

Finance

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

Video of meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/ZMhWTNawJ4o>

Members present in person: Chairman Joseph McGiverin, Vice Chairman Kevin Jourdain, Peter Tallman, Will Puello

Members present on Zoom: Juan Anderson-Burgos

Other councilors present: Linda Vacon, Jose Maldonado Velez

Chairman McGiverin called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM

Councilor Tallman made a motion to take a roll call vote that for the purposes of this meeting will be applicable to all motions to remove items from the table, package items together, suspend the rules, or any miscellaneous such motions unless there is an objection. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion passed on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

Councilor Tallman made a motion to suspend the necessary rules to remove items 1 and 2 from the table as a package. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Item 1: 1-3-23 Settlement Agreement by and Between The City of Holyoke and the UFCW Local 1459, Council in aging employees

--->Received, 5-0.

Item 2: 1-3-23 MCGIVERIN — that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2023, SIXTEEN THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED SIXTY SIX AND 00/100 Dollars (\$16,966.00) as follows:

FROM:

11381-51101 CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER \$16,966.00

..- UFCW LOCAL 459/COUNCIL ON AGING MOA ..

TOTAL: \$16,966.00

TO:

15411- 51102 KITCHEN SUPERVISOR \$1,827.00

15411-51104 KITCHEN ASSISTANT 3,132.00

15411- 51105 SOCIAL WORKER / COORDINATOR 5,481.00

15411-51202 LPN / WELLNESS INSTRUCTOR 2,872.00

15411- 51203 DRIVER 3,654.00

-
-
-
TOTAL: \$16,966.00

--->Approved, 5-0.

DISCUSSION:

Chairman McGiverin stated that item 2 was a transfer to financially support the agreement in item 1. He emphasized that the City Council does not get involved in negotiating contracts but have a role to play in reviewing them as part of the appropriation approval process. He then recognized that Assistant City Solicitor Mike Bissonnette was in attendance, as well as Navae Rodriguez, Director for the Council on Aging, and Jeff Jones from the union. He then asked Atty Bissonnette to explain the contract.

Atty Bissonnette stated that the contract was self-explanatory, with some issues regarding adjusting the pay for several employees. He noted there were funds available due to a vacancy in the Chief Procurement Officer position.

Chairman McGiverin expressed his understanding that this would be retroactive to the beginning of the fiscal year, July 1st, 2022, with a similar increase for the following fiscal year as it was a 2 year agreement. He then asked to confirm that the increases were not percentages but \$1 per hour increases.

J. Jones confirmed that was correct. He then stated that the agreement was straightforward, 2 year deal retroactive to July 1, 2022, with a dollar increase each of the 2 years. He added that there were minor adjustments to the clothing allowance for kitchen staff and drivers, as well as some grammatical changes.

Chairman McGiverin asked to clarify that the clothing allowance was capped at \$150 per fiscal year.

J. Jones confirmed.

Chairman McGiverin asked Ms. Rodriguez if there was anything else to add.

N. Rodriguez stated that it was a fair settlement.

Councilor Jourdain asked how many employees were involved in the agreement.

N. Rodriguez stated there were 11.

Councilor Jourdain asked why the \$1 an hour increase was the agreed on figure, if it was an evaluation of what was fair compared to similar workers in neighboring communities. He

also asked what that was as a percentage. He also asked if it had been some time since they had gotten a raise. He emphasized that the workers did a great job for the city.

N. Rodriguez stated that they started off negotiating with percentages but there was a feeling of trying to do better for the employees at the lowest end of the pay scale. She noted that the \$1 increase was significant for those making \$16-\$17 an hour, and would put them more in line with working workers in similar positions in other communities. She added that the percentage was lower for higher paid staff.

Councilor Jourdain asked to clarify that they did look at other communities to make sure the city was being competitive.

N. Rodriguez confirmed that was accurate.

Councilor Jourdain asked to confirm the annual impact was around \$19,000 a year.

N. Rodriguez stated that it was around \$17,000.

Councilor Jourdain stated that it showed \$38,000 for 2 years.

J. Jones stated that the appropriation request amount was to supplement the already existing COA budget. He suggested that \$19,000 a year was more accurate.

Councilor Jourdain asked if they had struggled to fill positions or was this about holding onto good people.

