MINUTES

A Special Meeting of the Common Council of the City of Middletown, Questions to Directors, was held on Monday, August 1, 2022, beginning at 6:00 PM. This meeting was a hybrid meeting with in-person participation in the Common Council Chamber and remote access via WebEx. The meeting was also simultaneously livestreamed on local cable access television, on the City’s webpage and on the City’s Facebook page.

Present:
- Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell
- Councilman Anthony Gennaro, Sr. (arrived 6:50PM)
- Councilwoman Meghan Carta
- Councilman Vincent Loffredo
- Councilwoman Grady Faulkner, Jr.
- Councilman Edward McKeon
- Councilman Darnell Ford
- Councilman Eugene Nocera
- Councilman Edward Ford, Jr. (arrived 6:50PM)
- Councilman Philip Pessina

Mayor Benjamin D. Florsheim, Chair
Daniel Ryan, Esq., Corporation Counsel
Linda Reed, Clerk of the Common Council
Officer Scrivo, Sargent-at-Arms

Absent: Councilman Anthony Mangiafico Councilwoman Linda Salafia

Also Present:
- Arts & Culture – Kisha Michael, Coordinator
- Communications – Wayne Bartolotta, Director
- Economic & Community Development – Barbara Knoll Peterson, Acting Director
- Equal Opportunity & Diversity Management – Faith Jackson, Director
- Finance – Carl Erlacher, CPA, Director
- Fire Department – Chief John Woron
- General Counsel – Brig Smith, Esq; Kori Wisneski, Esq.
- Health – Kevin Elak, Director
- Human Resources Division – Justin Richardson, Director
- Land Use, Marek Kozikowski, AICP, Director
- Police Department – Chief Eric Costa; Officer Scrivo
- Public Works – Christopher Holden, PE; Director; Rohan Manning, Acting Deputy Director
- Recreation & Community Services – Catherine Lechowicz, Director
- Technology Services – Brianna Skowera, Director
- Water & Sewer Department – Joseph Fazzino, Director
- Youth Services – Justin Carbonella, MPA, Coordinator

Absent: Assessor – Damon Braasch, CCMA II; Director
- Library – Ramona Burkey, Director;
- Technology Services, Brianna Skowera, Director

Public: online: unknown WebEx: none Facebook: 5

1. **Call to Order**

Mayor Benjamin Florsheim calls the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. He welcomes everyone to the Special Meeting of the Common Council, Questions to Directors. The Chair asks Councilman Philip Pessina to lead the Common Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Clerk of the Common Council reads the Call of the Meeting and the Chair declares the call a legal call and the meeting a legal meeting.

2. **Questions to Directors Workshop Opens – Question of Regular Meeting Agenda Items**

The Chair opens Questions to Directors at 6:07 PM.
3. Questions to Directors Workshop Opens – Question of Regular Meeting Agenda Items

Councilman Eugene Nocera asks Public Works Director Christopher Holden to the podium. He has two questions. First, he asks for an explanation of the proposed amendment at Item 8G, which adds a phrase that the funds will be taken out of the General Fund.

Director Christopher Holden explain that, when they created the document they did not include the loan from the General Fund. The $353,111 should also appear in the box for loan from the General Fund, adding it will be a reimbursement grant, not a grant up front.

Councilman Nocera thanks Director Holden, adding that this item will be read by Councilman Faulkner later tonight. His second question is a little more detailed, he asks Director Holden to explain the Nutmegs Games: the scheduling process, how the games are advertised, and general background, as this will unfold for the first time in Middletown. This item was raised at the caucus.

Director Holden replies that it is the first time that City is hosting this event. About the middle of this year, the Executive Director retired and a new person was promoted, so there was leadership change. He ask public Works Acting Deputy Director Rohan Manning to join him at the podium, indicating that he was on the call.

Acting Deputy Director Manning states that they did change directors so a new individual came on board. From the standpoint, the initial plan was to work in conjunction with the City with a massive media blast. Unfortunately, that did not take place. It was already in the mix. It got some publicity, but not the proper publicity that it should. The initial kickoff that Mayor was to do a ribbon cutting, but that did not take place. The Nutmeg games concluded last Sunday so he has notes to discuss with them so that next year it will have (inaudible) and work without downtown businesses. Many individuals came to visit and we need to take advantage (inaudible).

Councilman Nocera replies that there were large crowds and many people from outside the community. They learned from the players . . .

Acting Deputy Director Manning adds, “Yes,” they learned from the players and family members, so, next year, we will change that and make sure it is done correctly with a massive media blast.

Councilman Nocera replies that was the concern. The players now, the families knew from the players and coaches, but the community in Middletown and outside of Middletown may not have seen any of the schedules.

Acting Deputy Director Manning replies, “Correct,” adding that this is something that we are aware of and did apologize for. They will make sure it is done rightly.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr

Councilman Grady Faulkner states that he was wondering if there will be a post mortem to get feedback. He took some notes when he was at the fencing competition, he learned that they were very pleased to be out of the Candlewood facility, which is right on top of a garage, an auto dealer.

Acting Deputy Director Manning concurs that they were happy to be in Middletown.

Councilman Faulkner adds that, if there is something, he will try to contribute his observations.

Acting Deputy Director Manning offers to send Councilman Faulkner a notice email, sharing his notes going forward and inviting Councilman Faulkner to add to that. He would also appreciate any feedback from other Councilmembers.

Director Holden adds thanks to the Parks Department employees, who did long hours to be sure that all of the fields were up to the high standard for the Nutmeg Games.

Acting Deputy Director Manning adds how well the parks Department did. The Nutmeg Games Director indicated that he was both impressed and appreciative.

The Chair calls on Councilman Vincent Loffredo.

Councilman Vincent Loffredo states that he wants to be sure that he understands. There was a recent phone call as to the transfer of the directorship.

Director Holden replies, “Yes,” adding that sometime around January the organization changed Executive Directors.

Councilman Loffredo asks when the City became aware of that.

Director Holden replies that the City met with the whole group and was advised that they were transitioning.

Councilman Loffredo asks when the Nutmeg Games commenced.

Acting Deputy Director Manning replies that it was yesterday, Sunday, July 31st. Director Holden corrects that statement, noting that July 31st was the completion of the games, not the beginning. Acting Deputy Director
Manning notes that the beginning was with archery, which began about June 11th. They kicked off at June 11th at Kegwin.

Councilman Loffredo replies that the City had 6 months’ notice.

Director Holden replies, “Yes.” Councilman Loffredo asks about the post mortem.

Acting Deputy Director Manning replies that they (inaudible).

The Chair noted that there are no further questions for Director Holden. The Chair calls on Councilman Edward McKeon.

Councilman Edward McKeon asks if Attorney Wisneski is available. Councilman McKeon notes that he spoke with Attorney Wisneski earlier today on the question of potentially creating a civilian review board (CRB) with the expected ratification of the Police Union contract tonight. He is asking whether there will be an issue if Middletown creates the CRB after the contact has been signed. It is a small complication. He asks Attorney Wisneski to fill in the Council.

Attorney Wisneski replies that she will offer some background. They are here today for the 3-year extension of the Police contract. It has been brought to the Council as a tentative agreement. She has provided an executive summary and the Council has the resolution, which includes the financial impact statement. There have been questions via email, adding that she has also talked with Councilman McKeon today by phone about a civilian review board (CRB) and whether it is part of the contract or could be in the future. She will address that now. On the phone, when they discussed, it may seem like a simple question, but is actually quite complicated.

As she is sure that the Councilmembers know, the Police Accountability Act within the past year. There were several items associated with that Act, including the ability of every municipality to establish a civilian review board (CRB). That Act did not give a ton of information as to what that would look like. It left that to the municipalities and the legislative bodies. Some of the things set forth in the Police Accountability Act was that each municipality, if they so choose, could do an ordinance. That ordinance would at least prescribe the board’s scope of authority and how its members term of office, and the process for selecting members, whether elected or appointed, and the process for selecting for those vacancies. In addition, the local municipality would determine if the CRB would have subpoena power for certain documents and information. Before you, you see that we have not put anything forward about a CRB in the contract.

Over email, she said that there were discussions at the beginning of this process that the Anti-Racism Task Force needed more time to flush that out as to what it would look like, to get community input. The Mayor has sat down with the co-chairs of the Anti-Racism task Force as well as the Chef of Police and Police union leadership. More time was needed before we can get into those discussions. It is quite important for the community and for the Police Department. Whether this can be incorporated in the next couple of years really depends on the scope of what the CRB would look like. She will use an example. If the City were to put forth an ordinance that completely changed, what discipline would look like for the Police Department, which is not something that could just be incorporated into the contract. It is, frankly, at this stage, not even something that could happen, which she will explain.

Under the Municipal Employees Relations Act (MERA), which is the State statute that sets forth why we are here today – governing collective bargaining for the State, for the municipalities -- it states under 7-474 that, if you have a collective bargaining agreement, and the terms of the agreement are in conflict with any ordinance or special act, or the City Charter, the terms of that contract agreement prevail.

In effect, if we were to enact an ordinance that changed the discipline for police officers, it would not matter because the terms of the contract would prevail. That specific statute would be what we would have to follow. If the scope of the contract is different and did not conflict with the contract, then that is something that we could talk about the Police Department, determining if there is a need to have impact bargaining. It seems obvious to her that there would be a lot of discussion at the front end before anything like that would go into effect.

The long and the short of it is that it depends on the scope of the Civilian Review Board (CRB), if it were enacted in the City, what it would look like and how that would either conflict or not conflict with the term of the current collective bargaining agreement A lot of work has to be done, but it really depends on the scope and what comes out of those community conversations.

Councilman McKeon states, as a follow-up, one thing that he is hearing is that the legislation, as enacted by the State legislature, does not have a provision that would allow the CRB created by local municipal legislative body to override a collective bargaining agreement. Is that true?

Attorney Wisneski confirms that is true. We would not be able to do that.

Councilman McKeon states that they would specifically have to pass legislation for that to happen.

Attorney Wisneski agrees, adding that she does not know how they would do that as there is currently a State statute on the books that expressly states that we cannot have ordinance, Charter, State statute, or local statute that overrules the collective bargaining agreement that has been negotiated.
Councilman McKeon notes that second part, as he understand sit, as written by a legislature, the legislative body, obviously having discussions with all parties supporting, it would depend if we were to pass one next week, next month, the legislative body could as long as it is within the boundaries of the collective bargaining agreement. Is that correct?

Attorney Wisneski replies that it is true. There may be the need for impact bargaining, but she cannot answer that question until he sees what the CRB would look like.

Councilman McKeon thanks Attorney Wisneski.

The Chair notes that there are a couple of lights on. He asks Councilman Pessina if his questions are for the Deputy General Counsel.

Unidentified speaker (inaudible)

The Chair calls on Councilman Philip Pessina followed by Councilman Vincent Loffredo.

Councilman Philip Pessina (inaudible) . . . in his knowledge of CRBs, noting that they vary, there are some really integral and important nuances such as empower. It is easy to say, you have go to know to it . . . to take on an investigation that is already been done by the Police Department in order to get documents, to act. You cannot do it. You can. Some communities across this nation have done it. , but it is a very strict CRB. He cautions the Council to consider establishing that now when the Mayor’s task force is working on their end because we need clarity on what the community is looking for, the type of CRB board that we would have. In his opinion, based on 33 years in the Police Department, he would no way support any kind of rush to establishing that without getting the Chief, the Union involved collaboratively to bridge some of these concerns because, if the State Act says “may.” It does not say, “You will.” It will give the opportunity to bridge some of these questions and really look at how they look at themselves internally, we look at ourselves at the political end, and also the community needs to look. We have to go very, very carefully, he would not think that any suggestion would just muddy the waters of this contract and he agrees with wheat she said. Thank you.

The Chair calls on Councilman Vincent Loffredo.

Councilman Vincent Loffredo states that, on this evening’s agenda, we have a 3-year, new agreement between the City and the Police Union. That agreement does not address in any fashion a CRB.

Attorney Wisneski replies, “It does not.”

Councilman Loffredo states that what is before the Council this evening is what has been provided. The material that was sent, some of the appendices were not included. He asks if they were left out.

Attorney Wisneski replies that they should have received all of the appendices. The full packet of the wage scale.

Councilman Loffredo replies, “The full wage scale.”

Attorney Wisneski continues, noting that the full wage scale should be there. The initial one that you received did not include that because she was awaiting for that from Payroll. What was posted did. There is the salary scale and all of the appendices for CIGNA medical.

Councilman Loffredo states that Appendix A . . . he does not see anything and Appendix B.

Attorney Wisneski replies that we can ask them . . . she has the one she sent originally and 25 pages of medical. Councilman Loffredo states that it was not provided, by it is.

Attorney Wisneski states that he can ask the Council Clerk if the Appendices are included in the packet that they received tonight, adding that they should have been.

Councilman Loffredo states that, dealing with the issue that was raised initially: did this agreement in any way modify the City Charter.

Attorney Wisneski replies that it did not modify the City Charter.

Councilman Loffredo repeats Attorney Wisneski’s answer, saying that it did not change the City Charter. He asks because she did mention that this agreement contained language that would override the Charter.

Attorney Wisneski replies that this is dealt with in that provision of MERA that she mentioned earlier: 7-474f. What you are approving tonight is the request of funds to put this into effect. One of the other things that the Council could approve is if we did something was different from the Charter. She would have included that in the resolution of that had done that, but she did not. There is no such change.

Councilman Loffredo replies that he assumes that what she says is true. One fact that is clearly highlighted and played a role in this agreement was the CPI. In MERA, it highlights that it is on of the factors that should
be taken into consideration. What are the other factors that are to be considered in the collective bargaining and play any role in these negotiations?

Attorney Wisneski replies that other items that they can take into consideration are base wages in comparison to other municipalities, benefits. These are the types of things that we took into consideration. Also working conditions over the last couple of years, comparative wages across the City, what has this union been receiving, and did we think it was fair. We considered all of those items. She has in the executive summary that is what he sent along with the TA (tentative agreement) what those wages have been. They are similar to what she talked about when before the Council for Local 466. She has seen a bit of an increase, noting that Madison Police has gotten some 4’s going forward three years of 4. She believes that we will see a little bit of that with inflation at 9.1%. All of these things come into consideration, noting that there may be additional things when at impasse and go to arbitration that is when you would bring in the Finance Director to testify before that board and go back and forth on last best offers. Those are the factors that we considered in these negotiations, a negotiated settlement.

Councilman Loffredo states that this agreement the 2nd and 3rd year refer to a CPI between zero and five (5).

Attorney Wisneski replies, “That is correct.”

Councilman Loffredo asks if the CPI is set at a particular date. The date that is picked for the 2nd year is November 2022.

Attorney Wisneski states that it will be coming out, as it says in the resolution, as part of the packet. The CPI-U is released in December for the 12-month period, ending in November. That is what we negotiated for the last 2-years of this contract.

Councilman Loffredo states that the fiscal year is not January 1st to December 31st, but July 1st to June 30th. The fiscal impact issue, this actual agreement, they could have picked something in 2023, such as during the settlement of the new tax rate. We could have picked another date, noting that there is nothing preventing that.

Attorney Wisneski replies that they could have proposed another date, but the parties have to come to an agreement. She adds that this was specifically proposed by the Finance Director because this allows us to budget for it. When it is at that time of the year when the Mayor is preparing the budget there is time to plan, it is not a wild card.

Councilman Loffredo adds that the budget is not finalized by the Mayor. It is proposed, deliberated, and negotiated. He found that, moving forward with this with a 4% raise as determined this fiscal year 22-23. We are setting the next wage – FY 23-24 – it is being set November 2022.

Attorney Wisneski adds that it will be for July 1, 2023.

Councilman Loffredo states that is correct.

Attorney Wisneski notes that is what they have done for others. When we have negotiated this previously, this is what we have done with CPI.

Councilman Loffredo states that, using the Finance Director and our fiscal year and setting the next wage and so forth and the next tax rate and all of that, does not occur until 2023.

Attorney Wisneski replies that she believes that they have done this with the Fire Union and the non-bargaining.

