

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

Wednesday June 1, 2022, 6:30PM

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

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

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

Other Councilors present: Hannah Bowen (arrived at 6:42pm), Steven Crowley, Kathleen Feldman, Estelle Rand, Todd Rotondo, Brendan Sweeney

Order #156-Mayor's FY23 Budget - Department Budget Sessions

Planning – Darlene Wynne

Wynne noted the move of some funding from overtime to meetings/training in order to support the development of staff.

There was discussion on consultant projects, staff turnover, and equity goals.

Bowen arrived at 6:42pm.

There was additional discussion about salary increases for retention, the new CATA route, and other options for shared transportation services.

Inspectional Services – Steve Frederickson

Frederickson stated Inspectional Services has updated their permit system and said the department is losing three people this month to retirement.

There was some discussion of the increasing fuel costs. Ayles stated this has been a discussion in all departments with fleets and there has been some adjustment made for that.

There was also discussion on hiring and building into the budget enough to retain staff at the level needed.

Library – Allison Babin

Babin gave an overview of the library services and stated that most increases in the budget are contractual. There was some discussion of the state aid funding requirements.

Flowers asked about library's move to be free of fines and fees and if that has pinched the budget at all.

Babin stated the fines that were collected were put into the general fund, so it has not had an effect on the library, and there have been so many positive interactions with the public. Babin noted that the map really overlapped with the diversity plan. If a book is never returned after a certain amount of time, there is still a fee or the book needs to be replaced.

A few councilors noted the beneficial impact of the bookmobile, and there was discussion of the upcoming HVAC updates for the building.

Council on Aging, Enterprise Fund – MaryAnn Holak

Holak emphasized the ongoing need for housing and stated that access to food is still also at the top of service needs for seniors. Holak highlighted some facility needs like air conditioning repairs and the use of the computer lab.

There was some discussion of the shifting needs and social services provided through the Council on Aging. Holak stated that a lot of fees over the pandemic were waived, and this year some fees will be charged again. The enterprise fund has not been robust for the past few years.

Health – Bill Burke

Burke stated the Health Department is down a couple of people as well and it is hard to pay competitively. There was some discussion of vehicles, rodent control funding and the exhaustion of health staff statewide. Ayles stated that one thing that has really come to light through this pandemic is that the way health is administered will be forever changed. The Health Department staff are overtaxed, so the City is looking forward in order to craft some additional resources to support the wide range of things they do. They have had a lot on their plate these past two years.

Rand expressed her gratitude to the Beverly Health Department for being about educating and creating opportunity when possible rather than shutting things down.

Parks & Recreation, Enterprise Funds – Bruce Doig

Doig stated that camps are back up and running this summer. Doig thanked the Community Preservation Committee, stating that they have done about 20 projects since the CPC has been in effect.

St. Hilaire asked about maintenance of the carriage house.

Doig stated he would like to see the carriage house as more of a community center than a function hall, but also looking at flooding maps for the next 30-40 years, it is hard to know how much to put into the space. There was some discussion of the “park of the year” line, which Doig stated a lot of was spent on replacing safety surfacing. Rand asked if the line could be renamed.

Feldman expressed concern with CIT program and CIT’s paying to participate and asked if there is a plan for that going forward.

Doig stated that Parks and Recreation started charging a fee a few years ago; it used to be a free program. It is a minimal fee to cover the costs of hiring someone who oversees the CITs and the events for the CITs. Doig stated scholarships are offered for the program.

Feldman asked what it would cost to run the program if there was no charge.

Doig stated it would be under \$10,000.

Feldman asked if a stipend to the CITs would be more of an incentive for them.

Doig stated he would need a budget for it. This has come up with diversity and equity conversations, and the department has been looking at how to get more diverse students. It has been a challenge to recruit.

There was discussion of repaving the parking lot at Lynch Park coming from ARPA since there was so much revenue loss for this enterprise fund. There was also discussion of pickleball and other recreation priorities.

The motion to adjourn was made and seconded. A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:07pm.