



Committee on Finance

September 18, 2014 – 7:13 PM - **Minutes**
Chambers of the City Council, Room 214

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2014
TIME: 7:13 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS LINDA MORAD, CHAIRPERSON; JOSEPH LOPES, VICE-CHAIRMAN; DAVID ALVES; HENRY BOUSQUET; NAOMI CARNEY (7:18); DEBORA COELHO; BRIAN GOMES (7:18); STEVEN MARTINS; JAMES OLIVEIRA; DANA REBEIRO (7:23); KERRY WINTERSON

ABSENT: NO ONE

* * *

Councillor Morad called Finance Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. Councillor Morad apologized for being late and explained that they were across the street at the Zoning Board Meeting.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Communication, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDER that in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 53E ½, the revolving fund under the control of Tourism and Marketing Department known as the TOURISM REVOLVING FUND whose purpose is to collect sponsorship funds associated with City events, co-op advertising expenses and fees relating to film permitting, whose revenues and amount limited to be spent in FY15, is restricted to revenue deposited into the fund, is hereby authorized for FISCAL YEAR 2015 (Ref'd 08/21/14) was received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Coelho. (1, 1a)

Dagny Ashley, Tourism Director was present to answer questions from the Committee. She gave an overview of fees collected for advertising, film permit fees, etc. The monies are placed into a revolving fund.

Councillor Alves asked how much have they used in the past year, which Ms. Ashley responded approximately \$10,000 a year. To date they have raised about \$6,000 and they spend what they take in.

Councillor Bousquet asked how much in film permit fees to date. Ms. Ashley responded that normally no charge, just started this year and one has been issued they are \$35.00. In 2013 there were thirteen (13) issued without charge.

It was agreed that the proposed \$10,000 cap for a revolving fund would be appropriate by CFO Ari Sky.

On motion by Councillor Bousquet and seconded by Councillor Coelho, the Committee VOTED: To amend the motion to include a cap of \$10,000. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER, AS AMENDED, that in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E ½ , the revolving fund under the control of Tourism and Marketing Department known as the TOURISM REVOLVING FUND whose purpose is to collect sponsorship funds associated with City events, co-op advertising expenses and fees relating to film permitting, whose revenues and amount limited to be spent in FY15, is restricted to revenue deposited into the fund, is hereby authorized for FISCAL YEAR 2015; and further, the revenue deposited into said fund will not exceed \$10,000. This motion passed on a voice vote.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Communication, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDER amending the Order adopted by the City Council on June 26, 2014, and signed by the Mayor on July 01, 2014, which in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 53E ½, authorized the Revolving Fund under the control of the Planning and Community Development Department, known as the ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS REVOLVING FUND whose purpose is to provide supplies, postage, equipment and advertising costs, contract for technical and administrative support for the ZBA, zoning studies, and stipends for ZBA members, whose revenues and amount limited to be spent estimated at \$131,015.00 is hereby authorized for FISCAL YEAR 2015 (Ref'd 08/21/14) were received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney. (2, 2a)

Jill Maclean, City Planner was present to answer questions from the Committee.

Councillor Lopes was concerned that the money allocated will only be spent in the downtown area and it was his hope that it would be used beyond the fourteen (14) block area that encompasses the downtown.

Councillor Morad expressed concern that the balance in the revolving fund was too high. She thinks the fees were too high at the time.

Ms. Maclean informed the Committee that said fees were reduced just recently. It appeared that their revolving fund money was kept with the ZBA and not returned to the general fund at the end of the FY. This was discovered when the ZBA merged under the Planning Department oversight. The money they are seeking will cover, stenographer fees \$200.00 per meeting, Commissioner fees \$20.00 per meeting, and office supplies.

Councillor Bousquet asked who would administer the fund. Ms. Maclean responded it would be the Planning Office to the ZBA.

There was a discussion on the support of the item.

Councillor Morad asked about the purchase of tablets for Commissioners, where the City is attempting to go paperless.

Ms. Maclean replied that it will result in less paper being printed, the plans would be able to be seen online by the Commissioners during meetings, reducing the use of paper.

Councillor Morad asked how many tablets would be purchased, to which CFO Ari Sky responded it would be seven (7) at approximately \$900.00 a piece.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Bousquet, the Committee VOTED: To amend the revenues and amount limited to be spent at \$41,015.00 from \$131,015.00. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Bousquet, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION as amended, AN ORDER, amending the Order adopted by the City Council on June 26, 2014 and signed by the Mayor on July 01, 2014, which in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E ½, authorized the Revolving Fund under the control of the Planning and Community Development Department, known as the ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS REVOLVING FUND whose purpose is to provide supplies, postage, equipment and advertising costs, contract for technical and administrative support for the ZBA, zoning studies, and stipends for ZBA members, whose revenues and amount limited to be spent estimated at \$41,015.00 is hereby authorized for FISCAL YEAR 2015. This motion passed on a Roll Call vote of Yeas 8, Nays 2, with Councillors Coelho and Martins opposed and Councillor Rebeiro not present for the vote.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Communication, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting LOAN ORDER that \$12,500,000.00 is appropriated for the purpose of constructing, equipping and furnishing Taylor School at the existing SeaLab Facility site, and for which the City is eligible for a 90% grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) (Ref'd 08/21/14) was received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Carney. (3, 3a)

Barry Rabanovich, New Bedford Public Schools, Director of SBA Projects, 23 Alden Road, Wareham, MA and Mr. Frank Tedesco, Mt. Vernon Group, Architectures for school project, 9 Rocky Pasture Road, Gloucester, MA were present to answer questions from the Committee.

A brief discussion took place that no School Committee Member was present.

Councillor Alves made a motion to table, which was seconded by Councillor Gomes.

A discussion took place that because Mr. Rabanovich and Mr. Tedesco were present than the matter could be taken up; so Councillor Alves withdrew his motion to table and Councillor Gomes withdrew his second.

A review of the planned addition to Sea Lab to build the Taylor School was presented by Mr. Tedesco. Questions were asked about the design by Councillors Lopes, Bousquet and Alves.

Councillor Bousquet asked how the construction would affect the Sea Lab Program during the summer. Mr. Tedesco informed the Committee that the affect of Sea Lab would be minimal because the work would be done after hours.

There was a discussion on the bonding of the \$12,500,000 for the construction.

Mr. Rabanovich explained the SBA would reimburse the city 95% towards the construction, and that the money was readily available from other school projects that fell below the projected figures. The entire \$12,500,000 had to be approved so they could go forward with the application process and begin construction in a timely manner.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the LOAN ORDER that \$12,500,000.00 is appropriated for the purpose of constructing, equipping and furnishing Taylor School at the existing Sea Lab Facility site, and for which the city is eligible for a 90% grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 11, Nays 0.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Morad, Bousquet, Lopes, Gomes, Martins and Alves, requesting that School Committee Vice-Chairperson Livramento, appear before the Committee on Finance to discuss the City Council's concern over the non-operational alarm system at Keith Middle School, considering that taxpayer monies were expended in the construction of the brand new school building and that taxpayer monies will certainly be required to cover the expense of repairing the alarm system and for the costs associated with the destruction that was caused at Keith Middle School by the vandals in the recent break-in (Ref'd 08/21/14) was received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Lopes. (4)

The Clerk read a communication into the record as it related to the Vice Chair of the School Committee, Jack Livramento not coming to this meeting. This communication was received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Lopes.

A discussion took place between CFO Ari Sky and Councillor Lopes; the Councillor Lopes reviewed the school budget and did not see a line item for security. CFO Sky confirmed that there is not a dollar figure in the budget for security.

On motion by Councillor Bousquet and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: To report this matter out of Committee without a recommendation but to the City Council for action, as follows: requesting that School Committee Vice-Chairman Livramento, appear before the Committee on Finance to discuss the City Council's concern over the non-operational alarm system at Keith Middle School, considering that taxpayer monies were expended in the construction of the brand

new school building and that taxpayer monies will certainly be required to cover the expense of repairing the alarm system and for the costs associated with the destruction that was caused at Keith Middle School by the vandals in the recent break-in. This motion passed on a voice vote.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Council President Lopes, requesting, that CFO Ari Sky brief the New Bedford City Council on the status of the City's "other post employment benefits"; and further, that CFO Sky provide this body with any and all plans that the City is looking at to address this matter (Ref'd 04/24/14) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Alves. (5)

CFO Ari Sky was present to answer questions from the Committee.

Councillor Lopes explained the reason for his motion, he was concerned that we do not have a plan in place to address other post-employment benefits and he wanted to know what steps the City was taking to address the lack of funding.

CFO Ari Sky explained that currently the retirement fund is under funded by 563 million dollars. He assured everyone that employees would not lose benefits; he explained there is state legislation pending to adjust the eligibility and contribution provisions. He was unable to get into too many details as they were currently working out the issues, but it also included new bids for health insurance. We are currently putting twenty-four million a year into retirement, we are good to date.

Councillor Lopes asked who pays the School Department benefits, to which Mr. Sky said it was the city.

It was agreed that there it was still an open ended item and that the motion should be tabled for thirty (30) days and Mr. Sky would have additional information by that time.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Alves the Committee VOTED: To table this matter for thirty (30) days. This motion passed on a voice vote.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Related Motion, Councillor Alves, requesting from CFO Ari Sky, that the attachments to the Energy Management Systems Agreement, once completed, be provided to the full City Council no later than August 15, 2014 was received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Winterson. (6)

Scott Durkin, Energy Coordinator of the City was present to address the Committee and he submitted a packet of information which was received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Coelho.

An overview of how the installation of street lights and traffic lights was progressing under the direction of Siemen's. A number of questions were asked by all Councillors, to include the increase in wattage in areas that already had increases. How long it would take to finish the installations, what is happening to the metal from the poles when taken down. (By contract they become the property of Siemen's.)

Mr. Durkin informed the Committee that if their constituents have concerns they should call 508-979-1550 (City Yard) and ask for John Gorham. He is addressing issues as they arise with Siemen's.

Councillor Morad expressed a concern that as poles were being replaced they were not being numbered. Mr. Durkin said they are taking an inventory and steps to correct this issue. He would get the answers asked by each Councillor individually and revert back to them.

On motion by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To take "No Further Action" on this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Lopes made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Winterson.

This meeting adjourned @ 9:16 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Committees