



Lowell City Council

Regular Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: February 4, 2020

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA

1. ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed 9 present.

M. Leahy presiding.

M. Leahy recognized the efforts of the Lowell Police Department regarding memorial services for fallen Officer Thyne. C. Elliott noted it was a shining moment for the City at such a sad event. Supt. Richardson (LPD) noted the efforts of all involved with the event.

2. CITY CLERK

2.1. Minutes of City Council Meeting January 28th, for acceptance.

In City Council, minutes read, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. So voted.

Motion to suspend rules and take Item #5.15 out of order by C. Conway, seconded by C. Nuon. So voted.

2.2. Vote-Cancel Council Meeting 2.18.20.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Mercier. Adopted per Roll Call vote 8 yeas, 1 absent (C. Elliott). So voted.

3. UTILITY PUBLIC HEARING

3.1. National Grid - Req. installation of new handhole and 100 feet of underground electric conduit at 15-21 Surrey Lane.



In City Council, Given 2nd Reading. Hearing held. Speaking in favor Paul Pelligrini (National Grid). No Remonstrants. **Motion** to refer to Wire Inspector for report and recommendation by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Rourke. So voted.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

4.1. Motion Responses.

In City Council, **Motion** “To accept and place on file” by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Drinkwater. So voted.

A) Motion Response - New Business Recognition Procedures – C. Mercier commented that new businesses should be given opportunity to show efforts and resources they used to start the business. C. Nuon mentioned new hire by the City. Manager Donoghue noted that new Economic Development Director is Christine McCall.

B) Motion Response - Parking Kiosks – C. Mercier questioned placement of antennas on the device. Terry Ryan (Parking Director) noted that upgrading to 4G required the antenna and that it is placed inside of the device. C. Elliott noted that there are several complaints regarding use of meters and that there should be equipment upgrades and that devices should be maintained properly. Manager Donoghue noted that maintenance and equipment should be upgraded. Mr. Ryan noted that they are reviewing different meter types and different vendors. Manager Donoghue commented on ticketing procedures when it comes to malfunctioning meters. C. Elliott requested time frame on upgrades. C. Nuon noted the need to upgrade and repair meters and provide improved maintenance in the future. C. Rourke commented on the use of parking apps. C. Conway questioned appeal process for tickets and if notices were in different languages.

C) Motion Response - Traffic Calming W. Meadow Rd. – C. Elliott noted that interim traffic measures should be used in the area. Natasha Vance (Transportation Engineer) noted speed warning devices could be helpful in the area. C. Elliott noted that issues are getting larger as traffic increases. C. Mercier commented on land taking for the round-about being installed on Varnum Avenue. C. Rourke noted use of signage and radar will reduce speeding in the area.

D) Motion Response - Public Safety Infrastructure Funding – C. Elliott commented the letter being sent to delegation and Governor regarding funding requests.

E) Motion Response - Downtown Activity – C. Samaras commented on the report and questioned the use of resources. Supt. Richardson commented on the effective



use of resources and the proactive approach to monitoring downtown. C. Samaras noted the efforts of the police and his concerns for some of the establishments downtown and underage drinking. Supt. Richardson noted that there is aggressive patrolling downtown. C. Samaras noted the injuries suffered by officers on patrol and requested update on the report in six months to see if improvements are made. C. Conway questioned if increased resources would assist the department. Supt. Richardson noted that the proper use of resources are important. C. Conway questioned use of false identification. C. Elliott noted that effort should be made to reduce hours downtown. **Motion** to refer to Public Safety SC to provide a recommendation regarding turning back hours of operations from 2AM to 1AM in downtown establishments by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted. C. Chau noted the use of data to make informed decision. C. Samaras noted the need to have additional information. C. Nuon noted that Public Safety SC is proper forum to explore data. C. Drinkwater noted information is important to see if closing earlier would resolve issues. C. Mercier noted it is difficult on owners who run tight business and that closing times in other areas affect the City. C. Conway noted that arguments are on both sides of the issue but there needs to be solutions. C. Elliott noted

F) Motion Response - Calls to Group Homes – C. Elliott noted the number of calls to the homes and the vast use of resources. Manager Donoghue commented that both these homes were under DCF supervision and that the DCF protocol must change to lessen the number of calls. Supt. Richardson commented on current procedures by police to answer the many calls. C. Elliott noted increased monitoring of the responses is needed. C. Samaras noted that some of the group homes are managed better than others. C. Rourke noted these homes are for children from the worst situations in society. C. Noun noted the DCF should provide additional resources to assist the police. C. Rourke noted increased staffing is needed in many of these homes. C. Elliott commented organizations managing these homes need to be constantly informed of responses by the police.

G) Motion Response - Shannon Grant Information – None.

H) Motion Response - Redistricting Expert – C. Nuon commented on the hiring process.

4.2. Informational Reports

I) Informational - School Choice Students – Manager Donoghue commented on financial information from the school administration. Conor Baldwin (CFO) commented on money spent on children getting educated at other schools. C. Mercier noted that number was trending upwards. **Motion** by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Mercier to refer



matter to Finance SC and request Law Department provide opinion regarding what body is responsible for authorizing payments for children school outside of the system. So voted.

4.3. Communication - City Manager request Out of State Travel (1) DPW - Engineer.

In City Council, read, **Motion** to adopt by C. Conway, seconded by C. Rourke. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER

In City Council, Motion to Bundle and Adopt Votes Item #5.1 to #5.14 inclusive by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.1. Vote-1. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Daley Middle School.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.2. Vote-2. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Greenhalge Elementary.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.3. Vote-3. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Lincoln Elementary.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.4. Vote-4. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-McAuliffe Elementary.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.5. Vote-5. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-STEM Academy at Rogers School.



In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.6. Vote-6. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Pawtucketville Memorial.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.7. Vote-7. Authorize Supt to File Statement of Interest to MSBA-McAvinnue Elementary.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.8. Vote-8. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Moody Elementary.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.9. Vote-9. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Murkland Elementary.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.10. Vote-10. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Shaughnessy Elementary.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.11. Vote-11. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Butler Middle.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.12. Vote-12. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Robinson Middle.



In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.13. Vote-13. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Wang Middle.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.14. Vote-14. Authorize Supt File Statement of Interest to MSBA-Bartlett Community Partnership.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

5.15. Vote-Accept gift to light Aiken Street Bridge.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Mercier. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted. Jay Linnehan (President - Greater Lowell Community Foundation) commented on the gift indicating the donation from an anonymous source. Fred Faust (Lowell Waterways Vitality Initiative) made power point presentation entitled "Ouellette Bridge Illumination Project" and how it enhances use of City waterways. Mr. Linnehan commented on the bridge lighting project and that it will not bear any costs to the City. C. Mercier commented on the project and the success it will have. C. Conway noted appreciation for gift and donation and questioned maintenance of the bridge. Mr. Linnehan noted a fund was established to cover maintenance costs. C. Samaras noted the efforts of all those involved with the project. Registered speaker, Joe Radwich, addressed the Council.

5.16. Vote-Accept.Expend FFY20 Sustained Traffic Enforcement Program STEP Grant.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Mercier. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

Motion by C. Chau, seconded by C. Nuon to suspend rules and take Item #9.7 out of order. So voted.

6. ORDINANCES FROM THE CITY MANAGER

6.1. Ordinance-Create Grant Funded Position and Salary entitled Youth Outreach Specialist at the HHS Dept.



In City Council, Given 1st Reading, **Motion** to refer to public hearing on February 25, 2020 at 7PM by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Nuon. So voted.

7. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

In City Council, C. Rourke noted joint Elections and Rules SC meeting on February 25th. C. Elliott noted a Finance SC and Economic Development SC meeting on February 11th.

8. PETITIONS

8.1. National Grid - Request installation of ten feet of underground electric conduit to service 336 Central Street.

In City Council, Given 1st Reading, **Motion** to refer to public hearing on February 25, 2020 at 7PM by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Conway. So voted.

9. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

9.1. C. Elliott - Req. City Mgr. have Law Dept. research the legality of placing a safe haven baby box at a Lowell fire station.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Elliott noted he would comment upon receiving the report.

9.2. C. Conway - Req. City Mgr. meet with Supt. Of LPD to strategize with the State Police with the goal of re-instating or increasing the frequency of use of the Mass. State Police Sobriety Checkpoints / Impaired Driving Enforcement Mobile Unit.

In City Council, seconded by C. Elliott, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Conway noted they were effective programs that should be enhanced and done more often. C. Conway noted that administrations should work and share data on the programs. M. Leahy commented on action which can be done.

9.3. C. Drinkwater - Req. City Mgr. provide a report on the number on new housing units that were permitted for construction in 2019, and how many are planned to meet the standard of “affordable housing” as defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Drinkwater noted housing supply is directly tied to economic development and that housing costs financially strain homeowners. C. Elliott requested the total number of affordable units in the City. C. Mercier noted the challenges of homeownership



prevalent throughout the Commonwealth. C. Nuon commented on affordability of ownership. C. Rourke questioned status of Franco-American School Housing Project. Manager Donoghue noted presentation coming before Council by the Hunger-Homeless Commission.

9.4. C. Drinkwater - Req. City Mgr. provide a report on companies with current Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreements, including information on the amount of tax savings for the company; amount of revenue generated to the City; duration of the agreement; investment and job creation to date; and overall compliance with the terms of the TIF agreement.

In City Council, seconded by C. Elliott, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Drinkwater noted that TIF was a useful tool for economic development and that accountability should be monitored.

9.5. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. provide an update regarding installation of lighting at Clemente Field.

In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted the funding was available and that the work should be done. C. Elliott commented on earmark request for the project. Manager Donoghue noted she would provide funding report.

9.6. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. provide an update regarding bridge repairs in the area of Sparks and Beaver Streets.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon requested update.

9.7. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. investigate the intersection of Stedman and Westford Streets for possible safety improvements in signage or vehicular speed reduction.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speaker, Robert Hunt, addressed the Council. C. Chau commented on the location and the traffic in that area. C. Mercier commented on prior report regarding area. C. Nuon noted the issues and that there should be interim solutions. C. Elliott requested that report be sent to neighborhood group and to speaker.



10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In City Council, M. Leahy noted grand opening of Recovery Café. C. Elliott noted effort of Mayor to inform Council of upcoming events.

11. ADJOURNMENT

In City Council, **Motion** to Adjourn C. Mercier, seconded by C. Drinkwater. So voted.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk