

Budget & Finance Standing Committee
Thursday, October 22, 2020 – 5:30 p.m.
REMOTE MEETING
-Minutes-

Present: Chair, Councilor Melissa Cox; Vice Chair, Councilor Scott Memhard, Councilor John McCarthy; Councilor Val Gilman; Councilor Jen Holmgren; Councilor James O’Hara;

Also Present: Mayor, Sefatia Romeo Theken; Acting CAO, Vanessa Krawczyk; City Clerk, Joanne M. Senos; Fire Chief, Eric Smith; Police Chief, Ed Conley; Auditor, Kenny Costa; Grants Administrator, Jaimie Corliss; Community Development Director, Jill Cahill; Planning Director, Gregg Cademartori; CFO, John Dunn; Auditor, Kenny Costa; Health Department Regional Prevention Director, Amy Epstein

Absent: None.

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

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

There was a quorum of the City Council.

Councilor O’Hara left the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Chairperson Cox announced, “This meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state open meeting law. Consistent with the Governor’s orders, suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law and banning gatherings of more than 25 people, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation. The public may not physically attend this meeting, but every effort will be made to allow the public to view and listen to the meeting in real time. Persons who wish to do so are invited to view the meeting and you have the information that was on the posting. If you are calling in on a phone, you can press *9 to request to speak. If you are watching on a computer or a device, there is a raised hand button that you can tap or press to request to speak. Please use either these options to be recognized to speak.”

1. Memorandum from Grants Administrator re: request to accept Affordable Housing Trust’s recommendation to fund \$200,000 to the YMCA of the North Shore for an affordable housing development project at Middle Street #71 (Cont. from 10/8/20)

Summary of Discussion: Chairman of the Affordable Housing Trust Michael Luster, Affirmative Investments Vice President Tara Mizrahi, and YMCA of the North Shore CEO Chris Lovasco were all in attendance at tonight’s meeting.

Chairperson Cox informed the City Councilors present that **Mr. Lovasco** had provided a paper copy set of plans for this project located in the **City Clerk’s** office if anyone was interested in viewing them. She announced that the matter before them on tonight’s agenda was for funding only, and encouraged anyone with questions regarding the building or its composition to attend the Zoning Board of Appeals Zoom meeting scheduled for 7:00 p.m. that evening.

She repeated that when this matter originally came before the Budget & Finance Committee on October 8, 2020, one of the questions she had asked was whether the entire Affordable Housing Trust account

would be depleted. The original request was for \$250,000, but was reduced to \$200,000 because that was closer to the amount available in the account. She stated she believed that this project warranted the requested funding, and explained that **Auditor Kenny Costa** believed that the earned monthly revenue would generate enough by the time the project needed to receive the funding. She stated that without **Mr. Costa's** objection, she was going to adjust the motion to state that up to \$200,000 would be appropriated to the project.

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 appropriate up to \$200,000 (Two Hundred Thousand Dollars) for an affordable housing project as recommended by the Affordable Housing Trust Committee for a YMCA of the North Shore-owned affordable housing development project, located at 71 Middle Street in Gloucester from Fund #8217 Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The appropriation will support the full renovation of affordable housing units for seniors. The units shall continue to carry a state affordable housing restriction in perpetuity and giving preference to the fullest extent allowed by law to residents of Gloucester.

Summary of Discussion: **Councilor McCarthy** shared that he obviously supported this, and thought it was great that this project was before them, and that the committee could show their support so the applicant can continue their efforts to fund this project. **Councilor Memhard** agreed, and stated that it was wonderful that it was moving ahead so promptly. **Chairperson Cox** thanked **Mr. Lovasco** for taking the time to meet with her to discuss the project.

The following item was taken out of order:

7. Memorandum from Community Development Director re. Community Preservation Committee off-cycle funding recommendation of \$80,000 to support the Stage Fort Park Advisory Committee's landscape construction design project.

Summary of Discussion: **Community Preservation Committee Co-Chair Catherine Schlichte** explained that the committee heard an application from the Stage Fort Park Advisory Group, which is supported by **Department of Public Works Director Mike Hale**, for a design study for the Lucy Davis Pathway. The \$80,000 was recommended by the CPC for a design study so that an ADA-accessible pathway can be created that will lead to the cannons and to the Stage Fort Park Visitor Center Building since that was the contract bid amount submitted by the Beta Design Groups. However, **Auditor Kenny Costa** informed the CPC that the total amount is not available in the Open Space account, so the CPC requested that the Budget & Finance Committee modify their requested recommendation to \$74,500 since that is the amount currently available. **Mr. Costa** explained that the other \$5,500 could be provided by the Stage Fort Park Revolving Fund. **Ms. Schlichte** explained that it is considered off-cycle because of the circumstances and timing. She expressed hope that the design could be completed, and then there would be another round of funding from the regular cycle for the actual pathway itself to be constructed in order for the project to be finished by Gloucester's 400th Anniversary.

Stage Fort Park Advisory Committee members David Benjamin and **David Dow** were also in attendance. **David Benjamin** stated that since the goal was to have this project finished in time for the Gloucester 400, it is important to keep it moving forward. It was also clarified that the design plan will include renovations to the Fort area as well.

Councilor McCarthy asked if the Stage Fort Park Advisory Committee intended to begin conducting Zoom meetings since it appeared to be a lengthy project. It was discovered that the **City Clerk's** office

had informed them that under city regulations, the committee was not currently allowed to hold even remote meetings, although they have participated in the CPC meetings that have been held.

Community Development Director Jill Cahill explained that she had worked with the **Mayor's** office regarding this matter, and a memo from the **Mayor's** office should be released soon that stated that the City is in the process of getting all of the boards to begin meeting via Zoom since there are licenses required, and staff members need to administer the meetings. Committee chairs will be asked to submit an email to provide a committee agenda so the order that the meetings occur in can be prioritized to prevent them from being over-booked.

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 appropriate up to \$74,500 (Seventy Four Thousand Five Hundred) from the Community Preservation Act funds, as recommended by the Community Preservation Committee to provide off-cycle funding for the purpose of the Stage Fort Park Advisory Committee and the Gloucester Public Works Department to support the landscape construction design project. The appropriation will be allocated to the Open Space and Recreation category and be funded up to \$74,500 from the Open Space and Recreation Reserves #4150. The project will be tracked in Community Preservation Fund-Open Space and Recreation Capital Projects Fund #5719.

2. Memorandum from the Veterans' Services Director re. request acceptance of donations totaling \$2,100

Acting CAO Vanessa Krawczyk, on behalf of Veteran's Services Director Adam Curcuro, requested that the Budget & Finance Committee accept with gratitude donations to support the efforts of our Office of Veterans Services. She mentioned that the fact that she has accepted so many recently on his behalf speaks to the work that he is doing for the veteran community. **Chairperson Cox** agreed, and expressed excitement that the majority of the agenda at recent committee meetings was grants to be accepted. **Councilor McCarthy** also praised Veterans' Services for the great job they have been doing. Councilor Memhard agreed as well.

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 \$2,100 from the following members and business partners within our community:

Jon and Madith Curley	\$ 100.00
Sgt. David J. Coullard Memorial Fund	<u>2,000.00</u>
	\$2,100

Summary of Discussion: Gloucester Health Department Regional Prevention Director Amy Epstein attended the meeting to accept Agenda Items 3 and 4. She explained that her department was awarded a long-term annual grant from the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services. While the SAPC is focused on primary prevention predominantly for youth, tertiary efforts such as Narcan and other overdose prevention methods are covered under MOAPC to assist individuals currently using drugs, or those in recovery.

The Mass Call Grant is a new grant **Ms. Epstein** stated she is in the process of applying for since SAPC and MOAPC are being rolled into it. However, COVID-19 delayed the release of the Request for Proposal (RFP) document and the necessary paperwork being collected from the DPH, so it was decided that they would automatically refund all the programs with \$75,000 each so that salaries and

fringe will be covered until June 30, 2020, by which time, the determination from the Mass Call 3 should be received. **Chairperson Cox** thanked **Ms. Epstein** for her efforts.

Auditor Kenny Costa explained that confusion was sometimes created as a result of this grant being a joint partnership between the Board of Health and the Gloucester Police department, so there are times where he only worked with the police department because there is separate funding for each department despite the fact that it is all within the same grant.

Ms. Epstein mentioned that Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) may also part of this grant. According to their website, it is a 3-year cooperative agreement that began in September 2019 and focuses on the complex and changing nature of the drug overdose epidemic and highlights the need for an interdisciplinary, comprehensive, and cohesive public health approach. Funds awarded as part of this agreement support state, territorial, county, and city health departments in obtaining high quality, more comprehensive, and timelier data on overdose morbidity and mortality and using those data to inform prevention and response efforts.

3. Memorandum, Grant Application, and Checklist from the Public Health Director re. request acceptance of a 9-month extension on the Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative Grant in the amount of \$75,000

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 c. 44, §53A, a federal grant of an overdose data to action grant from Massachusetts Department of Public Health passed through the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention an amendment of \$75,000 (Seventy-Five Thousand) dollars for the total of \$200,000 (Two Hundred Thousand) dollars in FY21 to amend existing Substance Abuse Prevention Program Grant contract for a new grant award total of \$900,000 (Nine Hundred Thousand) for the purpose of the Gloucester Health Department, partnering with the Gloucester Police Department, to enhance the Community Impact Policing Unit through financial support for a dedicated one full-time equivalent Community Health Navigator to serve as a liaison between health, social services, and the community to facilitate access to services and improve quality and culturally competent service delivery. The grant period is through June 30, 2022. There is no local match for this grant.

4. Memorandum, Grant Application, and Checklist from the Public Health Director regarding request acceptance of a 9-month extension on the Massachusetts Opiate Abuse Prevention Collaborative Grant in the amount of \$75,000.

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 c. 44, §53A, a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration passed through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, a Massachusetts Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative Service Grant, an amendment of \$75,000 (Seventy-five Thousand) for a total of \$100,000 (One Hundred Thousand) in FY21 for a new grant award total of \$1,018,000 (One Million Eighteen Thousand). The purpose of this grant is to address the opioid crisis through a strategic regional approach with the town of Danvers and city of Beverly. The grant period is from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. The local match requirements are in-kind staffing materials and equipment only.

5. Special Budgetary Transfer Request (#2021-SBT-1) from the Fire Department

Summary of Discussion: Fire Chief Eric Smith explained that the matter before the committee tonight was a requested transfer of \$30,000 from the Department Salary Wage line into the Rental Building line in since the project has reached the point in which a repair facility is being pursued. He stated that while it would be ideal for the fire department to be able to build a new fire station, or for the DPW to be able to provide them with a garage space in a city owned property, an interim solution needs to be created.

The fire department has worked with a realtor so that an appropriate lease or rental property location can be found that would allow for fleet vehicle maintenance to be performed in the colder weather so the mechanics are not laying out in the street. When the mechanics are unable to perform maintenance due to these conditions, outside repair agencies need to be utilized. **Chief Smith** explained that money spent to rent a repair facility will result in the savings provided by having the work completed in-house.

The only result of a Request for Proposal (RFP) that has been received in the last couple of months due to limited availability is a property in Kettle Cove. General Counsel Chip Payson and Building Inspector Bill Sanborn have also been involved in the process to insure that the location meets all requirements. **Chief Smith** shared the fact that the fire department has \$6,000 that they were able to allocate in the budget in order to keep that line item open. The total funding requested would provide the cost of annual rent and anticipated start-up costs. He expressed hope to be able to put the funding in place to complete this project, and that the committee will be in agreement that this is a worthy endeavor at this time. The rental contract was set to be extended for up to five years in the event that it was agreed on by all involved parties. He mentioned that the RFP stage of the project will also need to appear before the City Council.

Chairperson Cox stated that she required as much background information as possible to be submitted in a memo along with the Special Budgetary Transfer Request since that was not the case with the two SBTs on tonight's agenda. Councilor Memhard expressed agreement with the statement, and thanked Chairperson Cox for addressing it.

Councilor McCarthy asked how long the lease was for. **Chief Smith** responded that no commitment has been made since the funding needs to be in place before a contract could be created, and the City Council would need to grant permission for an agreement to be committed to. He said that the advertised rent for that building was initially advertised as \$2,200 per month, but could possibly be negotiable. He felt that a 2-3 year lease would be optimal. A 3-year agreement was offered to the fire department, and **Chief Smith** requested that years 4 and 5 be included as options since he does not anticipate a chance in the foreseeable future of a city-owned garage becoming available for use. **Councilor McCarthy** expressed hope that the City would engage in long-term planning so that city-owned buildings can be utilized so the expense of paying rent can be minimized. **Chairperson Cox** agreed.

Acting CAO Vanessa Krawczyk nodded in agreement when **Chairperson Cox** asked if she was comfortable with the funds being transferred that **Ms. Krawczyk** would need to set aside for the fire department in the budget process over the next 4 years.

Chairperson Cox said she was pleased that a building was found within the city that you would keep the members of the fire department safe and provide the structure needed. She thanked Chief Smith for moving forward with the project. And I'm sorry that we can't provide you a fancy new fire department.

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 Special Budgetary Transfer 2021-SBT-1 in the amount of

\$30,000 (Thirty Thousand) from the Fire Salaries Account #0122051-511000 to Fire Department Rentals Account# 0122052-527001, for the purpose of funding rent expenses for a leased repair facility for the Gloucester Fire Department.

6. Special Budgetary Transfer Request (#2021-SBT-2) from the Mayor

Ms. Krawczyk explained that the **Mayor's** office submitted this SBT for city-wide Public Relations services. John Guilfoyle PR currently provided services to the police and fire departments, as well as Health Department crisis communications for COVID-related press releases. The firm reached out to the **Mayor's** office a few months ago with a very appealing proposal for city-wide PR services, so every City department with the exception of the school department would be represented for \$1,999 a month, with additional costs incurred for after-hours during the week, any weekend services that may be provided, or if the City decided to have a video created. It would cost the City less than \$24,000 a year for these services. Up to 12 press releases per month, along with media relations, would be covered for a one-year period with an option to renew for 2 additional one-year periods if it is agreeable to both involved parties. **Ms. Krawczyk** felt that it would be beneficial to the City to have a unified voice on all department press releases, and that it would provide departments who have been unable to effectively communicate information to constituents in the past the ability to do so in the future. She thought it would specifically begin to benefit the DPW and Veteran's Services. She viewed this as an opportunity to examine all of the departments to create a schedule of important milestones each month that the City would like to see promoted. She shared that the money was currently available in the police and fire department line items, so the plan would be to exhaust that funding, and the requested money would be applied to the additional contract if it was decided that the City would upgrade to premier services. She believed that the fire department had \$5,000 available, and the police department had \$4,000, so that would be \$9,000 in addition to the \$20,000 requested in this SBT. She explained that the City has been provided with the potential opportunity to have PSA videos created.

Chairperson Cox asked **Ms. Krawczyk** to elaborate on what potential future expenses may entail, and she responded that would include having a video produced and prepared to be placed on the City's social media. It has been the City's experience up to this point that nights and weekends are used only when it is absolutely necessary. This project would be managed through the **Mayor's** office since they have the final determination in what information is released to the public. **Chairperson Cox** also clarified that the entire \$20,000 requested would be applied to PR-related expenses. Only the police and fire department currently have budgeted public relations line items earmarked. The Health and other departments currently do not, which is why the **Mayor's** office previously appeared before the Council with a request for the creation of COVID crisis communication. The Community Development Department is currently in the last year of their PR contract with Benchmark Strategies for the annual Seafood Expo.

Councilor Memhard stated that the evidence seen of what they can do has been good recently. He said he appreciated the work of John Guilfoyle PR firm, and thought it would be a move in the right direction. **Councilor McCarthy** shared that if he remembered correctly, the police department PR budget ranged between \$6,200-\$6,500. He mentioned that he had worked with the company, and they are top-notch, and take a lot of pressure off of the department heads, so he agreed with **Ms. Krawczyk**. He assumed that the **Mayor's office** was closing in on an RFP status, and asked what the benchmark was before it needed to be out to bid. She answered that it has already been put out to bid, and that was the only response received. **Ms. Krawczyk, Police Chief Conley, and Fire Chief Smith** reviewed the proposal and agreed that the City should move forward with a one-year contract for city-wide services. **Chairperson Cox** agreed with the City presenting a unified voice, and expressed appreciation to **Ms. Krawczyk** for moving the request forward. She asked if the contract would end with the fiscal year on

June 30, 2021, would the rest of this year be partially funded? **Ms. Krawczyk** replied that the firm is okay with starting the contract on October 1st to go into the next fiscal year.

Chairperson Cox figured that at around \$2,000 a month, with the 9 months remaining in this fiscal year, that would total approximately \$18,000. She stated that she knew that **Ms. Krawczyk** would do a great job monitoring the situation and ensuring that any additional expense is for a justifiable reason. She extended several compliments she received today on how City communication with its residents has improved through the use of Code Red, and that it is appreciated. **Chairperson Cox** also shared that she received the most questions regarding DPW than any other departments, and she expressed gratitude that **Ms. Krawczyk** includes those types of updates in her emails, along with her other efforts to keep everyone informed.

Councilor McCarthy verified with **Ms. Krawczyk** that department heads would have direct access to **John Guilfoile** or whoever is on call, which he believed was important since there are times when situations occur where they need to be in direct contact with the firm to control the news media.

Auditor Kenny Costa agreed with **Chairperson Cox** excluding the words “potential future services” from the end of the proposed motion.

Councilor Gilman thought it was a great idea since the DPW does so much for the city and are not always recognized for their great work. She expressed supportive for the project, and suggested that since the annual report is such an important resource, it could benefit from additional promotion in addition to being available on the City website. She also mentioned that 1623 Studios could also be used to promote important information. She thanked **Ms. Krawczyk** for bringing this matter before the committee.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee by ROLL CALL voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council approve Special Budgetary Transfer 2021-SBT-2 in the amount of \$20,000 from Mayor Salaries Account #0112151-511000 to Mayor Purchase of Services Account #0112152-520000, for the purpose of funding Public Relation services.

Chairperson Cox clarified with **Ms. Krawczyk** that the money was being transferred from the Salaries account due to the lag.

7. Memorandum, Grant Application, & Checklist from the Police Chief re. request acceptance of the FY21 State 911 Support & Incentive Grant in the amount of \$102,983.

Police Chief Ed Conley explained that this was a grant received from the state after the GPD was notified the GPD that they qualified for it. The amounts are typically a product of the population of the city and towns who received it. The grant money is allocated 100% to paying a vendor to keep the dispatch center operational with the latest software, and to maintain and take care of any emergencies that occurred in terms of the software programing, and assisted with reimbursing the City for dispatch expenses and dispatch-related training.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee by ROLL CALL voted 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 Public Safety and Security, an FY21 State 911 Department Support & Incentive grant in the amount of \$102,983. The grant period is from October 6, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

8. Memo from City Auditor regarding accounts having expenditures which exceed their authorization & Auditor's Report and other related business.

Summary of Discussion: City Auditor **Kenny Costa** advised there was no report for the Committee for this meeting.

Chairperson Cox welcomed **Councilor Memhard** back, and expressed appreciation to **Councilors Gilman** and **Holmgren** for having attended this evening's meeting.

MOTION: 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 adjourn the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Brianna Komi
Administrative Support
City Clerk's Office