



Committee on Finance

February 24, 2016 – 7:30 PM – **Minutes**
Chambers of the City Council, Room 214

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCES

DATE: FEBRUARY 24, 2016

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

**PRESENT: COUNCILLORS JOSEPH LOPES, CHAIRMAN; JAMES OLIVEIRA; IAN CARNEYH;
HENRY BOUSQUET; NAOMI CARNEY; STEVEN MARTINS; DANA REBEIRO;
KERRY WINTERSON**

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS DEBORA COELHO; BRIAN GOMES; LINDA MORAD

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Councillor Lopes called the Finance Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read Communications from Councillors Coelho and Gomes explaining their absences and a Communication from Councillor Morad stating she would be late in attending tonight's meeting. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Bousquet and seconded by Councillor Oliveira.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Communication, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting a LOAN ORDER in the amount of \$520,000.00 to pay the costs of improving Hazelwood Park for recreational purposes including new pedestrian entrances and walkways, enhanced lighting, benches, table and other amenities and all other costs incidental and related thereto (the "Project") for which project the City has been awarded grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the amount of \$24,500 for design costs and \$339,500 for construction costs (Ref'd 1/14/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Winteron and seconded by Councillor Oliveira. (1, 1a)

Ari Sky, CFO, gave an overview of the long debt pay off as it related to the loan orders. As the reimbursement money comes in from the State, it will reduce the pay off time.

Councillor Rebeiro asked Mary Rapoza, Director of Park and Recreation about the benefits in Park improvements. She explained that they plan on improving parks throughout the city, and that the improvements at Hazelwood would be open to all.

Councillor Oliveira asked about improvements to parks in the north end, specifically the park near Pulaski School. Ms. Rapoza explained that they have received a grant specific to Hazelwood, and that they are however, working towards design improvements with DPI for Pulaski Park.

Councillor Bousquet asked about improvements, playground equipment basketball courts and tennis courts. He was told playground equipment and basketball courts are new. They will be looking to improve the tennis courts as well.

Councillor Abreu asked about a skateboard park. He was told it did come up during the improvement discussion, the pros and cons, they will continue to look at it as the design process continues. It will be a part of the conversation.

Councillor Lopes thanked Ms. Rapoza for her help in moving this project forward. It has been a long three years in planning.

On motion by Councillor Oliveira and seconded by Councillor Bousquet, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the LOAN ORDER in the amount of \$520,000.00 to pay the costs of improving Hazelwood Park for recreational purposes including new pedestrian entrances and walkways, enhanced lighting, benches, table and other amenities and all other costs incidental and related thereto (the "Project") for which project the City has been awarded a grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the amount of \$24,500 for design costs and \$339,500 for construction costs. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Communication, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting a LOAN ORDER, under the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), appropriating \$5,509,000.00 for the purpose of making critically- needed repairs to City-owned building including, but not limited to, projects for the repair and renovations of public safety facilities, recreational facilities and general office space (Ref'd 2/11/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Bousquet. (2,2a)

Ari Sky, CFO was present and conducted a power point presentation on the CIP of FY 2015, the proposed spending for FY16 and how it will, if it continues to be approved what the effect of the CIP would be through 2019. He provided the Committee with a copy of the power point presentation packet. The packet was received and placed on file by Councillor Bousquet and seconded by Councillor Winterson.

There was also a CIP packet as it related to the Zoo. This packet was also received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Oliveira.

Councillor Winterson asked Fire Chief Gomes to review the work needed on existing stations and the combining of Station 6 and 11. He provided a brief overview. He was asked about where the new station will be in the South End, and he was told they are conducting a feasibility study to come up with an appropriation site.

Councillor Oliveira reconfirmed the Council's commitment to the CIP concept and thanked Ari Sky for the work done to date.

Councillor Rebeiro asked Dr. Rabinovitch about the school improvements under the CIP. He provided an update on what continues to be needed as well as the repairs done to date, including Sea Lab and the pool at the high school. There is much more to be done as there at eight schools over one hundred years old that the city is currently using, unfortunately, you cannot replace them all at once.

Councillor Lopes asked Ari Sky to explain the formula used in building out financial growth into the CIP, so the city would not come up short financially in the future. Ari Sky explained he calculated a modest

increase based on previous years at 2%, this allowed them to calculate financial needs through FY 2020. He then asked Dr. Rabinovitch about the school funding. He was told of the eighteen million projected that the State would reimburse the city 79.58% on the projects. So the city's contribution would be \$3.7 million.

On motion by Councillor Oliveira and seconded by Councillor Martins, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the LOAN ORDER, under the City's capital Improvement Program (CIP), appropriating \$5,509,000.00 for the purpose of making critically-needed repairs to City-owned building including, but not limited to, projects for the repair and renovations of public safety facilities, recreational facilities and general office space. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Bousquet, requesting that the City Council look into establishing a revolving fund for the Department of Parks and Recreation and Beaches, in order to manage the care and maintenance of the proposed Dog Park in the City of New Bedford. (Ref'd 7/16/15, 8/19/15-9/9/15-tabled until May 2016) (3)

On motion by Councillor Bousquet and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, City Council President Morad, requesting that DFFM Commissioner Kenneth Blanchard and CFO Ari Sky, review the feasibility and costs associated with the construction of a service elevator in City Hall in an effort to decrease the usage of the current antique one-of-a-kind elevator and that the review be presented to the Committee on Finance within 90 days. (Ref'd 1/14/16) (4)

On motion by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Rebeiro, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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On motion by Councillor Bousquet and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To waive the reading and follow the Chair's recommendation of taking "No Further Action" on items five (5), six (6) and seven (7). This motion passed on a voice vote. They are as follows:

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Lopes, requesting, AGAIN, that the City of New Bedford adopt M.G.L., Chapter 59, Section 5N, which allows Cities and Towns to create a work-off tax abatement program for Veterans, this would allow Veterans to earn abatements on their property taxes by working for the community (Ref'd 3/27/13, 4/15/15- table for 30 days pending additional info from Carlos Amado and Chris Gomes) (5)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Resolution, Approving Certified Project Application and Special Tax Assessment Agreement with DARN IT! INC. and DARN IT! PROPERTIES LLC. (67-75 David Street) (Ref'd 9/10/15, 9/16/15- tabled until March 2016) (6)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a 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 5/09/13, 11/19/13- table for 6 months, 7/14/14- table until 10/14 Finance Committee Meeting) (7)

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

This meeting adjourned @ 8:48 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Committees