DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
MONDAY JUNE 22, 2026 – 6:00 PM
5555 PERIMETER DRIVE
COUNCIL CHAMBER

Meeting Minutes

Ms. Alutto called the Finance Committee meeting of June 22, 2026 to order at 6:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Ms. Alutto, Ms. Johnson and Mr. Keeler.

Staff members present: Mr. Rubino, Mr. Urbancsik, Ms. Hunter, Mr. Jiang, Mr. Fridley, Mr. Wilson

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Alutto moved to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2026 Finance Committee meeting. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion: Ms. Johnson, yes; Ms. Alutto, yes; Mr. Keeler, yes.

Procurement Policy Updates

Mr. Rubino presented a staff report on potential updates to Dublin City Code Chapter 37, which governs competitive bidding and Council approval requirements. The purpose of the presentation was to brief the Finance Committee and seek policy direction before staff drafts any formal code amendments. The committee was asked to consider four primary areas:

- updating the competitive bidding threshold,
- adopting a local vendor preference,
- updating alternative procurement methods, and
- adopting a formal proper public purpose statement.

Mr. Rubino provided background on the City's procurement framework, noting that the function encompasses the full spectrum of acquiring goods, services, and construction on behalf of the city. He explained that the governing framework is centered in Dublin City Code Chapter 37, with the Revised Charter providing broader contracting procedures. The Director of Finance is required to certify the availability and appropriation of funds for any procurement activity. Staff noted that just over 50 percent of the 2026 budget is subject to the procurement function, with the capital budget being particularly procurement-intensive. The City has engaged Baker Tilly's operational review segment to assist with modernizing and consolidating procurement policies and procedures.

Competitive Bidding Threshold

Mr. Rubino explained that the current formal competitive bid threshold is set at $75,000 in Chapter 37. This threshold was last updated in 2014 via ordinance, having been raised from $30,000. The rationale at the time was to align the threshold with the prevailing wage threshold. He noted that due to inflation, the 2014 figure of $75,000 is now equivalent to over $104,000 in purchasing power. He also noted that the State of Ohio, through the fiscal year 2024 state budget, updated the municipal bid threshold to $75,000 with a 3 percent annual inflationary increase, bringing the 2026 figure to $79,567.

All three committee members expressed support for updating the threshold. Mr. Keeler indicated openness to increasing the threshold and adding a 3 percent annual escalator. Ms. Johnson asked whether staff had analyzed historical contract data to identify a meaningful "sweet spot" for the new threshold. Mr. Wilson noted that benchmarking against peer communities suggested most are at $100,000 to $125,000, but he acknowledged that a significant number of contracts fall above the $100,000 mark as well, which would limit the practical efficiency gains of a more modest increase. He suggested that moving from $75,000 to $150,000 would likely produce a more meaningful operational difference than moving only to $100,000. Ms. Alutto agreed that staff should return with a specific recommendation supported by data, and that the recommendation should include a 3 percent annual inflationary escalator to avoid the need for periodic legislative action solely to address inflation.

Local Vendor Preference

Mr. Rubino described the concept of a local vendor preference as providing an evaluation advantage to businesses located within the City, with the intent of supporting the local economy, encouraging use of local businesses, and recirculating public spending within the community. He outlined three common models: a percentage-based price preference, a right-to-match provision, and a reciprocal preference. He noted that several Ohio municipalities, including Pickerington, Painesville, and Cuyahoga Falls, employ percentage-based preferences, typically at 3 to 5 percent, often capped at a maximum dollar amount such as $10,000.

Mr. Keeler expressed support for the concept, drawing a parallel to the economic benefit of keeping spending local given that many Dublin businesses and their employees pay income taxes to the city. He indicated a preference for the 5 percent model with an appropriate dollar cap. Ms. Johnson voiced support as well, while raising the question of whether a local vendor preference might deter outside vendors from bidding, potentially limiting the City's access to innovation or higher-quality work. Mr. Rubino acknowledged this concern and suggested that administrative guardrails and finance oversight could help monitor and address such outcomes. Ms. Johnson also indicated she was not in favor of a rebid option as a mechanism for implementing the preference.

Ms. Alutto expressed support for the concept and raised the important question of how "local" would be defined, particularly in the context of the modern hybrid work environment. She noted that an employee working from a home office in Dublin on behalf of an out-of-city firm may still generate municipal income tax withholding for the City, and suggested that the definition warrant careful consideration. Mr. Rubino agreed this was a timely issue given current work arrangements. Ms. Alutto also suggested that the policy include a discretionary off-ramp allowing the Finance Director to deviate from the local vendor preference in cases where there are legitimate operational or performance-related reasons that may not be appropriate to state publicly.

Alternative Procurement Methods

Mr. Rubino noted that the current Chapter 37 includes provisions for design-build and construction manager at risk delivery methods, which were added during the 2013 review. He indicated there are additional alternative methods now in broader use across the industry that could be added to the code. Ms. Johnson noted awareness of options such as integrated project delivery and public-private partnerships, the latter of which has been discussed but not codified. All committee members expressed openness to staff bringing forward additional recommendations on alternative methods for further review and potential recommendation to full Council.

Proper Public Purpose Statement

Mr. Rubino explained that while no specific procurement issues had prompted this recommendation, guidance from the Ohio Auditor of State and relevant case law establish that public entities should have a formal legislative declaration affirming that appropriated funds are expended for a lawful municipal purpose. He noted that the City currently does not have such a statement in its code or as an adopted ordinance, though administrative policies do provide relevant guidance. The Auditor of State tests for this, and having a formal ordinance in place would allow staff to clearly reference the legislative directive that underpins procurement policies and procedures. He shared sample language indicating that funds shall be expended for a lawful municipal function, with any private benefit being incidental, and that the specifics would be administered by the Finance Director through administrative procedures.

All three committee members expressed support for adopting a proper public purpose ordinance. Ms. Alutto cautioned that the language should be precise and not rely on overly broad or generic terms open to interpretation, while still being flexible enough that the specifics can be implemented through administrative policy. Mr. Rubino concurred, noting that legal counsel would be engaged to draft formal language for the committee's review before any ordinance is brought forward.

Mr. Rubino confirmed that the committee's input provided sufficient direction for staff to proceed. Ms. Alutto also noted approvingly that the City's use of government purchasing cooperatives is a valuable and efficient procurement tool and that this practice should be acknowledged within the updated framework.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Chair, Finance Committee

Clerk of Council