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BOARD OF FINANCE

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WHOLE BOARD OF FINANCE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2016

ATTENDEES: Committee Chair Richard Freeman, Vice Chair Mary Lou T. Rinaldi, and Members Dudley Williams, Sal Gabriele (arrived at 6:41 p.m.), David Kooris and Shelley Michelson. Also present were: Jay Fountain, Interim Director of OPM; Lee Berta, Assistant Director of OPM; Michael Pollard, Chief of Staff; and Mayor David Martin (arrived at 6:50 p.m.)

Call to Order: Chairman Freedman called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Chairman Freedman

Mr. Freedman stated that the Board met to review the Board of Finance (BOF) budget presentation process - including the Budget Book Format, Capital Budgets, Calendar, Meetings, Presentation Process, etc.

Budget Book Format: Mr. Freedman asked members to share comments on the outline of the budget book as it pertains to the function of the BOF.

Among the concerns were:

- The Revenue section is laid out in such a manner that items are difficult to find in this section, necessitating constantly going back and forth - with some departments providing no detail or breakdown of expenses.
- Part of the BOF's role involves looking at staffing, the addition and elimination of positions, changes in full-time and part-time positions.
- The breakdown of numbers, for example Purchased Property Services and Purchased Professional Services - what is in these numbers? Some categories provide no detail of expenses, simply a lump sum, as with Risk Management (Workers' Compensation, payments to insurance funds, etc.). The BOF needs the numbers broken down and this information placed in the book for everyone to see.

Suggested Remedies:

- Placing departments in alphabetical order.
- Grouping of sections.
- Budgets listed in size order.
- An appendix with detailed calculations in the back of the book where everyone can see them.
- An expense summary or perhaps another category to break it out.
- Ms. Rinaldi suggested highlighting in red any employee fluctuations.
- A summary page with staffing fluctuations (or perhaps comments on organization charts) - the Board of Education's budget book is a good example.
- Mr. Freedman referenced the BOE budget book where, for example, the health insurance is broken down in the appendix at the end of the book.

Both Mr. Fountain and Ms. Berta offered explanations as to why the budget book is in the current format and made some suggestions that may be helpful. They will provide the Board with examples of changes that might assist the Board in its function.

Mr. Pollard suggested that this budget book is generally the result of outputs from a 20-year-old system with limitations and the City needs to look into retiring it.

Board Member Gabriele arrived at the meeting during the foregoing discussion.

Capital Book

- It would be helpful to have the previous two (2) years listed; the “out” or prior years are not at all helpful.
- Some of the Non-recurring Capital is listed under “other.” It would be helpful to have a break-out of what is in “other.”

Calendar

- The current budget presentation schedule needs to be changed to even out the “large” and “small” department presentations so that, say, very large departments don’t all present on the same night - was well received.
- Mr. Freedman said he made notations of, “this night is too long” in his book on three (3) nights during the most recent budget process: March 15 (Public Safety); March 21 (Administration); and March 28 (Operations).
- Members preferred adding more nights to the calendar to allow for 2-hour rather than 4-hour meetings.
- A suggestion of more joint presentations with the Board of Representatives was seen as not workable.

Meetings

- Ms. Rinaldi added concentrating on talking about only those things the BOF is responsible for.
- A face-to-face meeting with all departments is warranted.
- Presentations limited to time spent only in those areas of BOF responsibility.

At this point in the meeting Mayor Martin arrived (6:50 p.m.).

Presentation Format:

- Reiteration of presentations being limited to time spent only in those areas of BOF responsibility
- Possibly limiting time of each presentation.
- Presentations are nice to have but department heads basically go page-by-page, reading verbatim, spending so much time going through the presentation that by the time the actual budget is addressed it is rushed.
- Department Heads should be prepared to discuss the status of their Capital requests.
- Discussion then centered about limiting the number of presentations, providing a written presentation prior to the meeting, a committee review prior to the meeting, video presentations.
- Mr. Williams proposed the Board leave the list the same and limit any additions on a case-by-case basis.
- The BOF should get something from everyone.
- What are the drivers around changes, including a summary of all changes – “a walk from this year to next.”
- The three biggest changes in their budget.
- An explanation of why the changes are there.

Mayor Martin explained his goals with the budget process to which Mr. Freedman responded that he appreciated the Mayor’s information and that the BOF would like to see to see incremental changes, adding that an enormous amount of Board members’ time has been spent on items that ultimately have no relevance to the function of the BOF.

There being no more questions, Mr. Freedman called for adjournment.

Adjournment: Motion by Dudley Williams, Second by Mary Lou T. Rinaldi to adjourn at 7:06 p.m.