

*Nov 10 2021 3:49 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, November 9, 2021 at 6:00 PM in the Legislative Building, 700 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA.

Committee Members present: Councilors Paul Beauchemin, Marcus DiNatale, Thomas Hughes, and Elizabeth Walsh. Councilor Anthony Zarrella arrived late.

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.

189-21           ORDER:           that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program grant in the approximate amount of \$71,227.00 (SEVENTY-ONE THOUSAND, TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-SEVEN AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to advance the practice of community policing in law enforcement.

Discussion: Police Chief Ernest Martineau was present. He stated that the Fitchburg Police Department is grateful for the receipt of these two grants and he thanked his department for doing a good job on the applications.

He is striving for accreditation of the department. These grant funds will be used for the certification and accreditation process, to cover the cost of analytical performance software, and to cover the overtime costs related to this effort. He is looking to achieve their goal in the next eighteen to twenty-four months.

Action: Motion to approve made by Councilor Hughes and second by Councilor Walsh. Motion adopted. (4-0).

190-21 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 \$24,403.00 (TWENTY-FOUR THOUSAND, FOUR HUNDRED THREE AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to support community policing efforts and update equipment needs.

Discussion: Chief Martineau remained. This grant is the second highly competitive federal grant received by his department. It helps supplement overtime costs for community events like the Block Party. He will also be using the funds to purchase new badges and ID's for officers, which will follow new state training guidelines. He will also use it to purchase reflective gear to better identify officers in a crowd.

Councilor Zarrella joined the meeting.

Councilors thanked the chief for working on gaining accreditation for the department and for this grant.

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

191-21 ORDER: that there be and hereby is transferred from within the sum of TWENTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$20,000.00) same to be transferred from RESERVE FOR OTHER MUNICIPAL PURPOSES, CAPITAL EXPENSES and credited to POLICE, CAPITAL EXPENDITURES, BUILDING RENOVATION for the purpose of safeguarding the entrance to the Police Station.

Discussion: Chief Martineau remained. He started by saying he hoped this discussion would be the first of many about the future of the police station. The custodian recently brought to his attention the falling concrete on the outside of the building. He quickly arranged with a contractor to set up staging along the outside passways to safeguard the passage of visitors to the station. The building is thirty-six years old and needs some work. This particular appropriation will cover the cost of renting the staging for the rest of the fiscal year.

Councilors asked why it was a rental and not a fix. The chief said that this is a temporary measure and more work needs to be done than can be done immediately. He is working with the Facilities Department to produce a full scope of work. He says the needs are significant and expects to have conversations addressing the needs in the current fiscal year. Councilors called for the use of Free Cash to fix the problems this year.

Councilors commented that the building is only thirty-six years old and other older buildings do not have similar problems. The chief said he can not redo what happened years ago. Councilors agreed that we are having to deal now with the cost cutting done years ago, but that we can not go back.

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

192-21 ORDER: that the sum of TWENTY-EIGHT THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$28,000.00) be appropriated, same to be credited to HOMELESSNESS OUTREACH SERVICES and charged against the CDBG Year 47.

Discussion: Community Development Director Tom Skwierawski was present. He said that earlier in the year when the Year 47 CBDG allocation was approved, the proposed homelessness services had been pulled at the request of the applicant. His department has been working with the Health Department to deploy these funds and to address homelessness outreach in order to connect the homeless to services they may need.

Councilors asked if they can get a report on what is going on with homelessness in Fitchburg. Mr. Skwierawski replied that he will ask for such a report and the timing is good since the city is starting the next round of grants.

Councilors observed that not all homeless people live on the street. Some live in cars; others in shelters. Sometimes it is simply people who could not find a shelter. It may also include people who have no home and are living with relatives.

Councilors are interested to see if the problem is bigger than what the city can handle and are looking ahead to receiving more detail during the Year 48 round of CDBG grants.

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

193-21 ORDER: that there be and hereby is transferred from within the sum of ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$100,000.00) same to be transferred from RESERVE FOR OTHER MUNICIPAL PURPOSES, CAPITAL EXPENSES and credited to CAPITAL PROJECTS, LONGSJO SCHOOL WINDOW REPLACEMENT for the purpose of paying costs for the replacement of windows at the Arthur M. Longsjo Middle School, including a feasibility study and all other costs incidental or related thereto, and for which the City of Fitchburg may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), said amount to be expended under the direction of Fitchburg Public Schools. The City of Fitchburg acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any costs the City incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the City of Fitchburg.

Discussion: School Director of Finance and Operations Craig Chalifoux was present. He is excited that the city has been accepted into the MSBA Accelerated Repair program for windows at Longsjo School. This particular request is for a feasibility study and the School Department will be looking for more funds when the project is fully scoped and approved by MSBA. The windows were installed in the early 1970's, and many are not operable.

Councilors asked about the timeline for the project. Mr. Chalifoux replied that the MSBA is meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup> and the study needs to be completed by then. Completion of the full project depends on the bid process and supply chain issues.

Councilors asked what types of projects are eligible. Mr. Chalifoux stated that different criteria are used in different years. This year the School Department had also hoped to replace the boilers at Longsjo School. However, because of the intense demand, the MSBA extended the age of eligible boilers, so Longsjo did not qualify.

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

194-21 ORDER: that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, Green Communities Division Competitive Grant Program in the approximate amount of \$151,283.00 (ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-ONE THOUSAND, TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY-THREE AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to implement a number of energy saving programs across the city.

Discussion: Facilities Director Russ Karlstad was present. He said that the city has been a member of the Green Communities program since 2017. It provides state grants that can be used for smaller projects that provide larger energy gains. Projects this year are primarily focused on the schools and include steam trap maintenance, building maintenance software at one school, and replacement of motors for the walk-in coolers. Next year the focus will be on non-school buildings. He is trying to put systems in place to help address problems before they become bigger and feels that the city is starting to turn the corner.

Councilors mentioned a heat problem at Reingold School. Mr. Karlstad replied that the issue may be addressed in the steam trap survey, which will help to make sure that heat is evenly distributed.

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Calvin D. Brooks, Clerk