



FITCHBURG CITY CLERK

Jun 21 2023 11:15 am

**City of Fitchburg
Massachusetts 01420**

CITY COUNCIL

Councillors at Large

**Sally H. Cragin
Marcus L. DiNatale
Amy Green
Samantha M. Squailia
Anthony M. Zarrella**

President

Anthony M. Zarrella

Vice President

Andrew J. Van Hazinga

Ward Councillors

**Ward 1 – Bernard J. Schultz III
Ward 2 – Paul R. Beauchemin
Ward 3 – Andrew J. Couture
Ward 4 – Andrew J. Van Hazinga
Ward 5 – Marisa R. Fleming
Ward 6 – Derrick J. Cruz**

**COUNCIL AS A WHOLE COMMITTEE MEETING
Legislative Building, 700 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA
Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.**

The Council as a Whole Committee Meeting was called to order by President Zarrella at 6:04 PM. The meeting opened with a salute to the Flag led by Councilor DiNatale. The clerk called the roll and 11 Councilors were present.

Also present were members of the Finance Team: Calvin Brooks, Auditor, Anne Cervantes, Treasurer, Jacquelyn Cronin, Deputy Auditor, Chris Parquette, Chief Assessor, Natalia Oliver, Chief of Staff, and Hon. Mayor Stephen DiNatale, and City Department Heads.

I. PUBLIC FORUM

Jacquelyn Wehtje, Fitchburg resident, thanked the City Council Members for the proposed budget cuts.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

His Honor the Mayor

Mayor DiNatale provided a written statement to the Councilors,

I wanted to provide some introductory remarks this evening to inform you of some good news. Today, I was approached by my Finance Team, and they have advised that I should plan to offer a Supplemental Budget, increasing revenues by \$800,000.00.

I want to thank the members of my Finance Team, the many Councilors, and Department Heads that have participated in countless meetings and numerous discussions about needs and resources, and about how those needs and resources will be reflected in the City's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget.

In light of this, I would ask you to reconsider your proposed budget cuts. When we presented the FY24 Budget to City Council on May 16th we used an estimate for property tax new growth of \$626,000. Fitchburg's Chief Assessor, Chris Paquette, has informed me that we currently have \$653,000 in new growth for real estate property taxes and estimates about \$240,000 in new growth for personal property taxes for a total of \$893,000 in new growth. This means that there is additional new growth of about \$267,000. Mr. Paquette, I would like to thank you for the great news.

A Supplemental Budget would include an increase in Hotel Excise Tax revenue. In this current budget, Hotel Excise Tax revenue has been estimated to be \$900,000. However, the actual could reach about \$1,400,000, or an additional \$500,000. Landfill Tipping Fees will likely exceed the current estimate of \$2,180,000 as well. State revenue may also increase, given that the Senate Local Aid proposal is higher than the Governor's House I Budget by approximately \$158,169.

City Auditor Brooks has assured me that these revenue increases, combined with others, should be enough to fund the \$800,000 shortfall in the School Budget. Therefore, please expect a Supplemental Budget to be released by my office in September for School Expenses. The City Auditor advises me that the City will know its actual receipts for FY2023 by then, and will be able to raise revenue estimates, and may I add, possibly beyond what I suggested here. I am hopeful this information, and this plan, will allay your fears and lessen the need you may feel to make cuts to this FY24 Budget. I am very concerned that many of the cuts being recommended will have a detrimental effect on City operations, limiting our ability to meet the desire of our residents for efficient municipal services. I respectfully ask that you not make these cuts to the FY24 Budget.

I want to thank City Auditor Calvin Brooks, Chief Assessor Chris Paquette, Treasurer Anne Cervantes, my Chief of Staff Natalia Oliver, and the future City Auditor, Jacquelyn Cronin, for their hard work, their fiscally conservative approach and dedication to our City. Without them, and their confidence in increased revenues, I would not have been able to make this statement. By working together, we can continue to move Fitchburg forward into a brighter and better future.
Thank you.

The Budget and related Orders and Petition to be addressed are as follows:

III. BUDGET ORDERS-FY 2024

148-23. ORDER THAT: there be and hereby is appropriated the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2024
Operating Budget:
General Fund: \$159,090,407 Amended to \$159,048,407
Water Enterprise: \$ 7,800,438
Wastewater Enterprise: \$ 23,475,155
Airport Fund: \$ 1,375,579

Amended Order adopted by vote of 8/3 (Cruz, Squailia, Van Hazinga). 11 members present. Board consists of 11 members.

149-23. ORDER THAT: there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$700,000), same to be credited to the Fiscal Year 2024 TAX LEVY and charged against OVERLAY SURPLUS.

Order adopted by vote of 10/1 (Beauchemin). 11 members present. Board consists of 11 members.

150-23. ORDER THAT: there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of ONE MILLION, THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,300,000), same to be charged against AVAILABLE FUNDS and credited to the Fiscal Year 2024 TAX LEVY in order to reduce the tax rate.

Order adopted by vote of 10/1 (Squailia). 11 members present. Board consists of 11 members.

151-23. ORDER THAT: there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$138,000.00), same to be charged against PARKING METER/GARAGE RECEIPTS and credited to Fiscal Year 2024 accounts as follows:

Treasurer Personal Services \$ 20,000.00
Treasurer Expenses \$118,000.00

Order adopted by vote of 11/0. 11 members present. Board consists of 11 members.

152-23. ORDER THAT: there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$55,000), same to be charged against PEG ACCESS AND CABLE RELATED FUND RECEIPTS and credited to Fiscal Year 2024 accounts as follows:

Information Technology, PEG Expenses \$55,000

Order adopted by vote of unanimous consent 11/0. 11 members present. Board consists of 11 members.

153-23. ORDER THAT: there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$15,000), same to be charged against CEMETERY SALE OF LOTS AND GRAVES and credited to Fiscal Year 2024 accounts as follows:

Cemetery Personal Services \$15,000

154-23. ORDER THAT: there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of SEVEN MILLION, EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND, FOUR HUNDRED THIRTY-EIGHT DOLLARS (\$7,800,438.00) same to be charged against WATER ENTERPRISE FUND RECEIPTS and crediting Fiscal Year 2024 Water Enterprise Fund accounts as follows:

Personal Services \$2,199,873.00
Expenses \$1,995,500.00
Indirect Costs \$1,110,000.00
Debt Service \$1,845,065.00
Capital Expenses \$ 650,000.00

155-23. ORDER THAT: there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of TWENTY-THREE MILLION, FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FIVE DOLLARS (\$23,475,155.00), charging \$13,678,190.00 against WASTEWATER ENTERPRISE FUND RECEIPTS and \$9,796,965.00 against WASTEWATER ENTERPRISE FUND RETAINED EARNINGS, and crediting Fiscal Year 2024 Wastewater Enterprise Fund accounts as follows:

Personal Services	\$2,719,960.00
Expenses	\$4,904,250.00
Indirect Costs	\$1,210,000.00
Debt Service	\$6,493,145.00
Capital Expenses	\$8,147,800.00

156-23. ORDER THAT: there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of ONE MILLION, THREE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED SEVENTY-NINE DOLLARS (\$1,375,579.00), same to be charged against AIRPORT RECEIPTS RESERVED and credited to Fiscal Year 2024 Airport Fund accounts as follows:

Personal Services	\$ 330,029.00
Expenses	\$1,045,550.00

157-23. ORDER THAT: the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the following Revolving Funds authorized by city ordinance up to the amount available in the fund or \$100,000.00 (except Public Health Sustainability which shall have a limit of \$700,000.00 for FY2024), whichever is less:

<u>Revolving Fund</u>	<u>Authorized Official</u>
Animal Control	Police Chief
Civic Days	Mayor or Mayor's Designee, Recreation Director
Communication Tower & Equipment	Fire Chief
Community Development	Community Development Director or Designee
Demolition	Community Development Director or Designee
Public Cemetery	Cemetery Superintendent, Public Works Commissioner
Public Health Sustainability	Public Health Director
Public Library	Library Trustees, Chief Librarian
Traffic Enforcement	Police Chief
Traffic Safety Equipment	Police Chief

Senior Center Activities

Executive Director of the Council on Aging

Sidewalk

Public Works Commissioner

Stormwater Maintenance

Public Works Commissioner

Orders 153-23 through 157-23 adopted by vote of unanimous consent 11/0. 11 members present. Board consists of 11 members.

Budget Orders can be viewed here:

[FY 24 - Orders](#)

[FY24 - Final Budget](#)

Proposed Budget Reductions from Councilors:

PROPOSED BY	DEPT	ACCOUNT	PAGE	CURRENT BUDGET	PROPOSED CUT	REVISED BUDGET	MOTIONS
Cruz	Various	Salaries and steps			Eliminate Proposed Salary Increases		Withdrawn
Schultz	Various	Salaries and steps			3% Increase across all Salary Increases		Withdrawn
Van Hazinga	Various	Ordinance Wage Matrix and Steps			Matrix increases at 1%-1%-1%, some step changes		Failed 9/2
Van Hazinga	City Council	Education & Travel	7	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0	Amend to \$2,000 with Zarrella
Zarrella	City Council	Education & Travel	7	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	Passed 8/3
Van Hazinga	City Council	Salaries	7	\$16,500	\$16,500		Failed 4/7
DiNatale	Human Resources	Human Resources Assistant	10	\$54,964	\$54,964	\$0	Withdrawn
Cruz and Van Hazinga	Legal	City Solicitor	11	\$106,630	\$106,630	\$0	Failed 2/9
Cruz and Van Hazinga	Legal	Assistant City Solicitor	11	\$71,443	\$71,443	\$0	Failed 2/9
Cruz and Van Hazinga	Legal	Administrative Support/Office Expenses	11	\$66,000	\$66,000	\$0	Failed 2/9

DiNatale	Assessor	Legal Costs & Expenses	12	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Auditor	Accountant	13	\$73,736	\$73,736	\$0	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Information Technology	Helpdesk Technician	15	\$60,684	\$30,342	\$30,342	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Information Technology	Software Support - Fixed Costs	15	\$390,000	\$35,000	\$355,000	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Information Technology	Telephone	15	\$100,000	\$10,000	\$90,000	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Information Technology	Support - City Computers	15	\$70,000	\$25,000	\$45,000	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Community Development	Conservation Agent	19	\$71,240	\$71,240	\$0	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Community Development	Program Management Assistant/Full Time	19	\$48,672	\$48,672	\$0	Withdrawn
Squailia, and Van Hazinga	Community Development	PR/Communications Contract	19	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0	Passes 7/4
Beauchemin	Fire Department	2 Firefighter (Full-Time)	25	\$3,575,552	\$107,846	\$3,445,136	* Motion to Reject: Passes 9/2
Beauchemin	Fire Department	EMT Stipend	25	\$200,000	\$11,856	\$188,144	*Motion to Reject: Passes 9/2
Beauchemin	Fire Department	Holidays	25	\$562,390	\$6,216	\$556,174	*Motion to Reject: Passes 9/2
Beauchemin	Fire Department	Pager/Recall	25	\$181,197	\$9,056	\$172,141	*Motion to Reject: Passes 9/2
Van Hazinga	Fire Department	1 Firefighter (Full-Time)	25	\$3,575,552	\$53,923	\$3,511,703	*Motion to Reject: Passes 9/2
Van Hazinga	Fire Department	EMT Stipend	25	\$200,000	\$5,928	\$194,072	*Motion to Reject: Passes 9/2
Van Hazinga	Fire Department	Holidays	25	\$562,390	\$3,108	\$559,282	*Motion to Reject: Passes 9/2
Van Hazinga	Fire Department	Pager/Recall	25	\$181,197	\$4,528	\$176,669	*Motion to Reject: Passes 9/2
DiNatale	Board of Health	Clerical - Principal Clerk	33	\$34,087	\$34,087	\$0	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Board of Health	Contract Services - Disposal	36	\$730,000	\$20,000	\$710,000	Withdrawn
Van Hazinga	Senior Center	Principal Clerk	38	\$52,884	\$52,884	\$0	Withdrawn
Van Hazinga	Recreation Department	Recreation Assistant	39	\$58,656	\$58,656	\$0	Withdrawn
Van Hazinga	Recreation Department	Lifeguards	39	\$44,850	\$44,850	\$0	Failed 1/10

Van Hazinga	Recreation Department	Head Lifeguard/WSI	39	\$14,962	\$14,962	\$0	Failed 1/10
Van Hazinga	Recreation Department	Front Desk and Concessions	39	\$8,960	\$8,960	\$0	Failed 1/10
Van Hazinga	Recreation Department	Pool Repairs/Maintenance	39	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0	Failed 1/10
Van Hazinga	Recreation Department	Pool Equipment/Supplies	39	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	Failed 1/10
Van Hazinga	Recreation Department	Pool Chemicals	39	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	Failed 1/10
DiNatale	Library	Head Clerk Part-time	40	\$28,709	\$28,709	\$0	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Employee Benefits	Worker's Compensation	41	\$350,000	\$10,000	\$340,000	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Employee Benefits	Unemployment Compensation	41	\$250,000	\$15,000	\$235,000	Withdrawn
DiNatale	Employee Benefits	Health Insurance	41	\$17,000,000	\$40,000	\$16,960,000	Withdrawn
Beauchemin and Van Hazinga	Misc Expenses	Johnny Appleseed Center	41	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	Failed 1/10

*** Reject vote is identical to a failed vote.**

6:38 PM Councilor Cruz raised a point of order, 2.11 President Zarrella sustained.

Councilor DiNatale withdraw all of his budget reductions requests.

7:32 PM Councilor Cragin motion for the previous question on Legal Department reductions.

A roll call vote to move the question failed 8/3 (Couture, Cragin, Green)

8:54 PM Recessed

9:04 PM Returned to session

President Zarrella requested to move the Recreation Department pool reductions within the agenda.

9:23 PM Point of Order was raised a point of order, 2.11 President Zarrella sustained. .

9:40 PM Recessed

9:49 PM Returned to session

Council voted on each budget order.

Auditor Calvin Brooks thanked the Council for providing him the opportunity to work for the City of Fitchburg. Has worked along many dedicated city employees and Department Heads that work long and hard to make the City the best it can be. Thank Jacquelyn Cronin, who will be taking over the position, and who will do a phenomenal job.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 PM.

Joanna Bilotta-Simeone

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bilotta-Simeone, City Clerk