



Lowell City Council

Regular Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: January 12, 2021
Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Pursuant To Governor Baker's Emergency Order Modifying The State's Open Meeting Law Issued March 12, 2020, Meetings Will Be Held Using Remote Participation As Follows: Members Of The Public May Not Participate In-Person And May View The Meeting Via LTC.ORG (On-Line; Live Streaming Or Local Cable Channel 99) And Zoom.

1. ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed 9 present (Remote – C. Nuon, C. Conway, C. Samaras).

M. Leahy presiding. Meeting was conducted in the Council Chamber; via teleconference with audio stream by LTC; and Zoom due to Covid-19 pandemic.

C. Chau requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Ray Michel and Mei-Yung Lu. C. Mercier noted passing of Mr. Michel and extended condolences to the family. C. Mercier requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Omer Page. C. Conway requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for James Wood and Joanne Kunkel Georges. M. Leahy requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Doris Danas.

2. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

2.1. Communication Remote / Zoom Participation:

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For Zoom - [HTTPS://SUPPORT.ZOOM.US/HC/EN-US/ARTICLES/201362193-JOINING-A-MEETING](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-joining-a-meeting)

In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Chau. So voted.



3. CITY CLERK

3.1. Minutes Of Environment & Flood Issues SC December 22nd; City Council Regular Meeting December 22nd, For Acceptance.

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

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1. Vote-Authorize Payment Of Bills Incurred In Excess Of Appropriations.

In City Council, **Motion** to remove from Table by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Drinkwater. Adopted per Roll Call vote 8 yeas, 1 nay (C. Elliott). So voted. In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Nuon. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted. C. Elliott noted that he still has not received information from school administration regarding bills and does not understand the lack of organization and detail. C. Mercier noted a vendor was paid that had spoken to her and that she would support vote in order for vendors to be paid though frustrated. Billie Joe Turner (School Finance) noted that law requires approval from body due to bad bills. Manager Donoghue commented that future practice should include explanation beforehand regarding bad bills but noted that the bills should be paid to avoid future litigation. C. Rourke noted he was not interested in hearing excuses for every bill during the meeting but perhaps they should be reviewed before. C. Conway noted that joint meetings should continue between school administration and City financial department. **Motion** by C. Conway, seconded by C. Mercier to have Conor Baldwin (CFO) prepare brief report regarding meetings with school finance team. So voted. C. Elliott recognized that some bills should be addressed but was concerned with the amount and the simplicity of bills not being paid and requested Ms. Turner provide reasons for non-payment.

5. GENERAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

5.1. Loan Order-Accelerated Repair Project.

In City Council, Given 2nd Reading, hearing held. No Remonstrants. **Motion** to adopt and refer to Clerk's Office for 20 days by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Conway. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

Motion to Suspend Rules to discuss attending athletic events in the City by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Elliott. So voted. C. Rourke noted it was the decision of the league to not allow attendance at games and requested that City find way to televise events through local cable outlets. C. Samaras noted it was important for children and parents to be involved in the activities. C. Elliott noted it would be good use of the local cable option in the City. **Motion** by C. Samaras, seconded by C. Nuon to Suspend Rules to discuss vaccination schedule for public safety employees. So voted. C. Samaras noted clerks in public safety offices were not allocated time on the vaccination schedule per State regulations and noted that they should have a priority. Manager Donoghue noted that the regulations were controlled by the State and currently they are very fluid and



are allowing more people on the list. C. Elliott questioned rollout for vaccines. Manager Donoghue noted it was to be done in three phases.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

6.1. Motion Responses.

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

A) Motion Response - HR Audit Update – Manager Donoghue provided update and noted that funds had been donated for the audit by local non-profit, Greater Lowell Community Foundation. C. Elliott commented on the costs of the audit and the donation from Foundation covers most of the costs. C. Drinkwater commented on the effort to get audit and noted the donation to assist the City. C. Nuon noted he would await results of the audit and was pleased it was moving forward. Manager Donoghue outlined the audit process. C. Conway noted funding donation was good news for the project.

B) Motion Response - MassHire Grants – C. Mercier noted programs are important for people and that grants are needed for those programs. C. Mercier was concerned if procedural issues prevented people from collecting unemployment. Manager Donoghue noted that if there were issues they can be resolved. Shannon Norton (MassHire) noted that all issues have been resolved and they are assisting people with procuring benefits. Manager Donoghue also noted that Human Resource Department is assisting as well.

C) Motion Response - Online Motion Dashboard – C. Drinkwater noted tracking responses can be difficult and dashboard would assist with searches. C. Chau noted it was the digital era and quick searches and multi search ability are necessary. Miran Fernandez (MIS) noted review of search engines involved. C. Rourke noted the need for quick process to search.

D) Motion Response - School Street Between Liberty And Shaw – C. Chau commented on the need for increased safety in the area.

E) Motion Response - Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Aggravated Assaults During Pandemic – C. Nuon noted that there was no marked increases in these crimes during the pandemic.

F) Motion Response - State Funding for Police Facility – C. Elliott noted it would be a long process but the need is overwhelming and that a working group should be established to start the process. Manager Donoghue indicated that they could set up such a group and that it is needed. C. Rourke noted that the State Police should have an involvement in that group as well as they may have some needs that could be addressed as well.



6.2. Informational Reports

G) Informational - 2020 Year In-Review Presentation – Manager Donoghue made following presentation entitled “City of Lowell 2020 Year in Review” which outlined following topics: Economic Development; Strong Finances; Public Safety; Partnerships; Education; and Covid-19 Response. Manager Donoghue recognized contribution of the Council during the pandemic. M. Leahy recognized efforts on the part of the administration

Motion by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Rourke to bundle Item #6.3 and #6.4 and send letter of recognition to each person. So voted.

6.3. Communication-Resignation Marianne Gries-Library.

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

6.4. Communication-Resignation Of Eric Lamarche COA.

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

Motion to bundle and waive full reading of Items #7.1 to #7.8 inclusive by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Drinkwater. So voted.

7. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER

7.1. Vote-Accept By Donation Easement In Furtherance Of Newhall St Bridge Over River Meadow Brook Rehab.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Elliott. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted. C. Elliott noted all of the votes regard getting proper grant funding for public safety and community contributions. C. Rourke noted that the grant money is invested in the community and greatly needed.

7.2. Vote- Accept Expend 15,000 JAG FY 2021 Grant.

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

7.3. Vote-Accept Expend FY21 Municipal Staffing Grant-LPD.

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



7.4. Vote-Accept Expend FY21 Shannon Community Safety Initiative.

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

7.5. Vote-Accept.Expend EOPSS 2021 Municipal Road Safety Grant 9 Mos.-LPD.

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

7.6. Vote-Accept Expend FY21 Municipal Staffing-LFD.

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

7.7. Vote-Accept.Expend State 911 Dept FY21 Support And Incentive Grant.

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

7.8. Vote-Accept.Expend State 911 Dept FY21 Training Grant.

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

8. ORDERS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

8.1. Order-60 Day Various.

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

Motion to bundle Items #9.1 to #9.3 inclusive by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted.

9. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

9.1. Wire Insp. - National Grid - Request Installation Of Of 24 Feet Of Electric Conduit At 179 Bridge Street For Service To Riverwalk Phase II.

In City Council, **Motion** to adopt and accept accompanying order by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted.

9.2. Wire Insp. - New Cingular Wireless (D/B/A AT&T) - Request Installation Of Wireless Small Cell Facility At 6 Industrial Avenue.

In City Council, **Motion** to adopt and accept accompanying order by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted.



9.3. Wire Insp. - New Cingular Wireless (D/B/A AT&T) - Request Installation Of Wireless Small Cell Facility At 282 Appleton Street.

In City Council, **Motion** to adopt and accept accompanying order by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted.

10. PETITIONS

10.1. Claim - (1) Property Damage.

In City Council, **Motion** to refer to Law Department for report and recommendation by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Chau. So voted.

10.2. Misc. - Coalition For A Better Acre Request Permission To Install Two (2) Overhanging Bay Windows At 555 Merrimack Street.

In City Council, **Motion** to refer to Law Department for report and recommendation by C. Conway, seconded by C. Drinkwater. So voted.

10.3. National Grid / Verizon NE - Request Installation Of (1) JO Pole And Relocate (6) JO Poles Along Andover Street.

In City Council, Given 1st Reading, **Motion** to refer to public hearing on January 26, 2021 at 7PM by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Chau. So voted.

10.4. Crown Castle NG East, LLC - Request Installation Of 55 Feet Of 4 Inch Fiber Conduit To Existing Customer At 650 Suffolk Street.

In City Council, Given 1st Reading, **Motion** to refer to public hearing on January 26, 2021 at 7PM by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Chau. So voted.

11. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

11.1. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have The Supt. Of LPD Identify Grants To Offset The Costs Of Video Cameras For Businesses, Non-Profits And Religious Institutions; And Potential To Connect To The Ring Network Or Comparable Video Network For Use By The LPD In Advancing Public Safety Efforts In Neighborhoods.

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted it was a simple idea put forward to create a safe environment.

11.2. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Investigate The Feasibility Of A Voluntary PILOT Program For Residents, Business Owners And Other Religious And Non-Profit Institutions To Register Their Address As A Location That Operates A Video Surveillance System; Such A Registry Would Allow Lowell Police Officers To Readily Identify Known Locations Throughout Lowell That Have Video Surveillance Systems That Could Potentially Aid Police With Criminal



Investigations; In Addition Report To Identify Other Communities In Massachusetts Where Similar Programs Have Been Established.

In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted the detrimental effect it may have on crime and it will assist law enforcement as well.

11.3. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Review Pedestrian Safety Along Branch Street Business Corridor; Indicating If Signage/Crosswalk Will Improve Safety In The Area.

In City Council, seconded by C. Elliott, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speaker, Tolayuth Ok, addressed the Council. C. Nuon noted dangerous traffic area that needs to be addressed. C. Elliott suggested a coalition of business should be established with the assistance of the City so that economic development can increase in that area. **Motion** by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Nuon to refer matter regarding coalition to Economic/Downtown Development SC in a business in that district. So voted.

11.4. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have City Assessor Place A Video On The City's Website Relative To The Process Used To Apply For Abatements.

In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted motion was self-explanatory.

11.5. C. Nuon/C. Drinkwater/C. Chau - Req. City Council Pass A Resolution Reaffirming Our Belief In Democracy And Condemning The President's Words And Actions To Undermine A Legitimate Election By The People, Which Served To Encourage And Incite The Violent Attack On The United States Capitol.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. Adopted per Roll Call vote 7 yeas, 2 present (C. Mercier, C. Rourke). So voted. Registered speaker, Dee Halzack, addressed the body. C. Nuon noted the violence at the Capitol and was angered by such action. C. Drinkwater noted the organized effort to effect democracy and that democracy was not a given and must be defended. C. Chau noted that such action should not happen in America and protest should not be violent to be in line with democracy. C. Rourke noted it was political pandering and that such motions do not belong on the floor. C. Rourke noted if children need to be educated about it should be done by parents. C. Mercier noted motion is misplaced. C. Nuon requested roll call.

11.6. C. Conway - Req. City Mgr. Meet With The DPW Commissioner And Develop A Plan To Increase Surveillance In The Shedd Park Pond Area; To Address Illegal Dumping; And To Preserve The Wildlife In Its Natural Environment.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Conway noted it was a neighborhood concern and described area commenting that it should be protected so that people can enjoy nature.



11.7. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Investigate And Implement Immediate Remedial Traffic Solutions At The Lord Overpass.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Chau noted number of complaints and commented that though it is temporary it will be like that for an extended period of time so it should be improved with better markings and lighting. C. Rourke noted problem exists but can be mitigated.

11.8. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Investigate Trash Problem In The Vicinity Of River Meadow Brook And Research Potential Private Sector Support From Nearby Companies In Resolving Issues.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Chau commented on prior motion regarding matter noting trash is a major problem in the area and at one point will have a negative effect on the river. C. Nuon noted need for many partners to address the issues. Manager Donoghue noted contract with vendors and efforts to reach out to private entities as well. C. Mercier noted that there is State and City property in the area.

11.9. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Provide An Update Regarding Parking Enforcement Procedures On City Streets During Declared Snow Emergencies.

In City Council, seconded by C. Elliott, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speaker, Robert Hunt, addressed the body. C. Chau noted confusion during last snow storm and that there are many residential parking issues during snow times. C. Elliott noted concern on vehicles being parked for extended periods of time and that perhaps ordinance change could address that. Manager Donoghue noted she would review the matter.

11.10. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Report To Council Regarding A 1, 3 And 5 Year Plan To Make The City Workforce Reflect The Diverse Demographics Of The City Population; Year 1 Plan Is To Be Incorporated Into The FY 2022-23 Budget Plan.

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Chau commented on the need to continue progress by taking HR audit results and developing an action plan which could be incorporated into budget preparation.

11.11. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Report To Council Regarding Status On Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution And Testing Sites Throughout The City.

In City Council, seconded by C. Elliott, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speaker, Shirley Archambault, addressed the Council. C. Chau noted the words of the speaker and commented on the vaccination and the continuance of testing.



11.12. M. Leahy - Req. City Mgr. Provide Update For City Council Regarding Distribution Of The Vaccination For Covid-19 Throughout The City.

In City Council, seconded by C. Elliott, referred to City Manager. So voted. M. Leahy noted the need for testing and vaccinations as well as information being supplied to the public. Manager Donoghue commented on outreach and partners involved. C. Mercier recognized strength of the speaker.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In City Council, none.

13. ADJOURNMENT

In City Council, **Motion** to Adjourn by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Chau. So voted.

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk