



CITY OF EASTHAMPTON **OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Easthampton Municipal Building
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Minutes

City Council Finance Committee Meeting, 5/24/2023

Attendees:

Finance Committee Members:

Councilor Dan Rist, Chair
Councilor Tom Peake, Clerk
Councilor Koni Denham

Other Attendees:

Mayor Nicole LaChapelle
City Auditor Hetal Patel
City Council President Homar Gomez
HR Director Emily Russo
City Treasurer Jessica Hebert
Executive Assistant to the Mayor Lindsy Mailer (remote)
Tax Collector Carol Veto
Assessor's Office Manager Christine Zdonek
Assistant Tax Collector Lori Reynolds
Senior Planner Jamie Webb
Board of Assessors Chair Peter Davies
IT Director Karin Camihort (remote)

Meeting was called to order at 5:15 PM.

- 1) Approval of Minutes: On motion made by Councilor Denham and seconded by Councilor Peake, it was voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of May 15 as amended.
- 2) Mayor's Communication: None
- 3) Public Speak: None
- 4) New Business

a) **FY '24 Budget Review:**

i) **General Government:**

- (1) **City Council:** Salaries were voted to increase. Some professional services were moved from the mayor's office to the city council.
 - (2) **Mayor's Office:** The executive assistant position was reworked and the salary increased. There is now a principal clerk, which has been the case in some, but not all, prior years. In this year, the principal clerk is largely dealing with COVID funds. Council legal expenses were moved to the council.
 - (3) **Licensing:** No changes.
 - (4) **Assessors:** The city is searching for a new principal assessor. The salary has increased to be competitive. There is a new data collector position. This was previously a consultant. Assessor's Office Manager Christine Zdonek stated that she believed that having a data collector would help the city to avoid missing growth.
 - (5) **Auditor:** There is an increase in salary due to the pay plan. The city is spending more ARPA money, and there are more capital projects to audit, so the financial audit item went up \$5,000.
 - (6) **Treasurer:** Salary increases were due to pay plan. The assistant treasurer salary went down because of a new employee.
 - (7) **Central Purchasing:** This is mostly office and postage supplies. It has increased by three percent as the price of postage has increased.
 - (8) **Technology:** There is a part time clerical position in the office. Salary increases are pay plan. The radios, telephones, and others line item has increased. This is mostly due to increased connectivity demands in public safety, such as ambulances.
 - (9) **Tax Collector:** No major changes beyond pay plan/inflation.
 - (10) **Human Resources:** There is an actuarial study that has to occur every other year. Professional services include a benefits coordinator and drug testing for the DPW.
 - (11) **City Clerk:** There is an increase due to a change in the longevity policy.
 - (12) **Elections and Registrations:** There is a municipal election this fiscal year. There are some things the city will have to pay for that they would not need to during midterms or presidential elections. There is also a presidential primary next spring. There are still some unknown factors in this.
 - (13) **Planning:** Planning Director Jeff Bagg stated that he is working to move salaries off of one-time grants in order to stabilize salaries. Education and training increased. A lot of that is planning board and zoning boards of appeals member trainings. Councilor Rist and Mayor LaChapelle spoke in favor of the salary increases in planning salary from the purpose of retention of talent.
- ii) **Community Preservation Fund:** Revenue estimates are up from last year but are still estimates as the legislature is still deliberating. Senior Planner Jamie Webb stated that the CPA Committee budgeted conservatively for the revenue. Councilor Rist stated that he hoped the committee would invest heavily in affordable housing this year.

5) Old Business

6) Continuing Business

- a) **Quarterly fiscal reports from the City Auditor:** This was not discussed tonight.
- b) **Quarterly Report on Covid-19 grant funding and spending:** This was not discussed tonight.

By motion made by Councilor Peake and seconded by Councilor Denham, the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 PM

Next meeting: 5/30/23