for a staircase that would join the Belfast Common with Steamboat Landing Park. Secondly they wanted to remind the Council that they have existing Belfast Common capital projects for additional sidewalk work (funded at \$15,000) and development of additional parking along Front Street at the foot of the Common (funded at \$20,000) and they are getting ready to construct those projects.

Agenda Items:

10.B Consideration of an agreement with the Maine State Police to supply an officer in the Computer Crimes Unit in exchange for full reimbursement by the State.

The State was having a difficult time recruiting good officers for its Computer Crimes Unit because experienced officers in the State did not want to lose retirement benefits by switching to the State System. The States response is to have the officer remain on the payroll of the local police department that they gained their experience in so the officer can stay in the same retirement system and not lose any benefits by accepting the State position. We do this now with an officer who works with the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency.

I recommend we approve this. Since this is a contract the State can't eliminate it from its financial obligations. The officer that goes and works with the State directly reports to them and is fully covered for any liability arising out of the state police activity they are involved with. The officer that goes relinquishes any right to come back if for any reason this State Police program ceases to exist. Of course if we had an opening we would be glad to consider them for that opening. This arrangement benefits the City because we have a locally sensitive person involved in attacking this form of crime and can lend

a voice to active enforcement by the State here. This is a multi year agreement and the Auditor should see that you have approved it.

10.C Request from the YMCA to conduct a Tri-Athalon in Belfast on May 15th.

This is a new and exciting opportunity for many age groups that will surely bring people to come, stay, eat and shop here. Because it's new we wanted to give the YMCA and the Council the opportunity to talk it over and fine-tune any issues that may arise. Staff supports this event and the YMCA has agreed to pay for associated police cost.

10.D Discussion and report from the Hiking, Biking and Pedestrian Committee.

There are two attachments in your packet and we are also posting them on line. The long document is 21 pages and provides an updated vision statement for Hiking, Biking and Pedestrian amenities in the City. It has many practical and useful photographs.

The second document is two pages long and contains the Committee's recommendations which include a call for new enhancements including:

- improvements to Main Street so that it better connects for walkers and bicyclists to Reny's Plaza,
- improved infrastructure along Route 52,
- continuation of Route 1 sidewalk on Eastside to at least the Big Apple Store,
- new and improved sidewalks from Macleods on High Street to the area opposite Belfast Variety,
- repair sidewalk at same time we resurface adjacent street,
- Repair/replace sidewalk from Hatley Drive to YMCA,
- Repair/replace Field Street between High Street and Waldo Avenue.
- Repair/replace Waldo Avenue between Main and John Streets,
- Repair/replace Congress Street between Miller and Main,
- Adopt policy to consider hiking, biking and pedestrian issues when streets are being built or improved.

These are all good recommendations that we can pursue. Money would be the component that would determine the speed and pace of making these repairs and improvements. The great news is that this identifies a recommended Plan from a group of our citizens based upon an intensive assessment and if you approve these recommendations then we staff can target them for estimated cost, possible grants and construction. Committee Representatives will be at the meeting to present these recommendations and to answer any questions or address comments.

10.E Discussion and possible action on adoption of an Economic Development Plan.

A 25-page draft of this was distributed at the January 5th meeting. It is on the agenda for your amendment and then approval. A copy has been posted to the City Website.

This Plan if approved would be one of the base responsibilities for an Economic development Director so please make sure that your thought are reflected in this document so expectations are clear.

10.F Discussion and possible action on a Job Description for a new Economic Development Director.

The job description is in your packet and also posted on the Website. Please look it over and let us know if it is acceptable. If approved we plan to advertise for this position immediately in several statewide newspapers. The salary would fall within a broad range based upon experience. A budget would look something like this:

Position:

Advertising:	\$2,000
Salary:	_____
Health Insurance	\$9,500
Social Security	\$4,300
Retirement	\$2,000
Life Insurance	\$ 310
Unemployment	\$ 205
Work Comp	\$ 270
Memberships	\$1,000
Mileage	\$2,600
Meals	\$1,200
Lodging	\$1,600
Computer	\$2,000
Cell Phone	\$ 720
Training/Conf.	\$1,500
Supplies	\$1,200

Total startup cost estimate: \$75,000 to \$95,000.

Total ongoing cost estimate: \$72,000 to \$92,000 (2011-12).

Selection Process:

This is a new position that was proposed by the Council. I am thinking that Wayne Marshall and myself- along with a Council representative and one outside person act as the hiring committee. I am specifically recommending that the outside person be another City Manager who has had the experience with working with his or her own Economic Development Director for a period of time and who can bring an experienced view to the team. I am not recommending that we solicit assistance from the Director or Board of any existing economic development group that we are likely to do business with down the

road. There should be no confusion in the new Economic Developer's mind who made the decision to bring them here and their responsibility and loyalty to the City should not be compromised.

10.G Discussion of FY 2010-2011 budget process – General

We are starting to work on this. Here are some items of concern:

- A. I am concerned because of what I am hearing about the school budget and I think the Council should decide what role if any they believe they have in that process.

Next year the school will not have the roughly \$180,000 the City supported them with last year that was carried over from a previous allocation so we know they will need to raise that money anew. Secondly I am hearing that the consolidation will cost Belfast more because the Searsport teachers will likely need to be paid the same rates as the Belfast teachers. Finally I am hearing that there may be cutbacks on School funding due to state revenue shortfalls.

The City collects the taxes for the school and our employees have to address the taxpayers when they come in to discuss these taxes. Neither the School nor the County has to do this. What ever we can do to get a handle on potential school tax increases as soon as possible is important. I do not think that school budgets should impact City services. If we cut a city service it should be for reasons other than what is happening at the school. The point is that we have lowered taxes 2 years in a row and in my current view taxes may well go up this year and we should be talking about that.

- B. Budget format- we have had discussions on the size of the budget book and requests for spread sheet formats. We need to tool up if we are going to change but we need to know what you want that change to look like.
- C. Capital Projects- I intend to present a 5-year capital plan this year so it is easier to see both short term anticipated projects but also longer term ones.
- D. We would like to hear of items or projects of interest to the Council.
- E. Timeline: The budget is presented in March, work sessions on budget starts April through May. Conclude mid-June.

This is the end of my report. We have several matters to discuss in executive session and I think each of them will absorb some time.

Have a safe and enjoyable weekend and special thanks to Detective Mike McFadden for all of his great service to this community. We all wish him the very best with his new opportunity. Keep in touch Mike. We will always leave the light on for you.