

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Special Board of Aldermen Minutes
Thursday, December 16, 2021
FY 2023 Budget Meeting

Members present; President Whitcomb, Aldermen Gorruso, Franco, *Savage, Neary, Doenges, Gillam, Clifford DePoy and Davis. Also present; Mayor Allaire, Attorney Bloomer, City Clerk Heck and various Department Heads. Alderman Talbott was absent. Alderwoman Savage arrived at 5:33 PM.

5:30 PM BOARD OF ALDERMEN SPECIAL MEETING

President Whitcomb called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

This meeting was called to hear the committee reports for the various departments associated with the FY 23 Budget process. Minutes will be presented in the minimalist form as most reports noted no debate and very little opposition with committee recommendations.

President Whitcomb opened the meeting and sought a referral recommendation from Mayor Allaire. Mayor Allaire thanked the Board and noted a request to refer the item of the Alpine Pipeline and rates to the Public Works Committee. The request was so moved and seconded (Clifford, Gillam). **Motion passed.**

President Whitcomb thanked Mayor Allaire and asked Alderman DePoy to read his Recreation Committee report.

Alderman DePoy read his committee report from November 9, 2021 and noted the committee discussed the Library Budget request.

Alderman DePoy; Chair, Recreation Committee, Municipal Budget

Rutland Free Library-

Alderman Depoy noted the motion out of committee was to approve the budget at \$781,848 and he so moved. Alderwoman Davis seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Alderman DePoy moved on to the recreation department and presented the following motions.

Alderman DePoy; Chair, Recreation Committee, Municipal Budget

Recreation Admin-

Alderman DePoy noted an increase in this line and noted a couple positions not replaced because of COVID last year were being filled this year. The motion out of committee was to approve the amount of \$583,684 and he so moved. Alderman Davis seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Recreation Giorgetti Park-

Alderman DePoy noted a decrease in this budget and so moved the recommendation from committee to approve at \$87,505. Alderwoman Savage seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Recreation Godnick Center-

Alderman DePoy noted the motion out of committee was to approve at \$15,544 and he so moved. Alderwoman Savage seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Recreation White Park-

Alderman DePoy noted a small increase for court maintenance and his committee's recommendation to approve at \$130,558. Alderwoman Savage seconded. No Debate. **Motion passed.**

Rutland Community Center

Alderman DePoy noted a slight increase due to staffing and moved his committee's recommendation to approve at \$155,372. Alderwoman Savage seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Recreation Maintenance-

Alderman DePoy noted this budget was down due to the retirement of Bob Peterson and moved the committee's recommendation to approve at \$803,990. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Recreation Programs-

Alderman DePoy noted his committee's recommendation to approve this budget at \$265,588 and he so moved. Alderwoman Davis seconded.

President Whitcomb thanked Alderman DePoy and Superintendent Peters and her staff and asked Alderwoman Davis to report her Finance Committee report.

Alderwoman Davis read her committee report from November 29, 2021 with the following recommendations.

Alderwoman Davis Chair, Finance Committee, Municipal Budget

Treasurer's Budget-

The committee moved to approve the Treasurer's Budget as presented in the amount of \$670,296.48 and Alderwoman Davis so moved. Alderman Gillam seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Transfers-Out- PD, Fire, REC & DPW

Alderwoman Davis noted transfers-out were approved as set by charter for the equipment replacement fund for Pd, Fire, Rec and DPW and so moved. Alderman Gillam seconded. Clerk Heck sought a dollar figure and Treasurer Markowski responded \$295,000. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Pension Budget

Alderwoman Davis noted that last year's budget was not fully funded because of COVID and the Board wanting to give tax payers as much relief as possible. The FY 23 budget is fully funded with an additional \$400,000 for a total budget of \$946,238.40. The committee discussed the impact to the tax payers and moved to reduce the budget by \$100,000 for a new total of \$846,238.40 and she so moved her committee's recommendation. DEBATE. Alderwoman Davis noted reasons for the decrease. President Whitcomb read a letter from Alderman Talbott, who could not be present, noting his desire to fully fund this budget. Alderman Neary, Savage, Franco and Doenges spoke in favor of fully funding this budget. Alderman Gillam supported the cut. Alderman Gorruso sought input from the Treasurer, who voiced her strong support in fully funding this budget. Mayor Allaire voiced his reasons for funding this line. President Whitcomb called for a vote. Based on the voice vote, President Whitcomb was unsure of the result and sought a show of hands. The result was five (5) in favor of the cut and four (4) against. **Motion failed for lack of majority.** Alderman DePoy moved to fully fund the pension line at \$946,238.40. Alderman Neary seconded. No debate. Upon calling for the vote President Whitcomb was unsure of the result and sought a show of hands. Three (3) no, six (6) yes. **Motion passed.**

Alderwoman Davis moved on to Public Safety and read her committee report from December 9, 2021

Alderwoman Davis Chair, Public Safety Committee, Municipal Budget

Rutland City Fire Budget-

The motion out of committee was to approve the fire budget at \$4,071,263.79 an increase of just over \$100,000 and she so moved. No debate. **Motion passed.** Chief Lovett thanked the Board for their support.

Rutland City Police Department Budget-

Alderwoman Davis noted the specifics to the \$6.3 million budget. The committee's main debate stemmed from the lack of police recruits and the need to fill thirteen new (13) officer positions. Mayor Allaire noted that he would not burden the tax payers by fully funding this line, but sought to fund seven (7) as Chief Kilcullen felt that it may be possible to hire seven. Alderwoman Davis noted that the committee felt based on specifics/criteria, meeting background checks and passing the police academy that six (6) hires may be more realistic and the committee sought to cut one unfilled officer position, reducing the police budget by \$74,553.57 to a new total of \$6,361,456.65 and she so moved. DEBATE. Most debate was on filling officer staffing levels. **Motion passed.**

Parking Meter Fund

Alderwoman Davis noted the recommendation from committee was to approve the budget as presented at \$172,601.46 and she so moved. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Transfer Out

Alderwoman Davis noted this line as unchanged and so moved the budget at \$15,000. Alderman Gillam seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Alderman Gorruso stated that his committee meeting for the General Committee budget was a very quiet meeting held on December 1, 2021.

Alderman Gorruso; Chair, General Committee, Municipal Budget

Community Development- Brennan Duffy

Motion out of committee was to approve this budget at \$210,574 as presented. Alderman Doenges seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Legislative Budget- Mayor

Alderman Gorruso noted the recommendation from committee was to approve the \$30,853.26 budget and he so moved. Alderman DePoy seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Clerk Budget-Clerk Heck

Alderman Gorruso noted the recommendation from committee was to approve the \$467,551 budget and he so moved. Alderman DePoy seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Executive Budget –Mayor

Alderman Gorruso noted the recommendation from committee was to approve the \$115,206.74 budget and he so moved. Alderman DePoy seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Human Resource-Judy Frasier

Alderman Gorruso noted the recommendation from committee was to approve the \$110,616 budget, down from the \$134,000 and he so moved. There was input from the Mayor as this position just hired a new HR director and needed to firm up the final budget. Treasurer Markowski noted the new budget of \$115,236.02. Alderman Gorruso amended his request for the new total as presented. Alderman DePoy seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Elections Budget-Clerk Heck

Alderman Gorruso noted the recommendation from committee was to approve the \$31,365 budget as presented and noted that this increase was due to the two (2) extra elections being held during this budget cycle. Alderwoman Savage seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Attorney's Budget-Attorney Bloomer

Alderman Gorruso noted the recommendation out of committee was to approve a budget of \$382,606.89. Alderman Gorruso noted this included a part-time position with no benefits. Alderman Doenges seconded. DEBATE. Mayor Allaire noted with the employment history being difficult at best that they may need to switch to a full time position. There was some Q&A with the City Attorney and what the administrative position could look like as well. **Motion passed.**

Assessor Budget-Assessor Langlois

Alderman Gorruso noted the recommendation out of committee was to approve the budget of \$142,297.88 as presented. Alderwoman Savage seconded. **Motion passed.**

Building & Zoning Budget –ZA Strniste

Alderman Gorruso noted the recommendation out of committee was to approve the budget of \$584,146.89 as presented. Alderman Neary seconded. DEBATE. Alderwoman Davis asked Zoning Administrator Strniste to explain his reasons for the requested \$116,000 increase to his budget. ZA Strniste noted the position and software will work with each other to help generate additional revenues helping to offset this increase. Other members of the Board shared concerns and support for the request, debate continued for approximately 20 minutes. **Motion passed.**

Government Buildings Budget –Mayor

Alderman Gorruso noted the recommendation out of committee was to approve the budget at \$321,252. Alderman DePoy seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

General Fund Miscellaneous Budget-Mayor

Alderman Gorruso noted the recommendation out of committee was to approve the budget at \$322,244. Alderwoman Savage seconded. **Motion passed.**

President Whitcomb thanked Alderman Gorruso and asked Alderman Clifford to give his Public Works committee report. Alderman Clifford noted his committee met on December 14, 2021 and noted that it was one of the most informative budget hearing he had been involved in.

Alderman Clifford; Chair, Public Works Committee, Municipal Budget

DPW Admin-

Alderman Clifford noted this budget was down slightly and the motion out of committee was to approve as presented at \$1,092,360.19 and he so moved. Alderman Doenges seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Streets Division-Including Winter Maintenance

Alderman Clifford noted this line was up slightly and approved in committee in the amount of \$2,486,310.83 and he so moved to the full Board. Alderman Gillam seconded. DEBATE. There was brief debate on equipment and increasing the pavement line next year. **Motion passed.**

DPW Traffic & Street Lights-

Alderman Clifford noted this line was approved in committee in the amount of \$543,044.00 and he so moved. Alderman Doenges seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

DPW Vehicle Maintenance-

Alderman Clifford noted this line was approved in committee at \$639,765.95 and he so moved. Alderman Gillam seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Storm Water Budget-

Alderman Clifford noted this line was approved in committee at \$73,500 and he so moved. Alderman Doenges seconded. Alderwoman Davis then spoke about equipment replacement and how this can actually save money. Commissioner Rotondo then spent about 10 minutes reviewing his equipment replacement handout from the Public Works Committee meeting from the 14th. Alderman DePoy questioned storage rental buildings the City was using. **Motion passed.**

Alderman Clifford briefed the Board on water and sewer and moved right into his report.

WATER & SEWER

Water Fund- Water Treatment-

Alderman Clifford noted discussion out of committee. Alderwoman Davis sought an explanation to increases in Salary Line. Commissioner Rotondo provided indepth details for that increase. Alderman Clifford then moved the committee's recommendation approving the line at \$699,712.46 and he so moved. Alderman Doenges seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Water Fund- Distribution Budget –

Alderman Clifford noted the committee moved to approve the line at \$701,212.86 and he so moved. Alderwoman Davis seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Water Meter Budget-

Alderman Clifford noted the committee moved to approve the line at \$351,521.04 and he so moved. Alderwoman Davis seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Debt Service Pay-Outs-

Alderman Clifford noted the committee moved to approve this line at \$564,386.04 and he so moved. Alderman Gillam seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Sewer Wastewater Collection-

Alderman Clifford noted the committee moved to approve the line at \$830,492.69 and he so moved. Alderman Doenges seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Sewer Pump Stations-

Alderman Clifford noted the committee moved to approve the line at \$37,110 and he so moved. Alderman Clifford was unsure of the total and asked the Treasurer for confirmation. Treasurer Markowski noted the total budget line for all pump stations was \$67,130. Alderman Gillam seconded No debate. **Motion passed.**

Sewer Wastewater Treatment-

This line has a large budget and Alderman Clifford spent more time with details. The motion out of committee was to approve as presented at \$2,902,082.04 and he so moved. Alderman Gillam seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Debt Service Pay-Outs

Alderman Clifford noted the committee moved to approve this line at \$930,198.67 and he so moved. Alderman Gillam seconded. No debate. **Motion passed.**

Water & Sewer Rates

Alderman Clifford reported that the Water rate decreased by -.015% and Sewer rate increased by +.065% and he so moved these rates. Alderman Gillam seconded. There was debate and briefing from Commissioner Rotondo. **Motion passed.**

President Whitcomb sought a final total from Treasurer Markowski who asked for transfers-out to be finalized.

Assistant Treasurer Holmquist noted Water Transfers at \$772,976. Alderwoman Davis so moved and Alderman Neary seconded. **Motion passed.**

Assistant Treasurer Holmquist noted Sewer Transfers at \$965,740. Alderwoman Davis so moved and Alderman Neary seconded. **Motion passed.**

Treasurer Markowski then noted an overall increase to the FY 23 Budget at \$93,793 and the budget total was \$22,726,658.97. This budget total was so moved and seconded (Davis, Neary) **Motion passed.**

AT 8:03 PM a motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Neary) to adjourn. **Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Henry A. Heck
Rutland City Clerk