




Brendan Flynn  
ARPA Finance Manager

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Thomas A. Golden, Jr., City Manager 

**FROM:** Brendan Flynn, ARPA Finance Manager

**CC:** Conor Baldwin, CFO

**DATE:** July 12, 2022

**SUBJECT: MOTION RESPONSE: 5/17/2022 – C. Gitschier – Req. City Mgr. Look Into Hiring A Greeter For City Hall That Is Multi-Lingual To Help Residents When They Visit City Hall**

The City of Lowell has a diverse language spectrum with roughly 70 different languages spoken by its' residents, and small business owners. In an effort to increase access to municipal services for non-English speakers in Lowell, the City has been in contact with other municipalities within the State to learn what efforts are being undertaken to address this need, and how they plan to provide these services in an impactful way.

To address incoming calls from non-English speaking residents, some communities are deploying telephone translation services, such as LanguageLine®, with the intent to be used within municipal buildings, as well as by municipal employees in the field. Translation services are also being considered for virtual meeting platforms (i.e. WebEx®, Zoom®, or Microsoft Teams) through a variety of closed-captioning software products. The deployment of free translation apps, like Google Translate or Microsoft Translator, is also viable options. These apps facilitate short, text-based transactional-type conversations, and can be deployed within customer-facing departments through purpose-programmed tablets.

In addition to the above technology based solutions, municipalities are addressing this issue in other ways. Some have hired employees who are dedicated to translating a specific language, or in some cases multiple languages, for residents visiting City Hall. Others have brought on greeting staff, who provide assistance through the text-translation app approach mentioned above.

In order to address this need, the finance department is exploring the use of ARPA to implement some of these services in City Hall, as well as at other, public-facing city offices. When the revised ARPA budget is presented back to the City Council this summer for review and approval, the proposed funding plan will include funding for interpreter multi lingual services.