

Budget & Finance Committee
Thursday, October 17, 2019 – 5:30 p.m.
1st Fl. Council Conference Room – City Hall
-Minutes-

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

Absent: Councilor Hecht

Also Present: Kenny Costa; Jim Destino; Fire Chief Eric Smith

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. Matters were taken out of order.

1. Memorandum, Grant Application & Checklist from the Fire Chief re: request acceptance of FEMA FY18 Assistance to Firefighter Grant in the amount of \$424,055

Chief Eric Smith conveyed the following information: The FY18 FEMA grant is \$424,054.54 and the grant match is 10% at \$42,405.46. This grant will focus solely on training, and will pay for personnel costs for overtime backfill and to pay for instructors from the Fire Academy. Whatever classes they can't fill they'll open up to departments in the region which is part of the scope of the grant. They have to pay for the whole class regardless, he noted. Once the three primary scoped goals of the grant, they can extend it to other officer courses, he advised. There is motor/pump operator class, a six-day, 50+ hour program that will bring all GFD firefighters up to the NFPA standards with an advanced driver course which takes about one day; a two-day aerial operator course focusing strictly on operating aerial equipment and positioning vehicles and ladders. That also comes with a pro-board certification. This will get the department beyond minimum OSHA minimum standards, he added, and suggested why FEMA awarded the funding as the state moved to OSHA mandates.

Responding to questions by **Councilors Memhard** and **Cox**, **Chief Smith** conveyed they'll look to book the Friend Room at the Library, but suggested another location was possible for classroom training. As to the driving portion of the training, it will take place on city streets; pump work will likely be done at either at Stage Fort Park or at other locations under the direction of the DPW. It is hoped to get some training done before the weather turns and then take it back up in April of 2020. Although the end date of the grant is September 2, 2020, **Chief Smith** assured they can ask for an extension and suggested it wouldn't be an issue if needed, although the grantor prefers that the grant conclude by September 2020. Should this grant be accepted, it would put the department at about \$1.8 million total for grants monies, but not all of it was from FEMA, he pointed out.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Cox, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Hecht) absent, to recommend that the City Council accept under MGL c. 44, §53A a FY18 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) in the amount of \$424,054.54. The purpose of this grant is to fund training of all Fire Department firefighters to the NFPA level on pump operations, aerial operations and emergency vehicle operations with a 10% local match funded by the City of Gloucester. The grant period is from September 3, 2019 through September 2, 2020.

Councilor Memhard commented that funding this grant match funding from the General Stabilization Fund, is a result of sound city financial policy, noting there's \$6,338,000 remaining in the General Stabilization Fund.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Cox, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Hecht) absent, to recommend that the City Council approve 2020-SA-6 or \$42,405.46 (Forty Two Thousand Four Hundred Five Dollars Forty Six Cents) from Account #75005-596001, General Stabilization Fund, Transfers to General Fund to Account #0122051-513011, General Fund, Fire Overtime-Training Equipment for the purpose of funding a 10% local match for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for the purpose of funding Fire Department training to the NFPA level on pump operations, aerial operations and emergency vehicle operations.

2. Memorandum from City Auditor re: request acceptance of a 2003 Stewart Stevenson High Water Truck under the Federal Surplus Program, with an estimated value of \$30,000

Councilor Cox conveyed she understood that the city doesn't actually own this truck. **Kenny Costa**, City Auditor, advised although this vehicle will be with the city for a finite time (about five years), the Council needs to vote to accept the estimated value for the duration of time it is used by the city. It is for financial reporting purposes only, and he briefly touched on the accounting reasoning behind the action to be taken by the Council.

Chief Smith advised that this vehicle is currently outside at the West Gloucester Fire Station, assuring it was always kept outside, which is okay, although not preferred. For the events when the vehicle is needed, it will be repositioned at headquarters, he noted. The truck can operate in 3+ feet of water routinely. It is an option for the city to put a truck in harm's way elevated enough to keep first responders and victims safe.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Cox, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Hecht) absent, to recommend that the City Council accept under MGL c. 44, § 53A-1/2, a gift of tangible goods to the City of Gloucester Fire Department from state Department of Conservation (DCR) Essex County Fire Warden for a 2003 Stewart Stevenson High Water Truck under the Federal Surplus Program with an estimated value of \$30,000.

3. Memorandum from City Auditor re: City's FY18 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) award

Mr. Costa reviewed briefly the city's Independent Auditors' Report on the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018 successfully qualified for the national GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. He conveyed this was the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, saying it represents a significant accomplishment. This is two years in a row, and a great achievement for the city.

A motion was made, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana C. Jorgensson

Clerk of Committees

DOCUMENTS/ITEMS SUBMITTED AT MEETING: None.