



FITCHBURG CITY CLERK

**City of Fitchburg
Massachusetts 01420**

May 26 2021 2:04 pm

CITY COUNCIL

President

Anthony M. Zarrella

Vice President

Elizabeth R. Walsh

Councillors at Large

Marcus L. DiNatale

Amy Green

Thomas C. Hughes

Samantha M. Squailia

Anthony M. Zarrella

Ward Councillors

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 – Elizabeth R. Walsh

May 19, 2021

COUNCIL AS A WHOLE COMMITTEE MEETING

To be Held in the Legislative Building, 700 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Immediately Following the Finance Committee Meeting

Which is scheduled for 6:00 PM

Via Zoom Meeting Platform

Register in advance for the Public Comment/Hearing portion of the Agenda by going to:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IM3AJA5HQg2nKbDL3nchtw

The Council as a Whole Committee Meeting was called to order by President Kushmerek at 6:18 PM on May 25, 2021 in the Legislative Building, 700 Main Street and via the Zoom Meeting Platform. Members present were Councillors Beauchemin, Couture, DiNatale, Hughes, Squailia, Van Hazinga, Walsh, and Zarrella. Councilors Fleming, Green, and Schultz participated in the meeting remotely.

Also present were members of the Finance Team: Anne Cervantes, Treasurer, Patrick Hare, Chief of Staff, Calvin Brooks, Auditor, and Hon. Mayor Stephen DiNatale.

The agenda will consist of the following:

Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale and the Finance team will formally present in detail the FY2022 budget to the City Council followed by public forum and public comment (use the link above to register for the Meeting)

The budget and related Orders and Petition to be addressed are as follows:

FY 2022 BUDGET ORDERS

095-21 ORDERED THAT there be and hereby is appropriated the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2022

Operating Budget:

General Fund:	\$139,479,493
Water Enterprise:	\$ 6,267,208
Wastewater Enterprise:	\$ 15,485,159
Airport Fund:	\$ 841,537

096-21 ORDERED THAT there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$700,000), same to be credited to the Fiscal Year 2022 TAX LEVY and charged against OVERLAY SURPLUS.

097-21 ORDERED THAT there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of ONE MILLION, SEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,775,000), same to be charged against AVAILABLE FUNDS and credited to the Fiscal Year 2022 TAX LEVY in order to reduce the tax rate.

098-21 ORDERED THAT there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of TWO HUNDRED THIRTEEN THOUSAND, EIGHT HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT DOLLARS (\$213,848.00), same to be charged against PARKING METER/GARAGE RECEIPTS and credited to Fiscal Year 2022 accounts as follows:

Treasurer Personal Services	\$100,848.00
Treasurer Expenses	\$113,000.00

099-21 ORDERED THAT there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$25,000), same to be charged against PEG ACCESS AND CABLE RELATED FUND RECEIPTS and credited to Fiscal Year 2022 accounts as follows:

Information Technology, PEG Expenses	\$25,000
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100-21 ORDERED THAT there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$15,000), same to be charged against CEMETERY SALE OF LOTS AND GRAVES and credited to Fiscal Year 2022 accounts as follows:

Cemetery Personal Services	\$15,000
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101-21 ORDERED THAT there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of SIX MILLION, TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-SEVEN THOUSAND, TWO HUNDRED EIGHT DOLLARS (\$6,267,208.00), same to be charged against WATER ENTERPRISE FUND RECEIPTS, and crediting Fiscal Year 2022 Water Enterprise Fund accounts as follows:

Personal Services	\$1,781,019.00
Expenses	\$1,681,000.00
Indirect Costs	\$ 920,000.00
Debt Service	\$1,385,189.00
Capital Expenses	\$ 500,000.00

102-21 ORDERED THAT there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of FIFTEEN MILLION, FOUR HUNDRED EIGHTY-FIVE THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-NINE DOLLARS (\$15,485,159.00), charging \$12,585,765.00 against WASTEWATER ENTERPRISE FUND RECEIPTS and \$2,899,394.00 against WASTEWATER ENTERPRISE RETAINED EARNINGS and crediting Fiscal Year 2022 Wastewater Enterprise Fund accounts as follows:

Personal Services	\$2,354,769.00
Expenses	\$3,870,500.00
Indirect Costs	\$1,150,000.00
Debt Service	\$5,794,890.00
Capital Expenses	\$2,315,000.00

103-21 ORDERED THAT there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of EIGHT HUNDRED FORTY-ONE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED THIRTY-SEVEN DOLLARS (\$841,537.00), same to be charged against AIRPORT RECEIPTS RESERVED and credited to Fiscal Year 2022 Airport Fund accounts as follows:

Personal Services	\$289,221.00
Expenses	\$552,316.00

104-21 ORDERED THAT the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the following Revolving Funds authorized by city ordinance up to the amount available in the fund or \$100,000.00 (except Public Health Sustainability which shall have a limit of \$700,000.00 for FY2022), whichever is less, as outlined in the enclosed Order.

