

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING OF NOVEMBER 28, 2018

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The Finance Committee meeting was called to order by President Scott Joseph Graves at 12:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall.

Finance Committee Members present were Council President Scott Joseph Graves and Councillor Ronald Cormier. Councillor James Walsh was absent.

Others participating included Mayor Mark Hawke; Police Chief Neil Erickson; Public Works Director Dane Arnold; City Engineer Christopher Coughlin; City Auditor John Richard; and, City Clerk Alan Agnelli.

President Graves asked if anyone present planned to record the meeting, in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, as follows:

*Any person may make a video or audio recording of the open session of this meeting so long as it does not interfere with the conduct of the meeting. All documents and exhibits used or referenced at this meeting shall be submitted in duplicate to the City Clerk, as they become part of the minutes of the meeting. Is there anyone present who will be recording this meeting?*

No one responded.

**1-1 Reading and Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting.**

On a motion by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by President Graves, it was voted to approve the Minutes of the November 19, 2018 Meeting, as printed.

**2-1 A Measure Authorizing Acceptance of Donations and Gifts for Use by the Community Bandstand Committee for Musical Concerts and Other Entertainment Events.**

President Graves open the discussion by commenting on the Public Service Committee's recent meeting at which the question arose as to whether the Municipal Grounds Commission had been abolished, since a member of the Cemetery Commission suggested that it was abolished. Therefore, he added, the Service Committee did not recommend adoption of the proposed Community Bandstand Ordinance.

Mayor Hawke stated that the Municipal Grounds Commission still exists and that the current members of the Cemetery Commission also serve on the Municipal Grounds Commission.

President Graves cited Chapter 217-1 of the City Code, which references the existence of the Commission. He added that since the proposed Bandstand Ordinance is still pending, then any action taken on the proposed Gift Fund is "putting the cart before the horse."

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Accordingly, since the same measure is also before the Public Service Committee and corresponds to the pending Municipal Grounds/Bandstand Ordinance, the Committee postponed action on *A Measure Authorizing Acceptance of Donations and Gifts for Use by the Community Bandstand Committee for Musical Concerts and Other Entertainment Events*.

2-2 **An Order to Raise and Appropriate \$178,287.00 for the Expenses of Various Departments for Fiscal Year 2019 (“Supplemental Budget”)**

Mayor Hawke informed the Committee that he e-mailed the Supplemental Budget Order and supporting materials to all Councillors the previous week, as the matter is “time-sensitive” and that the Tax Rate cannot be approved until the Order is approved. He said that when the FY2019 Budget was prepared, certain assumptions were made about New Growth and so \$300,000 was used to prepare FY2019 Projected Revenues. Recently, he added, the Assessors determined that FY2019 New Growth is \$482,000.00; therefore, an additional \$182,000.00 is available to raise in the Levy for the year.

Continuing, the Mayor stated that the next Fiscal Year will be “financially tight” as the School Budget will realize a budget shortfall; therefore, he is recommending that the City address a number of “one-time needs” with the available resources. He added that by committing the available levy at this time; then the amount would become part of the permanent tax levy and available in future years.

Addressing the **Bike Path Bridge Match** portion of the Order, City Engineer Chris Coughlin informed the Committee that the \$41,287 would be used to match the \$300,000.00 State Grant to design the Bikeway Bridge project of the North Central Pathway, which is on the State TIP and projected to be funded in 2021. He said that if the project moves to the next phase, “Post-Design,” then the City’s additional share will be \$33,713.00, which could occur within one to one and one-half years. He added that the total Project cost is \$3.5 Million, plus design costs, of which the City is only responsible for 25% of design costs.

Addressing the **DPW Chipper** portion of the Order, Mayor Hawke informed the Committee that the DPW proposes to purchase a new chipper for \$35,000.00, which includes the value of the 2006 Chipper to be traded-in.

Addressing the **Plumbing Vehicle** portion of the Order, Mayor Hawke informed the Committee that the Department’s 2005 Ford Ranger was removed from service for safety reasons and that the Plumbing Inspector has been using his personal vehicle to perform inspections. He said that the City could obtain a good used truck for \$25,000.00

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Addressing the City Hall Alert System portion of the Order, Mayor Hawke informed the Committee that there is a need to replace the defunct alert system in City Hall which, he said, failed to differentiate whether the emergency was fire or police related and where in the building the “duress alert” originated. He said that the new system would send a signal to Police Dispatch that would identify the origin of the alert and noted that there have been a number of incidences in City Hall where he has had to assist employees until Police arrived.

Continuing, the Mayor stated that 11 offices were identified as requiring duress buttons, citing the frequency of visits by the public.

Councillor Ronald Cormier suggested that the City Council Chamber should be included, since it is utilized by many boards and commissions, as well as for other events, and where there may be a need for immediate Police assistance. President Graves agreed.

The Mayor stated that he would look into adding a duress button for the Council Chamber.

Addressing the HVAC Commissioning portion of the Order, Chief of Police Neil Erickson informed the Committee that the funds would provide for automation of the existing HVAC system in the Police Station, which was not completed during the Police Station project. He said that the system would allow the Department to monitor all systems and units from computers.

President Scott Graves questioned whether the automation was part of the original Police Station project.

Chief Erickson stated that the Consultant reached out to the former HVAC installation contractor who advised him that they “never really completed the automation.”

President Graves remarked that “the City is left holding the bag,” and questioned whether the City could seek recovery from its Insurance Policy.

Mayor Hawke remarked that the City believes that \$30,000.00 for commissioning was cut from the Project Budget, which would have served “to double-check everything.” He added that the IT piece was missing, which is the reason that the HVAC systems “never balanced appropriately.”

President Graves suggested that the Law Department should look into the matter to determine whether the City “paid for something that it did not get.” He asked the Mayor to seek the City Solicitor’s review of the matter.

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On a motion by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by President Graves, it was voted to recommend to the City Council that the following Order ought to pass:

AN ORDER TO RAISE AND APPROPRIATE A SUM OF MONEY FOR THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS FOR THE EXPENSE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2018 TO JUNE 30, 2019

ORDER: To raise and appropriate for the expense of the City of Gardner for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, sums as designated below for the expenditures of the various departments in the amount of ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-EIGHT THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY-SEVEN DOLLARS (\$178,287.00)

Survey	Bike Path Bridge Match	\$41,287.00
Public Works	DPW Chipper	\$35,000.00
Building Dept.	Plumber vehicle	\$25,000.00
Police Dept.	City Hall Alert System	\$11,000.00
Police Dept.	HVAC Commissioning	\$46,000.00
Public Works	Additional Paving	\$20,000.00

**9-1 Report from the Mayor**

Mayor Hawke informed the Committee that the City Auditor has been working diligently to obtain DOR Certification of Free Cash and that he anticipates that the amount will be “slightly below average.” He added that he will pursue an immediate and large appropriation to Stabilization in order to restore the balance in the account, due to the recent transfer of funds to the FY2019 School Department Budget.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by President Scott Graves, it was voted to adjourn at 12:25 p.m.