

~AD HOC REPORT~
Budget Ad Hoc: Public Works
Monday, April 17, 2023

Chairman Cavo called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. on Monday, April 17, 2023. Present were Committee Members John Esposito III, Jay Eriquez, Ben Chianese, and Joe Britton. From the City were Dan Garrick, Finance Director; John Kleinhans, Mayor's Office; Ed Siergiej, Lake Kenosia Commission; Bob Doyle, Treasurer, Danbury Museum; Brigid Guertin, Executive Director, Danbury Museum; Geoffrey Herald, Chairman Danbury Museum Authority, Julie (last name not given), Danbury Museum; Gregory Wencek, Cultural Commission; Nick Kaplanis, Director, Parks & Recreation; David Day, Superintendent of Public Utilities; Antonio Iadarola, Public Works Director & City Engineer; and Absent were: Highway, Forestry, Public Buildings, Equipment Maintenance, Construction Services, Parks Maintenance, and Tarrywile Park Authority. Ex Officio Members present: Duane Perkins, Vinny DiGilio, and Warren Levy. Present from the public was Tom Brown, Resident.

Mr. Wencek thanked the Committee for funding the Cultural Commission. He provided a brief overview of the Commission's programs and events. Ms. Guertin provided a brief overview of the following: Danbury Museum's programs, and challenges: climate-controlled storage and working space, grant funding, and fundraising efforts. Mr. Herald spoke on the moratorium on accepting items, and the lack of storage space. Ms. Guertin suggested utilizing the second floor of the court for storage and working space if the city acquires the property; and noted that the museum is a non-profit organization for the public good.

Mr. Doyle provided a brief overview of the Museum's funding needs, maintenance costs, lack of volunteers, and membership retention. Mr. Siergiej gave an overview of the goals and tasks of the Lake Kenosia Commission. The Commission is focused on addressing Zebra mussels and calcium levels in the lake. The Commission is concerned Zebra mussels will affect the lake/city reservoir; and he noted the need for more testing this year as a precaution. Mr. Siergiej explained to Mr. Chianese and Mr. Esposito III that calcium is mostly coming from the runoff of winter salt used by the state on the nearby highway. Mr. Iadarola explained to Mr. Perkins how wetlands are used to help purify runoff.

Mr. Esposito III suggested passing an ordinance prohibiting the use of boats. Mr. Siergiej noted that the City will need to also work with the State to prohibit the use of boats from the second state owned dock. Furthermore, the City installed an artificial wetland several years ago to help purify runoff going into the water. Mr. Kaplanis discussed improvement/expansion projects for pickle ball and other popular recreational courts.

He noted that the interest in sports continues to increase in the community. Mr. Day confirmed that the lack of snow did not affect the water levels in the reservoirs with Mr. Chianese. He clarified the next phase of sewer plant upgrades with Mr. Perkins. Mr. Chianese asked about the municipality paying sewer rates for City buildings. Mr. Garrick confirmed for Mr. Chianese that the same contractor for cleaning services is used for all City owned public buildings.

Mr. Iadarola noted the old school building at Rogers Park would need significant improvements to be used for museum storage as suggested by Mr. Chianese. Furthermore, he noted that the Public Works budget includes; a salary adjustment for a vacant Plumber position, paving of about 9-miles of road, and confirmed for Mr. Chianese that Miry Brook Road is on the paving list. He explained that the goal is to finish 5-miles of paving with the remaining fiscal year 2022-2023 budget. Mr. Cavo noted that projected road paving lists are not guaranteed.

Mr. Iadarola discussed how the City coordinates projects for paving and utility repairs with Mr. Eriquez. Mr. Garrick clarified how additional funds can be allocated towards paving projects. Mr. Iadarola commented that the department will focus on internally balancing the budget before allocating more funds towards road/sidewalk/drainage improvements; and that the City did utilize a large portion of the snowfall resources allocated for this year. He clarified the CAPE seal product with Mr. Perkins. Mr. Garrick confirmed the City has received a Public Works State Grant annually.

Mr. Iadarola confirmed that the City has a dedicated tree warden. He explained how the City works with Eversource's vendor to perform tree trimming. Furthermore, the City is experiencing recruitment challenges for qualified Engineers. He confirmed the old landfill is not recognized as a recreational opportunity with Mr. Perkins. He confirmed that the Construction Services proposed budget includes funding for a drone, which will be used for inspections.

Mr. Garrick discussed the funding needs of the Tarrywile Park Authority. The Authority is working on securing more grant funding. Mr. Chianese expressed concern that the Authority is not receiving enough funding for building maintenance expenses. Mr. Esposito III questioned if funding was allocated in the past towards the park's maintenance garage. Mr. Garrick clarified the proposed capital improvements with Mr. Chianese.

A motion made by Councilman Esposito III, and seconded by Councilman Chianese, to recommend that the City Council adopt the Mayor's Public Works budget, as presented. The motion carries unanimously.

A motion made by Councilman Britton, and seconded by Councilman Chianese, to amend the motion to include an additional increase of \$50,000 to the Mayor's proposed budget for line-item (002.)7008, which is the Danbury Museum & Historical Society. 3 No, 2 Yes (Britton, Chianese). The motion failed.

Mr. Britton clarified the purpose of the additional funding request with Mr. Chianese. Mr. Esposito III questioned where the funds will be allocated from. Mr. Cavo thanked Mr. Britton for his request and explained the rigorous budget process; he suggested that requests need to be discussed in greater detail with time for review, and he noted the negative affect it could have with other city agencies who request more money.

A motion made by Councilman Chianese, and seconded by Councilman Britton, to adjourn. The motion carries unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Cavo, Chair
John Esposito III
Jay Eriquez
Ben Chianese
Joe Britton