

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
DATE: JULY 13, 2020
TIME: 7:02 P.M.
PLACE: HELD REMOTELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS' MARCH 12, 2020 ORDER SUSPENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE OPEN MEETING LAW G. L. C. 30A, SECTION 20 AND THE CITY COUNCIL'S VOTE TO WAIVE RULE 21A

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS LINDA MORAD, CHAIRPERSON; IAN ABREU, VICE CHAIRMAN; DEREK BAPTISTE; NAOMI CARNEY; DEBORA COELHO; MARIA GIESTA; BRIAN GOMES; SCOTT LIMA; JOSEPH LOPES; WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY

ABSENT: COUNCILLOR HUGH DUNN

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Councillor Morad called the Finance Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read a Communication from Councillor Dunn explaining his absence from this meeting. This Communication was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Giesta.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, requesting an opportunity for relevant City staff and Consultants to brief the City Council regarding proposed upcoming Wastewater and Stormwater Capital Improvement Projects identified through the City's recently completed integrated plan as well to discuss anticipated financial implications and proposed sewer rates increases associated with the Plan (Ref'd 03/12/2020) was received and placed on file by Councillor Coelho and seconded by Councillor Lopes. (1)

Jamie Ponte, DPI Commissioner was present and provided the Committee with an update on projects (using a power point) being conducted and/or placed on hold due to COVID-19 within the Wastewater Division. The city is entering into a plan to improve the combined sewer overflow system. The EPA has mandated that run-off water when the city's drainage system is overloaded to no longer drain off into the harbor or Clarks Cove as it has for well over 100 years. The EPA has mandated these changes.

The costs involved in all the water mitigation and other Wastewater Projects are estimated to be long-term \$290,000,000, which are identified repairs, one point three billion dollars. The EPA has accepted the city's plan, which are approved in five-year increments. When one project is done, the city will then see what the next step should be.

The issue is that revenue is off, and the department is working to cover their shortage, which is currently about \$3,000,000. The city will meet with the EPA to spread out the projects. The city has taken a holistic approach in repairs to include the

Water Treatment Plant, it's Pump Stations and Pipes. They are spreading out the cost more evenly over a twenty-year period.

The Committee wanted to speak about the possibilities of litigation between the city and the EPA, if the city is unable to meet the EPA mandates.

Mikaela McDermott, City Solicitor, stated that where the conversation will discuss possible litigation the Committee should move to go into Executive Session.

Councillor Morad asked Attorney David Gerwatowski if he concurred and he said he did. He suggested that the Committee move to go into Executive Session citing Exception #3 in the statute as it relates to the open meeting law and that the Committee will not be coming out of Executive Session.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Lima, the Committee VOTED: To go into Executive Session citing exception #3 in the statute as it relates to the open meeting law and that the Committee will adjourn in Executive Session. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 10, Nays 0.

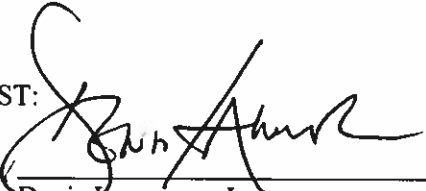
The Committee went into Executive Session at 7:26 p.m.

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

Councillor Giesta made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Baptiste.

This meeting adjourned @ 8:19 p.m.

ATTEST:



Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees