

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the standing committee on Finance was held on Monday June 17, 2024 at 6:00PM in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 45 School St., Brockton, MA. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM with all members present. With Councilor Rodrigues presiding.

Ordered: Receipt of the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Appropriations.

1. Mayor - Hon. Robert Sullivan, Mayor

Mayor Sullivan wanted to start the meeting off by thanking everybody.

Mayor Sullivan explained that the library will not be touched in regard to budget cuts.

Stresses the need for development within the City for the tax payers.

Mayor Sullivan stated that while some positions may not be filled, there will be no cuts on the city side.

Mayor Sullivan recommends that the city council adopt the FY25 budget as recommended in the budget order that was filed in the amount of \$580,274,987.

Councilor Lally raised the question regarding certain positions in the budget having no money next to them. Mayor Sullivan explained that those positions would not be filled.

Councilor Lally asked the CFO, in regard to how difficult the budget had been to create, what is left for the City to do if the School Department does not get their act together. CFO Troy Clarkson expressed that the City, School, and State have and will continue to work together to put the City in the best position forward.

Councilor Lally asked the Mayor, regarding the Library, that if once the money is restored, the cuts will not be as deep. Mayor Sullivan confirmed this to be true with the new coming Fiscal Year.

Councilor Thompson asked how the consolidation of the consultant budget would work regarding various departments. CFO Troy Clarkson stated that departments looking to take from the consultant budget would then be going to him first, and there would be a breakdown for what each department are spending.

Councilor Thompson asked if the Internal Control Policies are voted on by the School Committee or if they are implemented through the CFO himself, or the School Committee's CFO. CFO Clarkson explained that these were all Operational Changes.

Councilor Thompson asked the Mayor what the Director of Immigration is doing. Mayor Sullivan explained that the Director of Immigration deals with various customers, as well

as numerous projects that they are working on within the City as well as stressed it would be best to allow them to speak for themselves through a resolve instead of the Mayor speaking on their behalf.

Councilor Thompson asked Mayor Sullivan about his budget cuts & why Tourism for example saw such a significant cut. Mayor Sullivan explained that major cuts were needed and that all budgets had to be considered but highlighted that it was not zeroed out. Mayor Sullivan expressed the significance of Tourism and how important it is to get people into the City of Brockton.

Councilor Farwell questioned the School Department's late request of \$5,900,000 and if approved where the funds would have come from. CFO Troy Clarkson explained that it would have come from a wide spread reduction and lay offs from multiple departments as well as closings of a Library's branch.

Councilor Minichiello questioned the Part-Time Jobs budget & what that money is used for. Mayor Sullivan explained that money is for interns and other jobs like that as well as expressing that not all of those funds would be spent and that they would return to the general funds.

Councilor Derenoncourt expressed his frustration with Mayor Sullivan regarding the Library cuts & how the Mayor failed to reach out to him regarding the cuts prior to them being made. Mayor Sullivan expressed that the State advised for further cuts to be made and that was why the Library ended up losing funds as originally it was to be left untouched.

Councilor Asack inquired about the Diversity Commission and if they have started to meet again. Mayor Sullivan explained that the new name is actually the Human Rights Commission & that many previous members declined reappointment.

Councilor Nicastro inquired about the Constituent Handbook that is referenced in the budget. Mayor Sullivan showed said handbook & explained that these are handed out to all constituents in the Mayor's Office.

Councilor Nicastro asked for an update regarding the little red school house. Mayor Sullivan explained his displeasure with the building as well as how the 9C cuts are what has caused a delay in the improvement of the building.

Councilor Nicastro stated she noticed \$100,000 was not cut for the Youth Taskforce budget and inquired what that was used for. Mayor Sullivan explained it is primarily used for the Brockton After Dark Program as well as explained that it has expanded from just sports to also include drama and other activities as well.

Councilor Nicastro wanted to state her disappointment regarding the quality of materials and information from the School's Budget.

2. S.E. REGIONAL SCHOOLS- Holly McClanan, Superintendent

Superintendent McClanan stated that Southeastern Regional has seen a 40-student increase in enrollment over the past year. Foundation budget 36.6M dollars. 23.1 State aid, 13.5 local assessment to 9 communities. Transportation costs went up about 24%. Supposed to be reimbursed for regional transportation, that has not happened. 62% of students are Brockton residents.