N. Rodriguez stated that specifically for the driver position and the kitchen assistant position, they did put out a call to hire people twice during the previous fall. She added that they did get people but it was a struggle.

Councilor Tallman expressed his belief that it was a fair agreement. He then stated that he visited the Senior Center often and found them to be great, hardworking people. He noted that people from other communities often visit for their lunches and community activities. He added that it was well run.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to receive item 1 and approve item 2. Councilor Anderson-Burgos seconded the motion. Motion passed on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays-- Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

(12:05)

Councilor Tallman made a motion to remove item 3 from the table. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Item 3: 1-3-23 MCGIVERIN — that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44 Sec. 53A, the City Council hereby accepts the provisions of the “FY2022 EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT, \$37,248, 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.
*Tabled initially, adopted later in the meeting.

DISCUSSION:

Chairman McGiverin stated that Sgt Hart would be attempted to join by telephone. He then noted that Sgt Hart did not appear to be in attendance. He then stated that this was an annual grant that most councilors would be familiar with. He then explained that the grant came from the Attorney General, with conditions and requirements the same as before. He added that the grant had been coming in for close to 2 decades. He then asked Mayor Garcia if he could explain it.

Mayor Garcia suggested revisiting the item later in the meeting to allow him time to get more information.

Chairman McGiverin asked City Auditor, Tanya Wdowiak, if she could explain it.

T. Wdowiak stated that she had only the same information as the committee and was not sure what they would be paying for with the grant.

Chairman McGiverin suggested returning the item to the table for later.

Councilor Tallman made a motion to lay item 3 on the table. Chairman McGiverin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

(15:40)

Councilor Tallman made a motion to remove item 4 from the table. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Item 4: 10-4-22 From Tanya Wdowiak, City Auditor, Purchase Agreement for Police Cruisers, Lease Schedule No 1 and Master lease purchase agreement.
*Tabled 10-17-22

--->Complied with, 5-0.

DISCUSSION:

Chairman McGiverin stated that the communication was sent due to a request from Councilor Jourdain to receive a copy of the agreement. He then asked if Mayor Garcia or Ms. Wdowiak could explain the cruiser lease. He then asked if the lease with Marcotte had fun out.

T. Wdowiak stated that they made their last payment on the 2022 agreement the previous month and that the city's lease agreements were done at that point.

Chairman McGiverin stated that during the budget hearings, there was a request within the budget that led them to believe that the agreement was up sooner than it was. He recalled that it was cut.

Mayor Garcia recalled that there was discussion about an overlap. He then explained that they took funds from capital stabilization to pay for the first half. He clarified that it was called a lease but was not really a lease.

Councilor Jourdain asked if there was awareness that the city was paying 3% interest on the leases. Noting that the 2019 agreement added up to \$4,610, he questioned if the city wanted to continue paying interest.

Mayor Garcia asked if that referred to the final payment for the existing lease.

Councilor Jourdain stated that the agreement ended in October of 2020. He asked if there were subsequent leases after that. He suggested that it appeared the city was getting away from leases and just buying the cruisers. He asked if that was accurate.

Mayor Garcia stated that going forward, they would be purchasing vehicles from MHQ through a state list. He then stated that there was an agreement to spend a certain amount in a 2 year period for vehicles. He added that he was unsure if there would be leases in the future.

Councilor Jourdain asked if there would be interest under the new arrangement.

T. Wdowiak stated that the new agreement was not a lease but a contract to purchase. She added that the 2020 agreement was the last lease entered into. She added that they then purchased vehicles outright from Marcotte and then had them sent to MHQ for outfitting with lights and technology tools.

Mayor Garcia asked to clarify if there was interest in the contract with MHQ.

T. Wdowiak stated that there was not.

Councilor Jourdain stated that the first lease valued at \$315,000 had \$4,610 in interest. He added that the second arrangement dated June 17, 2022 was valued at \$206, 245 with an interest payment of \$8,408.

Mayor Garcia stated that was the lease they were transitions away from. He then asked to clarify if that was the second payment.

Councilor Jourdain stated that the agreement showed a payment due on June 17, 2022, leaving a remaining balance of \$197,836, which is what was just paid. He then asked to confirm that the city was done with leases.

Mayor Garcia confirmed that was correct.

Councilor Jourdain asked to confirm that the police going forward would not be to do leases but use capital stabilization or other sources to purchase.

