

## FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

3-2-21 AT 5 PM

ZOOM

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Figy at 5 PM. In attendance were Committee members Councilor Bridget Matthews-Kane and Councilor Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. Also, in attendance were Peter Carrier of the media, Christopher Willenborg, Director of the Westfield Municipal Airport and Francis Cain, Acting Director of the Department of Public Works and Water.

Chairman Figy began the meeting by asking if anyone from the public who would like to speak to during public participation. There was no one from the public in attendance.

Councilor Sullivan made a motion to accept the minutes of the 2-2-21 Finance Committee meeting. Councilor Matthews-Kane seconded the motion which passed 3-0. Voting yes were Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan.

Councilor Sullivan made a motion to APPROVE accepting a grant in the amount of \$4,700,000.00 to the Westfield Barnes Regional Airport from Mass Development for the rehabilitation of taxiway Sierra/Apron Project. Motion was seconded by Matthews-Kane.

Director of the Airport, Christopher Willenborg stressed the importance of the ongoing project which is part of the five year capital improvement project. He addressed the project safety concerns where the FAA has been working out for years. The taxiway serves both the Air National Guard's missions and civilian operations at Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport. There is no local share and is 100% funded via both Federal and State grants. The project is slated to being sometime in April. The pre-bid meeting was already conducted. Councilor Sullivan asked if this was the same project that began several years ago. Director Willenborg confirmed that the project began 15 years ago and almost \$20,000,000 has been given to the Security Strategy Taskforce Program. Councilor Sullivan asked if there will be certain contractors will be restricted from winning a bid for this particular project. The Director stated that he will confer with the Law Department and the procurement officer. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if all projects taking place will have environmental impacts and if so, how will they be addressed. Director Willenborg said all projects must abide by EPA regulations and Conservation laws. MEPA approved this project. Proper drainage will be installed and water runoff must be treated. Also, they are taking great care to minimize the environmental impact that may occur to the endangered bird species that have natural habitats at the Airport during and after the project. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if there will be an increase in municipal revenue after the completion of the project. Director Willenborg stated yes and there already has been an increase even during the pandemic, especially with athletic based private charters. Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if there will be any foreseeable future funding commitments required from the city. Director Willenborg stated that

as long as we remain on task and on budget, does not foresee any future expenses that the city will incur for this project. If there are changes to the proposed project all contractors will convene to discuss the best way to move forward without having to go over budget. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting YES.

Councilor Matthews-Kane made a motion, seconded by Councilor Sullivan, to ACCEPT the grant monies in the amount of \$200,000.00 from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Agency to reimburse the City for the costs of designing and permitting PFAS treatment projects for wells 1, 2, 7 and 8. Acting Director Cain stated that with the assistance of Heather Stayton and Tighe & Bond, an application was submitted to win the grant. Councilor Sullivan asked if there are any conditions attached to this grant. Acting Director said there are no conditions attached and monies will only be used for the filtration and treatment systems. Councilor Sullivan asked if by accepting this grant, will it prevent the city from applying for future grants to assist in the ongoing PFAS treatment projects for these wells. Acting Director Cain stated that it will not prevent the city from receiving future monies. Chairman Figy asked in the monies will go into the undesignated account. Acting Director Cain stated that he will get back to the committee members with a definitive answer. Councilor Figy thanked Heather Stayton and Tighe & Bond for writing the grant proposal that awarded the city monies for these projects. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting yes.

Councilor Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Councilor Kane, to APPROVE to transfer \$10,100.00 from the full-time hourly account to the purchase of services account for vehicle repair.

Director Willenborg state that it was a busy winter and the old snow removal equipment for the Airport was in need of repairs which are very costly especially for replacement parts and service. He explained that they must abide by FAA safety standards and it is a requirement to remove snow/ice and to maintain clear taxiways. Director Willenborg there was money available in the FT hourly account due to an employee being out on maternity leave. There were no questions from the committee members. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting yes.

A motion was made to TABLE the \$700,000 by Councilor Matthews-Kane and was seconded by Sullivan.

Discussion was had to remove from the table an appropriation of \$700,000. From Free Cash to Department of Public Works, Water Division Construction account. Chair Figy asked if it would be wise to maintain the monies for the purpose of a safety net just in case the bond was not approved by the City Council. Councilor Sullivan suggested to leave it in committee just in case the project incurs future costs. Councilor Matthews-Kane concurred with Councilor Sullivan's suggestion and stated that the upgrade of infrastructure of Western Avenue is partly in her Ward and would like to make the right decision. Councilor Sullivan did state that even if the City Council did not approve of the Bond Authorization that there is a 21 day appeal process to protect the City financially. The motion was passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting yes.

Councilor Matthews-Kane made a motion to adjourn which Councilor Sullivan seconded. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting yes.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Marisa Colon, Scribe of the Finance Committee