



*Minutes*

*City*

# ***CITY OF EASTHAMPTON*** **OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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*Council  
Finance  
Committee  
Meeting,*

*2/23/2022*

**Attendees:**

**Finance Committee Members:**

Councilor Dan Rist, Chair  
Councilor Tom Peake, Clerk  
Councilor Koni Denham

**Other Attendees:**

City Council President Homar Gomez  
Mayor Nicole LaChapelle  
City Treasurer Jennifer Gallant  
Assistant Planner Jamie Webb  
City Auditor Hetal Patel  
Library Board Vice President Marge Prendergast

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM. The meeting was held remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was videotaped

1. Approval of Minutes: 2/10/22. **Motion made by Councilor Denham and seconded by Councilor Peake. Motion passed 3-0.**
2. Mayor's Communication: None.
3. Public Speak: None.
4. New Business
  - a) **\$15,000 for costs to add a Historic Preservation Restriction on Emily Williston Library:**  
The CPA Committee approved this unanimously. The Library may at some point want to move into a larger structure, and wanted to see it preserved. A deed restriction would stay with the building in the case that it were sold. Marge Prendergast said that she didn't see the library sell it, even if they moved into a new space, but thought this was a common sense approach. City Planner Jamie Webb outlined the process of the preservation restriction. The city would work with the library board to agree on common goals and then engage an attorney to draft an agreement, which would be signed by both parties and the state, and filed with the registry of deeds. This appropriation would cover those legal costs, but would not cover the change of market value of the building. Councilor Peake asked if adding a deed

restriction could add costs of potential future renovation. Councilor Rist stated that the CPA committee would not fund future renovations without a conservation restriction. Jamie Webb said that it would increase cost, but it could also unlock CPA funds that may not otherwise be available. Councilor Rist also noted that there are historic grants that would be available. Jamie Webb also stated that part of the deed restriction process gives the parties an opportunity to define which features of the building are important for historical preservation. Councilor Denham asked whether some future purpose would include public access. Marge Prendergast stated that any future use would be hypothetical. She also stated that future accessibility improvements could be improved by access to historical preservation funds and expertise. **Motion made by Councilor Peake and seconded by Councilor Denham. Motion passed 3-0.**

5. Old Business

- a) **Review of Salary and Stipends for Elected Officials:** Councilor Rist stated that he supported increases to the stipends to the Board of Public Works, Planning Board, and Board of Assessors. He also noted that the members of those boards were not asking for that. Councilor Peake suggested that the Board of Health also be available. The mayor observed that the city council does not have the power to appropriate money, and that the city has a number of fiscal concerns right now, but that she was not opposed to exploring it. She also noted that paying out stipends carries certain administrative costs.

6. Continuing Business

- a) **Review of quarterly fiscal reports from the City Auditor:** City Auditor Hetal Patel stated that as of the second quarter of this fiscal year, local receipts were at 119.8 percent of the estimate for the fiscal year, with half the year left to go. Meals and marijuana taxes were substantially ahead of city estimates. Real estate and personal property taxes were at 49.82 percent, which is almost exactly where the city was last year. The city is on target for local aid, slightly ahead of where they were last year. Overall, general fund revenue was 52.56 percent collected. In terms of water and sewer revenues, the city was also on track. Halfway through the fiscal year, the city has collected 54.43 percent of estimated revenue. Overall, the city has collected 52.73 percent of estimated revenues. With respect to expenses, no city department is allowed to deficit spend without coming to the city council, outside of CARES and FEMA spending and snow removal. Councilor Rist suggested that he would prefer to make any increase effective for the 2024 fiscal year, rather than the 2023 fiscal year, in order to allow the city to budget. City Treasurer Jenn Gallant noted that it is easier in terms of the budget to make these things effective at the start of the fiscal year. Council Rist also suggested that he would reach out to the chairs of the committees to get their thoughts.
- b) **Quarterly Report on Covid-19 grant funding and Spending: no report for this meeting.** This was not discussed tonight.
- c) **Pay Plan Exhibit B July 1, 2022 pay scale proposal & review of council employees pay grades.** This was not discussed tonight.

**By motion made by Councilor Denham and seconded by Councilor Peake, the meeting was adjourned at 5:56 PM**

Next meeting: 3/9/22

