



Committee on Finance

November 19, 2013 – 7:00 PM - **Agenda**
Chambers of the City Council, Room 214

****View Minutes****

1. Written Motion, Councillor Martins, requesting, that the Committee on Finance meet with a representative of the MIS Department, City Auditor, CFO and City Treasurer for the purpose of having the City of New Bedford's checkbook placed online for all taxpayers and Citizens to view; and further, that the City has a large budget, monies being transferred, items being bought and salaries being paid for that although the City Budget it posted on the web, it's not easy to follow and doesn't give them, the information needed to follow the monies being spent, nor the access to see what they pay for and what we do with City funds; and further, that this process would increase transparency of local government and we should have our books open to the public to show the people of New Bedford what is being done with their tax dollars; and further, this process should include the School Department's budget, especially during times like these when so many Citizens and taxpayers want answers to their questions and rightfully so. (Ref'd 5/9/13)

INVITEES: MIS Director Maria Pina-Rocha; Acting City Auditor Lynn Gaspar; CFO Ari Sky; City Treasurer Renee Fernandes-Abbott

2. Communication, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting a LOAN ORDER, that \$5,867,000.00 be appropriated for the purpose of making critically-needed repairs to City-owned buildings, including, but not limited to, projects for the repair and renovation of public safety facilities, school buildings, recreational facilities and general office space, and all costs incidental and related thereto.

2a. LOAN ORDER,

INVITEES: CFO Ari Sky

3. Communication, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDER for the TRANSFER of \$120,000.00 from OVERLAY RESERVE, to TOURISM & MARKETING, CHARGES & SERVICES. (Ref'd 11/14/13)

3a. AN ORDER,

INVITEES: CFO Ari Sky; Tourism & Marketing Director Dagny Ashley

4. Communication, Derek Santos, Acting Executive Director, New Bedford Economic Development Council, to Council president Duarte and Members of the City Council, submitting TIF application and Resolution approved by the Tax Increment Financing Board for a five (5) year TIF Agreement for **DICKSON DEVELOPMENT CORP-STEWARD-ST. ANNE'S AMBULATORY CARE CENTER**, Coggeshall Street, New Bedford, MA 02746. (Ref'd 11/14/13)

4a. RESOLUTION, Approving Certified Expansion Project Application and Authorizing the Tax Increment Financing Agreement with **DICKSON DEVELOPMENT CORP-STEWARD-ST. ANNE'S AMBULATORY CARE CENTER**. (Ref'd 11/14/13)

INVITEES: Economic Development Council Acting Executive Director Derek Santos

Chairperson suggests taking “No Further Action”, on the following items:

5. Written Motion, Councillor Saunders, that the City Council, request that Mayor Lang, submit a specific proposal to the City Council detailing how the Administration intends to fund the payment of economic losses plus interest to the AFSCME employees pursuant to the November 17, 2011 Decision and Order of the Department of Labor Relations for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the case of City of New Bedford vs. AFSCME Council 93, AFL-CIO, (case #'s MUP-09-5581 and MUP-09-5599) whereby Mayor Lang was found to have illegally implemented furlough on City Employees; and further request that the Mayor submit said proposal prior to the setting of the tax rate. (Ref'd 11/22/11, 12/12/11 – tabled, 5/9/12 – remain tabled)
6. Written Motion, Councillor Lawrence, requesting that the Committee on Finance review the salaries/compensation as it relates to Union and Non-Union Employees, Department Heads and Elected Officials to see if they are commensurate with communities of the same size; and further requesting, that the Committee reports their findings back to the City Council as a whole. (Ref'd 1/12/12, letters to communities with similar economic struggles asking what salaries Dept Heads, Mayor, etc. make)
- 6a. Communications from the Town of Freetown and the Cities of Brockton, Fall River and Worcester with their responses for salaries/compensation as it relates to Union and Non-Union Employees, Department Heads and Elected Officials. (Ref'd 12/10/12)
7. Written Motion, Councillors Gonsalves, Alves, Coelho, Lopes, Saunders, Bousquet, Council President Martins, Lawrence, Gomes, Oliveira, and Duarte, requesting, that the Committee on Finance meet with MIS Director Robert Tetreault to explore the possibility of streaming City Council Meetings live on the internet, as part of the planned upgrades in our MIS capabilities with the purchase and installation of MUNIS. (Ref'd 2/23/12, 5/9/12 – tabled)
- 7a. Related Motion, Councillor Coelho, that the Committee on Finance ask MIS Director Robert Tetreault to look into the possibility of using the three existing cameras in City Council Chamber to stream live the City Council meetings and get back to us with the price, see if it is doable and to see if it can hook up to the present system; what we are looking for is a cost effective appropriate software interface that would solve the problem of working with Cable Access as well. (5/9/12)
- 7b. Related Motion, Councillor Coelho, that the Committee on Finance ask MIS Director Robert Tetreault to look into the possibility of placing computers, laptops or tablets on each Councillor's desk in the City Council Chambers and including two at the Council President's desk. (5/9/12)
8. Written Motion, Councillor Lopes and Council President Martins, requesting, that the Massachusetts General Accounting Office provide City Council with a year-by-year breakdown of the gasoline tax collected in the City of New Bedford for the past 16 years. (Ref'd 10/25/12)
9. Related Motion, Councillor Gonsalves, requesting that the document submitted by Superintendent Shea relative to book expenditures, be referred to the Finance Committee. (Ref'd 12/3/12)
10. Written Motion, Councillors Gonsalves, Alves, Lopes and Martins, requesting, that the Economic Development Council meet with the City Council and provide us with the loan documents relative to the loans made to Andrew Rocket d/b/a Rocket Enterprises, for the purchase of properties in New Bedford and that we review those loans, their terms and conditions including whether there is a claw back provision in light of recent events relative to Mr. Rocket. (Ref'd 1/10/13, 10/23/13 – Remain in Committee)

11. Related Motion, Councillor Lopes, requesting that Ron Labelle, DPI Commissioner, be invited to a future Finance Committee Meeting to provide detailed information on the Combined Sewer Overflow Abatement Program and how the \$2,100,000.00 will be utilized. (Ref'd from Finance meeting 1/29/13)
12. Written Motion, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the Administration provide the Committee on Finance at its' April meeting a breakdown of the monies received through FEMA's SAFER Grant and a breakdown of how the monies were spent throughout each year by the Fire Department; and further, that through the calculations of this Councillor, there presently is \$2.5 Million Dollars unaccounted for that was transferred out of the SAFER Grant, that the Committee on Finance would like to know how and when the money got transferred out of the SAFER Grant to the City. (Ref'd 3/14/13, 10/23/13 - tabled)
13. Written Motion, Councillor Gonsalves, requesting, that the Committee on Finance meet in Executive Session with the City Solicitor to get a claims briefing of all open claims, in particular those claims of high dollar exposure. (Ref'd 4/11/13, 5/22/13 - tabled)
14. Related Motion, Councillor Lopes, requesting, that the Director of the Quest Center attend a Committee on Finance meeting to discuss the collection of rents and revenues as it relates to the operation of the Quest Center. (Ref'd 6/27/13)
15. WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Lawrence, in response to the Standard-Times Article, of July 15, 2013, stating that City Leaders are confident that New Bedford will be awarded a SAFER Grant, which would extend the employment of seventy of our firefighters and sustain the opening of the two fire houses once closed, even though the Federal Government has yet to release the applications for the next round as said applications were thought to be released in June, requesting that the City Council's Committee on Finance meet with the CFO Sky and Fire Chief Gomes to discuss the following: 1) When the SAFER Grant application will be released by the Federal Government for New Bedford to reapply; 2) What is the projected turnaround time for the Government to review and inform the City whether they have been approved or not; and 3) When will we know if the current SAFER Grant allows the City to retain its seventy firefighters until September, and when in September if the monies are not received, will the layoffs begin, and will there be a reduction in the number of layoffs as a result of retirement attrition; and further, what is the projected time frame for the closing of the two stations which were reopened as a direct result of New Bedford securing the original SAFER Grant; and further, requesting that a letter be sent to our Federal and State Delegations expressing the urgency in securing the funds necessary to maintain our current compliment of firefighters. (Copy of Standard-Times article dated July 15, 2013, enclosed.) (Ref'd 7/18/13, 10/23/13 - tabled)
16. COMMUNICATION, Councillor Gonsalves submitting email from Robert Clark, Sales Development Consultant, Extend Health, a Towers Watson Company, requesting to meet with the Committee on Finance to discuss retiree medical for the City of New Bedford. (Ref'd 9/12/13)
17. Discussion, regarding a Communication/email from Exchange Solutions Sales Development Consultant, Rob Clark to Councillor Jane L. Gonsalves, Chairperson, Committee on Finance, pertaining to sustainable health benefit strategies for the upcoming Affordable Care Act (ACA) transformed health care landscape. (10/10/13, 10/23/13 - tabled)