

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
DATE: MAY 09, 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; DEREK BAPTISTE (7:05); SHANE BURGO; NAOMI CARNEY; HUGH DUNN; MARIA GIESTA; BRIAN GOMES; LINDA MORAD; RYAN PEREIRA

ABSENT: NO ONE

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Councillor Markey called the Ordinance Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. All Councillors were present, there were no absences.

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Councillor Morad asked that items one (1) and two (2) be taken up together without objection, there were no objections.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Morad, requesting that the Acting Chief Financial Officer immediately supply to the Committee on Finance a listing of the applications received through April 28, 2022, under the Enhanced Façade Improvement Program funded by the ARPA program, said listing shall include the date of application, application amount, business name, address and nature of the building improvement project; and further, that the Chair of the Committee on Finance call a meeting of said Committee prior to May 15, 2022, to review the requested information (To be Referred to the Committee on Finance.) (Ref'd 04/28/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (1)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Morad, requesting, that the Administration amend the Enhanced Façade Improvement Program by immediately suspending the 25% match requirement for all applicants under said program; and further, that this Motion be referred to the Committee on Finance for discussion with representatives of the Administration, the Office of Housing and Community Development, the South Coast Chamber of Commerce and small business owners regarding negative ramifications of the 25% match requirement, which is deterring small business owners from submitting applications for funding under the program (To be Referred to the Committee on Finance and the Administration.) (Referred 04/28/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (2)

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To received and place on file the listing from Interim CFO Michael Gagne, regarding the eleven (11) projects under the Enhanced Façade Improvement Program funded by the ARPA program. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Pereira, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file the Communication received from the Co-CEO Rick Kidder from South Coast Chamber of Commerce. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file the Press Release dated today, 5/9/2022 from the Administration regarding the Expansion of Enhanced Façade Program for Local Businesses. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Morad informed the Committee that she called Patrick Sullivan from the Office of Community Development and asked him not to attend tonight's meeting since she intended to table these two matters. She found the Press Release today very interesting, and she is glad to know the Administration might be listening from time to time but certainly did not listen to suggestions from this Councillor or a couple of her Colleagues; but, in an effort to make it look like the program might work, which she is not sure it will, she is still getting phone calls from people saying that zero match or 5% match is the better number. So, she is requesting to hold these two items for thirty (30) days and at the end of that time get an updated list and see whether there might be other companies that have applied under the revised program and whether some of those companies might be somewhere outside of the historic district downtown. She thinks this is where this program should be targeted.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To table these Motions for forty-five (45) days. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Councillor Morad asked if item numbers three (3) and four (4) could be taken up together, without objection. There were no objections.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a REPORT, Committee on Finance, recommending to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER, for the Community Preservation Act FY22 Funding Recommendations for fifteen (15) Projects totaling \$1,412,500.00 (Ref'd 04/12/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (3, 3a)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Janine da Silva, Chair, Community Preservation Committee, submitting for reconsideration of the City Council, the CPA Project: New Bedford Whaling Museum Bourne Masonry Repair (Ref'd 04/28/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (4)

Janine da Silva, Community Preservation Committee Chairperson and Jessica Bailey, Community Preservation Act Coordinator were both present to answer any questions from the Committee.

Councillor Morad does not want to use taxpayer money to pay for the design of the signs, not for the creation or the implementation for our city parks and beaches. Generally, when you go to a sign company, they build in the cost for the design to the sign project. She is not sure why we need to hire someone to design the signs and find money to fund the creation of the signs and then have Commissioner Ponte to implement them in the parks. So, she is asking to remove the \$24,000 because it is not a good use of taxpayer money, and it might spur the creation and implementation of these signs in 2022 in our parks and beaches versus waiting another one or two seasons.

Councillor Pereira asked Mary Rapoza from Parks and Recreation, if they collected quotes, were there any from local companies. She informed him that they had several companies participating and there were some local companies.

Councillor Abreu asked Ms. Rapoza if they thought about using students from Voc Tech's Graphic Design class and she responded that they did think about it but school is almost out and they would have to wait until next year. They want the signs now.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Pereira, the Committee VOTED: To remove item two (2) City Wide Signage for Parks for \$24,000 from the Community Preservation Act FY22 Funding Recommendations. This motion FAILED on a Roll Call Vote of Yea 5, Nays 6, with Councillors Carney, Giesta, Gomes, Morad and Pereira in favor.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Burgo, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file the Communication from the CPA on the Commitment to our Community. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Dunn and seconded by Councillor Pereira, the Committee VOTED: To restore CPA Project, New Bedford Whaling Museum Bourne Masonry Repair for \$187,500. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 7, Nays 4, with Councillors Giesta, Gomes, Morad and Pereira opposed.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Lima, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council Amend the Order for Community Preservation Act FY22 Projects funding amount from \$1,412,500 to \$1,600,000. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 9, Nays 2, with Councillors Morad and Pereira opposed.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting a LOAN ORDER, in the amount of \$119,000,000, to finance the costs of projects outlined in the City's Long Term CSO Control and Integrated Capital Improvements Plan including capital planning, wastewater treatment plan improvements, wastewater collection system improvements, pumping station improvements, wastewater collection systems investigations, CSO abatements, and general system improvements (Ref'd 04/12/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (5, 5a)

Michael Gagne, Interim Chief Financial Officer, was present and addressed the Committee. He gave the Committee an overview of the Loan Order and answered questions.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the LOAN ORDER, in the amount of \$119,000,000, to finance the costs of projects outlined in the City's Long Term CSO Control and Integrated Capital Improvements Plan including capital planning, wastewater treatment plan improvements, wastewater collection systems improvements, pumping station improvements, wastewater collection systems investigations, CSO abatements, and general system improvements. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, resubmitting an ORDER, as amended, detailing a series of proposed sewer rate increases, with the first one taking effect on July 01, 2022, the first day of Fiscal Year 2023, subsequent rate increases would take effect on the first day of the four subsequent Fiscal Years – 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027 (Ref'd 04/12/2022) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Burgo. (6, 6a)

Michael Gagne, Interim Chief Financial Officer, was present and addressed the Committee. He gave the Committee an overview of the Order for the proposed sewer rate increases. He also gave the Committee more information on the multi-year subsequent rate increases.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council refer the Order for the proposed sewer rate increases to the Quasi Committee of the Whole that's considering the annual fiscal year budget. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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

This meeting adjourned @ 8:20 p.m.

ATTEST:



Donna M. Britto
Assistant Clerk of Committees