

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Standing Committee on Finance met on *Monday, February 7, 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 Patrick Hill of 39 Patterson Avenue, Brockton, MA 02301 to the position of Commissioner of Public Works of the City of Brockton for a three-year term ending January 2025.

Invited: Patrick Hill, Interim DPW Commissioner

*Councilor Mendes asks Commissioner Hill what his main priorities are in the department to which he replies that his main priority over the next few years will be focusing on where to spend the infrastructure money that has been accumulating. He plans to complete standing projects and to get his staff properly trained.

*Councilor Mendes follows up to ask what the city can do to improve snow cleanup and plowing issues following the most recent storm. Commissioner Hill replies that parked cars are the biggest issue regarding plowing issues and despite the efforts to get the cars moved, it is time consuming and can sometimes delay plow response times. He states that the DPW did the best they could with what they had to fix any issues that may have arose during the course of the storm. She also asked who assumes the responsibility to plow or shovel the sidewalks in the city as it has become a problem. He states that the sidewalks are the responsibility of the DPW. He followed up to say that the DPW does not have enough equipment, or the right equipment to keep up with the amount of snow that accumulated during the storm in question.

*Councilor Minichiello asks what type of equipment would be needed to do an adequate job regarding snow removal on the sidewalks. Commissioner Hill replied that the equipment we have now is not meant to handle more than a foot of snow. In order to purchase updated versions of these machines, and just the machines themselves without any attachments, would be approximately \$145,000 each. He believes that the DPW would need to purchase at least three of these to be confident in a storm like the one in question.

*Councilor Nicastro asks about when the bridge on Grove St. would be repaired to which Councilor Hill replied that it is projected that in the spring or fall of 2024 the construction would begin. She continues on to question if the cars parked on the street that made issues for plow drivers were reprimanded whether by tickets or some other punishment. Commissioner Hill said that despite the snow emergency being called at 6pm the night before the storm and all of their towing efforts, the city is big and it is sometimes impossible and dangerous to continue to tow after a certain turning point during the storm. He states that they've tried ticketing, and ticketing and towing and even with this, people still will park on the road the next time.

*Councilor Rodrigues asks when in the year that the DPW begins preparing for storms and winter weather. Commissioner Hill replied that they begin preparing their equipment at the end of October. He goes on to say that some districts within the city are responsible to take care of their own sidewalks, but believes that the city is not enforcing these responsibilities. Commissioner Hill replied that while that is true, it is hard to

enforce this with the information he has, including the fact that the city's public safety professionals are incredibly busy enforcing other public safety concerns.

*Councilor Tavares expresses her concerns for the elderly in her ward and the fact that they couldn't get out of their homes due to poor plowing on their streets and asked how the councilors and Commissioner could collaborate to give the constituents the best quality of service in this case. Commissioner Hill states that every ward in the city also felt this way, but this storm in particular was not a standard storm, therefore they did the best they could with the amount of snow that accumulated. He continued to say that he is always available if any councilor has something pressing or specific that he can help with.

*Councilor Teixeira asks what the DPW can do better next time considering how the most recent storm went, and Commissioner Hill states that he is almost positive that with the amount of equipment they currently have and with another storm of the same caliber they would essentially be in the same situation. Councilor Teixeira urged Commissioner Hill to propose some kind of budget to be able to acquire equipment to be better equipped for large storms.

*Every councilor expressed their gratitude toward Commissioner Hill, and looked forward to supporting his appointment.

Having considered the same, motion by Councilor Asack to report FAVORABLE, 2nd by Councilor Nicastro. Motion carried by a hand vote.

2. Appointment of Monique Screen-Berry of 126 Torrey Street, Brockton, MA 02301 to Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate Member for a three-year term, ending January 2025. Invited: Monique Screen-Berry

*Councilor Thompson followed up on Ms. Screen-Berry's statement about not being incredibly experienced in zoning with a question about her experience with plans and laws and if she had any. She replied that she had some with her work in projects in the past.

*Councilor Farwell states that the Law Department will be sure that Ms. Screen-Berry and any and all other appointees will feel comfortable in their role(s) regarding laws in question amongst other things despite their experience or lack of.

Having considered the same, motion by Councilor Rodrigues to report FAVORABLE, 2nd by Councilor Thompson. Motion carried by a hand vote.

3. 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: \$75,000

From: Election- Purchase of Services	\$20,000
and	

Auditor- Purchase of Services	\$55,000
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To: Auditor Mail- Purchase of Services	\$75,000
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(This transfer is necessary due to large mailing for the two elections that were held this

past year.)

Invited: Cynthia Scrivani, Executive Director of Elections
Ann Marie Raymond, Interim City Auditor
Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

Having considered the same, motion by Councilor Thompson to report FAVORABLE, 2nd by Councilor Asack. 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 \$718,400.

From: Executive Office of Public Safety and Security - 2022 Senator Charles E.

Shannon, Jr. Community Safety Initiative Grant

To: Brockton Police Department – 2022 Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr. Community Safety Initiative Grant Fund

(These grant funds will be used to pay for gang prevention efforts throughout the city. Police overtime will be used for outreach efforts to at-risk youth, including a new mentoring program to launch in the fall, hot spot suppression, and SRO/School Police home visits. This award will also fund Old Colony YMCA street outreach and case management services through Safe Corners and positive youth development through Kidz Konnect; Boys and Girls Club memberships, summer camperships, and paid summer counselor positions; mentoring, winter and spring clubs and workshops, a summer academy, and Kidz ‘n the Park program from Brockton Christian Mentoring Initiative, a summer work program run by MassHire YouthWorks; case management and the PLAAY group-based intervention program from Luminosity Behavioral Services; prevention efforts and positive youth development through discussion groups from Health Imperatives positive youth development through recovery art projects from 24 Hr. Power, Inc.; and a Juvenile Justice Jeopardy positive youth development program from Strategies for Youth. This grant requires a match of in-kind services only.)

Invited: Michelle St. James, Grant Coordinator BPD

Steve Williamson, Interim Chief of Police

Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

*Ms. St. James states that this is a recurring grant that is used to be sure that children are aware of the services that are provided in the city. She goes on to talk about how information about these resources are spread and talked specifically about school resource officers and the voluntary home visits that they do. She is sure to reiterate the fact that parents are not obligated to open the door or talk to them at all, and that these visits will be incredibly casual and all information will be secure. She goes on to say that Shannon is primarily meant to intervene with youth who are at risk for gang involvement. She states that it is a preventative program that strives for intervention.

*Councilor D’Agostino states that if anyone has any questions or concerns about this program, Officer Leedburg is more than happy to answer any of these via email; Nancy@BrocktonPolice.com.

*Councilor Mendes asks if there is an application process in regard to the non-profits that the BPD is partnered with through this program. Ms. St. James replies yes. Councilor Mendes follows up to say that it would be nice to expand to more organizations as it

seems as though the same organizations are involved with this grant yearly. Ms. St. James agrees, but also states that there are reasons organizations are involved yearly which could be because of the specific and unique things that they do for the community.

*Councilor Tavares asks how the organizations are identified given the services they provide, and follows up with the possibility of the Cape Verdean Association of Brockton and some Haitian groups potentially being partners with this. Ms. St. James states that they are trying to expand their steering committee to involve these minority groups more and that she was hoping that they would get applications from associations regarding these groups but they did not. She plans to continue to do outreach on the matter.

*Through the Chair, Councilor Tavares asks Councilor Rodrigues specifically if the Cape Verdean Association of Brockton had applied to be a partner with the Police Department for this grant. Councilor Rodrigues responds no, the organization did not. He goes on to say that the organization is focusing on summer jobs and potential employment for the youth of the city.

*Councilor Rodrigues tells Ms. St. James that sometimes these programs are viewed as ‘babysitters’ for the children involved. He goes on to say that as far as applying for these, the applications are usually kept in the same circle of organizations, and aren’t typically sent to those who haven’t been involved in the past. Ms. St. James states that she personally sent it directly to Councilor Rodrigues. He said that he did not see it in his email.

*Councilor Rodrigues states that it could be beneficial to reach out locally for these organizations, in our own backyards, opposed to someone else’s back yard. He goes on to tell Ms. St. James that if the program is looking for someone to help provide jobs for the youth of the city, than his organization will apply. Otherwise, they are not interested in competing with organizations that are already well-developed. He tells her that he wouldn’t mind having someone from the Cape Verdean Association of Brockton on the steering committee to look into everything. Ms. St. James tells him that she would love that.

*Councilor Minichiello asks how the children whom are at risk become identified for the program and Ms. St. James states that the SROs will sometimes be able to identify the at-risk children as well as guidance counselors, adjustment counselors and the administration at schools.

Having considered the same, motion by Councilor Asack to report FAVORABLE, 2nd by Councilor D’Agostino. Motion carried by a hand vote.

5. Ordered: That the City Council authorizes the acceptance and expenditure of the total grant funds in the amount of \$150,000.
From: MassDevelopment-Site Readiness Grant
To: Department of Planning and Economic Development-Site Readiness Grant Fund (These grant funds will be used to prepare a strategy for the implementation of the trust Brook Urban Renewal Plan. This grant does not require a match.)
Invited: Robert May, Director of Planning and Economic Development
Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

*Mr. May states that the funds received will be primarily used toward developing an acquisition strategy which includes but is not limited to better understanding the environmental conditions and what the risks and liabilities will be regarding the renewal plan.

*Councilor Thompson asks if MassDevelopment is the consultant, or if this is something that goes to a bid for a consultant. Mr. May clarifies that MassDevelopment is the awarder of the grant, and they have contractors that they use. He goes on to say that there are some scopes of work that their contractors do not do, and that is when they will have to contract out to additional consulting services.

*Councilor Thompson goes on to ask how long this process is expected to last and when there will be a final work product to be deliberated on. Mr. May states that he expects the grant work to continue through the fall. Councilor Thompson clarifies that through the final work product there will be a better understanding on how to develop Trout Brook and Mr. May agrees. The more information acquired, the more qualified the city becomes for future grants.

*Councilor Farwell asks if since February of 2021, when this started to be publicized, if any developer has reached out with interest to develop the property. Mr. May says yes, and that he and Mayor Sullivan have met with a few different developers that are interested in a large-scale development project. He goes on to say that there have been preliminary meetings with CSX and are moving closer to find a qualified development team. A big part of this grant will be used to find the right partner, and to find the right way to find the right partner.

*Councilor Farwell follows up to confirm that CSX still would like to sell the property, and asks if they have come up with a set price for it to which Mr. May replies that a price has not been spoken about yet, but CSX is interested in entertaining offers.

*Mr. May speaks about his concerns with the environmental conditions and how given the research conducted, he will be able to understand how these conditions will affect the redevelopment plan. Money from this grant will help him do so more precisely.

*Councilor Farwell asks if the city is willing to buy the 66 acres from CSX, and take on all of the potential environmental issues or if it is something that a private developer will buy. Mr. May responded by saying that that has not been talked about yet, but that the city making this purchase could be a possibility depending on who the development partner may be.

*Councilor Farwell states that with the potential environmental concerns that diminish the value of the property as it stands, it could be beneficial to go to DEP or the EPA and make these organizations aware that there are environmental issue(s) that could affect ground water. He goes on to ask why the current property owners do not do the remediation and studies themselves, and Mr. May says that they have been doing this on site and have received an activities use limitation. He goes on to say that the current property owners have cleaned the properties up to a level that would be appropriate for commercial or industrial use. Mr. May states that the DEP has been very involved in this process.

*Councilor Nicastro refers to Mr. May's comment about he and Mayor Sullivan having met with several developers and questions what sort of uses they have had in mind for the property. Mr. May states that the city needs to find someone who is interested in doing a

mass redevelopment of the process. He goes on to say that the city is particularly looking at potential developers who have commercial developing experience.

*Councilor Nicastro goes on to ask what exactly the term of the grant agreement is, to which Mr. May replies that he believes it is usually a year or two, but the materials are available for five years. The city needs to make periodic reports to MassDevelopment on activities that have been undertaken. Councilor Nicastro clarifies that the contract states that it is a five-year term, but the grant acceptance routing form states that it is a three-year term. Mr. May says that he will look into it.

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

Meeting Adjourned at 8:53 PM.