

Minutes of City of Dunkirk Finance Committee held on January, 23 2012

**Present:** Councilman Mike Michalski, Chairperson  
Councilwoman Stacy Szukala, Member  
Councilwoman-at-Large Stephanie Kiyak, Member  
Mark Woods, City Treasurer  
Gib Snyder, Observer reporter  
James Muscato, guest

**Absent:** Harry Briggs, City F.O.A.

**Opening:** Chairman Michalski opened the meeting at 5:00pm.

**Meeting Content:**

Meeting began with review of Revenue budget drops from all three funds. City Treasurer Mark Woods stressed these were not final numbers for 12/31/2011. Revenue funds for Fund I & III were at or over 100%. Auditors will review revenue in all funds as to what belongs in 2011 vs. 2012 and figures are still changing daily.

**Fund I reviewed items included:** cable franchise agreement (timing issue) and on-street parking fees. Discussion turned to how often parking meters are checked & replaced. Possibility of replacing broken meters on Central Ave. from meters in back parking lot was discussed and should be referred to Public Works committee.

Cell tower revenue discussed as a timing factor – contract started in May 2011 so not a full year. Restricted drug enforcement revenue was down. Dog License fees were up; rates left the same however city no longer turns monies over to NYS. Miscellaneous reimbursement & unclassified revenue was discussed and a detailed report was requested by Kiyak.

**Fund II revenues:** Metered Water Sales – Municipal non-city only 57% of budget. Woods explained there will be an entry by the auditors and line will most likely come in under budget.

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**Fund III revenue:** Szukala noted Sewer Charges were 720% over budgeted revenue. Michalski noted Waste Hauling Fee was only at 32% of budgeted revenue. Szukala noted free B.O.D. waste was no longer going to be available. Concerns expressed about trucked-in waste being sent to other municipalities. Michalski questioned if load activity was down. Szukala mentioned with new ownership (Cott), operations may have been improved upon or less production was influencing amount of waste. Michalski offered to contact Sean Raynor (WWTP Dept. Head) for clarification.

**Fund I Expenses:** Vehicle Fuel 19% over budget. Michalski felt line was in good shape & almost impossible to predict fuel prices. Szukala noted Fire Dept - Personnel was over 9% (\$153K) and Overtime was over 37% (\$34K). Kiyak requested more detailed reports on overtime as to why it was being taken. Michalski felt quarterly overtime reports would be beneficial in addition to weekly OT report. Woods explained majority of personnel services lines would be adjusted due to payroll period at end of year. So numbers would be lower once adjustments were made & most likely these reports were showing pay for the first week in January.

Streets - Repair & Maintenance to vehicles over 50%. Discussion followed regarding repairing vehicles vs. replacement. Also, discussed buying new vs. used vehicles. Szukala stated her goal of replacing one vehicle every one to two years.

Snow removal under budget by 60%, however Salt was over budget by 31%. Michalski questioned why both lines weren't more in sync with each other. Szukala mentioned salt prices had increased & a full load was purchased in 2011.

Szukala noted overtime line for Sanitary Sewer was over 33% (\$4,300). Kiyak asked why Dept of Development was only 41% of budget. Woods felt it was a timing factor in reimbursement of CDBG monies. Woods explained there is an ongoing water project - West End Water Project that was budgeted for \$250,000 and nothing was expended on that project yet and was carried over to 2012.

**Fund II Expenses:** Overtime noted at 59% over budget (\$35,639). Szukala noted that trainee was hired and should cut down on OT. Contracted Services line, 581% over. Detail report requested.

**Fund III Expenses:** Overtime noted at 23% over budget (\$17,742). Discussion turned as to whether it is cheaper to pay overtime or hire a new employee with benefits. Woods explained plant manager retired, so they had to cover his absence and incur OT for a period of time.

**Miscellaneous Budget Items:** Michalski reviewed items which will affect the 2012 budget that were brought to Council's attention in Mid-December. E-mail from Kory Ahlstrom explaining decrease of CDBG funding will affect the Development Dept. Administrative line by an \$11,000 decrease (Fund I revenue line 001 2770 7703). Woods explained there was a timing issue.

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Szukala stressed adjustments need to be made now & not wait till late in the year, so money is not spent in those other lines. Michalski explained it was his intent to make a listing of budget concerns for Mayor Dolce's review & have him address these issues first. Woods explained we could wait possibly six months from now and pull monies from other revenue lines, but he would not suggest it & should be addressed now. Szukala agreed.

Payments for a water fund truck did not qualify for payments from CDBG monies beginning in April. Monies (\$6,869) would have to come from the city's general fund or water fund in 2012. Landfill fees set to go up \$5,500. Committee felt comfortable leaving as is.

Personnel issues were discussed. Woods stated Mayor Dolce was meeting with the two individuals whose retirements were already factored into the budget, but had not yet retired. Woods then discussed his submitted report regarding personnel lines of the FOA (decrease of \$23,294), Assessor's office (decrease of \$6,114), Youth (decreases of \$6,000 & \$9,000), Law Dept. (net increase of \$35,408), DPW (decrease of \$2,314) and City Clerk (increase of \$11,314).

Committee felt that at this time, there were too many questions or variables at this point in time to fully address personnel issues and their effects on the budget.

**Treasure's Report:** New revenue source from Dunkirk Free Library (\$6,662) representing reimbursement to the city for NYS retirement system was credited to Szukala. Tax stabilization transfer discussed as part of a one-time budgeted item due to a past city tax rate increase.

**Fire Dept. emergency truck purchase:** Szukala informed committee that resolution for the purchasing of a new emergency vehicle / ambulance may be brought before council at Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Kiyak questioned Fire Dept's need for a new vehicle. Szukala stated she was in favor of purchase. Michalski agreed noting age of current vehicle. Kiyak still, at this point, felt uncomfortable approving purchase. Szukala pointed out what Fire Dept had done for the city regarding a new revenue source (insurance billing) and new labor contract which reduced staffing, increased contributions to health insurance and wage freezes.

Because City Treasurer Mark Woods was unfamiliar with leasing / bonding issues presented in memo from Chief Ahlstrom, it was decided this issue would be discussed in more detail at the next Finance Committee meeting or perhaps during Public Safety Committee meeting on Feb 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Meeting adjourned at 6:15pm**

