



*City of Taunton
Municipal Council Meeting Minutes
City Hall, 15 Summer Street, Taunton, MA
In the Chester R. Martin Municipal Council Chambers*

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Minutes, April 11, 2023 at 7:02 O'clock P.M.

Regular Meeting

Mayor Shaunna L. O'Connell presiding

Prayer was offered by the Mayor

*Present at roll call were: Councilors Dooner, Duarte, Borges, Pottier,
Coute, Sanders, Quintal and Postell
Councilor McCaul was absent.*

Record of preceding meeting was read by title and approved. So voted.

Opportunity for input by the general public. No one spoke during public input.

Hearing:

NONE.

Communications from the Mayor:

Mayor O'Connell stated that the City offices will be closed on Monday, April 17, 2023 in observance of Patriots Day. Mayor O'Connell stated that there are some community events happening this week. There is an information session on the public safety facility this Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 6:00pm located at City Hall. The project design team will be present, as well as the Chief of Police, Fire Chief and herself. They encourage and invite you to attend if you have any questions or need any more information. Also on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, there will be an information session located at Friedman Middle School from 7:00pm to 8:30pm regarding the reuse of the nursing home. She stated that the City has received a grant to hire people to do a study as far as the options for reuse of the nursing home. They would love to hear ideas and input from residents. No decisions have been made on the reuse at this time so they do encourage residents to attend. She stated that there will be tours of Central Fire Station on Saturday, April 15, 2023 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm so you can see firsthand the needs of the fire station.

Appointments:

NONE.

Communications from City Officers:

Com. from Mayor O'Connell expressing gratitude to the members of the Day of Portugal Committee for sharing their plans to celebrate Portuguese American Heritage Month in Taunton. Celebrating Taunton's Portuguese Heritage is integral to recognizing Taunton's rich and diverse cultural history. For decades, Taunton has paid homage to its Portuguese roots through its various festivals and ceremonies, and it is gratifying to see plans underway for this year's celebration. They will proudly welcome visiting dignitaries, local officials and City residents to City Hall for a flag-raising ceremony on June 10, 2023. They have reserved the City Hall Council Chambers for a reception following the flag-raising ceremony. They look forward to working with the Committee to ensure a successful and spirited celebration throughout the entire month. Mayor O'Connell stated the Day of Portugal Committee is planning multiple events for the month of June and as soon as they get that information they will be sharing that with the public. Councilor Borges expressed gratitude to Mayor O'Connell as a member of the Prince Henry Society for attending their meeting last night and for being so open to this discussion. She also thanked the Portuguese nonprofit organizations that came together to form this group. She also thanked Ligia for the work she has been doing behind the scenes. Mayor O'Connell expressed gratitude to Liz Soares who singlehandedly organized last year's events so they could still have a celebration.

Communications from Citizens:

NONE.

Petitions:

Taunton Motorized Carriage Company, Inc. located at 295 Broadway, Taunton for a renewal of their Livery License by Alexander Tucan (15 Vehicles, 3 Handicap). **Motion was made to refer to the Committee on Police and License. So Voted.**

Taunton Cartage Co. LTD-DBA-Checker Cab located at 295 Broadway, Taunton for a renewal of their Hackney Carriage License by Alexander Tucan. **Motion was made to refer to the Committee on Police and License. So Voted.**

Taunton Cartage Co. LTD-DBA- Cozy Cab located at 295 Broadway, Taunton for a renewal of their Hackney Carriage License by Alexander Tucan. **Motion was made to refer to the Committee on Police and License. So Voted.**

Petition submitted by Barbara Cleary, 5 Hopewell Street, Taunton for a NEW Grade 1 (4-6 Dogs) Personal Kennel License/NOT Business Use to be located at 5 Hopewell Street, Taunton. **Motion was made to refer to the City Clerk to schedule a public hearing. So Voted.**

Petition submitted by PB & C Series, LLC, One Roberts Road, Plymouth, MA 02360 requesting approval of a change of ownership for a Flammable Storage License located at 113 Dean Street, Taunton. (DEED ON FILE). **Motion was made to move approval. So Voted.**

Committee Reports:

Motion was made for Committee reports to be read by title and approved. So Voted. Recommendations adopted to reflect the votes as recorded in committee reports. So Voted.

Unfinished Business:

Request a vote to refer to the City Clerk to reschedule and re-advertise the continued public hearing on the modified Special Permit application submitted by Denise Asack, RDA Property Holding for 74 Weir Street, from the March 28, 2023 Agenda. **Motion was made to move approval. So Voted.**

Councilor Coute motioned to refer the budget hearings to the Committee as a Whole as opposed to the full Council meeting on May 10, 2023 at 5:30pm. **Motion was made to move approval. So Voted. Councilor Coute motioned to invite the school superintendents to a meeting of the Committee as a Whole prior to the May 10, 2023 meeting to be scheduled at the Council President's discretion. So Voted.**

Orders, Ordinances and Resolutions:**Ordinance for a first reading to be passed to a second reading****AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING DEPARTMENTAL REVOLVING FUNDS****Chapter 40
FINANCE**

Be it ordained by the Municipal Council of the City of Taunton and by authority of the same as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 40 of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Taunton, as amended, is hereby further amended by adding a new section 5.3 to Article VIII, as follows:--

5.3 School Department

- 5.3.1 **Fund Name.** There shall be a separate fund called the Maintenance and Supplies Revolving Fund for the use of the School Department.
- 5.3.2 **Revenues.** The City Auditor shall establish the Maintenance and Supplies Revolving Fund as a separate account and credit to the fund eighty (80%) percent of the sale proceeds from the sale of surplus School Department items, equipment, goods and inventory. The remaining twenty (20%) percent shall be deposited into the City of Taunton miscellaneous non-recurring revenue account.
- 5.3.3 **Purposes and Expenditures.** During each fiscal year, the School Department may incur liabilities against and spend monies from the

Maintenance and Supplies Revolving Fund for expenses of school maintenance. Salaries or wages of employees shall not be paid from the fund.

- 5.3.4 Reports. Within 10 days of the end of each quarter of the fiscal year, the Superintendent of Schools, or the Superintendent's designee, must provide the School Committee and the City Auditor with a report of the revenues and expenditures of the Maintenance and Supplies Revolving Fund during the month and fiscal year to date.
- 5.3.5 Fiscal Years. The Maintenance and Supplies Revolving Fund shall operate for fiscal years that begin on or after July 1, 2023.

All ordinances or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed. This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon passage.
Motion was made to pass to a second reading. So Voted.

Ordinance for a first reading to be passed to a second reading

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING DEPARTMENTAL REVOLVING FUNDS

**Chapter 40
FINANCE**

Be it ordained by the Municipal Council of the City of Taunton and by authority of the same as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 40 of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Taunton, as amended, is hereby further amended by adding a new section 5.4 to Article VIII, as follows:--

5.4 Lake Sabbatia

- 5.4.1 Fund Name. There shall be a separate fund called the Lake Sabbatia Revolving Fund for the use of the City to Maintain Lake Sabbatia and fund initiatives.
- 5.4.2 Revenues. The City Auditor shall establish the Lake Sabbatia Revolving Fund as a separate account and credit all sums received from Lake Sabbatia parking lot revenue to said account.
- 5.4.3 Purposes and Expenditures. During each fiscal year, the City may incur liabilities against and spend monies from the Lake Sabbatia Revolving Fund for expenses related to the maintenance, improvement and Lake Sabbatia initiatives as approved by the Mayor or Mayor's designee. Salaries or wages of employees shall not be paid from the fund.

- 5.4.4 Reports. Within 10 days of the end of each quarter of the fiscal year, the Mayor, or the Mayor's designee, must provide the City Council and the City Auditor with a report of the revenues and expenditures of the Lake Sabbatia Revolving Fund during the month and fiscal year to date.
- 5.4.5 Fiscal Years. The Lake Sabbatia Revolving Fund shall operate for fiscal years that begin on or after July 1, 2023.

All ordinances or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed. This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon passage.

Motion was made to pass to a second reading. So Voted.

New Business:

Councilor Coute requests to refer to the Committee on Public Property to meet with the Director of Parks, Cemeteries and Public Grounds to discuss the possibility of adding a skate park to the memorial park renovation plan. **Motion was made and seconded. So Voted.**

Councilor Postell motioned to refer to the Police Department for stepped up presence and enforcement action in the Industrial Park as there has been an increase in concerns with street racing and noise. **Motion was made to move approval. So Voted.**

Councilor Postell motioned to refer to the Safety Officer to review the area of Fourth Street and Weir Street for overcrowded parking of vehicles along the roadway. **Motion was made to move approval. So Voted.**

Councilor Borges motioned to refer to the Safety Officer to review the area of Bassett Street as there have been some trailers that have been pulling in from out of state and they have ATV's and fancy cars and they are video-taping in that area. She stated the Safety Officer is on it but wants the public to know they are aware as well. **Motion was made to move approval. So Voted.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:13 P.M.

