



# City of Fitchburg Massachusetts 01420

## CITY COUNCIL

### Councilors at Large

David Clark  
Marcus L. DiNatale  
E. Thomas Donnelly  
Samantha M. Squailia  
Anthony M. Zarrella

### President

Michael P. Kushmerek

### Vice President

Amy L. Green

### Ward Councilors

Ward 1 – Amy L. Green  
Ward 2 – Paul R. Beauchemin  
Ward 3 – Joel R. Kaddy  
Ward 4 – Michael P. Kushmerek  
Ward 5 – Marisa R. Fleming  
Ward 6 – Elizabeth R. Walsh

### Finance Committee

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A meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Chairman DiNatale on Tuesday, October 23, 2018 at 6:02 PM in the Memorial Middle School Library, 615 Rollstone Street, Fitchburg, MA.

Committee Members present: Councilors Paul Beauchemin, Marcus DiNatale, Michael Kushmerek, Elizabeth Walsh, and Anthony Zarrella.

Other Councilors present: Samantha Squailia.

Others present: City Auditor Calvin Brooks, Mayor's Chief of Staff A. J. Tourigny, Asst. City Solicitor Christine Tree, Police Chief Ernest Martineau, Airport Manager Scott Ellis, Community Development Director Thomas Skwierawski, and Steve Cook of NewVue Communities.

266-18           ORDER:           that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division, Design and Permitting grant in the approximate amount of \$33,500.00 (THIRTY-THREE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to pay for the design and permitting phase of the airport runway reconstruction project.

267-18           ORDER:           that there be and hereby is transferred the sum of THIRTY-THREE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$33,500.00) same to be charged against RESERVE FOR OTHER MUNICIPAL PURPOSES, CAPITAL EXPENSES and credited to AIRPORT CAPITAL, RUNWAY DESIGN AND PERMITTING for the design and permitting phase of the airport runway reconstruction project.

Discussion: The chairman announced that he was taking up both Order #266-18 and Order #267-18 and then read the letter from Scott Ellis dated October 5, 2018. Mr. Ellis then stated

that this order is not for a new project, but for the state and local share of a federal grant already accepted by City Council.

Councilors asked what economic benefit the city gained from the \$14.8 million being reported for the region. Mr. Ellis replied that the number was not broken down by municipality and would be hard to calculate.

Action: Orders #266-18 and #267-18 be adopted (4-1)

268-18           ORDER:           that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs grant in the approximate amount of \$27,976.00 (TWENTY-SEVEN THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED SEVENTY-SIX AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to purchase community policing equipment, portable radios, and tactical equipment, as well as support community policing mobilizations.

Discussion: The chairman read the letter from Chief Ernest Martineau dated October 5, 2018. Chief Martineau then explained that this JAG grant is a non-competitive grant and is based on community size and crime statistics. He is looking to use the funds to upgrade the department's portable radios, purchase ten Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) suits used for training, possibly three additional ballistic shields, and have more officers involved in community events.

Councilors commended the Police Department for actively seeking grant funds. They asked about the need for RAD suits and the chief explained that the department has had to borrow some from the university and he would like to be self-sufficient. They also asked about the radios and were told they operate on an antenna system. The Fire Department uses a microwave system and the new radios will be capable of doing both. They have already replaced about 30 radios using grant funds and are about a third of the way through the project. The Police Chief is also talking with the Fire Chief about the two departments using similar technology. Finally, councilors asked about body cameras and were invited by the chief to contact him later as the topic requires time to discuss.

Action: Be adopted (5-0)

269-18           ORDER:           that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, STOP School Violence, Category 5 grant in the approximate amount of \$57,364.00 (FIFTY-SEVEN THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-FOUR AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to support individualized physical security assessments and trainings for each Fitchburg public school.

Discussion: The chairman read the latter from Chief Martineau dated October 5, 2018. The chief explained that this was a competitive grant and only 13 communities across the nation were awarded funds. He commended his grant writer for doing an excellent job in writing the grant application. He stated there is a need to talk about school violence and that this grant will be used for training police and school personnel. The first step is to hire a professional to provide an assessment of each school as it relates to school violence, which will be used to develop the next steps. Monthly meetings of the police and school administrators will discuss progress on the issue. He also intends to send two officers for training to do the assessments and make recommendations for school security.

Councilors asked where the current school safety officers are stationed. The chief reported that Longjo School, Fitchburg High School, Monty Tech, and Memorial School each have an officer assigned to them. He intends to request an additional full time officer for the elementary schools beginning in January. When asked if there is any money coming from the state supplemental budget, he replied that it was a little early to know what money is available. He was encouraged to continue to pursue adding a school safety officer, because you can't put a price on school safety.

When asked by councilors if there are sufficient funds in the grant for a full, comprehensive study for all schools, the chief said that the estimated cost is \$20,000, so yes, there will be sufficient funds. The cost of the assessment is also the reason he is seeking assessment training for departmental officers, and the department is already looking ahead to the next phases, anticipating that grant funds will be available and approved.

Councilors asked if the state could do these assessments and were told that this field of work is expanding in the private sector as professionals retire from public service and move to the threat assessment business. The state does not have the resources to provide that same level of assistance. Councilors were pleased with the grant award, noting that success breeds success.

Action: Be adopted (5-0)

270-18           ORDER:           that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, STOP School Violence, Category 5 grant in the approximate amount of \$13,300.00 (THIRTEEN THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to purchase and manage anonymous tip reporting software.

Discussion: A motion was made by Councilor Kushmerek, seconded by Councilor Walsh, to amend the order by changing the grant name from "Category 5" to "Category 7".

Action: Be amended (5-0)

Chief Martineau said that this grant was also a competitive grant with 22 communities nationwide being awarded funds. This grant had to be written very specifically to be successful and for the project to be successful the student body has to be on board. This grant is for the acquisition of application software allowing students or any other person to offer tips to the police regarding school safety. Because the tip is anonymous, students don't have to face repercussions from their peers for offering the information. It would give voice and legitimacy to all students.

In response to a councilor's question, the chief explained that the grant covers the cost of the software for the first couple of years, at which point the department would need additional funding. The software application would be for cellphone use and easy enough even for elementary students. The grant will give the city a couple years to evaluate the software and with the additional training given to officers through the previous grant, will allow the city to possibly expand the program to other city buildings and locations.

Action: Be approved (5-0)

273-18

PETITION: Marc Dohan, Executive Director, NewVue Communities, for the City of Fitchburg to include in its annual budget a line item requiring payment to MassDevelopment of an amount equal to 15% of any Economic Benefit to the Municipality derived from the redevelopment of land at 62 Academy Street as further detailed in the petition.

Discussion: The chairman read the October 10, 2018 letter from Marc Dohan, NewVue Communities. Addressing the Finance Committee were Thomas Skwierawski, A. J. Tourigny, and Steve Cook, Director of Housing Development at NewVue Communities. Mr. Skwierawski stated that this Mass Development grant is a first step in the BF Brown project and in dealing with brownfields generally in the city. It is part of a partnership between the city and NewVue Communities and is a chance for the city to show support.

The chairman explained that MassDevelopment is waiting for city approval. The city would have to pay back 15% of any increase in property tax on the BF Brown property, which would be toward the cost of the Phase II review (evaluation of the contamination). Depending on the Phase II report, there may be additional costs related to remediation.

One councilor expressed the view that the vote seems simple. It is something that has to be done for the project, but the city has to pay back a percentage of the gain in taxes. The city does not have to pay for all up front, so there is little risk to the city.

Another councilor expressed another view that this material was present when we sold the property, so the city has some obligation to pay. Recoverable grants are fairly common in the state and are used to take care of environmental issues.

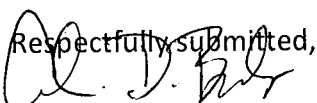
Councilors were told that the project is not eligible for FRA grants or other sources of grant funds, because the city originally owned the property. Councilors expressed the view that this situation was win/win—the city only pays if the tax revenue increases and the property is cleaned. Upon further questioning, councilors were told that the Phase II report will help to determining the extent and costs of a Phase III remediation. Any city cost for a Phase III remediation will be brought before City Council for funding.

The Baseline Value is expected to be \$105.05, which is the pro-forma tax paid in FY2019, the current fiscal year. Calvin Brooks explained that when city property, which is tax exempt, is sold, the taxes for the current year are calculated by multiplying the sales prices times the tax rate. Since the sales price for BF Brown was \$5,000, the taxes were relatively low. Taxes for FY2020 will be based on the assessed value of the property, which will be significantly higher.

Councilors asked about the \$1.6 million already appropriated for the property. They were told that the funds are being used to replace the roof and dry out the building. Some of the Phase II issues involve the stables, which had not been damaged by fire. Apparently some old electrical transformers were found, so more investigation is needed. In the end, the \$1.6 million and the \$20,000 Phase II report are two different matters.

Action: Be adopted (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
Calvin D. Brooks, Clerk