Councilman Loffredo notes that this raises a question for the legislative body and looking at this and how we are doing it. It seems to him, adding that he may be totally wrong, that likely by using November 2022, which is just a few months from now, we will be setting a 5% increase for the next fiscal year for the Police Department.

Attorney Wisneski replies that is possible, but she is not the Treasury.

Councilman Loffredo replies that he is simply raising that they are picking this so early on. This answers his questions.

The Chair calls on the Council Clerk.

The Council Clerk states that, in response to Councilman Loffredo’s question about the documents and appendices, apparently the contract was submitted to the Council in two (2) forms – Word and PDF. The PDF document is different, so when people go into iLegislate at Item 11A they will, in addition to seeing that contract document that they have seen, they will find the supplemental document with appendices. It has also been sent to all Councilmembers and to the Mayor by email. It is also posted for members of the public to see it. She apologizes for any confusions.

The Chair thanks the Clerk for this info. These next questions are also for Attorney Wisneski so we will now go to Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr. followed by Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell and Councilman Eugene Nocera.
Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr. states that he has an answer from the last exchange. He was looking at the process. We have 4% for the current year so how does the FY23-24 determination come about. What is that timetable?

Attorney Wisneski replies that talks about that in the resolution in the packet in the final impact. Years 2 and 3 will be determined after CPI-U is released in December of the year prior to going into effect. The first one we will get is December 2022, going into effect July 1, 2023. We will get that 3rd year determined in December 2023, going into effect July 1, 2024. That is a Finance Director Erlacher question, but that is where we get the CPI-U index, which comes out federally.

Councilman Faulkner states that, if he is not mistaken, there is no looking at similar size or comparison communities.

Attorney Wisneski replies that she did do that. She did a survey across the countries. What she does not think has happened in those municipalities and the data has caught up with the inflation trends. She notes that, as she said earlier, she has seen Madison Police so there is a little bit of a trend starting. They have three 4s in row. They will likely see more of that. The data that she was getting is catching up so it’s a couple of years ago, it is data that may have been negotiated in 2019 for several years or 202 and several years, reiterating that she is not sure that it is fully caught up.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell.

Councilwoman Jeannette Blackwell states that she appreciates Councilman Loffredo’s question. That was actually one of the question that she omitted asking this afternoon. She notes that Attorney Wisneski described the language as having been embedded in to the prior contract.

Attorney Wisneski replies that it was not in the prior Police contract; rather when they have done CPI in the past with other negotiated contracts, she believes that that have used that November date.

Councilwoman Blackwell states that she jotted down “the spirit of the law as it relates to the Police Accountability Act.” She does not think that that point should be missed as they talk about the Police Accountability Act. She knows that the CRB language is not embedded in this contract, but that she and Attorney Wisneski spoke about the spirit of the law, the scope, and the example, for her discipline is a far extreme. There are, however, components of this law that are really vital as well. She is interested in what they decide to do with the CRB, reiterating that there are other elements of this law that are vital and we cannot lose sight of that. When she thinks about the CRB and discipline, they talked about oversight it does not have to be to the other extreme. As it relates to the contract, she posed a question that Attorney Wisneski could not answer. She asks if Police Chief Costa can step to the podium to respond to the email that she sent earlier this afternoon.

Police Chief Eric Costa state that he did not get her email.

Councilwoman Blackwell states that she sent it about 5:00 PM; her question was about the promotions of sergeants and lieutenants in the contract. The contract states that they are on probation for a year. She would like to know if there is an evaluation period or some sort of rating that newly promoted sergeant or lieutenant would receive.

Police Chief Costa replies the policy was instituted about two (2) months ago, maybe five (5) months ago over an incident. They have a training program for newly promoted sergeants. That program goes for 4-weeks. Two weeks are supervised and 2 weeks are shadowing. When it comes to lieutenants, they mirror a lieutenant for a week and a patrol captain or division captain that they work for. They are probationary for a year.

Councilwoman Blackwell asks if there is no formal written evaluation.

Chief Costa replies “No,” adding that is what accreditation will give them. Currently, the police department uses the evaluation process some 5 to 10 years ago. They are reinstituting that in their policy. It is on Lieutenant Puoro’s desk.

Councilwoman Blackwell notes that they are reinstituting that

Chief Costa replies, “Absolutely.”
Councilwoman Blackwell replies, “Excellent.” The newly promoted . . .

Police Chief Costa interjects, saying, “Even for myself.”

Councilwoman Blackwell asks, in terms of training for new officers – sergeants, lieutenants, and yourself – what are the required training on an annual basis. She asks if he can answer that. Councilwoman Blackwell asks what the annual training are.

Police Chief Costa replies, it ranges from sexual harassment to search and seizure to labor and specialties that we send our officers to for practice.

Councilwoman Blackwell replies, “Excellent.” If he can share that list with her, she would be very appreciative.
Police Chief Costa will get that list to her.

Councilwoman Blackwell replies. “Excellent.” She adds that, when she looked over the contract. She thinks it is important to think about training, development, and support of our officers.

Chief Costa states that, to go back to the training aspect, the State of Connecticut is ranked 4th in the nation as to how it trains its officers. It is well established that has done an excellent job and keep evolving with law enforcement trends around the country. A lot of the things that we do in Connecticut are based on good policy and good procedure and what the stakeholders are in our community. This has been going on for years. Going into the Accountability Act, a lot of them are standardized and follow-through is happening with transparency, bit just for bigger agencies like a Middletown or a New Haven Police Department and so on, but for smaller agencies as well, which is very important. He thinks that is what is important about that bill. The training aspect, it will definitely (inaudible).

The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera.

Councilman Eugene Nocera states that first he wants to thank her and the Police negotiation team for the long hours of work that goes into putting this together. The 4% general wage increase, considering inflation, is over 9%, we recognize the difficult position that staff is in. It is important to note that the City in an unprecedented way as had a zero increase for three (3) years in a row. He commends the Council and staff for the hard work. We have to recognize that our contracts and the increases are fair, considering what is happening with inflation, but we also have to realize that revenue for the City has shrunk except for incentive money. There has been a modest increase in the grand list. It is important to him to remember that we are in a very difficult situation as we try to figure out how to fund the needs of the community we all recognize this including the Finance Director. Next year and the year after are very difficult years. Three years of flat budget revenue stabilized. It is something that we have to contend with.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr.

Councilman Faulkner state that his question is not for Attorney Wisneski.

The Chair calls on Councilman Vincent Loffredo.

Councilman Vincent Loffredo states that he has one quick question. What changes, if any, were made in terms of the benefit package?

Attorney Wisneski replies that there were no changes this go around to the medical or dental plan because they are in the midst of the pandemic. It is reflected in the TA.

Councilman Loffredo asks if it is being retained for the next three (3) years.

Attorney Wisneski replies, “Yes, it is.”

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner Jr. and gives the Council the 10-minute warning for time.

Councilman Grady Faulkner states that he wishes to discuss the Youth Development Specialist. He does not see Youth Services here.

The Chair states that Youth Services Director Justin Carbonella is on WebEx.

Director Carbonella states that he understand that the position the queue with Human Resources. It was submitted when the new software came on line 2 weeks ago.

The Chair states that this question may be better director to Human Resources Director Justin Richardson as it is an HR issue and is on the agenda tonight.

Councilman Faulkner states that he has been looking for the prevention person in the Youth Services Bureau and, to his recollection, no one has been hired.

Human Resources Director Richardson replies that this position already exists. They are currently going through a labor/management revision, adding that there is a current employee doing this work, a licensed social worker.

Councilman Faulkner replies that the TO does not change.

Director Richardson asks what that is.

Councilman Faulkner replies, “Table of Organization.”

Director Richardson replies, “No.”

The Chair calls on Councilman Vincent Loffredo.
Councilman Vincent Loffredo states that this position is currently at Grade 9 and will go to Grade 12. He asks how the current position has been occupied.

Dirirer Richardson replies at least 4 or 5 years. Before that, the job description had not been looked at in some time.

Councilman Loffredo notes that the reason that this came about is because of the management revision.

Director Richardson replies, “Labor management.”

Councilman Loffredo notes that this upgrade is a 33% increase from a Grade 9 to a Grade 12. He asks that Director Richardson explain the rationale for this significant reclassification.

Director Richardson states that the redlined managerial and supervision skills were highly underrated in this position. With the rubric that we have in our classification plan, various criteria in the position were underscored originally and the job has since become more developed over time. When this was a Youth Development Specialist, it had a lot less lower case load and now has over 100 cases a year. It has a lot more involvement so a lot of the State mandates and policies that have been pushed down have been pushed onto the various roles of this position, making it have more responsibility. It is more in line with its duties and responsibilities.

Councilman Loffredo asks, when we look at the change in this role and all the rest, do you look at what other communities are doing for similar positions.

Director Richardson replies, “Yes,” they take that into account and look at some general samples from other towns. We look at the union, who probably get their information from various other places. We make a good faith effort to negotiate a job description that would fit the municipality.

The Chair calls on Councilman Philip Pessina.

Councilman Philip Pessina asks for Recreation Director Catherine Lechowicz. He states that there was a question on the youth sports grant, Item 11K, which is on the agenda. In relation to Chapter 44, 11B, for the Council’s edification, that in fact, we meet that ordinance.

Director Lechowicz, replies that, when that ordinance was put into effect, it was incorporated into the grant application and all of the organizations that apply demonstrate the 1:1 match and satisfy that criteria.

Councilman Pessina states that his recollection is that this has been done for the sports grants that the Council has approved every year. Prior to and when the first ordinance in May 2016. He just wanted his colleagues to understand fully that these sports grants, which cover thousands of youth in the community, are fully vetted by the Commission and fully, more so, over these last few years since she took over. They have a hard working commission and support the coaches. In the final analysis, we did not have them. We could not afford to take care of the youth in the City. Thank you.

The Chair calls on Councilman Vincent Loffredo for one quick questions.

Councilman Loffredo calls on the Police Chief Costa. He notes that one item on the agenda deals with transfer and the need for additional funding. This evening, there is an overtime request for $169,000 within the department. He asks Chief Costa to address.

Police Chief Costa states that they are asking for $169,855.11 in overtime and $60,601.30 for private duty line. The $169K deals with the Police overtime line, which is the crimes that occur in the City, crime spikes in the last fiscal year. There were two (2) homicides – shootings – that drew out of that line for the investigations. The replacement overtime is for manpower to maintain staffing in patrol operations. It was an unprecedented year with Covid. A lot of that line – about 1,800 hours of overtime replacement - were because of Covid and other matters, vacation time, and requirements of the contract. That drew over. Police holiday did not include Juneteenth, the new Federal holiday in the new fiscal year. That is about $50K that they had to cover. That also goes into the annual patrol officers’ budget, which came up short because of the holiday line. These are the basic for the $169K. When he took the position as Chief in October (2021), after doing an audit and working with the budget analysts and the Administrative Commander, Captain Lozefski, they were projecting about $65,000 deficit because of the Covid response. That is when they stopped spending and some training of specialized units over the winter, which is historically a low time in responses for those teams. These things require certifications and monthly training to maintain. We had to maintain and keep it as close to budget as we could. That is where we are over. There were preventative matters that we did. We kept Finance involved, knowing about this deficit, the Mayor’s Office, and the Commission.

4. Questions to Directors Workshop Closes

There being no further question, the Chair closes Questions to Director at 6:57 PM.

5. Meeting adjourned

Councilman Philip Pessina moves to adjourn. Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell seconds the motion.
There being no discussion, the Chair calls for a voice vote. The motion to adjourn is approved unanimously by a vote of 10-0 (AYE: Councilmembers Blackwell, Carta, D. Ford, E. Ford, Faulkner, Gennaro, Loffredo, McKeon, Nocera, and Pessina; ABSENT: Councilmembers Mangiafico and Salafia). The matter is approved.

The meeting is adjourned at 6:58 PM

ATTEST:
LINDA S.K. REED,
COMMON COUNCIL CLERK
K: review/ minutes/ 22 August 01 -- Ques to Directors – 1 Aug 2022