



# SHAKER HEIGHTS

## Finance Committee

Monday, July 17, 2023, 8:00 A.M.

Virtual meeting pursuant to Chapters 113 and 115 of the Codified Ordinances  
(as amended in Ordinance 22-28), and Resolution 22-29, enacted on March 22, 2022.

Members present: Council Member, Anne Williams, Chair  
Council Member, Earl Williams  
Council Member Nancy Moore  
Council Member Tres Roeder  
Citizen Member, Anthony Moore  
Citizen Member, Martin Kolb

Others present: Chief Administrative Officer, Jeri E. Chaikin  
Director of Finance, John Potts  
Director of Recreation, Alexandria Nichols  
Support Services Bureau Commander, John Cole  
Principal Planner, Kara O'Donnell  
Planner, Anna Mates  
Frank GoForth, League of Women Voters

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### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 20, 2023.

Chair Anne Williams stated that the minutes of June 20, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved.

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### REQUEST TO APPROPRIATE GRANT FUNDS TOTALING \$18,803 RECEIVED FROM THE OHIO HISTORY CONNECTION'S 2023 CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CLG) GRANT PROGRAM TO RESTORE URGENT-PRIORITY GRAVESTONES WITHIN WARRENSVILLE WEST CEMETERY.

Planner Anna Mates requested to appropriate grant funds totaling \$18,803 received from the Ohio History Connection's 2023 Certified Local Government (CLG) grant program to restore urgent-priority gravestones within Warrensville West Cemetery.

The 2023 CLG grant funds will be used to restore up to 57 gravestones that were categorized as an urgent priority during the planning process for the Warrensville West Cemetery Historic Preservation Master Plan. Restoration work will include removing and resetting fallen or leaning gravestones, treating biological growth, removing interfering plantings and roots, remedying previous temporary fixes, and cleaning. This restoration work is a critical first step in fully implementing the Historic Preservation Master Plan.

#### CITY OF SHAKER HEIGHTS

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In February 2023 (Ord. 23-11), Council authorized the Planning Department to apply for, and accept, \$25,000 in grant funds. This application was successful, and the Ohio History Connection CLG grant program awarded an \$18,803 grant to the City. A match of at least 40% is required and the City has \$15,000 appropriated for the project in the Capital Budget under 2020 Neighborhood Projects. Given the reduced funding, we will work to restore as many of the first priority gravestones as possible with the CLG grant and the City's Capital Fund.

Chair Anne Williams questioned when the project would be completed. Ms. Mates stated the project is expected to be completed the spring through summer of 2024.

Council Member Nancy Moore questioned if there would be another gravestone restoration workshop held to recruit more volunteers for this project. Ms. Mates stated there has been no discussion on this yet but she does know that the consultant will be completing the work on the project. Principal Planner Kara O'Donnell stated the department would have to talk with the people at the State Preservation office. This project would be put out to be bid to qualified restoration contractors. If the awarded contractor is open to this and the State approved, this is something to be considered; as this a great way for community building. The reality is that the stones are mostly urgent priority because they need more than just cleaning.

Citizen Member Martin Kolb questioned what would it cost the City to restore the entire cemetery and is there a plan to try to obtain those funds. Ms. Mates stated the grants are something that the department would be looking into in phases. As mentioned, this is the first phase in implementing the master plan. The department would be applying for additional grants to implement other portions of the master plan to restore the cemetery. Mr. Kolb also questioned if there was a way to enhance the visibility of the cemetery. Ms. Mates stated that is something that is worked into the greater master plan. The issue along Lee Road is that a lot of the plantings are entwined with the gravestones. It would take a greater effort to increase visibility along the road. It is part of the master plan to do that eventually at a future time.

The Finance Committee approved the request to appropriate grant funds totaling \$18,803 received from the Ohio History Connection's 2023 Certified Local Government (CLG) grant program to restore urgent-priority gravestones within Warrensville West Cemetery.

