

(The following is not a verbatim transcript of comments or discussion that occurred during the meeting, but rather a summarization intended for general informational purposes. All motions and votes are the official records).

SPECIAL FINANCE COMMITTEE – MAY 20, 2020
(BUDGET HEARINGS)

A special meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, May 20, 2020 via web-ex.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by the Chair.

Present Councilmember Paul J. McAuley
 Councilmember John P. Donegan
 Councilmember Christopher G. Paplauskas
 Councilmember Kenneth J. Hopkins, Vice-Chair
 Council Vice-President Michael W. Favicchio, Chair
 Council President Michael J Farina

Absent: Councilmember Edward J. Brady

Also Present: Councilmember Steven A. Stycos
 Councilmember Lammi J. Vargas
 Daniel Parrillo, Director of Administration
 John Psilopoulos, Deputy Director of Administration
 Christopher Rawson, City Solicitor
 Robert Strom, Finance Director
 Michael Igoe, City Controller
 David DiMaio, City Council Budget Analyst
 Evan Kirshenbaum, City Council Legal Counsel
 Rosalba Zanni, Acting City Clerk

Chair stated that after reviewing all the issues with the budget process and feedback from the public and Democratic caucus, he obtained opinion from Attorney Kirshenbaum with regards to the School Budget, which is the most difficult because of the uncertainty. He stated that based on Attorney Kirshenbaum’s research, if we pass a budget, anything that goes into that budget becomes Maintenance of Efforts as it relates to the Schools. In addition, we have issues with Revenues. He thinks we need more time to formalize the budget. Also, the State is just starting to meet on their budget.

Chair stated that if the City Council would like to make some minor amendments, he would not object, but he would be uncomfortable passing a budget until we have a little more guidance. The Republican City Council are willing to wait and not make any amendments tonight and wait until next week until we may have some guidance. He stated that he is willing to entertain any amendments this evening.

Council President Farina stated that he would like Attorney Kirshenbaum to discuss his opinion and make it part of the record.

Attorney Kirshenbaum stated that his opinion is to wait for a decision from the General Assembly and a decision as to the legislation of what we will be receiving or pass the budget without those monies.

Director Strom stated that his only concern is he would like the City Council to know that if they elect not to make any amendments tonight and pass the budget on May 27th, his concern is we need to get tax bills out. He is concerned about our cash flow and about paying our debt.

Chair stated that he understands the need and timeframe to get tax bills out, but we would like to make the budget affordable for the taxpayers.

Council President Farina stated that the House Finance Committee is meeting at this time to discuss the current year's deficit and the out year deficit and give an update on the budget and hopefully with a budget timeline. If we do get some sort of time, then we may be able to adopt a budget next week.

Chair stated that we may get a little guidance, which could help us.

Councilmember Stycos asked Director Strom what his timeline is to get the tax bills out so it does not disrupt the City's operation. Director Strom stated that based on the schedule of tonight and adoption on May 20th, and based on his discussions with the Tax Assessor, Treasury and the company that prepares the bills, we are on schedule to send out tax bills on June 26th and a due date of July 15th. Only bills we were not going to send out at this point is the Motor Vehicle bills of the excise tax.

Councilmember Stycos stated that the discussion that will possibly happen next week is how late can we wait. He asked Administration if the Mayor agrees with Attorney Kirshenbaum's opinion on Maintenance of Effort. Director Parrillo stated, yes.

Councilmember Stycos asked if anyone objected to not making any amendments this evening and pass it to the Adoption night and if any amendments come up, they can be made then.

Councilmember McAuley stated that his concern is he is not sure the State will have any information from the federal level in time for next Wednesday.

Chair stated that that is the possibility, but we may have a little bit of information to go by.

Council President Farina stated that for next week, he would like to know what would preclude the City from sending out tax notices if the budget is being finalized and has not been adopted.

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilmember McAuley, it was voted to send the budget to the full City Council for full review without recommendation from the Finance Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Rosalba Zanni
Acting City Clerk