

**NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**  
**DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2021**  
**TIME: 7:05 P.M.**  
**PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLORS LINDA MORAD, CHAIRPERSON; JOSEPH LOPES, VICE CHAIRMAN; NAOMI CARNEY; HUGH DUNN; MARIA GIESTA; SCOTT LIMA; WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY**

**ABSENT: COUNCILLORS IAN ABREU; DEREK BAPTISTE; DEBORA COELHO; BRIAN GOMES**

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Councillor Morad called the Finance Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read a Communication from Councillor Gomes explaining his absence from this meeting. This Communication was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Giesta. The Clerk announced that he received a call from Councillor Baptiste stating he may be late in attending tonight's meeting.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, R. Renee Fernandes, Treasurer/Collector to Councillor Linda M. Morad, Chairperson, Committee on Finance, presenting a request for interim loan financing for the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust Project CW-20-20 in the amount of \$1,750,000 and for the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust Project CW-20-22 in the amount of \$4,304,590; these interim loans are part of the \$25,000,000 authorization voted by the Council in October 2016 (Ref'd 10/07/2021) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Dunn. (1)

R. Renee Fernandes, Treasurer/Collector was present and gave an overview of the request to approve the interim loan financing for the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust Project CW-2022. She explained that this interim loan in the amount of \$4,304,590 is part of the \$25m000,000 loan authorization voted and granted by the City Council in 2016.

The request before the Committee was to approve the sale of zero percent interim loan notes of the city to the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust. The breakdown of the loans are as follows:

CW 20-20 \$1,750,000 Sewer and Stormwater System IDDE

CWP-2022 \$4,068,890 Wastewater Collection System Improvements

CWP-20-22-A \$235,700 Wastewater Collection System Improvements

Ms. Fernandes was asked if she had an idea what the guaranteed interest rate would be and stated it would be 2%. She was asked how much of the \$25,000,000 loan has been spent to date and she told the Committee approximately \$24,700,000 has been spent.

Jaime Ponte, DPI Commissioner, was asked where most of this money was being spent, he informed the Committee members that the funds were spent in the downtown area.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Markey, the Committee VOTED: To approve the sale of the zero percent Interim Loan Notes of the City to the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust; to approve the related Financing Agreements and the execution and delivery thereof by the Treasurer and to approve the delivery of the related Bonds to the Trust. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 7, Nays 0.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNUCATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting the Appointment of ROBERT DICKINSON as CITY AUDITOR for the City of New Bedford, also requesting, that Mr. Dickinson be established at Salary Step 4 (\$108,926) on the Unit C Salary Schedule, which is commensurate with his professional experience (Ref'd 10/12/2021) was received and placed on file by Councillor Giesta and seconded by Councillor Lopes. (2)

Michael Gagne, Acting CFO, was present and gave an overview of the need to increase the starting salary for Mr. Robert Dickinson as the City Auditor to start at Step 4 (\$108,926.00) on the Unit C Salary Schedule. He explained the city has been looking for a person to fill this position since June 1<sup>st</sup>. He was asked why the city is not able to start the applicant at Step 1. He explained that the current market for municipal auditors has changed and that the Step 1 amount is too low. The salary that is being recommended is consistent with the job within similar government agencies.

Councillor Markey asked how many individuals applies for the position, he was told five (5). He also asked what the figure for Step 1 is and was told \$100,169.00.

Ms. Perkins, Personnel Director, was present and addressed the Committee. Councillor Lopes confirmed through her, that the last two budgets for this position were listed at \$101,000. He explained he had an issue with the Unit C Salary structure and recommended that it be revisited and updated.

Councillor Morad asked if the applicant is planning on moving to New Bedford, she was told yes. She asked if they were to promote from within would they start the person at Step 1, and she was told yes. She expressed her concern that we can take individuals from out of the system and offer the higher pays, but should we look to promote from within a department that the starting salary is the figure that is taken into consideration. It shows that we do not value our own people.

There was a discussion about referring the matter to Appointments and Briefings to review the applicant's qualifications to see the increase is justified. The Chair reminded the Committee that the motion before them was not whether the candidate was qualified or not, but should the applicant not start at Step 1 rather than Step 4.

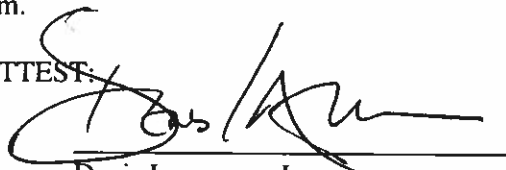
A discussion ensued amongst the Committee in favor of the increase so as not to lose a qualified candidate and against the increase, stating that structure was in place for a reason and should be followed.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL as AMENDED, of the Appointment of ROBERT DICKINSON as CITY AUDITOR for the City of New Bedford, also requesting, that Mr. Dickinson be established at a Salary M17, Step 1 (\$100,169) on the Unit C Salary Schedule. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 6, Nays 1, with Councillor Markey opposed.

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

This meeting adjourned @ 7:52 p.m.

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denis Lawrence, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Denis Lawrence, Jr.,  
Clerk of Committees