

## CITY COUNCIL MAY 23, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** May 23, 2023

**Time:** 6:30 PM

**Location:** City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA

### 1. ROLL CALL

Roll Call 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 of file by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Yem. So voted.

#### 2.2. Citation - UML Chancellor Julie Chen.

In City Council, **Motion** to accept and place of file by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Robinson. So voted. M. Chau presented citation and commented on achievements of Chancellor Chen, who thanked the body.

### **3. CITY CLERK**

#### **3.1. Minutes Of City Council Meeting May 16th, For Acceptance.**

In City Council, **Motion** to accept and place of file by C. Leahy, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted.

### **4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER**

#### **4.1. Motion Responses.**

In City Council, **Motion** to accept and place of file by C. Scott, seconded by C. Yem. So voted.

**(A) Motion Response - Baseball Tournament at LeLacheur** – C. Robinson noted the field is tournament ready. C. Gitschier commented on the report noting field is tournament ready.

**Motion** by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Gitschier to take Item #7.2 out of order. So voted.

**(B) Motion Response - Pein Air Co-working** – C. Jenness noted it was a cool idea for use in the future. C. Robinson noted the effort of the administration.

**(C) Motion Response - Open Streets** – C. Robinson noted this was an example of working to provide enjoyment in public spaces. C. Jenness noted the participation of NMCOCG in the process. C. Yem noted the program success in Montreal and commented on funding. C. Yem commented on the use of City hot spots for internet sharing in the City.

**(D) Motion Response - Lowell Experience** – C. Robinson noted all the partners coming together to uplift the City. C. Leahy noted all involved with the efforts of the City.

**(E) Motion Response - Bi-Weekly Conversion** – C. Nuon noted program and the efforts to move it forward and lauded the Audit staff for their diligence. Manager Golden, Jr. noted the long process involved and commended the Audit Department. C. Gitschier questioned holiday and detail payment issues at the police department. Auditor Oakes noted the issue with police software dealing with holiday pay. Manager Golden, Jr. noted the detail pay system of thirty days. C. Yem noted MUNIS was available to City.

**(F) Motion Response - 45 Merrimack Street** – C. Nuon commented on the building and the importance of project. Yovani Baez-Rose (DPD) noted which step in the process the project was currently in. C. Drinkwater commented on the tax incentive program for the project which may be causing delays. Ms. Baez-Rose commented on tax incentive program.

#### **4.2. Informational Items**

**Informational - FY2024 Budget Update** Manager Golden, Jr. commented on updated schedule for FY24 Budget hearing indicated June 6<sup>th</sup> for presentation of budget and June 20<sup>th</sup> for public hearing. **Motion** by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Mercier to have Special Meeting for FY24 Budget presentation and hearing on June 6, 2023 (Presentation) and June 20, 2023 (Public Hearing). So voted.

**Informational - Update on Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) Municipality Equality Index (MEI)** – Manager Golden, Jr. commented on the efforts of the administration to increase the score on the index and that the work continues; further noted the DEI position posting has closed and interviews will start. C. Jenness noted this was a great step forward and scores will increase.

#### **4.3. Communication - City Manager Request Out Of State Travel (1) Parking.**

In City Council, **Motion** to adopt by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Mercier. Adopted per Roll Call vote 10 yeas, 1 absent (C. Robinson). So voted.

**Motion** to bundle and waive second reading for Items #5.1 to #5.5, inclusive by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Nuon. So voted.

### **5. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER**

#### **5.1. Vote - Accept Gift From Kkonde Family.**

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

#### **5.2. Vote - Apply/Accept/Expend CSO Grant – Wastewater.**

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

#### **5.3. Vote - Transfer \$350,000 - Personal Information Insurance.**

In City Council, Read twice, **Motion** to adopt by C. Scott, seconded by C. Rourke. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted. C. Gitschier questioned if notice

had gone out to prior employees of City regarding cyber-attack. Manager Golden, Jr. outlined notice process thus far focused on current employees. C. Gitschier noted the need to attempt and notify prior employees if possible. C. Gitschier questioned process of procuring software protection for City employees. C. Gitschier questioned expert opinion regarding choice of vendor. Conor Baldwin (CFO) noted item was procured through emergency procedures as approved by the State and noted the City relationship with the vendor. **Motion** by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Mercier to request Manager provide report regarding transfers from the Manager's Contingency Fund during past fiscal year. So voted. C. Gitschier requested MUNIS report be made available on website. C. Jenness requested copy of cyber two year contract.

#### **5.4. Vote - Transfer \$394,123 - Salaries And Wages.**

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

#### **5.5. Vote - Transfer \$707,888.16 – DPW.**

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

### **6. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)**

In City Council, none.

### **7. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS**

#### **7.1. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Have The Police Department Provide Extra Patrols The Car Wash Located At 81 Rogers Street.**

In City Council, seconded by C. Scott, referred to City Manager. So vote. C. Gitschier requested North Common be added for extra patrols as issues are growing in both areas. C. Scott noted noise is getting louder as weather improves. C. Yem commented on issues arising out of ball games being played at North Common.

#### **7.2. C. Robinson/C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Draft A Letter On Behalf Of The City Council And Community Stakeholders To Be Sent To State Department Of Housing Newly Appointed Secretary, As Well As, Sheriff Kotoujian, Sen. Cindy Friedman And The "Restoration Center" Team To Explore Feasibility Of Creating A Pilot Program Utilizing The Former**

## **Superior Courthouse To Address The Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Homelessness And Housing Crisis Impacting Our Community.**

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So vote. Registered speaker, Karen Frederick, addressed the Council. C. Robinson noted the need for a commonsense approach and that altering building will need many partners involved. C. Robinson noted the City should not have to foot whole bill for services and the responsibility should be shared. C. Gitschier noted City has been forefront with services when the opened shelter many years prior drawing many to City for services. C. Gitschier commented on possible Stackpole Street building being capable of providing services. Manager Golden, Jr. commented on discussions surrounding that building. C. Mercier noted approach was best practice but did not agree with the location suggested. C. Jenness noted the goal was to find solutions and decide on best area. C. Rourke questioned status of the Superior Court House. Manager Golden, Jr. commented on process of State to release building and that it was a different regarding District Court House as the latter building process is much further down the road. C. Rourke noted that focus about the use of Tewksbury State Hospital should never be off the table. C. Drinkwater noted that all vacant properties should be explored as to potential use and that partners should understand all elements of homelessness. C. Nuon noted homelessness involves many factors and spectrums. C. Scott requested clarity on the motion which C. Robinson provided. C. Leahy noted exploring options can create opportunity. C. Gitschier noted if wish to help people services must be readily available for them. M. Chau noted the approach is acceptable but opinions differ on location and as such, as indicated by discussion, that all areas should be reviewed.

**Motion** by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Jenness to take Item #7.3 out of order. So voted.

### **7.3. C. Robinson - Req. Mayor Create A Restorative Center Ad Hoc Committee Focused On Exploration On Utilizing The Superior Courthouse Property.**

In City Council, seconded by C. Jenness, referred to Mayor. So vote. C. Robinson noted the need for committee as options are explored. C. Nuon noted involvement of many partners on the committee.

**Motion** by C. Leahy, seconded by C. Gitschier to take Item #7.1 and #7.4 out of order. So voted.

**7.4. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have DPD Provide GIS Mapped Report On Potential Number, As Well As, Locations Of ADUs If Proposed Change Were To Be Adopted.**

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager as amended. So vote. C. Robinson noted possible use of external buildings for ADU could be reported easier for data use. C. Gitschier commented on ease of variances obtained by the ZBA Board of Appeals. C. Drinkwater noted report for detached units in the City. C. Gitschier noted that the motion does not state that. Motion to amend by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Rourke to have report specific to detached units on properties. So voted.

**8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

In City Council, C. Yem commented on Memorial Day events. C. Gitschier noted it was DPW recognition day and noted efforts of the department. C. Robinson noted recent program for women-owned businesses. C. Rourke requested Veteran's Memorials be prepared for the upcoming holiday.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:31PM.

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Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk