

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.  
GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Chair Soto called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present: Clr. Marsan, Clr. Pesce, Clr. Santos, Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, and Chair Soto. Clr. MacLaren was absent.

Acceptance of the Agenda

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Pesce to accept the agenda.

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Simard to amend to move Organizational Business after Public Participation and TR-26-9 as the next item of business after Organizational Business. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to accept as amended. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation/Moment of Silence

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and remained standing. Vice-Chair Pesce read a quote from Margaret Read “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed for the citizens can change the world.

The City Council observed a Moment of Silence for Edward A. Miller, Luis Gustavo Nunez, Caracas, Heraldo Campos, Victor Manuel Diaz Padilla, Luis Beltran, Yanez Cruz, Herber Sanchez Dominguez, Alex Preti, and Jonathan Stackelin.

Councilor Santos gave the Invocation for evening.

Public Participation

Ruth Nora Estes, 141 Tenney Street, Arlington neighborhood, and Kalani Mercado, 141 Tenney Street spoke. This Saturday during their satellite library arts and crafts program, children’s staff work together to create thank you cards for the DPW staff and Mr. Bower as a meaningful way to express our appreciation. They want to recognize the hard work and dedication that goes into keeping our streets clean and safe, helping ensure that children can travel safely to and from their bus stops and homes each day. Please know that your efforts do not go unnoticed and is deeply appreciated by our families. They also created a special thank you card for Mayor Beauregard to share our sincere gratitude for all that you have done and can continue to do for our families and our neighborhood. Your leadership, commitment, and continued support make a lasting and positive impact on our community. Kalani gave the Mayor and Pat Bower a thank you card. Nora Estes spoke in support for the CDBG funding as it helps them at the Lena Lahey Community Center to offer services such after school homework program, summer basketball league, Saturday movies and crafts, karate, yoga and so Much more to over 130 youth annually.

Linda Soucy, 10 Kirk Street, spoke on three different items on the agenda. First is the TR-26-9 Acceptance of the FY 25 CDBG Funding. This funding is used for housing, rehab projects for low income families, adult literacy training, and neighborhood based youth services like what we offer at the Lahey Community Center, after school homework center, summer basketball leagues, Saturday movies and crafts, karate and yoga, and so much more to over 130

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

youth annually. The funding comes directly from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Council just must accept the funding coming in this evening. On TO-26-6 the winter parking ban, she wanted to say what a great job DPW did and a big thank you to the residents of the Arlington Neighborhood for removing their cars from the streets. She personally feels that just knowing that the new ban was put in place with the increased fines to \$100, had an impact on people removing their cars. They reached out at Mann Inc, called people on every street to let them know and told them to tell their neighbors. The police handed out flyers with the new information. The Mayor and the police posted it on their Facebook, and we also posted it on Facebook. She believes that because of that the cars were removed from the street. She would like to see it pass and would like just to use the blue lights, the flashing blue lights that he had talked about previously. She knows there is a fee that goes with that but why cannot we use The fines to pay for that. It is about \$25,000. She is sure we can figure out how to get those blue lights up. TO-26-5 the position of the Sanitation Zero Waste coordinator. She believes this position is needed to cut down our contamination rates in Methuen. This educational piece is much needed to develop plans to let people know what you can and cannot recycle. She learned at their neighborhood meeting months ago you cannot put plastic bags in your recycling. She had no idea. She has been putting plastic bags in her recycling for years, but you cannot put any type of plastic bags in your recycling. As she drives through town, she constantly sees Market Basket and other bags hanging out of people's recycling. She feels this person would be able to address this and that would take down on our contamination rate. Please do not forget their annual golf tournament on May 18<sup>th</sup> at 8 a.m. They appreciate all the support they can get.

Harleen Kouchar, Literacy Program Coordinator at Nevins Library, thanked the Council for their continued support of their literacy services. Due to their support the library has been able to offer English language classes. This past year, they have expanded to digital literacy. Their student who are all adult students have been able to get jobs, have been able to sign up for specialized training, go to college. So many of them this year have enrolled in colleges. Digital literacy really helps them become better assimilated in society. One of the things they are focusing on this year with your support is on making families more digitally literate. That is a new program they will be starting soon. She stated she is grateful for Council's support.

Organizational Business

- Adoption of City Council Rules and Procedures (as amended January 20<sup>th</sup>) Clarification language for agenda deadline

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve. UPON VOTE:  
8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)  
VOTE: UNANIMOUS

**TR-26-9** Resolution Authorizing Acceptance and Expenditure of FY'25 Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant Community Development Fund

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Councilor Valley asked the CAFO if this is a reoccurring grant every year.

CAFO Duprey said the city receives this grant every year.

Councilor Valley asked how many department positions are funded.

CAFO Duprey said they do not fund any full positions out of there. We do get some administrative support from the grant financially, which offsets some of the budget. We do not have any salaries that come out of there directly.

Councilor Valley said she saw \$238,000 going toward salaries. \$222,000 is the program coordinator, rehab specialist and the finance officer, on the back of page 2.

CAFO Duprey said some of these it funds a portion of the position. for example, the division director, etc., we get to take administrative costs from that. These do not fund the full positions, they just offset some of them. In the economic and development budget, in the general fund, there is an offsetting line with the grants. That comes from here. They are not full positions. The rehab specialist is a different position. That is an outsourced position. That is not something that we hire and have a full-time position for.

Councilor Valley asked if these positions are going to be included in the budget.

CAFO the ones that these help offset? Councilor Valley yes. CAFO Duprey responded, yes.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**Reading and Acceptance of Minutes from Previous Meetings:**

June 16, 2025 Water Enterprise Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m.

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve.

Councilor Valley questioned why Council is accepting minutes from seven months ago.

Chair Soto said some of the minutes are in backlog. Once they are produced, they are submitted to the Council for review and approval. There are minutes that the Solicitor is requesting from 2010, 2020, 2021 that must be done. Once they are prepared you will see them come across your desk to be voted on.

UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 1 present (Clr. R. DiZoglio) 1 absent (Clr. Maclaren)

Municipal Budget Public Hearing, June 16, 2025 at 6:15 p.m.

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve. UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 1 present (Clr. R. DiZoglio) 1 absent (Clr. Maclaren)

June 16, 2025 special meeting Municipal Budget MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve. UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 1 present (Clr. R. DiZoglio) 1 absent (Clr. Maclaren)

January 5, 2026 regular meeting MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**Proclamations/Correspondence:** Recognition – Outstanding Service – Stephen Angelo Recreation Director MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Simard to Proclaim.

The City Council presented Superintendent Angelo with an Award and living plant. Chair Soto declared a brief recess. Members present: Clr. Marsan, Clr. Pesce, Clr. Santos, Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, and Chair Soto. Clr. MacLaren was absent.

Consideration of Appointments: None

Presentations/Projects/Department Updates: None

### Mayor's Report

Mayor Beauregard expressed his condolences to Jill Stackelin and the entire Stackelin family following the passing of Jonathan Stackelin, an employee in our DPW department. Speaking personally, he went to school with Jonathan, fellow members of the Methuen High School Class of 2007, and thought the world of him. This is a tremendous loss to our city. He will send an update to the entire city workforce with information about the upcoming services, which he will also share with the City Council. Jonathan will be deeply missed.

We experienced another tragedy in Essex County in recent days with the sinking of the Lily Jean, a fishing vessel out of Gloucester. Seven crew members were lost at sea and this has been absolutely devastating to the City of Gloucester. He has reached out to Mayor Lundberg and Senator Tarr to express out condolences and offer support to the people of Gloucester from all of us here in Methuen.

Today there was a natural gas explosion in Nashua New Hampshire. He has been following that story and staying in touch with Chief Toto. We have not been called in to send mutual aid to Nashua yet. We are ready to respond if we are asked to do so.

