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## Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

JUN 13 2023

May 2, 2023 at 6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bridget Matthews-Kane at 6:00 PM. In attendance were Finance Committee members Councilor Bridget Matthews-Kane and Councilor Brent Bean. Also in attendance was City Auditor Vicki Moro and Scribe of the Finance Committee Karisa Zerbato.

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 Bean for the transfer of \$38,538.14 from the Reserve for Future Salary Increases Account #19500000-519999 to various accounts to fund the recently signed AFSCME 35-Hour Unit Successor Agreement for the period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilor Matthews-Kane.

Prior to the vote, Councilor Matthews-Kane stated processing contracts this way is another change in how things have been done previously. She stated when she first took over as Finance Committee Chair, the contract was approved and then the transfer was approved at a different meeting. In the next process the contract and the transfer were both approved at the same meeting. She added this way is another change to the process as the transfer would be the item that is approved which implicitly approves the contract. Councilor Matthews-Kane stated this process is based on previous conversations with Assistant City Solicitor Shanna Reid and two legal opinions. Councilor Matthews-Kane further added the case from Methuen OIG Report made recommendations that included that the City Council must exercise its own due diligence before approving collective bargaining agreements/contracts and should independently review the contract for substance and form. Councilor Matthews-Kane stated that per her email discussion with Ms. Reid the newer report does not override the previous rulings. Councilor Matthews-Kane added that the signed and ratified agreement was not available prior to the meeting. Vicki Moro stated the reason why this is being done now is because the contract was not in place before July 1 however money was put aside in the budget last year to cover the potential increases. Councilor Bean stated in the past money has been set aside in an account for negotiation purposes. Councilor Bean stated this is taking line item monies within each department and transferring it. Ms. Moro stated she is taking the money that was set aside for contracts and it is being applied to each individual department. Councilor Matthews-Kane stated the bigger issue is not having the signed contract to review. Councilor Bean asked if this contract is already in retro time. Ms. Moro confirmed. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if retro pay would be given if the contract was held up. Ms. Moro stated retro will be going back to July 1, 2022 for Fiscal Year 2023 as this contract is already almost a year old. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked why it has taken so long to get to the Finance Committee. Ms. Moro stated negotiations ended a short time ago. Councilor Bean stated a ruling may be needed from the State on how to move forward with the process. Ms. Moro stated if this item is tabled and the Committee comes back next week she can't guarantee that these amounts will go into the budget for next year. Councilor Bean asked when the budget is coming in. Ms. Moro stated she is hoping by next week.

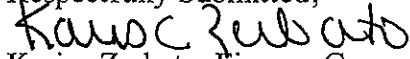
Councilor Bean made a motion to table this item. The motion was seconded by Councilor Matthews-Kane. The motion passed 2-0 with Councilor Bean and Councilor Matthews-Kane voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the transfer of \$15,000.00 within the Council on Aging Department from the FT Hourly Account #15410000-51100 to the Purchase of Service Account #15410000-520000 to cover utility costs for the remainder of FY 23. The motion was seconded by Councilor Matthews-Kane.

Prior to the vote, Councilor Matthews-Kane stated she received a letter from Tina Gorman that stated funds are needed to cover the rising costs of the Senior Center's gas and electric use. Escalating costs for utilities have caused the shortage in funds. There is adequate funding in the FT Hourly Account due to the Special Projects Coordinator Position not being filled yet which was funded beginning January 2023. This position is anticipated to be filled once the second floor renovation project is complete. The letter further stated that budgeting for this line item is a recurring challenge due to the supply and demand for utilities. The motion passed 2-0 with Councilor Bean and Councilor Matthews-Kane voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean to adjourn the meeting at 6:16 PM. The motion was seconded by Councilor Matthews-Kane. The motion passed 2-0 with Councilor Bean and Councilor Matthews-Kane voting YES.

Respectfully Submitted,



Karisa Zerbato, Finance Committee Scribe