

The Committee on Ways and Means met on Monday, May 15, 2023 at 6:00pm in the City Council Chambers at City Hall.

The meeting was recorded by ECTV and can be viewed on the City of Everett website.

Members present were Councilor John Hanlon, presiding; Councilors Darren Costa and Stephanie Smith. Member absent was Councilor Vivian Nguyen.

Communication received from Councilor Nguyen that she would be away on vacation and unable to attend.

The Committee met on an Order offered by Councilor Michael Marchese, as President: An order requesting the approval of an appropriation of \$250,000 from Budgetary Fund Balance into the Solicitor's Litigation/Professional Services account.

City Solicitor Colleen Mejia was also present.

Solicitor Mejia informed the Committee that the Chief Financial Officer Eric Demas was able to find available funds from various City Department accounts that could be transferred to cover the updated request for \$350,000 to fund the Solicitor's Litigation/Professional Services Account to cover costs associated with invoices received from the City's outside legal Counsel as it relates to the United States Title VII inquiry. Councilor Smith expressed concern about the process and felt that the City and Schools appeared to be treating the confidentially aspect of the matter differently. She also noted that the invoicing for the City seemed to indicate that the Law firm partners were charging the city for 90% of the work and only 10% for law associates whereas the invoicing for the schools was split 50/50% for partners and associates. Solicitor Mejia explained that the summary of detail on future invoices will change and she referenced that the partners were in extensive conversations with the US Attorney's office and that this was not something the Associates would be working on. Councilor Smith responded that she was pleased to hear that. Councilor Costa asked if there was a list of city employees that met with the US Attorney's office and Solicitor Mejia acknowledged that there was only one employee at this time that has met with the US Attorney. Councilor Costa inquired to what documents were provided to US Attorney and if they were accessible public records and Solicitor Mejia noted that there were 42 public record exemptions that included personnel files and privileged documents. Councilor Costa asked what was the value for the money being spent on this matter and Solicitor Mejia stated that the value was having former US Attorney's navigating the Department of Justice system while representing the City and not individuals. Councilor Smith recommended that the order be amended to reflect the transfer of funds from:

Solicitor Salaries	01-151-1-5111	\$90,000
Purchasing Salaries	01-138-1-5111	\$45,000
Human Resources	01-152-1-5111	\$80,000
Health & Wellness Salaries	01-630-1-5111	\$90,000
Unemployment	<u>01-913-2-5170</u>	<u>\$45,000</u>
		\$350,000

The amendment passed on a voice vote.

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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE  
EVERETT, WA

The Committee voted 2 to 1 with Councilor Costa in opposition: to report back to the City Council with a favorable recommendation as amended to the transfer of the following department accounts to fund the City Solicitors Litigation/Professional Services Account:

Solicitor Salaries	01-151-1-5111	\$90,000
Purchasing Salaries	01-138-1-5111	\$45,000
Human Resources	01-152-1-5111	\$80,000
Health & Wellness Salaries	01-630-1-5111	\$90,000
Unemployment	<u>01-913-2-5170</u>	<u>\$45,000</u>
		\$350,000

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Burley  
Clerk of Committees

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Communication received from Councilor Nguyen that she would be away on vacation and unable to attend.

The Committee met on an Order offered by Councilor Michael Marchese, as President: An Order requesting the approval of an appropriation by borrowing in the amount of \$144,000 for the purpose of paying the costs associated with the purchase of three 2023 Ford Explorer Hybrid model vehicles.

DPW Business Manager Brian McCarthy was also present.

Councilor Smith expressed concern over the accuracy of the vehicle inventory list that was recently provided to the City Council. Mr. McCarthy explained that some data entry errors in the excel spreadsheet may have made it appear that way. He noted that the City has 214 pieces of equipment with 185 those being vehicles. He stated that a number of older vehicles are being retired and that recently the City Council approved the disposition of 23 vehicles. He informed the Committee that the three new hybrid vehicles would be used in the Highway, Parks and Cemetery Departments with National Grid helping to install charging stations at no cost while also offering the City some rebates. Councilor Smith asked if the new vehicles would be taken home and Mr. McCarthy indicated that they would but only from home to work while noting that they would be installed with GPS tracking devices that will allow the City to set parameters and look at real time activity usage of the vehicles. Councilor Smith remarked that she was looking forward to seeing these GPS reports. Councilor Costa mentioned that he was concerned that the City was not chasing money for funding these vehicles that might be available from the Federal government. Mr. McCarthy assured him that the City was working with NStar as well as the grant writer in the Planning Department on potential funding sources, but Councilor Costa felt the City was behind the eight ball compared to other communities in replacing the older gas vehicles with new technology. Mr. McCarthy noted that the State was pushing the green initiative as it related to replacing municipal vehicles and was hoping that some State funding would also come along with it. Councilor Costa asked if the City has explored having employees using their own vehicles and Mr. McCarthy responded that there were a host of issues to doing that which included insurance, emergency lights, signage and communication devices.

The Committee voted 2 to 1 with Councilor Costa in opposition: to report back to the City Council with a favorable recommendation as amended to the transfer of the following department accounts to fund the City Solicitors Litigation/Professional Services Account:

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Communication received from Councilor Nguyen that she would be away on vacation and unable to attend.

The Committee met on an Order offered by Councilor Michael Marchese, as President: An Order requesting the approval of an appropriation by borrowing in the amount of \$1,500,000 from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Lead Loan Program.

Mayor's Chief of Staff Erin Deveney was also present.

Ms. Deveney informed the Committee that there were 8300 water service lines within the City and that 5000 of those were known to have lead/copper service. She explained that the MWRA began the program in 2016 and that the City of Everett has been proactive in replacing the old lead service without any cost to residents whereas in some other communities they are charging residents between \$5000-\$7000 to do so. She noted that in 2019 – 112 replaced, 2020 – 64 replaced, 2021 – 58 replaced, 2022 – 107 replaced and this year the City is looking to replace 150. Councilor Smith remarked that at this pace it would take approximately 70 years and more than 83 million dollars to complete this task. Councilor Costa acknowledged that these are scary numbers and inquired to how the City was picking the 150? Ms. Deveney referenced a number of streets in North Everett where the work is expected to be done. Mr. Costa asked if the City was replacing these water services when the streets were open such as the ongoing street reconstruction work on Ferry and Elm Streets. Ms. Deveney agreed to confirm but mentioned that all utilities are usually updated when the streets are opened up. Ms. Deveney also agreed to provide a list of the lead replacement work that was completed. Councilors Costa and Smith both concurred that new Developers in the City should help the City shoulder the cost of this project. Councilor Costa reiterated his concern if the City was hitting its effectiveness when the roads were opened up and inquired if the City was looking into any infrastructure funding that may be available.

The Committee voted: to report back to the City Council with no recommendation pending the information the Mayor's Chief of Staff Erin Deveney agreed to provide.

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The Committee met on an Order offered by Councilor Michael Marchese, as President: An Order requesting the approval of an appropriation of \$307,552 from Receipts Reserved for Appropriations – Bond Premiums and \$178,448 from Receipts Reserved for Appropriation – Parking for a total of \$486,000 to fund the replacement of parking kiosks around the City.

Parking Officer Chad Luongo and Mark Berling of IPS Group were also present.

Councilor Smith asked if the City was planning replacing the parking meters or the parking kiosks and Mr. Luongo responded that the plan was to replace the existing kiosks which were originally installed in 2015. Mr. Luongo explained that the current kiosks were from a company in Canada and that it was difficult to get assistance in maintaining them with most of the work being done in house. He stated that the new company IPS Group has kiosks in neighboring communities and has four attendants working in Massachusetts. The Committee asked what the lifetime expectancy was for these kiosks and Mr. Berling responded that 8 to 10 years was a reliable time frame. Councilor Smith inquired if new signage would now be needed and Mr. Berling indicated that it may not since the kiosks will have scanning capabilities to show the operation. Councilor Costa referenced his knowledge of the meters and kiosks from working in the City of Somerville and discussed maintenance costs and fees for credit card transactions. Mr. Luongo confirmed that collections were around \$120,000 a year and Councilor Costa remarked that he hoped to see that go up noting that it may take 4 to 5 years to pay this cost off. He suggested that the City roll it out as a pilot program to allow feedback from residents while working out better merchant fees. Councilor Smith countered that the City needed the new kiosks now.

The Committee voted: to report back to the City Council with recommendation for favorable action.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Burley  
Clerk of Committees