



# *Committee on Finance*

March 28, 2016 – 7:00 PM – **Minutes**  
Chambers of the City Council, Room 214

**MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**DATE: MARCH 28, 2016**

**TIME: 7:00 P.M.**

**PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLORS JOSEPH LOPES, CHAIRMAN; JAMES OLIVEIRA, VICE-CHAIRMAN; IAN ABREU; HENRY BOUSQUET; NAOMI CARNEY (7:10); DEBORA COELHO; BRIAN GOMES (7:20); STEVEN MARTINS (7:05); LINDA MORAD; DANA REBEIRO (7:05); KERRY WINTERSON**

**ABSENT: NO ONE**

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Councillor Lopes called the Finance Committee Meeting to order and took attendance.

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Councillor Morad made a motion to take items two (2), three (3) and four (4) out of order, which was seconded by Councillor Bousquet.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Lopes, Abreu, Martins, Winterston, Morad, Bousquet, Rebeiro, Carney and Coelho, requesting that the Personnel Director Sandy Vezina, appear before the Committee on Finance, to review the City's current residency requirements was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Coelho. (2)

Sandy Vezina, Personal Director was present to address the Committee. She distributed a Power Point presentation printout to the Committee. Councillor Bousquet made a motion to receive and place on file, the packet submitted by Ms. Vezina, which was seconded by Councillor Abreu.

Ms. Vezina reviewed the Power Point for the Committee and answered questions.

Councillor Oliveira asked about trends of employees moving out of the city. He was told there were no real trends, but most of the moves could be found within the New Bedford Police Department and the New Bedford Fire Department. Unit C waivers are granted more than often because it is harder to find qualified people in the city to fill the positions. Wages are affecting the number of people that are actually attracted to employment with the city. The city does not compensate aggressively.

Councillor Rebeiro asked about changing the Ordinance to mandate residency in the city of a city job, but she was reminded that the ability to leave the city is negotiated in city contracts.

Councillor Coelho reviewed the figures presented.

Councillor Carney asked if the Mayor is moving towards changing residency requirements in the city. She was told he attempted to increase it in the New Bedford Fire Department negotiations but was not successful.

Councillor Martins made comment on the need to change the rule. He receives number of complaints from constituents on the residency requirement. He was also informed that all three unions were currently up for negotiations this year.

Councillor Morad reviewed the AFSCME turn over that she was unaware that after three years an AFSCME member could move out of the city and continue to retain their job.

On a Related Motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Morad, the Committee VOTED: That Personnel Director Sandy Vezina provide the Finance Committee with a list of the 163 Unit C Employees, under Section 19-22, to include their title, are they on a residency waiver and if they live in the City of New Bedford. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On a Related Motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Morad, the Committee VOTED: That City Council President Linda Morad establish a Special Committee to Review the Unit C Residency Requirements. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Bousquet, the Committee VOTED: To take “No Further Action” at this time on the main motion. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Winterson, Coelho, Abreu, Lopes, Gomes, Council President Morad, Councillors Martins and Carney, requesting, that CFO Ari Sky and Fire Chief Gomes be invited to a Committee on Finance meeting to discuss the recent increased Fire Department’s brownout policy aimed at reducing overtime cost was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Bousquet. (3)

The Clerk read a Communication submitted by C.F.O. Ari Sky, explaining the overtime savings by doing the rolling brownouts. This Communication was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Winterson.

A conversation ensued on the numbers as presented by CFO Sky and how it affects the budget and overtime. They also discussed the Safer Grant and the need to not let the number of the firefighters fall below the 216 it is now, but strive to add new firefighters as well.

The Chief was recognized and provided his review of the brownouts and though he is not in favor of them they are a cost cutting tool.

Councillor Abreu asked about the normal overtime charge per firefighter, he was told on the average five to six thousand dollars per fighter; but it is currently eight thousand dollars per capita.

Councillor Lopes asked if the 2016 budget was underfunded intentionally. He was told no.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Oliveira, the Committee VOTED: To take “No Further Action” on 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, 2/24/16 – tabled) was removed from the table by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Abreu. (4)

Ken Blanchard, DFFM Commissioner was present and gave an overview on the costs to build a new elevator in City Hall and the cost to refit the existing elevator. He explained they just put a new elevator in the Zeiterion and they used the consultant hired for the project to review the same for City Hall. It was decided a new elevator could be added to the northwest corner of the building. The cost would be approximately 1.1 million dollars to outfit the existing elevator would be approximately \$440,000, but it would require redesigning the existing elevator and reconfiguring its original design.

A discussion ensued where most Councillors expressed their displeasure with changing the existing elevator because of its historical significance. It is the oldest operating elevator of its kind in the world. They agreed something should be done, but stopped short of making any recommendations.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Bousquet, the Committee VOTED: To take “No Further Action” on 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, Councillor Lopes, requesting that CFO Sky, brief the Committee on Finance on the Fiscal Year 2017 budget, before the Mayor’s budget submission in May (Ref'd 3/10/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Winterson. (1)

C.F.O. Sky reviewed the Power Point presentation with the Committee.

Councillor Bousquet asked about the ninety (90) city buildings and how many of them are surplus. He was told the problem with them was that a lot of non-profits are using them, which is fine, but they are not paying anything toward the up keep, heating, electricity, etc. that some of the building will be declared surplus at some point and the city will look to sell them off. It was explained that we can simply not continue to maintain all the buildings we own.

Councillor Winterson asked about the energy cost savings in the city. He was told approximately \$600,000 per year, paying 400,000 towards the loan to upgrade, profiting \$200,000 a year. Once all conversions are done there will be a cost savings of \$1.3 million a year.

Councillor Carney asked about tax title sales, she was provided an overview of the success of the program.

Councillor Morad asked about the pension assessment increase of one million dollars. She was told there is a move to fully fund the retirement fund by 2026. The last year there was a \$24.5 million increase.

Mr. Sky explained that the 2017 outlook for levy increase will not exceed the 2-1/2 %. It will increase but it should not be as large as FY16 was.

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

Councilor Morad made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Bousquet.

This meeting adjourned @ 8:48 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Clerk of Committees