

The Committee on Government Operations, Public Safety & Public Service met on Thursday, April 18, 2019 at 6pm.

Members present were Councilor Anthony DiPierro, presiding, Councilors, Peter Napolitano, Michael McLaughlin and Richard Dell Isola, as ex-officio.

Member absent was Councilor John Hanlon.

The Committee considered a Resolution offered by Councilor Richard Dell Isola: That a representative of the Mayor's office, Planning & Development and Engineering appear at this meeting to give an update on the progress of the Ferry Street Construction Project.

Greg St. Louis, Executive Director of Public Works and Richard Benevento, President of WorldTech Engineering were also present.

Mr. Benevento provided the Committee with a power point presentation (copy attached and available in City Clerks office). The presentation covered the Project History to Date, the Project Area itself, Project Funding, Existing Issues, Project Goals, Proposed Improvements and the Project Status/Schedule. Mr. Benevento explained that this was a complete reconstruction project that would remove old train tracks and cobblestones at a total cost of \$18.5 million which would be covered 100% by Federal and State Funds. He noted that while the street was open the City would expend about \$2.5 million to replace the existing water main with a new water main. Mr. St. Louis announced that when that occurs the City would reach out to homeowners that abut this stretch of work about replacing their old lead water pipes that go into home. Mr. Benevento explained that the new construction would result in improved traffic signal equipment, reconstructed sidewalks, provide dedicated bike lanes and replace drainage system. He informed the Committee that the plan was to start the actual construction between the period of the Fall of 2020 and Spring of 2021 and revealed that the overall project would take three years to complete. He stated that when the street is open they would notify all Utility Companies that had equipment under the street that it would be the time to replace or upgrade their equipment while the street was open since there would be a five year moratorium to replace any of that equipment once the project was completed. Mr. St. Louis explained that the actual construction would only occur at four blocks at a time and not the entire length of Ferry Street. Councilor McLaughlin expressed concern with the current condition of Ferry Street due to the work that was performed recently by National Grid in the gas line replacement project and noted that residents and businesses couldn't wait until 2021 to have the poor conditions created by National Grid fixed. Mr. St. Louis assured the Committee that he was working with National Grid in addressing this issue and was also exploring some new overlay methods to address this issue.

The Committee voted: To report back to the City Council with a recommendation to refer back to Sponsor.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Burley  
Clerk of Committees

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Members present were Councilor Anthony DiPierro, presiding, Councilors, Peter Napolitano, Michael McLaughlin and Richard Dell Isola, as ex-officio.

Member absent was Councilor John Hanlon.

The Committee considered a Resolution offered by Councilor Michael McLaughlin: That His Honor the Mayor and CFO appear at this meeting to give an update on any recommendations that have been made from the School Review Commission, and to see if an audit has been done on the School Department, and if a blue ribbon commission has been formed to address school funding going forward.

Eric Demas, Chief Financial Officer was also present.

Councilor McLaughlin mentioned that the Mayor had some strong ideas that he had laid out to avoid future school financial situations that had occurred last year and questioned what the status of those plans were. Mr. Demas explained that a School Finance Review Commission had been established and continues to meet on a regular basis noting that the School Principals have been invited to the next meeting to discuss budgetary issues. Mr. Demas went on to explain further that a Blue Ribbon Task Force has also been meeting with members who have a strong diverse financial background but noted that scheduling challenges have occurred especially due to the change within the school administration. Mr. Demas stated that the Task Force investigation has basically concluded and expected the Task Force to draft a comprehensive report and share with City. He informed the Committee that the City has now developed a strong working relationship with the new school administration and has participated in school budget discussions to insure all is transparent. Councilor McLaughlin questioned if the City Council could obtain the report of the Task Force before the Budget process. Mr. Demas responded that he hoped to have a least a draft prior to the budget proceedings but revealed that things have slowed down due to the change in school administration. Councilor McLaughlin asked if an operational audit of the schools had been conducted and Mr. Demas responded that the School Finance Review Commission is performing the operational audit. He stated that the School Finance Review Commissions work will be reflective in the upcoming budget. Chairman DiPierro concurred that there has been a much improved relation between the City and School officials. Mr. Demas suggested that the City Council reference the School Finance Review Commission minutes of the meeting to understand the work that is being done prior to the budget process. Mr. Demas assured the Committee that the same financial procedures in place for the City are now in place for the Schools and reminded the Committee that Financial audits are done every year which also includes audit of the schools. Councilor Napolitano remarked that he was content that things have been worked out. Chairman DiPierro reminded the members that State Representative Joe McGonagle and State Senator Sal DiDomenico were working diligently on getting the school funding formula changed. Councilor McLaughlin suggested that all the City Councilors be provided with a copy of the School Finance Review Commission meeting minutes by the first regular City Council meeting in May.

The Committee voted: To report back to the City Council with a recommendation to refer to the City Clerk with a request that he provide the City Council members with copies of the School Finance Review Commission meeting minutes by the first regular City Council meeting in May.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Burley  
Clerk of Committees