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City of Amesbury
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62 Friend St.
Amesbury, MA 01913

City Council Budget & Finance Subcommittee Minutes

April 15, 2025, at 6:30 PM

City Hall 62 Friend St.

Councilor Redfern called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

Roll was called and present were: Councilor Frederique and Councilor Redfern. Councilor Stanganelli was absent.

Also Present: Mayor Kassandra Gove, Chief of Staff Ann Marie Casey, Director of Public Works Joe Buckley, Assistant Accountant Betsy Doucette, Chief Financial Officer Marissa Baptiste, City Engineer Lisa DeMeo, and Administrative Assistant Allie Connolly

Minutes for Approval:

Councilor Frederique made a motion to accept the March 18, 2025, minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Redfern and passed 2-0.

Communication and Updates: None

Public Comment:

- City Clerk, Jennifer Smith, addressed Bill 2025-041, advocating for a more equitable increase in the salary for the City Clerk position. She cited findings from the administration's compensation study, highlighting that the role is currently undercompensated relative to other comparable Department Head positions within the city.

2025-037 An Order to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend an FY25 Community One Stop for Growth MassWorks Infrastructure Program grant in the amount of \$500,000 from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Development to support the Clark's Road project.

- City Engineer Lisa DeMeo spoke about this grant the City received and her hope that it will be accepted.

Councilor Frederique made a motion to return 2025-037 to the City Council with a positive recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilor Redfern and passed 2-0.

2025-038 An Order to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend FY25 formula grant funding for the Amesbury Council on Aging from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) in the amount of \$69,165.

- Chief of Staff Ann Marie Casey explained that this is an annual grant that the Council has seen before. It has continuously gone up over the last few years. She also mentioned that this grant funding goes to support the Council on Aging programming.

Councilor Frederique made a motion to return 2025-038 to the City Council with a positive recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilor Redfern and passed 2-0.

2025-039 An Order to authorize a Memorandum of Understanding between the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority and the City of Amesbury Council on Aging pursuant to M.G.L. c. 40, § 4A for the use of an accessible vehicle for transportation services for seniors, subject to approval by the Mayor.

- Chief of Staff Ann Marie Casey spoke about how there is some funding involved in 2025-039 for insurance, basic maintenance, and wrapping of the vehicle. Ann Marie stated how great it will be for the COA to receive this handicapped vehicle, as their current vehicle has over 250,000 miles on it and overheats. She mentioned that currently the Rec Department has been loaning the COA a vehicle to use.
- Chief of Staff Ann Marie Casey shared that after the Ordinance and Administration Subcommittee Meeting on April 14th a few revisions had been made to the document.
- Councilor Frederique asked if the City is required to pay for oil changes for the vehicle, Ann Marie answered that yes basic maintenance would be on the City but anything major is covered under warranty.
- Driver of the COA Vehicle Dave Jolson was present to answer any questions. He stated that he has been through all the required certifications and that there is a maintenance plan in place that outlines who is responsible for fees for the vehicle whether it is MEVA or the COA.

Councilor Frederique made a motion to return 2025-039 to the City Council with a positive recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilor Redfern and passed 2-0.

2025-040 An Order to approve payment from the FY25 general fund operating budget for the below listed prior year invoices.

- Assistant Accountant Betsy Doucette was present to answer any questions about 2025-040.

Councilor Frederique made a motion to return 2025-040 to the City Council with a positive recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilor Redfern and passed 2-0.

2025-041 An Order to authorize the transfer of \$45,889.50 from the FY25 Salary Reserve account to various municipal departments.

- Mayor Kassandra Gove gave some background information on how the salary study was put together with the aid of a consultant. She mentioned that nothing is set in stone and this is something that will have to be re-evaluated annually as the job market changes.
- Councilor Frederique asked what the about \$5,000 leftover in the account will be used for. Mayor Gove said this is reserved for potential end of year transfers.
- Councilor Frederique clarified that this is not set in stone. Mayor Gove said no it is not set in stone.
- Councilor Redfern spoke to her own personal experience with salary studies at her workplace and said she understands how these studies can create contention and cause friction in a workplace.
- Councilor Frederique asked specifically about the Clerk's position within the study. The Mayor gave some context into the criteria they used in the salary study.
- Councilor Frederique asked if staff turnover was considered when conducting this survey. Mayor Gove stated that yes, they did consider this.
- Mayor Kassandra Gove stated that the Council does not have the ability to increase the appropriation of \$45,889.50.

Councilor Frederique made a motion to return 2025-041 to the City Council with a positive recommendation with the intent to revisit the Clerk's salary. The motion was seconded by Councilor Redfern and passed 2-0.

2025-042 An Order to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend a FY25 Complete Streets Funding Program grant in the amount of \$401,654.70 from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

- Director of DPW Joe Buckley explained the purpose of this grant and was present to answer any questions.

Councilor Frederique made a motion to return 2025-042 to the City Council with a positive recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilor Redfern and passed 2-0.

Adjourn: Councilor Frederique made a motion to adjourn at 7:11. Councilor Redfern seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (2-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Allie Connolly