



Feb 01 2024 9:02 am

# City of Fitchburg Massachusetts 01420

## CITY COUNCIL

### Councilors at Large

Marcus L. DiNatale  
Sally H. Cragin  
Amy L. Green  
Elizabeth R. Walsh  
Anthony M. Zarrella

**President**  
Anthony M. Zarrella

**Vice President**  
Andrew J. Van Hazinga

### Finance Committee

### Ward Councilors

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

A meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Councilor DiNatale on Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 6:04 PM in the Legislative Building, 700 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA.

Committee Members present: Councilors Anthony Zarrella, Paul Beauchemin, Derrick Cruz, and Elizabeth Walsh (remote) Committee Members absent: None

Others Present: Liz Murphy, Executive Director of Community Development; Nicholas Erickson, DPW Commissioner (remote)

276-23 ORDER: the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of state earmark funds in the approximate amount of \$200,000 (TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS) in support of the production of market-rate apartments at the Iver Mills housing development project on River Street.

Discussion: Liz Murphy informed the committee that funds are not currently committed to any particular project, therefore a motion was made by Councilor Zarrella, and approved, to amend the Order language to strike the reference to Iver Mills. In response to Councilors' questions about the reimbursement grant process, Ms. Murphy explained there is currently a queue of grant applicants for projects planning to develop residential units where there currently are none. Market rate units do not have income restrictions, and applications are not restricted to downtown. Finally, Councilors proposed and generally agreed that payback provisions should be a condition of the grant, in the event of sale of the property at a profit. Councilors thanked Senator Cronin for his advocacy.

Action: (4-0) Be Adopted (Councilor Walsh recused)

277-23 ORDER: the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of state earmark funds in the approximate amount of \$150,000 (ONE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS), to be added to the city's Main Street Housing Incentive Program created last year, in support of the production of market-rate housing in ~~upper stories of~~ Main Street buildings.

Discussion: Ms. Murphy stated that this earmark is currently committed, in part, to a project approved by the Planning Board for three units on the first floor of the Drury Building. Therefore a motion was made by Councilor Zarrella, and approved, to amend the Order language to strike the reference to upper stories of Main Street. In response to a Councilor's question, Ms. Murphy will confirm whether or not these funds can be used for projects outside of downtown. Councilors thanked Representative Kushmerek for his advocacy.

Action: (5-0) Be Adopted

278-23 ORDER: the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of grant funds from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities in the approximate amount of \$100,000 (ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS) for the purpose of conducting a study of the Water Street gateway corridor, specifically between the Water Street Bridge and the intersection of Bemis Road and Wanoosnoc Road, to analyze and prioritize redevelopment opportunities and infrastructure needs.

Discussion: Ms. Murphy explained that the goal of this planning grant is to move the needle on applications for future roads and sidewalks grant dollars. In response to Councilors' questions, Nick Erickson described the study as working in partnership with the City's Water, Wastewater, and Engineering divisions to look at current, and future, below and above-ground needs. Doing so will make future grant efforts more robust. It was noted that the Rail Trail Phase II project will be complete before the gateway corridor construction begins.

Action: (5-0) Be Adopted

279-23 ORDER: the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of grant funds from the Executive Office of Economic Development Massworks Program in the approximate amount of \$450,000 (FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS) for the creation of engineering designs, including underground utilities, for the reconfiguration of Moran Square.

Discussion: In response to Councilors' questions, Mr. Erickson stated that these funds will be used in conjunction with other flood resiliency and traffic/pedestrian study grant funds. In response to Councilors' concerns, Mr. Erickson agreed to bring the resulting conceptual designs to the City Council Public Works Committee for feedback before it's too late to make substantial changes.

Action: (5-0) Be Adopted

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Jacquelyn Cronin, Clerk