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WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2023 at 5:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bridget Matthews-Kane at 5:34 PM. In attendance were Finance Committee members Councilor Bridget Matthews-Kane, Councilor Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. and Councilor Brent Bean. Also in attendance were Deputy Superintendent Jeff Gamelli, Director of Public Works Fran Cain, Director of Human Resources Anne Larkham and Scribe of the Finance Committee Karisa Zerbato.

A motion was made by Councilor Sullivan for the acceptance of previous meeting minutes from 2/9/2023. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if anyone from the public would like to speak during public participation. There were no speakers for public participation.

A motion was made by Councilor Sullivan for the approval of the recently signed American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees, Council 93, Local 1676 (Foreman Union) Successor Agreement for the period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025. Additionally, requesting approval of a transfer in the amount of \$12,180.02 from the Reserve for Future Salary Increase from the General Fund Account #1950000-519999 to fund the agreement as follows: \$4,010.18 to the Land and Natural Resources FT Salary Account \$14990000-511000 and \$8,178.84 to the Highway FT Salary Account #14210000-511000. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

Prior to the vote, Councilor Matthews-Kane stated she has concerns with the dated Civil Service language. Anne Larkham stated she emailed a contact at Civil Service who stated that the City can adjust job titles to reflect a gender friendly format locally. In regards to Civil Service the titles would remain as currently listed. Ms. Larkham stated that in order to make the changes negotiations would have to take place with the bargaining unit. One of the items that would be changed is the word foreman to something more gender friendly. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if once a contract is negotiated for a 3 year period, can it be renegotiated to include this. Ms. Larkham stated she would look into it. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if the job titles have to stay the same as currently listed on the state side. Ms. Larkham confirmed as the State hasn't changed the titles through Civil Service. Councilor Sullivan asked if the local job title changes needs to reference the Civil Service job titles for clarity. Ms. Larkham stated that when the yearly reports are filed, the Civil Service titles would need to be listed for clarification. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Bean, Councilor Sullivan and Councilor Matthews-Kane voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the acceptance of a Grant in the amount of \$1,000,000.00 from the State and Tribal Assistance (STAG) to the Department of Public Works, Wastewater Division for the construction of a new Operations Building at the Water Recovery Facility. The motion was seconded by Councilor Sullivan.

Prior to the vote, Jeff Gamelli stated this a federal community Grant from Richard Neal's office. This needs to be accepted by City Council and the City has to meet all the thresholds and requirements in order to be awarded the Grant. Former Mayor Humason wrote the original request for \$2,000,000.00 however the City was earmarked for \$1,000,000.00. Councilor Bean was at the awards ceremony at the Wastewater Treatment Plant to accept the Grant from Congressman Neal. Mr. Gamelli further stated the \$1,000,000.00 is one-fifth of the amount needed for the project. The Bond request is for \$3,250,000.00 which includes an extra \$1,000,000.00 bond request at the recommendation of Treasurer Matt Barnes to cover the Federal Grant during construction. The Grant is reimbursable however the City has to expend money during construction in order to qualify for reimbursement of the Federal Grant. When the bond actually sells it will be for the \$2,250,000.00. Councilor Sullivan asked if the first million or the second million is what is reimbursed. Mr. Gamelli stated they were told to pick one part of the project and focus on that with a cost estimate. Councilor Sullivan suggested spending the first million on the site work and foundation. Mr. Gamelli agreed with this method. Councilor Bean asked if there is a list of items that would be spent with the Bond and the Federal Grant. Mr. Gamelli confirmed. Mr. Gamelli stated the total funding for the project is \$5,500,000.00 which includes \$2,000,000.00 in ARPA funding, \$1,000,000.00 from the STAG Federal Grant, a bond for \$2,250,000.00 and \$250,000.00 from the Undesignated Budget Allocation Cost Share Grant. This is 12% greater than the opinion of probable construction cost as the total project is \$4,910,000.00. Susan Guswa from Woodard and Curran stated the costs won't be finalized until the project goes out to bid but the estimate includes contingency per industry standards, administration fees and engineering associated with construction. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked where the \$250,000.00 originally came from. Mr. Gamelli stated it came from the Wastewater Undesignated Fund. Mr. Gamelli stated in 2019, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Indoor Air Quality Assessment recommended short term and long term measures to help with strong odors and air quality concerns. The Assessment recommended that the operator's space be moved to a new building to separate it from the wastewater treatment process. Mr. Gamelli stated the new operations building will include operator offices, a control room, a laboratory, a conference/break room, bathrooms, showers, lockers, an electrical SCADA data storage room, mechanical room and additional storage space. He further stated there will be an open storage area under the raised building due to it being located in the floodway. Mr. Gamelli stated the City did not receive any SRF Funding for this project. Mr. Gamelli further stated that the City has the same rate structures as previous and they have not had to be raised by the Water Commission. Councilor Bean asked if there was any plans for sewer expansion in new neighborhoods. Mr. Gamelli stated Montgomery Road in on the horizon. Councilor Bean asked how far down it would go on Montgomery Road. Mr. Cain stated it would go to the Turnpike Bridge area. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if a rate hike is approved it doesn't necessarily mean it takes place. Mr. Gamelli stated currently sewer rate structures are now approved/disapproved by the Water Commission. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if the building is going to be elevated. Mr. Gamelli confirmed and stated the building will be elevated above the 100 year flood elevation. Ms. Guswa stated this is a design standard across New England for critical infrastructure. She further stated this facility is in the floodplain as well as the floodway. Mr. Gamelli stated this project has taken a long time to get to this point and it needs to move forward. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Bean, Councilor Sullivan and Councilor Matthews-Kane voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the acceptance of a Bond Order in the amount of \$3,250,000.00 to the Department of Public Works, Wastewater Division for the construction of a new Operations Building at the Water Recovery Facility. The motion was seconded by Councilor Sullivan.

The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Bean, Councilor Sullivan and Councilor Matthews-Kane voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Sullivan for the appropriation of \$130,000.00 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the Department of Public Works Highway Division Supplies Account #14210000-540000 for upgrades for standard roadway structures. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

Prior to the vote, Fran Cain stated roadway structures need to be ordered for paving projects in the fall. Currently there is a 3-4 month lead time for the structures. These structures need to be ordered so when the time comes to resurface the roads the structures will be available for use. Councilor Sullivan asked what streets will be paved. Mr. Cain stated he will email the list of streets. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Bean, Councilor Sullivan and Councilor Matthews-Kane voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean to adjourn the meeting at 6:09 PM. The motion was seconded by Councilor Sullivan. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Bean, Councilor Sullivan and Councilor Matthews-Kane voting YES.

Respectfully Submitted,



Karisa Zerbato, Finance Committee Scribe

