



Lowell City Council

Regular Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: January 18, 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.

C. Mercier requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Ingrid Bayliss. C. Leahy requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Manny Freitas.

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. Yem. So voted.

3. CITY CLERK

3.1. Minutes Of City Council Meeting January 11th, For Acceptance.

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



4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

4.1. Motion Responses.

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

A) Motion Response - ARPA Public Input – C. Rourke inquired what the next steps would be to disperse funding. Manager Donoghue commented on the process and the end stage of hiring a fund manager who would work out final funding details. Conor Baldwin (CFO) noted the amount of public input in the process and how it was gathered and processed and that any funding plan would come before the Council for review. Manager Donoghue noted that it should be sent to subcommittee to fully explore issues. C. Drinkwater noted process to use funds in conjunction with the CDBG allocations. Manager Donoghue noted funds would be separated according to certain groupings and that there are strict reporting requirements with the funding. C. Drinkwater noted possible allocation with Capital Plan Budgeting process. C. Scott questioned the time frame and the use of funds to assist private businesses. Mr. Baldwin noted the strict reporting deadlines in place to comply with program. Manager Donoghue noted that DPD would assist with private business interest in the funding. C. Nuon noted the need to gather as much public input on the matter and that the finance director must be cognizant of that. C. Gitschier noted that public input was not as he had hoped and was looking more participation in the matter. Mr. Baldwin noted that funds were currently being used to replace loss revenues. C. Gitschier questioned if overtime costs could be covered with this funding. Mr. Baldwin noted that pandemic caused much of overtime costs during past two years. C. Gitschier questioned if funds could be used to cover increased costs to larger projects in the City. Manager Donoghue noted they were reviewing all those scenarios as well as seeking added federal funding which may be available as well. C. Robinson questioned if positions added with the funding would remain permanent. Mr. Baldwin noted regulations had a lot of grey areas in that matter and they would be governed by federal guidelines. C. Jenness questioned if funds would cover continued loss revenues. Mr. Baldwin noted loss revenue funding would come from first influx of money and if needed there would be funds available at second funding act. Manager Donoghue noted that any loss of revenue would be covered by funding if those funds were available. C. Rourke noted the importance of getting information to the Council and the direction the City would be following regarding the funding. C. Mercier commented on the public input as well as the funding sources. Manager Donoghue outlined the funding source regarding defunct county government. C. Yem questioned premium payments to essential workers. Mr. Baldwin noted such a program would have income eligibility requirements. C. Robinson noted there should be a review of eligibility requirements for premium pay.

B) Motion Response - Development Services Website – C. Gitschier commented on the report and noted the update.



4.2. Informational Reports

C) LHS Project Update from Representative of Suffolk, Perkins Eastman and Skanska

– Manager Donoghue noted consultants were present to provide update regarding Lowell High School project. Rex Radloff (Suffolk) provided presentation entitled “Suffolk – Lowell High School Project Update”. Mr. Radloff outlined the following topics of the project: construction overview; phasing and enabling work; procurement update; and MBE/WBE & workforce participation. Mr. Radloff noted the project was complex as they were taking down a building and erecting new buildings as students continued to occupy the premises. Mr. Radloff noted that each system must be tested before opening the doors. C. Jenness commented on procurement process and if there were any difficulties with it during pandemic. Mr. Radloff noted there was Covid pressure on the project but their relationship with subcontractors and vendors would enable a smooth continuance of the project. C. Jenness commented on costs impact on the project. Mr. Radloff noted that there would be more information on costs once all of the RFP are completed and published but they expect a competitive package. C. Gitschier noted there should be solar panels on roof of a project this size to save on building costs. Manager Donoghue noted ability to place solar panels on building but it would not be a reimbursable cost from the State. Joe Drown (Perkins/Eastman) noted the site is solar ready. C. Gitschier noted solar should be installed during this initial phase so to save money. C. Rourke noted the issues with steel at the Central Street Bridge and questioned if there would be steel supply issue with this project. Mr. Radloff noted getting steel would not be an issue. C. Rourke noted that there needs to be a plan to keep up with rising costs in the project. C. Scott noted that solar panels would save money in energy costs. C. Leahy questioned if all going according to plan with no elimination of features. Mr. Radloff noted that there were not a lot of high end finishes in the project so there would be limited obvious changes. C. Mercier questioned any cost overruns. Mr. Radloff commented that no added costs with current contracts. C. Rourke requested total costs to date as well as costs for the taking of building. C. Mercier requested report regarding litigation with taking of doctors’ building.

5. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER

5.1. Vote-Accept And Expend FY22 Body-Worn Camera Program Grant.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Leahy, seconded by C. Jenness. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted. C. Leahy requested brief summary of the vote. Maryann Manzi (LPD) outlined the grant and the reasons for it and that it was a pilot project. C. Leahy questioned pilot program. Manager Donoghue noted it was bargaining scenario with the union to move project forward. C. Nuon commented on the grant and success would move project to be permanent. Manager Donoghue noted they were still reviewing costs and that the Lowell Police would implement the project. C. Yem questioned monitoring and storing/protecting footage. C. Jenness questioned operations and preservation of the footage. Manager Donoghue noted the need to comply with Massachusetts law regarding use and that the LPD would be in charge of operations. Solicitor O’Connor



commented on the use of footage. C. Robinson questioned if storage could be done by third party vendor. Manager Donoghue noted such storage would probably be done in house.

6. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

6.1. Wire Insp. - National Grid/Verizon- Request Installation Of (1) JO Pole Relocate (2) JO Poles At Tanner And Plain Streets. (Tanner Street Realignment)

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

7. PETITIONS

7.1. Claims - (2) Property Damage.

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

7.2. Misc. - Mohammed Alaedani (Lemon And Thyme Restaurant) Request Installation Of Overhanging Sign At 491 Dutton Street.

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

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

In City Council, Given 1st Reading, **Motion** to refer to Public Hearing on February 1, 2022 at 7 PM by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted.

8. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

8.1. C. Mercier - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Restore The Drop Box To Pay Bills At The JFK Plaza Entrance To City Hall For Residents Who Do Not Wish To Enter The Building.

In City Council, seconded by C Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Mercier noted the issue has been resolved.

Motion by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Mercier to take Item #8.11 out of order. So voted.

8.2. C. Jenness - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Investigate Drainage Issues Around The Crosswalk At The Corner Of Market & Palmer Streets.

In City Council, seconded by C Yem, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Jenness commented on current crosswalk project and described area which floods with rain and ice causing pedestrians into the right of way.



8.3. C. Jenness - Req. City Mgr. Provide A Report Regarding Current Policies For Maintenance Of The Riverwalk Area, In Particular Winter Snow Removal, Including Any Coordination With Stakeholders Abutting The Walkway (NPS, UML, Etc.)

In City Council, seconded by C Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speaker, Steven Oliver (Zoom), addressed the Council. C. Jenness noted the walk was used all year round and there should be a plan to maintain the area by all off the abutting owners along the walkway. Manager Donoghue noted they would get parties involved to see what needs to be done and who will do it. C. Leahy questioned the extent of the area.

8.4. C. Nuon/C. Jenness - Req. City Mgr. Update Council Regarding Hiring Of Permanent Full Time Director Of Elections.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted that current director has done great job but he was only interim and it is time for him to return to the Law Department. C. Nuon noted there may be a need to adjust the salary to entice applicants and to increase staffing as well. C. Jenness noted the importance of the position.

8.5. C. Yem - Req. City Mgr. Have Appropriate Department Paint The Word "Stop" On The Streets At All Stop Signs Throughout The City.

In City Council, seconded by C Jenness, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Yem noted it was a resident request and that vehicles are not stopping at the signs so some painting may make it safer especially at four way stops. C. Gitschier noted it would entail a lot of work with very little resources in that department so outside vendor may be preferable.

8.6. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Have All LHS Renovation Building Committee Meetings Aired Live On LTC.

In City Council, seconded by C Scott, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Gitschier commented that there was not enough attention being put on the matter for residents to see progress and that there needs to be more visible support for the public. Manager Donoghue there are weekly meetings and more involvement moving through the phases. C. Rourke questioned what kind of coverage could be done with the meetings. Manager Donoghue noted the existence of the School Building Committee as part of the MSBA requirements.

8.7. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Provide Council With The Covid Protocol Policies For Disinfecting All City Buildings, Schools, City Owned Equipment, Vehicles And Common Areas.

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



8.8. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Provide Council With A Report On The Number Of Homeless That Use The Lowell Transitional Living Center, The Eliot Day Program, Life Connection Center Or The Non-Congregate Hotel During The Recent Cold Snap.

In City Council, seconded by C Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Gitschier recognized the Manager and staff for tending to the needs of the homeless during recent inclement weather.

8.9. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Provide Council With The Current Yard Waste Contract And Future Schedule For Yard Waste Pick-Up.

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

Motion by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Nuon to take Item #8.3 out of order. So voted.

8.10. C. Robinson/C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Provide Council With An Update On All Fully Funded Positions That Are Currently Vacant In The FY22 Budget; Including The Length Of Time They Have Been Vacant.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted motion is self-explanatory.

8.11. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Provide Council With An Update On Missed And/Or Delayed Solid Waste Pick-Up.

In City Council, seconded by C Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted it was a reoccurring issue and that there should be coverage as contracted for. C. Mercier noted frustration with residents. C. Gitschier noted the hardship on the residents and that vendor should be held to contract. C. Rourke noted they have dealing with same problem for some time and there is no improvement. C. Leahy noted that even when pickup happens it is in a haphazard manner. Jim Nocella (WasteManagement) addressed the Council noting staff issue, weather issues and restricted hours. C. Gitschier commented on restricted hours regarding drivers. C. Yem noted app on City website is a helpful source of information. C. Mercier noted the safety issues involved but the delays are far too long. C. Robinson noted there should be discounted fees due to poor service. C. Scott questioned if surrounding communities were facing the same issues and that there should be contract enforcement. Manager Donoghue noted current contract expires in 2023. C. Robinson noted attempt to amend contract regarding the City now picking up in the parks. Solicitor O'Connor noted the amendment was not finalized.

Motion by C. Gitschier, second by C. Drinkwater to take Item #8.9 out of order. So voted.



8.12. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Look Into Feasibility Of Installation Of Solar Panels On The Robinson School Property.

In City Council, seconded by C Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speakers, Jon Grossman (Zoom) and Jay Mason, addressed the Council. C. Robinson noted there was green space available and would be best use of the property. M. Chau noted other school properties should be explored as well.

8.13. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Provide Council With An Update On The Current Status Of The City's Plan To Mitigate And/Or Eliminate The Practice Of Brownouts Within The Lowell Fire Department.

In City Council, seconded by C Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson commented the need to know where the City is at concerning full coverage. C. Nuon noted the need to keep information fluid and noted strides made in prior years. C. Jenness requested information regarding reason for brownouts.

8.14. C. Rourke - Req. City Mgr. Contact MassDOT Concerning Rourke Bridge Inspections And Any Upcoming Plans For Redesign And Construction Of New Bridge.

In City Council, seconded by C Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Rourke noted issues with the bridge and stated that pressure should be put at every level of government to get the needed funding for the project.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In City Council, C. Yem noted the efforts of plowing crew during last storm. M. Chau noted his subcommittee assignments have been completed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk