

City of Taunton
Municipal Council
September 26, 2023

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2023 SEP 28 A 10: 05

The Committee on Finance and Salaries

TAUNTON, MA

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

Members Present: Councilor Phillip Duarte, Chairman
Councilor David Pottier
Councilor John McCaul

Also Present: Patrick Dello Russo, CFO
Christine Clymens, Treasurer/Collector
Ian Fortes, City Auditor
Charlene Bonenfant, Director of Human Services
Gill Enos, Budget Director

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 PM.

1. Approval of minutes from September 19, 2023.

Motion by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. McCaul to approve. **So voted.**

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

Motion by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. McCaul to approve the payroll warrant in the amount of \$1,660,875.17. **So voted.**

Motion by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. McCaul to approve the accounts payable warrant in the amount of \$5,852,953.19. **So voted.**

3. Meet to discuss the request to establish a gift account for the Taunton Police Department comfort dog.

Motion by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. McCaul to invite in the interested party. **So voted.**

Mr. Duarte read a letter from Mr. Dello Russo requesting the establishment of this gift account.

Motion by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. McCaul to make the letter part of the record. **So voted.**

Mr. Duarte read the language of the requested Order to establish the account.

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Mr. Pottier to approve the gift account.

Mr. Postell noted that this is a common approach for many municipalities.

So voted.

4. Meet to discuss the request to transfer from the Social Spending Stabilization Account to the Helping Hand Program Fund.

Mr. Fortes explained that since this is a transfer from stabilization, a 2/3 vote of the Council would be required. The request is to transfer \$350,000 from the Social Spending Stabilization fund to the Helping Hands Program Account.

Mr. Duarte read the suggested Order.

Mr. McCaul asked what the balance of the Social Spending Stabilization Account would be and Mr. Dello Russo stated it would be close to zero. Details of the program will be discussed next week.

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Mr. Pottier to approve the transfer. **So voted.**

5. Meet to discuss the request to dedicate 25% or an amount not to exceed \$250,000 from tax liens redeemed and directly allocate those fund to be the recurring revenue for the Helping Hand Fund.

Ms. Clymens showed the tax title payments for the last three fiscal years. 25% on average would give \$240,000 annually. Mr. Dello Russo stated that using this source of funding makes this a sustainable account.

Mr. Duarte read the suggested language of the Order.

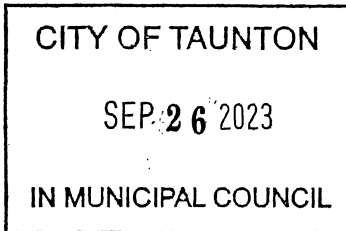
Mr. Pottier clarified that this is a recommendation and not a mandate.

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Mr. Pottier to approve. **So voted.**

Motion by Mr. McCaul and seconded by Mr. Pottier to adjourn and thank the participants at 5:43 P.M. **So voted.**

List of Documents and Other Exhibits Used:

- The Committee on Finance and Salaries Meeting Minutes from 9/19/23
- Payroll Warrant #49
- Bill Invoice Warrant #48
- List of items over \$100,000
- Letter from Patrick Dello Russo dated 9/12/23
- Order to Establish Gift Account for Comfort Dog
- Letter from Patrick Dello Russo dated 9/14/23
- Order to Transfer Social Spending Stabilization Fund to Helping Hand Fund Program Account
- Order to Direct Fund Helping Hand Fund Program Account
- Tax Title Annual Payments



Respectfully submitted,

Maggie E. Clarke
Clerk of Council Committees

REPORTS ACCEPTED. RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED.

CITY CLERK

City of Taunton
Municipal Council
September 26, 2023

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The Committee of the Council as a Whole

TAUNTON, MA

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

Councilors Present: Council President Kelly Dooner
Councilor Phillip Duarte
Councilor Estele Borges
Councilor John McCaul
Councilor David Pottier
Councilor Christopher Coute
Councilor Barry Sanders
Councilor Lawrence Quintal
Councilor Jeffrey Postell

Also Present: Attorney Matt Costa, City Solicitor
Jim Hawkins, State Representative, Attleboro
Jean Warrish, Rocky Knoll Estates
Carol Doherty, State Representative

The meeting was called to order at 5:51 PM.

1. Approval of minutes from September 19, 2023.

Motion by Mr. Coute and seconded by Mr. Pottier to approve the minutes from September 19, 2023. **So voted.**

2. Meet to discuss the request to adopt a resolution endorsing passage of House Bill 1327 and Senate Bill S875, "An Act relative to manufactured housing communities".

Motion by Mr. Coute and seconded by Mr. Pottier to invite in the City Solicitor. **So voted.**

Motion by Mr. Coute and seconded by Mr. McCaul to invite in the sponsor of the Bill, James Hawkins, State Representative Doherty, and the author of the letter that was sent. **So voted.**

Ms. Doherty stated that she was attending as State Representative to support the residents' effort and that she is planning to testify on behalf of this measure tomorrow.

Ms. Warrish stated that she is asking the City to support the residents of the manufactured home parks who are mostly seniors. She believes that these bills, H1327 and S875, will help keep things fair. There are seven manufactured home parks in Taunton and five are owned by large corporations. She indicated that she had 80 letters from residents of different manufactured home communities in the City expressing their support. Ms. Warrish explained that in manufactured home communities, the residents rent the land, essentially the parking spot for their homes. They pay monthly rent but do not know what the monthly expenses are. She believes that in all parks the residents need some type of protection. This Bill will allow for a taskforce. Ms. Warrish gave some rent summaries from different parks highlighting how the rents have increased. She indicated her hope that the Council would adopt the resolution so that they can go to the State House tomorrow with that support.

Mr. Hawkins explained that in the past many parks were family owned but now they are being gobbled up by out of state corporations. He gave an example of one park that was on the books for \$3 Million, the tenants made an offer to purchase of \$10 Million, it was actually sold to a hedge fund for \$13 Million, and was then flipped a year later for \$19 Million. He stressed that these bills do not change the State law and does not cost the owners in the parks anything extra. Massachusetts has some of the best protection laws in the nation and this would just confirm that any changes are in conformity with State law.

Ms. Dooner asked if landlords can still increase rents and Mr. Hawkins confirmed that landlords can still increase rents and indicated that this would just provide for a review.

Mr. Postell suggested that this is an opportunity to resurrect an ordinance that covers the manufactured homes where there used to be a task force. He suggested that this be looked at to see how this would roll into the existing task force. Mr. Postell would like to see an annual report provided to owners and other information shared such as successes and shortcomings. While he will support this, he thinks that the Bill needs more bite but this is a start. He further suggested information sharing across parks.

Mr. Pottier stated that he served on the task force in the past and the focus then was on evictions. He suggested that if owners knew that rent increases were coming then they could plan accordingly. He indicated that the owners are looking to get information and that this is the least the Council should be able to do. He expressed his belief that this is entirely reasonable and will support the resolution.

The Clerk of Committees read the suggested resolution.

Motion by Mr. Sanders and seconded by Mr. Postell to adopt the resolution as written.

Mr. McCaul stated that the residents need some protection. He knows that this is time sensitive and he will be voting yes.

Ms. Borges recognized Senator Pacheco who signed onto this Bill and is working with the AG on manufactured home issues. She wondered how this is different from what Senator Pacheco is working on. Representative Hawkins stated that he supports what Senator

Pacheco is doing and they do not conflict with each other. Ms. Borges stated that she hopes that these changes will protect the homeowners.

Mr. Duarte asked about pass-through expenses and Ms. Warrish stated that these include real estate taxes, water, sewer, license fees, and capital expenses. Mr. Duarte referenced an article from the New Yorker from March of 21 that claimed that manufactured home communities are becoming cash cows for investment companies. He suggested that this is a well-orchestrated scheme by people with a lot of money. He believes this a reasonable approach to the issue. Mr. Duarte suggested that this is not rent control but, rather, rent justification. He referenced the letter from the Massachusetts Manufactured Housing Association and indicated that he did not find the arguments compelling. Mr. Duarte gave his support for the resolution.

Mr. Coute stated that he is an opponent of rent control but he does not view this as rent control. The Bills are just looking to enforce existing State laws.

Ms. Borges supported the measure and agreed with the points that Mr. Duarte had made.

So voted.

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Mr. Postell to make the letter of opposition and the fact sheet part of the record. **So voted.**

Motion by Mr. Coute and seconded by Ms. Borges to excuse the parties. **So voted.**

Motion by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. Postell to take a 2 minute recess at 6:33 PM. **So voted.**

The Committee returned to business at 6:42 PM.

3. Meet to discuss marijuana related businesses licensing procedure and number.

Mr. Pottier stated that he was wondering if there is an appetite to discuss adding a couple licenses as the market is becoming more mature.

Mr. Coute indicated that he would have an appetite once all licenses are approved and the businesses are operational. At that point, he thinks that getting an update from OECD, the Building Inspector, and the City Clerk might make sense. In general, he believes the market drives the commerce.

Mr. Postell would like to get the current businesses up and running. If the market determines that the demand isn't being met then this can be looked at again.

Ms. Borges suggested a committee to keep better track of cannabis matters. She would prefer to wait until that committee forms as she is not prepared to make any decisions tonight on this.

Mr. Duarte stated that adding any new licenses would be to the detriment of the current licensees looking to succeed in the market.

Mr. Sanders suggested this should be part of a larger conversation. He noted that the CCC has recently released some draft regulations regarding HCAs and protections around social equity businesses and if the cap were to be raised he would want to be consistent with that mission.

Motion by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. Coute to invite OECD, Building Commissioner, City Clerk, and Law Department for an update on the status of existing license holders and for a discussion on the appetite for more licenses. **So voted.**

Motion by Mr. Coute and seconded Mr. Postell to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 PM. **So voted.**

List of Documents and Other Exhibits Used:

Meeting Minutes from the Committee of the Council as a Whole 9/19/23

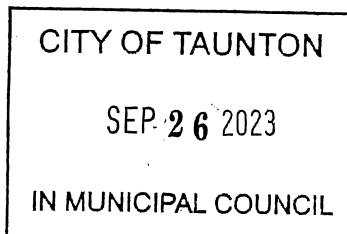
Letter from Jean Warish dated 9/12/23

Resolution in support of H1327 and S875

House Bill 1327 and Senate Bill 875

Opposition to the Proposed Amendments to Chapter 140 of the General Laws from the
Massachusetts Manufactured Housing Association

Email from Melissa Caron, MMHA Executive Director



Respectfully submitted,



Maggie E. Clarke
Clerk of Council Committees

REPORTS ACCEPTED. RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED.



CITY CLERK