



Lowell City Council

Regular Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: October 26, 2021
Time: 6:30 PM
Location: City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA/Zoom (Hybrid)

1. ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed 9 present.

M. Leahy presiding.

M. Leahy requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Harry L. Stamas and Nathaniel "Nate" Fabian.

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. Conway, seconded by C. Chau. So voted.

3. CITY CLERK

3.1. Minutes Of City Council Meeting October 19th, For Acceptance.

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

Motion by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Conway to take Item #8.4 out of order. So voted.



4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

4.1. Motion Responses.

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

A) Motion Response - Homelessness Initiatives – C. Mercier noted the efforts and the organizations involved and commented on the burden on City from outside sources. C. Mercier noted the need for a special facility that could meet the specific needs of the homeless. Manager Donoghue noted that Councilors can attend any task force meeting which discuss the issues. C. Mercier noted the need to get help from all levels of government. C. Samaras noted similar issues throughout the United States and there must be a multi prong solution approach. Manager Donoghue outlined the approach the City is taking to address the issues as contained in the report; partners, budget funding and housing. C. Elliott noted his attendance at the Coordinating Council and the efforts of the task force. C. Drinkwater commented on the federal housing program through HUD; noting the possibility of hotel/motel purchases for housing. Christine McCall (DPD) noted such an endeavor would have to be regional as the City does not have that resource within its limits. C. Nuon noted report was generated from the last Coordinating Council meeting and that there are many resources going towards the problems. Ms. McCall noted efforts was for long term solution. C. Chau noted the amount of work and the solution will not come quickly but there is a need to assist downtown business with issues in a short fashion. Manager Donoghue commented on the efforts of the police working with downtown merchants. **Motion** by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Samaras to take Items #4.4 and #8.3 out of order. So voted.

Manager Donoghue recognized the efforts of the DPD to secure significant recent grant funding for various purposes throughout the City.

B) Motion Response - Pawtucketville Memorial Playground – C. Rourke requested slide be installed before spring. M. Leahy noted that some parks at schools are controlled by the City and it may make more sense to be under school control. Manager Donoghue noted efforts of the DPW to take inventory of these parks to establish ownership and what repairs need to be done.

C) Motion Response - Father Maguire Park – C. Rourke noted the use of grant funds for the park.

D) Motion Response - Varnum Ave Tree Pruning – C. Rourke noted work had been done on the information he passed along and that the tree at Campbell Park has been removed.

4.2. Informational Reports

E) Informational - FY2021 Year End Financial Review – Manager Donoghue noted the strength of FY21. Conor Baldwin (CFO) highlighted the report which indicated a large free cash input at end of year as well as the continued strength of the stabilization



fund. Mr. Baldwin noted that enterprise funds in the City are monitored to ensure stability. C. Elliott noted it was a great fiscal report which indicates solid fiscal management. C. Drinkwater commented on revenue replacement under the American Rescue Plan. Mr. Baldwin noted those funds must pass through the free cash process as well.

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

4.3. Communication - Collective Bargaining Agreements.

In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted. Manager Donoghue noted the contracts were on agenda for approval. City Solicitor O'Connor noted the agreement on agenda for ordinance employees.

4.4. Communication - Appoint Stephen M. Laput To Conservation Commission.

In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Elliott. So voted. Mr. Laput was present and thanked Council.

Motion by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Rourke to bundle and waive second readings for Items #5.1 to #5.9, inclusive. So voted.

5. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER

5.1. Vote - Accept Expend 35,439 FY21 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant.

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

5.2. Vote - Accept The 2020 Re-Precincting Plan For City Of Lowell.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Elliott. Adopted per Roll Call vote 9 yeas. So voted. C. Elliott noted the vote included precinct plan for the election after this current one. Manager Donoghue outlined the plan that required approval before the end of the month. City Solicitor O'Connor noted the process which included Secretary of State input as well as expert review by the City so it would be compliant with the Consent Decree. C. Elliott noted precincts would be modified. City Solicitor indicated that because there are new districts the precinct plan would be modified. C. Drinkwater questioned how new State redistricting work into plan. Manager Donoghue noted this plan is only for City elections and that polling locations may differ next election cycle. C. Nuon questioned public involvement with the process. City Solicitor noted that there is no public forum but done through Secretary of State Office and the use of experts which in the end goes before independent commission.



5.3. Vote - Accept.Expend 125,000.00 FY21 Community Policing Development Microgrants Program Grant.

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

5.4. Vote - Accept.Expend 57,183 MA Dept Of Mental Health Grant.

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

5.5. Vote - Auth Mgr Exec First Amendment To Verizon Wireless Lease.

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

5.6. Vote - Ratify And Approve The Execution By City Manager Of MOU With AFSCME Local 2532.

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

5.7. Vote - Ratify And Approve The Execution By City Manager Of MOU With Fire Fighters Local 853.

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

5.8. Vote - Ratify And Approve The Execution Of City Manager Of MOU With AFSCME Local 1705.

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

5.9. Vote - To Increase COLA For Ordinance Employees.

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

6. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

6.1. Wire Insp. - Cellco Partnership D/B/A Verizon Wireless Small Cell Facility On Existing Utility Pole At 7 Whitman Street.

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



7. PETITIONS

7.1. Misc. - Joseph/Anmarie Pereira Request To Rescind (3) Off Street Parking Spots Located Along 23 Dix Street; As Well As 911 And 933 Gorham Street.

In City Council, **Motion** to refer to City Manager for report and recommendation by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Elliott. So voted. Anmarie Pereira spoke before the Council.

7.2. Misc. - Norma Von Fricken Request Permission To Discuss Grass Roots Effort For A Better Lowell.

In City Council, Ms. Von Fricken supplied written correspondence to body.

8. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

8.1. C. Samaras - Req. City Mgr. Work With The Superintendent Of Schools To Accelerate The Removal And Replacement Of Trailers At Cawley Stadium.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Samaras noted the area needs to be cleaned out and trailers replaced. Manager Donoghue noted the school department is in the process of deciding what type of trailer to be used and whether they should lease or own them.

8.2. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Work With National Grid And Others Who Need To Close Parts Of Streets For Maintenance To Schedule Such Work Outside Of High Traffic Times And To Consider Advance Warning Signage That Gives Motorists A Chance To Find An Alternate Route.

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon commented there should be a common sense approach.

8.3. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Work With Non-Profits And Other Developers Who May Be Interested To Identify Property, Land And/OR Buildings That Can Be Developed For Housing Single Individuals In, Tiny Houses, Modular Buildings, Etc.

In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon Registered speaker, Carl Howell, addressed the Council. C. Nuon noted that currently there are available beds but they will not be such in the spring so there must be a housing plan in place.

8.4. C. Elliott - Req. City Mgr. Request Superintendent Of Schools Provide A Report On Measures To Ensure Safety In All The Schools.

In City Council, seconded by C. Conway, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speaker, Betsy Toro St. Onge, addressed the Council. C. Elliott noted he had spoken to the School Superintendent and recognized school officials at the meeting. C. Elliott stated the need to get more information to the parents when there are incidents in the schools. Mr. Fiato, Head of School at Lowell High School, outlined



comments that were made at a recent forum at the school department. M. Leahy questioned the amount of security in the schools. C. Elliott noted that security officers at the school is under the school administration. Manager Donoghue noted that schools are fully staffed with City police resource officers. C. Elliott questioned discipline procedures in the schools and whether they were effective. C. Samaras noted Covid effect on school administration but there is a need to provide current and correct information. C. Conway noted City partnership with schools is important for a proper operations. C. Conway noted the need for police resource officers and that they should present in middle schools as well. C. Conway noted that information could be challenging depending on the type of investigation that is being done.

8.5. C. Elliott - Req. City Council Discuss The Recent Release Of The State's 2030 Master Plan On Solid Waste And Consider Creating A Subcommittee On Solid Waste To Address Costs Of Illegal Dumping, Increase Recycling, Enforcement Of Illegal Dumping And Improve Yard Waste/Trash Pick-Up.

In City Council, seconded by C. Chau, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Elliott noted the current plan has a lot of incentives for cities and that they should be pursued and the best method may be through a subcommittee.

8.6. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Investigate Installing A Crosswalk On Stevens Street At The Intersection Of Fairfax Street In Front Of Lowell Catholic.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Chau commented on the area and that there were many students and parents present.

8.7. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Take Needed Action To Replace The Missing Street Light On The Telephone Pole At The Intersection Of Pine And Wilder Streets.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Chau commented on the length of time the light has been out.

Motion to cancel Council Meeting on November 2, 2021 due to election by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Nuon. Adopted per roll call vote 9 yeas. So voted.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In City Council, Manager Donoghue commented on the return of the Monster Bash. M. Leahy noted square dedication this weekend.



10. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk