



# Lowell City Council

## Regular Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary  
City Clerk

**Date:** January 24, 2023

**Time:** 6:30 PM

**Location:** City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA/Zoom (Hybrid)

### 1. ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed 11 present. C. Rourke (Zoom).

M. Chau presiding.

C. Leahy requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Thomas Birmingham (Former State Senator). M. Chau requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for the victims of the Monterey Park and Half Moon Bay, California mass shooting victims.

### 2. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

#### 2.1. Communication Remote / Zoom Participation:

**Meetings Will Be Held In Council Chamber With Public Welcome And By Using Remote Participation As Follows: Members Of The Public May View The Meeting Via LTC.Org (On-Line; Live Streaming; Or Local Cable Channel 99). Those Wishing To Speak Regarding A Specific Agenda Item Shall Register To Speak In Advance Of The Meeting By Sending Email To City Clerk Indicating The Agenda Item And A Phone Number To Call So That You May Be Issued Zoom Link To The Meeting. Email Address Is [MGEARY@LOWELLMA.GOV](mailto:MGEARY@LOWELLMA.GOV). If No Access To Email You May Contact City Clerk At 978-674-4161. All Request Must Be Done Before 4:00 PM On The Day Of Meeting. 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. Mercier, seconded by C. Jenness. So voted.

**Motion** to suspend rules by M. Chau, seconded by C. Robinson to introduce contingent from a university in Cambodia visiting the City. So voted. Representatives from the University of Indrawichea were introduced by M. Chau in the Council and they addressed the body.



### 3. CITY CLERK

#### 3.1. Minutes Of City Council Regular Meeting January 17th, For Acceptance.

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

**Motion** to take Item #10.2 out of order by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Nuon. So voted.

### 4. GENERAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

#### 4.1. Ordinance - Create Position IT Manager - Career Center.

In City Council, Given 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, hearing held. Speaking in favor of the petition were Shannon Norton and Kevin Coughlin from the Career Center. No Remonstrants.

**Motion** to adopt by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Robinson. Adopted by Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted. C. Robinson questioned if system will integrate with system in City Hall. Manager Golden, Jr. indicated that the Career Center operates on totally different system but this position will assist with employee recruitment. C. Nuon noted the system need updating as it must be user friendly. C. Gitschier questioned savings with new system. Ms. Norton indicated that there will be less need for consultants and restoring system would be done quicker. C. Jenness noted the job description which called for many duties. M. Chau commented on the work of the Career Center.

**Motion** to take Item #6.2 out of order by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted.

### 5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

#### 5.1. Motion Responses.

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

**A) Motion Response – Submetering** – C. Yem noted resident concern over high water bills and conservation of water. Steve Duchesne (Water Dir.) commented on current programming designed to conserve water and that City did not have adequate resources to sub meter but owners could do it independently. C. Scott noted outside vendors and videos on methods that could be used.

**B) Motion Response - Garage Passcard Contract** – **Motion** by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Leahy to refer report to Finance SC. So voted. C. Gitschier questioned some dated documents that were part of the report. Terry Ryan (Parking Dir.) commented on current rate structure. C. Gitschier noted lease details with Middlesex Community College. Mr. Ryan commented on the current contract and would provide copies to the Council. Manager Golden, Jr. indicated his office would provide documents to the subcommittee. C. Mercier commented on parking at the Lowell Community Health Center. Mr. Ryan outlined that agreement. C. Scott questioned contract for a 99 year lease. Mr. Ryan indicated he was researching that document.



**Motion** by C. Yem, seconded by C. Mercier to take Item #7.1 out of order. So voted.

**C) Motion Response - McDermott Reservoir** – C. Robinson lauded the DPD vision and their ability to lay out all sorts of options for the space. Manager Golden, Jr. noted passive park approach and would welcome more input from the community. C. Yem noted he was impressed with options and that possible housing could be an option as well. C. Gitschier noted grant money could be available because it is infrastructure. C. Jenness questioned if there were any restrictions on the property.

