



MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
59 COURT STREET
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
MAY 26, 2022 AT 5:30 PM

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Councilor Matthews-Kane, Chair of the Finance Committee.

The Clerk called the roll. Councilors Allie, Flaherty and Morganelli were absent.

Under "Public Participation" the Council was addressed by Lisa Okscin, 341 Steiger Drive. She read a statement as follows:

"First and foremost, I want say I understand the challenges DPW faces. We are all quick to complain of potholes and failing infrastructure but there are a lot of things the DPW does manage for the city. As for the budget. I do have concerns with the stormwater enterprise. The last time the stormwater fee was raised was for FY20. And the effects of that can be seen in line-item cuts. While construction is seeing an increase purchase of services and supplies are seen decreases. I do not feel this budget shows intention to work towards MS4 compliance. While no one wants to see rate increases, the city cannot expect to maintain roads, if we are neglecting our stormwater system. With enterprises, the city does have the opportunity to allocate salaries that work on these departments to save costs from the general Fund. While I do not feel this is the year we should allocate to see the savings, I do think it should be considered in future budget years to better match where employees are utilized. In the Water Department budget, there are carbon filters budgeted for wells seven and eight. I hope the water presentation will address these and if we are experiencing PFS breakthrough at those wells. I will close with asking the DPW what kind of projects may we see completed using ARPA funds this year."

The Departmental Budget Hearings were as follows:
Enterprise Funds - Sewer and Wastewater Treatment

Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Superintendent Jeff Gamelli was present to represent the Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Department. Also present was Fran Cain, Acting Director of Public Works. The SWWT Superintendent informed the Council that the total budget for the department is \$6.29 million based on revenue from two years ago. Councilor Bean asked the SWWT Superintendent to talk about the health of the account. The SWWT Superintendent replied that the health of the account is fairly decent. There are large increases for sledge hauling which are up 37% and large increases in gas and electric costs and costs for chemicals which are up 67% and

hopefully with the 8% rate increase it should be covered. Councilor Bean questioned what the contingency is if sludge costs keep rising. The SWWT Superintendent replied that there may need to be surcharge if needed. Councilor Onyski questioned the length of contracts for chemicals and sludge hauling. The SWWT Superintendent replied that the chemical contracts are for one year and the sludge contracts are usually for one year with a two year renewal option and this year was only for one year. The issue is there is nowhere to put the sludge and the costs keep rising and will continue to rise with the PFAS regulations coming up. Councilor Figy questioned the increase of the Infiltration and Inflow item. The SWWT Superintendent replied that the Mass DEP did an inspection and now are cranking down on remediating clean water coming into the system and it has been neglected for years and now must be done on a schedule. Councilor Mello questioned if the report gives a roadmap to get us where we need to be and the funding for it. The SWWT Superintendent replied that the DEP does not get involved in the funding for the processes they require, they just make the City do it. Councilor Sullivan asked the timeline of the incinerator going off line that recently had an appropriation in the current budget. The SWWT Superintendent replied that it came in under budget from \$175,000 to \$90,000 and took 4 weeks instead of 8 weeks. Councilor Burns questioned what projects are happening. The SWWT Superintendent replied that one project is a new administrative building which is in the design phase and a sludge dewatering upgrade as drier means less money to be paid for hauling and both projects are in capital plan and SRF money has been applied for or it may need to have a bond. ARPA money will be used to rebuild the pump station.

Upon motion of Councilor Bean, it was

VOTED: That the Sewer and Wastewater Treatment budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Enterprise Funds – Sewer Department

Acting Director of Public Works Fran Cain was present to represent the Sewer Department budget. He reviewed the budget items relative to the full time salary items are per contractual negotiations, OT at this time is the same, may need to be look at later on in the year due to any unforeseen overtime. All other items remain close to the same as last year. He explained that the Sewer part is the connections to the sewer treatment plant.

Upon motion of Councilor Bean, it was

VOTED: That the Sewer and Wastewater Treatment budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Enterprise Funds – Storm Water Department

Acting Director of Public Works Fran Cain was present to represent the Storm Water Department budget. He informed the Council that the budget is relatively small and the purchase of services account and supplies account remain close to the same as

last year. The construction account has a slight increase due to ongoing projects on East Mountain Road, Montgomery Road and Western Avenue.

Upon motion of Councilor Bean, it was

VOTED: That the Storm Water budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Enterprise Funds –Water Department

Acting Director of Public Works Fran Cain was present to represent the Water Department budget. He informed the Council that the budget has a lot of moving parts in it. Councilor Sullivan asked if the revenue will meet the costs. The Acting Director replied yes, at this time. He explained there are projects such as the culvert on City View Road that could present unexpected issues and costs, but at this time there are no additional expenses anticipated. Councilor Figy questioned the vacancies in the department. The Acting Director replied that there are vacancies and people are not applying because the jobs do not pay enough and private companies are paying 2 to 3 times more than the City. And because there is not enough manpower in the department a lot of services are contracted out. Councilor Adams questioned how many firms does the department contract with. Currently is with one company and goes out to bid every year which this year is Raymakers, but still has the option to bid out on larger projects if needed. The goal is to do the projects with City staff but because the jobs do not pay enough in wages, there is no City staff. Councilor Beltrandi informed the Council that equipment was purchased for City employees to operate it and questioned if anyone was running it. The Acting Director replied that there is one person, but there needs to be more and the only way to solve the manpower shortage is to pay more. Councilor Onyski questioned if higher wages are being budgeted. The Acting Director replied that the contracts for wages are in the process of being negotiated. Councilor Mello questioned if he would be willing to look at the money used for contracting work out could be used for paying higher wages. The Acting Director replied yes. Councilor Matthews-Kane requested the Acting Director to explain what an enterprise fund is. The Acting Director replied that an enterprise fund generates its own income from user fees that it charges for services and the department has to operate on that revenue and there are no City funds to support it. But, with that said there is a ton of money that is generated from the enterprise fund department that does go back to the City. An example is the tower in Granville that is on City water shed property and is maintained by the Water department and the rent for the tower goes back to the City's general fund, not the enterprise fund. Also, the City does not pay for water for fire hydrants or water parks and it's the Water department paying for the water and all associated costs of pumps, maintenance and electricity and it can be equated to street lights that the City has to pay for, it's not given to the City as water is given to the City. He suggested getting together to acknowledge these costs. Councilor Harris expressed her concern relative to the frustrations of the department explained by the Acting Director. She suggested to add this to the list to be talked about because these are internal struggles and the ratepayers are not concerned with that they are only concerned with the rates they have to pay and do not want increases and if these

internal struggles can be solved it will help to keep the ratepayers fees down. Councilor Mello agreed that this is exactly what needs to be discussed.

Upon motion of Councilor Sullivan, it was
VOTED: That the Water budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Department of Public Works, Administration

Acting Director of Public Works Fran Cain was present to represent the Department of Public Works, Administration budget. He informed the Council that budget contains the DPW Director, Deputy Director and Stormwater Coordinator's salaries. He informed the Council that as Acting Director he received \$73 more a week. Councilor Burns questioned if the utility bill collections are down. Budget Analyst Joanna Williams replied that the collections are much the same in previous years. There are some customers that have not paid and there is assistance for those that cannot pay. Councilor Burns questioned if water would be shut off for unpaid bills. The Acting Director replied that as a rule water is not shut off.

Upon motion of Councilor Bean, it was
VOTED: That the Department of Public Works, Administration budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Department of Public Works, Highway Division

Acting Director of Public Works Fran Cain was present to represent the Department of Public Works, Highway Division. He informed the Council that this budget takes care of potholes, and there is intersharing of personnel and equipment from other departments such as Water department, it's all under one roof. There are vehicles that will mature and asking for three non-cdl plow trucks. Councilor Beltrandi thanked the Acting Director for the hard work of his department with a short staff. Councilor Figy questioned the request for the fire suppression system. The Acting Director replied that there is a lot of equipment in the building and there is no fire suppression to protect the equipment and it is needed. Councilor Morganelli arrived at 6:35 PM. Councilor Figy questioned the brine process. The Acting Director explained that it helps with the melting of the snow and ice and the program has been expanded and it helps. Councilor Mello requested a spreadsheet for any vehicles that cannot be purchased this year and if the money could possibly be used in other departments, such as lunch for the children. The Acting Director replied that he would do that.

Upon motion of Councilor Sullivan, it was
VOTED: That the Department of Public Works, Highway budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Councilor Morganelli abstained as he did not hear the whole presentation.

Department of Public Works, Land and Natural Resources Division

Acting Director of Public Works Fran Cain was present to represent the Department of Public Works, Land and Natural Division. He informed the Council that

it's a personnel department and has equipment vehicles that are needed. Councilor Figy asked if any new vehicles will be electric vehicles. The Acting Director replied there are no electric vehicles at this time.

Upon motion of Councilor Sullivan, it was VOTED: That the Department of Public Works, Land and Natural budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Councilor Morganelli abstained because the Council is just hearing from the departments at this time and should not be making decision tonight. Chair Matthews-Kane explained that this is a recommendation and during the reconciliation changes can be made at that time.

Department of Public Works, Park and Recreation Division

Acting Director of Public Works Fran Cain was present to represent the Department of Public Works, Park and Rec Division. He informed the Council that it's again salary contractual obligations and mostly the same on other items. Councilor Harris commented that she has attended many meeting of this department and it is a compassionate board and this department cares about its residents. Councilor Sullivan questioned the increase for purchase of services. The City Auditor replied it was an increase for the Westfield Gas and Electric increases. Councilor Morganelli questioned what the staffing levels are especially for the rail trail. The Acting Director replied that the rail trail issues are under Engineering and he replied that the department is understaffed because the jobs do not pay enough.

Upon motion of Councilor Sullivan, it was VOTED: That the Department of Public Works, Park and Rec budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Councilor Morganelli abstained.

Department of Public Works, Snow and Ice Division

Acting Director of Public Works Fran Cain was present to represent the Department of Public Works, Snow and Ice Division. He informed the Council that it's the only account allowed to deficit spend and it shows that \$941,000 is to cover the deficit. Councilor Mello questioned what the total is spent every year. The Acting Director responded that a million dollars is spent every year. The Acting Director informed the Council that a snow melter was used this year. Councilor Sullivan questioned if there are restrictions on where snow melting can be done. The Acting Director replied that yes there are restrictions and one reason to use the snow melting is because Cabot Road can no longer be used to dump snow.

Upon motion of Councilor Sullivan, it was VOTED: That the Department of Public Works, Snow and Ice budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Councilor Morganelli abstained.

Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division

Acting Director of Public Works Fran Cain was present to represent the Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division. The Acting Director informed the Council that the Solid Waste Division and Recycling should be combined. Councilor Morganelli questioned if there are green initiatives or grants to help with recycling since it is now costing the City to get rid of recycling. The Acting Director replied that there are grants and the recycling is brought to a tipping station.

Upon motion of Councilor Sullivan, it was
VOTED: That the Department of Public Works, Solid Waste budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Councilor Morganelli abstained.

Department of Public Works, Waste Collection Division

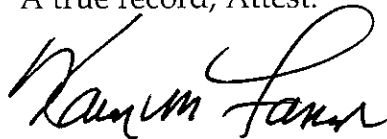
Acting Director of Public Works Fran Cain was present to represent the Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division. The Acting Director informed the Council that there are employees covered in the budget and works with the solid waste division. Councilor Onyski questioned if there will be any smaller trucks for smaller streets. The Acting Director replied that there may need to be changes for trash and recycle containers to be brought down to the end of the street or a smaller truck so to save the roads, but it is not in the budget at this time. Councilor Adams questioned if the barrels are weighted. The Acting Director replied yes, there is a weight limit in order to save the arm of the truck and if it's overweight it will be rejected.

Upon motion of Councilor Sullivan, it was
VOTED: That the Department of Public Works, Waste Collection budget, as submitted, be APPROVED.

Councilor Morganelli abstained.

At 7:20 PM, and upon motion of Councilor Harris, it was
VOTED: To ADJOURN.

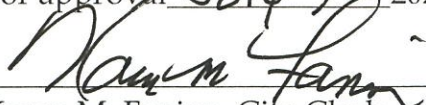
A true record, Attest:



Karen M. Fanion
City Clerk/Clerk of the Council

Presented to the Mayor

For approval July 7 2022



Karen M. Fanion, City Clerk

Approved by the Mayor

7.12 2022



Michael A. McCabe, Mayor