

City of Gardner, Massachusetts
City Council Public Welfare Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of June 7, 2018

Councillor Christine Johnson called the Public Welfare Committee meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 7, 2018 in the Mayor's Conference Room. Committee members Councillors Nathan Boudreau and Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas were present, as well as City Clerk Alan Agnelli.

Other officials present and/or participating were Kathleen Leslie, Director, Levi Heywood Memorial Library; Phil Buso, Director, Veterans' Services; Ken Bonk, Chairman, Airport Commission; Debra Pond, Administrator, Greenwood Memorial Pool and Member of the Disability Commission; and, Bill Frank, Superintendent, Gardner Municipal Golf Course.

I. FY2019 Budget Hearings

Kathleen Leslie, Director, Levi Heywood Memorial Library

- Books and periodicals line item reduced \$6,000 by the Mayor.
- Library Budget is driven by annual certification for State Aid to Library program – affected by the number of hours that the Library is open to the public and the amount that the City spends on library materials.
- Heywood Library has met the minimum requirements for the last seven years.
- In prior year, the State Board of Library Commissioners eliminated the minimum requirements and now classified “mid-level” which requires that the Library must be open at least 45 hours per week . No extra staff will be added, but more salary and wages will be necessary. Will use part-time staff and reallocate other staff to achieve the additional 12 hours per month required.
- The Budget request reflects increases in Library Technician and Staff Librarian salaries.
- Shortfall in Materials line item can be made up from Investment account next year. Balance in State Aid Account could be reclassified at the end of the year to meet grant requirements.

Phil Buso, Director, Veterans' Services

- Mayor allowed Veterans' Benefits amount that he requested.
- Office supplies were increased by \$200.
- Prof. Development/Travel line item was reduced by \$100 – Director no longer attends training sessions. \$35 dues for Worcester County Veterans' Services.
- The Veterans' Benefits budget allotment was exceeded in the last 7 to 8 years, requiring supplemental appropriations from Free Cash. Over \$900,000 was expended in FY2017.
- So far this fiscal year, \$75,000 in “cash benefits” was expended, not counting medicine and related medical benefits.
- The State reimburses the City 75% of total Veterans' Benefits expended. Reimbursements are paid in the following Fiscal Year.

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Ken Bonk, Chairman, Airport Commission

- All amounts requested by the Airport Commission were granted by the Mayor.
- \$500 increase in energy and utilities.
- Airport usually breaks even – department receipts to operating expenses. Receipts were higher this year than in prior years.

Debra Pond, Administrator, Greenwood Memorial Pool

- Budget request similar to current FY.
- All major repairs to the outside pool and facilities completed in prior years.
- Receipts for use of outdoor facilities (pool and spry park) do not cover operating expenses – receipts average about one-third of expenses.
- Energy and utilities savings partially due to solar energy credits.
- Hiring lifeguards for the season at this time. One lifeguard added to monitor the deep end of the pool since the opening of the spray park.

Debra Pond, Disability Commission

- FY19 Expenses Budget reduced by \$500 from current FY. No additional funds needed unless there is a special project planned. An Informational brochure was printed in the prior year.
- Professional Development & Travel – set aside for access monitor training.

Bill Frank, Superintendent, Gardner Municipal Golf Course

- Golf Course operates under an Enterprise Fund – expenses paid from revenues.
- No major capital projects planned for the coming FY.
- Vehicle Supplies is up by \$10,000 over current FY (to \$25,000).
- Golf carts are leased by the Golf Commission.
- Membership and cart fees were recently increased.
- Budget includes additional \$20,000 to cover indirect costs (e.g. pensions).
- Commission members receive membership benefits in lieu of stipends.
- Only 1 bid to operate the 1772 House restaurant (operator of Zoe's in Winchendon). The restaurant is only seasonal and its success is weather-dependent.
- The Golf Commission (City) maintains the 1772 House.

Adjournment.

On a motion Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas and seconded by Councillor Nathan Boudreau, it was voted to adjourn at 7:08 p.m.