

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
OF MEETING OF JANUARY 30, 2023

The Finance Committee meeting was called to order by Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall. Finance Committee Members Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz and Ronald Cormier were also present. Also participating was Mayor Michael Nicholson; and City Clerk Titi Siriphan.

II. Referred to Finance Committee

• 10881 – An Order Appropriating \$134,500.00 From Free Cash to FAA Airport Runway and Taxiway System – City Portion. (In the City Council and referred to the Finance Committee 01/17/23)

Mayor Nicholson informed the committee that the City had recently received substantial grants from the FAA and MASSDOT for the purpose of resurfacing the airport runway. He informed the committee that those grants are contingent on the city matching a portion of the funds allotted, which accounts for the sum being requested. He noted that if the runway were not repaired, the airport would become inoperable, and the city would be forced to reimburse the FAA for past grants.

On motion made by Councilor Ron Cormier and seconded Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted to recommend to the City Council that the following Order ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO FAA AIRPORT RUNWAY AND TAXIWAY SYSTEM – CITY PORTION

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of One Hundred Thirty-Four Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and No Cents (\$134,500.00) from Free Cash to the Airport Runway and Taxiway System – City Portion.

• 10885 – An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Gardner, Chapter 171, Thereof, Entitled “Personnel,” to Change Compensation Schedule 1, Yearly Salaries, Mayor and City Councillors. (In the City Council and referred to the Finance Committee 01/17/23)

President Kazinskas noted that Councilor Mack had brought forward this proposal in August of 2022 and the committee had said they would revisit it in January of 2023. She noted that it was the responsibility of the Finance Committee to report to the Council as a whole it's recommendations regarding the Mayor's and Councilors' salaries. She offered a correction to the Mayor's salary as noted in the packet. She said the correct number constituted a 1 percent raise for each year from 2018. She also noted the proposal included a weekly salary for the position of Acting Mayor.

Councilor Ron Cormier expressed that he thought it was time the compensation of the Mayor and City Councilors reflect the amount of work the positions entailed. He also noted that it was desirable to attract good candidates to these positions. He also noted any pay raises would not take effect until after city-wide elections. He advocated for a system to be installed which would avoid such drastic pay raises.

President Kazinskas confirmed with Mayor Nicholson that a salary study was being undertaken for non-union, non-elected positions in the city. Mayor Nicholson expressed the difficulty of including the Mayor and Councilor salaries in that study, given time constraints laid down in the city charter.

On motion made by Councilor Ron Cormier and seconded Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted to refer the item to the Council as a whole.

III. First Time on the Agenda

• **10886 – A Notification from the Mayor Regarding Free Cash Appropriation Proposals**

Mayor Nicholson noted that he was being particularly cautious with what was being presented for Free Cash Appropriation Proposals, due to the high cost of snow and ice removal that winter, and the uncertainty of how much money would be spent in that area going forward.

President Kazinskas confirmed that City Department Heads were aware of what the Mayor had just expressed to the Finance Committee.

Councilor Dernalowicz confirmed that the Free Cash Appropriations approved by the Finance Committee that evening had already been accounted for in the Mayor's statement.

On motion made by Councilor Aleksander Dernalowicz and seconded Councillor Ronald Cormier, it was voted to place the item on file.

• **10887 – An Order Appropriating \$4,040.00 from Free Cash to the Engineering Dept.- Capital Improvement Uptown Rotary Account.**

City Engineer Rob Oliva noted the Uptown Rotary Project required a total of eight easements. He noted the city had done appraisals on all properties affected, part of which was a just compensation report. The sum being requested constituted those awards to affected property owners.

Mayor Nicholson noted the sum would be presented to the Council as a whole once a sufficient amount of time had passed for property owners to raise any potential objections.

On motion made by Councilor Aleksander Dernalowicz and seconded Councillor Ronald Cormier, it was voted to recommend passage to the full Council.

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE ENGINEERING DEPT - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT UPTOWN ROTARY ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Four Thousand Forty Dollars and No Cents (\$4,040.00) from Free Cash to the Engineering Dept. – Capital Improvement Uptown Rotary Account.

• 10888- An Order Authorizing the City to Borrow \$5,380,000.00 for the Airport Runway Improvement Project. (added 1/25/2023)

Mayor Nicholson noted the sum being requested was set to be reimbursed in its entirety through Federal funding and was a matter of facilitating cleaner bookkeeping as it related to the previously discussed Airport Runway project.

On motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted to recommend passage to the full Council.

BOND ORDER NO. _____

IN CITY COUNCIL _____, 2023

A BOND ORDER TO PAY COSTS OF VARIOUS AIRPORT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS
BE IT ORDERED, BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GARDNER AS FOLLOWS:

That there be raised and appropriated the sum of Five Million Three Hundred Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$5,380,000) to pay costs of airport capital improvements, including, but not limited to, (i) designing and reconstructing runway 18/36, (ii) rehabilitating taxiway A; (iii) shifting/reconfiguring taxiway D; (iv) installation of NAVAID – runway 36; (v) install NAVAID runway 18 REILS; (vi) installation of an airfield electrical vault; (vii) installation of a lighted wind cone; (viii) replacement of airfield guidance signs, (ix) obstruction removal for runway 36 approach, and (x) the payment of all other costs incidental and related to each of the foregoing, and to meet this appropriation, the City Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, be and hereby is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, §8(12), or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the City therefor. The Mayor is authorized to accept and expend any federal or state grants that may be available to the City on account of the projects described above. The amount authorized to be borrowed pursuant to this loan order shall be reduced to the extent of any federal or Commonwealth grants received by City on account of the projects approved by this vote.

ADJOURNMENT On a motion by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz and seconded by Councillor Ronald Cormier, it was voted to adjourn at 6:23 p.m.

