

## FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Standing Committee on Finance met on *Tuesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 7:00 PM* in the *Council Chambers, Brockton City Hall, 45 School Street*, with Councilor Lally presiding, to consider the following:

1. Appointment of Henry G. Soones of 5 Kenneth Ave Brockton, MA 02302 to the Council on Aging for a three (3) year term, ending January 2025.  
Invited: Henry G. Soones

Having considered the same, motion by Councilor Farwell to report FAVORABLE, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Thompson. Motion carried by a hand vote.

2. Ordered: That the City Council authorizes the acceptance and expenditure of the total grant funds in the amount of \$25,000.  
From: MassDevelopment – Technical Assistance Grant  
To: Department of Planning and Economic Development – Technical Assistance Grant Fund  
(These grant funds will be used to assist the City study and develop a Business Improvement District (BID) and Plan for downtown Brockton.)  
Invited: Robert May, Director of Planning & Economic Development  
Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

\*Mr. May states that he will be working with the Downtown Brockton Association and the property owners to prepare a feasibility study for a BID (Business Improvement District) in Downtown Brockton. If this study works, he states that he will be back in front of Council with a petition from the property owners who would be interested in creating a BID.

\*Mr. May tells Council that this money is only available to the BID board to work with, therefore the city would not be able to allocate it into something else. The BID plan that will be adopted will determine how the money will be spent.

\*Councilor Thompson questions how large the target district will be.

\*Mr. May answered that the BID would stretch approximately from Warren Avenue to Commercial Street, East to West, and then from Spring Street to the river just south of White Avenue, North to South.

\*Mr. May introduces John Fay, the Senior Economic Development Planner who states that 60% of the property owners representing 51% of the assessed value of the district will be the deciding group in the vote to pass through the BID.

\*Councilor Thompson asks if even the people who vote against the BID would have to pay the fee as well. Mr. May states that this is correct.

\*Councilor Thompson asks if there is a timeline of when to expect the vote to happen. Mr. May answers that he hopes to have a kickoff meeting for the study the first week of February. It should take about six months after that to put together the study and recommendation which will put them in the position to begin the solicitation process

to be sure that there are enough signatures to accompany the petition to go before Council again as it is City Council's decision whether or not to develop a BID.

\*Councilor Thompson asks if the grant as it stands will suffice to get them to the point stated prior of if there is an expectation of the city to provide funds. Mr. May believes that this will get them to this point, or at least puts them in line for another MassDevelopment grant to finish the process if need be.

\*Councilor Thompson asks what type of services would be contemplated in the BID. Mr. May states that it would be ideal to have full time management that organizes the process of getting the communications out to the property owners. He continues to say that they are looking at beginning an Ambassadors Program to check in on businesses downtown and to also sponsor festivals and events that bring people into the downtown area.

\*Councilor Asack asks if there is a match for the grant to which Mr. May responds no.

\*Councilor Farwell reiterates the idea that even if people vote "no" that they would have to pay regardless, and Mr. May confirms again that this is the case. Mr. May goes on to say that the BID is in existence from 3-5 years and will be voted on again if it is renewed by both the Council and the property owners.

\*Councilor Farwell asks whose responsibility it is to set the percent of money that the property owners will be taxed. Mr. May answered that there will be a Steering Board formed to make these decisions and inform the Council. City Council is the one responsible to pass the suggested number from the Board.

\*Mr. May clarifies that the fee is a special assessment and that although it is collected with the real-estate taxes, it is not an actual real-estate tax.

\*Councilor Nicastro asks who comprises the BID Board and who sets the funds. Mr. May states that it will be elected by the property owners downtown, their peers. Councilor Nicastro follows up to ask if the CFO and the assessor are on this board, to which Mr. May states no.

\*Councilor Nicastro notes that while there is no match for the grant, the city still is subject to providing an abundance of services and therefore is contributing to the order in some way even though it may not be matching the dollar figure completely.

\*Councilor Nicastro asks that in the worst-case scenario if the city would ever have to pay this back, Mr. May says no.

\*Councilor Tavares asks who will draft the petition and Mr. May states that it will be drafted by the consultant Ann Burke and the Steering Board Committee. She follows up to ask how the property owners will be informed to apply, Mr. May states that the Steering Committee will put together a campaign to be sure that every property owner is informed.

\*Councilor Rodrigues expresses his concerns that the big businesses and corporations will dominate this BID and leave the smaller property owners to pay something that they can't necessarily afford. Mr. May responds that while a business can own 51% of the assessed value by themselves, the BID still requires 60% of the total property owners to support the petition. He goes on to say that this is for commercial property or big multi-family homes.

\*Councilor Mendes states that this district in particular is a hard to reach population and a population that speaks multiple languages, she wants to be sure that each person

involved understands the literature provided to them. Mr. May says that that will be no problem as the plan that will go before Council will benefit everyone in the district.

\*Councilor Thompson asks if there will be an opportunity to amend this item when it comes back in front of Council. Mr. May isn't sure, but he assumes that it may just be an up or down vote.

Having considered the same, motion by Councilor Thompson to report FAVORABLE, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Asack. Motion carried by a hand vote.

3. Ordered: That the City Council authorizes the acceptance and expenditure of the total grant funds in the amount of \$74,800.

From: U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ) – 2021 BJA FY21 Edward Byrne Memorial

Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

To: Brockton Police Department - 2021 BJA FY21 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Fund

(These grant funds will be used to conduct community policing overtime, send youth to the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office Summer Day Camp, and purchase Axon Taser non-lethal weapons, batteries, cartridges, and holsters to properly equip patrol officers. There is no match required for this grant.)

Invited: Steve Williamson, Interim Chief of Police  
Michelle St. James, Grant Coordinator, BPD  
Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

\*Ms. St. James states that the JAG grant is a long-standing federal grant based on crime rate. She states that the Police Department will use this grant for equipment more than anything else.

\*Councilor Nicastro asks who decides how the percent of the grant is allocated to each city or county. Ms. St. James responds that congress determines this based on the state's share of violent crimes and population equally. After the money is allocated to the state, it is split in the same way by county and city. Since Brockton has one of the higher crime rates in the state, we have gotten one of the higher JAG amounts. This grant in particular is based off the crime rates and populations from the census in 2019.

\*Councilor Rodrigues brings up the fact that the Police Officers in the City of Brockton share tasers and wonders what it would take, or how much money it would take to equip every officer in this city with their own taser. Ms. St. James responds that with the numbers that she has in front of her now, it can be done under \$250,000. She continues to say that what this grant money is used for is amendable if both the City Council and Police Department agree that there is another need for the money other than what is allocated as of now.

Having considered the same, motion by Councilor Asack to report FAVORABLE, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Thompson. Motion carried by a hand vote.

4. Ordered: That the City Council authorizes the acceptance and expenditure of the total grant funds in the amount of \$250,000.

From: Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's Office of Grants and Research (OGR) – Massachusetts Municipal Public Safety Staffing Grant

To: Brockton Fire Department- Massachusetts Municipal Public Safety Staffing Grant Fund

(These grant funds will be used for overtime necessary to maintain staffing levels.)

Invited: Brian Nardelli, Fire Chief or Designee

Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

\*Chief Nardelli states that this is a recurring grant that the Fire Department receives each year to be used for staffing purposes only.

Having considered the same, motion by Councilor Rodrigues to report FAVORABLE, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Asack. Motion carried by a hand vote.

5. Ordered: That the following named sum be and the same is hereby transferred as the same was submitted by the Mayor as follows:

Transfer of: \$800,000

From: Brockton Fire Department – Personal Services- Other Than Overtime

To: Brockton Fire Department – Personal Services- Overtime

This transfer is necessary to supplement overtime spending due to vacations, increased members on injury leave, vacant positions, and a new collective bargaining agreement.

Invited: Brian Nardelli, Fire Chief or Designee

Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

\*Chief Nardelli states that both the pandemic and numerous other injuries amongst the staff have been a reason that the Brockton Fire Department has been experiencing staffing issues more so than usual at this time of year.

Having considered the same, motion by Councilor Farwell to report FAVORABLE, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilor Asack. Motion carried by a hand vote.

Meeting Adjourned 8:05pm