

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
DATE: NOVEMBER 18, 2020
TIME: 7:01 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 JOSEPH LOPES, COUNCIL PRESIDENT; IAN ABRUE, VICE CHAIRMAN; DEBORA COELHO; HUGH DUNN; MARIA GIESTA; BRIAN GOMES; SCOTT LIMA; WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS LINDA MORAD, CHAIRPERSON; DEREK BAPTISTE; NAOMI CARNEY

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Councillor Lopes called the Finance Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read Communications from Councillors Morad, Baptiste and Carney explaining their absences from this meeting. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Coelho.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDER, appropriating \$6,503,133.00 from ORDINARY REVENUE AND MUNICIPAL RECEIPTS, to SCHOOL DEPARTMENT (Ref'd 11/12/2020) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lima and seconded by Councillor Abreu. (1, 1a)

Andrew O'Leary, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations for New Bedford Public Schools, was present to address the Committee. He gave a presentation on the School Departments request to appropriate \$6,503,133.00 from Ordinary Revenue and Municipal Receipts to the School Department. He explained the operating budget of \$179,000 and that healthcare now falls within the School Department budget which accounted for an increase in their operating budget. He also explained that in late October the State allocated more in Chapter 70 Aide to the School Department in the amount of 6.5 million dollars, which is the reason they are before the Committee. He explained where the newly received funds would go. Fine Arts \$200,000; Curriculum \$750,000; Tech/Hardware \$150,000; Furniture \$750,000; FTE Hybrid Mode \$2,600,000; Facilities \$500,000; Utilities \$600,000 and ESSER transfer \$953,153.

Councillor Markey asked how the Charter Schools funding would apply and he was told that the Charter Schools are an issue that is tough. He explained that the collapse of the City on a Hill Charter School resulted in \$1,500,000 coming back but they were not able to spend it. He also asked why the appropriation is being made from ordinary revenue and municipal receipts. CFO Sky explained that this is the way the

money comes into the City from the State, but it is earmarked for Education. The Finance Committee must properly relocate the funding.

Councillor Lopes asked if the Committee could be provided with a carryover breakdown and he was told that they would provide them with a breakdown, but it includes pre-paying residential placements and the circuit breaker funding pays for out placement costs and reimbursements. He asked about the ESSER funding and was told that most of this money was applied to Paraprofessionals salaries. Mr. O'Leary also explained that \$390,000 was used in adding an additional six District Learning positions, remote teachers, and that these positions could well continue into the FY22.

Councillor Lopes expressed his desire to have transportation costs reimbursed by the State; but was told by CFO Sky that this was not possible because the State feels that the money should be used for education and not transportation. Therefore, the School Department must fund school transportation.

Superintendent Thomas Anderson explained that they will continue to dig deeper to expand services for our children and he credited Mr. O'Leary on being fiscally prudent in leading the effort.

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER, appropriating \$6,503,133.00 from ORDINARY REVENUE AND MUNICIPAL RECEIPTS, to SCHOOL DEPARTMENT. 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 AN ORDER, that the City Solicitor is requested to obtain appraisals of privately owned property along Rockdale Avenue and Allen Street which is needed for infrastructure improvements at the intersection of Rockdale Avenue and Allen Street and prepare an Order of Taking for the easements to be acquired through eminent domain (Ref'd 11/12/2020) was received and placed on file by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Giesta. (2, 2a)

DPI Deputy Commissioner Manny Silva was present to address the Committee and answer questions. He explained the rationale for taking property that abuts Rockdale Avenue and Allen Street. This is a project that has been in development since 2016, when they had a public hearing on 1/29/2020 for the design phase in expanding the streets. They will deal with some drainage issues, add a bicycle lane in the street as well as wheelchair accessibility. The project has been pushed back from 12/20 to 3/21.

There is a total of sixteen (16) easements that will be temporary, three (3) permanent and two (2) sidewalks including utilities. The price tag is \$3,000,000 which will be paid for which 80% will be paid by the Federal Government and MASS DOT will cover the other 20%. The entire project is funded at no cost to the city.

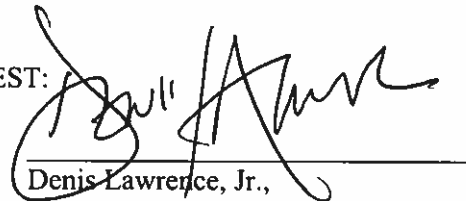
Councillor Lima informed the Committee that he distributed 220 letters to the neighbors that would be affected by this job. He said of the 220 letters only four people showed up to the hearings, two homeowners and two from the Dentist Office at the corner of Rockdale Avenue and Allen Street; there was not any opposition to the project.

On motion by Councillor Lima and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER, that the City Solicitor is requested to obtain appraisals of privately owned property along Rockdale Avenue and Allen Street which is needed for infrastructure improvements at the intersection of Rockdale Avenue and Allen Street and prepare an Order of Taking for the easements to be acquired through eminent domain. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Gomes made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Abreu.

This meeting adjourned @ 7:58 p.m.

ATTEST:



Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees