

Oct 13 2021 4:02 pm



**City of Fitchburg
Massachusetts 01420**

CITY COUNCIL

Councilors at Large

**Marcus L. DiNatale
Amy L. Green
Thomas C. Hughes
Samantha M. Squailia
Anthony M. Zarrella**

President

Anthony M. Zarrella

Vice President

Elizabeth R. Walsh

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 – Elizabeth R. Walsh**

Finance Committee

A meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Chairman DiNatale on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 at 6:01 PM in the Legislative Building, 700 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA.

Committee Members present: Councilors Paul Beauchemin, Marcus DiNatale, Thomas Hughes, Elizabeth Walsh, and Anthony Zarrella. Committee Members absent: None.

The chairman read an announcement regarding the recording of public meetings, noting that FATV was recording and broadcasting the meeting. No other person stated that they were recording the meeting.

The chairman opened the meeting for public comment. No one spoke.

162-21 **ORDER:** that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community Compact Best Practices Program in the approximate amount of \$40,000.00 (FORTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is for a review and analysis of the city's staffing levels in all departments, excluding public safety and school departments.

Discussion: Mayor's Chief of Staff Patrick Hare was present. The chairman indicated that this matter had been held in committee at the last meeting because the committee was looking for answers to certain questions. Mr. Hare replied that there are continuous requests for new positions and that this analysis will study departmental structure and workflow to identify if a department needs more hires or if they need to reorder their procedures. It is a third party review that the mayor can use in future budget discussions. Police and Fire were excluded, because the city is working to meet national standards for staffing. The School Department is excluded because of its size and complexity. Councilors also noted that the School Committee has jurisdiction over that department.

Councilors asked if diversity or racial equity is part of the review. Mr. Hare reported that it was not part of the initial plan, but he is hopeful that the report will give support to it. Councilors asked what would happen if, for instance, the report recommended adding fifty workers in the Public Works Department. Mr. Hare said the report would be used to help prioritize how dollars should be spent. Councilors asked about studies done about ten years ago and other Councilors replied that earlier reports were focused on cost cutting because of the fiscal condition of the city at that time. Given that so much time has passed, it made sense to conduct a new study. When asked about a possible recommendation to combine departments, Mr. Hare replied that the report will look at whether there is an opportunity for sharing duties.

Councilors noted that the numbers coming out of the report would become goals for future budgets, rather than a plan for the FY2023 budget. Mr. Hare agreed that the report is for target setting and goal setting. If there are a lot of new positions needed, the priority for filling the positions would come out of further discussions with the various departments.

Action: Motion to approve made by Councilor Zarrella and second by Councilor Walsh.
Motion adopted. (5-0).

177-21 ORDER: that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Action Grant in the approximate amount of \$173,350.00 (ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-THREE THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED FIFTY AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to explore ways to mitigate flooding in the Baker Brook drainage Basin.

Discussion: Public Works Business Manager Courtney Lamoureux was present. The chairman offered to read the letter from Acting Public Works Commissioner Nicholas Erickson, but the committee waived the reading of the letter.

Councilors stated their desire to make the John Fitch Highway more modern as this project proceeds. Councilors noted that this grant is not for road engineering. It is instead focused on flood control upstream from the John Fitch Highway, as described in Paragraph 4 of the Acting Commissioner's letter.

Action: Motion to approve made by Councilor Beauchemin and second by Councilor Zarrella.
Motion adopted. (5-0).

178-21 ORDER: that there be and hereby is transferred from within the sum of TWO HUNDRED TWELVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$212,000.00) same to be transferred from RESERVE FOR OTHER MUNICIPAL PURPOSES, CAPITAL EXPENSES and credited to POLICE, CAPITAL EXPENDITURES, VEHICLE REPLACEMENT for the purpose of replacing four police vehicles.

Discussion: Police Chief Ernest Martineau was present. He reported that this is his annual request for an appropriation to purchase police vehicles. The usual request is for two vehicles. Last year because of the pandemic, he did not ask for any, so this year he is requesting four. The cost also includes an extended warranty for each of the new vehicles. The first line of patrol cars includes seven vehicles and the second line is another six. He tries to keep the first line under 100,000 miles. The vehicles are specially outfitted for police use by Ford, who offers the extended warranty on these police vehicles. The cost is about \$60,000 per vehicle.

Councilors asked why this request is not included in the annual budget. The chief said he would like to, but is OK with requesting funding from one-time Free Cash. Other Councilors noted that technically this expense is budgeted, because it is coming from the Reserve for Capital, which is being used to fund small capital items. In that sense it is included in the budget. Prior to FY2008 the city would borrow for five years to cover the cost of acquiring police vehicles, which generally didn't last that long. Councilors also noted that budgeting money in the reserve gives more flexibility in the budget than if it were budgeted in the specific line item.

The Chief said during his six years as chief he has been committed to replacing some vehicles annually to keep the fleet fresh. Prior to 2008 vehicles were all bought at once and would depreciate together and not look fresh.

Action: Motion to approve made by Councilor Beauchemin and second by Councilor Zarrella. Motion adopted. (5-0).

179-21 ORDER: that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, Funds Available for Projects in the approximate amount of \$500,000.00 (FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to increase Covid-19 testing, vaccination, and contract tracing activities.

Discussion: Public Health Director Steve Curry was present. The chairman read a letter from Mr. Curry dated September 28, 2021. Mr. Curry distributed a budget sheet for the \$500,000 being requested.

Mr. Curry said he is hoping he won't have to spend all of the funds being requested, but wants to be ready if an opportunity presents itself in fighting the Covid outbreak. They are proposing up to two drive-through testing sites operated by the city with oversight from the state. They would be open two or three days per week so the public can get tested for Covid.

There are currently about 200 active Covid cases in the city. The state will stop contact tracing on November 30th, which includes interviews, contact tracing, and contact interviews. The Health Department needs to stay on top of the situation in order to not lose control. The identified difficulty today is getting tested, so his plan is to make testing easier. He would be looking to hire about five public health nurses and administrative support. He then reviewed the budget worksheet that was distributed.

Councilors asked if these funds would be used to purchase testing kits. Mr. Curry said he is hoping to use state DPH kits. He will be doing a test site with the City of Leominster and will be buying saliva test kits for this event.

Councilors asked about the use of the word surveillance to guarantee quarantine compliance. Mr. Curry said it basically involves a public health nurse following up on positive cases to make sure they are complying with the quarantine; if they are not, then to determine where they are going so as to further track the spread. He said keeping a good relationship with the confirmed case is important.

Councilors asked what would happen if someone violates the quarantine. Mr. Curry said there are legal steps he can take, such as issuing notices and fines, but he prefers to simply encourage compliance. Councilors asked about a vaccine mandate. Mr. Curry said it would require a unanimous vote of the Board of Health, but there isn't a good way to force people to vaccinate. He prefers to work on educating and encouraging people to get vaccinated on their own. Councilors expressed concern about offering gift cards. Mr. Curry said that the state

program offers gift cards for booster shots as well and may have a beneficial effect for lower income people who are affected by Covid. Councilors noted that the gift cards are about \$25, an amount that pro-vaccine people would probably not hold out for but which may be an incentive for those less vaccine inclined.

Councilors asked about current testing at the pharmacies and why the city needs to also do testing. Mr. Curry said that the pharmacies usually requires that an appointment be made and that might be a two or three day wait. If the city does a testing site, it would not require an advance appointment.

Councilors thanked Mr. Curry and his staff for their work during this pandemic.
Action: Motion to approve made by Councilor Hughes and second by Councilor Walsh.
Motion adopted. (5-0).

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Zarrella second by Councilor Walsh.
Motion adopted. (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Calvin D. Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Calvin D. Brooks, Clerk



City of Fitchburg

166 Boulder Drive, Suite 108
Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420

Office of the City Auditor/Finance Director
Tel: 978-829-1840 • Fax: 978-829-1961

Calvin D. Brooks
City Auditor/Finance Director

Jacquelyn M. Cronin
Deputy City Auditor

September 16, 2021

Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale
718 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Re: Council Order #162-21

Dear Mayor DiNatale:

I am writing to you as Clerk of the City Council Finance Committee.

At the Finance Committee meeting held on September 14, 2021, members of the committee had questions about Council Order #162-21 to approve the expenditure of \$40,000 from the Community Compact Best Practices Program. Specifically they asked the following:

- What is the purpose of the review and analysis of the city's staffing levels and what is being reviewed?
- Why were the Public Safety Departments excluded from the study?

The committee would appreciate your or your representative's attendance at the next Finance Committee meeting scheduled for September 28, 2021 in order to answer these questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Calvin D. Brooks
Clerk, Finance Committee

City of
Fitchburg



Department of
Public Works

COMMISSIONER

301 Broad Street
978-829-1910
978-345-9687 FAX

STREETS & PARKS

301 Broad Street
978-829-1900
978-345-9687 FAX

WASTEWATER

166 Boulder Drive, Suite 108
978-345-9622
978-345-9623 FAX

SEWER COLLECTION

301 Broad Street
978-829-1900
978-345-9687 FAX

WATER

1200 Rindge Road
978-345-9616
978-345-9555 FAX

ENGINEERING

301 Broad Street
978-829-1917
978-345-9687 FAX

CEMETERIES

115 Mount Elam Road
978-345-9578
978-345-9686 FAX

September 21, 2021

Mr. Stephen L. DiNatale, Mayor
718 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Re: Acceptance of Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant Funds for the *Bolstering Public and Private Action to Improve Flood Resilience in Baker Brook Project*

Dear Honorable Mayor DiNatale:

This past July, the City was notified that it was awarded a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program Action Grant through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) in the amount of \$173,350 to further explore ways to mitigate flooding in the Baker Brook drainage Basin.

John Fitch Highway (JFH), which is located towards the downstream end of the Baker Brook drainage basin, is subject to frequent flooding issues. JFH is one of the main commercial corridors in the City with many retail, restaurants, entertainment and service based businesses. It was constructed in the 1950's to provide auto-oriented commercial strip development. Unfortunately, JFH was built within the flood plain of Baker Brook. The brook was diverted and the adjacent wetlands and farmlands were filled in to develop three major commercial plazas, which are now affected by flooding of Baker Brook to some degree during intense precipitation events.

Over the past two years, the Department of Public Works (DPW) has successfully applied for, obtained, and executed an MVP Action Grant to perform a 25% design of green infrastructure stormwater improvements, pedestrian access improvements, and traffic safety improvements along JFH between Lunenburg Street and Summer Street. These improvements will help reduce urban flooding and improve water quality in Baker Brook, create green space to beautify that area, and will help to improve pedestrian safety and facilitate pedestrian access along the corridor. The project has been accepted to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT's) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which will fund the remainder of the design and construction costs to complete this project.

During the design process for this project, however, it was determined that this will not be enough to completely mitigate the flooding issues along JFH. As such, the City needs to look further upstream in the watershed to determine ways to adequately mitigate the flooding issues. The project to be funded through this grant proposes to accomplish exactly that by evaluating flood prone areas and looking for locations to implement flood control improvements. The improvements will be scored and prioritized according to benefits to environmental justice populations, estimated reductions in urban heat island effect, and other co-benefits to the community. The final products will be a targeted capital improvement plan for identified and assessed public properties, and a pilot retrofit program for specific private properties. The feasibility of financing this program through a stormwater and climate resilience utility will be explored. In future years, the DPW will be seeking additional funding through this grant program and/or other State/Federal funding programs to progress the final products towards implementation.

The DPW has committed to provide a cash match of \$50,000 from available stormwater funding, which was made possible by the Mayor's office through an appropriation from free cash. The DPW has also committed to provide in-kind services valued at \$8,800. The cash and in-kind service matches demonstrate the City's investment in the project and were no doubt instrumental in the success of this grant application

I respectfully request that the Mayor and City Council accept the grant in the amount of \$173,350 from the EOEAA and allow the expenditure of funds from the grant to complete the tasks identified in the attached Scope of Work.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Erickson, PE
Assistant City Engineer

Attachment

cc: Calvin Brooks, City Auditor
Courtney Lamoureux, DPW Business Manager

Vendor Name City of Fitchburg	Today's Date 10/12/2021
Fiscal Year 22 - Annualized	

Program Component	FTE	CURRENT BUDGET (A)	Proposed Changes +/- (B)	Proposed New Budget (C)	Justification (D)
PROGRAM STAFF					
Public Health Nurses- Temporary	5.00	\$ 337,735.00		\$ 337,735.00	Contact Tracing, Vaccination, Testing
Administrative Asst- Temporary	1.00	\$ 42,595.00		\$ 42,595.00	Data entry
SUB TOTAL	6.00	\$ 380,330.00	\$ -	\$ 380,330.00	
Fringe Benefits					
1. TOTAL PROGRAM STAFF		\$ 380,330.00	\$ -	\$ 380,330.00	

Program Component	CURRENT BUDGET (A)	Proposed Changes +/- (B)	Proposed New Budget (C)	Justification (D)
Contracted Program Staff				
Epidemiologist	\$ 20,000.00		\$ 20,000.00	Assist Nurses with cases
Police Details	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 15,000.00	Assist at test site with traffic and clinics
Equipment	\$ 20,000.00		\$ 20,000.00	Computers and equipment
Materials/Supplies	\$ 5,670.00		\$ 5,670.00	Office, gift cards incentives
Expenses	\$ 49,000.00		\$ 49,000.00	Tents, trash, portable bathrooms, signage, Tent heaters
Fire/EMT	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00	Assist at clinics
2. TOTAL CONTRACTED PROGRAM STAFF	\$ 119,670.00	\$ -	\$ 119,670.00	

Occupancy				
Program Facility			\$ -	
Facility Operations, Maint. and Furn.			\$ -	
3. TOTAL OCCUPANCY			\$ -	
SUB TOTAL: 1 + 2 + 3			\$ -	
Administrative Support				
Max Cap Amount:			\$ 500,000.00	
4. AGENCY ADMIN. SUPPORT			\$ -	
TOTAL 1+2+3+4+5			\$ -	\$ 500,000.00