Councilor Minichiello asked for information regarding graduation rates and percentages as well as the benefits of a trade school. McClanan stated that 20 career programs are offered at the school, stating 60% of construction, HVAC, plumbing, and electrical are going right into the work force. Medical Field including Dentists and Medical Assistants are going directly into the work force at a 90% rate. Other fields require additional training or further education as well. Councilor Minichiello asked for the graduation rate itself and Superintendent McClanan stated that they have an almost 99% 4-year-graduation rate.

Councilor Farwell wanted to state that Southeastern Regional is an exceptional school and to say thank you for all that it offers to the City of Brockton.

Mayor Sullivan wanted to thank Superintendent McClanan for their support for the Welcome Center and to say thank you for everything they do for Brockton.

3. Veterans' Services - Kelly Young, Director

Director Kelly Young started off by stating Veteran's Services has done very well over the past year. Over 100 more veterans / veteran's families have been taken care of this year. Director Young also wanted to thank her team, highlighting that it is a group of four people working for a city of over 100,000 residents. Also mentioned that their budget is down but they will be able to keep all services the same.

Councilor Derenoncourt wanted to publicly state that he commends Kelly Young and her staff. Highlighted such a small staff needs to be acknowledged for all of the work that they do.

Councilor Nicastro stated how one of the objectives to secure financing for the Ames cemetery has stuck around since FY23 and FY24. Director Kelly Young responded by stating she feels confident in receiving the grant this year for that.

Councilor Griffin wanted to publicly thank Kelly Young for her hard work & her timely responses when he has needed her assistance.

Councilor Tavares asked what the director's accomplishments are. Director Kelly Young responded by stating she credits networking and her change of vision of unity and working together to get Veteran's Services where they are. Councilor Tavares asked what

her goal was this past year & was responded with the goal to avoid layoffs, which was reached.

Councilor Tavares asked if Director Kelly Young would need additional support for her budget or if she thinks she will be fine. Kelly Young responded that she will heavily rely on grants but she believes they will be fine.

Councilor Tavares thanked Director Kelly Young and mentioned that she only hears good praise regarding her.

Councilor Minichiello stated he had no questions or problems regarding her budget but wanted to commend her accessibility and service at all times and that the City is very fortunate for her and her staff.

4. Fire - Brian Nardelli, Fire Chief

Chief Nardelli publicly thanked everyone as well as the entire Fire Department for their work within the City.

Many fire houses have seen repairs over this past year.

Chief Nardelli stated that unrelated to this year's goals they were able to purchase thermal imaging cameras for all vehicles and are the only within the commonwealth to do so.

Chief Nardelli stated that Deputy Chief Albanese has saved the City hundreds of millions of dollars through grants.

Chief Nardelli stated that they are looking to purchase new technology as some of their software has been outdated.

Chief Nardelli stated that the City of Brockton has not seen a fire-related death in the last 5 years. Stressed that the staffing supplied by the Mayor and CFO has worked as the Brockton Fire Department is putting more bodies to fight fires which in turn is working.

Councilor Nicastro stated the budget does not list dispatchers and was wondering where they were. Chief Nardelli explained that it was combined into regular salary.

Councilor Nicastro also questioned what unique pay is listed for within the budget. Chief Nardelli explained that that is a contractual agreement where pay is for firefighters when they are operating without supervision.

Councilor Farwell wanted to highlight how well put together the Fire Department Budget was.

Councilor Tavares asked Chief Nardelli if he feels comfortable with his staffing. Chief Nardelli responded by stating he would always take more firefighters, but also highlighted how advancement in technology has made it so that more firefighters will be needed in the future. Councilor Tavares then thanked Chief Nardelli for his presentation of the Fire Department budget.

Councilor Derenoncourt asked Chief Nardelli how diverse his department is. Chief Nardelli responded by stating in the past, the department has not been that diverse, but over recent years this has started to change as the last drill school was the first minority majority that they have had.

President Rodrigues asked what Premium Pay is within the budget. Chief Nardelli explained that it is a contractual agreement and that it is pay for when working on a holiday.

