



Finance Committee Meeting
1:30p, March 22, 2016
First Floor-North Conference Room, City Hall

Present: Vice-Mayor Gwen Wisler (Chair) , Councilman Cecil Bothwell,
Councilwoman Julie Mayfield

Staff: Barbara Whitehorn, Tony McDowell, Gary Jackson, Paul Fetherston, Scott Burnette, Kelly Whitlock

1. Approval of Minutes

Councilwoman Mayfield motioned to approve the minutes. Councilman Bothwell seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

2. Updates/ Reports

HAZMAT Multi-year Regional Response Team Contract (Scott Burnette)

Chief Burnette said that this is a four year grant contract in the amount of \$69,000 with the Department of Public Safety that the City has had since 1994.

Vice Mayor Wisler asked if the spending of these funds are at our discretion and how often they are used. Chief Burnette said that the use of the funds are at our discretion, but we are accountable to the state for how the funds are spent, and are required to send documentation on how the money is spent. We will spend \$50,000 on training and the remainder will be used for fire-fighter physicals. The Chief said that we get more HAZMAT calls from within the city limits due to higher density and more hydrocarbons in the city of Asheville. Transportation incidents are the number one cause of HAZMAT incidents.

Councilwoman Mayfield asked how this fits into the county's HAZMAT program. Chief Burnette said that we manage HAZMAT for the city, but the call typically goes to the county office, they notify us and we respond.

Vice Mayor Wisler asked if we have difficulty getting reimbursed for HAZMAT services. Chief Burnette said there is a high recovery rate due to the fact that companies are typically involved in cases of HAZMAT and more able to reimburse than an individual.

Councilwoman Mayfield made a motion to recommend this item move to full council for approval to enter into a four year contract agreement to provide regional HAZMAT response. Councilman Bothwell seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

Fire Safety Grant (Scott Burnette)

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant and Fire Prevention & Safety is a federal grant for \$100,000 with a \$5,500 match from the city, to obtain funding for fire prevention and life safety programs. Chief Burnette said that the 100% of the grant money would be used to purchase equipment such as a digital fire simulator, and materials for fire safety programs. Chief Burnette said the he would like to see every home in Asheville installed with smoke detectors and a carbon monoxide detector.

Councilman Bothwell made a motion to recommend to council that we apply for the fire safety grant. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield. Motion was unanimously approved.

Staffing for Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant (Scott Burnette)

Chief Burnette said that this is a non-matching, 2 year, federally funded grant that would fund nine additional fire fighter positions that would offset overtime expenditures. Our current over time budget is \$950,000 and this would bring it down by approximately \$150,000 per year. There is a stipulation that at the 2 year grant periods, the city must retain those positions. However, since the grant is non-matching, the City could choose not to absorb those costs. The additional firefighters would be absorbed into the current FTE count. This is a highly competitive grant that we have not been awarded since 2006.

Councilwoman Mayfield made a motion to recommend to full council to approve the request to apply for the grant. This motion was seconded by Councilman Bothwell. Motion was unanimously approved.

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

Consideration of a Recommendation Concerning a Lease of City-owned Property at 224 Louisiana Avenue (Nikki Reid)

Nikki Reid provided a background and map of the city owned property located at 224 Louisiana Avenue, that is currently leased to USA for the Army Reserve Center. When the lease expired in 2000, it was brought up to fair market value at that time. The lease is up and the USA would like consideration of a five year lease for the continued use of the property as US Army Reserve Center.

Councilman Bothwell asked why staff is recommending a 3 year instead of a 5 year lease. Ms. Reid said that it was in consideration of council's vision for land use in conjunction with the rest of the city's portfolio. After discussion, the committee agreed that the city would not be ready to develop this area in 3 years time.

Councilman Bothwell made a motion to recommend to full council that we renew the lease with the USA for 5 years. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield. Motion was unanimously approved.

As there was no public comment, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.