Last week, Governor Healey filed her fiscal year 27 budget. According to the preliminary cherry sheet for Methuen, our Chapter 78 is rising from roughly \$71 million in fiscal year 26 to \$72.6 million in fiscal year 27. That is an increase of 2.3% which is what most other municipalities in the Commonwealth saw with a few exceptions, Methuen. Methuen's unrestricted general government aid is rising from \$6.7 million in fiscal year 26 to \$6.9 million dollars in fiscal year 27. We are seeing increases, of course, that we like in local aid, but we are going to need to enter the budget planning cycle for fiscal year 27 with our eyes wide open. Costs are continuing to rise for every city and town in Massachusetts, and vastly outpace the aid that we get from the Commonwealth and uncertainties at the federal level are not helping. We have been off to an early start in terms of budget planning which is excellent. They will keep Council posted as they prepare to roll out our municipal budget for the upcoming fiscal year. It is good to get that early start, so we do not find ourselves in a position like we were in in recent years where, you know we were right up to the very last minute.

Council may have heard the Marsh school was closed today due to heating and pipe issues. The problem was that the outdoor gas line system was frozen and caused a disruption to the boilers late Saturday, which in turn caused pipes to leak in five classrooms. The custodial crew has been working quite literally around the clock to clean up and the necessary fixes. He

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

was at the school until around 3:00 a.m. this morning. Councilor Drew joined him for the bulk of that time as well. We can personally attest to the hard work of the custodians and the vendors and their diligence to deal with the issue. The vendor technicians were also at the Marsh all night. The building now is clean, it is dry. It is warm. School will be open tomorrow at the Marsh, and we are also assessing what improvements can be made to prevent this disruption from happening again. Separately from this issue, the RFP for the boiler replacement project at the Marsh has been up. It closes on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The RFP was published on January 21<sup>st</sup>. We have funding available in the CIP. By way of going about this the right way, we can move forward with that project in the coming months.

Doctor Galowski was invited to take part in a one on one meeting with Commissioner Martinez from Dese. That of course was following the meeting orchestrated by Senator Pyano with your help, Chair Soto, in recent weeks. The Commissioner invited her acting superintendent to meet with him to learn more about his accelerating achievement initiative. That was great to hear. He is grateful for the strength and connection between our city and our schools with Dese that stems from that meeting.

Regarding school events, Methuen High School's 40<sup>th</sup> annual Science Fair was held this morning. Unfortunately, he had to miss the event due to his attendance at the Merrimack Valley Chambers Mayors and Managers breakfast at the same time. He was told the students did a fantastic job as they always do.

He invited Council to join Methuen Public School students at Nevins Library this Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. as they seek community input in the development of the vision of a graduate. It is a workshop that has been developed and will be run by Methuen students, and the purpose is to serve as an aspirational outline of the skills, knowledge, and traits we hope our students will have upon graduation.

Regarding some RFPs that are in progress, the RFP for grant services that he mentioned during the last meeting is on its way to being posted this week. The RFP for a cleaning service vendor for the Quinn building will close tomorrow. That will be opened tomorrow. The trash and recycling RFP are up in time as we hoped for today and will remain open for bidders to submit proposals until February 18<sup>th</sup>. We are on track to meet our timeline for that. His expectation is that we will have a new contract in front of Council for consideration before the end of March. Speaking of trash and recycling the carts we ordered they are on the way. He will continue to keep the Council posted about each of those initiatives.

He is proud to announce tonight, something new. This week, he is signing an executive order creating the City of Methuen's first ever parental leave program for city employees. This was a new benefit provided to Methuen educators in their new contracts last year, but it has never been available to employees on the city side. In his opinion, no employee should be forced to bank sick time just to welcome a child, whether by birth or adoption. This has historically been a rare benefit for employees in the context of municipal government, and he's excited that we're finally getting with the times and making a meaningful investment in our municipal workforce that will hopefully serve as a valuable tool to help us retain and attract folks as we keep trying to remain competitive in the context of retaining employees.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

He is grateful for the Council's shoutout for Superintendent Angelo. He does outstanding work for our city day in and day out and we are blessed to have him leading our Parks and Recreation division.

He also wants to give a shout out to our DPW crews. They have been out there in the freezing cold temperatures dealing with water main breaks. He was in touch with Councilor Valley over the weekend regarding an especially complicated one on Danton Drive this weekend. They do a great job for our residents and he wants them to be recognized too.

This past week we had a snowstorm which he has been calling Armageddon storm, a storm we had not seen in roughly ten years or so in terms of the amount of snow we got. As Linda Soucy mentioned residents did an incredible job during this storm adhering to the new winter parking ban rules. Overnight, when we were first getting that snow on Sunday night, he joined Director Bower who drove across the city plowing with him and they through the Arlington neighborhood and there wasn't a single car to be seen on the streets, which made for a much more efficient cleanup. We also got to jam out with Steely Dan, which is always great.

He acknowledged our police officers for their recent advocacy for a new mental health wellness program. He signed off on implementing that last week. This is going to be a new support system for our officers in the context of mental health which is great.

Speaking of shoutouts and recognition, he is inviting residents, visitors, and employees to share their thoughts about and their experiences with our local government through a new online feedback form. The form provides an easy way to share compliments, report concerns, offer suggestions and the like. Every little feedback we get helps us better understand the community's needs, improve municipal services, but also strengthen the municipal workforce for everyone. It will help us with our shout out section and our internal newsletter. It is always great to recognize our staff. Individuals can visit [Methuen.gov](http://Methuen.gov) to access the feedback form. Regarding upcoming events Y'es Table on the east end will be holding a Chinese New Year celebration this Saturday at 12 p.m.

He mentioned before our first Dominican Independence Day celebration will be held on Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at City Hall. There will be a nice breakfast and it will be a fun event.

Our friends at the Nevins Library are holding a retirement party for Kristen McLeod, the outgoing director. That will be held on Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. He hopes Council will join them for that.

First Church Congregational 144<sup>th</sup> George Washington Dinner will be held on Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>.

The first official Methuen 300 event, a tricentennial concert featuring the Firebird Pops Orchestra, will be held at the high school on March 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

As mentioned during the last meeting the Methuen Saint Patrick's Day, he should say the Merrimack Valley's Saint Patrick's Day Parade now held in Methuen, which is being organized by a group of residents led by Councilor Drew with the help of Councilor Ryan DiZoglio, will be held on Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> beginning at 10 a.m. at Nicolson Stadium. There was an event at the cottage. He shared that the City of Methuen is now the place where Saint Patrick's Day is no longer just a one-day event, it is now a two-month celebration. That is

fantastic. A great new tradition for our city. He will keep sharing reminders about the parade and the Methuen 300 events as we get closer.

Councilor Valley thanked Director Bower and DPW staff for the great job they did on Saturday. That allowed Shaw's distribution center to continue the operation with the second shift that was 200 employees. Thank you very much and you did a great job. The water main was broken. They have a schedule for 200 employees at 3:00 p.m. for the second shift. Since DPW and the Mayor responded so fast and Director Bower was in constant communication with the plant manager and kept her informed throughout the repair and the completion of the job.

Councilor Marsan asked if there is an update on the rezoning of the two schools.

Mayor Beauregard said that is something they are discussing, the next steps. They are looking at exactly the pathway that we would need to take to achieve that. That is something he will share, maybe a quick status update at the next meeting after we firm up the specific details to get that done. That is something he is anxious to accomplish this Spring.

Councilor DiZoglio gave a shout out to the Mayor for opening up Ditson Place during the snowstorm. A lot of his neighborhood, the central west area, did not have parking and they had to drive down to the stadium. And for the elderly that are in his neighborhood, it just would not be able to be suitable for them. On his request, the Mayor got it done with 30/40 minutes. He appreciates that. There were six or seven cars that were parked down there. That helped them a lot. He wanted to give a shout out to the Mayor as well.

#### CAFO Report

CAFO Duprey provided two handouts. One was the updated Capital Improvement Project report, updated as those projects are coming along. Council will see the approved pending contracts column. That is where she put anything that is coming through her office. Council may not have seen those yet. They are in process, but she put them on there to make sure that we are accounting for them as soon as they get passed through. Nothing is specific there that she wanted to bring up. It is just a status update.

The next document is what she wanted to bring to the Council's attention. Now that we have had quite a taste of winter, she thought it would be good to provide a status of our snow and ice accounts. It is not great. We have already exceeded our budget by just over \$1 million. That is more than we have expended in the last, at least five years, out of that account and it is February 2nd. She is just bringing it forward. This is kind of a standard thing that happens that we go over this budget and we will be back later in the Spring. They usually wait until the winter is over so that they have a solid number of where we are. She and the Mayor will bring forward a solution to how we want to cover that this Spring. She wanted to give everyone an idea of what that is looking like already. That is going to be something that we must address this Spring. She noted for the new Councilors we can go over appropriation on these lines. they are one of the very few that they can do that per Mass General Law. But going over budget is standard and allowed as far as part of Mass General Law.

Mayor Beauregard said this is something for any new Councilors, but anyone who is watching as well. This is an annual conversation that we typically have with the Council during

budget planning time when it comes time to make reductions in the budget, this is one area and he knows tonnage was the other one last year, but this is the area where typically the budget will come in at a lower number for snow and ice, simply because of the fact that we have to pay that expenditure either way, just to move the snow. But ultimately, the question comes down as to whether to budget that at the outset or simply make up the difference with say free cash, whatever source we go to at the end. This is something that is a strategic discussion at budget time, knowing that either way that it is a bill that we must cover.

Chair Soto said currently Council receives the impact statement the day after we submit the agenda. Last week we did the agenda Wednesday. Our impact statement was received by Thursday. She encouraged Councilors if they have questions, as soon as you get that, any questions/concerns or clarification, please reach out to the CAFO.

### **Requests of Councilors**

- Update regarding the status of the RFPs for garbage and recycling services (Req. of Chair Soto)
- Update on litigation regarding the consolidation of the School and City IT Departments (Req. of Clr. Soto)

Mayor Beauregard gave an update regarding the IT consolidation because this has been a topic of interest. There was a meeting of the Charter Review Committee last week where this came up. When he initially pushed for this consolidation last year, it was done so under the context of Chapter 278 of the Acts of 2018 which provided local government with the ability to make various adjustments, consolidate various functions to save money, doing so under Chapter 278. Then the issue though is although that is a state statute approve by the legislature, there's also Chapter 71, Section 37, which speaks directly to consolidation of city and school functions. The issue that we have is that Chapter 278 of the Acts of 2018, in Chapter 71, Section 37M, don't exactly jive by way of the way you can accomplish this and given the fact that Chapter 71, Chapter 37M clearly outlines a process from 278 that states that if you want to achieve consolidation of say, city and school functions, you need to do so by way of a vote of the City Council but also the School Committee. We're at a point now where, this ongoing lawsuit is silly, a waste of money, frankly, at this point, given the fact that, you know I think that the discussion we had in court with the judge clearly indicated that although we had 278 on the books, she was really looking at Chapter 71, Section 37, which provides a clear roadmap. Going forward, based on his own conversations with members of the school committee, there is an interest in having options on the table that would save money for the district, while also of course, being cognizant of maintaining high operational standards and not impacting the way that we are providing these services to the schools. This is something that is an ongoing conversation, but he wants to get us to a point where hypothetically we are going to be dealing with a difficult budget. If we could have a framework that the school committee is on board with and the City Council that would achieve those cost savings, but also ensure that we are maintaining those proper standards of services we're providing by way of it to the schools. That is something from what he is heard in offhand discussions. It is something that folks would be generally open to. It is common sense idea that he thinks is widely embraced. Given the fact that there is the state statute that directly addresses this, we have a path forward. It is a matter of continuing this conversation and getting us to a point where we can have a strategy moving forward that will get the votes across the board to get this done. There are some nuances in the

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

statute between 278 and 37M that have caused some conflict. Despite that we have a path forward. Something that he mentioned previously in an interview with the Eagle Tribune was that, aside from IT, we've already gotten to a point where we have an excellent picture of what consolidation, what increased collaboration between the city and school should look like by way of the collaboration regarding facilities. He pointed out the example of how one of the main drivers of the pest issues at the Timony school, it was the overgrown trees and brush in the courtyards at the Timony. These overgrown trees were coming right up against the building. That provides easy access for rodents to be able to get from the courtyard to the building and cause all sorts of trouble. In a situation like that, typically a municipality might go out to get some quotes from a vendor to see who can come in and take care of trimming all that back and cleaning that up. Instead of doing that, we have those resources in DPW. We have the equipment. We have the staff. Rather than going out to pay a third-party vendor to that work, we can do it in house. We did that and that was tremendously successful. The school district leadership was on board with that. The school committee was enthusiastic about it. All of us were happy with the results of that as well. Given the fact that we have that statutory framework, but also, we have a great picture of it already working at the local level. That is the type of conversation we ought to have not adversarial and gets the job done at the end of the day.

- Discussion on the meeting with DESE (Req. of Clr. DiZoglio) The DESE meeting has reaped benefits for us as well
- Issues with garbage barrels and solutions (Req. of Clr. DiZoglio) Aside from that we have everything else here moving along, the RFP, the barrel situation is being sorted out with that upcoming delivery.

Chair Soto to the Mayor regarding the IT consolidation, member Willette indicated that he wanted to place that on your agenda for the next meeting. She is not sure whether that has been requested or not. You mentioned 37M. If they place that on their agenda and it is voted down, then there is no want to really consolidate. If they vote no, then they do not want it. If it gets voted down, there is nothing that we do here. If it passes there, then it would come to this Council floor. But the endgame is Mr. Mayor, the Mayor would have to be on board with that. She asked if that is something that the Mayor still wants to do. Her urgency to ask that on the floor is because at that unbenounced to Council he had an emergency or something you were not present. Your chief of staff was here. He stated on your behalf that yeah you wanted to do this. She asked if that is something the Mayor wants to do if it is passed at the school committee and brought to Council. Then the end game is we both want it and unless you say execute it is not going to happen.

Mayor Beauregard said his ultimate objective is to save money (#1) and (#2) be able to freed up resources so that we're not in this constant annual conversation about teacher layoffs, if there are areas where we can truly save money. But also, keep in mind that we do not want as he mentioned impact the IT services we are providing to our students, teachers, and the like. He had a conversation with member Willette. He did indicate he was ready for a plan at the next meeting. Mayor Beauregard said he wants to do this the right way. After having gone through the process of dealing with the lawsuit, etc., he wants to make sure that we measure twice and cut once instead of going the other way around. Rather than going ahead and putting a framework on the table for a vote, he would prefer to have in essence some workshops with the school talk through exactly the way that they would like to see this work. He is on board 100%.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

He has been on board 100%. Given the context that we need to save money, we need to make things more efficient. We need some structural reforms, no doubt. But at the same time, we need to get the votes of the school committee. He does not want to waste time pursuing a plan that is just going to be shot out of the sky, right out of the gate. It would have to be a framework that passes muster with the City Council. The long and short of it is this is something that he wants to work towards in terms of cost savings reform, but wants it to be done in a collaborative way with the School Committee, with the City Council so that it's an area we can tackle properly and have it done the right way that has the support of the public, the support of our elected bodies. He does not think the adversarial nature of the discussion is productive. That is not really getting us anywhere. He has also expressed the fact that we already have right significant amount of leadership upheaval in the district. Now, granted, there is an argument to be made that this is the time for this conversation, and he is on board if we can get the support of the school committee. The bottom line is we would not have a plan coming to the school committee for a consolidation or a reorg and then have that pass and come to Council if he were not putting it forward and advocating for it.

Chair Soto the discussion by Charter Commission was to add consolidation to that Charter. At that point you still must be on board to do it because if not...

Mayor Beauregard said any consolidation along these lines, it would be offered by him. The framework would be offered by him for the School Committee's consideration and discussion. He wants to be careful with the specific time. He wants to get it right. Do it the correct way and have a plan that gets the Council's vote and the School Committee's vote rather than run around in circles and have this be a constant conflict. Once we get to that point, he thinks that is our path forward.

Councilor DiZoglio commented he was on the School Committee when they decided to file that lawsuit. The question was, there was no plan in place, and a lot of them were very discouraged of who would be saving money. "*Was it going to be money for the school department or for the city saving money or both?*" They did not have legitimate answers. He thinks what the Mayor is trying to say of doing it the right way, if we had a plan in place of how the service was going to be done, how is our department people still going to do the Chromebooks, the breakdown of who is going to be in charge of what and at the end of the day is that money coming back to the schools or is it going to go back into the city. In supporting the Mayor just because he was on the other side, that the only way you're going to get the members of the school committee on board for some of those members, you need to provide them with the plan. He asked if there is a deadline where the Mayor wants to present a plan. That would be more assuring for all of them. he is totally in support that the Mayor needs to bring a plan to the school committee before they will even vote. he reiterated if there is a deadline.

Mayor Beauregard said he thinks that this is a good discussion to have, a good project to tackle in the lead up to when we adopt our budget. This of course comes down to a budget question. When it came to the original executive order that triggered this whole conversation, the goal was to begin that process of information sharing between the city, the school district and there if you kind of get under the hood of this broader conflict, he thinks that on the school side they have their own system, their own people, etc., in place. On the city side, we have our own system, our own people. Stemming from that aspect of things, there was this concern where who is staying, who is, what are we going to be looking at in that context. It got to be a

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

very, almost personal conversation when he is trying to keep that out of it, where all he is looking to do is trying to keep that out of it. All he is looking to do is find a way to do two things, as he has referenced, and he will continue to reference saving money, making government more efficient, but also ensuring that we're maintaining the operational standards that we need to maintain. Another point that he wanted to make, he knows that the Charter allows for the City Council to proposed certain reorg plans and the like. That is also a function of the administration. The path forward that he is recommending in that he would like to pursue is that given the fact that there is widespread interest in this, he was the one who started this whole thing last year. We need to have him, as the Mayor and the Chair of the School Committee, be the bridge. We do not want to be wasting our time. We do not want to be on this constant wheel going around and around, not actually getting a solution. The only way to do that is to have a conversation, have a series of conversations, a series of workshops and planning conversations and have a framework that is developed in conjunction with the school committee and the city council. If you do not get the votes on the school committee or if you do not get the votes for it on the city council, it is yet another waste of time. His goal is to find a way to achieve these cost savings and increase efficiency, but in an efficient way that gets the votes needed for passage rather than more conflict. We were talking about the buckets where the savings lie? Keep in mind t hat at the end of day he knows we get stuck in this pattern sometimes of thinking, oh, city, schools, it is all the same bucket.

**Public Service:**

**Grants: None**

**Licenses:** Gamestop #3596 184 Haverhill Street, Methuen, MA 01844 (renewal)

**MOTION BY:** Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve. UPON

**VOTE:** 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**Vehicle for Hire License:** Beroea Transportation, LLC, 142 Pleasant Valley Street, Apt. 180-203, Methuen, MA 01844 (New)

**MOTION BY:** Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve. UPON

**VOTE:** 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**Contract(s):**

**C-26-69** Motorola Solutions, Inc., 500 West Monroe Street, Chicago, IL 60661 for 8000 Base Radio, astro system release, power efficiency package and rackmounts in the Amount of \$60,199.44

**MOTION BY:** Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve. UPON

**VOTE:** 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**C-26-70** Cyber Communication, Inc., 56 Holton Street, Woburn, MA 01801 for VHF Antennas and cables at Forest St. Tank, and Pie Hill Receiver Site in the Amount of \$37,083.88

**MOTION BY:** Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve. UPON

**VOTE:** 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**Other Officers and Committee Reports** Chair Soto reported that Councilor MacLaren had her first meeting and will be doing her report for the Ad hoc Committee for the sound and lighting in this room at the next meeting.

Councilor Marsan reported they held their first Economic Development Committee meeting. They went over their goals, etc. At their next meeting scheduled they will have a better analysis of what their true goals are and how they can assist Jack Wilson. And with the new coordinator if that person is on board and hopefully, they can have a lot of input with that coordinator assisting them and with the businesses of the community who are getting to permit and licenses. Those are the goals.

Chair Soto announced Councilor Simard is part of the Veterans Affairs Committee with Councilor DiZoglio.

Councilor DiZoglio said they would be setting up that meeting tonight as well as the public safety committee.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **Resolutions:**

**TR-26-3** - A Resolution Accepting a Conservation Easement at 799 Lowell Street, Methuen, MA pursuant to M.G.L. c. 40, Sec. 8C.

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**TR-26-4** - Resolution Approving a Tax Increment Financing Agreement by and Among the City of Methuen, Eagle Management Co., LLC (DBA Eagle Woodworking), and 189 North Main Street, LLC (*Requested by the Mayor and Director of Economic and Community Development, Jack Wilson*) MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Drew to approve. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**TR-26-5** – Resolution Requesting Comprehensive Condition, Safety and Capital Needs Audit of All City-Owned Parks and Public Spaces – (*Sponsored by Clr. John Drew*) MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**TR-26-6** – Resolution Requesting Comprehensive Facilities Condition, Risk and Capital Needs Audit of All Non-School City-Owned Buildings and Facilities – (*Sponsored by Clr. John Drew*) MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve.

Councilor Santos said she would like to prioritize the buildings i.e., City Hall, Police Department, Fire Department and DPW and a possible motion to amend if needed. She spoke with Councilor Drew. Once the audit is done, they should bring these buildings to the table so they can come up with a plan on what needs to be done. There is so many ideas and we all know that we need these facilities to be rebuilt and replaced but need something on paper.

Chair Soto: to better understand the amendment Councilor Soto you are asking for this and you mentioned referenced you and Councilor Drew spoke. Councilor Drew said they spoke earlier this afternoon on this. Councilor Soto had some questions and he had reference that he believes this would be part of the RFP process. He didn't have a chance to speak with

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

the Solicitor on this or the Mayor that the RFP would just have to be written in that those five properties that you're looking at would have to be, once they're done, we want those immediately brought to the Council as quickly as possible before they continue on with the remainder of the audit. That is what they discussed. Councilor Santos agreed.

Chair Soto questioned where the language would be added to TR-26-6 to prioritize those buildings in the RFP. If they are not mentioned, how do we know that the person is going to prioritize them?

Mayor Beauregard said he appreciates the sense of urgency such as the fire station which is in deplorable condition. DPW building is in deplorable condition, the Quinn building, etc., Right now we are engaging actively with a feasibility study, needs assessment. Originally it was the public works element, but we are building into that with the vendor, the public safety side of it as well. That is something that is being dealt with right now as we speak. In the context of urgency that would certainly help meet that. One thing to keep in mind typically with these consultants is, we could try to build and ask them to prioritize certain things and give us multiple reports, having the priority ones first and then a follow up presentation. Typically, what they will do is they will do their work in terms of an assessment and then they will come back with one complete presentation that goes through everything versus breaking it down and doing certain things first or not. If that is something you want to include, perhaps something we could consider in the RFP, then that might make sense. But in a functional sense, it might be interesting to see how that plays out.

Councilor Drew said he did not see a need for it to be into this directly, as more a directive to the Mayor when writing the RFP. He did not see where it would fit properly. At that point we are directing the Mayor to do certain things, and it is not really within our jurisdiction to do that. It is more a request from Council to make sure that the RFP is represented to understand that those top five buildings are the hot items for us, knowing that is a major issue that we see. So, we are not going to continue to throw good money at bad so we can be better informed as we continue down the path throughout the year.

Chair Soto asked the Solicitor for clarification on directing the Mayor to do or not to do through a resolution.

Solicitor O'Neill said Council could request that the Mayor do that if they want to include language that says something "to the extent feasible the council requests the Mayor to ask the consultant to prioritize the following city buildings. There is a lot of variables here with so many buildings. The Mayor can do it in the RFP without additional language. This is a comprehensive audit. It is difficult to specify what you are looking for without starting it.

Councilor Santo asked if there is a deadline on when the consultants are going to have the report ready.

Mayor Beauregard indicated Director Bower has been in touch with Wesson and Sampson, the contractor that is helping us with this. They had a meeting with a representative from Wesson and Sampson to go through some concept plans that they have done in this context. Council could add additional details.

Director Bower said there is no deadline. It is open ended with them. They are waiting on the city to provide locations. He has been working with this consultant since 2018. They

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

have gone around and around on everything they are going to need. They have done all the work they can do up to a point where they need a location to complete the design. This is DPW facility specifically. They met with the Mayor, talked about different locations, different options they have. There were some good positive thoughts on that. The idea now is with the condition of the police and fire facilities that we do a similar look at what they are going to need. Basically they meet with everybody there and they'll have an idea of certain space that's required for sergeants and captains and things like that and they'll come up with what you need for a baseline square footage for a police department. What it comes down to and the struggle the city is having is where that goes, if it stays at the Quinn building, how do we run a police department there while we are doing these renovations. There is no deadline on it. they are kind of waiting on the city to provide them some information.

Councilor Santos said nothing is on paper. It is just an idea. They are waiting for us to decide on moving forward. A decision needs to be made on whether the police department, the fire, where are these buildings going to be placed? It is a beautiful idea to have them all together in the same space, but if we do not have a space to put them on, then we need to move forward and see other options.

Councilor Drew said there is a 120-day requirement for this report once the contract is executed. We are asking when we get this comprehensive report to see it back to us within 120 days. As for the other items with the structures and that type of thing, that is a larger conversation that he thinks is part of this, but it is not directly assimilated to this resolution that Council is looking at right now.

Chair Soto said she needs clarification if there is an amendment on the floor or not to prioritize the buildings that were mentioned.

Councilor Santos motioned to prioritize the Fire Department, Methuen Police Department, DPW, and City Hall and Searles Estate. When those reports are done to be submitted to the Council at the 120 days. Motion failed due to lack of second.

Councilor Drew said he did not second that amendment because we should have said more on the prior to the 120 days, "the immediate upon it being completed"

Councilor Santos asked if he would accept it "prior to the 120 days".

Councilor Drew said the 120 days seems reasonable.

Chair Soto said Council is breaking up a report that they want the Mayor to get done to Council. Once the Mayor has that report you can have a conversation with him to work on getting those buildings clarified.

Councilor Marsan asked the CAFO about the cost of \$50,000 for the comprehensive audit.

CAFO Duprey said that was the parks audit. The buildings are going to be six figures plus. Based on what she is seen a general estimate is more in area of \$300,000.

Councilor Simard expressed concern about the cost. If he was in favor of it, he may not be in favor of the cost once Council votes on the vendor. He then asked the Mayor if this audit would duplicate some of the feasibility studies being done.

Mayor Beauregard said this is something that he spoke to during the last meeting, where broadly speaking the spirit of the resolution, not ordinance, is a request of the administration to

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

go about this exercise. However that comes to fruition whether it is through an all-encompassing audit, if we are able to find a vendor who's able to do that work inside of a 120 day span, that might be something we might want to include in the RFP to whatever companies "you need to commit to not just doing this, but doing it within a 120 days". Hypothetically a company could say, well, I would be willing to help you with an audit, but I do not want to hold my company to getting it done within 120 days". They may not necessarily bid. He does not want to hold the vendor to commit to doing it within 120 days. Councilor Drew's focus is to ensure they take a more intentional, strategic, data driven approach to our capital planning. We have a CIP. We continue to update that year after year, adding to it, adding to the look ahead for the next couple of years. That is based on insights from department heads, from Director Bower, from Chief McNamara, from Chief Toto, etc. these individuals are aware of the issues that exist in their facilities, and they make recommendations accordingly. In this context this is asking a third part vendor, someone with an outside pair of eyes to come in and take a look from top to bottom at our facilities and help maybe guide us, provide us with a blueprint in terms of capital planning, suggesting things that we might be missing. It remains to be seen in terms of the RFP process, in terms of cost, in terms of the specifics. By way of the resolution, it is not saying that it is now the law of the land, that the Mayor shall find a company to get this done in 120 days, or else face some sort of consequence. That is not the case. This does not dictate that we must go with a particular vendor or spend a particular amount of money. This would be subject to a vote of the Council for approval of a contract, appropriating funds. This is not the be all, end all. This is simply an ask of the administration to maybe rethink the way we are going about capital planning to be more strategic, to be more data driven. This is something that we need to do. One of the things that the CAFO found in terms of research was there are not really a ton of examples of this because it is something most municipalities are not doing this level of work. This would help us go a step further in terms of setting a new standard for other municipalities to perhaps model by way of doing this advanced planning. It is something that makes sense. He is in favor of it. It does not really tie us to a specific dollar amount or anything beyond the ask of the administration.

Councilor Drew said there is language if there are deviations required it would just be relayed to the Council at the time.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. R. DiZoglio)

**TR-26-7** - Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of a Gift of \$2,000 from Digital Federal Credit Union to Support the Methuen Police Department (*Requested by the Mayor*)

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**Ordinance(s):**

**TO-26-4** - An Ordinance Amending the Wage and Salary Classification Plan, Unaffiliated, to Add the New Position of Economic Development Coordinator (*Requested by the Mayor*) (**remove from the table**) MOTION BY: Councilor R. DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Valley to remove from the table. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve

Councilor Valley asked what KPIs would be tied to this position for performance evaluation.

The Mayor said this is something that has not been included in the job description. He thinks it is something that would be more relative to the review process that we would establish going forward. As someone who was in an economic development coordinator role. He worked for the Town of Arlington years ago in a capacity along nearly identical lines. Broadly speaking, there are very clear-cut indicators as to how well a person does in a role like this. He has very specific thoughts. He has spoken to the Chair about this extensively. This is something they are going to continue to discuss as they roll this out. There is a specific set of goals that he has right at the baseline where we need an enhanced focus, in essence, doubling down on our current efforts, where this person would have two main functions. They would be overall living and breathing small businesses inside of this building. In essence, being that point person that provides for the opportunity for an entrepreneur with for instance an idea. Instead of having to go from office to office and navigate the bureaucracy on their own, they would have somebody who would provide them with: you want to open a restaurant, here is your checklist. Let us go through it together and walk them through that process. We are going to get feedback from entrepreneurs who are working with whoever this person is in terms of the service that they are getting and that is going to be something that will be very insightful. Beyond helping entrepreneurs going out there and hitting the road is he other function of this position where we need somebody who is going to live and breathe the selling of Methuen to entrepreneurs from other parts of the Commonwealth. We have such an outstanding workforce here in the Merrimack Valley. Our location is incredible. There are some challenges for retail, give the fact that we have New Hampshire right across the border, but aside from that, we are really an ideal location in terms of our competitive tax rate, relatively speaking. We are going to see the fruits of this person's labor with our own eyes by way of more interest in our city, more people trying to come to the city. Also, more initiatives have come before the Council to proactively get ahead of things like zoning or for instance if we know along the Lowell Street belt, we want a zone for perhaps more manufacturing or biotech or whatever industry we want to attract, this person would also be someone who works alongside Jck to bring those zoning initiatives to us so we can have a red carpet laid out for entrepreneurs and be very intentional about the economic future we want for the community. There are KPIs to be discussed by way of building this out once we move forward. At the same time too the greatest KPIs will be what we see, what we hear. Entrepreneurs certainly are not shy about coming to us and sharing their concerns and their ideas. There is going to be an opportunity for a formal review process. Beyond that this is going to be going to work hand in hand with all Councilors as well.

Councilor DiZoglio noted this is a new position and asked when it comes to the salary, where did the Mayor come up with the salary?

Mayor Beauregard said he has perhaps the unique benefit of knowing many other people in this type of role given the fact that he was colleagues with many people who were in this type of function. Just to be upfront and transparent, one individual who he stayed in close touch with is Ali Carter. She is the economic development coordinator for the City of Lowell and is

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

doing an incredible job in the city, working to revitalize their downtown and bring in new businesses and the like. They set seminars and the like that are sponsored by the city, but they are for business owners in the community. It is very Lowell specific. She was his predecessor in Arlington. Just in conversation with other people in this type of role, we would want to get as close to the \$100,000 mark as we possibly can to be competitive and attract maybe people from other communities. This current proposal is in alignment with what we have for another position in the department. It gets us close to that point, especially at the higher steps, which will be dependent on experience and the like. The goal is to remain as competitive as possible with other communities that are also actively seeking this type of employee. We can do that in a responsible way. This is brand new for us, so he does not want to go too far overboard. The thinking is that this fits within the context of the current department, as salaries in that department exists now while getting us as close as we can to that point where this is widespread recognition of being competitive or not.

Councilor DiZoglio said when it comes to budget season, there are other departments that have been seeking extra help for quite some time. He is afraid that they might be shortchanged if this goes through but then come budget season they get cut. He is trying to be cautious when it comes to this position. but it is a revenue generated position. that is how he looks at this and that is why he is for it. but he also wants reassurance that there are departments that he knows have been asking for help for quite a while. He just wants to make sure those people also get help. We put a position in and then someone else gets shortchanged. That is his concern about this.

CAFO Duprey explained this position is currently in the fiscal year 2026 budget. It would not be an add for next year. It is already in the budget.

Mayor Beauregard said he is cognizant of the fact that many of our departments, including economic and community development are short staffed. Also, we need to continue to build out our inspections team, and we need to add some diversity to our inspection team as well. There are so many other areas. DPW is short staffed, the police department, fire department, even our schools in certain areas are short staffed. He cognizant of all of that and sensitive to the fact that we need to make investments like this but be aware that we need to also not leave other departments behind.

Councilor Santos said this person is going to be responsible for bring new business to our city, which is a great idea. She asked if this person is also going to be responsible to serve our current small businesses.

Mayor Beauregard responded yes. He envisions this type of role where this person will be focusing on being that active, present force for our current business community, always accessible to business owners that are in need of assistance, but also splitting that time with going out on visits with entrepreneurs and actively selling Methuen and perhaps bringing in Director Wilson and himself in to help with closing those opportunities and closing the loop. He views it as a two pronged approach that would involve service to existing businesses, but also built in there a focus on trying to get out there on the road and present Methuen in the best possible light to interested entrepreneurs.

Councilor Santos asked if the city is allocating any kind of funds to assist the current business owners that we currently have in our city to help them improve their businesses.

Mayor Beauregard said when it comes to the traditional role of economic development coordinator in many other municipalities, this is also a person who, as part of their function, would help with going after grants in the context of business support, entrepreneurship, etc. A part of this aside from these other functions that we are discussing, you know this would be revenue generating by way of their support in the context of grants. If we can secure a grant to be able to launch a grant to initiate a façade improvement program in downtown and things like that, he would certainly envision that being a part of this. It has been tried before with varying degrees of success, but it is something that is a tool that other municipalities are embracing. We could benefit from that too. He wanted to mention the idea of getting involved in the context of placemaking, the idea of trying to find creative ways to bring people in foot traffic to our downtown, maybe in ways that we do not see now. For instance, a couple of years back he worked with former Mayor Perry and his team on trying to bring some life to Riverwalk Park on Osgood Street. This event was a disaster because it got rained out and the Mayor said he did not pick a rain date. A lesson learned. They brought in a group from Florence called “Let’s Pop Market” and it is a group that they can set up a popup market in any location. It could be in a parking lot. It could be in a park or recreational area. And combine that with what was then Spicket River brewery, where we brought in a truck from Spicket River Brewery and they were able to try to serve some food and adult beverages and the like. It was an actual experience where people would come to this location in downtown, where they otherwise might not be shopping getting a bit to eat or trying a craft brew or something like that. We literally set up a place for that. We used that concept to in essence activate a space that otherwise would not have that. These are the creative things that he would want to see this person chasing after and creating those opportunities for people to come to our downtown to be able to come to Riverside Park over in the West End and have it be utilized in a way that it might not otherwise be utilized without that intentional placemaking effort.

Councilor Santos said this person is going to be responsible not only to bring new businesses, but also to serve the growing businesses that we have, as well as looking out for grants to improve the businesses that we have. She asked who this person is going to report to.

Mayor Beauregard said this would be within the Department of Economic and Community Development that they would report to Director Wilson and with him as well. But they would be directly reporting to Director Wilson.

Councilor Simard commented he is glad the \$80,000 is in the budget. We do lack in new growth. Lowell is a lot bigger, a huge tax base compared to Methuen. His concern is come budget season, if there is a barometer or some way, we could prove that person is worth this salary. It is a generous salary for that assistant. *“Is there a way the Mayor could come to Council saying what this person has done?”* It is only three and half months to budget season, but he hopes there is a way we can measure his success not only accommodating growth but also generating growth. He hopes the Mayor can do that come budget season.

Mayor Beauregard said absolutely. Part of this will be this ongoing conversation and highlighting whatever wins this person is able to get under their belt. The more that we

demonstrate the value at out of the position, that will probably increase our comfort level but also increase the return on investment that we would get over time.

Councilor Marsan said we need this person. He has been an advocate for this for years. It is going to pay off. Hopefully, the Mayor will utilize the committee and himself so that the committee and he can help assist in this person because of his expertise here.

Mayor Beauregard agreed. He said he would envision this person being an active member of the Economic Development Committee and working closely with the Councilors and moving the ball down the field, getting the points on the board.

Chair Soto asked if that Economic Development has been added to their roster. She said for now it is Mr. Jack Wilson until that person comes in.

Councilor Valley asked if a budget position is not filled immediately, where are those funded funds allocated. In this case you have three and a half months.

CAFO Duprey explained it will stay in that department and either support that department in other ways if necessary, or it will just fall to the bottom line at the end of the year, the surplus.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**TO-26-5** - An Ordinance Amending the Wage and Salary Schedule of Chapter 6, Section 6-5 of the Methuen Municipal Code, Department of Public Works Employees Association by Adding the Position of Sanitation/Zero Waste Coordinator (*Requested by the Mayor*) (**remove from the table**) MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Pesce to remove from the table. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.

Councilor Santos asked if this position would be posted on the website.

Mayor Beauregard explained the way the process would work. If the Council were to approve the creation of the position by adding it to the wage and salary classification plan what we would then be able to do is take that job posting that we had shared as a supporting document and post that on the website and then that is the point at which you would see it on the listing of available opportunities. This is the formal process by which he received the green light from the City Council to go ahead and move forward with posting and then hiring the individual for the position.

Councilor Santos said when she was reviewing this, she was unclear on what are the certificate or education requirements to fill this position.

Mayor Beauregard explained that for a position like this because it is going to be largely a constituent facing position it is not something that would require any level of specific credentialling. The goal would be to perhaps find somebody with a background in sanitation, public health, things like that. But by way of any specific licensure, this would not require that. What we would be looking for mainly is the ability for somebody to communicate with residents to be able to draw their attention to our ordinances, to be able to work in concert with Director Bower, Deputy Director Garcia, the new trash vendor, on resolving various issues and ultimately being the point person on the city side for the trash program. That is going to require

somebody with good work ethic, strong organizational skills, excellent interpersonal skills and be fantastic if we're able to work with somebody who is able to communicate with Spanish speakers in our community, that's very important as well. Ultimately this would be that person who would not just own the trash program, but the goal in increasing compliance with that ordinance is to ultimately reduce our tonnage costs, which are outrageous. He calls it a budget buster. Ultimately the goal is to help reduce our costs versus, say, the economic development role. The goal there is to help us grow our commercial tax base.

Councilor Valley recalled a conversation she had with the Mayor last year regarding this position. The Mayor informed her that the landfill caretaker will be transferred into this role. She asked: "*Did that transfer occur or what happened?*"

Mayor Beauregard explained the thing about this role is that it was included in the budget. It had not been formally established as a position, but there was this individual who primarily worked at the transfer station who had a lot of these outstanding skills and an interest in trying to get involved with this type of work. By way of her role as somebody who was employed at the transfer station, that is certainly within the context of trash. She had started to test out some of the functions of what this might look like, but not in this role specifically, simply because it had not been created yet. The thinking was to try to pilot some concepts and see how it would work. Having somebody out there in the field, on the ground dealing directly with people. From their discussions, he knows that it was widely seen as a help in many cases.

Director Bower said they have someone who is very interested in this position. it is no secret that this is coming. It was in the budget and there were a lot discussions. This is something that they worked on with Mayor Perry some time ago. He is very excited about this position. They did run a few pilot programs and had this person from the transfer who runs the scale house at the transfer station now go out and on trash day, review what was in people's recycling and more importantly interact with people. It was wildly successful. They started in the neighbors where they had problems with contamination. People were just using the recycle bin as an additional trash bin. But they resolved many of the issues, if not all the issues, just by speaking to people. They just did not know. The educational component of this is going to be invaluable for them and just those few weeks they spent out interacting with the public was wildly successful. He is very excited to have this position finally started, especially with the new contract coming up. Its perfect timing.

Councilor Valley: if the position is going to be filled internally, the question that Councilor Santos asked about the website so its not going to be posted.

Mayor Beauregard said the city is required by ordinance to post this position. this will be open for anybody in the public to apply for. He does not want to make any specific guarantees. This would be something that will be properly posted, maintained on the website, publicly per the ordinance for people to apply. They want to leave every option on the table and see who comes forward and proceed from there. Originally when they placed this in the budget, they did not have on their radar at the time that they have a recycling dividends grant. One of the expenditures they can make using that grant is for a zero-waste slash sanitation coordinator. Although they added this to the budget, it is in the budget. they may need to tap into it, depending on those two factors. He is not sure but for the most part they are going to be able to

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

use that grant to help pay for this, and that is going to reduce the financial impact, at least at the outset. The city has that grant for multiple years. Hypothetically, if position works out and achieves and achieves the results that they're looking for and we want to hold on to it, then what's going to be very helpful is having that grant offset the cost that we would otherwise need to go to the budget for.

Councilor Valley said one of her concerns is and we hear that from Linda Soucy. The neighborhoods that will need the education the most are Spanish speaking. This person is not bilingual? How is she going educate those residents and communicate with them and let them know why they are being fined?

Mayor Beauregard said Director Bower can add to that but in terms of these areas of the community for instance he is thinking of the Arlington neighborhood, where in a lot of cases, hypothetically, you have violations of the trash ordinance. A lot of the people who are living in that part of the community and certainly in others as well, they are often renters. It is difficult to try to enforce a municipal ordinance when you have a renter. A big part of this in the context of say, the Arlington neighborhood. Ultimately, it is going to be holding landlords accountable. In the Arlington neighborhood, it is interesting how it is an area of the community that is unique by the way of how a lot of the landlords live in the neighborhood which is unique. Director Bower can speak to the broader concern.

Director Bower said just to make a point on this, during the pilot programs they had a representative from Harvey from the vendor go with the person from the city, and they provided somebody who was bilingual. They are required to do that for their contract. They are required to go out. It was a team effort. If is a good idea in case, you run into somebody who is not happy with what you are telling them for us to go in pairs. Like the Mayor said, this person is not guaranteed this position. They must go out, advertise, they will interview people and bilingual individuals will be considered because it is going to be valuable to be out there and be able to speak Spanish to Spanish speaking residents. That will be something that they will consider during the interview process.

Mayor Beauregard explained there is a component of our agreement that the vendor is required to provide a certain amount of funds to help with education. That is something that we want to maintain with whoever the new vendor is. Hypothetically, if we were to cross that bridge and we needed help with translation and properly communicating with residents, that would be tremendously useful line to target in terms of education.

Director Bower said our outreach to residents, door hangers, things that we hang on barrels are English and Spanish.

Councilor Valley asked if the city is assigning a car to this person for transportation.

Director Bower said at this point, no.

Councilor DiZoglio said that is what he wanted to ask because it says we will go and examine violations and possible fines. They are not driving around to see, because if he recalls, the ordinance says your barrel must be shut. He could go up and down this neighborhood right now and there's trash overflowing in pretty much every barrel. There is no transportation for this person. "How are they supposed to go around neighborhoods to monitor the trash and educate them, but also at the end of the day, enforcement?"

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Director Bower said there are inhouse vehicles at Ditson place that have City of Methuen stickers on them. whoever gets the position will be wearing City of Methuen badge, City of Methuen DPW clothing. They have developed a system of fines where they will leave a sticker that is a warning on the barrel. They will not hand the fine out in the street. They will come back here, and the city will submit a fine to them via the mail. They will get a fine electronically. The city is going to have basically what the police use for parking tickets and have something they can type in there. Then the fine is automatically delivered to them because it is not going to be a face to face operation. They will be getting that, whatever we decide, they can get multiple warnings, sticker then a warning, however we want to do that. But it will not be a face to face operation when they get the fine. It is important to be in a vehicle that is marked, clearly people will understand that person is from the city. They will use inhouse vehicles, not a take home vehicle.

Mayor Beauregard said we are not talking about creating a new position and having to go and procure a new vehicle from the CIP. This is something that we can accommodate.

Councilor DiZoglio said they will receive a city vehicle for the day, go and do their job, drop the vehicle off and then go home.

Mayor Beauregard responded yes. For instance, we have our conservation officer, what the conservation officer would do is park the conservation officer vehicle at city hall. They take their personal vehicle, park it here, and then they use the conservation vehicle to go out and do their work for the day. They come back and take their own vehicle home. This would be along a similar line.

Councilor Santos said her biggest concern was what Councilor Valley said. Since the central district is going to be the most needed one with this position, her biggest concern is that whoever fills this position speaks Spanish since most of the population there speak Spanish and most of them do not speak English. They could be educated in this aspect.

Mayor Beauregard said if you look to the job description, we indicate directly that we do prefer a bilingual candidate. That is listed in the job description.

Councilor Santos said she would like to see the person that fills this position speak Spanish.

Councilor Drew asked where the salary number came from. *“Who chose that chart and how do we choose it?”*

Mayor Beauregard said this is something that he chose. It is based on the ME5 level in our wage and salary grid for DPW. Just in terms of research on what other communities pay for something along these lines, he thought that was proper and would be competitive enough in this case. When it comes to anything like this, if we get to a point where we need to make an adjustment, that’s something that we’re always able to do with a vote of the Council, but at least at the outset, it’s a new position. Like the economic development coordinator role, he does not want to go too crazy with it. We want to see some results and such because this is another position that he views as an investment. But we also want to do that responsibly. He is basing it on the ME5 level in DPW.

Councilor Drew asked if this would be a union position.

Mayor Beauregard responded yes.

Councilor Drew noted that Director Bower mentioned that the city will be fining everybody and just be sending them an electronic ticket. He asked: “*What’s the mechanism to collect on those fees?*” “*If someone gets a ticket in the mail from DPW what’s the repercussions if the resident doesn’t pay it?*”

CAFO Duprey said it would be like the way the city does the parking tickets. That is a separate process they need to work out as far as this position goes. The ME5 is a DPW union position. It is inline with the working foreman position. It is something they discussed with the Director during the budget process. They budgeted at that level intentionally so that it would be along those same lines.

