

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
5-3-21 AT 5 PM
ZOOM



The meeting was called to order by Chairman Figy at 5 PM. In attendance were Committee members Councilor Bridget Matthews-Kane and Councilor Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. Also, in attendance were City Auditor Vicky Moro, Chair of the Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail Carmel Steger, It Support Staff Mark St. Jean and Scribe of the Finance Committee Marisa Colon.

Councilor Matthews-Kane Made a motion, seconded by Councilor Sullivan, to APPROVE the acceptance of Finance Committee minutes from April 13, 2021 as amended. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane, and Sullivan voting YES.

Chairman Figy asked if anyone from the public would like to speak during public participation. Carmel Steger, Chair of the Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, of 6 Wood Road in Westfield, MA spoke before the Finance Committee regarding the request to accept a gift donation of historical signs donated by the Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail to be placed along the Rail Trail (Item number 5 on the agenda). Mrs. Steger stated that there have been four signs that have already been produced and two more signs in production. A total of six signs will be donated at no cost to the city accept the installation which will be done by the Department of Public Works. Once the central section of the Rail Trail (bike path) is completed, the DPW and the Greenway Rail Trail will work together to figure out where the best place to install the signs. She stated there are four historical signs already in place along the bike path beginning on Shaker Road and continue north which contain the City's cultural, history and early immigrants. Councilor Matthews-Kane thanked Mrs. Steger for all the work she and the members of the Greenway Rail Trail have done and believes that the existing signs do add value to the trail as well. Councilor Matthews-Kane stated that she noticed the signs that will be donated will have Native American historical information on them and asked Mrs. Steger to explain more about what the signs will be displaying. Mrs. Steger stated that the signs will have information about the Algonquin and Woronoco Tribe and the information was corroborated by the Westfield Historical Commission so that it will be as accurate as possible. Councilor Matthews-Kane referenced an incident that occurred in Wellesley, MA that displayed a painting to commemorate the founding of the town which involved Native Americans that some tribes took offense because of the way they were portrayed and felt it was an inaccurate incident. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if the historical signs referencing the Native Americans were vetted, approved or endorsed by any Native American groups. Mrs. Steger stated that a Professor from Westfield State University, Dr. M. J. Bull, had done the research on the Algonquin tribe and the Woronoco people but she was not sure if any Native Americans were directly contacted. Councilor Sullivan, Figy and Matthews-Kane asked if Mrs. Steger would forward a digital copy to the members' city email. Mrs. Steger agreed to forward the designs of the signs via email and stated that if there are any concerns, to please let her know.

Councilor Figy and Sullivan thanked her for attending the meeting and all her work with the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail over the decade. Councilor Bridget Matthews-Kane made a motion to ACCEPT the gift donation of historical signs donated by the Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail to be placed along the Rail Trail, seconded by Councilor Sullivan. Chair Figy asked if there was any further discussion regarding the historical signs. Councilor Sullivan asked Councilor Matthews-Kane if she will double check the design and information of the signs to make sure that something that is very well intentioned does not become a problem and agreed with Councilor Matthews-Kane's concerns. Councilor Matthews-Kane stated that she will review the designs of the historical signs. Roll Call vote was made and the motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting YES.

Councilor Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Councilor Matthews-Kane, to APPROVE the acceptance of the sewer rate relief fund grant in the amount of \$1,710.00 from the Commonwealth of MA Division of Local Services and MA DEP to the Public Works Department.

Councilor Sullivan stated that this small amount will not impact the rates at all in. Chairman Figy stated that the amount comes from a general fund out of the State to the municipalities and it is base per capita which is supposed to help cities and towns set the rates but agreed with Councilor Sullivan. Roll Call vote was made and motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting YES.

Councilor Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Councilor Matthews-Kane, to APPROVE the transfer of \$5,562.86 from the Auditor Department's full time salary account to the Airport Department's Capital Signs Project Account.

Westfield City Auditor Vicky Moro stated that she had a meeting with City Purchaser Tammy Teft and Airport Director Christopher Willenborg and Mr. Willenborg recently received some state grants that required a local share funding piece. In going over his budget, they could not find enough money to cover the local share funding. One of the pieces was for the air conditioning vents on the airport roof which the Purchasing Department was able to encompass that in their budget under their Maintenance Account in order to account for that part of the local share. Auditor Moro stated that because she began working full time in November of 2020, she could share the left over money in that line item, which is already budgeted, instead of appropriating new money from free cash. Councilor Sullivan stated that it is important to take into consideration that extra money may not be available next year. Auditor Moro stated they discussed putting a loan item into the Airport's budget next year for these unanticipated state grants that need a local share which most must be used by June 30th. Roll Call vote was made and motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting YES.

Regarding unforeseen items, Chairman Figy stated that he will be having a meeting with the Mayor and Auditor for the FY 2022 budget to develop a timeline for it to be presented to the City Council and to determine dates for the Finance Committee meeting as a whole to review the budget. Councilor Figy stated that he would like to have the public hearing first

which is why he is trying to set the dates in advance. He will update all the committee members in regards to the subsequent dates and times for budget hearings. Councilor Sullivan asked if the council will have the ability to weigh in on how the city is spending or how it will spend the Cares Act Money. Councilor Figy will bring up those questions during his meeting with the Mayor.

The Finance Committee members discussed and agreed that the next Finance Committee meeting date will be held Tuesday, May 18th at 5 PM.

Councilor Matthews-Kane made a motion to adjourn, which Councilor Sullivan seconded. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting YES.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:15 PM

Respectfully submitted
Marisa Colon, Scribe of the Finance Committee