



# **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**

### **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**

### **Finance Committee**

A meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Councilor Zarrella on Thursday, November 7, 2024 at 5:32 PM in the Legislative Building, 700 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA.

Committee Members present: Councilors Anthony Zarrella, Paul Beauchemin, Derrick Cruz, and Elizabeth Walsh.

Committee Members absent: Councilor Marcus DiNatale.

Others Present: Jeremy Roche, FPS Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations; Liz Murphy, Executive Director of Community Development.

185-24        ORDER:        the City of Fitchburg hereby raise and appropriate the sum of SIX HUNDRED FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$645,000), crediting School Department Expenses, for the purpose of funding a shortfall in the Fiscal Year 2024 Net School Spending requirement.

Discussion: Mr. Roche explained the circumstances driving the FY24 shortfall. Escalated transportation costs and the costs of transportation for unforeseen enrollments paid out through the School Department, which are the responsibility of the municipality, ran over budget by over one million dollars. This appropriation will serve to restore the School Department budget for those excess payments.

Action: (4-0) Be Adopted

186-24 ORDER: there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of ELEVEN THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FOUR AND 30/100 DOLLARS (\$11,134.30) same to be charged against RESERVED FOR APPROPRIATION - TNC PER RIDE ASSESSMENT and credited to DPW CAPITAL EXPENSES - STREET REPAIR for the purpose of road repaving.

Discussion: Auditor Cronin explained that these funds represent a surcharge on Uber and Lyft rides, and are returned to the city for appropriation. Commissioner Erickson elected to use these funds to supplement the road repair budget. Councilors reiterated that one mile of road costs approximately one million dollars to pave.

Action: (4-0) Be Adopted

187-24 ORDER: 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, for Nature Based Solutions for a Resilient Coolidge Park, in the approximate amount of THREE HUNDRED TWENTY-THREE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED SIXTY DOLLARS (\$323,160) to help mitigate flooding impacts by increasing Stormwater storage, recharge, and water quality.

Discussion: Councilors discussed the impact this grant will have, including the value of mitigating known flooding problems at Baker Brook and John Fitch Highway.

Action: (4-0) Be Adopted

188-24 ORDER: the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of grant funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community Compact grant program, in the approximate amount of FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$50,000) to develop a multi-year paving management plan.

Discussion: Ms. Murphy stated that the Public Works Department will undertake the development of a multi-year paving management plan to determine the maximum use of available funds by prioritizing not only paving, but also the ongoing maintenance of roads. In response to Councilors' questions, Ms. Murphy stated that she is not aware of an existing pavement management plan. Councilor Zarrella stated that to the best of his recollection, the city has a pavement quality index, which provides a ranking of streets. Councilor Walsh said she is confident that this plan will not be put on a shelf, but will provide a more comprehensive look at addressing the problem. Ms. Murphy also explained that these Community Compact grant monies are for planning purposes only, not for actual road repairs or associated salaries.

Action: (4-0) Be Adopted

189-24 ORDER: the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of grant funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community Compact grant program, in the approximate amount of FORTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$40,000) to develop a capital improvement plan.

Discussion: Ms. Murphy stressed the importance of this Community Compact planning grant. If the city had a comprehensive capital improvement plan, it would be in position to tap into greening and energy efficient funding opportunities. A team would be created to support efficiencies in the city's building facilities. Councilor Zarrella stated that to the best of his recollection, when the Capital Improvement Commission last met, the capital improvement plan was not an actionable plan, but more a list of needed projects.

Action: (4-0) Be Adopted

190-24 ORDER: the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of grant funds from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Shared Streets and Spaces grant program, in the approximate amount of TWO HUNDRED FORTY-SIX THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED SIXTEEN and 56/100 DOLLARS (\$246,816.56) to create a formal shared-use path along Railroad Street to the future pedestrian bridge.

Discussion: Ms. Murphy explained that this Rail Trail connector will run along Railroad Street from Fifth Street - the current end of the Rail Trail - to the pedestrian bridge to be built over the railroad tracks to the MART building. As a shared street, it will be the responsibility of the city to maintain the connector.

Action: (4-0) Be Adopted

191-24 ORDER: the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of grant funds from the Massachusetts Department of Culture and Recreation Mass Trails grant program, in the approximate amount of SEVENTY-EIGHT THOUSAND FIVE DOLLARS (\$78,005) to improve a section of trail at the summit of Rollstone Hill, and to install Rock Walk signage.

Discussion: Ms. Murphy stated that the city has applied for these funds on behalf of the volunteer Conservation Corps which is coordinating and doing much of the work; including the installation of signage and setting granite stairs to refine part of the Rock Walk - a treasure to the community.

Action: (4-0) Be Adopted

192-24           ORDER:           the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities 40R Smart Growth program in the approximate amount of THREE HUNDRED TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$321,000), for Low Park and other activities and city improvements.

Discussion: As explained by Ms. Murphy, these payments are the result of "bonus" units created when the city passed a Smart Growth zoning area, including the Moran Square apartments and the Fitchburg Arts Community at B.F. Brown. \$150,000 has been committed to Low Park, the uncommitted balance could be used for city parking program costs and/or a 40U software system. The intent is to use the uncommitted balance for systems that will help make the city run more efficiently, rather than for Main Street beautification efforts.

Action: (4-0) Be Adopted

The meeting adjourned at 6:12 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Jacquelyn Cronin, Clerk