

Finance Committee

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Video of meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/HJn6ezxfzWc?feature=shared>

Members present: Chair Joseph McGiverin, Peter Tallman, Will Puello

Members on Zoom: Juan Anderson-Burgos

Members absent: Vice Chair Kevin Jourdain

Other councilors present: Linda Vacon, Tessa Murphy-Romboletti

Chair McGiverin called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM

Chair McGiverin noted that this would be the final Finance Committee meeting for himself, Councilor Tallman, and Councilor Puello.

Councilor Tallman 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 together, or suspend the rules, unless there is an objection. Councilor Puello seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Councilor Tallman made a motion to remove item 1 from the table. Councilor Puello seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Item 1: 11-21-23 MCGIVERIN — that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2024, SIXTY THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND 00/100 Dollars (\$60,500) as follows:

FROM:

8811-10400 CAPITAL STABILIZATION \$60,500

TOTAL: \$60,500

TO:

14803-58004 PARKING CAPITAL OUTLAY-VEHICLES \$60,500

TOTAL: \$60,500

*Tabled 12-4-23

--->Referred back to the City Council 4-0-1 (Jourdain)

DISCUSSION:

Chair McGiverin stated that this was the second time this was coming up, noting there were questions yet to be answered. He then explained that the capital stabilization account was created under Mayor Garcia's term as an account to be used for one-time capital expenditures and purchasing of different capital outlay items. He emphasized that it was a wonderful way to do business. He then explained that the proposal was to buy two vehicles for DPW. He noted that the Purchasing Director, Jaime Morrow, and Tax Collector, Laura Wilson, were in attendance for this item. He further explained the vehicles were for the parking attendants while out ticketing for parking infractions as well as collection of parking meters. He then recalled that one question was about the cost of uniforms.

J. Morrow explained that the DPW got their uniforms from New England Uniforms out of West Springfield and would all be rented which came with a dry cleaning service. She then explained that there were provided per union contract, which required 11 pants and 11 long sleeve shirts per person, as well as 5 short sleeve shirts. She then explained the formulas for pricing, which added up to \$3,866.32 for the two employees.

Chair McGiverin asked to confirm that the uniforms were rented.

J. Morrow confirmed that was accurate.

Chair McGiverin asked if uniforms were returned when an employee leaves.

J. Morrow stated that was correct. She added that they were dry cleaned weekly. She added that it was better value to rent so that the city wasn't buying 11 sets of uniforms every time there was turnover.

Chair McGiverin suggested that someone might ask about 11 pairs of pants at the Council meeting.

J. Morrow noted that the union contract was provided showing that.

Councilor Tallman asked if each employee got the whole set.

J. Morrow stated that was correct.

Councilor Tallman asked to confirm that the contract stated that was what they needed.

J. Morrow stated that was correct, adding that it was negotiated between the unions and the city.

Councilor Tallman, noting that the previous cost had been higher, asked if that had been because of purchasing uniforms.

J. Morrow stated that the previous cost had been a best guess because the catalog did not have pricing. She then stated that the city did not purchase uniforms but did not know if the contract stated they necessarily had to be rented. She then explained that if uniforms were purchased outright, the difference would not be much. She then reiterated that there was more value with renting because if uniforms were purchased and then the employee left in six months, the city would need to buy more sets for the people replacing them.

Councilor Tallman asked how the cleaning worked.

J. Morrow stated that it was a weekly thing where they would pick up the old ones and bring in new ones. She then explained that they were 57 cents per unit, which included the item plus the laundering service and delivery.

Chair McGiverin noted that the parking attendant position wasn't new, but that only one had been budgeted for and hired for a long time. He then asked why funds were coming out of capital stabilization for uniforms when it should be coming out of the department's budget.

J. Morrow stated that it would be a one-time expense, noting that the uniforms in the proposal were not their current uniforms. She then explained that they needed uniforms that were more reflective of enforcement.

