



Lowell City Council

Regular Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: January 31, 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. Robinson – Zoom)

M. Chau presiding.

C. Leahy requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Atty. Robert Murphy.

C. Robinson requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Elaine Romanauskas.

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. Yem, seconded by C. Rourke. So voted.

Motion to suspend rules by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Nuon to allow Mayor to present citation. M. Chau presented citation to Kheing Hong Long (Red Rose Restaurant) as a recipient of the Beard Dining Award. C. Yem noted the accomplishments of Mr. Long in the community. M. Chau noted the long standing business in the City.

3. CITY CLERK

3.1. Minutes Of Zoning SC January 24th; City Council Regular Meeting January 24th; Auditor/Clerk Oversight Personnel SC January 26th, For Acceptance.



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

4. UTILITY PUBLIC HEARING

4.1. Verizon New England Inc. Place One New 4" Conduit Approximately 46' Southwesterly Direction From Existing Pole Lakeview Avenue.

In City Council, Given second reading, hearing held, no remonstrants. Ross Bilodeau (Verizon/Pike) spoke in favor of the petition. **Motion** to refer to Wire Inspector for report and recommendation by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Yem. So voted.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

5.1. Motion Responses.

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

A) Motion Response - Reserved Dwelling Sign Program – Motion by C. Scott, seconded by C. Jenness to refer matter to Finance SC. So voted.

B) Motion Response - Suffolk and Broadway Streets – Registered speaker, Milka Ferreras, addressed the Council. C. Yem noted resident input to response and were pleased with the proposal. C. Yem questioned time frame for moving forward. Manager Golden, Jr. commented on upcoming bridge repairs by State. C. Robinson noted area was a high pedestrian use area.

C) Motion Response - Kinsman Street – C. Nuon commented on the recommendation.

D) Motion Response - Plain Street – C. Gitschier questioned if area is being utilized again after cleaned up, especially near Target. Manager Golden, Jr. indicated that it could be a return to private property. C. Gitschier noted his concern for environmental problems arising.

E) Motion Response - Hunger and Homeless Commission – C. Robinson noted this was an important piece to combat the issue and to pass along vital information. C. Jenness questioned past meetings and minutes. Maura Fitzgerald (Homeless Coordinator) noted meetings were just organizational meetings. C. Jenness noted commission will need support from administration. Manager Golden, Jr. indicated there would be full support and commented on new appointments. C. Jenness noted that a person with homeless experience should be part of the commission. C. Nuon noted need for a personal perspective. C. Nuon commented on the membership pool. Ms. Fitzgerald commented on process and the ability to add more members. C. Mercier noted this was good news and should be shared as with the new shelter opening last week.

F) Motion Response - Garden Road Repaving Request – None.



G) Motion Response - ADA Ramp Update – C. Gitschier commented on contract and the number of ramps installed and also referenced prior motion response. Ting Chang (City Engineer) commented on bid and contract process. C. Gitschier noted it was too long to finalize the contract and that cost additional money and was not effective government. C. Jenness noted there is still work to be done and questioned process to add areas that need repair. Ms. Chang stated that department should be notified if areas of repair are needed. C. Yem questioned work on end of Merrimack Street. Ms. Chang noted difficulties with the many vaults in the area. C. Yem recognized that there are many underground vaults in that area. C. Gitschier questioned status of the sidewalk index being developed. Ms. Chang noted consultants continue to work on the index. Manager Golden, Jr. noted the short staffing in Law and Engineer Departments simultaneously causing some delays along with some vendor bonding issues. C. Gitschier questioned Law Department regarding contract review. Helene Thomlinson (City Solicitor) commented that she was not aware of contract.

H) Motion Response - Recycling Contamination By Month – C. Gitschier questioned the projected savings in this area. Gunther Wellenstein (DPW) commented on the savings and the factors involved. C. Gitschier questioned outreach plan especially with schools. Mr. Wellenstein commented on school information and the use of many languages to assist with outreach. C. Mercier questioned the process for fixing bins and requested presence of employee to come before the Neighborhoods SC next meeting. C. Nuon reviewed cost of repairs for bins. C. Scott questioned the use of cameras during collection process. Mr. Wellenstein noted cameras can be contracted for. C. Leahy questioned neighborhood inspection process. Mr. Wellenstein noted number of staff and that inspections are done daily. C. Robinson commented on broken bin issues and pick up times. C. Yem noted broken bins and the use of compost. C. Mercer reviewed prior report regarding fines.

I) Motion Response - MSBA Accelerated School Repair Funding Update with Attachment – C. Gitschier questioned the number of projects in the program. Manager noted the number of projects slated and that issue may arise with funding for the MSBA. Paul St. Cyr (DPW) commented on use of ARPA money for projects which do not qualify for MSBA funding. C. Gitschier questioned status of relationship with schools and the DPW regarding maintenance issues. Mr. St. Cyr commented on the strength of the relationship and work being done. Manager Golden, Jr. commented that current approved work under MSBA will be funded. C. Leahy noted there are some schools that will need full replacement in near future.

5.2. Informational Reports

Informational Report - Lead Service Line Inventory and Replacement Program with Attachment – Steve Duchesne (Water Utility) reviewed the report and introduced Aurora Bas to field any questions. C. Gitschier commented on lead presence in water and indicated usually caused by private piping. Ms. Bas noted inventory being done to get a better view of numbers.

Manager Golden, Jr. introduced Diandra Silk as the new communications director for CASE who thanked the body.



5.3. Communication - Appointments And Reappointments To Hunger Homeless Commission.

In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Yem, seconded by C. Gitschier. So voted. M. Chau read following names for appointment and re-appointment: Dan O'Connor; Deborah Sevigny; Sue Smith; JoAnn Howell; Diane Waddles; Maura Fitzpatrick; and Levenia Furusa-Mavingire.

5.4. Communication - Resignation Of Melissa Desroches From Board Of Parks.

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

5.5. Communication - City Manager Request Out Of State Travel (1) DPD.

In City Council, **Motion** to adopt by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Scott. Adopted by Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted.

6. CONSTABLE BONDS

6.1. Communication - City Mgr. Request Approval Of Constable Bonds For Stanley Wyzansky, Juan Garcia And Ronald Bertheim.

In City Council, **Motion** to adopt by C. Yem, seconded by C. Nuon. Adopted by Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted.

7. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

7.1. Auditor/Clerk Oversight And Personnel SC January 26, 2023.

In City Council, C. Gitschier provided report outlining attendance and discussion of evaluation of City Manager, City Clerk and City Auditor. C. Gitschier noted not all one evaluation form with fit all and that employees should have input as to criteria being used. **Motion** to accept the report as a report of progress by C. Yem, seconded by C. Drinkwater. So voted.

7.2. Veterans SC January 31, 2023.

In City Council, C. Yem provided report outlining attendance and discussion of Heroes Banner Program and events for Memorial Day. C. Rourke noted motion adopted to convene subcommittee meeting to provide services that are available to veterans. C. Yem noted motion adopted to establish areas to display banners. C. Mercier noted attendance of Matt Elkins. **Motion** to accept the report as a report of progress and adopt motions by C. Leahy, seconded by C. Robinson. So voted.



8. PETITIONS

8.1. Claims - (4) Property Damage.

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

9. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

9.1. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Update The Council On The LFD Equipment Order From The ARPA Funds.

In City Council, seconded by C. Jenness, referred to City Manager. So voted. **Motion** by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Scott to discuss Item #9.10 with this item. So voted. C. Gitschier questioned placing the order. Manager Golden, Jr. commented on current communications with vendors.

9.2. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Provide The City Council With A Report On How Many Fines Issued And Cars Towed During The Parking Ban For The January 23rd Snow Event.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Gitschier requested information regarding towing procedures during storms. C. Rourke questioned who made calls regarding towing. Manager Golden, Jr. indicated the police department is responsible for towing. C. Nuon noted the LPD should let public know the process. C. Leahy noted there may be a need to revisit the procedure. C. Gitschier questioned if tickets could be issues beyond any parking ban. C. Mercier noted the need may be to open more garages during bans. C. Robinson noted neighborhood locations are difficult to get to garages and there is no place to park off street. C. Rourke noted current system is best for the situation. C. Robinson noted some cars cannot be moved. C. Gitschier noted that parking bans need to be enforced no matter how the weather turns out. C. Jenness noted all enforcement must be consistent and same for all. C. Rourke noted preference is to have all cars off the roads.

9.3. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have The Appropriate Department Evaluate Traffic Flow At The Shaughnessy School To See If Improvements Can Be Made; Including Additional "One-Way" And "Do Not Enter" Signage.

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Leahy requested all schools signs be inspected.

9.4. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have The Appropriate Department Evaluate The Badly Deteriorated Sidewalk Conditions At Cardinal O'Connor Preschool And Develop A Plan For Repairs.

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



9.5. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have Appropriate Department Evaluate Christman, Newhall, Watson And Quimby Streets To Determine If They Should Be Added To The Paving List.

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

9.6. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have Traffic Engineer Submit Hollis, Christman And Jean Avenue Stop Signs As A 60-Day Trial.

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

9.7. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Work To Review Plan Designs For Lowell High School With Perkins Eastman To Make Sure All Amenities Are Built To Scale For The Student/Staff Population Size.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Scott commented on prior discussion regarding resident concerns and MSBA standards regarding common areas and meeting the needs of students.

9.8. C. Mercier - Req. City Mgr. Have LPD Find Ways And Means To Initiate A Program Similar To Chelmsford's SafetyNet System Program, At No Costs To The Residents, That Monitors And Locates Missing People Who Wander From Homes And Facilities.

In City Council, seconded by C. Leahy, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Mercier outlined the system and how it operates.

9.9. C. Rourke - Req. City Mgr. Have The Appropriate Department Investigate The Creation Of An Elevator, Hood And Vent Installation Program To Support Renovation Of Downtown Buildings.

In City Council, seconded by C. Jenness, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Rourke noted the need for DPD involvement in order to make strides in economic development through federal and state funding. C. Nuon noted it was an incentive to repair buildings.

9.10. C. Rourke/C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have LFD Chief Provide An Update On The Department's Status With Purchasing Fire Fighting Vehicles.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Scott noted the need in the City but there is a long lead time involved. C. Rourke noted it was a long process to go through and must keep moving along.



10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In City Council, Manager Golden, Jr. commented on cold weather procedures. C. Rourke noted Black History Month flag raising.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned 8:43 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk