

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

DECEMBER 1, 2020

Meeting began: 5:36 PM

Attendees: Council Vice President Tency A. Eason (TE), Council Member Weldon M. Montague III (WM), Council Member Clifford R. Ross, (CR), Christopher Hartwyk (CH) Business Administrator, Adrian Mapp (AM) Finance Director; Nile Clements, (NC) Chief Finance Officer; Joyce L. Lanier, (JL) City Clerk; Vaughn Parchment, (VP) Assistant Attorney, Tamara Robinson, (TR) Clerks Office, Carol Perkins (CP) Citizen Representative, Tom Boran (TB) Citizen Representative, Lydell Carter (LC) Citizen Representative, Charles Pryor II (CP II) Citizen Representative

ORDINANCES-SECOND READING/PUBLIC HEARING

55-2020 **Amending Chapter 200, “Vehicles and Traffic” Residential Parking (Berryman Place)**
– Move Forward

ORDINANCES-INTRODUCTION/FIRST READING:

58-2020 **Amending and supplementing Chapter 153 “Portable Lavatories”** – CR noticed that portable lavatories present on construction sites are causing safety and cosmetic concerns due to placement; lavatories should be in the back, out of site, and inspected for safety and environmental concerns. TE asked who would be responsible for cleanings and TB mentioned the security of the lavatories when construction site is no being used. CH confirmed that lavatories are not locked at night and the Health Inspector can monitor for health and environmental concerns. CH suggested postponing this ordinance to make changes. Ordinance being postponed until December 15, 2020.

59-2020 **Bond ordinance to provide aid to redevelopment project located at 33-51 Lincoln Avenue and 60 Scotland Road** – CH confirmed that this is the 2nd phase of the Russo Development project. Move forward.

60-2020 **Approving a tax exemption for a 30-year period and approving execution of finance agreement with D&R Orange Urban Renewal II, LLC.** – CH confirmed that this is financial agreement for Ord. 59-2020. Move forward.

61-2020 **Providing special emergency appropriation to fund an anticipated deficit in operations in the Water/Sewer Utility Fund directly attributable to COVID-19** – CH explained that each year the Water Department collects 60% of revenue in last two quarters of the year. Normally, if not paid, a lien can be placed on property and sold. Under Governor’s COVID-19 executive order, unable to sell residential properties due to liens and bulk of Water Department revenue is bills and liens causing deficit. TB asked about commercial properties. CH confirmed that the City can do more to collect from commercial properties but cannot do a lien sale on them either. CP II asked for comparison between last year and this year. CH confirmed that in normal cases, about one-third of residents pay their water bills on time and currently Department is about \$1.6 million under. Since lien sales are unavailable at this time, unable to make of for deficit using that method. CR asked about the tax lien sale on December 15, 2020. CH confirmed that Tax Collector remains open during COVID-19. Move forward

62-2020 **Amending Part 1, Chapter 14 “Municipal Court” to establish the position of Municipal Court Director** – CH confirmed that title does not exist currently in the City, but state law requires a certification to hold title. Resolution will create new title, move current Court Director to it until certification is gained. Move Forward

RESOLUTIONS

- *457-2020 **Appointing Sharon Spence as homeowner representative to the Rent Leveling Board** – TE asked since recent Rent Leveling secretary retired if new one would be hired. CH confirmed that someone is moving into that title by the end of next week. Move forward.
- *458-2020 **Amending resolution 27-2020 “authorizing the extension of a communications services contract with Direct Development, LLC” seeking to authorize additional fees for the CY 2020** – JL explained that funds are short by about \$1,500 and asking for additional funds to carry through end of 2020. Correction needed to title language; should include “not to exceed \$18,000” Move forward
- *459-2020 **Appointing Council Members Montague, III, Ross and Coley to the Working Committee to research the benefits of creating a Public Safety Department** – TE raised concerns about the number of members, possibly causing issues because of too many opinions; advised Council to check on appointees to make sure they are dedicated to Committee seat. Move forward
- *460-2020 **Authorizing the submission of an application to the Local Finance Board requesting approval of bond ordinance (Lincoln Avenue Redevelopment Project).** – CH confirms that this is in line with plans to make old Police Station on Lincoln Avenue into condos. Working with new developer. Move forward
- *461-2020 **Revoking resolution 261-2019 and 406-2019 (WO)** –Move forward.
- *462-2020 **Transfer of appropriations.** - TE asked if this transfer will provide enough funds to get through rest of 2020. NC confirmed that they anticipate more transfer of appropriations this year. CH confirmed that many people are moving department due to COVID-19 but for transparency reasons, balance is needed between funds Move forward
- *463-2020 **Authorizing the cancellation of tax sale Certificate No. 18-00153 and refund for all accrued interest, penalties and fees to Richard Leonardis** – Move forward
- *464-2020 **Authorizing the cancellation of tax sale Certificate No. 19-00884 and refund for all accrued interest, penalties and fees to CC1 NJ II** – Move forward
- *465-2020 **Approving the certification of the CFO as the anticipated deficit in operations in the Water/Sewer Utility directly attributable to COVID-19 and approving submission of an application to the Director of Local Government**– Move forward
- *466-2020 **Approving the bill list (Grand Total: \$4,420,988.90)** – CP II made comment about the overtime in the bill list and we should be mindful to find ways of reducing overtime in all departments. Move forward

OTHER BUSINESS - 2020 Independent Auditor’s Report / Corrective Action Plan

CP II asked about the reports that were included in the 2020 Independent Auditor’s Report / Corrective Action Plan, including some payroll payments. CH explained that some departments, including the Tax Collector, Finance and the Administrative Services Departments, have been reconditioned, with some employees and roles being moved to better regulate accountability.

CP II asked if the City has missed any opportunities due to this mismanagement. CH confirmed that due to not closing out of previous grants, it blocks new ones but he and his Team are working with Department heads to close these issues. The City is working with 3rd party vendors to ensure compliance and shifting risks to vendors instead of the City. TE emphasized training employees to properly perform duties.

Adjournment Time: 6:44 PM