

Finance Committee

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

Video of meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/KkVg1ZtCr98?feature=shared>

Members present in person: Chair Patricia Devine, Carmen Ocasio, Michael Sullivan, Kevin Jourdain

Members present on Zoom: Kocayne Givner

Other councilors present: Linda Vacon

Chair Devine called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

Chair Devine made a motion to take a roll call vote that for the purposes of this meeting would be applicable to all motions to remove an item from the table, place items on the table, package items, or suspend the rules, unless there is an objection. Motion passed.

Item 1: Minutes of October 7, 2024 meeting

---> Approved, 5-0

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Sullivan made a motion to approve item 1. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion adopted, 5-0.

(1:20)

Councilor Sullivan made a motion to remove item 2 from the table. Motion adopted.

Item 2: 10-15-24 DEVINE - Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2025, THIRTY THREE THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$33,000) as follows:

FROM:

14101-51101 PAY-ENGINEER \$19,000

14101-51105 PAY-SR CIVIL ENGINEER 14,000

TOTAL: \$33,000

TO:

14102-53010 PROF ENGINEERING SERVICES \$33,000

TOTAL: \$33,000

---> Approved, 5-0

DISCUSSION:

Chair Devine recognized DPW Director, Carl Rossi.

Councilor Jourdain asked if this was another appropriation for engineering services.

Chair Devine stated it was until the city hired somebody. She added that Victoria Houle was doing a great job.

Councilor Jourdain asked if this was for 2 months.

C. Rossi stated that it was.

Councilor Jourdain asked how the candidacy process was going. He recalled there was a suggestion to get a headhunter to help recruit a candidate.

C. Rossi stated that he would need to talk to Personnel Director, Kelly Curran, adding that they hadn't engaged in that process.

Councilor Jourdain asked for a follow-up on that. He emphasized that somebody needed to be retained. He also recalled that Councilor Magrath-Smith had suggested reaching out to area colleges for recent graduates or those early in their careers.

C. Rossi stated that would not be appropriate for a city engineer, emphasizing that they needed someone with at least 10 years of experience. He added they would need a PE license.

Councilor Jourdain agreed that was a need. He then asked for an explanation of years of work needed before someone could get that license. \

C. Rossi stated that the process required passing an engineering training exam in college, which was required before taking the PE exam. He added that they had to get training

working for a civil engineer for four years before being able to take the test. He noted it was similar to what doctors and lawyers had to go through.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the minimum amount of work someone needed was four years.

C. Rossi stated that was correct, but it had to be the right kind of experience.

Councilor Sullivan asked what the salary range was.

C. Rossi stated that it was \$112,500 to \$133,000.

Councilor Sullivan asked what the surrounding communities were paying.

C. Rossi stated that he hadn't looked at them, but believed the range was fair.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to approve item 2. Councilor Sullivan seconded the motion.
Motion adopted on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

C. Rossi stated that he was coming before the committee every few months because of transfers coming out of the salary line item and going into the engineering services line item.

(6:15)

Chair Devine suggested taking item 4 up out of order just to receive it.

Item 4: 8-6-24 From Mary Monahan, communication regarding board and ad hoc committee

---> Received, 5-0

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Sullivan made a motion to receive item 4. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion.
Motion adopted on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

(6:45)

Chair Devine made a motion to remove item 3 from the table. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion adopted.

Item 3: 10-1-24 MAGRATH-SMITH – Ordered, that the DPW Director and Conservation Director provide an update either in writing or in person as to the progress made in implementing the Urban Forestry Grant monies for 24-25.

---> Approved, 5-0

DISCUSSION:

C. Rosi stated that he and Conservation Director, Yoni Glogower, had been working on the grant. He then stated they had a big opening the next day for the program. He noted they had they couldn't go with their existing contractor because these were federal funds. He then explained that they would be planning to lease a stump grinder.

Councilor Jourdain recalled the money for the stump grinder was already approved.

