

**Scott D. Houseman-Chair**  
**Julie R. Flowers**  
**Matthew J. St. Hilaire**

CITY OF BEVERLY  
RECEIVED AND RECORDED  
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

2023 MAR 14 P 2:38

**FINANCE AND PROPERTY / CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES**

Monday, March 13, 2023 6:30PM

City Council Chambers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Beverly City Hall, 191 Cabot St.

Houseman called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

Committee Members present: Julie Flowers, Matthew St. Hilaire, Scott Houseman

Committee Members absent: None

Councilors present: Hannah Bowen, Steven Crowley, Kathleen Feldman, Todd Rotondo, Brendan Sweeney

Councilors absent: Estelle Rand

Also present: City Council Budget Analyst Gerard Perry and Finance Director Bryant Ayles

**Discussion on Council Priorities for the FY2024 Budget**

Houseman asked for the budget priorities and concerns of the Council.

Perry went over how the municipal part of the budget has added positions and had challenges that have not happened in the past. The school, in his time of seven budgets here, gets most of the money leaving the municipal side in need. Perry stated his opinion is that it needs to be more balanced out.

Rotondo and Perry confirmed that if the Council cuts the budget, they cannot say where the money will go. For example, the Council can't cut three million from schools and put it towards roads and sidewalks. It would be up to the administration to decide where the money goes.

St. Hilaire said it would not really be cutting the budget. If we cut \$3,000,000 from the schools, they are still getting a 5% increase, so it's not cutting, it's just not giving them what they have gotten in the past. St. Hilaire said his priorities are roads and sidewalks and public safety staffing. St. Hilaire asked about an update on the 21 new positions in the City and the background of the projects that have been funded.

Flowers said her priorities are roads and sidewalks, improving the senior tax relief work off program, adding a communications point person for the City, adding a second position in the Veterans Office and diversity work in other departments.

Ayles asked for more specifics around the Veterans Office staff and what the Council would like fixed.

Bowen suggested a shared position with the Council on Aging and Veterans for the paperwork case load. It seems like a lot of paperwork and maybe they need help with that.

Houseman asked Perry to sit down with the Veterans Director and see what he thinks he needs.

Feldman asked if it's a management issue. Last year money was given for gravestones which was asked for, but he did not mention needing other help with case work.

Ayles stated the budget process has just begun and meeting with departments will be in April.

Houseman read correspondence from Councilor Rand where she requested more government tools for Council and other boards and commissions.

Houseman stated he is concerned with new less experienced people coming in and starting higher than people that have worked for the city for 25 years.

Rotondo stated his priorities are roads and sidewalks, transportation and that salaries in the City are still on the lower side.

Sweeney said he would like to maintain \$2.7 million for roads and sidewalks. Other priorities are the Central Fire Station repairs and Council Chambers being available for hybrid meetings.

St. Hilaire suggested looking into small streets and neighborhoods and doing more than a large project that takes up all the money for roads.

Feldman stated her concerns are roads and sidewalks, state funded projects falling off the radar (projects that were funded but never completed), and airport building 45.

Perry stated he talked to the Airport Commission and feels optimistic but is going to meeting with them again.

Bowen agreed on a lot of the already mentioned priorities and concerns and said she would like to be shown the process of sidewalks and roads in a chart or report.

Perry suggested a meeting solely on roads and sidewalks with the Engineering Department and Commissioner Collins.

Crowley stated his priorities are roads and sidewalks, parks, Ward 3, and finishing what gets started.

Committee of the Whole and Committee on Finance and Property adjourned at 8:28pm.