PETITIONS

109-21. Mary de Alderete, City Clerk, to review the Mayor's salary and the City Councilors' salary, as required by Chapter 3-43 of the Code of the City of Fitchburg.

Mayor DiNatale addressed the Council with the following remarks:

“Good Evening Councilors;

“As you may remember, a year ago, due to the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, I decided to forgo submitting a budget for Fiscal Year 2021 and to submit month-to-month spending plans for July, August, and September. At the time, the state was in almost total lockdown and there was no indication from the legislature of what state aid would be. Tax deadlines had been extended, so that while the city could continue to assess taxes, there was a question about how much would be actually collected. The total lockdown also seemed to foreshadow a drop in local receipts, as well. If revenue fell in all sectors, then the city could have been in dire fiscal shape.

“Given the uncertainty, I proposed a budget in September that reduced staff across most departments, primarily through attrition. I also proposed that the city also not embark on any new endeavors, outside of pandemic relief, in order to forestall any possible fiscal calamity. These measures were consistent with a conservative approach to budgeting—keeping revenue estimates down and limiting expenses.

“As the budget proposal was being finalized, the city became eligible for funding through FEMA, for emergency expenses, and through the CARES Act. Both sources of money came with restrictions, but did take some of the pandemic pressure off the budget by allowing reimbursement for Covid-related expense. While the reimbursement rules changed over time, this funding did greatly help the city.

“In addition, revenue did not drop as precipitously as was feared. For example, a valid assumption was made that the lockdown would drive down Building Permit Fees because of a lack of building projects. Instead, building projects continued or perhaps even increased because people were home and ready to remodel. So while the Hotel Excise Tax revenue and Investment Income revenue fell, most other local revenue held its own.

“Moving forward to this year, revenue estimates for FY22 are still affected by the pandemic, but not to the extent that was initially feared. The city has approached the FY22 budget process with a little more optimism than last year and has been able to restore positions lost through attrition in FY21. The FY22 budget also supports a full Summer Recreation Program for this season and full summer crews for the Highway, Cemetery, and Parks Divisions of the Public Works Department. The city has also been able to add a few new positions to support the work being done by the various departments.

“Fiscally, the city is not out of the woods, but it is progressing in a positive direction. The pandemic has certainly been a challenge and distraction. Fortunately, because of past fiscal prudence, the city had reserves in Free Cash which it has been able to use as a bridge to future revenue streams, thereby allowing the city to operate with a minimum disruption in services. While there is still work to be done, the city is back on the right path.

“Finally, the city is expecting to be receiving money from the American Rescue Plan Act or ARPA. The US Treasury Department recently announced the guidelines on how these funds can be spent. The city is in the process of reviewing those guidelines and will be formulating a plan. Since these funds are to be spent over the next five years, it is important that we take the time to do the job right. Once a general plan is put together, I plan to submit it to City Council for their review.

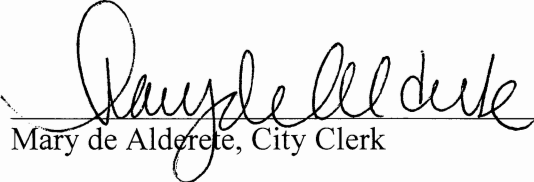
In closing, I would like to offer a special thank you to the Finance Team for their valuable expertise, as well as all Department Heads and City Staff for their cooperation and effort, especially during these difficult times. The budget we present to you tonight is indicative of a growing and succeeding City. I look forward to working closely with the City Council as we engage in a formal discussion of the budget. I am confident that together we will produce a budget that is fiscally responsible while providing critical services to the constituents of the City of Fitchburg.”

Council members reviewed the budget and asked questions regarding specific line items to the Finance Team.

A brief recess was called at 8:35 PM and the session was reconvened at 8:42 PM.

MOTION: Move the Agenda to a Council as a Whole and Special Meeting on June 10, 2021 was approved by unanimous consent. 11 members present. Board consists of 11 members.

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 PM


Mary de Alderete, City Clerk