

Budget & Finance Standing Committee
Thursday, August 5, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.
REMOTE MEETING
-Minutes-

Present: Chair, Councilor Melissa Cox; Vice Chair, Councilor Scott Memhard; Councilor John McCarthy

Other Councilors Present: Councilor Val Gilman

Also Present: Auditor, Kenny Costa; CFO, John Dunn; Planning Director, Gregg Cademartori; Police Lieutenant, Jeremiah Nicastro; Clerk of Committees, Sherry Karvelas

This meeting was conducted remotely through ZOOM. All votes were by ROLL CALL.

Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Chairperson Cox announced, “In the interest of government transparency with regards to deliberations and decisions made by the City Council and according to Open Meeting Law since this meeting was posted as a Zoom meeting, this meeting is recorded by audio and video and will be conducted by remote participation. Additionally, all votes taken by the City Council during this and future remote meetings will be by roll call vote.”

1. Memorandum from Planning Director requesting acceptance of a Climate Action & Resilience Plan (CARP) – MVP Action Grant

Summary of Discussion: **Planning Director, Gregg Cademartori** stated discussions were held in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) regarding moving forward with a project to develop reduction strategies for carbon emissions. He stated the project had been funded through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant program (MVP Grant) for this fiscal year, but would be a partnership with MAPC staff and staff from Community Development and the Clean Energy Commission to conduct this project over the next year with a local match of staff time and a cash match from the Energy Stabilization Fund. He further stated that it would be a good learning experience for the general public as well in terms of actions the public could take to be part of solutions.

Councilor McCarthy asked if any part of this project was education. The **Planning Director** stated a big part of the project was outreach. He stated there were a number of organizations already in place, and growing, including the Cape Ann Climate Coalition. The **Members of the B&F Committee** thanked the **Planning Director** for his efforts on this matter. The **Planning Director** wished to thank **Staff Planner, Gemma Wilkins**, who put this grant together.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget and Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept under MGL c. 44, §53A, a state grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program Grant in the amount of \$69,890 to complete the project entitled “Gloucester Climate Action and Resilience Plan” (CARP). The purpose of this grant is to conduct an in-depth inventory of the City’s contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and help develop goals, targets and strategies for the community to reduce its impact. The minimum local match is 25% of total project costs using cash or in-kind contributions. The total local match of \$30,705 and 31% will comprise of a cash match of \$19,685, funds of which will

come from the Energy Stabilization Fund 7601; and \$11,020 from staff in-kind hours. The grant period is through June 30, 2022

2. Memorandum from Veterans Services Director requesting the acceptance of donations in the amount of \$330

Summary of Discussion: Members of the B&F Committee thanked the members of the community who donated and also thanked **Adam Curcuru, Veterans Services Director**, for his hard work.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept various cash donations under MGL c. 44, §53A, to support Cape Ann Veterans Services in the amount of \$330.00 from the following members within our community:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Donald and Cynthia Fitzgerald | \$ 50.00 |
| Mary C. Williams | 50.00 |
| David and Bernice Cardillo | 100.00 |
| Robert and Janice Arsenault | 100.00 |
| <u>Natalie and Robert Balzarini</u> | <u>30.00</u> |
| Total | \$330.00 |

3. Memorandum from Police Lieutenant for Community Impact Unit requesting acceptance of car seats from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' 2021 Car Seat Distribution Program with a value of \$7,491.20

Summary of Discussion: Police Lieutenant, **Jeremiah Nicastro** of the Community Impact Unit stated he applied for a grant through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' 2021 Car Seat Distribution Program. He explained that the grant provided 91 car seats of varying levels to be distributed as free car seats for families in need. He stated the installation of the car seats would also be provided by a trained technician, if needed. He added that the City had two trained technicians, Officer Liacos and Officer Adelfio, who both underwent a comprehensive training class.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept under MGL Ch. 44, §53A-½, a gift of tangible goods to the City of Gloucester Police Department, Community Impact Unit, from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' 2021 Car Seat Distribution Program for 91 car seats with a value of \$7,491.20

4. Memorandum and Supplemental Appropriation-Budgetary Request (#2022-SA-2) from the CFO in the amount of \$75,000

Summary of Discussion: CFO, **John Dunn** stated there was a recognition that secondary power should be offered to the Council on Aging building as it served as a shelter in both summer and winter. He stated a cost estimate for approximately \$75,000 provided for an emergency generator and installation, which would be funded through the Building Maintenance Stabilization Fund.

Councilor McCarthy asked where the generator would be installed as the building was in a flood plain. The **CFO** stated he was unsure of the location, but recognized the building was in the flood plain. **Councilor McCarthy** stated he would reach out to the **DPW Director** to find out the location.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council approve Supplemental Appropriation 2022-SA-2 in the amount of \$75,000 (Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars) from the Building Maintenance Stabilization Fund-Undesignated Fund Balance, Account #7700-359000 to the Building Maintenance Stabilization Fund - Council on Aging Emergency Generator – Building Improvements, Account #770011-582003 to install a natural gas-fired emergency generator at the Rose Baker Senior Center

5. Memorandum and Supplemental Appropriation-Budgetary Request (#2022-SA-3) from the CFO in the amount of \$88,049

Summary of Discussion: CFO, John Dunn stated this was a two-part request, with \$58,049 being requested for improvements to the Fisherman’s Memorial. He stated most of the work would be granite work, including replacing old granite with new granite, new curb granite, granite benches and also some bronze planters, along with possible ADA compliance work, if needed. Councilor Cox asked why the repairs were being funded through the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund. The CFO stated this would be a one-time purchase so this fund was an appropriate mechanism for funding these types of projects.

The CFO stated the second part of this request was for \$30,000 in design work and ADA accessibility work for the relocation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial that was currently located in the back of the high school. He stated the relocation would be to the Boulevard near the tennis courts and ballfield. He further stated that there was a desire on the part of the Vietnam Veterans to do some fundraising to help with this project. Councilor Cox stated she fully supported moving this memorial to make it more accessible to the public. She further added that she appreciated any fundraising efforts and would prefer those fundraising monies go towards maintenance and flowers and that the City cover any additional costs in moving the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Councilors Memhard and McCarthy concurred. Members of the B&F Committee recognized and thanked the members of the public who attended the meeting in support of this matter.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council approve Supplemental Appropriation 2022-SA-3 in the amount of \$88,049 (Eighty-Eight Thousand Forty-Nine Dollars) from Capital Project Stabilization Fund-Undesignated Fund Balance, Account #7600-359000 to the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund – DPW - Boulevard/Stage Fort Park - Site Improvements, Account #760029-584000 for improvements at Fisherman’s Memorial and Stage Fort Park, and design work for the Vietnam War Memorial relocation

6. Memorandum from City Auditor regarding accounts having expenditures which exceed their authorization & Auditors Report and other related business

Summary of Discussion: There were no items under this heading for the Committee’s consideration.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Councilor McCarthy stated Councilor Memhard had asked for an update regarding costs thus far in the cupcake investigation and thanked the CFO for providing that information. Councilor McCarthy stated he had further questions including:

- Who is directing the investigation?
- Who is authorizing the spending?
- What authority are elected officials being investigated under? He added that elected officials were not considered employees, except by the IRS. He read the following definition regarding

elected officials: Elected officials are considered responsible to the public, which have the power to vote them out of office. He stated this incident should be public, as it was part of a recording that happened at a public meeting.

- Where is the report? He added this incident started in the beginning of March and the City had already paid approximately \$13,500 in invoices.

Councilor McCarthy again asked for an update and stated taxpayers' money was being used to fund this investigation. He stated the B&F Committee was charged with authorizing the dollars to be spent, which, he stated, he took very seriously. He again questioned why the City Council did not have a report in hand at this point and stated the City Council had a right to this report and requested immediate further action to his questions.

Councilor Cox stated she had spoken to the **Human Resources Director** who informed **Councilor Cox** that she had been in contact with the investigator who did tell her that the report would be completed by the end of July. **Councilor Cox** added that there would be another invoice for July's work. **Councilor Cox** asked the **CFO** to hold off payment on any further invoices until the report was delivered, but stated she realized she did not have the authority to request this.

Councilor Memhard stated he agreed with both **Councilors Cox** and **McCarthy**. **Councilor Memhard** stated he had questions as to how the investigation was being managed and what the defined scope of responsibility was, as he believed the scope was more widely ranging than had been originally expected or anticipated. **Councilor Memhard** clarified his questions by stating the following:

- How is the scope of the investigation and the work being managed?
- What is the anticipated outcome or consequence of the investigation?
- How is the City benefiting from this process?
- What is the end result?

Councilor Memhard added these questions needed to be answered for the benefit of the City's taxpayers. The **CFO, John Dunn** stated he would endeavor to address the issues with the Mayor's office and Human Resources.

Councilor Cox asked the **CFO** what accounts had been used to pay the two invoices. The **CFO** stated he presumed the funds came out of HR or Legal, but would need to confirm. **Councilor McCarthy** also questioned why Administration needed to use an outside firm to investigate, as the City Council had been told that Legal needed another full-time attorney to supplement Personnel. **Councilor Cox** requested **Councilor McCarthy** send an email to the **Clerk of Committees** with a list of questions.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor McCarthy, the Budget and Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Submitted by: Sherry Karvelas, Clerk of Committees

Documents submitted at the meeting: None.

Meeting Recording: <http://gloucester-ma.gov/1097/Past-Remote-Public-Meetings>