**Motion** to suspend rules to introduce new City employee by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Drinkwater. So voted. Manager Golden, Jr. introduced Melissa Desroches as new part of administration, who thanked the body.

**Motion** to take Items #10/9 and 10.10 out of order by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted.

## **6. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER**

### **6.1. Vote - Authorize CM Ex. License Agreement With Lowell Festival Foundation.**

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Drinkwater. Adopted by Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted.

### **6.2. Vote - Increase Cost Of Living Adjustment For City Of Lowell Retirees.**

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Nuon. Adopted by Roll Call vote 10 yeas, 1 recuse (C. Mercier). So voted. C. Mercier recused herself from discussion and vote due to conflict. C. Gitschier noted the need for an increase for the work they performed during their tenure. C. Yem voiced support as a way to show appreciation. C. Nuon questioned the impact for retirees and budget. Conor Baldwin (CFO) noted budget impact would be slight and would begin FY25. C. Nuon noted fairness of the vote.

## **7. ORDINANCES FROM THE CITY MANAGER**

### **7.1. Ordinance - Create Position Digital Evidence Specialist – LPD.**

In City Council, Given 1<sup>st</sup> Reading, **Motion** to refer to Public Hearing on February 7, 2023 at 7 PM by C. Leahy, seconded by C. Jenness. So voted. Supt. Golnar (LPD) commented on funding options over three year period. C. Yem noted it was a critical position within the department. C. Nuon noted that position will assist with body camera rollout.

## **8. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)**

### **8.1. Zoning SC January 24, 2023.**

In City Council, C. Drinkwater provided report outlining attendance and discussion of MBTA zoning amendments for overlay districts as presented by the DPD. C.



Drinkwater noted reasons for amendments and proposals. M. Drinkwater noted subcommittee motion recommended full Council adoption for the changes. **Motion** to adopt motion and report as a report of progress by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Jenness. So voted.

## **9. PETITIONS**

### **9.1. Boston Gas D/B/A National Grid - Request Moving Gas Main At Meadowcroft St. And Exchange Pl. To Enable Work By The City.**

In City Council, Given 1<sup>st</sup> Reading, **Motion** to refer to Public Hearing on February 7, 2023 at 7 PM by C. Yem, seconded by C. Leahy. So voted.

### **9.2. National Grid/Verizon NE - Request Installation Of (1) JO Pole At 114 Burnside Street.**

In City Council, Given 1<sup>st</sup> Reading, **Motion** to refer to Public Hearing on February 7, 2023 at 7 PM by C. Leahy, seconded by C. Drinkwater. So voted.

C. Jenness took moment of personal privilege and wished C. Yem a happy birthday. C. Yem noted birth day of Shawn Machado (Asst. City Mgr.).

## **10. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS**

### **10.1. C. Leahy - Req. City Mgr. Have DPW Provide A Schedule For Summer Work To Be Done At The Following Schools: Reilly, Sullivan, Pyne Arts And LeBlanc.**

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Leahy noted work to be done before in his district. C. Gitschier requested report be provided to all schools. Manager Golden, Jr. noted he will provide report for all school work.

### **10.2. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Revisit The Premium Pay For Employees Eligible Out Of The ARPA Funds.**

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. Adopted by Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted. Registered speaker, Keith Rudy, addressed the body. C. Gitschier commented on ARPA funding noted fair to pay workers who are not respected or paid sufficiently and who showed up for work during pandemic. C. Mercier noted fairness in pay as City is always open. C. Robinson noted it was a once in a lifetime chance to do right by employees. C. Drinkwater supported motion and requested a friendly amendment to have reports provided that indicates who has been paid and under what criteria. C. Drinkwater noted employees should be paid to those who worked under similar circumstances. C. Gitschier accepted the friendly amendment. C. Yem noted employees should be paid if deserved. C. Jenness noted need to be done in the City as it is fair and deserved. C. Scott noted efforts of the employees and need to be treated fairly. C. Nuon noted the need to be consistent with criteria. C. Leahy noted fair to revisit the issue. M. Chau noted various comments and thanked employees.



**10.3. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Have The Proper Department Report On The Crack Sealing, Fog Sealing, And/Or Cape Sealing Of The Roads During The 2022 Calendar Year; With Dates Of Completion.**

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

**10.4. C. Jenness/C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Have The Proper Department Explore The Feasibility Of Creating A Lowell Fire Academy To Assist With Onboarding Of New Firefighters For The LFD, As Well As, Potentially Create A New Revenue Source.**

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Jenness looking to increase number of firefighters on the force by way of class and physical training.

**10.5. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Provide A Report On The Hunger Homeless Commission In Regards To Frequency Of Meetings As Well As Focus Moving Forward.**

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

**10.6. C. Robinson/C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Provide A Report On The Status Of The 2019 City Manager's Task Force On Homeless And Affordable Housing Action Plan And Final Recommendations.**

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted.

**10.7. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have The Director Of Homelessness Initiatives Revisit Strategies Outlined At The 2019 Summit, Which Convened At Inn And Conference Center With Local Businesses, Non-Profits, And Community Foundations; Assess The Feasibility Of Reconvening And/Or Implementing Said Strategies, Which Were Put On Hold Due To The Covid Pandemic.**

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

**10.8. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Provide City Council With A Report Detailing The Delineation Of Federal And State Funding That Is Received And Goes Towards Housing In The City.**

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

**10.9. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Send Letter To Transportation Secretary, Gina Fiandaca, On Behalf Of The City Council Expressing Agreement With And Support Of Rep. Rodney Elliott's Letter Dated January 17th Stating The Dangerous Conditions Of The Rourke Bridge And Asking For Necessary Repairs To Keep It Functioning Until It Is Replaced.**



In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. Justin Ford was allowed to address the Council. C. Nuon noted length of project and the need for it to be safe in the interim. C. Scott noted concern over bridge but further noted it was deemed safe to travel by the State. C. Robinson noted City should provide updated information on website and commented that bridge has structural integrity. Manager Golden, Jr. noted various interaction with MassDOT and commented on report of experts at State level. C. Rourke noted the need to keep pressure on project and not instill false fear to the public. C. Yem requested letter be sent to other federal and state agencies. C. Nuon accepted that friendly amendment.

#### **10.10. C. Drinkwater - Req. City Mgr. Reach Out To Appropriate State Agencies To Determine Any State Assets Available To Be Utilized For A Regional Approach To Emergency Shelter For The Unhoused.**

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. Justin Ford was allowed to address the Council. C. Drinkwater commented on the many discussions that are needed and taking place to tackle the issue through as many option available. C. Robinson took exception to speaker indicating Council is disrespectful and noted the constant effort on the part of the City and further stated that City should be that information out to the public. C. Mercier commented on the commitment of the City Council and is direct opposite of what speaker indicated. C. Yem noted Council does much work in this area. C. Gitschier noted it was totally unfair to characterize the Council as disrespectful and speaker should be ashamed of such an accusation. C. Gitschier questioned coordinator regarding clean up on Tanner Street. Maura Fitzgerald (Homeless Coordinator) commented of efforts or the co-op team, LFD and LPD in clearing Tanner Street. Lisa Golden (HHS) commented on homeless operations. C. Gitschier noted the absurdity of expecting a City to install a sprinkler system in a private building being occupied by a tenant. C. Nuon noted the City should always look for added ways to help. C. Nuon noted need to keep Council updated with strategies. C. Scott noted comments of speaker were offensive and that trying to assist those to get shelter out of cold is not in any fashion disrespectful. C. Jenness commented that all parties should know the protocol. Manager Golden, Jr. commented on the efforts of the City and the Council regarding the homeless and it is above and beyond reproach and the path should continue to be followed. M. Chau noted homelessness is one issue that all of the Council respect and work toward solutions.

#### **11. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

In City Council, C. Gitschier wished his wife, Angela, a happy birthday.



## 12. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

---

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk