



Lowell City Council

Regular Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: February 1, 2022

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.

M. Chau presiding.

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. 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. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Jenness. So voted.

2.2. Citation - SanaLife U.S.A.

In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Robinson. So voted. C. Chau presented citation to representatives of SanaLife U.S.A., Rielis Mesquita and Toly Chea. Mr. Chea addressed the Council.

3. CITY CLERK

3.1. Minutes Of City Council Meeting January 25th, For Acceptance.

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



4. UTILITY PUBLIC HEARING

4.1. Boston Gas D/B/A National Grid - Request Replacement Of Low Pressure Gas Main Along Twelfth, Wachusett And July Streets.

In City Council, Given second reading, hearing held, no remonstrants, **Motion** to refer to Wire Inspector for report and recommendation by C. Leahy, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted. Diane Cudy (National Grid) spoke in favor of the petition.

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. Yem. So voted.

A) Motion Response - Rourke Bridge – C. Rourke requested quick synopsis of the report. Manager Donoghue provided a historical overview of the project noting that redesign efforts began some time ago and has faced many challenges. Manager Donoghue noted that the project must be placed on specific State list to open up for possible funding as the current costs would be about 169 million dollars. Manager Donoghue noted that there was 100 million dollars in a bond bill for this project but it has not been approved as of yet. Manager Donoghue requested immediate inspection of the bridge to assess safety and ease tensions of travelers. C. Rourke noted attendance of a meeting to have project placed on State list and was hopeful it would be accomplished sometime in March. C. Rourke noted there must be continued pressure for funding on this project. C. Gitschier noted the most important element is to inspect the bridge. C. Gitschier was critical of current inspection reports by the State and noted there should be an independent inspection done. **Motion** by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Robinson to request City Manager look into having an independent third party structural engineer group inspect the bridge. So voted. C. Chau commented on photos of the bridge and the debris around it and requested that Manager inform State of the need to clean it up.

B) Motion Response - Fire Department Brownouts – C. Robinson requested information to see if staffing levels had an effect on brownouts. Conor Baldwin (CFO) commented on the staffing as Chief Charron could not join due to Zoom difficulties which lasted the entire meeting. Manager Donoghue noted that all open positions have been funded and that the overtime for the department went from \$750,000 to over two million dollars. C. Robinson noted that some capital improvements would assist with full operation. Mr. Baldwin commented on request for updated equipment. C. Gitschier noted that department heads should go back to personal attendance in the meetings. C. Nuon commented on the funding question with the department as there are staffing and equipment issues. C. Drinkwater commented on the substantial increase in overtime and noted that full staffing will lessen that encumbrance. Manager Donoghue noted that COVID has had a negative effect on brownouts as well. **Motion** by C. Leahy, seconded by C. Nuon to send matter to Public Safety SC. So voted.



C) Motion Response - Parking Kiosks – C. Yem requested information on the selection process for new kiosks. Manager Donoghue noted the report should be sent to Finance SC for further review. Terry Ryan (Parking Director) outlined the selection process for new machines. C. Scott questioned if broken meters result in loss of revenues. Mr. Ryan noted there is a loss of revenue but the City can reduce that by ticketing illegal parking. C. Gitschier noted the loan order outlasted the equipment and that was not appropriate. Mr. Baldwin noted loan was staggered but equipment is at the end of usefulness. C. Rourke noted benefits of using the App available and that there should be a push for increased use. C. Nuon noted the report on garages as well.

Motion to refer matter to Finance SC by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Leahy. So voted.

D) Motion Response - Summer Youth Employment Grants – C. Robinson noted report outlined increased opportunities for youth employment. C. Drinkwater noted private sector can be involved as well.

E) Motion Response - Bulk Item Collection – C. Gitschier commented on issues with mattress pickups at UTEC.

F) Motion Response - Clemente Field at Koumentzelis Park – C. Nuon requested outline of report. Christine McCall (DPD) commented on the current granting and work that can be done with the grant which included lighting the park. C. Nuon noted State would be good partner in the project moving forward and was pleased with the lighting being available. C. Yem noted the importance of lighting the park.

G) Motion Response - Crosswalk at Moore and Gorham – C. Scott commented on the report. Motion by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Gitschier to take Item #9.4 out of order to discuss now. So voted. C. Gitschier noted that painting of whole City may be best approach and should be done through the sign department. Ms. McCall noted some work may be done through existing contracts. C. Yem commented on the scope of work involved.

Motion by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Nuon to suspend rules and take Item #9.12 out of order. So voted.

Motion by C. Scott, seconded by C. Robinson to suspend rules and take Item #9.19 out of order. So voted.

H) Motion Response - Transformative Development Initiative – C. Scott noted the effort to continue is vital as the reward may be substantial. C. Nuon noted continued efforts with the grant.

I) Motion Response - Development Projects in the Acre – C. Yem noted the report and the exciting developments in the Acre that the community is involved with.

J) Motion Response - Solar Feasibility at Robinson School - C. Robinson noted the report was optimistic and that a solar investment would be wise. Manager Donoghue



commented on the preparation of the RFP. Katherine Moses (DPD) provided further description of the RFP. C. Gitschier noted the possible solar project at the high school and the changing regulations at the DPU. C. Jenness noted it was a great opportunity for the City and commented on possible use of parking lots in the City as solar capable.

K) Motion Response - Foot Patrol and Community Based Policing – C. Robinson noted the proactive approach.

5.2. Informational Reports

L) Informational - Garage Enterprise Capital Plan – Matter referred earlier to the Finance SC.

5.3. Communication - Reappointment Of Zoe Dzineku To The Election Commission.

In City Council, Read. **Motion** to adopt by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Jenness. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted. Ms. Dzineku thanked the body.

5.4. Communication - City Manager Request Out Of State Travel (1) LPD.

In City Council, Read. **Motion** to adopt by C. Leahy, seconded by C. Jenness. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted.

Motion to bundle and waive second reading Items #6.1 to #6.3, inclusive, by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Rourke. So voted.

6. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER

6.1. Vote - Authorize CM Enter Into License Agreement With Lemon And Thyme Bistro LLC.

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

6.2. Vote-Authorize CM Accept Gift Of \$1,575.26 From Franco-American War Veterans.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Rourke. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted. C. Nuon requested letter of thanks be sent to organization.

6.3. Vote-Authorize CM Accept Gift Of Plots From Franco-American War Veterans.

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



7. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

In City Council, none.

Motion to bundle Items #8.1 to #8.3, inclusive, by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted.

8. PETITIONS

8.1. Claims - (2) Property Damage.

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

8.2. Misc. - Rita Barry Request Installation Of "No Parking" Sign At 24 Hampshire Street.

In City Council, **Motion** to refer to Traffic Engineer for report and recommendation by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Leahy. So voted.

8.3. Misc. - Michael Amoah (Geary & Geary, LLP) Request Permission To Rezone Property At 89 Agawam Street From Traditional Single Family (TSF) To Traditional Two Family (TTF) District.

In City Council, **Motion** to refer to Law Department for report and recommendation and draft ordinance by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Leahy. So voted.

9. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

9.1. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Have The Proper Department Look Into Installing A Crosswalk Across Westford Street From Rutland Street To Tyler Park.

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

9.2. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Reach Out To The Superintendent Of The Lowell School Department And The Greater Lowell Technical High School To Collaborate In The Purchase Of A Bookmobile .

In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Gitschier noted the need for the service as literacy rates need improvement and further noted the use of ARPA money and that funding for this service should be spread across City. C. Jenness noted that it is an important purchase and that electric option may provide savings. C. Yem noted use of funds should be shared for this service. C. Nuon commented on the need for the service and that always prudent to look into funding options. C. Scott noted the schools should be included as there had been elimination of library aides in the past.



9.3. C. Jenness/C. Gitschier - Req. Rules SC Meet To Review And Update City Council Rules.

In City Council, no second needed, Rules SC. So voted. C. Jenness noted rules should be updated to reflect new Council make-up.

9.4. C. Mercier - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Install A Crosswalk On Middlesex Street From The Corner Of Durkin's Carpet To The Sidewalk At The Corner Of The Judicial Center At Appropriate Time In The Spring.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Mercier noted it would be efficient to prepare list of the work to be done before spring construction season begins.

9.5. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have Appropriate City Department Address Problematic Parking Within 20 Feet Of Intersections.

In City Council, seconded by C. Scott, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted prior motions addressing this issue and that there must be an attempt to inform drivers of the law and regulations surrounding the issue. C. Yem noted many narrow streets in the City that must have the room at the intersection. C. Scott noted it was a safety issue. C. Leahy noted need for more aggressive enforcement. C. Gitschier noted effort of the LDP on towing vehicles.

9.6. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Update Council With Status Of Collaboration With Non-Profits (CTI, CBA, Life Connections, Etc.) Regarding Homelessness And Affordable Housing.

In City Council, seconded by C. Jenness, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted the working relationship with these partners. C. Scott requested information regarding working groups surrounding this issue. C. Robinson noted the need for outreach to various groups.

9.7. C. Nuon/C. Yem - Req. City Mgr. Have City Solicitor And Supt. Of Police Report To The Council On How Law Enforcement Trust Funds Have Been Received And Spent Over The Past Five Years.

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

9.8. C. Nuon/C. Yem - Req. City Mgr. Provide Council With A Report Concerning The Training Received By The City's Police Officers.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted motion was self-explanatory. C. Leahy requested the scope of the motion. C. Nuon outlined the scope for day to day operations.



9.9. C. Robinson/C. Yem - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Work With Youth Program Providers To Identify Areas Of The City With Programming Gaps And Work On Plans For Information Sharing To Our Residents.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager/Youth Services SC. So voted. C. Robinson requested it go to the Youth Services SC to ensure that they are getting the most out of programs available. C. Yem concurred with sending matter to Youth Services SC as well.

9.10. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Provide A Status Of The Broken Wall At McPherson Park On Bridge Street And What Is The Time Frame For Repair.

In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted it has been in disrepair for some time.

9.11. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Work With Parks And Recreation Department As Well As The Lowell Public Schools To Establish A "Drop-In" Basketball Program At The Robinson School For Youth During Colder Weather.

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted past sessions were popular and events would be well attended. C. Nuon noted there should be an effort to do it in all schools. C. Rourke noted programs are beneficial to City. C. Jenness noted it was a good program and should expand it has much as possible.

9.12. C. Robinson/C. Gitschier - Req. Municipal Facilities SC Meet Jointly With School Side Subcommittee To Begin Conversations Around Establishing A Centralized Facilities Department.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to Municipal Facilities SC. So voted. Registered speakers, Eileen Delrossi and Jacky Doherty (Zoom), addressed the Council. C. Robinson noted the need for the meeting so that all departments can be on same level of information. C. Gitschier noted the need explore creation of a centralized department. C. Leahy commented on subcommittee process.

Motion by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Robinson to suspend rules and take Item #5.3 out of order. So voted.

9.13. C. Rourke - Req. City Mgr. Meet With The School Department Concerning The Cawley Stadium Engineering Report, Along With The Associated Costs For Renovations.

In City Council, seconded by C. Leahy, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Rourke noted it was important to send to working group and that the School Administration should be part of funding as they have many funds with less funding demands.



9.14. C. Rourke - Req. City Mgr. Update Council On The Communication Between Treasurer's Office And Lowell Homeowners Concerning The Late Issued Tax Bills.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Rourke noted glitch was not the fault of the City but there needs to be communication with residents and an explanation to assist them. C. Gitschier noted if information of this nature could be put out on the Code Red System. Manager Donoghue noted that there are some restrictions with the system.

9.15. C. Rourke - Req. City Mgr. Update Council On The Timeline For Construction At The Hamilton Canal District.

In City Council, seconded by C. Scott, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Rourke requested update on construction in the district.

9.16. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Explore Granting Exclusive Use Of An Agreed-Upon Portion Of The South Common To The STEM Academy To Fence Off For Use As A Safe Play Space For Students.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Scott noted concerns of staff and parents for safe play areas. C. Mercier noted the park has a public safety issue and it should be addressed. C. Robinson commented on the need.

9.17. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Investigate Installing A Stop Sign Or Other Traffic Calming Measures At Bowden/Chippewa Streets To Slow Fast-Moving Traffic Traveling To The Cabot Crossing Apartments.

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Scott noted resident concern.

9.18. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Investigate Potential Traffic Calming Measures For Traffic Traveling From Woburn St/495 Area Over To Boylston St. And To Delmont Ave Apartments.

In City Council, seconded by C. Jenness, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Scott noted similar situation as above being at end of street which is part of the neighborhood. C. Scott recognized the Home Depot warehouse coming to the area and that there needs to be accommodations for that. C. Leahy noted it may be proper area for speed hump pilot program in the City.

9.19. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Provide An Update On The Current Schedule For Pickup Of Public Trash Barrels.

In City Council, seconded by C. Yem, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speaker, Jeff Thomas (Zoom) was present. C. Scott questioned procedure and what



work was being done in-house. C. Mercier noted current barrel complaint. C. Robinson noted some park barrels need to be emptied year round.

9.20. C. Yem/C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Consider Developing A Small Business Recovery Grant Program From ARPA Funding; Also, To Develop Informational Materials Available In Multiple Languages That Includes All Known Business Recovery Options.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Yem noted the need to assist businesses back on track after the pandemic. C. Scott noted businesses still assistance and that they should be aware of all available resources.

9.21. C. Drinkwater - Req. City Mgr. Consult With Our State Delegation And The Department Of Elementary And Secondary Education Regarding Grant Funding Allocated Through “An Act Relative To Immediate COVID-19 Recovery Needs”; For The Purpose Of Addressing Repairs For Improved Ventilation And Indoor Air Quality In Districts And Schools With High Concentrations Of Economically Disadvantage Students.

In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Drinkwater commented on the legislation and earmarked money. C. Robinson noted the current heating issue at Robinson School. Kara Keefe (Asst. Mgr.) commented on the issue. C. Mercier did not approve of the language in the legislation stating economically disadvantage students. Manager Donoghue noted formulas that are used by the State. C. Gitschier noted the reality is that there are a number of homeless children who attend schools.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In City Council, Manager Donoghue note that there are additional covid test being distributed in the City and that the Cawley testing facility remains open under extended hours. C. Gitschier recognized the hard work done by DPW regarding plowing in the City. C. Yem noted the re-location of Gormley’s Café. C. Robinson noted February as “Black History Month”. C. Chau recognized Lunar New Year. C. Robinson noted wrestling clinic during school vacation.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk