

City of Beverly
Special City Council Meeting
Public Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 28, 2022, 6:30pm
City Council Chambers, 191 Cabot St.

CITY OF BEVERLY
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Julie Flowers, City Council President, called the meeting to order at 6:30pm, City Clerk, Lisa Kent, took attendance by roll call.

Members Present: Hannah Bowen, Steven Crowley, Kathleen Feldman, Scott Houseman, Estelle Rand (arrived 6:49pm), Todd Rotondo, Matthew St. Hilaire, Brendan Sweeney, Julie Flowers

Members Absent: None

Feldman led the pledge of allegiance.

Order #156-Mayor's FY23 Budget

City Council Budget Analyst Gerry Perry spoke briefly about the budget and voting process.

Flowers asked if any Councilors would like to make general statements on the budget.

St. Hilaire thanked Ayles and Perry and stated that there is a lot to like about the budget. There is an opportunity with ARPA funding to make a difference, but there is also inflation impacting our residents. St. Hilaire stated he supported the decision the Council made last year to not go to the maximum tax levy. Home values are increasing; this is hitting residents. There is a lot of good stuff in the budget this year though, including new positions like mental health support in schools and new patrolmen, and there is a record level of roads and sidewalks funding.

Bowen spoke about some graphs she had created to help communicate the budget information. Bowen stated that the budget as presented does not really tell the story yet of the longer term investments that can and should be made. It is important as a full government to be transparent and accountable for it a year later. Bowen stated that her hope is that next year's budget, particularly with additional finance staff, includes goals and summaries by department of what has been accomplished and what changed throughout the year. Bowen stated she would be approaching the budget process in a very different way next year if the Council gets this same book.

Houseman agreed it would be good to get visuals as a way of communicating to the general public. Houseman asked for the mayor's annual reports to be submitted to the clerk's office.

Rand arrived at 6:49pm.

Houseman stated that the responsibility belongs with the administrative/executive branch for the kinds of things the Council is asking for.

Bowen credited the constituent services director who is working on creating some communication; that progress is there.

Flowers asked if any councilors would like to propose amendments.

Feldman noted that in the Parks and Recreation budget there was discussion of finding \$15,000 to put into Parks and Rec to fund next year's CIT program without a counselor fee.

Mayor Michael Cahill stated the rationale behind the fees is that it is a modest fee and a buy-in for the program. They have scholarships available. We can certainly engage in this conversation going forward. The program is already in place for this summer.

Feldman stated that she thinks it sets the wrong tone for work and value of work in the community and budget that we are building. It is so minimal to eliminate this fee. Feldman stated she understands that part of the reasoning was that if there was buy-in there would be more commitment to the program but does not see how for a 13 or 14 year old that is necessarily part of the equation if their parents are paying this fee. It seems worth giving it a try.

Ayles stated that he was not sure procedurally what kind of amendment would be put into place. The funding is already built in there.

Rand also expressed support for changing how this program operates.

Perry stated this is not a budgetary issue; it is a policy issue. Perry advised working with the mayor and the department head.

Rand stated that her hope is that some of the funds allotted in the DEI line could be used to support the CIT program.

Cahill stated he understands the desire. The recreation department, human resources, and school department are working on this; it has been a challenge to recruit students. Cahill stated he would be happy to sit down and discuss it and have the conversation with the staff from the recreation department.

Bowen stated that this is not a new request. It was discussed at budget time last year and in the preliminary budget conversations this year. Many places will not offer unpaid internships anymore because of the stark differences in outcomes and diversity. It sounds like there is the money in the budget to do it and an active choice not to even try it.

Feldman stated she appreciates all of the effort and outreach that has happened to date in terms of equity and inclusion in recruiting. Feldman stated that her disappointment lies in the unwillingness to try removing this barrier and that she would continue to work with department heads and have discussions.

A motion to approve the proposed budget as presented was made and seconded. A vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

Flowers thanked everyone who worked on this process.

Houseman stated that next budget season he plans to begin Council conversations early to discuss priorities.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. A vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:18pm.