

Scott D. Houseman-Chair

Julie R. Flowers

Matthew J. St. Hilaire

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FINANCE AND PROPERTY / CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

Tuesday, May 23, 2023, 5:30PM

City Council Committee Room, 3rd Floor, Beverly City Hall, 191 Cabot St.

Order Number	Date to Committee	Description	Action Taken
#326	4/18/2023	Councilor Bowen-Regarding Beverly Regional Airport	Held
#104	4/18/2023	2023 Capital Expenditure Plan pursuant to the City Charter	Held
#137	5/15/2023	Reappointment-Michael Collins to serve as Beverly's Director of Engineering, Commissioner of Public Services, Public Works	Held

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

Other Councilors present: Todd Rotondo, Kathleen Feldman

Also present: Mayor Michael Cahill, Director of Public Services & Engineering Michael Collins, Assistant Commissioner of Public Services and Engineering Eric Barber, City Council Budget Analyst Gerry Perry

Houseman called the meeting to order at 5:34pm.

The motion for a five minute recess was made and seconded. A vote was taken, and the motion passed (3-0). The meeting adjourned at 5:34pm. The meeting was called back to order at 5:39pm.

Perry read a few lines from a document he prepared for Councilor Houseman that had information on outstanding projects and fund balances.

Collins stated public services keeps a list of ongoing projects but he has not seen the list in this format [as prepared by Mr. Perry]. It does not sound like it shows encumbrances.

Cahill arrived. Feldman arrived. Houseman called to order Committee of the Whole.

St. Hilaire asked for clarification on what was asked of Mr. Perry.

Houseman stated he would like to see where the city is on certain projects. Houseman asked Mayor Cahill about a hard stop at 6:30pm because he understands there is another meeting.

Cahill stated there is a public meeting at 6:30pm about the design of city hall. A meeting with councilors is being scheduled.

Houseman stated it seems conversations about the design happened already with city employees but he and other councilors were not included even though they are city employees. Houseman stated he was surprised other city employees and the public were invited to see it before councilors.

Houseman asked about the library HVAC system.

Cahill stated the project has a designer and should be eligible for payment from the federal government as a clean energy project. We are in the process of finding out more information.

Houseman asked if the HVAC project was on the expected timeline and the estimated completion date.

Collins said we have been aggressive in the path we've chosen. We are doing everything we can to accelerate the project. Collins stated he had been hoping they would be in the ground in September, but cost estimates came in higher than expected.

Cahill stated the hope is to be in construction by the winter and have the project completed in 2024.

Perry stated it sounds like this is on target with the completion date originally given.

St. Hilaire asked if the cost of goods and services is causing issues across the board.

Cahill and Collins agreed it absolutely is.

Cahill stated he expected to have designs for both the youth center and city hall by the end of the summer.

Houseman distributed to committee members a list from the website of four CPC projects that have not been completed, including replacement of tennis courts at Kimball-Haskell and Cahill Parks, Beverly Farms Cemetery perimeter fence restoration, Gruppe Mural preservation and Gillis Park/Pleasant View Beach staircase restoration.

Flowers asked for updates on some of the CPC projects.

Cahill stated they would have to talk with Bruce on the Gillis Park project.

Collins stated there may be a disconnect as he was not aware that was a DPS project not a parks project.

Cahill stated one of the goals of bringing Eric on is having the capacity for these projects. That's part of why we made this move.

Collins stated the mural is a tedious process. It may need to be made into a triptych in order to be transported. The hope is for it to be completed sometime in the next year. The Beverly Farms fence is a bandwidth issue on public services' end.

Houseman stated the big picture question is how those projects are being managed. It sounds like a capacity issue.

Collins agreed and stated this is why the department ventured into reorganization.

Barber stated he will be more involved in the day to day and Mike [Collins] will have time to focus on higher-level planning.

Houseman stated he is glad to hear this is happening.

Flowers asked what happens in the case where CPC funding was awarded a while ago and costs may have risen.

Collins stated either the scope of the project would be reduced or more money would need to be found.

Flowers asked for ways that members of the public can be informed when there are changes to the timeline. Flowers asked if there's a way to get those updates without nine councilors bombarding public services with questions.

Barber stated there needs to be a balance with constant recording and communicating. Barber stated he is working on a buildout in Central Square to track more information on projects. Barber stated by adding in more information on projects then progress will be on a report that can then be pulled a lot of different ways. It will take buy in and effort to build, but councilors could then get reports and have information to share with constituents.

Rotondo left at 6:11pm.

Cahill stated councilors could call his office with questions while this is being worked on. The constituent services position was made to help with inquiries.

Perry stated his opinion is that public services lacks the resources needed to coordinate a lot of this. Too much is put on Mr. Collins' lap. We have not invested as much on the municipal side as we should have.

Houseman asked about the Central Cemetery master plan and the Beverly Common gazebo.

Cahill stated the city got a donation from Beverly Rotary Club for the gazebo which is a piece of the funding but won't cover it all.

Houseman stated his understanding that someone was creating the plan on a volunteer basis and asked why the public should wait for a pro-bono architect when there's probably a free plan online for a gazebo.

Collins stated once the donation was accepted, it was also important to have buy in from the Beverly Rotary Club on the improvements since the gazebo was originally donated from them. The architect is a rotary member. It's about 90% of the way; the last part is working on structural details.

Perry asked how much would be needed.

Collins stated the project may be \$200,000 altogether.

Houseman stated he wanted to understand how an appropriated item for \$50,000 gets held up for a calendar year by a department head. Houseman stated he has a petition signed by 85 constituents who want improvements to the Central Cemetery.

Collins stated there was an agreement made to fund this which he didn't know about for some time. It fell through the cracks. Collins stated he was not aware of the RFP that was drafted and placed. We will get it done.

Houseman asked why it has taken so long.

Collins stated this happened outside the normal process and that he wants to understand where the RFP came from and what the goals of it are. There are a lot of good pieces there, but no cohesive effort to bring it together.

Houseman and Perry stated they provided language to David Gelineau for the RFP.

Cahill stated he agreed before that this would get its attention. These gentlemen [Collins and Barber] are on it.

Perry noted that the \$50,000 is for a study not for actual repairs to the fence.

Collins stated he would like to schedule a time with Councilor Houseman to go over the RFP.

Houseman stated this represents what has concerned him about management and communication.

Collins told committee members they can reach out with questions. We'll provide you with the best available information.

St. Hilaire thanked everyone for the discussion. The ward-by-ward engineering update is really helpful.

Flowers stated what Mr. Barber is envisioning would be really helpful. It sounds like communication can be tricky; it may not be just a public services issue. It can be part of communicating between all departments.

Cahill stated Eric's position has existed for about a month, and this is a lot of the reason for the position.

Barber stated he has been taking it upon himself to break down walls between departments and those separate buckets of information. Barber stated he is building umbrella systems and working on centralized documentation and modern practices.

Cahill left at 6:43pm to attend the public meeting.

Houseman asked why the gazebo is not in the capital expenditure plan.

Perry stated it is too small of a project.

Collins stated it would fall under operations. We want it to be less susceptible to vandalism. We are working with a contractor to have time for the work donated hopefully. Even for donating time there is a procurement process; whether going to bid or getting it donated, it's the same process.

Houseman stated he has an issue with the cemetery description in the capital expenditure plan and doesn't think it's accurate. The capital expenditure plan does not have a time-sensitive aspect to it since it's usually received and placed on file. Houseman stated he would prefer to hold it. Houseman stated he appreciates the work Mr. Collins does and the candid exchange.

Collins stated he did not know specifically what this meeting was about ahead of time and would appreciate a heads up on how to best prepare for it.

Houseman suggested a next step may be a meeting with himself, Collins, Barber, and Perry about the cemetery.

Barber stated councilors could schedule a time any Thursday night. If that doesn't work, we can set up another time.

The motion to adjourn Committee on Finance and Property was made and seconded. A vote was taken, and the motion passed (3-0). The meeting adjourned at 6:56pm.