

Apr 13 2023 1:28 pm



**City of Fitchburg
Massachusetts 01420**

CITY COUNCIL

Councilors at Large

**Marcus L. DiNatale
Sally H. Cragin
Amy L. Green
Samantha M. Squailia
Anthony M. Zarrella**

President

Anthony M. Zarrella

Vice President

Andrew J. Van Hazinga

Ward Councilors

**Ward 1 – Bernard J. Schultz, III
Ward 2 – Paul R. Beauchemin
Ward 3 – Andrew J. Couture
Ward 4 – Andrew J. Van Hazinga
Ward 5 – Marisa R. Fleming
Ward 6 – Derrick J. Cruz**

Finance Committee

A meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Councilor DiNatale on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 6:04 PM in the Legislative Building, 700 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA.

Committee Members present: Councilors Paul Beauchemin, Marcus DiNatale, Samantha Squailia, Andrew Van Hazinga, and Anthony Zarrella.

Committee Members absent: None.

The chairman read an announcement regarding the recording of public meetings, noting that FATV was recording and broadcasting the meeting. No other person stated that they were recording the meeting.

The chairman opened the meeting for public comment. There was one written comment which is attached. One person had an oral comment.

Fitchburg resident Miranda Tozier-Robbins spoke on Item #088-23 and asked if the \$1.4 million appropriation was in addition to the \$4.8 million already approved for the project.

087-23 ORDER: that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the National Council on Aging (NCOA) grant in the approximate amount of \$149,848.73 (ONE HUNDRED FORTY-NINE THOUSAND, EIGHT HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT AND 73/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates in MPHn communities and to ensure older adults and people with disabilities get the latest COVID and flu vaccines.

Discussion: City Epidemiologist Victoria Selser was present. The chairman read a letter from Public Health Director Steve Curry dated March 27, 2023. Councilors asked about the period of

time covered by this grant. Ms. Selser replied that it is for the year April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024. It will cover approximately 80 clinics and approximately 1,001 home visits. Councilors asked if the grant covers just Fitchburg. Ms. Selser answered that it is for communities in MPH and that Fitchburg oversees the funds going to other communities. She added that people appreciate that we are going to where they are living, helping them to avoid having to deal with transportation and scheduling issues. The vaccine incentive programs that give out gift cards are coming from the state and not the city.

Action: On a motion made by Councilor Van Hazinga second by Councilor Beauchemin, the committee voted to approve Order #087-23. The vote was 4-1 with Councilor DiNatale in opposition.

088-23 ORDER: that there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of ONE MILLION, FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$1,400,000.00) same to be charged against AVAILABLE FUNDS and credited to LONGSJO SCHOOL WINDOWS & DOORS CAPITAL PROJECT.

Discussion: The chairman read a letter from City Auditor Calvin Brooks dated March 29, 2023. Mr. Brooks explained that the project was for \$4.8 million and was approved as a loan order. The city's share is \$1.4 million and that amount will be paid through this order rather than borrowed, as it had been discussed during the votes on the Crocker School project and the Library Renovation project.

Action: On a motion made by Councilor Beauchemin second by Councilor Squallia, the committee voted unanimously to approve Order #088-23.

089-23 ORDER: that there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$400,000.00) same to be charged against AVAILABLE FUNDS and credited to DPW ADMIN. EXPENSES, STORMWATER CONTRACT SERVICES.

Discussion: Public Works Commissioner Nick Erickson was present. He indicated that these funds will be used to comply with the terms of the city's stormwater permit, with a small portion to be used as a local match for grants and for minor stormwater system repairs.

Councilors noted that this order has become an annual supplement to the annual city budget. Mr. Erickson said that at some point the city will need to come up with a more sustainable funding source. Funds have been requested annually by the department, been not funded by the mayor, and then funded by available funds. He said that there are about 7,000 catch basins in the city. These funds are used to tackle problems with the catch basins and the department tries to tackle the worst ones. The stormwater plan has been in effect since 2017 and is under the supervision of the EPA. He has been trying to go after grants to assist with costs.

Councilors asked if we have looked at other funding sources. Mr. Erickson replied that the city had been considering establishing a stormwater fee schedule, but then the pandemic came along. The study is still in draft form, but no action has been taken and there is no timeline for action.

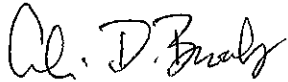
Councilors asked about staffing and Mr. Erickson answered that he has requests for engineering interns and summer laborers.

Action: On a motion made by Councilor Beauchemin second by Councilor Squailia, the committee voted unanimously to approve Order #089-23.

On a motion made by Councilor Beauchemin second by Councilor Squailia, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 6:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Calvin D. Brooks".

Calvin D. Brooks, Clerk

City of Fitchburg
Available Funds Summary
Fiscal Year 2023

Available Funds Certified as of July 1, 2022			6,514,191
Less Approved Appropriations:			
01/17/23	010-23	Stabilization Fund	-350,000
07/17/23	011-23	OPEB Fund	-250,000
01/17/23	012-23	Reserve for Capital Expenses	-27,500
02/07/23	022-23	Stabilization Fund - Future Debt Service	-500,000
02/07/23	023-23	Assessors, Contracted Services	-2,620
02/07/23	024-23	Various Departments, Personal Services - Contract Adjustments	-14,885
02/07/23	025-23	Police, Personal Services - Contract	-435,000
02/07/23	026-23	Fire, Personal Services - Contract	-465,000
02/21/23	029-23	Fire Expenses, Gas & Oil	-60,000
03/07/23	041-23	Public Works, Personal Services - Contract	-453,300
03/21/23	047-23	Health, Weights & Measures	-16,750
03/21/23	048-23	Police, Radio Repair	-45,000
03/21/23	049-23	Info Tech, Contracted Services - Patriot Property Software & SQL	-32,721
03/21/23	050-23	Info Tech, Capital Improvements - reroute fiber on Cherry Street	-70,000
03/21/23	052-23	Community Development, Downtown Cleanup	-50,000
03/21/23	053-23	Community Development, Contracted Services - Rail Trail	-30,000
03/21/23	054-23	Community Development, Municipal Hearing Officer	-10,000
Subtotal - Approved Appropriations			-2,812,776
Balance Available			3,701,415
Less Proposed Appropriations:			
04/04/23	088-23	Longsjo School Windows and Doors	-1,400,000
04/04/23	089-23	Public Works, Stormwater Expenses	-400,000
Subtotal - Proposed Appropriations			-1,800,000
Balance Available if Proposed Appropriations are Approved			1,901,415
Possible Appropriations:			
Snow & Ice			
Stabilization Fund 5% - \$7,499,346 7% - \$10,499,084 Current - \$7,954,692			
OPEB Fund Current - \$2,324,167			
Stabilization Fund for future debt service costs			
Labor Contracts			
Comp Time			
Overtime			
Veterans - Cash Benefits			
Community Development - Rail Trail - Phase 2			
Main Street Garage - Phase 1			
Salary Study			
Crocker Field			
DPW - Stormwater Expenses			
DPW - Oak Hill Road Bridge			
Schools - Longsjo School - Window Replacement			
Info Tech - Relocation of cabling on Cherry Street			
Police Station Renovation			
Senior Center Renovation			
Demolition - Laurel Street School			
Police - Vehicles			
Fire - Vehicles			
Cemetery Software			
Cemetery - Vehicles			
Cemetery - Masoleum			
Cemetery - Engineering & Design for Expansion			
Cemetery - Construction for Expansion			
Parks - Downtown Summer Groundskeeper			

Brooks, Calvin

To: Suarez, Lilian
Subject: RE: Dual Comment

On Fri, Apr 7, 2023, 5:29 PM J Wehtje [REDACTED] wrote:

This comment is for two meetings:

Finance on Tuesday and MPH N on Wednesday. I am submitting a comment because I tried to get information from Dr. Selser and she did not respond to me. The City website lists a MPH N contact of Dorothy Macnamara but at the last Board of Health meeting Dr. Bogdasarian said she no longer works here, so I can't reach them either.

As you see from the forwarded email below from last year I told MPH N that covid is endemic and not to waste \$300,000 of tax dollars on tracing it. What happened? The big contact tracing bureaucracy had nothing to trace (yes, I was right) so instead they started pushing vaccines on little kids, bribing them with pizza, snacks, gift cards, books, and raffles to earn things like bicycles, making the unvaccinated children who were excluded (due to a decision their parents made) feel badly. Who does that to a child? These grant recipients, that's who.

So here we are at grant time again and in addition to the senior grant on the Finance Committee agenda there are a bunch of other grants listed on the MPH N agenda for covid shots. The huge amount of money poured at this one respiratory virus is destroying our economy with record inflation that even the Federal Reserve cannot tame with repeated rate hikes. It is time to say no to this reckless spending.

It would be one thing if for this money we got some good bang for our buck like single payer, but instead it's focused almost exclusively on one virus by pushing shots that do not prevent anyone from contracting or transmitting the virus. The big beneficiaries are the pharmaceutical industry and the health bureaucrats who could easily find work elsewhere given staffing shortages in the health care industry.

We don't get off this wrong track in our country until you all stop approving these expenditures. Just say no.

Jacquelyn Wehtje
Fitchburg resident

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **J Wehtje** [REDACTED]
Date: Mon, Jun 6, 2022, 3:08 PM
Subject: Public Comment for June 8th Meeting
To: Curry, Steve [REDACTED], Selser, Victoria [REDACTED], Mcnamara, Dottie [REDACTED]

Please confirm you will read this public comment of mine at your June 8th meeting:

We should not be spending \$300,000 on a covid team. Covid is now endemic. We don't spend \$300,000 on a flu team.

Grant money isn't free money. We pay for it with our state and Federal taxes. It makes sense to accept funds if there is a strong benefit. That is why I asked Commissioner Erickson to apply for funds from the infrastructure bill to fix our roads rather than passively waiting for a little bit of that money to trickle down to us through the state.

I challenge you to conduct a survey of the people of Fitchburg. Ask them if they would rather spend \$300,000 on our roads or on contact tracers. Roads are essential. This big health bureaucracy is not.

Jacquelyn Wehtje



Office of the

Board of Health

City Hall

Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420

978-829-1870

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Stephen L. DiNatale

From: Stephen D. Curry,
Director of Public Health

cc: Calvin Brooks, City Auditor
Board of Health

Date: March 27, 2023

Re: NCOA-Community Action Grant

Please be advised I am respectfully requesting an order be directed to the City Council to approve the expenditures of the National Council on Aging (NCOA), Community Action Grant totaling \$149,848.73 for the period commencing April 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024.

These funds were awarded to the Fitchburg Health Department, lead agency of the Montachusett Public Health Network (MPHN) for the purposes of increasing COVID-19 and Flu vaccination rates in the MPHN communities and to ensure older adults and people with disabilities get the latest COVID and flu vaccines. These funds allow the Communicable Disease Investigation team formerly known as the COVID Response team to target vaccination efforts to the most vulnerable populations. This grant will require hosting of 80 vaccine clinics, establish 10 new partnerships in places such as, places of worship, senior centers, and apartment buildings via newly established community outreach. The grant also requires the team to establish 3 new relationships with health care providers and while providing a robust in-home vaccination request/referral system to administering no less than 1,001 vaccinations.

Do not hesitate to let me know if there are any questions.



City of Fitchburg

718 Main Street
Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420

Office of the City Auditor/Finance Director

Tel: 978-829-1840 ♦ Fax: 978-829-1961

Calvin D. Brooks
City Auditor/Finance Director

Jacquelyn M. Cronin
Deputy City Auditor

March 29, 2023

Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale
718 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Re: Longsjo Windows and Doors

Dear Mayor DiNatale:

I am requesting an appropriation from available funds in the amount of \$1,400,000.00 to be credited to the Longsjo School Windows & Doors Capital Project.

This project is to replace the windows and doors at the school over the summer and is primarily funded by the Massachusetts School Building Authority Accelerated Repair Program. The city's share of \$1,400,000 was initially to be funded from borrowed funds. Rather than issue bonds for payment over future years, I recommend that the city share be funded from available funds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Calvin D. Brooks
City Auditor