Chair McGiverin stated that the funds were going into a line item for parking capital outlay vehicles, but that the uniforms were rented on an ongoing basis. He then asked it would be done this way.

City Auditor, Tanya Wdowiak, stated that the city did not have the funds budgeted at the moment, so the mayor wanted to take it out of capital outlay. She suggested that she could revise it to go into the uniforms line before a vote on it.

Chair McGiverin stated that he would prefer that. He reiterated that renting was not a one-time expense but an annual cost.

J. Morrow clarified that the one-time expense was to get them new enforcement uniforms but then the rental would be in the budget.

Councilor Puello asked if this was done for all DPW uniforms, noting that the union contract mentioned purchasing them.

J. Morrow stated that it was done for all DPW uniforms.

Councilor Puello asked if these two positions were through the DPW.

J. Morrow confirmed that was accurate, with Stephanie Rodriguez as their direct supervisor.

Councilor Puello asked if they were wearing civilian clothing before this.

L. Wilson stated that they were purchasing their own clothing.

Councilor Puello asked why they weren't covered in the DPW budget.

L. Wilson stated that the shirts offered to them said DPW and often were running into issues with getting a lack of respect while out doing their job, which led to spend their own money to buy reflective sweatshirts, hats, and other items that were more fitting to the role.

Councilor Puello asked if they would be able to get something if they waited a few months.

L. Wilson stated that the newest enforcement officer, John, hadn't taken a DPW uniform with the hope that these new ones would come in and they'd have uniforms that better fit their position than t-shirts that said DPW, leading to them not being taken seriously when trying to enforce parking issues. She added that she bought body cams out of their own pockets to back them up for situations they were running into. She added that they were looking for uniforms that said, "parking enforcement." She emphasized that they did get an allowance for that. She added that the other longer-term employee, Carlos, had returned all of his and purchased other items.

Councilor Puello asked if he was able to exchange it.

L. Wilson clarified that there wasn't yet a uniform for their position.

Councilor Puello asked to clarify that the ones he turned in were under this contract.

L. Wilson confirmed that was accurate.

Councilor Puello asked if that uniform had been paid for the whole year.

J. Morrow clarified that the uniforms were paid weekly, adding that the city was billed monthly. She further clarified that the city was not currently paying for uniforms for either of them.

Councilor Puello asked if this proposed set would be more expensive than the DPW set. He then suggested that with the uniforms turned in, there should be funding in the budget to at least cover some of the cost.

L. Wilson expressed an assumption that there would be.

Chair McGiverin asked if there was a clothing allowance.

J. Morrow stated that there was a \$200 allowance for boots.

Chair McGiverin noted that boots were part of this proposal.

J. Morrow stated that the boots were purchased.

Chair McGiverin asked if \$200 were one pair for each employee.

J. Morrow stated that was correct.

Chair McGiverin asked if the line item for DPW clothing had any funds in it.

T. Wdowiak stated that the parking enforcement had their own budget.

Chair McGiverin asked to clarify that it fell under the DPW.

T. Wdowiak stated that they had their own budget where their employees were charged from. She then stated that the only account shown there was for their clothing allowance.

J. Morrow stated that they didn't have a special uniform so it would have been whatever the regular DPW employees had.

Chair McGiverin stated that while he believed the DPW workers looked great in their uniforms, he understood why the enforcement officers needed to look different because they were encountering people who didn't want to get ticketed.

T. Wdowiak stated \$200 out of the allowance was spent for one of the employees.

L. Wilson stated that Carlos received the \$200.

Chair McGiverin suggested separating the uniforms as a transfer at the next Council meeting.

T. Wdowiak asked if the request was to take the full uniform cost and separate it from the equipment and vehicles.

Chair McGiverin stated that a second order would be needed for vehicles and portable radios. He suggested that if it was a contractual thing, there should be one separate line for the entire DPW. He then shifted to the proposal for vehicles. He stated that the information included quotes, vehicle types and styles, and how they would be used. He then stated that while he understood pay by apps was available, coins still needed to be collected from parking meters and that had to be stored safely. He then asked why the city needed them instead of them just being nice to have amenities.

