

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
DATE: NOVEMBER 29, 2021
TIME: 7:03 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

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

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS DEBORA COELHO; MARIA GIESTA

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

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDER for the APPROPRIATION of \$600,000.00, from ORDINARY REVENUE AND MUNICIPAL RECEIPTS to GENERAL GOVERNMENT UNCLASSIFIED, CHARGES AND SERVICES (Ref'd 11/23/2021) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lima and seconded by Councillor Lopes. (1,1a)

Michael Gagne, Interim Chief Financial Officer, was present and gave an overview of the \$600,000 appropriation as it relates to the General Government Unclassified category and what their commitments are in that budget and what the funds and needs are for that particular budget. He gave out all the dollar amounts associated with this appropriation.

Councillor Lopes asked if \$600,000 would be enough since he was doing the math as he was talking and he has so far \$575,000. He asked why he is asking for \$600,000.

Mr. Gagne answered that the \$600,000 was the exact amount cut from the budget in June.

Councillor Lopes informed Mr. Gagne that he will amend the amount based on the figures he provided to \$375,000.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: To amend the Order for the APPROPRIATION from \$600,000.00 to \$375,000.00 from ORDINARY REVENUE AND MUNICIPAL RECEIPTS to GENERAL GOVERNMENT UNCLASSIFIED, CHARGES AND SERVICES. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 7, Nays 2, with Councillors Carney and Morad opposed.

Councillor Morad told the Committee that this item will be reported out for the Special City Council Meeting on December 7, 2021.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION as AMENDED, the ORDER for the APPROPRIATION of \$375,000.00 from ORDINARY REVENUE AND MUNICIPAL RECEIPTS to GENERAL GOVERNMENT UNCLASSIFIED, CHARGES AND SERVICES. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 7, Nays 2, with Councillors Carney and Morad opposed.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, requesting the reconsideration of the starting salary of ROBERT DICKINSON as CITY AUDITOR at a Salary Step 4 (\$108,926) on the Unit C Salary schedule which is commensurate with his professional experience (Ref'd 11/09/2021) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lima and seconded by Councillor Markey. (2)

Michael Gagne, Interim Chief Financial Officer was present to address the Committee. He told the Committee the position was advertised on February 23, 2021, and the first application was received on March 8, 2021. They have checked on a number of similar communities for the position of auditor's salaries as follows: Lowell - \$125,000; East Bridgewater - \$110,000 and Stoneham - \$105 to \$130,000 salary range.

Councillor Morad asked Mr. Gagne if he checked on the salary from the City of Fall River and he said he did but does not have them on the list. She informed Mr. Gagne that the salary being paid in Fall River is around \$93,000 a year.

On motion by Councillor Markey and seconded by Councillor Dunn, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the starting salary of ROBERT DICKINSON as CITY AUDITOR at a Salary Step 4 (\$108,926) on the Unit C Salary schedule which is commensurate with his professional experience. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 6, Nays 3, with Councillors Baptiste, Carney and Morad opposed.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Council President Lopes, requesting that Interim CFO Gagne provide the members of the City Council with a breakdown of fiscal year losses in revenues which can be attributed to the COVID-19 Pandemic as well as determination if the lost revenues is recoverable under the American Rescue Plan Act (To be Referred to the Committee on Finance) (Ref'd 08/19/2021) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Lima. (3)

Councillor Morad informed the Committee that the CFO sent a memorandum over the weekend regarding the Pandemic Revenue Loss, and she is looking to have it received and placed on file.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Lima, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file the Memorandum from Michael Gagne, the Interim Chief Financial Officer. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Michael Gagne, Interim CFO was present to address the Committee.

Councillor Lopes asked Mr. Gagne if he estimated what the potential fiscal year 21 losses would be, and Mr. Gagne answered yes. The FY21 Revenue categories for State Aid Revenue was a reduction of \$664,000 from what had been originally expected in 2021 when the budget was set; Local receipts were \$29,300,000; Water & Sewer, and Parking & Airport revenues were \$46,200,000, for all those agencies was \$5,500,000 lower than the projected amount.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council to take "No Further Action" on the WRITTEN MOTION, Council President Lopes, requesting that Interim CFO Gagne provide the members of the City Council with a breakdown of fiscal year losses in revenues which can be attributed to the COVID-19 Pandemic as well as determination if the lost revenues is recoverable under the American Rescue Plan Act. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Councillor Morad, submitting an email and spreadsheet from CFO Sky regarding the City's current COVID-19 Expenses as of June 5th (To be Referred to the Committee on Finance) (Ref'd 06/25/2020) (10/19/2020 – tabled; updated spreadsheet requested from CFO Sky) (10/20/2020 – updated spreadsheet sent to all Councillors via email by CFO Sky) (02/08/2021 – updated spreadsheet sent to all Councillors via email by CFO Sky) (02/10/2021 – tabled) (8/10/2021 – updated spreadsheet provided by CFO's Office, sent to all Councillors via email) (8/16/2021 – tabled) was removed from the table and received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Gomes. (4)

Councillor Morad informed the Committee that an email was sent on 11/24/2021 from the CFO's Office on updated COVID expenses that she would like to have received and placed on file.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Lima, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file an email from Sharon Thomas, Management Analyst, CFO's Office on updated COVID expenses. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Morad asked if there were any questions on the information provided, there were none.

On motion by Councillor Lima and seconded by Councillor Markey, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter for three (3) months (February 2022). This motion passed on a voice vote.

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On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Lima, the Committee VOTED: To waive the reading on items five (5) and six (6) and follow the Chair's suggestion and take "No Further Action" on these two matters. This motion passed on a voice vote. They are as follows:

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Lima, Abreu, Lopes and Dunn, requesting that the Administration review fees as they relate to solar energy projects. (Ref'd 03/14/19) (04/17/19-request that Danny Romanowicz provides the Committee with a breakdown of all solar jobs in the City, to include fees charged by the City, per project; tabled) (04/19/19-letter sent to Danny Romanowicz requesting info outlined above) (05/23/19-response received from Danny Romanowicz, shared with all Councillors via email on 05/24/19) (11/13/19-tabled 90 days) (5)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, John W. Parsons, Esq., Executive Director, Commonwealth of Massachusetts/Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission, to City Council, submitting copy of a memorandum sent to the New Bedford Retirement Board regarding the amount to be appropriated for the City of New Bedford's retirement system for Fiscal Year 2022. (Ref'd 12/09/2020) (6)

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

This meeting adjourned @ 8:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Donna M. Britto", is written over a horizontal line.

Donna M. Britto, Assistant
Clerk of Committees