

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The Standing Committee on Finance will meet on *Monday, May 15, 2023 at 7:00 PM* in the *Council Chambers, Brockton City Hall, 45 School Street*, to consider the following:

1. Ordered: That the City Council approves the acceptance of the Local Option increasing the Retirement Board members stipend from \$3,000 to \$4,500 in accordance with Section 34 of Chapter 176 of the Acts of 2011, M.G.L., Chapter 32 §20(6).

Invited: Jeanne Martineau, Executive Director, Brockton Retirement Board
Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

Jeanne Martineau, Executive Director, Brockton Retirement Board

- Asking for the increase because the stipend has been the same since approximately 1990.
- Have had increased responsibilities without compensation.
- 18 hours of class each year
- Various responsibilities interpreting the guidelines.

Councilor Thompson

- How many board members?
- Term is 3 year. How are the stipends paid?

Jeanne Martineau, Executive Director, Brockton Retirement Board

- 5 Members, 2 elected. 2 appointed by mayor and 1 elected by all members and can't have any personal interest in the outcomes.
- Pay comes from the expenses from the board. Independent budget.

Councilor Minichiello

- How much time is put into by the board members?

Jeanne Martineau, Executive Director, Brockton Retirement Board

- Once a month, more time if there is an RFP
- One to four hours depending on number of disability cases that need to be reviewed.

Councilor Asack

- How are the members elected? When do the elections happen? How many members are Brockton residents?

Jeanne Martineau, Executive Director, Brockton Retirement Board

- Notices are sent out. 2021 elections were done. Three members are Brockton members.

President Nicastrò

- Explained parts of the statute, discussed training requirements and how much is in the pension fund currently.
- Meeting 15 times is \$300 per meeting to review and preparing for the meetings.

Jeanne Martineau, Executive Director, Brockton Retirement Board

- Retirees approach the retirement board members so there is work beyond the preparation and actual meetings.
- \$750M currently in fund.

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

2. Ordered: That the City Council approves the acceptance of a 2% COLA increase in the maximum base amount upon which the COLA is calculated for the Brockton Retirement pension payments for FY23 retroactive to July 1, 2022.

Invited: Jeanne Martineau, Executive Director, Brockton Retirement Board
Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

- Provided a brief explanation and noted that retirees have increased costs.

Jeanne Martineau, Executive Director, Brockton Retirement Board

- One time increase for retirees for this fiscal year.
- Maximum increase is 3% on the first \$14,000, \$420/yr.
- In 2023 Social Security granted an 8% increase, many retirees are not allowed social security so the state put in a local option for a 5% increase for only one year.

Having considered the same, motion by Councilor Lally to report FAVORABLE, 2nd by Councilor Rodrigues. 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: \$1,000,000

FROM: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS HIGHWAY-PURCHASE OF SERVICES

TO: STABILIZATION FUND

Invited: Patrick Hill, Commissioner of DPW
Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

- Stated that he provided a similar request a couple of years ago. The Mayor wanted to take advantage of interest rates to pay for the \$98M Public Safety Facility.
- The city borrowed the entire amount, which was a sound decision and got a rate of less than 3% and saved the city tens of millions of dollars.
- Consequence is that payment must begin next year.
- Take money from snow and ice and place in stabilization fund. Then in FY24, take the stabilization fund money and use it to pay debt services in FY24.
- 175K & 200K was transferred to restore budgets that were previously cut.
- There are sufficient funds to accommodate this transfer.

President Nicastro

- Can the City afford this?

Patrick Hill, Commissioner of DPW

- No more snow emergencies this fiscal year.

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

4. Ordered: That sum of \$5,550,000 is appropriated to pay costs of acquiring a parcel or parcels of land located at 1782 Main Street in Brockton, by eminent domain or otherwise, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto, including renovations and all furnishings and equipment necessary, and that to meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to G.L. c. 44, §7(1) or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the City therefor.

Further Ordered: That the City Treasurer is authorized to file an application with The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Municipal Finance Oversight Board to qualify under M.G.L. c. 44A any and all bonds or notes of the City authorized by this vote, and to provide such information and execute such documents as the Municipal Finance Oversight Board of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts may require.

Invited: Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer
Martin Brophy, Treasurer/Collector
Rob May, Director of Planning and Economic Development
Aldo Petronio, Chief Financial Officer of Schools

Councilor Asack

- Motion by Councilor Asack to table items 4 & 5. Per request of school dept.

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

5. Ordered: That the City of Brockton does hereby take in fee in accordance with M.G.L. ch.79 and/or other applicable law, the following described parcel of land, to wit:

1782 Main Street Parcel ID:119-002: for further reference see Plymouth County Registry of Deeds Book 19133, Page 29

We have considered and estimated the damages sustained by all persons who have not waived damages in their several estates and hereby determine and award the same as follows, to be paid from the bond amounts previously authorized by the City Council for purchase or taking of property for public safety and general municipal purposes.

PROPERTY/OWNER	AMOUNT
Owner: M Trust, 1782 Main Street	\$5,550,000.00

Said taking shall include all trees, soil, or fixtures thereon.

Invited: Megan Bridges, City Solicitor
Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

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

6. Resolve: Be it resolved by the Brockton City Council to invite Rob May, Director of Planning and Economic Development for the City of Brockton, and area restaurateurs, to

come before the Council to provide an update and discuss their vision of the Sycamore Grove project being proposed by the City of Brockton.

Invited: Rob May, Director of Planning and Economic Development
Joseph R. Angelo, Owner, Joe Angelo's
Chrismin Charlotte, Owner, Bamboo
Manuel Dasilva, Owner, Preto's Island Cuisine
Manuel Rodrigues, Co-Owner, Cristal
Tony Rodrigues, Co-Owner, Cristal

President Nicaastro

- Received an email, the designer has been brought back and Dan Pollota will work with the store owners before a final design is completed.
- There will be several meetings in the coming months.

Councilor Asack

- Since owners are present, they should be heard tonight.
- Mayor inquired about concerns. Redesign to keep parking.

Chrismin Charlotte, Owner, Bamboo

- Information is accurate, waiting for the meetings to see.

Manuel Rodrigues, Co-Owner, Cristal

- Dan is involved and they met and spoke with the Mayor and all of the business owners are addressing all of the owners concerns. They will provide feedback on the plans.

Councilor Asack

- Would like to postpone until July meeting.

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

7. Resolve: WHEREAS, the City of Brockton was required to, and the City Council did adopt on December 22, 20019 the stormwater control ordinances (Revised Ordinances section 23-131) to comply with the Stormwater Program of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System promulgated by the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection; and WHEREAS, the purpose of said Ordinances is to "... effect proper management of Stormwater runoff and its control facilities, in a prudent manner; to Comply with state and federal environmental regulations."; and

WHEREAS, said Ordinances provide, at sections 23-132 and -135, for the imposition of a Stormwater Utility Fee to fund Stormwater services and payable into a special dedicated fund.;

WHEREAS, said fee is intended, as stated in Sec.23-135, to be "...operated in the manner the existing sewer and water utilities are operated"; and

WHEREAS, since the City began billing property owners for said Stormwater Utility Fees, there have been repeated problems with the billings including inaccuracies and duplicate

billings, and how the bills are calculated, as well as the need to clarify the amounts being raised.

NOW Therefore, be it resolved by the Brockton City Council to invite the Commissioner of Public Works, Patrick Hill, the Treasurer/Collector, Martin Brophy, and CFO Troy Carlson to appear before the Finance Committee of the Brockton City Council to discuss billing issues and such other related issues as may arise.

By separate resolve, the members of the Stormwater Authority will be invited to discuss the uses of the funds raised and other related issues.

Invited: Robert Sullivan, Mayor
Patrick Hill, Commissioner of DPW
Martin Brophy, Treasurer/Collector
Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

President Nicaastro

- Provided an update on absence city councilors

Patrick Hill, Commissioner of DPW

- Inaccuracies in the billing is true.
- It is attached to parcel ID's and couldn't be tied to the water and sewer bill.
- DPW has updated the bills and one annual bill will be issued.

Councilor Rodrigues

- Can we look at the fees that we're paying? How to reduce cost. ie. Calvary cemetery uses zero water, has a stormwater bill over \$4,000.
- What is the stormwater committee progressing on?
- Wants a fair value in how businesses are required to pay for Stormwater fees ie. Churches are being charged for the parking space. It's not for water used it is just for water running in their parking lots.
- Look into issues where some are paying a lot and others nothing. Calvary vs Melrose.

Patrick Hill, Commissioner of DPW

- DPW will do whatever we can to assist businesses.
- Discussed specifically with Calvary and instructed them to file an appeal with the Storm Water Commission to review.
- There will be exceptions as time goes on. 41C business should see an exemption.

Councilor Asack

- Councilors wanted to establish a technical committee to look at the stormwater activity and what the requirements are and to review the work of the Stormwater Commission since it was voted in 2019.

Councilor Thompson

- How long has this been mandated?
- How much is in the fund?

Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

- It's a brand-new Enterprise Fund FY22. \$119K in revenue for FY22, FY23 is over \$1M and projected revenue in FY24 is \$1M.
- The budget is around \$800K.
- They need to have cash on hand for stormwater projects.
- This Enterprise was able to absorb some of the salary expenses

Councilor Thompson

- Any outlook for capital improvements to be paid out of this fund?
- Will the work affect the flooding?
- Explain the stormwater system and where the water goes?

Patrick Hill, Commissioner of DPW

- Dry weather sampling at various locations and designing the first phase of cleaning and imaging of stormwater locations.
- Trying to get to the larger pipes and the rivers need to be clean.
- Stormwater collects run off water so that the streets don't flood.

Councilor Teixeira

- Is this a once a year bill? How can residents pay quarterly?
- Businesses are having a hard time paying once a year.

Patrick Hill, Commissioner of DPW

- Yes, once a year.
- Most residents would prefer to pay the bill once than pay several.
- Researching how businesses can possibly pay 2 times a year. The office didn't receive a lot of calls or complaints. Mostly just the calculation on square footage.
- Cemetery was getting a large bill
- Great opportunity for the working group to make the decision.

Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

- When the issues occurred, a steering committee/working group was put together to discuss how to manage the office efficiently.
- We want to establish a business manager through the DPW to take control of the billing process and improve it. There is currently an open position within the budget.

Councilor Teixeira

- Who sits on the committee?

Patrick Hill, Commissioner of DPW

- Chike the City Engineer, Evan Lacasse a Financial Analyst, Mike Rednickas, Foreman of Highway, a conservation analyst and GIS coordinator.

President Nicastro

- Wanted to asked Mr. Brophy. Will Munis improvements help with the billing?
- Have you received complaints?

Martin Brophy, Treasurer/Collector

- Creating one bill, will make it easier.
- Most people complained about the timing of the bill.
- Lots of refunds had to be issued and his office was able to handle the issue.
- Having one bill will make it less hectic.

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

8. Resolve: Be it resolved to invite the members of the Stormwater Authority and its chair, City Engineer Chike Odunukwe, to appear before a committee of the Brockton City Council to discuss the work and operations of the Stormwater Authority and such other related matters as the Council deems relevant.

Invited: Robert Sullivan, Mayor
Patrick Hill, Commissioner of DPW
Chike Odunukwe, City Engineer

President Nicastro

- Asked City Engineer to discuss the Stormwater Authority.

Chike Odunukwe, City Engineer

- Only processed a few permits.
- No other engineer was on board.
- No problems with permits. The application is very easy to follow.

President Nicastro

- How do you publicize the need to apply and pay the fee?
-

Chike Odunukwe, City Engineer

- It's a one stop process. Every permit issued through the city will know if they need to apply for stormwater.

President Nicastro

- Read the minutes over the past years. Seems like not much was accomplished.
- Is it because of short staffing?

Chike Odunukwe, City Engineer

- Short of engineers and staffing which delays issuing permits.
- Need people to check the homes and monitor construction.

President Nicastro

- The city was mandated by the federal government?

Chike Odunukwe, City Engineer

- Yes. The city had a combined system with drainage and overflow so they already had this fee.
- Communities should have reduced fees.

President Nicastro

- Owners are concerned that have large parking lots, K-Mart Plaza, mall owners.
- Owners ask if this is really necessary and what the funds used for.

Chike Odunukwe, City Engineer

- Brockton is very old and drainage system don't have bottoms.
- Catch basins need to be changed, they don't meet regulations.
- Private streets don't have drainage.

President Nicastro

- Has constituents that have yards that get lots of water because of the lower level streets.

Chike Odunukwe, City Engineer

- It will help owners in correcting past mistakes and lack of education.
- When developments are created they affect run off, causes flooding.

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