Board of Finance Meeting, Monday, November 23, 2020, 5:30 pm
VIRTUAL MEETING
11/23/2020

BURLINGTON BOARD OF FINANCE

CITY HALL

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

MINUTES OF MEETING

November 23, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Max Tracy

Karen Paul

Brian Pine

Ali Dieng

Miro Weinberger

OTHERS PRESENT: Katherine Schad

Eileen Blackwood

Rich Goodwin

Jordan Redell

Chapin Spencer

Darren Springer

Luke McGowan

Kara Alnasrawi

Doreen Kraft

Paul Plunkett

Lise Veronneau

Paul Alexander

Brian Locke

Olivia Darisse

Susan Molzon

Jon Murad

Tyeastia Green

Joey Bergstein

Tony Barry

Melissa Steady

Cindi Wight

Danielle Cota

Melissa Cate

Grace Ciffo

Sophie Sauve

Max Madalinski

1.0 CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

Chief Administrative Officer Schad called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

1.
    i. Motion to amend/adopt agenda

MOTION by Councilor Pine, SECOND by Councilor Paul, to adopt the agenda.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2.0 PUBLIC FORUM (VERBAL)

2.01 Verbal Comments

None at this time.

3.0 CONSENT AGENDA

3.01 motion to adopt the consent agenda and take the actions indicated

3.02 Board of Finance Draft Minutes, November 9, 2020 – approve the minutes.

MOTION by Councilor Pine, SECOND by City Council President Tracy, to adopt the consent agenda and take the actions indicated for items 3.01-3.02.

DISCUSSION:

- **Councilor Paul requested that the November 9, 2020 Board of Finance minutes be amended to include further detail relating to agenda item 4.01 (Financial Update Presentation) to reflect discussion around phasing the use of the unassigned fund balance instead of taking from the balance to fill a control expenditure. She additionally requested that the minutes state the Board of Finance's commitment to addressing budget gaps without resorting to job cuts for City employees in any department.**

MOTION by Councilor Paul, SECOND by Councilor Pine, to table the consent agenda items 3.01 and 3.02

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

4.0 REPORT REGARDING COVID-19 BUDGET UPDATE

4.01 Report Regarding COVID Budget Update

CAO Schad noted that while slides were being compiled for this update, the City received notification that it had received funding approval from the State in the form of a Local Government Expense Reimbursement (LGER) option for up to $2,545,397, and that all documentation to unlock this funding will need to be submitted by December 11.

CAO Schad provided an overall summary of the COVID-19 budget, noting that the LGER line item included was built on the guaranteed $750,000 minumum funding. She said that the City has been able to leverage more than $3 million in its COVID Budget. She provided an overview of the applications for funding that have been submitted, including from Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Department of Justice (DOJ) at the federal level, and additional funding at the state level. She broke out the COVID budget, again noting the use of the conservative $750,000 estimate from the LGER; line items include Emergency Operations (EOC), the Resource and Recovery Center (RRC), Business Support, Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB), and contingency funds. She said that generally, the EOC has addressed primary impacts of the pandemic, like masks and testing and that the RRC focused more on secondary impacts like access to food and grants to businesses. She provided further detail on the grants and support going to businesses in downtown Burlington and throughout Burlington neighborhoods. She finally noted the line items related to REIB, including for the 8 Point Plan and Rapid Response Team stipends, which are in addition to the $1 million already allocated.

Councilor Dieng asked about the difference between translation, communication, and trusted liaisons in the budget. CAO Schad replied that the trusted liaison line item is for stipends paid to individuals within the New American Community to help with communicating information about the virus, that translation is paying for printed materials and emails in languages other than English, and that communications is for print ads in local publications to communicate the availability of certain services through the RRC.

CAO Schad noted that some challenges for the City have included a prior lack of understanding around the scope, scale, and new responsibilities of grant coordination efforts, but that discussions are underway to better align CEDO and the Clerk/Treasurer's Office to better ensure grant management and process improvement. She concluded by underscoring the success that the $1 million allocation for COVID-19 in the City's budget has been leveraged to at least $3 million.

Councilor Pine asked if the federal government would allow for some of the additional staff burden to be reimbursed by the LGER funds. CAO Schad replied that yes, the LGER grant is flexible and the application included significant CEDO staff time at the RRC.

Councilor Pine asked if the additional grant management, monitoring, and compliance duties can be performed by current staff, or if current staff need to be augmented for additional work. CAO Schad replied that there will be a short term staff time crunch, but should even out in the longer term.

Councilor Paul asked whether there are consultancy firms that specialize in grant oversight and monitoring and could perform those duties more efficiently than City staff. CAO Schad replied that she would research whether that type of consultant specialty exists.

City Council President Tracy asked if the budget needs to be modified to incorporate items from the Language Access Plan adopted at a prior City Council meeting. CAO Schad replied that yes. Director McGowan agreed.

City Council Tracy asked if there is money budgeted for masks or if the City has moved away from that as a line item. CAO Schad replied that funding is still available for masks, that there are masks still in storage and that more have not been ordered yet.

Councilor Paul suggested a centralized grant management operation.

Councilor Dieng noted that the grants seem to have many requirements and stipulations and had the potential for a substantial amount of administrative burden. CAO Schad replied that many grants have strict requirements, but that they have proven to be worth the additional administrative burden and effort.

5.0 FOR APPROVAL AND RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL

5.01 B.E.D.'s Property/Boiler and Machinery (B&M) 2020-2021 Insurance renewal - BED

MOTION by Councilor Paul, SECOND by Councilor Pine, to approve and recommend that the City Council authorize the General Manager of the Burlington Electric Department to execute the Property, Boiler & Machinery insurance coverage renewal contract with AIG/ZURICH/STARR TECH/AEGIS for the policy period 11/20/2020 through 11/20/2021 with a premium of $644,528.50, as outlined in this memo, subject to review and approval of the City Attorney's Office.

DISCUSSION:

- **Councilor Paul asked if the value of the McNeil Plant is more or less than the noted $181,000,000, and what the proposal would cover if the total insurable value is capped at $175,000,000. Mr. Alexander clarified that BED's total insurable value across its physical properties is $258,000,000 and that the total insurable value of the McNeil Plant is $181,000,000. He said that it is unlikely that multiple systems will fail simultaneously. Councilor Paul asked if BED has explored self-insuring or whether they would consider exploring in the next year. Mr. Alexander replied that the increase represents an 11.2% increase over last year's budget, but is consistent with what is occurring around the country. He noted that premiums could be offset in other lines.**
- **Councilor Pine asked if the Board of Finance could have a discussion with BED about the options that Hickock and Boardman presented (included in the memo to the Board of Finance), and explore which are advisable and desirable as ways to bring down premium costs going forward.**
- **Councilor Dieng asked if there would be an issue with lapse in coverage. Mr. Alexander replied that there would not be a lapse in coverage if the renewal is approved tonight.**

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

5.02 Request for Approval of Impact Fees for a Budget Neutral Amendment - Fire

MOTION by Councilor Pine, SECOND by City Council President Tracy, to approve and recommend that City Council approve a budget neutral amendment through the use of impact fees to the FY 21 Burlington Fire Department budget to increase revenues and expenditures by $109,660 as outlined in Chief Locke's memo dated, November 10, 2020.

DISCUSSION:

- **Chief Locke noted that the new ambulance will require new staff and new equipment, such as a defibrillator, radio, lockers, storage space for Station 4. He added that the Department is on track to hire 6 firefighters in March and 3 additional firefighters in August, for a go-live of September 2021 for the ambulance.**

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

5.03 Champlain Elementary Pedestrian Improvements Project - Authorization to Increase Construction Contingency - DPW

MOTION by Councilor Paul, SECOND by Councilor Pine, to approve and recommend that the City Council authorize the Director of Public Works to use up to an additional $4,000 in contingency funds for a total of $494,000 for the construction contract with Dirt Tech, LLC to complete the Champlain Elementary Pedestrian Improvement Project.

DISCUSSION:

- **City Council President Tracy asked whether all work has been completed or if work remains to be completed. Engineer Darisse replied that work has been completed and that this additional funding would be used to pay invoices for the project.**
- **Councilor Dieng asked for specificity on project details. Engineer Darisse replied that work was completed both at Birchcliff Parkway and Locust Street, which were all included under the umbrella of this project. She said that work specifically included new sidewalk, raised intersections, new stormwater drainage, striping, and signing. Engineer Molzon said the origins of this project were through the results of the Safe Routes to School Study, which focused on walking and biking to Champlain Elementary School.**

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

5.04 FY 21 Police Budget/Benchmark Analytics Personnel Management System – Police

Councilor Pine asked how the new proposed personnel management system would support work around police reform and monitoring. Chief Murad replied that the management system is being used by a number of police departments and is designed to monitor, ensure compliance, and integrate personnel databases, which include use of force reporting, training documentation, internal discipline and investigations, personnel records, performance evaluations. He added that these pieces of data are all maintained in different places and that this system would integrate these disparate sources of data into one centralized system. He further added that the system allows for access by other entities, which could help improve efforts around public accountability and transparency.

Councilor Pine asked how this system ensures data quality. Chief Murad replied that the system creates required fields and tabs to improve imported data. He said it will also help with new training, which is required by the Racial Justice resolution from June.

City Council President Tracy asked how operational efficiencies will be leveraged to ensure that more data is accessible to the public and transparency is increased. Chief Murad said that the software can create ready-made forms to export data visuals, as an example.

MOTION by Councilor Pine, SECOND by Councilor Paul, to approve and recommend that the City Council approve Fiscal Year 2021 expenditure totaling $13,880 with a budget amendment to move $13,880 from Police FY 21 salary account number 101-17-5000_100 to the Software account number 101-17-050-6015; And to authorize the Acting Chief of Police to execute a 3 year contract, and any necessary supporting documents thereof, subject to final review and approval by the City Attorney.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

5.05 Establishment Of BIPOC Small Business And Nonprofit Relief Fund And Grant Program - REIB

MOTION by Councilor Pine, SECOND by Councilor Paul, to recommend that the City Council approve the attached resolution.

DISCUSSION:

- **Councilor Pine said this is an incredible accomplishment and that Director Green has quickly leveraged resources to reach out to community members in need and accomplish this work.**
- **Councilor Dieng applauded Director Green's efforts to simplify the process for accessing relief funds when the community needs it and for making that process more understandable and accessible.**
- **Director Green thanked the City for its support, and Joey Bergstein from Seventh Generation said it is important to support the work of the REIB and recognize the importance of getting funding directly to BIPOC businessowners.**

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

5.06 Reclassification, Elimination And Creation Of Positions Within City Arts - BCA/HR

Director Kraft noted that the Darkroom Director's departure led to a reorganization in the education department in order to meet strategic goals. She said that the reorganization is a priority in terms of serving a broader and more diverse community and reacting to the implications of COVID-19 to programming moving forward.

Councilor Dieng asked about the status of the Darkroom/photography program. Doreen Kraft replied that the program would not change.

MOTION by Councilor Dieng, SECOND by Councilor Paul, to recommend that the City Council approve the attached resolution.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

5.07 Reclassifications And Staffing Updates -- Burlington Parks, Recreation, And Waterfront - BPRW/HR

MOTION by Councilor Pine, SECOND by Councilor Dieng, to recommend that the City Council approve the attached resolution.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

5.08 Divestment Of City Funds, Including Retirement, From Fossil Fuels Investments - CC

This item was removed from the agenda.

6.0 BOARD OF FINANCE APPROVAL ONLY

6.01 Community Works Project & Policy Specialist II - Development - CEDO/HR

MOTION by Councilor Pine, SECOND by Councilor Paul, to approve the re-categorization of the Projects and Policy Specialist II – Development position, a Limited Service, Exempt, Non-Union, Grade 17, position in CEDO to a Regular, Part-time, Non-Exempt, Non-Union, Grade 17, position.

DISCUSSION:

- **Councilor Paul said that positions should be reclassified as soon as they are deemed necessary in order to provide employees with the full suite of benefits to which they are entitled.**

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

6.02 Perkins Pier Siting Study Design Contract - BPRW

Parks Planner Sauve said that this contract will let the City conduct public outreach to ask what Perkins Pier should be or continue to be, while balancing the needs of the wastewater treatment plant, realignment of bike path, and how to support the marina.

MOTION by Councilor Dieng, SECOND by Councilor Pine, to approve and authorize the execution of a contract with Agency Landscape + Planning for a price not to exceed $44,945 for the Perkins Pier Siting Study Project, plus a project contingency of $6,742, and to authorize Cindi Wight, Director of Parks and Recreation, to execute the contract and any related documents needed to carry out the project, subject to the review of the City Attorney's Office.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries

6.03 Leddy Park Staircase Replacement – BPRW

MOTION by Councilor Paul, SECOND by Councilor Dieng, to approve and authorize the execution of a contract with Engineers Construction Inc., for a price not to exceed $78,000 for the Leddy Staircase Replacement project, plus a project contingency of $7,800, and to authorize Cindi Wight, Director of Parks and Recreation, to execute the contract and any related documents needed to carry out the project, subject to the review of the City Attorney's Office.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

7.01 Motion to Adjourn

MOTION by Councilor Pine, SECOND by Councilor Dieng, to adjourn the Board of Finance meeting.

With no further business and without objection the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 PM.

RScty: AACoonradt