C. Rossi stated it was part of the grant.

Chair Devine made a motion to approve item 3. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion.
Motion adopted on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

(8:25)

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to remove item 5 from the table. Councilor Sullivan seconded the motion. Motion adopted.

Item 5: 10-15-24 DEVINE - Ordered, that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44 Sec. 53A, the City Council hereby accepts the provisions of the "FY2025 STATE 911 DEPARTMENT SUPPORT & INCENTIVE GRANT, \$306,443, NO MATCH" grant and authorizes the establishment of a Fund or other method appropriate for the accounting of the receipts and expenditures of all resources associated with the administration of said grant.

Sec 2-509 – Grant Reporting

Any city department, of which has received grant funding by approval of the city council pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, or any other authorizing criteria, shall within a reasonable period of time, but no later than 60 days from the conclusion of said grant, generate a detailed report which outlines the planned outcomes with the documented actual results. Said report shall be submitted to the city clerk for addition to the city council's next agenda.

---> Approved, 5-0

DISCUSSION:

Chair Devine recognized Sgt. Zurheide from the Police Department to discuss the grant.

Sgt. Zurheide stated that they were awarded \$306,443 with a start date of September 10, 2024 and an end date of June 30, 2025. He then explained that the grant would be used to supplement salaries and overtime in dispatch as well as purchasing equipment needed for their dispatch center computers.

Chair Devine asked what kind of equipment it would be.

Sgt. Zurheide stated that there was a switch in the computer that was used for radio traffic, noting their current ones were older and starting to malfunction. He added that they were around \$15,000 per computer.

Councilor Givner asked what it meant that the grant ended in June of 2025.

Sgt. Zurheide stated that June 30, 2025 was the last day they could spend funds from the account.

Councilor Sullivan made a motion to approve item 5. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion adopted on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

(11:35)

Chair Devine made a motion to suspend the necessary rules to remove items 6 and 7 from the table as a package.

Item 6: 9-4-24 From the Holyoke Retirement Board, PERAC Investment Report 2023

---> Laid on the table, 5-0

Item 7: 9-4-24 From the Holyoke Retirement Board, Annual Statement of the Financial Condition of the Holyoke Retirement Board

---> Laid on the table, 5-0

DISCUSSION:

Chair Devine stated that members received this information a couple of weeks earlier. She then noted that Tony Dulude spoke with her earlier and stated he had sent a correspondence. She suggested tabling this to call him in at another time.

Councilor Jourdain agreed that he could come in at another time, noting nothing was dire but it would be good to check in with him on how things were going.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to receive items 6 and 7. Councilor Sullivan seconded the motion. Motion adopted on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

(13:40)

Councilor Sullivan made a motion to remove item 8 from the table. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion adopted.

Item 8: 9-4-24 VACON, JOURDAIN - ORDER: the Treasurer along with key people, please provide an update on progress and next steps for converting to self-insurance to provide health insurance for city employees. Please also review with the City Council the calculations on how the FY 25 insurance budget was calculated.
*Tabled 9-23-24

---> Complied with, 5-0

DISCUSSION:

Chair Devine welcomed City Treasurer, Rory Casey, into the chambers.

R. Casey expressed his understanding that the meat of the order was about explaining their calculations. He then introduced Chirs Butler and Joe O'Connor, members of the executive board of Section 19 as well as the newly established board of trustees, serving as the employee representatives. He also introduced the insurance brokers, Steve Corbin from Dowd Insurance as well as Maureen Ross O'Connell from Webber and Grinnell Insurance.

Councilor Jourdain stated that he had two main questions, with one being how the FY25 was arrived at. He also recalled that when this was last discussed nearly a year ago, there was conversation about conversion to self-insurance and about hitting benchmarks to move this along. He then asked to understand where things were.

R. Casey stated that the Council adopted the acts that allowed for the creation of a health and dental trust. He added that after exploring all the options, they decided to go with being self-insured. He noted that any claims with the previous insurer had carryover, and they were still being reconciled. He then explained that they would review where things were at when they got to the renewal period in January to decide if it was a good decision, emphasizing that there were off ramps if they needed it. He noted that the trust documentation was submitted and it was executed in June after the budget was voted on. He then explained that the trust was a 7 member board, with 3 representatives of

employees, 3 members representing the city who were currently made up of the auditor, the superintendent, as well as a mayoral appointee representing the city, and then those 6 elect a 7th member. He then noted an annual meeting would take place coming up in November.

Councilor Jourdain asked who the 7 people currently were.

R. Casey clarified that the mayor and superintendent still needed to submit names, but the 5 current ones were the city auditor, Tanya Wdowiak, as well as Chris Butler, Joe O'Connor, Quentin Donahue, and Chris Adams. He then stated they would hold meetings monthly or quarterly based on how the members decide to proceed.

Chair Devine asked if the present trust could change at the annual meeting.

R. Casey stated that it could, noting there was a lot of governance in the document, but he did not expect it to.

Chair Devine asked that the City Council be given a list once that meeting takes place.

R. Casey stated that it was his sense that there would not be any changes, adding that those put forward were longstanding members of the committee that had been very involved with the health insurance process. He also stated it had been a good example of management and labor coming together for a common goal. He also explained that this wasn't just a budget line but was coming out of everyone's pocket. He added that they were also negotiating with the carriers. He then deferred to Mr. Corbin and Ms. O'Connell to explain the numbers.

S. Corbin stated that he and Ms. O'Connell had been working with the city for some time, noting he was going on his 18th year as broker as well as Blue Cross Blue Shield rep. He then explained how the self-funded dollar was broken down into fixed costs and variable costs. He also explained that there were stop loss costs that were a part of caps that prevented large losses to the city if there were large claims in any given year. He then highlighted reports on a four years of history on medical claims versus the premiums being paid in to ensure that premiums taken in could cover claims going out. He added that they used 15% to trend forward from one year to the next. He then emphasized the importance of being conservative in the first couple years to avoid risks and keep a healthy trust and avoid drastic increases to employees.

Councilor Jourdain asked if 15% was typical for the market. He also asked if that was what Holyoke had experienced.

S. Corbin stated that was typical for the market in, not necessarily due to inflation but through contractual trends. He then stated that Holyoke was likely closer to 7% or 8%.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the thinking was to use a conservative cost trend in order to bulk up the trust.

S. Corbin stated that would be consistent with the presentation from Cook and Company. He added that the city would want to take the savings right away since it was unclear what could happen.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the city was still in the fully funded model or if the conversion had happened. S

S. Corbin stated that the conversion occurred on July 1st.

Councilor Jourdain stated that part of the disconnect was that when this was last discussed a year earlier, the Council was going to be provided with benchmarks on when this was going to happen but nothing was ever received.

R. Casey stated that it was discussed at the budget hearing.

Councilor Jourdain stated that the number was discussed, but it was not clear that the conversion was happening.

R. Casey reiterated that the city was still dealing with some runoff from being fully insured because of claims from before. He then stated that Blue Cross Blue Shield was covering everything now, including the stop loss insurance. He then explained that they could still look at other pharmaceutical plans that offer more rebates and other types of programs - potentially requiring more legwork from employees - but potentially leading to less coming out of their paychecks. He added that they wanted to see how things work out first.

Councilor Jourdain asked what percentage Blue Cross was charging.

R. Casey stated it was a flat fee of \$59.64 for a per member charge.

Councilor Jourdain asked what that was in percentage of claims.

S. Corbin stated he would need to do the math on that.

Councilor Jourdain asked what that aggregated out at over the course of a year.

S. Corbin stated that was \$1.156 million, which included the \$20 per member broker fee.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the broker fee was above the per member charge, making it \$79.64.

S. Corbin stated that it was.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the broker portion was around a quarter of a million.

S. Corbin stated that was accurate.

Councilor Jourdain asked what the standard was for an administrator.

S. Corbin stated that some were lower, and some were higher.

Councilor Jourdain asked what sold them on Blue Cross.

S. Corbin stated that they had deeper discounts, which would lead to lower claims overall. He added that they had one of the lower administrative fees. He also stated their stop loss rates were some of the lowest in the market. He also explained that they also had level monthly billing, avoiding ebbs and flows that would come with weekly billing.

Councilor Jourdain asked if that meant having an additional amount of claims did not mean paying extra.

S. Corbin stated that was correct.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the estimate date from different providers was available.

S. Corbin stated that they could provide that.

Councilor Jourdain asked what Holyoke got for the \$250,000 paid for broker services.

S. Corbin stated that he could provide a breakdown of those services. He then noted that they had dedicated a full time employee to Holyoke this year for the first time. He then explained she had been handling assistance with billing, reconciliation, auditing, and invoicing. He added that she would be available for help with open enrollment and onboarding.

Councilor Jourdain observed that the broker fee had not gone up, but had stayed flat or even reduced over the years. He then expressed his appreciation that the brokers were holding Blue Cross accountable. He then expressed his understanding that they were also involved in setting the premium.

S. Corbin stated that was correct.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the city had done a good job in the previous year of setting the premiums so there weren't shortages.

S. Corbin stated their goal as brokers was to get the premiums as low as possible, noting the risk was with the health insurance companies. He expressed his belief they had done a good job of that. He added that now with self-funded insurance, they would have to be more strategic.

Councilor Jourdain recalled the city had to pick up a shortfall of \$450,000 in a bad year due to a shortfall in the premium to cost.

S. Corbin recalled that was in the early days of self-funding, adding that things were more under control now.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the city could provide rebates or extra benefits if it ever overcharged, beyond it going into the trust.

M. O'Connell stated the intent was to be conservative in the early years to get the trust fund to grow its balance. She added that the city could give premium holidays or other rebates based on what the trustees decide.

Councilor Jourdain asked what the stop loss premium.

S. Corbin stated that the aggregate stop loss premium was \$3.84 per subscriber per month. He added that specific admin premium was broken down into individual at \$39.71 or family at \$123.87.

Councilor Jourdain expressed his understanding that the stop loss individual cap was \$350,000. He then asked if there was an aggregate cap was.

S. Corbin stated that while he did not have that figure, he explained that Blue Cross would come up with what they expected the city to pay throughout the course of the year and calculate 125% of anticipated claims.

Councilor Jourdain asked if they looked at other vendors in terms of stop loss insurance.

S. Corbin stated that they looked at 4 stop loss carriers.

Councilor Jourdain asked if they were the best choice.

S. Corbin stated they one of the big reasons for keeping with the same company as the insurance provider, aside from cost, was that the city would not need to wait for reimbursement from the stop loss carrier for losses from claims. He added that with more experience, the city could look at other carriers.

Councilor Jourdain asked if they looked at different thresholds to determine to the best balance between cost of premiums versus anticipating payback on stop loss.

S. Corbin stated they looked at different thresholds and found \$350,000 was the sweet spot.

Councilor Jourdain asked if all types of claims were aggregated.

S. Corbin stated there were no exclusions in this stop loss.

Councilor Jourdain asked if GLP-1 drugs were being covered.

S. Corbin stated they were as long as medically necessary.

Councilor Jourdain noted they were quite expensive. He asked if they were in a 4th tier.

S. Corbin stated they were in a specialty tier and would be a higher cost. He reiterated it needed to be medically necessary and not just for weight loss but for traditional purposes.

Councilor Vacon expressed her appreciation for the thorough presentation, noting that she also had not been clear the city had moved into the new model.

Councilor Sullivan what the difference was between the TPA admin fee and the specific admin fee.

S. Corbin stated that the TPA admin fee was paid to administer the claims adjudication, customer service, and other day-to-day services. He then explained that the specific admin fee was the cost for the stop loss insurance to cover catastrophic claims.

Councilor Sullivan noted that the 4 year reports showed the TPA only went up 5% while the specific fee went up 20%.

S. Corbin stated that those numbers had a little leeway and were to generate a self-funded projection because they did not want to include fully insured trending. He then suggested that over a 4 year period, the stop loss fee would likely increase around 5% a year.

Councilor Sullivan stated that under the prescription number for 2024, the surplus was -\$1.1 million. He suggested that it could almost be attributed to just 2 months and noted that there wasn't any other 2 month period in 4 years where the prescription cost increased by over 100%.

R. Casey covered by Health New England, adding that a lot of it was pharmaceutical and a lot of it was a juvenile cancer case. He then explained that over the last 10 years, the single largest driver of costs were prescription costs.

Councilor Sullivan suggested that in the next year, the city could be looking at it going to \$11 million if the trend continued.

R. Casey stated that one big difference was that some pharmaceutical costs would go down through no longer covering prescriptions that could be purchased over the counter.

Councilor Sullivan stated that he was concerned about a potential \$6 million shortfall if the trend continued from the previous years.

S. Corbin offered a reminder that the city was capped at \$350,000 on individual claims, so even with those claims, the city would be held harmless. He added that there were programs available to employees for specialty drugs that could allow them to get those drugs for as little as no cost. He then stated they could pay a higher cost if they chose not to follow the programs.

Councilor Sullivan stated that he had concerns and needed more explanation. He then emphasized that \$974,000 was paid out in one month earlier in the year, compared to averaging around \$350,000 in previous months.

S. Corbin stated that the spreadsheet needed to be corrected, noting that the medical claims column appeared to have been repeated in the pharmacy column, leading to the pharmacy numbers being overstated. He then stated that he would resend the spreadsheet out after checking it.

Councilor Sullivan stated that it would wipe out the negative surplus.

Chair Devine noted that it was both May and June.

Councilor Jourdain added that could be around \$1 million difference.

S. Corbin stated that it was a better look now. Councilor Jourdain asked where in the process there would be an actuary brought in to review and certify the numbers and ensure enough was being charged.

R. Casey stated that he understood the question but was not aware of anything mandating that. He added that did not mean it couldn't happen. He then explained that it was different from the Retirement Board where risk needed to be managed in a different way.

Councilor Jourdain suggested that even if it was not required, it should be considered to make sure someone was looking at the cushion and understanding the worst case scenarios.

R. Casey stated that was the role of the trustees to look into that, but the trust document would allow them to bring somebody in to perform that type of service.

Councilor Jourdain explained that on the provider side of things, those representing hospitals and doctors needed to have actuarial certifications when entering into risk based agreements. He added that it could help keep everyone honest to have someone looking at data such as claims history, background, and number of participants. He suggested it wouldn't be that expensive. He then asked if they saw stability going into the FY 26 budget that would not see a 10% jump. He also asked that the Council be kept up on invitations to meetings, minutes, and reports from those meetings.

R. Casey explained that they would be publicly noticed meetings with agendas posted on the city website. He added that minutes would be submitted to the Council once approved as a matter of how it should operate. He then suggested that while it was too early to put

a number on things, all of the work done to research the options was with an eye toward stability. He added that it wasn't about just focusing on first year savings but on the long term health and solvency of the city and the trust.

Councilor Jourdain stated that the cost could not be going up 10% a year.

R. Casey stated that he agreed, but 10% was better than the 20% the city was looking at with the fully insured plan. He then emphasized that the meetings would be more public than the section 19 meetings were, noting that those were not public meetings. He added that the process would be more transparent than it had been before.

Councilor Jourdain asked if they would be on video.

R. Casey stated that he couldn't say because he didn't know what room they would be meeting in.

Councilor Jourdain asked them to consider it.

R. Casey expressed his belief that all subcommittees and boards should be televised. He then stated that minutes from these meetings would be provided to the City Council. He added that the Council could invite the trustees and brokers to future meetings to talk more about these things. He also stated that they should be able to provide 6 months of claims data during discussions of the budget but noted that it wouldn't be until the 2nd or 3rd year before long term projections could be provided.

Chair Devine stated that it was good to see everyone was happy with this so far.

J. O'Connor introduced himself as the former chairperson of the Section 19 committee. He then stated that their committee's relationship with Mr. Casey, Ms. Curran, and the brokers had been a very good one, and he expressed appreciation to everyone involved.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion that item 8 had been complied with. Councilor Sullivan seconded the motion. Motion adopted on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

(1:24:50)

Chair Devine asked that item 11 be taken off the table, noting that officers were available to discuss it. She then stated that Sgt. Jim Bartolomei, Acting Chief Cruz, and Officer Borrego.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to remove item 11 from the table. Councilor Sullivan seconded the motion. Motion adopted.

Item 11: 3-19-24 MURPHY-ROMBOLETTI - Ordered that the City Council invite the Mayor, Police Department and relevant financial department heads to a future meeting of the Finance Committee to provide an update on the status of the off-duty police account and former vendor Off-Duty Blue.

*Tabled 4-3-24, 5-15-24, 8-12-24, 9-11-24

---> Laid on the table, 5-0, to January

DISCUSSION:

Chair Devine recalled that when this was last discussed, an itemized list was provided on this.

Acting Chief Cruz stated that they had since had several meetings, and he had delegated it to Sgt. Bartolomei and Ofc. Borrego. He then stated they had numbers and could address questions.

Mayor Garcia emphasized this had been an ongoing project. He added that Mr. Casey could give an overview of where this was and what had happened with the status. He also stated they were addressing previous deficits, addressing current systems and practices, as well as what they planned to do with the remaining gap after reconciliation.

R. Casey explained that the off duty account was for officers working road details. He then explained that officers get paid through city payroll. He also explained that there had been issues in the past with work being performed and bills not being paid, leading to deficits. He then stated that the department began working with a third party vendor who would charge a 10% fee on top of the detail fee, with half going to the vendor and the other half to the city for administrative costs. He further explained that initially contracted with RollKall, changed to Off Duty Blue 6 months, and now were back with RollKall. He then stated that with Off Duty Blue, there was a concern that they were not sending in timely reports or funds, and the funds received did not come with reconciliation of what the funds were for, leading to a significant deficit. He then stated that the mayor talked to the Council president, which led to this order being filed, but they had since gone back to RollKall. He then emphasized there was an improvement, with deposits coming regularly, along with reports that broke down hours worked by each officer and how much they were paid. He added that the Law Department had been working with the Police Department to go after unpaid bills.

Chair Devine observed it appeared things were approving. She then asked if there was a contract with Off Duty Blue, as well as how the switch happened.

R. Casey stated there was a contract that would be submitted to the Council for the records, noting that it wasn't the type of contract the Council would approve, but was executed between the mayor and the Police Department. He reiterated that the current contract was now with RollKall. He then suggested that the account was likely just too big for Off Duty Blue.

Mayor Garcia stated that RollKall understood the original concerns from the city, and they saw it as an opportunity to step up.

Chair Devine reiterated a list was provided before. She then asked another list could be provided in the future to see how things were going.

Mayor Garcia suggested that this remain tabled to allow them to come back with more information and continue the conversation.

Chair Devine asked the officers to describe where they started and where they were now.

Sgt. Bartolomei stated they were in the process of putting together an SOP (standard operation procedure) to show how RollKall worked, including how bidding for details worked and setting up payments. He then explained that they continued to go after those on the list, which included city entities as well as the mall, which made up over two-thirds of what was owed. He then explained that some cause for concern at the last meeting was due to looking at the wrong list, notably a \$1.2 million figure that was money that had been collected, not money that was still owed. He added that what was currently owed was \$120,000. He reiterated Mr. Casey's point that Off Duty Blue had a habit of sending checks but not explaining where the money was from, leading to his department being unsure which vendors still owed and which had paid. He then stated they would have an SOP ready to provide to the Council by the end of December.

Councilor Sullivan expressed his understanding that Off Duty Blue and RollKall were supposed to straighten out an issue with reserve officers not getting paid. He asked if that was still an issue.

Sgt. Bartolomei stated that he was unsure about that. He then explained that when they did away with the reserve crew who were paid through the Police Department, they became 1099 employees and were paid directly from the vendors.

Ofc. Borrego stated that auxiliary officers at one time were not getting paid until the vendors paid their bills. He then stated that with RollKall, they were being paid right away. He added they also got insurance through RollKall

Councilor Sullivan emphasized that was a great improvement.

Councilor Jourdain asked what city employee was responsible with the relationship with RollKall as well as receiving reports from the company.

R. Casey stated that they were a vendor of the Police Department. He then explained the expected SOP would include an explanation of the whole process of vendors seeking details all the way to handling pay. He then stated that when officers work a road detail, they get paid during the following pay period, which was how the deficit was happening.

Councilor Jourdain asked who was responsible.

R. Casey stated the Police Department entered the payroll.

Councilor Jourdain asked who at the Police Department was responsible.

Acting Chief Cruz stated that it would be payroll.

Councilor Jourdain asked if someone in payroll at the Police Department that managed this.

R. Casey stated that the department had just hired a new bookkeeper who would be managing this.

Councilor Jourdain asked if they were an admin.

R. Casey stated they were.

Councilor Jourdain asked if an admin was in charge of the relationship with RollKall.

R. Casey clarified that would be the chief.

Councilor Jourdain asked Acting Chief Cruz if he personally reviewed the reporting from RollKall. He then noted that he had heard from city departments that they weren't willing to pay the bills until provided with the specific times and hours they were being billed for. He then expressed an expectation that RollKall would be reporting those details, or it wasn't clear what would be reported to the treasurer's office to make sure payment was going into paychecks. He then asked what was still needed from RollKall.

Sgt. Bartolomei clarified that it was an Off Duty Blue issue.

Councilor Jourdain asked who was receiving the reports when it was with Off Duty Blue.

Sgt. Bartolomei stated that it was a combination of the Police Department and the Law Department to try and get the money. He then clarified that they were not declining to pay but were asking for invoices. He added companies weren't willing to just send a check when told by the city they owe something.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the issue was that while the city had the details for paying people, it did not have the details to give to the vendors who purchased services from the city. He then asked what the holdup was, emphasizing that the city already provided the information. He suggested that the information must be available because it would have been provided to the treasurer's office for people to get paid.

Sgt. Bartolomei stated that it wasn't available from Off Duty Blue.

Councilor Jourdain stated that it must have been available because people were getting paid.

R. Casey explained that there was a total amount.

Councilor Jourdain stated that an employee would say they worked on a specific date for a number of hours for a specific road job for a specific vendor.

R. Casey stated those reports were what they were having a difficult time with. He then stated that independent of payroll, the Police Department entered their payroll, which would specific officers working road detail, and they get paid out of the road detail account. He added that did not necessarily mean the department's payroll would know the specifics of a road detail.

Councilor Jourdain asked why they wouldn't know that.

R. Casey expressed his understanding that this was the document the Police Department was planning to provide.

Councilor Jourdain if his office didn't have backup for the hours people worked.

R. Casey stated they got a timesheet.

Councilor Jourdain asked if that didn't include who they were doing the jobs for.

R. Casey stated it was only the total amount. He added that the police chief signed off on those, and then they went to the auditor's office for review. He then explained that the details they were now getting from RollKall included specific officers, who they worked for, how much the rate was, how long they worked, and what the specific job was. He further explained that level of detail hasn't existed before the last 6 months.

Councilor Jourdain asked if took until 6 months ago, after 20 years, to decide the city needed that level of detail.

R. Casey stated he couldn't speak to how it was done before.

Councilor Jourdain recalled Councilor Bartley's frustration when this was last discussed was appropriate, emphasizing that these issues happened before multiple times, followed by repeated claims it would all get better. He then expressed disappointment that specific details about the work were missing while people were paid for them.

R. Casey clarified the vendors they had the most issues with weren't 90 days or even a year of being owed but went back as much as 4 years. He recalled there was a fast food restaurant that owed the city \$6,000, and the departments worked together and were able to collect on it. He reiterated that they were running into situations where they seek to be paid, and some state they believed they already paid and were asking for invoices.

Councilor Jourdain asked if someone was required to prepay if they stiffed the city previously.

R. Casey stated that they were, noting that was one of the things they discussed in their previous meeting. He added that they were requiring credit cards to be on file to bill. He also stated that there were sometimes situation such as with HG&E where they may be behind, but they were waiting to be paid for their contract. He then explained that for every payroll, the auditor was asking for confirmation that the chief had signed off on the numbers and could verify when and where people worked.

Mayor Garcia suggested that the repeated issues in the past had been due to bad internal control systems. He then explained that his oversight attitude was to make sure department heads understood the responsibility fell on them, even if they were assigning those duties of turning over revenues in their departments to other people in their departments. He added that he was also working to make sure reimbursement forms were done in time when it came to grants. He then stated that he would be doing more to hold department heads responsible. He then stated that the issue with Off Duty Blue was a vendor issue and shouldn't be blamed on any department head. He then explained his plan to eventually come to the Council to clear up any remaining gap, but would first do everything possible to collect everything and make sure processes were cleaned up to avoid these issues happening again.

Ofc. Borrego stated that with RollKall's system, they were sending the invoice information to the clients to verify it was all correct, they then get approved, and then officers get paid through payroll.

Chair Devine asked when they would be ready to have this come up again.

Acting Chief Cruz stated that after December, they should have answers that Bartley asked for.

Sgt. Bartolomei stated they would also have the SOP.

Chair Devine stated she would plan to take this back up in January.

Acting Chief Cruz stated they would try to collect as much revenue as they could in the meantime.

Chair Devine made a motion to lay item 11 on the table. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion adopted on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

(2:06:50)

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to remove item 10 from the table. Motion adopted.

Item 10: 8-6-24 DEVINE - Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2025, THIRTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$30,000) as follows:

FROM:
11211-51104 MAYOR - CAFO \$30,000
TOTAL: \$30,000
TO:
11611-51210 ELECTIONS OFFICERS \$30,000
TOTAL: \$30,000
*Tabled 8-12-24

---> Approved, 5-0

DISCUSSION:

Chair Devine stated that the City Clerk could not attend, but sent a letter explaining that the funds were for the special election on January 28, 2025 to cover costs of poll workers, movers, printing of ballots, programming memory cards, equipment transportation, and overtime.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to approve item 10. Councilor Sullivan seconded the motion. Motion adopted on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

(2:08:15)

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to remove item 9 from the table. Councilor Sullivan seconded the motion. Motion adopted.

Item 9: 10-15-24 DEVINE - Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2025, ONE HUNDRED EIGHT THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED NINETY FIVE

AND 56/100 Dollars (\$108,695.56) as follows:

FROM: 8815-10400 CANNABIS STABILIZATION \$108,695.56
UPDATE TO FY2025

TOTAL: \$108,695.56

TO: 19412-57630 SOLICITOR – CLAIMS & DAMAGES \$108,695.56

TOTAL: \$108,695.56

---> Laid on the table for executive session, 5-0

DISCUSSION:

Chair Devine stated that the same transfer had come before the committee before and had been discussed a lot. She then asked what the committee wanted to do.

Councilor Jourdain stated that he believed it should remain tabled and be discussed in executive session. He then noted that one of the documents in the packet claimed it

passed on October 1st by a vote of 7-6, with a presentation to the mayor to signature on October 2nd. He suggested that it did not pass. He then asked if this was a refile.

Chair Devine stated that it was a refile. She then suggested getting the parties together to go through it.

Councilor Jourdain stated that the logic behind the amount needed to be discussed. He recalled the Law Department advised discussing it in executive session.

Laid on the table on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

Adjourned at 8:41 PM

Documents for meeting can be [found here](#).

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ADMINISTRATIVELY LAID ON THE TABLE

Item 12: 9-4-24 From Stephen Superba – Email regarding Police Department Cash Seizures