

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
DATE: APRIL 13, 2022
TIME: 7:01 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS WILLIAM BRAD MARKEY, CHAIRMAN; SCOTT LIMA, VICE CHAIRMAN; IAN ABREU; SHANE BURGO; NAOMI CARNEY; HUGH DUNN; MARIA GIESTA; BRIAN GOMES; LINDA MORAD; RYAN PEREIRA (7:07)

ABSENT: COUNCILLOR DEREK BAPTISTE

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

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, R. Renee Fernandes, Treasurer/Collector to Councillor William Brad Markey, Chairman, Committee on Finance, presenting a request for interim loan financing for the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust Project DW-21-12 in the amount of \$150,000; this interim loan is part of the \$63,000,000 authorization voted by the Council in October 2016 (Ref'd 04/04/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Giesta. (1)

Renee Fernandes, Treasurer/Collector was present and addressed the Committee. She gave an overview of the city's request for interim loan financing for the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust Project DW-21-12 in the amount of \$150,000, that the interim loan is part of the \$63,000,000 authorized by a City Council vote in October of 2016. This interim loan financing will be applied to the city's Unit Flushing Water Distribution project.

On motion by Councillor Lima and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To APPROVE the Interim Loan Financing for the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust Project DW-21-12 in the amount of \$150,000; this term loan is part of the \$63,000,000 authorization voted by the Council in October 2016. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 9, Nays 0, with Councillor Pereira not present for the vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Morad, requesting that New Bedford Economic Development Council Executive Director Derek Santos, appear before the Committee on Finance to provide an update regarding the actions his office is undertaking to ensure that three New Bedford companies with active TIF Agreements; Oceans Fleet Fisheries, Inc., Quality Custom Packing, Inc., and Shuster Corporation; are brought into compliance with the annual reporting requirements as per

the companies TIF Agreements, said companies last submitted annual reporting as of 2017, 2018 and 2018 respectively (To be Referred to the Committee on Finance.) (Ref'd 03/10/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Lima. (2)

Derek Santos, Executive Director of the NBECD and Ramon Silva from the NBECD were both present to answer questions from the Committee.

Councillor Morad asked what steps the Economic Development Council was taking to ensure that the three New Bedford companies that have received TIF's have not been in compliance with their agreements.

Mr. Santos explained that the city has the ability to check in and see if the companies are meeting their goals, however, it is up to the State to move to decertify companies that are not meeting their TIF requirements. Mr. Santos, tried to explain that the State has not been monitoring since the pandemic, but Councillor Morad told him that information was not relevant to the conversation, that the three companies in question had not provided status dating back to 2017 through 2018, pre-pandemic.

Councillor Giesta questioned whether or not it was up to the city to notify the state of companies not in compliance. Mr. Santos said it was the state that had the power to remove the certification. He stated the city did have access to the states data base but did not provide the Committee with an answer as to whether or not they monitor the system and if companies are not in compliance, they notify the state.

Ramon Silva stated that two of the three companies, Quality Seafood and Shuster are now in compliance. He was asked when this took place and Mr. Silva did not have an answer, he thought maybe in February of 2022. He went on to explain that Oceans Fisheries, did not start up, and fell victim to the pandemic and never fully got up and running.

On a Related Motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To request the Director of the New Bedford Economic Development Council to immediately begin the process to request that the State EAC Board begin the process to decertify the TIF for Oceans Fleet Fisheries, Inc. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Lima, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council to take "No Further Action" on the WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Morad, requesting that New Bedford Economic Development Council Executive Director Derek Santos, appear before the Committee on Finance to provide an update regarding the actions his office is undertaking to ensure that three New Bedford companies with active TIF Agreements; Oceans Fleet Fisheries, Inc., Quality Custom Packing, Inc., and Shuster Corporation; are brought into compliance with the annual reporting requirements as per the companies TIF Agreements, said companies last submitted annual reporting as of 2017, 2018 and 2018 respectively. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Councillor Morad asked that items 3, 3a, 4, 4a, 5, 5a be taken up together without objection, there were no objections.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDINANCE, Amending the Unit C Schedule, set forth in Chapter 19-7 (c) of the Code of Ordinances, by inserting the title of Director of Public Nursing at pay Grade M-12 (Ref'd 10/14/2021) was received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Giesta. (3, 3a)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDINANCE, Amending Unit C Schedule, set forth in Chapter 19-7 (c) of the Code of Ordinances, by inserting the title of Principal Health Inspector at pay Grade M-11 (Ref'd 10/14/2021) was received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Giesta. (4, 4a)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDINANCE, Amending Unit C Schedule, set forth in Chapter 19-7 (c) of the Code of Ordinances, by inserting the title of Laboratory Director at pay Grade M12 (Ref'd 10/14/2021) was received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Giesta. (5, 5a)

Damon Chaplin, Director of the Board of Health, spoke on his reasoning for the Board of Health needing to create the positions Director of Public Nursing at pay Grade M-12, Principal Health Inspector at pay Grade M-11 and Laboratory Director at pay Grade M-12. He explained that this request has been pending since October 2021. He sees the need to create these positions as he looks to grow the department and designate responsibility. He is currently budgeted for twenty-one (21) employees and only has fifteen (15) positions filled. He is looking to combine some of the positions into single positions, for example, he had two part-time nurses on staff who have left the department and he would combine those two positions into the one position of the Director of Public Nursing. He explained that he hoped to fill those positions, if approved in the current FY22, and that the positions would be paid for by combining vacant positions.

Mr. Chaplin was asked if any of the positions would be a revenue generator for the city and he said yes, specifically the Lab Director's position. The city's lab is approached by other communities, specifically in the summer to test beaches and waters for safety. He stated that because the Lab employee is currently a union position, they do not work weekends, when the bulk of these requests are received.

Councillor Lima warned against the Council's appetite to not want to support step increase for newly hired positions, that it has become a level of contention between the Administration and the Council.

Councillor Morad expressed her concern that the department currently has twenty-one (21) positions and only fifteen (15) are filled and that by combining positions and increasing step/grades, this will also increase benefits which in the end would cost the city more than just the step salaries. She stated that the city is currently down by \$15 million in revenue and felt that this was not the correct time to create three new positions with such high steps. Both Councillors Morad and Carney expressed their concerns in approving this especially when there are so many current employees who have been with the city for years and not compensated properly.

Councillor Dunn asked Mr. Chaplin just how much revenue the department generates, he was told it costs approximately \$1,000,000 to run the department currently, and they generate approximately \$4,000,000 in revenue.

Councillor Gomes asked Ms. Keating, the Personnel Director if applicants would be interviewed at higher steps. She stated that they would not, that when she begins the pre-interview process, she explains that the positions are offered at step one and that if you chose to live out of the city, the salary would be reduced by 10%. However, it is understood that the Administration could approach the Council to increase the step based on the current market value.

On motion by Councillor Dunn and seconded by Councillor Morad, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council to refer the COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDINANCE, Amending the Unit C Schedule, set forth in Chapter 19-7 (c) of the Code of Ordinances, by inserting the title of Director of Public Nursing at pay Grade M-12 to the Ordinance Committee. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 9, Nays 1, with Councillor Morad opposed. (3a)

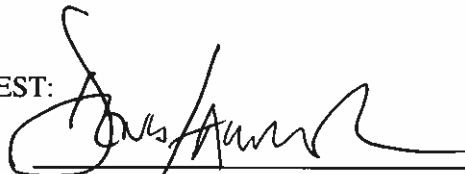
On motion by Councillor Dunn and seconded by Councillor Morad, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council to refer the COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDINANCE, Amending Unit C Schedule, set forth in Chapter 19-7 (c) of the Code of Ordinances, by inserting the title of Principal Health Inspector at pay Grade M-11 to the Ordinance Committee. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 9, Nays 1, with Councillor Morad opposed. (4a)

On motion by Councillor Dunn and seconded by Councillor Morad, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council to refer the COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDINANCE, Amending Unit C Schedule, set forth in Chapter 19-7 (c) of the Code of Ordinances, by inserting the title of Laboratory Director at pay Grade M12 to the Ordinance Committee. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 10, Nays 0. (5a)

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

This meeting adjourned @ 8:04 p.m.

ATTEST:



Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees