



Minutes - Final

Public Works Committee

Wednesday, August 16, 2023

6:15 PM

Council Chambers

Roll Call: Chair Zucal, Santos, Hendricks

[15-6109](#)

Bill 75

Amending the 2023 General Fund budget to allow for a position name change in the Department of Public Works, Recycling and Solid Waste, by changing the SWEEP Officer position to SWEEP Officer Bilingual.

Attachments: [Bill 75 - SWEEP Officer Retitle](#)

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that there are currently four Sweep Officers with only one position being bilingual. That position has recently become vacant due to retirement within the Bureau. This change will allow for increases customer service to our residents and assist with our outreach efforts within the Bureau of Recycling and Solid Waste.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked if this involves any monetary changes.

Mr. Mark Shahda stated no, sir. Just a title change.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked if there were any questions from his committee.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she is not on the committee.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated then from the dais.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked is it a way that they can be paid more since they have an extra skill which is speaking two languages.

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that is something they can definitely work with our HR team and see how that would be negotiated with SEIU.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that they definitely should.

Mr. Mark Shahd stated that he does not disagree one way or the other. That is something that they can definitely look into.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked if there were any comments from the public. He asked Mr. Shahda for a Capital Projects update.

A motion was made by Daryl Hendricks, seconded by Natalie Santos, that this Bill is forwarded to full Council.

Yes: 3 - Ed Zucal, Natalie Santos and Daryl Hendricks

Updates

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that they are delighted to gather around this evening and provide them with the Comprehensive Update on the ongoing Capital Projects within the Public Works Department. He stated that commitment to improving our city's infrastructure and services are at the forefront of our efforts. He stated that they are excited to show the progress and plans with you all this evening. Presently, the Public Works Department is managing 26 Capital Projects. He is happy to report that four of the projects are ready for closure due to the successful completion. He stated that they are proud of the achievements. It contributes significantly to the enhancement of our city. Additionally, our focus remains on the six annual projects that they are currently overseeing. These initiatives which include the Cost Share Program with UGI and LCA. Curb and sidewalk construction, shade tree revitalization in the Streets Program. Constituents are the core to our ongoing efforts. Each project is essential in maintaining and improving our city's infrastructure on a constant basis. They have in place three capital accounts that are earmarked for emergencies. These accounts are instrumental in addressing critical needs such as urgent bridge repairs, roof maintenance, and essential renovation to city hall. Turning our attention to ARPA funds, they are thrilled to inform them about the three projects that have been made possible through its funding. First, the stormwater lining projects is in full swing and is expected to include this summer. Additional funds have been allocated for the Operating Budget for 2023 - 2024 ensuring the projects continuity and effectiveness. The second and third ARPA funding projects encompass the watermain and filter replacement initiatives. These projects are on track for completion in the Fall of 2025. The water main replacement project, initially a part of Cycle 7 has undergone a strategic shift and now will be combined with Cycle 8 instruction in 2024. Meanwhile the water filter replacement project is scheduled to commence construction in Spring 2024. Within the diverse range of projects, this significant portion falls under Traffic and Planning. The School Pedestrian Safety Improvements Project backed by the TASA Grant is designed to enhance safety around our schools. It involves an installation of new school zone flashers and an RRFB at Fourth and MLK. Currently in its final design and bidding phase, this project is set to commence construction later this year. The traffic signal modernization project funded through the MTF PennDot Grant aims to modernize our traffic signal systems. This initiative includes installing a new traffic signal at 15th and Highland and upgrading two existing signals to integrate within an adaptive system. While still in the preliminary design stage, this project holds immense promise for improved traffic management. Diving further

into their efforts, the American Parkway Traffic Signal Improvement Project made possible by a Greenlight Go Grant seeks to revolutionize traffic along American Parkway. This involves installing a traffic adaptive system with GPA preemption from Auburn Street to Airport Road with pedestrian enhancements. They are excited to announce that the RFP for the design consultant is now active, moving us closer to bringing this innovative vision to life. Stepping into the commitment of well-lit streets, the Mack Boulevard lighting project supported by the MTF DCED grant is making strides. This endeavor involves the installation of new streetlights along Mack Boulevard spanning from Emaus Avenue to the Railroad Bridge. The design process is being handled in house and the construction is set to commence later this year. Lastly, the Hanover Traffic Signal Improvements Project funded by MTFDCED Grant aims to enhance traffic management around Hanover Avenue. This initiative includes installation of a traffic adaptive system with GPS preemption from Albert Street to Wahneta Street alongside the introduction of RFD at the Hanover and Linden intersection. Currently, in the design phase this project underscores our commitment to safety and efficiency. In conclusion, we are excited to share the progress and plans for a diverse range of Capital Projects. These endeavors are a testament to our team's dedication to improving our city and infrastructure. He stated that they are grateful for their continued support and engagement as they work together to create a cleaner and safer Allentown.

Mr. Ed Zucal thanked Mr. Shahda and asked if there were any questions from his committee or he dais.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated to Mr. Zucal that she does not have a question concerning this, but would like to ask Mr. Shahda about other things. She received a few phone calls from different businesses complaining about not receiving a notice or letter about construction on their streets. The main complaint is about UGI has been working all over our city. Some of the businesses are losing a lot of jobs, especially the restaurants because when they are doing construction on their blocks, the people have no way of going to get their foods. She asked if it is possible to do something about it. Perhaps a letter to them ahead of time to know what has been going on. They are losing a lot of money.

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that he understands the situation. They are a part of the utility companies process does consist of public outrage. They are required to reach out to residents and homeowners, businessowners of the work that is going to take place. He will follow up on that to make sure that is happening.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that of course they want things to be fixed and all know that UGI is all over fixing/working the streets and things like that. They

are minority owned and they are not making the money. It is important to let them know ahead of time so that they can know their options.

Mr. Mark Shahda stated absolutely, he will definitely follow up and make sure it is happening.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked if there were any other questions from Council.

[15-6156](#) Public Works - Capital Projects Report

Attachments: [2023 Q2 Public Works Capital Projects](#)

Minutes

[15-6126](#) July 26, 2023 Public Works Committee 2024 Budget Priorities Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [July 26, 2023 Public Works Committee 2024 Budget Priorities Meeting Minutes](#)

Yes: 3 - Ed Zucal, Natalie Santos and Daryl Hendricks

Adjournment: 6:24 PM