

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING OF MAY 10, 2023

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The Finance Committee meeting was called to order by Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas at 8:00 AM in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall.

Finance Committee Members Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz (via phone conference) and Ronald Cormier were also present.

Also participating were Mayor Michael Nicholson; City Auditor John Richard; and City Clerk Titi Siriphan.

**Review and Approval of the Meeting Minutes**

On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll, to waive the reading and to accept the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of April 18, 2023

**REFERRED TO FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**10977 An Order Appropriating \$99,000.00 from Free Cash to the Personnel Employee Benefits Account- Workers Compensation Audit.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that this appropriation is part of the annual auditing procedures, the City is required to audit the workers compensation claims and payments every two years.

On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT –WORKER COMPENSATION EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Ninety-Nine Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$99,000.00) from Free Cash to the Personnel Dept. – Worker Compensation Expense Account.

**10978 An Order Appropriating \$701,700.00 from Free Cash to the DPW Snow and Ice Removal Expense Account.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that this appropriation covers the deficit that exists in the City's snow and ice removal account for operations that took place this winter. Most of the funds was spent on the purchase of salt than labor. There were a lot more ice instances instead of snow this year.

On a motion made by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz and seconded by Councillor Ronald Cormier, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the

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City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE DPW DEPARTMENT –SNOW & ICE REMOVAL EXPENSES ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Seven Hundred One Thousand Seven Hundred Dollars and No Cents (\$701,700.00) from Free Cash to the DPW Department – Snow & Ice Removal Expenses Account.

**10979 An Order Appropriating \$10,000.00 from Free Cash to the Treasurer Department Professional Services- Tax Title Foreclosure.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that the Administration has made more concerted effort going after properties on the tax title foreclosure list to get them back on the tax rolls. Doing so create additional legal expenses of getting these properties through land court.

On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE TREASURER'S DEPARTMENT –PROFESSIONAL SERVICES EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$10,000.00) from Free Cash to the Treasurer's Dept. – Professional Services Expense Account.

**10980 An Order Appropriating \$3,312.00 from Free Cash to Law Department Outside Counsel Expense Account.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that this line item is budgeted at \$5,000 for this account. There are currently 4 cases that would be covered under this account. This appropriation would close out any deficit that may exist in the current FY2023 operating budget.

On a motion made by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz and seconded by Councillor Ronald Cormier, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE LAW DEPARTMENT – OUTSIDE COUNSEL EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Three Thousand Three Hundred Twelve Dollars and No Cents (\$3,312.00) from Free

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Cash to the Law Dept. – Outside Counsel Expense Account.

**10981 An Order Appropriating \$500.00 from Free Cash to Law Department Deposition and Discovery Expense Account.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that this appropriation is the result of one of the lawsuits that the city is currently in. They don't anticipate any further depositions before the end of the fiscal year.

On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE LAW DEPARTMENT – DEPOSITION AND DISCOVERY EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Five Hundred Dollars and No Cents (\$500.00) from Free Cash to the Law Dept. – Deposition and Discovery Expense Account.

**10982 An Order Appropriating \$879.00 from Free Cash to Law Department Professional Development and Travel Account.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that this appropriation was overage due to training that needed to be done for the new Assistant Solicitor. Lawyers are required to take annual continuing legal education classes.

On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE LAW DEPARTMENT – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAVEL EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Eight Hundred Seventy-Nine Dollars and No Cents (\$879.00) from Free Cash to the Law Dept. – Professional Development and Travel Expense Account.

**10983 An Order Appropriating \$15,000.00 from Free Cash to Personnel Department Medical Exam Expense Account.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that all new hires undertake a pre-employment medical exam and drug test. This appropriation request is to cover the costs of those exams that came in higher than what was appropriated in the

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operating budget. There have been 166 new hires in the last fiscal year. It is \$150 for new hire exams for non-fire and police employees. For fire and police exams, it is \$800 per employee. That amount is set by the Civil Service Commission. This includes a physical fitness test and a psychological test.

On a motion made by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz and seconded by Councillor Ronald Cormier, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT –MEDICAL EXAMS EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$15,000.00) from Free Cash to the Personnel Dept. –Medical Exam Expense Account.

**10984 An Order Appropriating \$45,000.00 from Free Cash to Mayor’s Unclassified Energy and Utilities Account – Waterford Street School and Prospect Street School.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that due to inflation related to cost increases with electricity and gas, this appropriation was to heat the buildings in the wintertime.

On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE MAYOR’S UNCLASSIFIED –ENERGY AND UTILITIES CITY OWNED PROPERTIES EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Forty-Five Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$45,000.00) from Free Cash to the Mayor’s Unclassified – Energy and Utilities City Owned Properties Expense Account.

**10985 An Order Appropriating \$25,000.00 from Free Cash to Mayor’s Unclassified S. Graves vs City Lawsuit Account.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that this is an ongoing litigation issue that the City has had. It is an appeal of the City’s decision on a public records request. The plaintiff is also suing the Commonwealth. They are working with the Attorney General on this case and expecting them to take a more prominent role.

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On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE MAYOR'S UNCLASSIFIED – S. GRAVES VS CITY LAWSUIT EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$25,000.00) from Free Cash to the Mayor's Unclassified – S. Graves vs City Lawsuit Expense Account.

**10986 An Order Appropriating \$10,000.00 from Free Cash to City Hall Maintenance Repairs and Maintenance Account.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that this appropriation is to cover the repair work done on the elevator at City Hall.

On a motion made by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz and seconded by Councillor Ronald Cormier, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE CITY HALL REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$10,000.00) from Free Cash to the City Hall Repairs & Maintenance Expense Account.

**10987 An Order Appropriating \$25,000.00 from Free Cash to DPW Street Lights Expense Account.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that National Grid has been billing the City for lights at an incandescent rate instead of the LED rate. In 2019, the City converted all of the street light to LED for cost efficiency. The rate for LED is lower than the incandescent rate. National Grid has been over billing the City. They are in discussions with the Department of Public Utilities and National Grid to rectify this and get a credit going back to a certain number of years.

On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE DPW – STREET LIGHTING EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

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ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$25,000.00) from Free Cash to the DPW – Street Lighting Expense Account.

**10988 An Order Appropriating \$32,000.00 from Free Cash to Greenwood Pool- Pool Filtration System Expense Account.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that since the Council first approved funding for the new filtration system at Greenwood Memorial Outdoor Pool in 2021, the cost of the installation increased severely between the product arrived and when it was installed. The device ordered in April of 2021 and arrived in October of 2022 for installation.

On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE POOL  
FILTRATION SYSTEM EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Thirty-Two Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$32,000.00) from Free Cash to the Pool Filtration System Expense Account.

**10989 An Order appropriating \$1,091.00 from Free Cash to Zoning Board of Appeals Communications Account.**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that appropriation is to cover the cost of public hearing notices in the newspapers and abutters notices for the ZBA. Once the City has a fulltime Building Commissioner, he would like to have the applicant pay for these advertisements just like the process of the Planning Board.

On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE ZONING DEPT  
COMMUNICATIONS EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of One Thousand Ninety One Dollars and No Cents (\$1,091.00) from Free Cash to the Zoning Department Communications Expense Account.

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10990 An Order Appropriating \$14,925.00 from Free Cash to the IT Department City Hall Copy Machine Account.

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that the central copy machine in City Hall used by all departments is approximately 10 year old and reaching the end of its useful life.

On a motion made by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz, it was voted on call of the roll to recommend to the City Council that the following ORDER ought to pass:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING FROM FREE CASH TO THE IT DEPT – NEW EQUIPMENT EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated the sum of Fourteen Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars and No Cents (\$14,925.00) from Free Cash to the New Equipment Expense Account.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Ronald Cormier and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz it was voted to adjourn at 8:32 a.m.