Mayor Garcia stated that they would assess the need, and would work to commit to a practice where needs are understood ahead of time so that they can be budgeted and planned for. He added that if that was not possible, raising and appropriating may be looked into. He added that bonding would be a last resort. He then stated that MHQ was on the state bid list, had the vehicles ready, and was an arrangement that did not require interest.

Councilor Jourdain emphasized that it had been the longstanding policy to pay as we went, adding that he preferred to go back to that. He then stated that the agreement showed underwriting fees. He noted that these types of things should be avoided in the future.

Councilor Tallman stated that it was good to receive the documents to better understand how the vehicles were paid for, noting it was called a lease but was not really.

Mayor Garcia clarified that it was a lease but was bought out.

Councilor Tallman noted that it could be confusing. He recalled that the Police Chief provided some explanation at an earlier meeting that it was better to get vehicles now to enjoy savings. He emphasized how important it was to have vehicles ready and available for officers.

Mayor Garcia stated that they were planning to streamline management and control of vehicles through the Purchasing office. He noted his frustration with repurposing vehicles rather than purchasing new ones and getting rid of old ones through surplus. He noted that this caused the fleet to grow, increasing insurance costs and leading to cars sitting around doing nothing. He added that there was confusion with department heads working directly with the insurance company. He suggested having it centralized would allow them to know things were in order.

Councilor Jourdain asked how to get 150th pins.

Mayor Garcia stated that he was scheduling meetings with everyone and giving them out.

Chairman McGiverin noted that it was a special year for the city with the 150th anniversary as well as the 70th St. Patrick's Parade.

Councilor Anderson-Burgos noted that City Hall was never dedicated a first time.

Councilor Tallman made a motion that item 4 had been complied with. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion passed on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

(29:15)

Councilor Tallman made a motion to remove item 5 from the table. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Item 5: 12-20-22 RIVERA_I — Order that the honorable city council approve an increased funding request in the amount of \$3,000 to the Wistariahurst museum for their painting restoration project. Originally Wistariahurst applied for and was granted 125K via CPA to complete the project, but due to rising costs in building and materials across the nation they now need another 3K.
*Tabled 12-28-22

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

DISCUSSION:

Chairman McGiverin recognized that Megan Seiler from Wistariahurst was in attendance. He noted that the item was tabled at the last meeting. He then asked Ms. Seiler if she could address the item.

M. Seiler stated that she was supposed to meet with Meghan from CPA and Atty Degnan to go over details and get more insight about the project per the request from Councilor Jourdain.

Chairman McGiverin stated that the questions were about maintenance and the legitimacy of using CPA funds for this. He then stated that he spoke with Atty Degnan and learned that the meeting was meant to take place the previous week but was postponed to the next Friday. He suggested that the questions may have to be on hold until after that meeting. He then asked how the project was going with the funds they did have.

M. Seiler stated that they had the previously approved \$125,000 as well as a \$75,000 gift accepted by the City Council on behalf of the Wistariahurst Foundation. She added that the project bid came in at \$203,000.

Chairman McGiverin asked if they needed the additional \$3,000.

M. Seiler stated they did to meet the shortfall for the overall bid. She added that the Wistariahurst Foundation would pay an additional \$18,000 for trimming back vines by a local specialist.

Councilor Jourdain emphasized that his concern was strictly a legal compliance matter and that the additional funds would be found in some way if this was not allowed. He added that they were waiting to confirm that painting was defined as restoration and not maintenance. He then asked when the work was meant to begin. He made an assumption that it would have to wait until it was warmer.

M. Seiler expressed their hope that it would start when they were able to enter into the contract, which would have to wait until they were fully funded. She suggested that some of the restoration work on some of the rot could begin while it was still cold. She noted that work on some of the trim and the rot would need to start before they could start on the painting work. She added that the terms of the contract would require the work to be done by May 31st.

Councilor Jourdain asked if there was an expense line in the budget to cover the cost, or if it could be pulled from capital stabilization, noting the time sensitivity.

M. Seiler welcomed the suggestion.

Mayor Garcia asked to clarify the timeline.

M. Seiler stated that the painting project needed to be finished by May 31st, 2023.

Mayor Garcia asked to confirm that they had secured a contractor to do the work.

M. Seiler stated that they had secured a winning bid but could not enter into the contract until it was fully funded and sitting in an account.

Mayor Garcia asked what the anticipated start time was.

M. Seiler stated that they hoped it could get started in late winter/early spring.

Mayor Garcia suggested that while they were waiting for a legal opinion, he could submit a line item transfer if it was getting close.

Councilor Jourdain suggested that if the Law Department said the \$3,000 wasn't okay, they could also state that the original \$125,000 was not okay either. He also suggested that the trimming of bushes may not be okay.

M. Seiler clarified that the cost for that would be covered by the Board.

Councilor Jourdain asked to clarify that the \$128,000 was all for painting.

M. Seiler stated that it included repairing damage that had been done due to lack of painting work, as well as the painting. She added that they found paint samples that were original to the house so the color would change a little to be historically accurate to what was done by a paint survey.

Chairman McGiverin emphasized the importance of the timeline for the prep work done prior to a large scale painting project like this. He then expressed his belief that this would be considered historical preservation and not maintenance. He then emphasized that they did not have to listen to the Law Department.

Councilor Vacon suggested that as they were focusing on restoration work on a historically significant building, she believed it was a different situation than with a different project where fixing a roof was defined as maintenance.

Councilor Jourdain stated that his intent was to have the conversation to assure there was an evaluation happening. He added that his concern was that prior to several months back, nobody was asking the questions to assure that the projects met the statutory rules.

Councilor Vacon recognized that they should be assuring that the details are understood.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to lay item 5 on the table. Councilor Tallman seconded the motion. Motion passed.

(39:20)

Councilor Tallman made a motion to remove item 6 from the table. Councilor Puello seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Item 6: 12-20-22 JOURDAIN -- Ordered, Mayor and Wistariahurst Director please give the City Council an update and repair plan on specifically when will the Wall of the grounds be repaired and how it will be funded. This needs to be a priority and fixed as soon as possible.

--->Complied with, 5-0.

DISCUSSION:

Mayor Garcia stated that the City Engineer, Kris Baker, provided a [communication](#) addressing the matter. He then expressed his frustration that the issue should be simple, emphasizing the wall clearly needed to be repaired and was not safe. He then stated that they put it out to bid a couple times, but then needed additional authority because it was historic. He added that they tried to get approval through an emergency angle but that direction was not received well through either the state or the federal level. He emphasized that there was a plan but it was a slow and frustrating process.

Councilor Jourdain noted that Mr. Baker noted a \$40,000 grant from Community Development just for engineering and design. He then asked if there was an estimate of the entire cost.

Mayor Garcia stated they did not. He added that there was a guess.

M. Seiler stated that the original estimate was around \$300,000. She added that in 2012, the estimate was around \$150,000. She further added that if the work extended beyond Pine Street, it could be more. She also noted that there could be drainage requirements added to the project. She then emphasized that historic deep preservation projects were incredibly challenging and required going through different channels.

Mayor Garcia stated that the biggest issue was a drainage problem as part of it, which was pushing the wall situation even more.

Councilor Jourdain stated that he did not remember a request for \$150,000 to fix the wall. He asked what happened with that estimate.

M. Seiler stated that they noticed issues with the retaining wall. She added that in 2011 or 2012, two predecessors before her, there was an official report done by an engineer that said it would need attention. She stated that it was brought to the attention of the city but she was unsure if it was presented to the City Council. She added that her immediate predecessor tried to get funding but it may not have qualified for funding since the wall had not yet fallen.

Councilor Jourdain emphasized that they almost never would vote down these types of requests.

Councilor Vacon stated that she recalled there may have been a request but it was complicated by trying to figure out how to pay for it, and it may have never been put through.

Mayor Garcia stated that was open to figuring out how to pay for it.

Councilor Jourdain reiterated that he did not recall a request through the City Council. He then emphasized that it did need to get fixed.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion that item 6 had been complied with. Councilor Tallman seconded the motion. Motion passed on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

(47:35)

Councilor Tallman made a motion to suspend the necessary rules to remove items 7 and 8 from the table as a package. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Item 7: 11-1-22 MCGIVERIN -- Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2023, ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$120,000.00) as follows:

FROM:

8810-10400 CAPITAL STABILIZATION \$120,000.00

TOTAL: \$120,000.00

TO:

13003-58000 SCHOOLS-CAPITAL OUTLAY \$120,000.00

TOTAL: \$120,000.00

*Tabled 12-14-22

--->Return to the auditor, 5-0.

Item 8: 11-1-22 MCGIVERIN -- that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2023, ONE HUNDRED FORTY THREE THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$143,000.00) as follows:

FROM:

8810-10400 CAPITAL STABILIZATION \$143,000.00

TOTAL: \$143,000.00

TO:

13003-58000 SCHOOLS CAPITAL OUTLAY \$143,000.00

TOTAL: \$143,000.00

*Tabled 12-14-22

---> Return to the auditor, 5-0.

DISCUSSION:

Chairman McGiverin recognized that Mickey Buhl from the School Department was in attendance. He noted that they just needed a quick explanation. He then asked if it was net school spending if it was approved.

M. Buhl stated that they would be requesting that the orders be returned to the auditor. He then stated that the requests were made as a result of being asked to determine what kind of vehicle needs they had. He noted that their vehicles were old but as their department discussed it, they recognized that they had higher priorities such as funding the middle school project. He added that they would work with their older vehicles or seek out other sources of funding for vehicles if it became necessary.

Chairman McGiverin asked if it would be net school spending if this or a similar use of funds was sought out in the future.

M. Buhl stated that he had not looked into it but when they had done vehicle repairs or purchases in the past that were under the threshold the state allowed, they were allowable under net school spending. He then suggested that they would not be able to do all 3 vehicles at once but one at a time could be done under net school spending.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to return items 7 and 8 to the auditor. Councilor Tallman seconded the motion. Motion passed on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 5--Nays 0--Absent 0.

M. Buhl stated that there would be a report coming soon on a transportation bid in time for the Council's next meeting.

(52:10)

Councilor Tallman made a motion to suspend the necessary rules to remove items 9 and 10 from the table as a package. Councilor Jourdain seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Item 9: 12-20-22 BARTLEY, JOURDAIN -- Ordered, The Auditor provide an update on PILOT agreements. Please provide the names of the parties with whom the City has a PILOT agreement, the amounts to be paid and the status of payments for the past one-year period (re: whether payments are current.). Please submit to City Council by the second meeting in January 2023.

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

Item 10: 1-3-23 From Tanya Wdowiak, City Auditor, FY 2022 and FY2023 Pilot Payments.

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

DISCUSSION:

Chairman McGiverin asked Councilor Jourdain if he would like to hear from the auditor and mayor first.

Councilor Jourdain stated that he would have a few questions but welcomed hearing from them first.

Mayor Garcia stated that bringing this up helped with cleaning things up. He then stated that he had been interested in addressing these and renegotiating them since he first took office, but other things ended up taking priority. He then stated that he would like to evaluate each agreement and develop an internal system where they're appropriate

invoicing, collecting, and renegotiating to increase the payments. He added that he would have to do more review to determine which ones might not require updating and which ones would require increases. He also stated that he would be seeking to create new PILOT agreements with additional nonprofits. He noted that City Solicitor, Lisa Ball, was aware that this was a priority.

Councilor Jourdain noted that Councilor Bartley had been seeking to get additional agreements listed that were not on the list. He then stated that it would be good to have an inventory of all of the agreements to be able to evaluate them and look at how long it had been since they were reviewed. He suggested that many were quite old and that values had changed over the years. He emphasized that since they were payments in lieu of tax, it would be helpful to understand how much tax they would be paying. He then questioned if their properties were being properly assessed if they were not paying taxes. He emphasized that this would be relevant to the bargaining position. He noted that one example, ISO New England's property valued at \$15.6 million, would be paying a tax of \$626,000 under the commercial rate. He added that their PILOT payments were \$140,000. He questioned why they should get a 78% tax break. He then stated that the Mass Green High Performance Computing Center properties had a total assessment of \$5.2 million. He added that their tax would normally be \$210,000 but were paying a PILOT of \$80,000, a discount of 62%. He then questioned why the personal property in the building was not subject to taxes. He emphasized that they were not the same as other nonprofits such as churches and social good nonprofits that society takes on as part of a community. He suggested that there needed to be more scrutiny with quasi-businesses receiving tax breaks. He then stated that the Holyoke Housing Authority owned 66 properties, with an assessed value of around \$34 million. He suggested that the figure seemed low but at that value, they would be taxed \$652,000. He then stated that they were paying a PILOT of \$16,000, a tax break of around 97%. He suggested that with real assessment, the tax breaks would likely be even higher. He then questioned how Beaudoin Village, with more than 200 apartments throughout 55 buildings on 22 acres of land, could be assessed at only \$9.6 million. He added that Coughlin Apartments was assessed at \$2.4 million with around 70 apartments. He suggested that professionals needed to look at these values. He emphasized that the city could not afford to give out hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax breaks. He also suggested that they should be paying into the services the city provides that their tenants use.

Councilor Vacon stated that if the city was able to get more contributions from nonprofits, it would reduce the burden on homeowners being squeezed. She also emphasized that many homes had been purchased by nonprofits and taken them off the tax rolls. She noted that she had sent a link to the mayor regarding the PILOT model from Northampton which set benchmarks similar to that of the CPA. She suggested that formalizing a plan would level the playing ground.

Councilor Jourdain suggested that the homes owned by nonprofits had been made into group homes and should be paying taxes. He added that many of the properties had been purchased by the state for various purposes, leading to a loss of tax revenue. He then identified many other organizations that had purchased commercial property, such as ServiceNet and Girls, Inc, leading to a cumulative effect of lost tax revenue. He emphasized that the impact of having an area with a lot of property and need was the

need for more services, but the flip side was the properties being purchased by those service providers, leading to the problem compounding.

Chairman McGiverin noted that while the Holyoke Health Center was continuing to pay taxes, Holyoke Medical Center was not paying anything. He emphasized that they purchased many homes and tore them down to build parking lots. He emphasized that he had never gotten an answer as far as why they would not be building a parking deck. He added that a greater frustration was a lab owned by Baystate that was not paying any taxes, adding that they often have over 100 vehicles parking overnight without the city getting any excise taxes from those vehicles.

Mayor Garcia emphasized that the PILOT agreements were voluntary and that the organizations could not be made to do anything. He added that the existing agreements were negotiated using formulas available at that time. He reiterated his interest in revisiting them and negotiate them in good faith, adding that there needed to be a formula to follow when reached fair agreements. He suggested that establishing a formula would help organizations understand that an agreement would be fair.

Councilor Jourdain stated that the Council would support him any way they could. He also stated that the efforts would show what kind of good will these organizations had for the city. He also noted that the Council had adopted an order to ask the state legislature for additional funds. He then suggested that the second tier of the PILOT discussion would be making a case to the state legislature that with all of the exempt property in the city, the requested additional \$4 million was needed. He emphasized that the system the state had put the city in was not working under the current local aid formula. He questioned the notion that revenue would be generated in the same way as other communities with less need. He emphasized that poorer communities often have to defer maintenance due to often only having enough to pay the basics. He added that communities like Holyoke sitting on a river also end up dealing with unfunded mandates due to costs associated with combined sewer overflow (CSO) regulations.

Mayor Garcia recalled and connected this discussion to an argument made during a recent Public Safety Committee meeting regarding drug addiction and homelessness, noting that people look to the local government to solve issues that the city has not necessarily created.

Councilor Vacon noted that well over 50% of the drug problems in the city were coming from outside of the city, emphasizing that was a regional matter. She noted that while each city received their own buckets of funding, there needed to be regional collaboration on these issues.

Mayor Garcia stated that the PILOT was a doable solution as a short term measure, but that the system itself was a bigger problem.

Chairman McGiverin emphasized that there was no simple answer to the drug issues. He suggested that the city's residents didn't use drugs but sold them. He added that he had believed for many years that the city doesn't create poverty, but services poverty. He added that no other community came close to Holyoke in terms of ratio of low income

housing. He added that the city did it well, but became a tax on schools, on the Police Department, and court system, for example. He then stated that the state put this on communities as a taxing scheme.

Chairman McGiverin suggested that there may be more information to come in.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to lay items 9 and 10 on the table. Councilor Puello seconded the motion. Motion passed.

(1:26:20)

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to remove item 3 from the table. Chairman McGiverin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Item 3: 1-3-23 MCGIVERIN — that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44 Sec. 53A, the City Council hereby accepts the provisions of the “FY2022 EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT, \$37,248, 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.
*Tabled initially, adopted later in the meeting.

--->Approved, 5-0.

DISCUSSION:

Chairman McGiverin stated that Sgt Hart was unable to connect to join the meeting but would make himself available for the Council meeting the following Tuesday.

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

Meeting adjourned 8:01 PM