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**REQUEST TO ACCEPT AND APPROPRIATE A \$309,721 OHIO DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES' 2022 CLEAN OHIO TRAILS FUND/RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM GRANT WITH AN ADDITIONAL \$63,241 LOCAL MATCH FOR ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE LOWER ALKE MULTIPURPOSE TRAIL.**

Principal Planner Kara O'Donnell requested to accept and appropriate a \$309,721 Ohio Department of Resources' 2022 Clean Ohio Trails Fund/Recreational Trails Program grant with an additional \$63,241 local match for engineering and construction of the Lower lake Multipurpose Trail.

In 2021, the City applied for an Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) grant for the Lower Lake Trail. The grant narrowly missed funding in that round and the Planning Department were given the opportunity to have it considered in the 2022 round. The department made minor adjustments to the grant, including ensuring a 10' wide path and updating the cost estimate to adjust for inflation.

The proposed trail will be located between Lower Lake and South Park Boulevard from Coventry Road to West Park Boulevard. The estimated project cost, including engineering, environmental studies, and construction is \$412,962. The \$309,721 grant awarded will pay for 75% of the project cost. A 25% local match (\$103,241) is required. The City committed \$40,000 in the 2020 General Capital Fund (Ordinance 19-122) and, in Ordinance #21-13, pledged to appropriate \$53,714 if the grant was received. Due to higher construction costs, our required match increased to \$63,241.

The Shaker Lakes Parklands are popular for passive recreation, including hiking, walking, biking, and jogging. Nearby residents often access the parklands on foot or by bike. A sidewalk or asphalt path surrounds the Lower Lake except along South Park Boulevard, roughly between Larchmere Boulevard and Brook Road where there is no paved path or sidewalk on either side of South Park. While there is a dirt footpath on the north side roughly parallel with South Park Boulevard, it can be muddy and impassible and is not comfortable for those on bikes, with strollers, or with limited mobility. Cyclists and pedestrians often travel within the South Park Boulevard roadway, sharing the street with vehicles.

The exact location of the trail has to be determined. Design of the trail, which will include community engagement and coordination with Public Works, will start this Fall with bidding in late Winter/early Spring and construction in 2024. ODNR requires that the funds be spent within 15 months of signing the contract.

This item was considered and approved by the Safety and Public Works Committee on July 6, 2023. There was support for the project. One question had to do with the path location and connecting to Shaker Boulevard. The exact location will be determined during the public engagement process and design.

Council Member Nancy Moore requested that once the location of the trail is determined, that it is really critical to restore the native habitat by planting native trees and plants and to keep in mind that many of the trees in this area are very old. It is important to the whole health of the neighborhood. Council Member Moore also stated that anytime a trail is made, the soil is compacted and trees are compromised. It will be really critical to the enjoyment of the area as a passive recreation spot to make sure that necessary caution is utilized. Council Member Moore put in a request on the record from City Council that the location be the least damaging to the natural habitat that has been restored in the area as possible. Chair Williams stated Council is one hundred percent behind that.

Citizen Member Kolb questioned how far up West Park does this trail go. Mrs. O'Donnell stated this will start at Lover's Lane Bridge, making sure to avoid those trees and goes below the lake and will end in North Woodland.

Council Member Tres Roeder replied to Council Member Moore's point and shared one of the conversations that happened at the Safety and Public Works Committee. One of the main areas of feedback from the community is they don't want it to be hard meaning this could be done in a less invasive way to the roots in the area around in concrete. Mrs. O'Donnell stated the plan is to have a 10 foot wide asphalt path because this is what the grant was written for. Whichever engineer who will be hired, will be sure to protect the trees during construction and with choosing exactly where the path will be. When the department was applying for the grant the site was walked through to show the curving line to avoid the largest trees. The department will work with the engineer to make sure the constraints are noted. Council Member Roeder clarified if it's needed to go less deep in the path if this was a concrete path. Mrs. O'Donnell stated she was unsure of the answer but guess it's

about the same because neither of the paths need foundations. There is some excavation needed for this project.

The Finance Committee approved the request to accept and appropriate a \$309,721 Ohio Department of Resources' 2022 Clean Ohio Trails Fund/Recreational Trails Program grant with an additional \$63,241 local match for engineering and construction of the Lower lake Multipurpose Trail.

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**REQUEST TO ENTER INTO A PLANNING AND DESIGN CONTRACT WITH MKSK FOR THE RECREATION STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECT FOR A NOT-TO-EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$130,000 AND APPROPRIATE TO THE GENERAL CAPITAL FUND.**

Principal Planner Kara O'Donnell requested to enter into a planning and design contract with MKSK for the Recreation Strategic Plan project for a not-to-exceed amount of \$130,000 and appropriate to the General Capital Fund.

It is important to plan for future recreation needs now to aid other planning priorities which include supporting strong neighborhoods, promoting economic development, and attracting and retaining a diverse resident population. Phase 1 will aid other planning priorities such as supporting strong neighborhoods, promoting economic development in attracting and retaining a diverse resident population. Phase 1 of the Recreation Strategic Plan will include four pieces which is community engagement and community needs assessment, existing state of recreation, a recreation strategic plan and an estimate of probable cost. There will be a comprehensive analysis of recreation needs, including community support for certain facility types and locations.

The Plan will coordinate with the school facility plans as well as incorporate City facilities not impacted by school decisions, focusing on key locations. The plan will investigate the four (4) most likely sites for future recreational facilities or amenities: the Shaker Heights Middle School, Thornton Park, Chelton Park/Shaker School District Bus Depot, and the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building/Colonnade area. In addition, two (2) additional sites may be determined during the plan process and would also be evaluated. The plan will include costs and options for renovation and/or building new at each site.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued on May 25, 2023, to 72 planning, architectural, landscape architecture, and community engagement firms. Many were selected from the State of Ohio's list of MBE and WBE engineers. The RFP was sent to the Urban League and Greater Cleveland Partnership Inclusion Marketplace, and also posted on websites of the Ohio Chapter of the American Planning Association, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Ohio Parks & Recreation Association, and the City of Shaker Heights. The RFP requested proposals from teams of qualified professional planners, engineers and landscape architects, and community engagement professionals, to prepare a Recreation Strategic Plan. Six teams submitted proposals on June 20, 2023, which is listed on the memorandum. The proposals were evaluated on specific criteria, including: experience with similar projects, proposed project approach, diversity of project team, and DEI strategy. Three firms' best met these criteria and were short-listed for interviews by the selection committee comprised of Joyce Braverman, Alex Nichols, Ann McGuire, Colleen Jackson, and Kara Hamley O'Donnell. The selection committee interviewed three teams on June 29. After

interviews, the Selection Committee determined that MKSK provided a proposal that best met the RFP requirements and demonstrated the best qualifications for the project. MKSK has experience undertaking similar recreation strategic plans and recreation master plans, includes a multipronged approach to community engagement, and has roots and experience in the community. Even though the proposals received for lower fees consultant services are evaluated on those project approach and their experience and their community engagement and their DEI and diversity of the team.

At its July 11 Recreation Committee meeting, staff verified that this contract will include fit plans for proposed buildings as well as cost estimates. The Recreation Committee unanimously recommended Council award the \$130,000 contract to MKSK and appropriate \$130,000 in the General Capital Fund for this project.

Council Member Nancy Moore reiterated again, as in City Council meetings, that there seemed to be a consensus on the part of Council to do this strategic plan for recreation that surprised Council Member Moore that the plan had more to do with economic development in some ways than with recreation but is being called a recreation feasibility study. Council Member Moore wanted to go on the record as saying that in the end if the City is shifting around the recreation facilities to the end that developable parcels are created and if doing so is not in the economic best interest of the taxpayers of Shaker Heights, she believes that the City should be very careful with the strategic planning process. This could easily be the case that the economic development benefits of certain projects that might be materialized or undertaken in certain areas where the City currently has recreation facilities, may not outweigh the costs of doing so. In other words, recreation would be of priority to economic development. Council Member Moore noted she will be monitoring this closely that this doesn't happen. The taxpayers of Shaker Heights have an interest in this that goes far beyond recreation which indeed includes long-term benefits and possibly tax benefits to them.

Chair Anne Williams questioned how much was allocated in the budgeting process this year. Director of Recreation Alexandria Nichols stated no money was allocated for this project, hence the requested of \$130,000 to be appropriated in the Capital Fund. Chair Williams also questioned if the study that will be conducted will include an historical analysis of the use of each of the facilities by the residents; how far back will this study look at trends, asking for clarification. Ms. O'Donnell stated that trends means they will be looking at the demographics of the community right now; trends of nationally and regionally of what recreation might be growing or falling in popularity. Also what would be taken into account is if there are recreation facilities that have not been utilized in the last 10 years, it does not make sense to restore them. Director Nichols stated trends change over time depending on what people are interested in. When Recreation looks at program participation numbers and types of programs that have been offered to the community, there is some standard type programs. There also has been some changes and shifts depending on available space and the desires of the community and stated it is important to consider current trends. Director Nichols also stated the importance of working with the consultant to figure out the upcoming trends and what may be on the forefront, also noting that she is unaware if there is good data in terms of usage. There can now be solid numbers given on visitation. It will be difficult to look at old information because it is not available. If the department works with a consultant, they may be able to predict what the community will want. Chair Williams stated her belief in the importance of looking at what the residents have been using and whom inside or out of the community has been using the facilities.

Council Member Roeder agreed with the comments made by Council Member Moore, stating there is a valid concern and some of the Council Members have been concerned about this effort from the beginning. Council Member Roeder questioned how this is working with Forward Together because Council has not received a recent update in a while. Council Member Roeder also questioned why the City would be funding planning around the Middle School and Bus Depot that is not currently controlled by the City deeming them unavailable. Mrs. O'Donnell stated the timing of going through this planning process is very intentional. By the time they lay some of the groundwork in parts of this plan, they are expecting to know the results of what is happening at the Middle School from the bond issue in November. In regard to the bus depot, Ms. O'Donnell is aware of some conversations that have occurred but has not been personally involved. As part of the Lee Road Action Plan, the bus depot was a future goal from people who participated in the Moreland and Lomond neighborhoods; deeming this as the idea for a Neighborhood Center of the Lee Road Action Plan. As the Planning Department coordinates plans, various sites are focused on in planning and looking toward the future. This site in particular requires working with the Shaker Heights School District. Mrs. O'Donnell stated that as far as building on Forward Together, there was a lot of good data collected from the community around recreation and noted to inform the consultant on the need to share the information with Council.

Council Member Roeder requested for expansion on the survey questions that will be asked in the community engagement and needs assessment, as some of these questions have already been asked of the residents before. Ms. O'Donnell stated the department will work with the consultant to create a community engagement plan. There has been discussion to get out into the parks and the importance of making sure there is an understanding. The department has the data from the community engagement survey and some recreation data from the community. Director Nichols stated the Community Attitude Survey was done this year and about five years ago. There is also program interest data from an internal questionnaire that the Recreation Department did in 2015. The department also has some high level data from Forward Together and also have some recent data from the Attitude Survey. Recreation has seen a significant change in the number of participants, youth participants and programs. There has also been changes in adult and senior adult interest in program participation since the pandemic and within the last five to ten years. Director Nichols stated having comprehensive data and information is important to receive from interest groups and the community. As part of the consultant selection process, the firms were asked specifically how they were going to balance interests from special interest groups from the general community. Director Nichols stated as an example, for 10 years the City has partnered with the City of Beachwood to offer Beachwood residents, resident rates to learn to skate if they register through the City of Beachwood. The objective was to get Beachwood residents to register and come to Shaker Heights rink instead of another local rink. This partnership was ended in the fall because Shaker residents are now utilizing the space. It is important for the City to be aware of the program participation. Getting information from the general population, not just the Recreation's program participants is important.

Citizen Member Kolb questioned if there had been discussion of the recreation strategic plan in the last few months of 2022 and asked for verification. Director Potts stated this had started to be discussed at the outset of the budget and towards the end of the budget it was removed for further consideration during 2023. Citizen Member Kolb questioned why is this being resurrected now if this project was removed for consideration for 2023. CAO Jeri Chaikin stated there was a conversation had with Council earlier this year and there generally was support to go forward with this study. The scope of work and the RFP was present to Council. At least of the majority of Council has been in support of it. Originally, there was a dollar amount proposed in the Capital

budget for this. CAO Chaikin stated, as Director Potts as stated, this item was taken out at the end of the budget discussion with the understanding that there would be further clarification of what this study would include and would be brought back to Council during this calendar year. Citizen Member Kolb questioned that given the fact it's now midsummer, the cost of this \$130,000 for a planning exercise and the fact that several pieces of these properties are not available and potentially won't be available for several years, why would the City not submit this again for next year's budget. Director Nichols stated they are trying to be timely because of the school's ballot issue in November. The Recreation Department feels strongly that the City needs to be prepared. This process is going to take a year. It would be ideal to start the process in September in advance of the November ballot initiative and already have started data collection. While the outcome of the ballot is unknown, there is still a strong potential that these sites could be available. Director Nichols stated the importance of having fit plans in the event the initiative ballot is successful and can continue to proceed.

Chair Williams wanted to voice concern with starting this process in September and having this discussion begin before the school's ballot initiative, as this may factor in if residents will support the bond issue or not. Chair Williams stated her belief that these need to be kept separate because the City is looking long term if we were ever to put facilities at the middle school. Chair Williams stated she is not opposed to putting this off mainly for that reason, to avoid confusing the residents. Chair Williams questioned how the Recreation Department plans to present this to the public so that it is of separate consideration. Director Nichols stated the department's expectation is not that this would be a negative or positive impact for the school but it would be completely separate. Gathering information from the residents is going to be a big part of this. When the 12 month plans established by MKSK is reviewed, community engagement and community need assessment is a big piece of that. Director Nichols emphasized the need to want to know from the residents their desires as it relates to recreation and their needs as far as what the residents feel they need to have a good quality of life and living in Shaker Heights. While a part of the plan is to do fit plans for the four sites and up to two additional sites, which will be a later part of the engagement. The information gathering that would start in September is about the needs that the community has related to recreation.

CAO Chaikin stated her understanding that the Committee is urging for a later date on the discussion of the item before attempting to get more information from the public. Chair Williams stated that is correct and also commented that community engagement is important but also looking at locations. Council Member Moore supported this suggestion to look at the process and see what could be accomplished without the beginning public engagement before the bond issue. Council Member Moore also stated it should be clear to Citizen Member Kolb's point that whatever strategic plan that is devised based on the community articulating its needs and wants is unfunded. In other words, there is no mechanism within the City budget process for implementing whatever the plan is that comes out of this. Council Member Moore contrasted that the 2005 recreation study that was funded through the large allotment from the estate tax which was still in existence at that point and asked for clarification on what initially is being discussed today. She also stated that this in contrast is a wish fulfillment plan and the concern although mitigated by the absolute expertise of the Planning Department and confidence in the Recreation Department, the beginning of this discussion may include visioning the same way the same way Forward Together included visioning. Council Member Moore concluded that the hope is whatever the vision is that's created by the community articulating its needs and wants, that there is an understanding built in that this is not funded.

Council Member Roeder stated he does not plan to support this. He supports recreation and knows the community wants to do more with it but expressed this particular way of doing it is problematic. Council Member Roeder agreed with Mr. Kolb that it is probably within best interest to see what happens with the levy and have a discussion for next year's budget.

The Finance Committee did not approve the request to enter into a planning and design contract with MKSK for the Recreation Strategic Plan project for a not-to-exceed amount of \$130,000 and appropriate to the General Capital Fund.

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**REQUEST TO RENEW LEASE WITH THE SHAKER HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE USE OF THE STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES COMMUNITY BUILDING 3450 LEE ROAD, FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S INNOVATION CENTER FOR PERSONALIZED LEARNING AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT (IC) FOR THE PERIOD AUGUST 1, 2023 THROUGH JULY 31, 2024 WITH THE OPTION OF TWO ONE YEAR RENEWALS.**

Director of Recreation Alexandria Nichols requested to renew lease with the Shaker Heights School District for the use of the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building 3450 Lee Road, for the School District's Innovation Center for Personalized Learning and Family Engagement (IC) for the period August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024 with the option of two one year renewals.

The Shaker Heights School District leases space in the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building for the operation of their Innovation Center for Personalized Learning and Family Engagement (IC). The original 5-year lease expired on July 31, 2019 and was renewed for the period August 1, 2019 through July 31, 2022. This item was also renewed in 2022 for the period August 1, 2022 through July 31, 2023. The IC provides a variety of learning enrichment opportunities for high school aged students who learn in a –non-traditional setting. They operate generally in the building from 8:00AM through 4:30PM Monday through Friday. The school leases space in the basement and two rooms on the first floor exclusively. The lease also provides for shared use of some additional spaces as available and when not in use by the City. As the school is in process of reviewing their facilities and has not yet determined a permanent home for the IC, this lease would give the schools up to four years to work through their planning process. This item was reviewed by the Recreation Committee and approved the request.

The Finance Committee approved requested to renew lease with the Shaker Heights School District for the use of the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building 3450 Lee Road, for the School District's Innovation Center for Personalized Learning and Family Engagement (IC) for the period August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024 with the option of two one year renewals.

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**REQUEST TO APPROVE LEASE WITH THE SHAKER HEIGHTS ARTS COUNCIL (SHAC) FOR USE OF THE STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES COMMUNITY BUILDING, 3450 LEE ROAD, FOR STORAGE OF SHAC ADMINISTRATIVE AND EVENT MATERIALS FOR THE PERIOD AUGUST 1, 2023 THROUGH JULY 21, 2024 WITH THE OPTION FOR RENEWAL FOR FIVE YEARS.**



Director of Recreation Alexandria Nichols requested to approve lease with Shaker Heights Arts Council (SHAC) for use of the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building, 3450 Lee Road, for storage of SHAC Administrative and Even Materials for the period August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024 with the option for renewal for five years.

The Shaker Heights Arts Council (SHAC) is a volunteer nonprofit organization whose mission is to enrich the cultural fabric of Shaker Heights by establishing the arts as a vibrant and integral part of the community. SHAC was established in 2002 and in 2005 this organization received 501(c)3 status as an official nonprofit and their mission is to build community through the arts and to build the arts through the community.

In 2014, SHAC received a three year lease for unused office space at the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building for storage of administrative and event materials as well as office space for administrative work on SHAC based events. The original lease period was from May 15, 2014 through May 31, 2017 and this space was primarily used for storage with limited use for administrative work. Although the lease expired in 2017, SHAC continued to store items in the STJ Community Building but they discontinued using the space for administrative tasks. In 2023, SHAC requested a new lease for storage and event materials to include storage cabinets and tables. SHAC has an ongoing partnership with the City and has supported events such as the Shaker Heights Arts and Music Festival in the past. SHAC has also provided instructors for Recreation programs to engage the community in fine arts creativity.

SHAC and the City have agreed that the City will provide an unused room on the second floor of the community building for storage of SHAC event items. SHAC will be able to lock the space and will have access to their items during normal building hours or upon request.

This item was reviewed by the Administration Committee on July 11 and they recommend a \$1/year in rent. This committee approved the recommended lease agreement.

The Finance Committee approved the request to lease with Shaker Heights Arts Council (SHAC) for use of the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building, 3450 Lee Road, for storage of SHAC Administrative and Even Materials for the period August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024 with the option for renewal for five years.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m. The next meeting will be August 21, 2023.

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Respectfully submitted,

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John J. Potts, Finance Director  
Finance Committee