

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
5-18-21 AT 5 PM
ZOOM



The meeting was called to order by Chairman Figy at 5 PM. Chairman Figy called for a recess to allow more time for all Finance Committee members to attend. Chairman Figy reconvened the meeting at 5:05 PM. In attendance were Committee members Councilor Ralph Figy, Councilor Bridget Matthews-Kane and Councilor Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. Also, in attendance were Health Director Joe Rouse, City Purchaser Tammy Tefft, Animal Control Operations Manager Margaret Terkelsen, City Assessor Robin Johnson, Westfield Police Chief Lawrence Valliere, Westfield Police Captain Jerome Pitoniak, It Support Staff Peter Cowles and Scribe of the Finance Committee Marisa Colon.

Councilor Matthews-Kane made a motion, seconded by Councilor Sullivan, to APPROVE the acceptance of Finance Committee minutes from May 3, 2021. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane, and Sullivan voting YES.

Chairman Figy asked if anyone from the public would like to speak during public participation. City Assessor Robin Johnson of 75 Highland Avenue of Westfield, MA spoke on the need for the city to purchase a new vehicle for the Assessor's office. She stated that currently there is only one vehicle for the 3 employees to use and in order to be able to assess new growth in the city, they really need to purchase this affordable vehicle.

Councilor Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Councilor Matthews-Kane, to APPROVE an appropriation of \$30,300.15 from Free Cash for the first year appropriation of a five year lease for the following vehicles: \$10,121.46, Animal Control, Equipment Account; \$6,018.83 Assessors, Equipment Vehicles Account; \$6,018.83 Health, Equipment Vehicles Account; and \$8,141.03 Police, Equipment Vehicles Account.

Westfield City Purchaser Tammy Tefft stated that the Assessor's Office has been requesting a vehicle for at least 4 years and as City Assessor Robin Johnson, stated earlier, they are in desperate need of a vehicle. The Health Department entered into a traditional 3 year lease where the vehicle is returned to the dealership. The dealership was no longer offering traditional leases, therefore, they opted for the lease to finance on both vehicles. Tammy stated that Animal Control Operations Manager, Margaret Terkelsen, went to the Mayor approximately 4 months ago requesting a new vehicle. Margaret worked with the Police Department on getting a vehicle that would not only be safe for her and her equipment but also for the animals she transports on a daily basis. Tammy commended the Police Department for researching alternative ways for securing their Administrator vehicles prior to choosing the leasing option. She stated that she worked with the city's leasing agent to secure the five year

leases. The prices listed are for the first year of the lease and as for the second year, the price decreases slightly because the city does not have to pay for the escrow fee. She explained that the city pays into it, then the financing company pays the whole vehicle payments into the account, and the city earns the interest. At the end of the lease, if there is any interest earned, the city will receive a check for the left over amount. Tammy further explained that other departments have used this option before and a few have actually made the city money. The Health and Assessor's office vehicles are about four to five months lead time and Police Department secured a vehicle on the lot. Councilor Sullivan asked if the next lease payments and the subsequent ones will appear in the Mayor's budget as an operational budget line item and not as a free cash appropriation. Tammy replied yes and explained that she worked with City Auditor Vicky Moro to make sure that each department's budgets were updated to include the aforementioned dollar amounts. Director of the Health Department, Joe Rouse, explained that the prior to Covid, the nurses from the Health Department used the vehicle to travel out of town, mostly to a clinic in Springfield, to pick up medications for their patients who have active TB or other communicable diseases. The employees of the Health Department mostly drive SUV's therefore the mileage reimbursement was not a frugal option and could be more of a liability if their personal vehicles were damaged during working hours. He stated for those reasons, he is looking into purchasing a hybrid vehicle that is more fuel efficient. Animal Control Operations Manager, Margaret Terkelsen, stated that they currently have two Ford Transits, one has 92,000 miles and broke down while she was working by herself the other day; it was towed to Westfield Auto. She is looking to purchase a pick-up truck with a cab on the back versus another van. She explained that with a truck, it is easier to sanitize in between and after animals, alive or deceased, have been transported. Also, in a hoarding case where they need to transport many animals in multiple carriers there is more space in the back of a pick-up truck versus a van. Councilor Figy asked if there will be enhanced lighting placed on the new vehicle for safety. Margaret replied yes; there will be LED flashers on the vehicle so when picking up animals on the roadways, they can be used for safety. Westfield Police Chief Lawrence Valliere explained that they are looking to purchase one admin vehicle which has been neglected for several years. The administrators' vehicles do not get a lot of mileage every year, unlike the marked vehicles which need to be replaced on a regular basis. Captain Jerome Pitoniak further explained that the vehicle they are replacing is a 2009 Ford Taurus which has approximately 86,000 miles. The issue with the vehicle is not the years or mileage, it is the rust on the body and the wear and tear in the transmission. The new vehicle will be a Detective Bureau car which will be used to travel to necessary trainings and investigations which are typically held out of the city. The Police Department have been trading police vehicles via the city auction where the city makes more money versus selling it back to the dealer. Captain Pitoniak further explained that normally they would pay to fix vehicles by using the money incurred via the towing account but payments for towing have been a lot less due to Covid. Roll Call vote was made and 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 a grant in the amount of \$180,495.00 from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental

Protection Agency to the Public Works Department for round two of the PFAS Design Grant Opportunity to further reimburse the city of PFAS treatment for Wells 1, 2, 7, & 8.

Councilor Matthews-Kane asked if there is a match required of the city. Councilor Figy answered there is no match required. Also, he noted that the first grant was for approximately \$200,000 for round 1 and Westfield is the only city to receive financing out of rounds one and two. Councilor Sullivan asked, this does not preclude any other recovery actions that we are taking for additional costs, correct? Councilor Figy, stated, correct. Roll Call vote was made and motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting YES.

Councilor Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Councilor Matthews-Kane, to ACCEPT a donation of miscellaneous furniture donated by Custom Component Sales, LLC.

City Purchaser Tammy Tefft stated that the gentleman who owned the entity is retiring. He had quite a few pieces of furniture to donate, such as desks, filing cabinets, tables and chairs and he reached out to the Mayor and the Purchasing Departments to offer these items. Tammy stated she reached out to the City's Department Heads to see if anyone would be interested and there were several departments who accepted these donations. Tammy offered her thanks and appreciation to the individual for his donations on behalf of the departments who accepted the office furniture. Roll Call vote was made and motion passed 3-0 with Councilors Figy, Matthews-Kane and Sullivan voting YES.

Councilor Figy introduced the next item on the agenda, the upcoming Budget Committee meetings of the whole. He stated that the City Council will be having a Special Meeting on May 27th at 6 pm where the Mayor will present the budget to the Council and then it will be referred to the Finance Committee. Two weeks after that, on June 10th at 6 pm, there will be a Public Hearing. The following Monday, will begin the Committee as a whole budget meetings. Councilor Figy asked the other Finance Committee members, how long everyone would like to meet each night. Councilor Sullivan stated that he is not overly concerned with the length of the meetings but more concerned with departments with larger budgets being scheduled on the same night. Councilor Figy agreed and stated that it would be best to schedule one larger budget each night and then fill in with the smaller ones. Councilor Matthews-Kane agreed with both Figy and Sullivan and stated that two to three hours was a reasonable amount of time. The Finance Committee members agreed with a 6 PM start time for their budget meetings. Councilor Figy stated that the budget meetings for the Finance Committee as a whole will be held on June 14, 15 and 16th at 6 pm and on June 17th at 5:30 PM will be designated for the Westfield Public Schools' budget, before the City Council's regularly scheduled meeting. He noted that they may need to continue meetings to June 21st and 22nd. This means that on June 24th would be the Reconciliation Budget meeting as well as a Special City Council meeting to approve the budget. Councilor Sullivan asked if that would allow the City Clerk enough time for publication notices. Councilor Figy answered yes and he will confirm. Councilor Sullivan asked if these will be zoom meetings or will the council be meeting in person (referencing Governor Baker's recent announcements of lifting Covid-19/State Emergency restrictions). Councilor Figy stated that he has reserved zoom time for all of the

aforementioned dates and times, but things may change depending on Governor Baker's orders. He stated that if they meet in person in the Council Chambers, the meeting will still be publicly broadcasted. Councilor Matthews-Kane stated that she appreciates that the public hearings will be done earlier than last year. Councilor Figy commented that last year, during the pandemic, the City Council was waiting on numbers from the State, which never came, therefore the City's budget was done late without those figures. Councilor Figy asked if there was anything else anyone would like to discuss or any unforeseen items that may have been missed. Hearing none, Councilor Figy set the next Finance Committee meeting for Tuesday, June 1st at 5 PM, with all members in agreement.

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 5:29 PM

Respectfully submitted
Marisa Colon, Scribe of the Finance Committee