



Lowell City Council

Regular Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: September 19, 2023
Time: 6:30 PM
Location: City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor,
Lowell, MA / Zoom (Hybrid)
SPECIAL MEETING (CONT. 9/12/23)

1. ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed 10 present, 1 absent (C. Rourke).

M. Chau presiding.

C. Mercier requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Michael Timothy “Mickey” O’Keefe and Gerard Dumont.

2. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

2.1. Communication Remote/Zoom Participation.

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

Motion to take Items #5.14 and #5.15 out of order by C. Yem, seconded by C. Nuon. So voted.

3. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

3.1. Motion Responses.

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

(K) Motion Response - Housing First Update - C. Jenness noted issue with response as it should not be put on hold due to homelessness in the City; must look at challenges and develop solutions with other cities. C. Jenness pointed out the possible use of federal resources. C. Nuon noted concern and the many challenges as well as the need to continue to work with our many partners. C. Robinson noted that some individuals cannot



handle housing due to mental incapacitations. C. Robinson stated that the City did not benefit from the Housing Summit. C. Robinson noted there were many failed programs and that the state and federal agencies need deeper involvement in the matter. C. Mercier stated that substance abuse is a part of homelessness. C. Scott noted the gridlock and that they must pull through that with global effort. C. Gitschier noted need for data regarding programs to see what is working and what is not. **Motion** by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Scott to request City Manager provide data of description and success of current housing programs by the City. So voted. C. Drinkwater noted the need for information to assess strategy. C. Leahy noted housing programs should keep people together under proper supervision. Manager Golden, Jr. noted program was not on hold and it was a poor choice of words in the response; stated that challenges are being addressed and worked on. C. Jenness noted small number of individuals are causing issues and that this should not prevent from helping others. C. Scott requested complete reports regarding available housing units. C. Nuon noted efforts of non-profits who provide shelter first and then follow up with services.

(L) Motion Response - CTI Hotel Programs - C. Nuon noted CTI efforts and their relationship with the State.

(M) Motion Response - Dept Head Bios - C. Nuon noted process was moving forward.

(N) Motion Response - Update Fully Funded Positions Currently Vacant - C. Gitschier requested more information regarding length of vacancies. Manager Golden, Jr. stated he would revise the report and commented on the numbers. C. Gitschier noted the need to have comparable salaries to retain employees. C. Scott commented on union contract reviews. Manager Golden, Jr. noted expansion of employee benefits to provide more opportunities. C. Robison noted trending employee benefits trending in other communities, including training, daycare and gym memberships.

(O) Motion Response - Enforcement No Parking Twenty Feet From Corner - C. Nuon noted report and the use of resources and education. C. Leahy commented on the painting to the curb. Shawn Machado (Asst. City Mgr.) outlined the curb painting. C. Gitschier noted the increased infrastructure will need to be properly maintained. C. Scott recognized clean-up in the Back Central area. C. Jenness noted neighborhood concerns are being addressed. C. Robinson recognized increased police response. C. Robinson noted many neighborhoods have a tight density



area which raises safety concerns. C. Gitschier noted Boylston Street project needs quick attention due to presence of school.

(P) Motion Response - Develop and Implement Signage Along Riverwalk - C. Jenness noted quick response to enhance safety.

(Q) Motion Response - Driving to Endanger Unregistered Off Road Vehicles and Bicycles - C. Gitschier requested information regarding procedures to stop violators. Supt. Greg Hudon (LPD) outlined those procedures and how they are followed regarding public safety.

(R) Motion Response - Update on Policy Mayoral Portrait - C. Scott requested to move forward with policy and noted it was part of a discussion during the Rules SC meeting.

4. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

4.1. Rules SC September 12, 2023.

In City Council, C. Jenness provided report noting attendance and review of current council rules and mayoral portraits. C. Jenness noted the attendance of City Solicitor Williams who would prepare rule changes and bring before Council. C. Jenness commented on the policy being developed for the portrait. C. Mercier noted her motions at the subcommittee were adopted which called for only a depiction of the mayor in the portrait and that the City Manager of designee should have oversight regarding placement in City Hall. **Motion** by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Scott to amend Rule 5 to remove September from the Summer schedule. Failed per Roll Call vote 4 yeas, 6 nays (C. Drinkwater, C. Jenness, C. Leahy, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Robinson), 1 absent (C. Rourke). So voted. **Motion** to accept the report as a report of progress and adopt motions of the subcommittee by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Leahy. So voted.

5. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

5.1. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Look Into Feasibility Of Demolishing The Smith Baker Center.

In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson suggested that there should be attempt to save the building. C. Gitschier noted building has been in disrepair for over twenty years and is beyond rehab.



5.2. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Move Halloween To The Last Saturday In October.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier (discussion), C. Gitschier withdrew motion with no objections. C. Gitschier noted that it was a resident concern and looking to establish policy in the future as it would be too late for this year. C. Yem stated that this should not be regulated. C. Drinkwater noted moving date could create more scheduling issues. C. Jenness suggested reaching out to citizens for input. C. Mercier noted the tradition of the holiday. C. Nuon noted that Asian community may have issue with moving holiday. M. Chau noted concerns on both sides of the issue. **Motion** by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Mercier to cancel City Council Meeting on October 31, 2023 (Halloween). Adopted per Roll Call vote 6 yeas, 3 nays (M. Chau, C. Gitschier, C. Leahy), 1 present (C. Nuon), 1 absent (C. Rourke). So voted. C. Scott noted staff would want time that night. M. Chau noted the need to keep moving forward. C. Gitschier noted that there is too much work to do to cancel a meeting.

5.3. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Update The City Council On An Engineering Study Rating All Sidewalks Within The City.

In City Council, seconded by C. Yem, referred to City Manager. So voted.

5.4. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Begin Process Of Purchasing St. Jeanne D'Arc School For Class Room Space.

In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Gitschier noted it was a valuable piece of property for student needs. Manager Golden, Jr. noted need for RFP process.

5.5. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Provide A Report On The Current HVAC Conditions Across Our Municipal Buildings And Plans For Repair.

In City Council, seconded by C. Leahy, referred to City Manager. So voted. **Motion** by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Leahy to bundle Item #5.16 with this item. So voted. C. Gitschier noted that there was a prior report regarding funding on these items. Manager Golden, Jr. Stated he would provide report with amounts paid to date and the source of funding for those repairs. C. Robinson noted new state guidelines regarding marijuana HCA and how those funds can go to maintaining buildings. C. Leahy noted



prior commitment of ESSR money by school administration and requested follow up on that matter.

5.6. C. Scott/C. Robinson/C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Invite The Lowell Delegation To A Council Meeting To Discuss And Update Us On Important State Issues Affecting The City.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Scott noted it would be a good practice to keep open lines of communication.

5.7. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have The Proper Department Provide A Report On The Installation Of The New 4-Way Stop On Aiken Street By LeLacheur Park; What Process Was Followed Prior To Implementation And What Will Be Done To Alleviate Traffic Congestion As A Result Of This Installation.

In City Council, seconded by C. Gitschier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted that the traffic plan was not working and should be abandoned.

5.8. C. Leahy - Req. City Mgr. Have The Proper Department Develop A Plan To Regrade Edges Of Sidewalks/Streets That Have Been Washed Out Due To Past Heavy Rains.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Leahy noted issue arose with the wet weather. C. Robinson described best technique to rectify issue.

5.9. C. Jenness - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Investigate Improvements To Regular Maintenance Along The Riverwalk On Both Sides Of The River.

In City Council, seconded by C. Yem, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Jenness noted area needed some attention.

5.10. C. Jenness - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Update On Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Within The City And Any Plans For Expansion.



In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Jenness noted need to regulate machines so that all have opportunities to use. C. Robinson commented on possible grant from National Grid for chargers. C. Yem questioned who would pick up the costs. C. Jenness noted chargers in the garage is free but there should be a cost associated with use. C. Gitschier noted the need to charge for use.

5.11. C. Jenness - Req. City Mgr. Have The Proper Department Investigate Adding More Public Trash Barrels Along Jackson Street And Jackson Street Extension.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Jenness commented on the concerns of residents. C. Robinson noted that there should be many barrels ordered and that they could become part of public art project. C. Yem noted that the North Common could use some as well.

5.12. C. Jenness - Req. City Mgr. Provide Update On Hamilton Canal Development Projects, Including City Held Parcels As Well As Parcels That Have Been Sold To Private Developers.

In City Council, seconded by C. Yem, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Jenness requested a status update. C. Yem requested review of contract with the developer.

5.13. C. Jenness - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Prepare A Report Detailing All Garage Payment Equipment Outages For The Past 12 Months Including Date Of Failure, Cause, Length Of Outage, Resolution, And Approximate Lost Revenue.

In City Council, seconded by C. Leahy, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Jenness noted concern with loss of revenue and how it would affect the monthly pass holders.

5.14. C. Nuon/C. Mercier - Req. City Mgr. Work With Proper Department To Name Part Of The Riverwalk In Memory Of Robert Malalvich, Lifelong Lowellian And Long Time Planner In The Lowell Department Of Planning And Development.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager/Monument Committee. Adopted per Roll Call vote 10 yeas, 1 absent (C. Rourke). So



voted. Registered speakers, Nancy Pitkin and Ann Malavich, addressed the body. C. Mercier noted the legacy of Mr. Malavich and referred matter to Monument Committee. C. Nuon noted Mr. Malavich served Lowell well and deserved the recognition. C. Gitschier commented on the vision for City by Mr. Malavich. C. Yem noted he was a compassionate employee.

5.15. M. Chau - Req. Mayor Establish A Sister-City Relationship With Cork, Ireland.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speakers, William Samaras and Professor Woodling, addressed the Council. M. Chau noted the need for sister city relationship. C. Yem noted that Lowell would be part of the international stage. C. Leahy noted prior attempts and that it was good to be back on track. M. Chau noted support of the memorandum of understanding.

5.16. M. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Review And Plan For Improving And Repairing School Buildings HVAC Systems.

In City Council, seconded by C. Leahy, referred to City Manager. So voted. See discussion under Item #5.5.

5.17. C. Leahy - Motion To Reconsider - "C. Drinkwater/C. Yem - To Add Language To Section 3J Of The Proposed ADU Ordinance So That The Section Would Apply With The Adoption Of The Home Rule Petition, Which Mirrors Salem, Ma., Granting Rate Reductions And Tax Relief For The Proposed Units".

In City Council, C. Leahy requested item be continued to September 26, 2023 City Council Meeting. No objections.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In City Council, Manager Golden, Jr. commented on upcoming City sponsored events.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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



Meeting adjourned at 9:31 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk