

**BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND CONTRACT
MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022**

Call to Order: At 04:06 P.M. by Chairwoman Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard

Board Members Present: Comptroller Darren Morton, City Council President Derrick Thompson and Chairwoman, Mayor Shawyn Patterson- Howard

Others: City Clerk William H. Holmes, Deputy City Clerk Tanesia M. Walters

Absent: None

Roll Call and reading of agenda items administered by Clerk Holmes

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS APPROVING ORDINANCES

Int. No. 1 Granting permission to the Mayor and two staffers to attend the 90th Annual Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

On the Question: None

Ayes: Comptroller Morton, Council President Thompson and Chairwoman, Mayor Patterson-Howard

Nays: None

Int. No. 2 Authorizing the transfer of funds within the Department of Veteran Services. (\$9,500.00)

On the Question – Comptroller Morton noted that he checked to confirm that there were funds available in the budget line and confirmed that there were available funds. He inquired if the transfer request was because of expenditure that needed to be done. His concern was whether that expenditure occurred in year 2021, if so is the department in receipt of the product, because it may not be necessary to do the transfers if the department did not have the product in house by December 31, 2021.

Chairwoman Mayor Patterson Howard responded that she knows that the transfer was initially requested in December to allow for the purchase of computers for staff and volunteer use, however, it was not approved in time so she is not sure if any purchase was made in 2021 and therefore she is not sure of any incurred expense with that regards.

Ayes: Comptroller Morton, Council President Thompson and Chairwoman, Mayor
Patterson-Howard

Nays: None

**Int. No. 3 Authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Westchester-Putnam
Workforce Development Board (WPWDB) (Gun Violence).**

On the Question: Comptroller Morton noted that the legislation states that it commences August 1, 2021 to July 2022, and the expenditure code is the same for both salary and fringe, he advised that there will be a separate code for fringe going forward and although it has traditionally been that both salary and fringe had the same code, it is not the correct coding process. It must be properly coded so both the fringe and salary can be attributed to their respective accounts. Also, there should be confirmation on whether this is reimbursable, Executive Director Burrell-Butler must confirm if this is reimbursable.

Chairwoman, Mayor Patterson-Howard advised that she asked Executive Director Burrell to confirm this information, she noted that this contract will be extended as it was executed late and delayed because of the transition of leadership on the state level.

Comptroller Morton replied that this means that there will be a roll over and he will adjust the 2022 budget to reflect this.

Ayes: Comptroller Morton, Council President Thompson and Chairwoman, Mayor
Patterson-Howard

Nays: None

**Int. No. 4 Amending Ordinance No. 14, adopted July 16, 2021, entitled “An Ordinance
Authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Agreement with the Westchester – Putnam
Workforce Development Board (WPWDB) Youth Employment Services Program.”**

On the Question: Comptroller Morton wants to make sure that his department is properly tracking the expenditure of the grant funds,1 so he would like Executive Director Burrell-Butler to contact him to speak on it.

Ayes: Comptroller Morton, Council President Thompson and Chairwoman, Mayor
Patterson-Howard

Nays: None

**Int. No. 5 Authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with NYS Office of Children and
Family Services. (\$35,500.00)**

On the Question: Comptroller Morton- “same as previous request”

Chairwoman Mayor Patterson-Howard responded yes, we want to make sure that this is tracked correctly, acknowledge and noted.

Ayes: Comptroller Morton, Council President Thompson and Chairwoman, Mayor Patterson-Howard

Nays: None

Int. No. 6 Granting permission to the Executive Director of the Youth Bureau and four staff members of the Youth Bureau's Strong Program to attend a conference.

On the Question: None

Ayes: Comptroller Morton, Council President Thompson and Chairwoman, Mayor Patterson-Howard

Nays: None

Int. No. 7 Authorizing the Department of Buildings to increase permit fees.

On the Question: Chairwoman Mayor Patterson-Howard noted that the building department have not increased permit fees in ten years. This is extremely challenging as the City is incurring cost that are not covered by the fees being charged. The fees to secure permits are less than what other Westchester municipalities are charging. This also impedes the city from fully operating at an optimal level because the affected staff pay rate is insufficient compared to the hours worked, as a result it is hard to retain and recruit competent staffing. Through the ARPA funds money has been added to the upcoming budget for plan examiners. When code enforcers and housing inspectors are out on a project two or three times often times this is not covered by the fees and so it is imperative to increase the fees .The building department has been the bain of many constituent's stress for a long time because the services have not kept pace with the demands, but at the same time the cost of the services have not kept pace with what the true cost are. So that is why the fees must be increased at the same time looking to increase the quality of service, the consistency of service and the efficiency of service.

Comptroller Morton questioned were the term '**fee**' should be used for the charge when a Stop Work Order is issued, or should it be termed as a '**violation**'. He expounded; it was his belief that the charge was a '**violation**' because the person acted without authority and using the term '**fee**' would create confusion.

Chairwoman Mayor Patterson-Howard, Council President Thompson and City Clerk Homes provided their input on their interpretation on the verbiage.

Ayes: Comptroller Morton, Council President Thompson and Chairwoman, Mayor Patterson-Howard

Nays: None

Int. No. 8 Creating the position of “Director of Economic Development” through the Department of Planning and Community Development and authorizing the allocation of American Rescue Plan Act Funds.

On the Question: Chairwoman, Mayor Patterson-Howard, added that even though there is no question, for transparency there is allocation in the ARPA funds for small businesses and small business technical assistance. This could have been done either by hiring a consultant or hiring a fulltime employee and we have opted to hire a full time employee who comes with over a decade of experience in working with small business and WMBEs, and a very successful track record. Mount Vernon encompasses a diverse community of small businesses and we want to make sure that we have someone on board to support economic development, provide technical assistance and build relationships and so the role is not just the director of economic development it also a director of development, empowerment and equity. Working with small businesses this person will also oversee other programs such as mayors for guaranteed income; overseeing the staff working in that area and anything around the financial navigators (ex. people impacted by Covid) and equity also just making sure that people have equitable opportunities to do business here in the city of Mount Vernon as we grow economically, we are doing it in a way that is very intentional and very balanced. This position will be funded for three years, as well as fringe any other OTPS (other personnel services/regular business expenses).

Ayes: Comptroller Morton, Council President Thompson and Chairwoman, Mayor Patterson-Howard

Nays: None

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Chairwoman, Mayor Patterson-Howard – At 5pm there will be the Urban Renewal Agency Meeting depending on a few details in that meeting we may have to call a special city council and board of estimate meeting to expedite the approval of securing some equipment because the supply chain is a real issue, I will not know for sure if a special meeting will be necessary upon the conclusion of the Urban Renewal meeting, so this a potential heads-up, I will keep you posted.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

**Tanesia M. Walters, J.D., M.P.A
Deputy City Clerk**