A true copy:

Attest: 
City Clerk

JLL/MAF

City of Taunton
Municipal Council
April 11, 2023

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
2023 APR 13 A 11:58
TAUNTON, MA
CITY CLERK

The Committee on Finance and Salaries

The meeting was held at Taunton City Hall, 15 Summer Street, Taunton, MA 02780 in Chester R. Martin Municipal Council Chambers.

Present were Councilor Phillip Duarte, Chairman and Councilor Pottier. Councilor McCaul was absent. Also present were CFO Patrick Dello Russo, Treasurer/Collector Christine Clymens, Assistant Treasurer/Collector Julie Venerus, and Budget Director Gill Enos.

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 PM.

1. Meet to review the weekly vouchers and payroll for City departments.

MOTION: *Approve the payroll warrant in the amount of \$1,328,351.43. So voted.*

MOTION: *Approve the accounts payable warrant in the amount of \$5,498,437.17. So voted.*

2. Meet with the CFO and Treasurer/Collector for an update on banking initiatives and collection and investment activity.

Christine Clymens spoke about the City's investment activity and indicated that the investment outlook is strong. She pointed out that the average yield on bank accounts is over 4%. Treasury bills are yielding close to 5%. Interest revenue is projected to be about \$3 Million higher this year than last. Ms. Clymens indicated that U. S. Treasuries are experiencing extreme rate movement weekly. She pointed out that stocks declined last year by 25% but this year so far they are up 7% year to date.

Mr. Dello Russo spoke about the recent banking issues where several banks failed which required the FDIC to step in and provide security by covering deposits. He and the finance team required the City's financial institutions to provide formal letters which ensured their positions are unlike those of the banks that collapsed. He stated that banks are getting rid of DIF coverage and will no longer cover deposits over \$250,000. However, to make sure that the City's funds are covered he indicated that they are adding intrafi coverage (a sweep) and using collateralization. He also spoke about Veribanc which dives into the nitty gritty of banks' financial statements and provide a public report which provides guidance on which banks to use and not use. Mr. Dello Russo indicated that this will be incorporated into the financial policies.

Julie Venerus spoke about the collection of police details. The Treasurer/Collector's office has taken over this responsibility. Between September 1 and March 31 they mailed out demand

notices totaling \$532,312 and have collected \$419,068 of that. Now the office is collecting all police details, not just past due. There is now a \$25 late fee and anyone with a police detail over 90 days is suspended from new details until paid. She also spoke about the collection of tows which is also now handled by the treasurer /collector's office. Ms. Venerus indicated that they have collected 81% of motor vehicle excise taxes as of yesterday which is slightly higher than prior years.

Ms. Clymens gave some details on tax title cases and pointed out resources for those who need assistance such as the expansion of the tax deferral program and the Helping Hands fund. Payment plans are also available.

Councilor Pottier moved that the presentation be part of the record. So voted.

Councilor Pottier asked for some details on the sweeps and Mr. Dello Russo explained that banks in the northeast and on the west coast are heavy with cash and so they put money into banks in the Midwest. The money sweeps in and out. Councilor Pottier suggested that the late fee assessed for police details might be a percentage of the balance instead of a flat fee. Ms. Venerus indicated that they are discussing charging interest but that has not been implemented yet. He noted that there is help available for those who need it for tax title situations. Mr. Pottier asked about the impact of inflation and Mr. Dello Russo indicated that gas and fuel prices are leveling off. Capital projects may see increases due to inflation. He also noted that the City's improved AA+ rating translates to interest savings for the City.

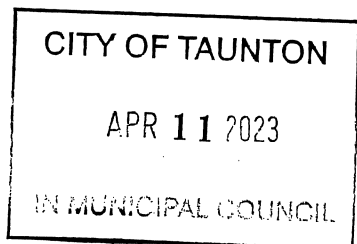
Councilor Duarte asked why banks are getting rid of DIF coverage and Ms. Clymens indicated that it is pulled from them. He also asked for information on the collection rate for police details prior to the process switch and Mr. Dello Russo indicated that the balance was over \$4 Million. Councilor Duarte asked if a late fee is associated with unpaid tow fees and Ms. Venerus indicated that they are able to assess a fee but they haven't had to do that yet. He also asked why excise taxes are now being issued in February instead of March and Ms. Venerus indicated that previously this was done in March due to staffing and the real estate due date but now that they are fully staffed they have gone back to February in the hopes of collecting more commitments before the end of the year.

Councilor Postell stated that he is glad to hear discussion about late fees and interest for outstanding police detail invoices. He wondered what efforts are being put in place for vendors hired by the City who do not pay detail bills. He does not want to hire contractors who do not pay their bills for City projects.

Councilor Sanders asked about the letters that were included and Ms. Clymens stated that the letters were passed along to the Council but they also received back up documentation from the banks.

Councilor Borges asked about limiting businesses who owe property taxes. She also asked if information on available help is given and Ms. Clymens stated that those who are behind are notified and reminded several times before any action is taken. Mr. Dello Russo stated that the expanded tax deferral program will be effective January 1 and it will be heavily advertised.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 PM.



Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maggie E. Clarke".

Maggie E. Clarke
Clerk of Council Committees

REPORTS ACCEPTED. RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Rega".
CITY CLERK

City of Taunton
Municipal Council
April 11, 2023

The Committee on Ordinances and Enrolled Bills

The meeting was held at Taunton City Hall, 15 Summer Street, Taunton, MA 02780 in the Chester R. Martin Municipal Council Chambers.

Present were Councilor Barry Sanders, Chairman and Councilor Dooner. Councilor McCaul was absent. Also present was Attorney Thomas Gay.

The meeting was called to order at 6:18 PM.

1. Meet to discuss an ordinance determining the process for setting stipends for elected and appointed officials.

Councilor Sanders read the document that he had proposed as a starting point for consideration for the suggested new ordinance.

Attorney Gay indicated that he believes that everyone is on the same page with creating a very straightforward ordinance and thought that Councilor's Sanders' suggestion is a good framework to start with. Going forward, the Council would have to vote to amend an ordinance in order to make changes and would probably wish to get the input from the CFO to get a budget perspective.

Councilor Dooner questioned the specific language that indicated that the Council "shall update" and Attorney Gay said that the language can be looked at.

Councilor Sanders suggested reviewing stipends every five years would prevent sticker shock that could happen if it goes 15 years.

Councilor Duarte lent his support for the framework discussed but questioned the Council's authority over the TMLP stipend. Attorney Gay indicated that this is something that can be looked at.

Councilor Borges indicated that TMLP will probably be removed since this compensation doesn't come from the City's budget. She also liked the suggested framework and agreed that raising stipends is an uncomfortable discussion so it would be good to look at every five years.

Councilor Pottier suggested that other boards' stipends be derived from a formula based on the Council's. While the Council meets every week, some boards meet once a month so might receive 25% of the Council's stipend, for example. He also suggested that the CFO would be helpful in this discussion.

Councilor Postell asked for the threshold where some committees or commissions are included and some are not. He wondered why certain boards are excluded from compensation and how to keep people engaged with no compensation. Councilor Sanders indicated that there are lots of volunteer boards and lots of people who do good work without any compensation. If the Council decided to add another commission for compensation then the ordinance could be opened and the commission added. Councilor Postell referenced the Youth Commission and noted that a scholarship had been suggested.

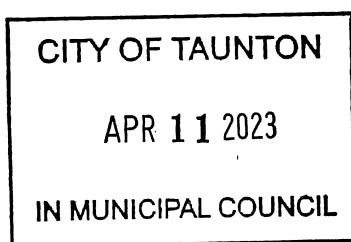
Councilor Duarte asked if any of these compensations are required by Mass General Law and Attorney Gay indicated that he would need to look at that but these stipends vary drastically from community to community.

Councilor Pottier suggested that larger communities tend to see larger stipends.

Councilor Borges asked if this is allowed since the Council cannot pull a line item out of the School Committee's budget and Attorney Gay indicated that doing this as an ordinance would memorialize existing stipends. Councilor Sanders stated that last week the Council was advised that this can be done by ordinance.

Councilor Dooner moved: ***MOTION:*** *Authorize the Law Department to work with the Clerk of Committees to draft the ordinance for the compensation for elected and appointed board, committee, and commission members within 3 weeks. ***So voted.****

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 PM.



Respectfully submitted,

Maggie E. Clarke
Clerk of Council Committees

REPORTS ACCEPTED. RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED.

Jennifer Rega
CITY CLERK