

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the standing committee on Finance was held on Thursday June 20, 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. Council on Aging - Janice Fitzgerald, Director**

Janice Fitzgerald began by explaining the functions of the Council on Aging, as well as some of their accomplishments over the past year. Councilor Tavares asked what their goal is for this upcoming year to which Mrs. Fitzgerald responded by stating they are going to continue to provide a welcoming atmosphere, implementing new things to the COA, as well as looking for more community outreach. Councilor Tavares then asked what the requirements are for a citizen to participate in the Council on Aging to which Fitzgerald responded by stating you must be 60 years old, or older to participate as well as highlighted that we welcome those from surrounding towns.

Councilor Minichiello mentioned the \$60,000 reduction which they believe to have a negative impact on transportation within the program, and asked for a little more explanation on this. Mrs. Fitzgerald responded by explaining the agreement between the COA and the Brockton Area Transit. Councilor Minichiello then asked how many participants there are in terms of utilizing transportation. Janice Fitzgerald responded by stating there are 21,000 elderly apart of the Council on Aging and many of them need transportation for many different reasons.

Councilor Derenoncourt asked, in regard to diversity, if the Council on Aging is seeing the Haitian, Cape Verdean, and Caribbean communities integrated into the COA to which Mrs. Fitzgerald responded that she does not have exact numbers but that there has been an increase in those members.

Councilor Griffin commented that he would like to thank Mrs. Fitzgerald for all that she and the COA has done, as well as state that he would personally lobby for the Mayor and CFO to replenish the \$60,000 that was cut from their budget.

Councilor Nicastro mentioned the expense summary and how it states memberships and subscriptions are down from \$8,800 to \$3,000 and asked what is being let go of to make that reduction. Mrs. Fitzgerald responded by stating that for the FY 25 budget, with the anticipation of returning back to a new center, cushions were given to multiple line items.

Councilor Farwell commented that there is another city budget that's asking for \$372,125 for busses and more than \$490,000 for bus drivers, and that he wishes for this to be cut, and whatever savings is decided to be reallocated to the Council on Aging as well as the Library.

Mrs. Fitzgerald commented that the return date for the COA to return back to their location is looking like mid to late November.

Councilor Lally motioned to move item 22 out of order. The motion was properly seconded. Carried by a hand vote.

## 2. Retirement - Contributory – Jeanne Martineau, Director

Clerk Cruise announced that Director Jeanne Martineau could not be in attendance tonight and that John Condon would represent.

Mr. Condon gave a brief recap of the past year for the department as well as some future plans.

## 3. Information Technology – Edward Medeiros, Director

Mr. Medeiros started by briefly thanking everybody. Mr. Medeiros then discussed the cuts the IT department has made as well as highlighted that there two positions that are now vacant and unfunded.

Councilor Nicastro asked why within the IT budget, goods and supplies increased by 14.7% to which CFO Troy Clarkson responded by explaining it is just a consolidation of other budgets.

Councilor Farwell asked Mr. Medeiros if to his knowledge, most communities have two IT departments for school and municipal. Mr. Medeiros responded by stating so far, he has noticed a mixture.

Councilor Lally commented on a previous discussion regarding putting the city on the cloud to which Mr. Medeiros responded by stating in the coming years equipment will need to be replaced and he would prefer moving some of the technology over to the cloud. Councilor Lally asked where the school department is in regard to this to which Mr. Medeiros responded by stating the school department's IT receives significant discounts on some of their purchases in comparison to the municipal side to which Mr. Medeiros explained is the reason the School IT Department is ahead.

Councilor Farwell asked in regard to \$2,000,000 increase in the School Department's IT's budget, if Mr. Medeiros was aware of any of their plans to which Mr. Medeiros replied by stating he is not aware of their plans.

Councilor Derenoncourt motioned to take item 19 out of order. Motion was properly seconded and carried by a hand vote.

4. Human Resources – Sandi Charton, HR Director

Sandi Charton began with providing some information regarding her background within the city. Mrs. Charton then went on to explain how the Human Resources Department has recently seen a lot of its staff move on. Mrs. Charton finished by explaining some of the functions regarding the Human Resources Department and then opened up to questions from the Council.

5. DPW: Commissioner – Patrick Hill, DPW Commissioner

DPW Commissioner Patrick Hill began with a brief summary of what the DPW Commissioner does in regard to the Department of Public Works.

6. DPW: Engineering – Patrick Hill, DPW Commissioner

DPW Commissioner Patrick Hill began with a brief summary about the responsibilities regarding the Engineering department.

Councilor Farwell commented briefly on an Engineering Department employee who is coming up on his 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary working for the City of Brockton.

Councilor Teixeira asked about the 38.5% increase in Personal Services to which CFO Troy Clarkson explained these were transferred from the Storm Water fund back to the general fund.

7. DPW: Highway - Patrick Hill, DPW Commissioner

DPW Commissioner Patrick Hill began with a brief summary about the responsibilities regarding the Highway department as well as some of the cuts that were made for the FY25 budget.

Councilor Thompson asked for an update regarding the paving of roads & Eversource's work to which Commissioner Hill responded by stating he is meeting with Eversource next week to discuss a paving schedule and as soon as it is made he would gladly get it out to everybody.

Councilor Teixeira mentioned the change in the CDL budget line going from \$39,000 to \$10,000 to which Commissioner Hill responded by stating that is a transfer that is done by the Auditing Department.

President Rodrigues mentioned the \$50,000 in separation costs, to which Commissioner Hill responded that that would cover about 2 employee's and that he is anticipating a couple of retirements in the near future.

8. DPW: Refuse - Patrick Hill, DPW Commissioner

DPW Commissioner Patrick Hill began with a brief summary about the responsibilities regarding the Refuse department as well as some of the cuts that were made for the FY25 budget.

9. DPW: Maintenance - Patrick Hill, DPW Commissioner

DPW Commissioner Patrick Hill began by explaining the responsibilities of the Maintenance department as well as highlighting that there were no significant cuts in this budget.

Councilor Teixeira mentioned that there is no workers compensation within the maintenance budget, to which CFO Troy Clarkson responded by stating it is not a requirement for this department and that those costs can be paid out of the regular budget.

10. DPW: Water - Patrick Hill, DPW Commissioner

DPW Commissioner Patrick Hill began by explaining the responsibilities of the Water department.

Councilor Nicastro questioned the vacancy of the Water System Manager to which Mr. Hill stated that the Water System Manager was formerly Mr. Creedon, and that they are actively looking for someone to fill the position, but that they must be a licensed operator.

11. DPW: Sewer - Patrick Hill, DPW Commissioner

DPW Commissioner Patrick Hill began by explaining the responsibilities of the Sewer department.

Councilor Nicastro mentioned the vacant Grant Writer position within the budget, to which Mr. Hill explained that the Grant Writer's positions have been filled and that some of their pay comes from this budget, although they are located within the Finance Department.

Councilor Teixeira asked CFO Troy Clarkson about the comparison between workers compensation between the water and sewer department to which Mr. Clarkson responded by stating it is impossible to predict how and when people will get hurt and that it may be more likely for this to occur within the Sewer Department. Commissioner Patrick Hill also stated that there have been settlements generated for people formerly within the Sewer Department and they get paid out from that department.

Councilor Farwell asked if it is true that we allow another municipality/vendor to bring in sludge that we then dispose of it. DPW Commissioner Patrick Hill responded by stating this is not true and that it is septage to which we charge for, and that the income varies month to month but has been growing in recent months.

12. DPW: Stormwater - Patrick Hill, DPW Commissioner

Councilor Nicastro asked how many stormwater permits have been issued. Commissioner Hill responded by stating none have been issued by him and that they are to be issued by the Stormwater Committee which is still awaiting appointments. Councilor Nicastro then asked how many people will be within the Stormwater Committee and who appoints them to which Mr. Hill responded by stating it will consist of 6 people and that he will serve as the chair but will not vote.

President Rodrigues stated that he would just like to have Commissioner Hill pass along gratitude to all of the workers part of the DPW.

### 13. Auditor – Irene Giannopoulos, Interim Auditor

Interim Auditor Irene Giannopoulos began by stating some of the accomplishments of the Auditing Department throughout the past year as well as the general processes of the department.

Ms. Giannopoulos then stated that for the FY25 budget they are requesting a small increase of \$49,000 to offset costs from hiring a compliance and technically control operator which is the employee who handles all of their grants.

Councilor Farwell asked if it would be okay to have Auditor Irene Giannopoulos come back at a later date to discuss some of the things that can be done to improve Brockton to which Ms. Giannopoulos responded by stating she would love to come back and speak to the Council about her ideas.

Councilor Teixeira wanted to thank Interim Auditor Irene Giannopoulos for all of her work and the help that she provides.

Councilor Derenoncourt asked for clarification on why the Auditor position is being listed within the budget for \$127,680 but the interim auditor is making \$135,456. CFO Troy Clarkson explained that those numbers were set by ordinance and that the \$127,680 is the lowest step for the position.

### 14. Auditor: Mail - Irene Giannopoulos, Interim Auditor

Responding to Councilor Minichiello's previous question about postage and auditor mail's budget increasing, Interim Auditor Irene Giannopoulos stated that there is just a lot more activity within the city when it comes to large/bulk mailings, and that is what is responsible for the increase. CFO Troy Clarkson also added that it is election year which is also something that is making them anticipate an increase in mail/postage.

Councilor Minichiello mentioned Part-Time Salary and how there are no part time employees, asking if that has been set aside for internships to which Ms. Giannopoulos responded that it is set for interns, and any situation that could potentially arise regarding a temporary hire.

15. Auditor: Telephone - Irene Giannopoulos, Interim Auditor

Interim Auditor Irene Giannopoulos stated the Telephone budget and its responsibilities.

16. Retirement – Noncontributory - Irene Giannopoulos, Interim Auditor

CFO Troy Clarkson offered to assist Interim Auditor Irene Giannopoulos and explained that this budget is an annual amount that the city has a pension outside of the system that has existed for some time and that this is just that annual contribution.

17. Assessors – John O'Donnell, Chairman Board of Assessors

Assessor John O'Donnell began by briefly explaining the missions and functions of the assessor's department as well as explaining the department's budget has been reduced 15.9%.

Councilor Nicastro asked if in regard to the requirement of 3 Board of Assessor's Members, if they are struggling with only having two for the time being to which Mr. O'Donnell responded that they are not as they functioned with just one for a period of time in the past and that they are interviewing to fill the vacancy.

Councilor Derenoncourt asked if the Assessor's office has an obligation to provide a list of cities auction-able to which Mr. O'Donnell responded by stating the Auction List is provided by the City Treasurer. Mr. O'Donnell explained that he assists the treasurer but he does not keep the list.

18. Public Property – James Plouffe, Superintendent of Buildings

James Plouffe began by stating some of the responsibilities within Public Property as well as listing positions within his staff.

Councilor Lally stated how Personnel is up \$300,000 within the budget, and asked for some light to be put on that, to which Mr. Plouffe explained that is due to the two members of Weights & Measures being added to the Public Property budget. Councilor Lally then asked if the part-time salary budget was for interns, to which Mr. Plouffe responded by stating yes and no, and that some of that money also goes to Zoning Board members who get paid through the ordinance.

Councilor Lally then asked if he could explain the instate travel line, to which Mr. Plouffe responded that instate travel is mileage reimbursement for the inspectors.

Councilor Teixeira mentioned the separation costs being \$80,000 and asked for an explanation. Mr. Plouffe responded by stating there are three members of his staff that are nearing retirement age, and he is anticipating the chance that they do this year.

Councilor Farwell stated that he believes enforcement is not Mr. Plouffe's favorite thing to do, to which Mr. Plouffe responded that that is not true. Councilor Farwell then stated that if that is the case, there needs to be a stricter enforcement on dumpsters that are not enclosed.

Councilor Derenoncourt stated that he wishes someone within the department spoke French or Haitian Creole to which Mr. Plouffe responded that when positions open up within the department that all candidates will be heavily considered.

Councilor Tavares asked how many code enforcements they have outside right now, to which Mr. Plouffe responded by stating that there are two.

Councilor Nicastro mentioned the stadium to which Mr. Plouffe responded by stating that the stadium is the white elephant in the room. Mr. Plouffe explained that the city is responsible for all of the stadium, whether that be renovations, maintaining the building, locker rooms, facilities, and even concessions.

President Rodrigues questioned the need to pay to fix the Kegerator to which Mr. Plouffe explained that it is a piece of equipment that is owned by the stadium, thus meaning it is owned by the city.

Mayor Sullivan stated his belief in the idea of selling Campanelli Stadium

#### 19. Board of Health - Dr. Eno Mondesir, Executive Health Officer

Dr. Eno Mondesir began by stating the processes of the Board of Health as well as presenting some of the FY25 budget, then opening it up to questions from the councilors.

Councilor Asack asked how the Board of Health is functioning without the replacement of the chair. Dr. Mondesir responded by stating they are continuing vaccinations based on what is provided by the dph which was expressed as a dire situation because we are only allowed to receive vaccines if there is a Doctor on the board.

Councilor Derenoncourt asked, where the City of Brockton is at in regard to COVID cases, to which Dr. Mondesir responded by stating we have the best COVID indicator in the country which is provided for and paid by the state, but does not give exact number of cases, and instead gives us an idea of the concentration of the virus.

Councilor Tavares asked if the Board of Health is in charge of Enforcement Officers to which Dr. Mondesir responded by stating they are not any longer and have been put under Inspectional Services.

Councilor Farwell mentioned the Animal Inspector that is apart of the Board of Health, as well as stated he would like to put in an ordinance to which this position is moved from the BOH to Inspectional Services. Councilor Farwell asked where this individual reports for work to which Dr. Mondesir responded that they report to the Board of Health.

## 20. Park & Recreation - Tim Carpenter, Superintendent of Parks

Superintendent Tim Carpenter began by explaining some of the projects the Parks & Recreation Department are currently responsible for.

Councilor Derenoncourt made a brief statement regarding DW Field Golf Course and how much it has grown over the recent years, highlighting how before, it would be busy on Saturdays and Sundays, but now, weather permitting, the place is busy all week long.

Councilor Teixeira mentioned the overtime part of the budget and its 17.4% increase to which Mr. Carpenter responded by stating that is a cause of recent city contracts, with an increase in employee rate of pay, as well as some additional responsibilities that will have to be taken on.

Councilor Nicastro asked how the Cosgrove Pool is coming along to which Mr. Carpenter responded by stating he believes the changes at the Cosgrove Pool is going to amaze everyone. Mr. Carpenter then started listing changes, including indoor and outdoor showers that provide hot water, landscaping around the pool, shade structures, as well as lockers. Councilor Nicastro asked if there was a date in which we should expect the reopening, and Mr. Carpenter responded by stating July 8<sup>th</sup> is the target date. Councilor Nicastro asked if Senators Marky and Warren will be in attendance to which Mayor Sullivan responded that Congressman Lynch will be in attendance and they are awaiting responses from both Senators.

Councilor Asack stressed her desire for there to be an officer patrolling the parks.

Councilor Derenoncourt made a brief statement for his desire to put money into upgrading a soccer field within the city for our citizens.

Councilor Farwell questioned the banking services budget line and what the \$48,246 would pay for to which Mr. Carpenter responded that that is for the credit card processing at the golf course as 90% of those who play golf pay with credit card.

## 21. Cemetery - Tim Carpenter, Superintendent of Parks

Superintendent Tim Carpenter began by briefly explaining some of the functions within the Cemetery, as well as specifics for this past fiscal year.

## 22. Planning Board –Toni Goncalves, Chairperson

Toni Goncalves commented that cuts have been made all across the Planning Board as well as highlighted the increase in stipend/overtime due to an additional meeting that is in July that typically is not held.

## 23. Planning & Economic Development – Rob May, Director



Planning Director Rob May started by thanking everybody from his staff to those in attendance tonight

24. Conservation Commission - Joyce Voorhis, Chairperson

Joyce Voorhis was unable to attend today, for which Kyle Holden will be representing. Mr. Holden explained that he would gladly take any questions from the council, but that due to lack of time he was unable to prepare a statement.

Due to no questions from the council, Mr. Holden decided to provide a brief overview and summary of the Conservation Commission.

25. Procurement - Michael Morris, Chief Procurement Officer

Michael Morris began by briefly describing the processes and functions of the Procurement Department.

President Rodrigues asked if Mr. Morris and the Procurement Department have been in contact with and assisting the Schools to which Mr. Morris responded by stating he has been assisting and guiding them with what he can.

26. Finance - Troy Clarkson, Chief Financial Officer

Councilor Nicastro asked CFO Troy Clarkson if there is any idea regarding the amount of free cash we would have for this fiscal year to which CFO Clarkson responded by stating no, and that it is due to the previous year's estimates being done conservatively.

Councilor Griffin stated he wanted to start by thanking CFO Troy Clarkson for always answering his calls and providing him with information. Councilor Griffin then asked Mr. Clarkson about the consultants and the budget that is set for them to which CFO Troy Clarkson explained that there are numerous consultants for different departments across the city.

Councilor Minichiello asked for any information regarding Marijuana Revenue to which CFO Troy Clarkson explained that our estimate was approximately \$1,200,000 and that this year we exceeded that number by reaching \$1,493,000.

Councilor Farwell wanted to thank CFO Troy Clarkson for all the work he has done specifically since last September.

Councilor Farwell motioned to recommend favorably to the Council which was properly seconded and carried by a hand vote.

President Rodrigues adjourns the meeting.