L. Wilson stated that the proposal came from her in regard to beefing up the way the parking control officers were doing their job. She then recalled that the officers at one time were physically pushing a recycling bin on a dolly to collect coins from meters due to a broken

key. She noted that close to \$37,000 in coins had been collected from meters. She then explained that they had been using Crown Victoria to get around to parking lots they were servicing which was not appropriate for the equipment they used and was not secure. She also stated that they were also responsible for mowing areas around city-owned lots, likely adding to them not being taken seriously in their enforcement role. She then emphasized that they had collected \$76,500 in parking tickets since the beginning of January, not including those yet to be paid. She then reiterated that the vehicles would help them do their jobs faster, more efficiently, and safer, noting that there had been several instances when people asked them what they were pushing. She also stated that people had jammed things into meters and taken the coin canisters out of them.

Chair McGiverin asked if the vehicles were electric or gas.

J. Morrow stated that they were gas. She then explained that the vehicles, called a Kubota, were 4-season and would provide a mechanism to lock the collection box as well as easier transfer of coins from the meters. She then explained that they looked at the rationale and needs specific to Holyoke in looking at vehicle choices. She also stated that the vehicles were useable for other departments if there were changes in the parking enforcement program. She added that they would be cheaper on gas.

Chair McGiverin asked if they were involved with the mayor's parking committee.

J. Morrow stated that she worked with them and Ms. Wilson was on the committee.

Chair McGiverin suggested that there was potential of getting close to \$200,000 if the lots and parking structures were properly run. He also expressed his understanding that 50% of the meters were not operating.

L. Wilson stated that the meters were vandalized frequently. She agreed that if meters were fully functioning and if ordinances were updated regarding parking farther down Front Street and Dwight Street, there was potential for more revenue.

Chair McGiverin stated that while the city was not looking to make money off parking, there were a lot of ways that it should be paying for itself. He added that he believed this made a lot of sense. He then noted one other part was the walkie-talkies.

J. Morrow explained that the reason they were expensive and had to be 2-channel was about safety. She recalled that the officers had been spit on and had things thrown at them, emphasizing that they needed radios that had direct channels to the police as well as their supervisors. She added that this allowed them to contact the police if they saw something that needed to be reported.

Chair McGiverin asked why there needed to be two vehicles instead of one being shared.

J. Morrow stated that the goal was to expand their work by allowing them to be in two places at once and potentially doing two different functions of their positions.

L. Wilson stated that they were also asked to patrol the parking lots so this would allow one to do that while the other is out collecting.

Chair McGiverin questioned rhetorically if it was good use of their time to be mowing lawns.

L. Wilson stated that this had come up as a point of contention, tied to diminishing the level of authority they should have in their position.

Councilor Tallman asked to clarify that these different needs would be split up.

Chair McGiverin stated that it would be up to the mayor. He added that there was another question over where the funding would be going.

Councilor Tallman stated that it was important that these employees have the right equipment. He then asked what office the tickets go through.

L. Wilson stated that they go through her office.

Councilor Tallman asked if they just go in and pay it.

L. Wilson stated that they could pay it, or they may go in with an appeal that would be sent to the City Solicitor's office to determine if it was a valid appeal. She then stated that around 65% of tickets had been paid. She also stated that the two of them wrote 3,404 tickets over the year.

Councilor Tallman emphasized that safety of employees was the number 1 priority. He then recognized why two vehicles was better than one. He then agreed that it would be better if they could be separated out.

J. Morrow stated that the amount would be the same, but the separation in the line transfers could be done.

Councilor Tallman noted that the full Council would have to vote on it.

J. Morrow asked that the committee emphasize that money the enforcement officers were bringing in.

Chair McGiverin stated that the really important number would be when the parking number finished their work and everything back on track.

Councilor Anderson-Burgos stated that he would be supporting this as a no-brainer. He then stated that this was an issue the city had fallen back on and this would pay itself off easily.

Chair McGiverin asked for reminder of the amount taken out of meters.

L. Wilson stated that it was just over \$37,000.

Chair McGiverin asked if the city could use an app on the meters yet.

L. Wilson stated that it could be used in place of a meter in certain spots. She added that they had been trying to work with the Park Mobile app to get more signage.

J. Morrow stated that while it was \$37,000 in coins, the value was not just about the coinage they were bringing in but also the funding brought in through tickets.

L. Wilson reiterated that the tickets added up to \$76,590.

Chair McGiverin asked Ms. Wdowiak how much was generated for monthly parking.

T. Wdowiak stated that she would provide this later.

Chair McGiverin emphasized that the whole parking scheme was revenue producing, adding that this helped it make a lot more sense.

Councilor Puello asked what the average parking ticket came to.

L. Wilson stated that it ranged from \$20-\$300 depending on the violation.

Councilor Puello suggested that this appeared to come to at least 10 tickets per day.

L. Wilson stated that Carlos had written 25 tickets just that day. She then emphasized that they were fantastic employees doing a tough job. She also expressed a hope that their area would be expanded.

Chair McGiverin noted that this discussion hadn't even included the storefront owners who think they can park in front of their store and not paying anything.

L. Wilson noted that many handicap spots get taken by store owners who park there an entire day. She noted that Carlos had spoken with the City Solicitor on this issue, as well as regarding other issues such as parking in crosswalks or in front of fire hydrants.

Chair McGiverin expressed his understanding that someone with a handicap placard can park in a metered zone without paying.

L. Wilson stated that was accurate.

J. Morrow stated that they couldn't park in front of a fire hydrant.

Chair McGiverin stated that one hard thing to enforce was the two-hour limit on the meters.

L. Wilson stated that the officers tried to be reasonable and not hound people, but they tried to be aware of when people were staying in one spot too long. She also how difficult it can be for City Hall employees parking in the lot, sometimes leading them to park in the 15 minutes spots.

Chair McGiverin noted that the ordinance, the Council changed it several years back to put more 15 minute spots up front, the mayor's spot, two spots for city councilors, and then then City Clerk was moved to create more parking for people doing quick business at City Hall.

Councilor Puello asked to confirm that the vehicles were street legal and had to be registered and insured.

J. Morrow confirmed that was correct.

Councilor Puello asked if that was a recurring cost or a city program.

J. Morrow stated that they were like any other city vehicle and would have plates.

Chair McGiverin asked if the city had a blanket policy.

J. Morrow that the city did.

Councilor Tallman stated that he appreciated these vehicles could be all-purpose and used by other departments that may need them.

J. Morrow added that it would be part of the mayor's vision to have a uniform fleet for the municipality.

Councilor Tallman stated that having the right vehicles was important.

Chair McGiverin made a motion that this be referred back to the City Council, anticipating that the mayor would separate the costs for the uniforms and a separate transfer for the vehicles and radios.

Councilor Tallman seconded the motion, and then asked if that would be three different orders.

Chair McGiverin suggested that it be two different orders, one for vehicles and radios, and one for uniforms. He emphasized that the uniforms were contractual and that the Council was obligated to appropriate it.

T. Wdowiak stated that she could do two or three, whatever was preferred.

Councilor Puello stated that he was good with two.

Chair McGiverin stated that there was no question that the vehicles and radios were one-time expenses while the uniforms were up front one-time but also ongoing needs.

Motion to refer back to City Council passed on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 4--Nays 0--Absent 1 (Jourdain).

(56:55)

Councilor Puello made a motion to remove item 2 from the table. Motion approved.

Item 2: 12-5-23 MCGIVERIN -- that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44 Sec. 53A, the City Council hereby accepts the provisions of the "FY2024 EDWARD J. BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT, \$49,920, 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.

--->Laid on the table 4-0-1.

DISCUSSION:

Chair McGiverin stated that the Police Department asked for this to be tabled at the request of the state's plan not to proceed until the next year.

T. Wdowiak stated that she could check on the details of the request.

Councilor Tallman made a motion to lay item 2 on the table. Councilor Puello seconded the motion. Motion passed.

(58:00)

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

Item 3: 12-5-23 MCGIVERIN -- that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2024, FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$5,000) as follows:

FROM:

11611-51210 ELECTIONS OFFICERS \$5,000

TOTAL:\$5,000

TO:

11612-52700 EQUIPMENT/BUILDING RENTALS \$5,000

TOTAL: \$5,000

--->Approved 4-0-1 (Jourdain)

DISCUSSION:

Chair McGiverin stated that the City Clerk provided a communication explaining that the request was to pay for the year maintenance agreements for the voting machines as well as the software used for Election Day. He further stated that the transfer out of Election Officers was due to a planned reimbursement from the state for the upcoming presidential primary. He then expressed his understanding that the funds had to be expended before the state would reimburse the funding.

Councilor Tallman made a motion to approve item 3. Councilor Puello seconded the motion. Motion to approve passed on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 4--Nays 0--Absent 1 (Jourdain).

(59:50)

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

Item 4: 12-5-23 MCGIVERIN -- that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2024, THIRTY THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED FORTY AND 00/100 Dollars (\$30,240) as follows:

FROM:

8811-10400 CAPITAL STABILIZATION \$30,240

TOTAL: \$30,240

TO:

16933-58001 WAR MEMORIAL-OUTLAY-BLDG IMPROVE \$30,240

TOTAL: \$30,240

--->Approved 4-0-1 (Jourdain)

DISCUSSION:

Chair McGiverin recognized Sean Sheedy from the DPW. He then noted that the committee understood the finding source, and then asked for an explanation of how this money would be used.

S. Sheedy stated that the funding was for the increase of the elevator at the War Memorial Building project, noting that the lowest bid of \$120,800 came in higher than what was anticipated. He added that the account currently had \$90,560. He also explained that \$9,440 was for the consultant fee. He also stated that the low bid was from Worcester Elevator, adding that another bid came in about \$37,000 higher than the lower one.

Chair McGiverin asked if the low bid company was reputable and everyone was comfortable with their workmanship.

S. Sheedy stated that they were. He then explained that they had their bid bond, met all the criteria through procurement, and that their scope review would be done later that week.

Chair McGiverin asked if the scope included a new elevator or if it would be taking care of the existing one.

S. Sheedy stated that they would be replace the jack, which was the piston that raised the cart up and down. He added that the motor, the electrical equipment, and the cart were still good. He also stated that the safety door edge had also failed and would also be replaced.

Chair McGiverin recalled those details when the request for the original transfer was discussed.

S. Sheedy noted there was a delay to get the consultant out to look at the full scope.

Councilor Tallman asked for clarification of the cost for the consultant.

S. Sheedy stated that it was \$9,440.

Councilor Tallman asked if that was about the range of what would be expected.

S. Sheedy stated that was what he originally estimated. He added that they were instrumental in writing out the specifications on the equipment and workmanship required for the project.

Councilor Tallman asked what replacing the part would do for the life span of the elevator.

W. Sheedy stated that the elevator was currently around 35 years old, and this work would add another 30-40 years to it.

Councilor Tallman asked if it was unlikely any other parts would need to be addressed in that time.

S. Sheedy stated that the only other two key pieces would be cart, electrical equipment in the cart, or the hydraulic motor that pushed the cart. He then suggested that those parts could be changed out in 5-10 years.

Councilor Anderson-Burgos acknowledged that Laddy Rua, Chair of the Soldiers Memorial Commission, was also in attendance.

L. Rua thanked Mr. Sheedy for his service addressing this.

Chair McGiverin thanked Ms. Rua for attending, adding that she had done a great job emceeding the Veterans Day ceremony.

L. Rua stated that she had been nervous but it was an honor.

Councilor Tallman made a motion to approve item 4. Councilor Puello seconded the motion. Motion to approve passed on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 4--Nays 0--Absent 1 (Jourdain).

(1:07:10)

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

Item 5: 12-5-23 MCGIVERIN -- That the City Council subsidize the revenue of the sewer budget from the tax levy in FY2024 by \$1,039,680 (one million thirty nine thousand six hundred eighty dollars and 00/100) and remainder funded by sewer receipts.

--->Approved 4-0-1 (Jourdain)

DISCUSSION:

Chair McGiverin stated that there was a reason this needed to be approved before the special meeting the following evening.

T. Wdowiak explained that within the tax recap, the enterprise funds was one of the things covered and subsidized by the general funds. She then stated that the DLS will only let the city claim as high as what was collected the previous year unless the tax rate was increased. She then stated that since that was not voted on, only 2023's revenue could be used for 2024 estimates. She then stated that the total revenue for FY 2024 was \$8.9 million but the actual budget appropriated for the sewer enterprise fund was \$9.9 million, leading to a difference of around \$1 million. She then explained that the subsidy would be automatically added to the rate and the general fund if the city did not come up with

another source of revenue to cover the subsidy. She suggested that one of the things holding the city back was that revenues were not posted for the entire year.

Chair McGiverin noted that the city was in the middle of the fiscal year. He then asked if the revenues from fiscal year 2023 had been closed out and reconciled.

T. Wdowiak stated that they had.

Chair McGiverin asked what the uncollectables were for 2023.

T. Wdowiak stated that the city did not account for revenue like that. She added that the DPW had a different billing system for the sewer. She further explained that they did not have comparisons in their budget for receivables and collections, but that it was all in one pot. She added that she could not tell what was from the current year versus a previous year. She also explained that they do write off bills, but they were not necessarily being written off in the fiscal year for which they were a receivable.

Chair McGiverin asked if that meant that even if the department billed for what was owed in a quarter, they would not know what was not paid.

T. Wdowiak stated that they know the commitments, how much was billed, but the payments didn't have a year on them when they came in.

Chair McGiverin asked if that was something that could be and should be changed.

T. Wdowiak stated that she agreed it should be changed.

Chair McGiverin reiterated that the city was halfway through the fiscal year. He then asked if this amount was an estimated deficiency by the budget versus what was collected the previous year.

T. Wdowiak stated that it was.

Chair McGiverin asked what would happen if more was collected this year than last year.

T. Wdowiak stated that it would go into retained earnings, just like free cash.

Chair McGiverin asked if it would reduce this amount.

T. Wdowiak stated that it would not reduce this amount but if it came back in retained earnings, it could be appropriated into the general fund.

Chair McGiverin suggested that it would become a wash. He then asked if this request would raise the tax levy.

T. Wdowiak stated that it would.

Chair McGiverin asked if this number would be less if the sewer rate was adjusted.

T. Wdowiak stated that it would if it was done before the first of the year.

Chair McGiverin asked if the mayor had any other options to reduce this. He then noted that the Council went through the budget during the hearings. He then suggested it would be hard to cut it at this point, but added that removing street sweeping and other items from the sewer budget would come up.

T. Wdowiak stated that even if that were removed, it would still be a \$500,000 increase to the general fund budget unless it was cut from somewhere else because it still existed as a cost.

Chair McGiverin stated that it was a wash as the taxpayers were paying for it no matter what.

Chair McGiverin stated that it should be the ratepayers and not the taxpayers.

T. Wdowiak suggested that more could be done in terms of tracking of collections and receivables.

Chair McGiverin asked what would happen to the final tax rate if the City Council failed to approve this appropriation. He then emphasized that the tax rate was essentially set once the levy was set, and that the tax rate classification vote was just about shifting the tax rate between commercial and residential.

T. Wdowiak stated that DLS would not approve the tax rate.

McGivern recalled that the last time a tax rate wasn't set by the end of the year, the city had to borrow for three months.

Councilor Tallman noted that the schedule showed around \$8,042,000 for salaries, wages, and expenses for fiscal year 24.

T. Wdowiak stated that this was coming from the budget. She then explained that this was all expenses from their budget.

Councilor Tallman asked for an explanation of the \$1.9 million for the capital outlay.

T. Wdowiak stated that was debt payments.

Councilor Tallman suggested that these numbers could be lower if the estimated revenues were higher than the previous year.

T. Wdowiak reiterated that they would not let the city do that.

Councilor Tallman suggested that it could have changed the investment income a little bit, changing the number as a whole.

T. Wdowiak stated that they did let the city to use the industrial billings toward the current year revenues. She then explained that while the 2023 revenues could be used, they also had to consider that were pending expenses as well. She added that expenses such as busted pipes were not being budgeted for.

Councilor Tallman asked to confirm that what was happening here is that the estimated funds collected for 2024 were around \$1 million less than what was needed.

T. Wdowiak stated that if the Council was to vote on an increased sewer rate, that money would be coming in whether it was forecasted or not, and it would allow the city to budget higher the next year.

Councilor Tallman asked if this appropriation would bring the city up to the levy of around \$63 million.

T. Wdowiak stated that this had recently decreased by around \$384,000.

Councilor Tallman suggested that if the sewer rate had been increased, the levy would be around \$62 million.

T. Wdowiak stated that the proposed \$8.03 rate billed from January to June would have brought in an extra \$500,000 to put toward this deficit.

Councilor Tallman stated that it would have shifted a little more to the ratepayers and less to the taxpayers.

Councilor Vacon asked to clarify that this transfer would not be changing the budget the City Council voted on in the final budget meeting.

T. Wdowiak stated that this enterprise budget was part of the total overall budget, but was not part of the appropriations.

Councilor Vacon stated that it was in the total number. She then explained that when people were saying it was going to increase the tax liability, it was not increasing the liability to do this transfer.

T. Wdowiak stated that she added the subsidy prior to when the budget was done. She then stated that the figure did include this.

Councilor Vacon emphasized that this action would not have an effect on the taxes from anything that was already done.

T. Wdowiak state that was accurate.

Councilor Vacon stated that the \$600,000 as a citywide service was material, and that portion was now documented as being an appropriate amount to come from the tax levy rather than the ratepayers. She then stated that as a taxpayer that was not on the sewer, she did not have an issue with her taxes paying for services that were citywide. She then suggested that after the analysis of storm water basins that were services throughout the city from the sewer fund, the city would find that the general fund was the proper source to cover those expenses.

Chair McGiverin stated that as a property owner that paid both property taxes and the sewer rate, he had an issue with double billing.

Councilor Vacon noted that the city had at least a 5% gap between the highest collection rate on the sewer rate and the current collection rate, impacting both ratepayers and taxpayers. She suggested that tightening it up would amount to many thousands of dollars.

Councilor Tallman made a motion to approve item 5. Councilor Puello seconded the motion. Motion to approve passed on a call of the roll of the yeas and nays--Yeas 4--Nays 0--Absent 1 (Jourdain).

(1:30:30)

Item 6: 12-5-23 From PERAC, Appropriation for Fiscal Year 2025.

--->Received

DISCUSSION:

Chair McGiverin stated that this was a regular communication the City Council received at least once a year showing the projected annual appropriation needed for the retirement fund. He then explained that he put this on the agenda just to keep it in the open. He further explained that the figured showed what was owed from each department in the government.

T. Wdowiak stated that she found it interesting that the city's appropriation went by \$100,000 between fiscal year 2023 to fiscal year 2024. She then explained that it was due to people leaving the system.

Chair McGiverin suggested that this could remain in the archives.

Councilor Tallman made a motion to keep this item in the committee archives for future reference. Councilor Puello seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Chair McGiverin offered thanks the committee for their hard word over the past two years, as well as over the many years of his tenure.

Councilor Anderson-Burgos thanked Chair McGiverin and Councilor Tallman for their many years of service, remarking that the Council would not be the same without them.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM