



Lowell City Council

Regular Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: February 21, 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.

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

2.2. Citation - Black History Month - Lura Smith.

In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted. M. Chau presented Key to City and Citation to Ms. Smith and noted earlier reception for her in the Mayor's Reception Room. C. Yem noted effort on her part for the City. C. Mercier noted her admiration for Ms. Smith. C. Robinson commented on her effect in the community. C. Drinkwater noted it was privilege to be in her presence. C. Nuon noted she was an inspiration to the youth. C. Jenness noted positive effect on the City. Ms. Smith eloquently addressed the body and thanked them for their recognition.



3. CITY CLERK

3.1. Minutes Of Public Safety SC February 14th; City Council Regular Meeting February 14th, For Acceptance.

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

4. GENERAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

4.1. Ordinance - Amend Chapter 9 By Creating Sister City Committee.

In City Council, Given 2nd Reading, hearing held. No Remonstrants. **Motion** to adopt by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Robinson. Adopted by Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted.

5. UTILITY PUBLIC HEARING

5.1. Boston Gas D/B/A National Grid - Request Installation Of 12 Inch Plastic Gas Main On Chelmsford Street To Gas Regulator Station At 83 Doane Street.

In City Council, Given second reading, hearing held, no remonstrants. Speaking in favor was Diana Cudy (National Grid). **Motion** to refer to Wire Inspector for report and recommendation by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Drinkwater. So voted.

5.2. National Grid - Request Revision Of Previously Approved Petition For Added Installation Of 75 Feet Of Underground Electric Conduit Along Boulevard Street.

In City Council, Given second reading, hearing held, no remonstrants. Speaking in favor was David Boucher (National Grid). **Motion** to refer to Wire Inspector for report and recommendation by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Scott. So voted.

Motion by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Robinson to take Item #11.12 out of order. So voted.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

6.1. Motion Responses.

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

A) Motion Response - Making it Public – Motion by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Robinson to request City Manager develop partnership with downtown businesses, City and art community. So voted. C. Robinson commented on the report and noted the many programs for public art. C. Mercier commented on partnership with the art talent in the community.

B) Motion Response - Shaughnessy School with Attachment – C. Scott commented on the report and the solid recommendations.



C) Motion Response - Behind the Meter Solar – Registered speakers, Jay Mason and Jonathan Grossman, addressed the Council. C. Gitschier commented on the presentation by Katherine Moses (DPW) at the prior subcommittee meeting. C. Gitschier noted a cost/benefit analysis would be credence to the program. C. Robinson noted City should be moving forward more aggressively. C. Scott noted moving forward with Phase I. C. Nuon commented a cost analysis will support programs. C. Jenness commented that the subcommittee adopted motion for City Manager expedite procurement pathway through Power Options Program and bring before Council. C. Robinson noted placing a solar field at Robinson School should be revisited. C. Yem noted possible site at the Senior Center. Ms. Moses noted there may be more than one reason for a site not to be suitable and that is why there was a request for information put out to the vendors. Ms. Moses noted that costs could be added without savings. C. Yem questioned the possible use of additional solar farms in the City. Manager Golden, Jr. noted working with renewables and using request for information to attract vendors in that area. C. Gitschier noted Senior Center is not owned by City.

D) Motion Response - Smart City – C. Yem noted it was the path of the future for municipalities. C. Gitschier noted City should be doing most of the recommendations spelled out in the report. C. Scott questioned use of the 311 system. Manager Golden, Jr. noted active approach to that with MIS Department.

E) Motion Response - Fire Academy – C. Jenness noted regional approach would be best path forward noting it is not a revenue generator but would assist with increasing staff. C. Yem noted assistance with staffing. Chief Charron (LFD) commented on time frame needed to implement plan. C. Gitschier questioned the costs for each cadet. Chief Charron outlined the costs.

F) Motion Response - MSBA Funding LHS with Attachment – C. Noun recognized the contribution of Sen. Kennedy and delegation with efforts. C. Gitschier commented on proposed legislation and the assistance needed. Manager Golden, Jr. outlined approach regarding support of the legislation.

6.2. Communication - Appointments And Reappointments To The Pollard Memorial Library Board Of Trustees.

In City Council, **Motion** to adopt by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Yem. Adopted by Roll Call vote 10 yeas, 1 absent (C. Robinson). So voted. The following were appointed to the Pollard Library Board of Trustees: Judith Davidson, Amy Wilson, Ellen Antsey, Muriel Parseghian, Helen Littlefield and Donna Scannell Richards.

Motion to bundle and waive second reading Items #7.1 and #7.2 by C. Nuon, seconded by Gitschier. So voted.



7. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER

7.1. Vote - Accept/Expend \$30,000 REACH LOWELL Grant.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Leahy. Adopted by Roll Call vote 10 yeas, 1 absent (C. Robinson). So voted.

7.2. Vote - Authorize CM Enter Into License Agreement With Savin Foods USA, Inc.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Leahy. Adopted by Roll Call vote 10 yeas, 1 absent (C. Robinson). So voted.

8. ORDERS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

8.1. Order - 60 Day Trial

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Rourke. Adopted by Roll Call vote 9 yeas, 2 absent (C. Nuon, C. Robinson). So voted.

9. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

9.1. Finance SC Joint With Technology And Utilities SC February 21, 2023.

In City Council, C. Scott requested report be brought forward on February 28, 2023 Council Meeting. No objections.

10. PETITIONS

10.1. Claims - (4) Property Damage.

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

11. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

11.1. C. Drinkwater/C. Yem - Req. Joint Zoning/Housing Subcommittees Meet To Resume Discussion On Accessory Dwelling Units.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to Joint Zoning/Housing SC. So voted. C. Drinkwater noted subcommittee will be scheduled as issues remain open. C. Yem requested Clerk check open dates.

11.2. C. Yem - Req. City Mgr. Have The Appropriate Department Work With Various Veteran Organizations And Business To Come Up With A Plan For A Parade On Memorial Day In Lowell To Honor Our Veterans.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to Veterans SC. So voted. C. Yem requested subcommittee gather information.



11.3. C. Yem/C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have The Appropriate Department Update The City Council On The Status Of The Youth Commission.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to Youth Services SC. So voted. C. Yem requested matter by referred to Youth Services SC. No objections.

11.4. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Meet With The Superintendent Of Schools To See How We Can Provide Support And Partnership For The LPS “Full Service Community Schools” Program.

In City Council, seconded by C. Scott, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted grant money is available and that the City should look to assist with the program.

11.5. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Work With Proper Department To See What Can Be Done To Correct The Muddy Corner At Intersection Of Bridge Street Ad The VFW Highway In Front Of CVS.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted the need to repair for safety purposes.

11.6. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Work With Proper Department, MassDOT, Lowell Litter Krewe And Residents Of Centralville To Organize A Series Of Beautification Projects On VFW Highway With Implementation Of Wild Flowers.

In City Council, seconded by C. Leahy, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted the program has been in place for a while and is covered by grants and that there are a lot of options in that area. C. Yem noted trees could be included as well.

11.7. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Work With The Career Center And Local Businesses To Explore The Feasibility Of Creating A Partnership To Help Provide Professional Attire For Employment Interviews/Opportunities.

In City Council, seconded by C. Jenness, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted it would help people searching for jobs. C. Mercier commented on prior organizations and programs and that currently the Bridge Club of Greater Lowell has some programming.

11.8. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Provide City Council With An Update On All Fully Funded Positions That Are Currently Vacant In The FY23 Budget; Including Length Of Time They Have Been Vacant.

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



11.9. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Add Sayles Street To The Re-Paving List.

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

11.10. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Create Proclamation Stating That The City Council And The City Of Lowell Officially Recognize The Month Of May As AAPI, Asian American And Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

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

11.11. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Assess Staffing Shortages In The Law Department And Create A Plan To Fill Vacancies.

In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted shortages and the need to have proper coverage by the department.

11.12. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Report On The Status Of The Property On Race Street That Was Damaged In The November 2022 Water Main Break Incident And Whose Resident's Insurance Has Denied Coverage; Homeowner And Family Remain In Temporary Housing.

In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speakers. Philip Luy, Julee Sok and Yun Joi Choi, addressed the Council. C. Nuon noted the impact of the water main break and requested report on status of payments. C. Gitschier questioned if matter should be in Executive Session as it is dealing with possible litigation. Helene Thomlison (City Solicitor) noted any litigation should be discussed in Executive Session. C. Rourke noted any response by Manager should be discussed in Executive Session at appropriate time.

Motion by C. Scott, seconded by C. Rourke to take Item # 6.1C out of order. So voted.

11.13. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Direct The LFD To Produce Fire Prevention Materials, In Printed And Video Formats And In Multiple Relevant Languages; Printed Material To Be Distributed To Residents And Video To Be Aired On LTC And Perhaps Maybe Available On City Website.

In City Council, seconded by C. Scott, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted need for additional safety education and that there are resources to do that. C. Yem noted prior employment involved this matter and that resources are abundant at the State level.

11.14. C. Rourke - Req. City Mgr. Report On Feasibility Of Issuing Two Separate Tax Bills; One For City Operations And School Operations.

In City Council, seconded by C. Leahy, referred to City Manager. Adopted by Roll Call vote 8 yeas, 3 nays (C. Drinkwater, C. Gitschier, C. Jenness). So voted. C. Rourke noted it would provide transparency with budget breakdown. C. Yem noted taxing



procedures in New Hampshire. C. Drinkwater noted he could not support the motion regarding separate tax bills but favored providing more information to residents. C. Gitschier noted problem with wording surrounding billing and that information could be supplied within the budget. C. Scott noted support for additional information and not billing. C. Nuon noted focus should be on reporting. C. Rourke noted breakdown of costs would suffice. C. Mercier noted no need for added bill if information is provided. Conor Baldwin (CFO) provided quick synopsis of current breakdown. C. Gitschier noted means to add information. M. Chau supported going forward with information.

11.15. M. Chau/C. Yem - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Repair Collapsed Wall On The School Street Side Of The School Street Cemetery.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Yem noted condominium wall has been repaired now City must do their portion. M. Chau noted need to repair and not just placing a jersey barrier.

12. CITY COUNCIL - EXECUTIVE SESSION

12.1. Executive Session - To Discuss Matters Of Pending Litigation, Public Discussion Of Which May Have A Detrimental Effect On The City's Position.

In City Council, M. Chau stated reason for Executive Session, **Motion** by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Mercier to enter Executive Session for stated purpose and to adjourn from Executive Session. (8:40 PM). Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted. M. Chau stated that body would adjourn from the Executive Session.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In City Council, C. Robinson requested information regarding ARPA rollout. Manager Golden, Jr. noted the rollout procedures.

14. ADJOURNMENT

In City Council, **Motion** to Adjourn by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Nuon in Executive Session. So voted.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk