

City of Taunton  
Municipal Council  
May 10, 2023

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### The Committee of the Council as a Whole

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

Present were Council President Kelly Dooner, Chairman and Councilors Duarte, Borges, McCaul, Pottier, Coute, Sanders, and Postell. Councilor Quintal was absent. Also present were CFO Patrick Dello Russo and Budget Director Gill Enos.

The meeting was called to order at 5:50 PM.

#### **1. Meet with the Chief Financial Officer and Budget Director for the fiscal year 2024 budget hearing.**

Patrick Dello Russo gave a presentation with the FY24 budget. He stated that the process took 100 hours and approximately 50 meetings. He described a budget as a good faith estimate and that the Council's job is to approve or reduce the amounts being requested. Mr. Dello Russo highlighted the five year capital budget that is in place. Further FY23 accomplishments include starting the Helping Hands fund, funding the Memorial Park project, and many other accomplishments. The FY24 budget calls for an expansion in social programs, an increase in school funding, an increase in the 1144A Labor Union contract to be in line with industry standards, and no layoffs. The total budget request is \$283,895,593 which includes an increase in DPW staff and added funding for PCPG. There is a 7.5% increase in revenue.

The Council took each department in turn.

#### **111-Municipal Council**

Motion by Mr. Sanders and seconded by Mr. Pottier to refer the issue of funding the Parliamentary position and training to the supplemental budget. So voted.

Motion by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget under advisement. So voted.

#### **121 – Mayor's Office**

Councilor Pottier asked about the staffing in the office and suggested it might be helpful to see a FTE count year over year. Councilor Sanders confirmed that the position of Deputy Chief of Staff had been replaced with an executive assistant position.

**Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budget for department 121 under advisement. **So voted.**

### **132 – Reserve Account**

**Motion** by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. Sanders to take the budget for department 132 under advisement. **So voted.**

### **135 – Auditor**

Councilor Borges asked if a clerical position was added and Mr. Dello Russo indicated that there was a shift away from the Office Manager position. There was discussion on the contracted person who is paid by ARPA funds and it was stated that much of this function will be automated with the new software.

**Motion** by Mr. Sanders and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budget for department 135 under advisement. **So voted.**

### **138 – Procurement**

**Motion** by Mr. Sanders and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budget for department 138 under advisement. **So voted.**

### **141 – Assessors Office**

**Motion** by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budget for department 141 under advisement. **So voted.**

### **144 – Foreclosures**

### **147 – Tax Title**

Departments 144 and 147 were taken together.

**Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budgets for departments 144 and 147 under advisement. **So voted.**

### **145 – Treasurer/Collector**

Councilor Borges questioned the increase in clerical expense and it was explained that a part time person was hired to handle the towing and detail collections.

**Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budget for department 145 under advisement. **So voted.**

**151- Law**

Councilor Duarte questioned the posting for an additional Assistant City Solicitor and Mr. Dello Russo suggested that if they find the right candidate the position would be funded by ARPA funds or with a transfer from the reserve fund. Councilor Dooner asked if the Law Department believes that the salary for this position is adequate and Mr. Dello Russo stated that he believes it to be in line with industry standards. Councilor Borges agreed and she thought the salary on the posting was low to attract good candidates. She asked Mr. Dello Russo to explain the contract with Gay and Gay and he explained that their contract would be renegotiated in January so that funding is not included in the budget.

*Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 151 under advisement. So voted.*

**155 – IT**

*Motion by Mr. Sanders and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 155 under advisement and to invite the IT Director to the Committee on Economic Development and Technology to come in and talk about the new things he is doing in his department. So voted.*

**159 – Office Services**

*Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded Mr. Pottier by to take the budget for department 159 under advisement. So voted.*

**161 – City Clerk**

Councilor Postell questioned the \$17,000 decrease in salary of the City Clerk. Mr. Dello Russo stated that there is an agreed upon contract with the current City Clerk. Councilor Sanders questioned the clerical staffing level and Mr. Enos indicated that the office requested one less.

*Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 161 under advisement. So voted.*

**162 – Election/Registration**

*Motion by Councilor Borges and seconded by Councilor Duarte to take the budget for department 162 under advisement. So voted.*

**165 – License Commission**

*Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 165 under advisement. So voted.*

**175 – Planning, Zoning, and Conservation**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Sanders to take the budget for department 175 under advisement. So voted.

**182 – OECD**

Councilor Duarte clarified that some salaries are funded by HUD entitlement funds.

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Sanders to take the budget for department 182 under advisement. So voted.

**192 – City Hall Maintenance**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budget for department 192 under advisement. So voted.

**193 – Maintenance/Tax Possession**

Motion by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 193 under advisement. So voted.

**196 – Environmental Coordinator**

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 196 under advisement. So voted.

**197 – Parking Commission**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budget for department 197 under advisement. So voted.

**210 – Police**

Mr. Dello Russo stated that the Police budget includes 2 new police officers and increases in expenses for training initiatives. Councilor Postell clarified that these two new police officers are new positions and not backfilling open, existing positions. Councilor Sanders questioned the overtime and wondered if there is a plan to shift some of the overtime to the new positions. His concern is not just for money reasons, but for the health and well-being of the officers. Mr. Dello Russo indicated that the additional officers might help to offset overtime but that hiring is difficult. Councilor Dooner expressed her thanks for the hiring of the clinician. Councilor Pottier suggested that FTE counts over several years would be helpful. Councilor Borges questioned the decrease in the educational incentive and Mr. Dello Russo stated that there aren't as many advanced degrees. Ms. Borges also agreed that the hiring of the social worker was great. Councilor Duarte questioned the increase in miscellaneous services and it was clarified that this is all contracts and mostly technology related. Councilor Postell asked for the total

number of positions. There was discussion on upcoming retirements and he stated that the concern is getting qualified candidates and getting seats in the academy.

**Motion** by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 210 under advisement. **So voted.**

#### **220 – Fire**

Mr. Dello Russo highlighted that there are two major building improvements in the works. Councilor Sanders indicated that his concerns with overtime are the same as his concerns with the police overtime. Councilor Borges asked if the Chief's vehicle would be referred to the supplemental budget and Mr. Enos indicated that it would go through the capital process. There was discussion on new apparatus that is on order. Councilor Postell noted that there has been a significant investment in public safety put forth. With the new public safety building there will be a chance to shift focus to outlying buildings.

**Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 220 under advisement. **So voted.**

#### **244 – Sealer Weights & Measures**

**Motion** by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 244 under advisement. **So voted.**

#### **291 – TEMA**

Councilor Sanders expressed his concern with the decision to eliminate the position of Assistant Director.

**Motion** by Mr. Sanders and seconded by Ms. Borges to refer filling the position of the Assistant Director to the supplemental budget.

Mr. Dello Russo suggested that the new director should be hired and allowed to determine the best needs for the department. Councilor Postell stated that this is a very important agency for the City and having one person responsible for that department makes it a very stressful situation. However, he agrees that the new director should assess the position. Councilor Sanders suggested that having the money in place sends a message that we value this department. Councilor Duarte indicated that it could take the new person months to decide.

**So voted.**

**Motion** by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget of department 291 under advisement. **So voted.**

### 292 – Animal Control

Mr. Enos indicated that there is a shortfall in Animal Control in FY23 that will be coming before Finance and Salaries

*Motion* by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Sanders to take the budget for department 292 under advisement. *So voted.*

### 293 – Police and Traffic Signals

*Motion* by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 293 under advisement. *So voted.*

### 296 – Fish Warden

*Motion* by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 296 under advisement. *So voted.*

### 380 – Bristol Agricultural School

*Motion* by Mr. Sanders and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 380 under advisement. *So voted.*

### 390 – Bristol Plymouth Technical High School

Mr. Dello Russo suggested that there is no Taunton representative on the BP Building Committee with public construction experience. Councilor Borges indicated that Louis Borges and Bob Pirozzi are on the building committee. Councilor Couté stated that he would support the CFO being on the committee. Councilor Dooner stated that the more representation from Taunton, the better. Mr. Couté indicated that he can't imagine what the argument against that would be.

*Motion* by Mr. Sanders and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 390 under advisement. *So voted.*

### 399 – Taunton Public Schools

Mr. Dello Russo stated that the Mayor is committed to meeting net school spending requirements. He suggested that a net school spending stabilization account may be needed in the future. Councilor Pottier asked if this number is 100% and Mr. Dello Russo indicated that yes but they need to wait for the state's numbers. Councilor Sanders asked if this number is different from the request of the superintendent and there was discussion on indirect costs. Councilor Couté expressed thanks to the administration for working to get to 100% of net school spending.

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 399 under advisement and take a five minute recess. So voted.

The Committee returned from recess.

#### **400 – DPW Administration**

Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 400 under advisement. So voted.

#### **410 – Engineering**

Councilor Borges questioned the GIS specialist position and Mr. Dello Russo indicated that this position was reclassified and should reduce consultant costs.

Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 410 under advisement. So voted.

#### **421 – Oil and Road Construction**

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 421 under advisement. So voted.

#### **422 – Streets and Ways**

Mr. Dello Russo indicated that a new position is carried in this budget.

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 422 under advisement. So voted.

#### **423 – Snow and Ice**

Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 423 under advisement. So voted.

#### **424 – Street Lighting**

Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 424 under advisement. So voted.

#### **433 – Trash Pickup**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budget for department 433 under advisement. So voted.

**480 – Vehicle Maintenance**

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Mr. Duarte to take the budget for department 480 under advisement. So voted.

**492 – Super/Public Buildings**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Sanders to take the budget for department 492 under advisement. So voted.

**493 – Repairs, Public Buildings**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. McCaul to take the budget for department 493 under advisement. So voted.

**496 – Public Buildings/A.D.A.**

Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 496 under advisement. So voted.

**Water, Sewer, and Golf Enterprise Accounts**

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Ms. Borges to take these budgets under advisement. So voted.

**500 – Human Services**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. McCaul to invite Charlene Bonenfant, the Director of Human Services, to the Committee on Elder Affairs and Human Services to come in and talk about some of the things she's been doing in her department. So voted.

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. McCaul to take the budget for department 500 under advisement. So voted.

**510 – Board of Health**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. McCaul to take the budget for department 510 under advisement and invite the Director or Acting Director to come in to the Committee on Public Health to brief the Committee on department initiatives. So voted.

**542 – Head Start**

Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Mr. McCaul to take the budget for department 542 under advisement. So voted.



**543 – Veterans Services**

Councilor Borges suggested that we invite the new Veterans Services Director Ally Rodriguez to the Committee of the Council as a Whole for the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July to discuss her needs and refer to the supplemental budget.

**Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Duarte to take the budget for department 543 under advisement. **So voted.**

**548 – ADA Disabilities Commission**

**Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Duarte to take the budget for department 548 under advisement. **So voted.**

**549 – Human Resources**

**Motion** by Mr. Postell and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 549 under advisement. **So voted.**

**610 – Library**

**Motion** by Mr. Coutte and seconded by Mr. McCaul to take the budget for department 610 under advisement. **So voted.**

**Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Postell to invite Linda Coelho to come to a meeting of the Committee of the Council as a Whole for a discussion on things happening at the Taunton Public Library. **So voted.**

**630 – Parks & Recreation**

**Motion** by Mr. Coutte and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budget for department 630 under advisement. **So voted.**

**Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Duarte to invite Commissioner AJ Marshall in to the Committee of the Council as a Whole for a discussion. **So voted.**

**650 – Airport**

Mr. Dello Russo indicated that the salary of the airport manager will be offset by the sale of jet fuel.

**Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Postell to take budget 650 under advisement and to invite the Acting Airport Manager or Manager in the future to the Committee on the Needs of the Airport for an update on what's happening at the Airport.

Councilor Postell questioned the salary of the new airport manager and how jet fuel will offset that. He suggested a salary of \$125,000 seems high as compared to other department heads. Mr. Duarte clarified that while it was budgeted for \$125,000 the new manager was hired at \$105,000.

**So voted.**

**Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Postell to refer to the Committee on Finance and Salaries the discussion on the budget of the Taunton Municipal Airport with the CFO and Budget Director to take a deeper dive. **So voted.**

#### **690 – Historical District Commission**

**Motion** by Mr. Coute and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 690 under advisement. **So voted.**

#### **695 – Cable Commission**

**Motion** by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 695 under advisement. **So voted.**

#### **696 – Municipal Access**

**Motion** by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 696 under advisement. **So voted.**

#### **710 – Debt**

**Motion** by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Mr. McCaul to take the budget for department 710 under advisement. **So voted.**

#### **751 – Interest/Long Term Debt**

**Motion** by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Mr. Duarte to take the budget for department 751 under advisement. **So voted.**

#### **752 – Interest/Short Term Debt**

**Motion** by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Mr. Duarte to take the budget for department 752 under advisement. **So voted.**

#### **840 – SRPEDD**

**Motion** by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 840 under advisement. **So voted.**

**910 – Retirement Benefits**

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Mr. Pottier to take the budget for department 910 under advisement. So voted.

**913 – Unemployment Compensation**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 913 under advisement. So voted.

**914 – Hospital/Group Insurance**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 914 under advisement. So voted.

**915 – Medicare**

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 915 under advisement. So voted.

**916 – Disability Retirement**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. McCaul to take the budget for department 916 under advisement. So voted.

**941 – Court Judgments**

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 941 under advisement. So voted.

**945 – Liability Insurance**

Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Ms. Borges to take the budget for department 945 under advisement. So voted.

**TMLP Debt**

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Postell to take this budget under advisement. So voted.

**946 – Claims/Damages**

Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Postell to take the budget for department 946 under advisement. So voted.

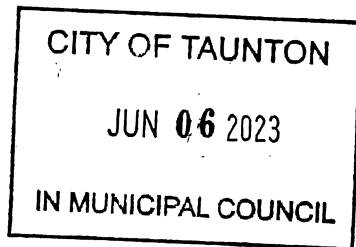
Councilor Couté commended the CFO and Budget Director for being so well prepared.

Motion by Councilor Pottier and seconded by Mr. Postell to thank the guys in the back televising and recording the meeting. So voted.

Councilor Borges asked about the Airport terminal building and the lease of the restaurant space. She asked if that space has to be a restaurant and expressed her hope that the vision of having a restaurant there does not change.

Motion by Mr. Duarte and seconded by Mr. McCaul to recommend the budget in the amount of \$283,895,593.47 and refer to the Full Council. So voted.

MOTION by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. McCaul to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 PM. So voted.



Respectfully submitted,

*Maggie E. Clarke*

Maggie E. Clarke  
Clerk of Council Committees

**REPORTS ACCEPTED. RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED.**

*Jennifer L. Regan*  
CITY CLERK