5. Law Department - Megan Bridges, City Solicitor

City Solicitor Megan Bridges started off by thanking everybody. Bridges also went on to explain that this is the first year that the Law Department has worked so closely with the Brockton Public Schools.

Councilor Nicastro mentioned how court judgements have gone up 18.89% and asked why. City Solicitor Megan Bridges responded by explaining that two transfers were made over which is what is reflecting the change.

Councilor Minichiello asked if the Public Records Access Officer was a funded position within the budget and if it will be filled. Solicitor Bridges explained that she would love for them to be able to hire someone for the position but when the department was told to look at cuts she decided to unfund the position and move the work around.

Councilor Minichiello mentioned how workers compensation has increased 8.8% as well as Property Insurance at 18.8%. Solicitor Bridges explained that these increases in budget were not in her control as the Law Department has an excellent relationship with an Insurance company who does due diligence for them. As for workers compensation, she explained the increase due to the contractual agreement they have in making those payments in case of injuries or accidents.

6. License Commission - Jeffrey Charnell, Chairperson

City Clerk Timothy Cruise stated that the License Commission is under the purview of the Law Department.

City Solicitor Megan Bridges speaking for the License Commission explained that the budget was level funded and then trimmed in all possible areas. Multiple lines were zeroed out and there was a 4.2% budget reduction.

Councilor Teixeira raised the question regarding Part Time Salary being for only one employee. Solicitor Bridges explained that she will get back to Teixeira with more information but that she believes that the members are paid every meeting. CFO Troy Clarkson mentioned that stipends were moved in this budget to Part-Time-Salaries.

Councilor Farwell mentioned to CFO Troy Clarkson to recheck the ordinance regarding the compensation of boards and commissions.

7. Election Commission - Cynthia Scrivani, Executive Director

Cynthia Scrivani thanked everybody including her staff, as well as explained the processes of the Election Commission.

Councilor Teixeira mentioned how Nara Lugo is listed as being hired in 1984. Scrivani stated that it must be a typo and that she has been with the department for about 6 years.

Councilor Thompson asked why the Election Commission handles Dog Licenses. Cynthia Scrivani explained that in the past, the City Clerk's office was overwhelmed and the Elections Commission experiences lulls, that they should take over the Dog Licenses.

Councilor Nicastro asked where the funds are to pay those who work the polls during elections. Cynthia Scrivani explained that the line item "polls" is where the funds come to pay those workers.

8. Police - Brenda Perez, Police Chief

Chief Brenda Perez started by saying hello and thanking everybody and then gave a quick overview of the department. Highlighted that there is a 56% minority rate who speak multiple languages throughout the apartment.

Councilor Farwell asked if this current budget, along with the cuts that were made, is enough to maintain future recruits and the filling of positions due to retirement. Chief Brenda Perez stated that as of today, yes, she does believe so.

9. Tax Collector/Treasurer - Martin Brophy, Treasurer/Collector

Martin Brophy started by thanking both of his staffs. This year the Tax Office has taken in over \$233,000,000 as well as gained \$4,500,000 in investment income.

10. Treasurer's Debt Service & POB - Martin Brophy, Treasurer/Collector

Martin Brophy explained that this is a set-in stone budget that actually decreased slightly due to a loan being paid off that no longer requires further payments. Brophy stated that there are no further debts that arose.

11. Library -Paul Engle, Director

Paul Engle started off by thanking everybody. Engle expressed how he cannot operate on promises that he is given, but only with what he has in front of him. Engle also explains

that he does not have the funds or the staffing to keep the West Branch of the Library up, but if these funds to appear he will reintroduce all that is being taken away.

Councilor Nicastro apologized for not reaching out sooner to Engle, but stated that she is entirely backing the Library. Also wanted to stress that the Council cannot add but can only cut from budgets which Engle acknowledged he understood.

Councilor Derenoncourt stated that he is very passionate about the Library, as well as how important it is for the City of Brockton to have all three branches of the Library open and available at all times.

Councilor Nicastro asked Engle what his annual circulation is within the main library and the two other branches. Engle explained that he does not have that information on hand but would get back to her with it in the morning.

Councilor Lally wanted to echo the words of Councilor Derenoncourt as well as applaud Paul Engle for being an excellent Library Director.

Councilor Tavares asked Paul Engle what his goals are for the upcoming year. Engle explained that the primary goal is to come up with a strategic plan for the next five years as well as a new roof project.

Councilor Tavares also asked about Immigration Services and Paul Engle explained he would prefer to get her all of the correct information in the morning.

President Rodrigues stated that the entire council is doing everything they can, while working with the CFO and the Mayor to make sure that they can safeguard the libraries.

12. BEMA - Stephan Hooke, Director

Director Stephan Hooke started off by thanking everybody, including his staff.

President Rodrigues mentioned a previous discussion regarding the grants or funds needed to make the Deputy Director into a full-time position. Director Hooke explained that they are continuing their look for funding to do so.

13. Parking Authority - Eric Akesson, Executive Director

Executive Director Eric Akesson explained that all offices including the Parking Authority has made multiple rounds of cuts to their budgets. Parking Authority specifically saw a 6% cut in personal services, and a 36% cut in goods and services.

President Rodrigues stated to take a brief moment to get a quorum.

Executive Director Eric Akesson continued to explain a 333% increase in indirect costs which he explains is money from their revenue that goes into the general fund.

Executive Director Eric Akesson wanted to highlight 3 items upcoming in the near future firstly mentioning new Park Systems in both garages which will positively impact the customers and scheduled for implementation in July. Secondly, they are working the US Postal Service to sell up to 200 passes, primarily in the Montello parking lot. The third new item, working with planning and other city departments to put together a new parking study as the last one was done in 2017.

14. Traffic Commission - Capt. Mark Porcaro, Chairperson

Capt. Mark Porcaro started by stating all know what is done within the department. He explained that all departments have made numerous cuts, his included as well as highlighted the fact that he should be able to make everything work with the cuts given.

Councilor Griffin acknowledged that the budget looked perfectly fine but he just wanted to publicly thank him for all the work that his department, and himself do for the City of Brockton.

President Rodrigues wanted to state similarly to Councilor Griffin, and wanted to just say thank you to Mark Porcaro for his and his department's work.

15. Animal Control -Thomas DeChellis, Director

Director Thomas DeChellis started by highlighting his department runs 24/7 as well as maintains an entire animal shelter. He also thanked his entire staff.

Councilor Farwell stated his passion for the Animal Control Department. Also highlighted how much of a hard worker DeChellis is as he is always available when those need help.

Councilor Tavares stated her thanks towards Thomas DeChellis and the Animal Control Department. Also asked if the public is allowed to openly adopt from the shelter. DeChellis explained that the public is allowed to do so.

Councilor Tavares also asked how DeChellis feels about the budget. DeChellis responded by stating he feels comfortable with where the budget is right now and his ability to maintain the same level of services.

Councilor Thompson stated that this is the first year of a fire-arms budget request, as well as asked what it is for. DeChellis explained that it is a contractual item & that it is a fire-arms stipend which enables the officers to stay proficient with their firearms.

Councilor Thompson asked about the Hazardous Duty line item and what it is about. DeChellis explained that is a contractual item and that it has to do with the hazards of the job that come with dangerous situations.

Councilor Thompson noticed a 9.3% increase in shift differential and DeChellis explained that it is a part of a contractual agreement with the City's Collective Bargaining Agreement.

16. City Council - Timothy Cruise, City Clerk

City Clerk Timothy Cruise stated that the City Council budget is down 22.3%

City Clerk wanted to highlight the tremendous work the Council is doing with such a difficult task regarding the School Committee and the budget.

City Clerk Timothy Cruise stated he wishes to hire legislative aid to help assist the councilors but due to where budget restrictions are, this cannot happen right now.

Councilor Farwell stated that the Overtime Budget is not for the councilors but is for the clerical staff.

17. City Clerk - Timothy Cruise, City Clerk

City Clerk Timothy Cruise started off by thanking his staff as well as stating that they are the best staff in City Hall.

Councilor Derenoncourt stated a request to have a Haitian speaker within the City Clerks office. Clerk Cruise stated that when hiring, those who speak more than one language are always heavily considered and that that is something he will try to do in the future.

President Rodrigues adjourns meeting.