Councilor Drew said he understands how the city is going to ticket them like the parking tickets. If he gets a parking tickets its attached to his license and he cannot renew his license. “If someone doesn’t pay a trash ticket, do they not get their trash picked up?”

Mayor Beauregard said we do have the option. He thinks it might be done in the City of Lawrence. He is no 100% certain but from what he heard where if there are fines that are levied against the citizen by the city, there is the opportunity to add it to the tax bill. There are mechanisms by way we can ensure that we are collecting resources from these fines without having to rely on someone.

Councilor Drew said if we have a renter who is just doing whatever they want, we are going to rely on the owner to ensure that their enforcement of their tenant. The city would be going after the landlord in that case.

Councilor Valley indicated that is what the City of Lowell is doing. It happened to her as a landlord. She did not pay it on time, and they added it to the property tax bill.

Councilor Santos asked if the city already has an amount for the fine.

Mayor Beauregard said right now we have the books that City Council approved, it is an ordinance that deal with the whole structure in terms of fines and the like for the trash program. He does not have the ordinance in front of him, but he can provide Council with a copy. It outlines the schedule.

Chair Soto recommended that ordinance go back to public safety and that something be implemented where its added to the tax bill. Right now, to answer your question Councilor Drew, there is no actual real mechanism for us to collect those fines. We are not blocking any other services right now from the city if they do not pay that bill and then you cannot charge the tenant. It is against the law in Massachusetts.

Solicitor O’Neill explained Council does not need to change the ordinance for it to be added to the tax bill because there is a state law that allows the city to do that. We just have not. The city has not been doing this yet so that process has not been set up. But the treasurer and the CAFO are aware of that ability. The authorization currently exists in state law for most fines and fees levied by the community. Not all, but this one would be included. When the city did the trash ordinance last session with the last council, we were aware of that and did not put it in there because it is a separate authority under state law. He could circulate that ordinance. It is a comprehensive trash ordinance when we never had one before that goes through all of this and this is a piece of that ordinance. There was a piece that wanted to require education

and that kind of thing because of the changes in terms of how things, what you're supposed to do, what you're supposed to put in, what you're not supposed to put in, those kind of things.

Councilor Drew mentioned discussion about the trash needing a reset. He is assuming this position will be utilized to ensure that all of the assets that we have across the city with the barrels will ensure that we have the inventory utilizing that same mechanism to pay for the barrels that the homes may not have right now that we need to ensure that they are paying every year. This is what this position kind of will be focusing on early.

Mayor Beauregard responded, Yes, in partnership with the vendor because one of the things that we've incorporated into the RFP is a specific element there where we would have the vendor take on more of the responsibility of the cart situation just to eliminate as much as we can, having the city be involved as a middle man there. Nevertheless, if we get to a point with a new vendor and from an operational standpoint, we need to have more of that focus on the city side, that would be in the wheelhouse of this person.

Councilor Drew said they will ensure that this home does not have two barrels on record and only has one. We are going to go through and make sure our inventory is correct with this position so that we are capturing all the tonnage and people that are maybe having more are paying accordingly.

Mayor Beauregard responded that is the goal.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**New Business:**

**Resolutions:**

**TR-26-9** Resolution Authorizing Acceptance and Expenditure of FY'25 Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant Community Development Fund (taken out of order)

**TR-26-10** Resolution Amending Traffic Rules and Regulations – Handicapped Parking – 5 Gleason Street WITHDRAWN

**TR-26-11** Resolution of the Methuen City Council Requesting the Mayor to Conduct an Analysis of Department Head and Non-Union Supervisory Salaries (Req. of Clr. DiZoglio)

MOTION BY: Councilor Ryan DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

Councilor DiZoglio said Councilors have been asking about salaries and where they get the whole point of the salaries. When he and Madam Vice-Chair were on the school committee together, when salaries came to them, they always asked the question, *what cities are you comparing us to?* With this analysis we are going to be comparing like he did when he was looking up the assistant council clerk. He went to three cities that were in line with our population, our demographics and with our budget. He and the Mayor have talked about this. It seems like our salaries are all over the place. With this analysis we will have competitiveness, but we are also not giving a salary that came from Springfield or that has 120,000 people with a different tax bracket, commercial base, residential taxes, and a whole different budget. The Mayor must specifically compare and then present it to Council, so we are not asking those questions. He can say he compared it to Peabody. It has 55,000 people with a budget that is like us and across the board. It is kind of eliminating those questions but also competing against people, cities that are close to us. That is why he put this resolution together.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.  
GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Councilor Marsan said if we do an analysis of our existing department heads and we get the conclusions of that and find out that we are not paying what is competitive, and now its on record that we are not. And maybe we are, maybe we are not. *“But now are we going to increase their pay?”* *“What’s the right?”* *“We’re looking at existing department heads, are we just going to say okay, now we’ve got to increase our budget because we’re not paying enough?”*

Councilor Pesce said similarly she was going to say the same thing in a different way. *“What happens if we find out that we’re overpaying?”* Originally, Councilor DiZoglio, I get what you are trying to do with this. She was thinking that it would maybe be better served going forward because we need some sort of uniformity as to what we look at. She thinks that is what he is getting to and he is asked those questions tonight, where are we getting these salary ranges? *“Are they arbitrary?”* *“Are we pulling them from different communities to align with what she thinks this position is?”* but then we are using other communities to align for a different position. She agrees with the concept, she just must agree a little bit with Councilor Marsan. She would ask Councilor DiZoglio maybe what the result is that we are looking for with the existing ones.

Councilor DiZoglio said he is more looking at it as if when he is just saying a department head comes back and wants a \$30,000 salary. If they are in that range already of another city, we do not need to say we are going to give them \$30,000. We might give them \$10,000 because they are in that range. Sometimes when we have looked at salaries, where he is watched City Council meetings, and someone gets a \$30,000, \$40,000 raise and he is like “wait a minute”.

Councilor Pesce said here is a question for you, say two positions who are somewhat similar, but one’s been here for 30 years, started at X salary and one’s here new and maybe started at something else. They do this kind of investigation into the salaries and they find that the average is, you know, one is being overpaid and one is being underpaid. One is being overpaid by \$40,000 and one is being underpaid by \$40,000. What happens when those two similar positions go into collective bargaining agreements or whatever or negotiations with the Mayor and they say okay, this is our average salary. So, we are giving nothing to one and giving a \$40,000 raise to the other to bring them equal.

Councilor DiZoglio we always are saying that we are having a high turnover because people are not getting paid properly or somebody feels like they are not getting paid. Wouldn’t we want an analysis done where we are saying, well, no, you are getting paid, right? Or better yet, maybe you are not. But we then work to keep people here.

Councilor Pesce said she agrees with the concept. She does not know that we are going to get that desired effect from this.

Councilor Simard what he has done in the past, when it comes to someone’s new contract, he is reviewed the budget and then compared it to other similar cities or towns. One thing is for sure a salary is never going to go down. So, you figure out what is appropriate. And there is the Collins group that we could do for major department heads that we can do in the past. But it is just kind of incumbent upon each Councilor to when you vote on that contract of a department head to do your homework and that what he has done in the past. We can deliberate amongst ourselves without violating the open meeting law. That is what he has done in the past.

Councilor DiZoglio asked if Councilor Simard would like that the Mayor brings that instead of Councilors doing that homework, that the Mayor brings it to Council and then Council could do their homework and say hey, looked at Peabody, Medford, Everett, they’re similar to our demographics that we can all look at it as well. He is bringing these positions to Council. Councilor DiZoglio said he would like to know if the Mayor is doing his homework

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

by looking at comparable positions. And then Council goes looking for it after. The last position Council looked at he literally did his digging where if he knew right there hey, we looked at Peabody, Medford, and Everett, he could go right to those, see their demographics and say alright that's a comparison instead of tabling it and then coming back after doing our homework. It is already presented to Council. That is what this analysis is. Every time he comes to the table with the position, he must show comparisons right away. That is what he is really getting at.

Councilor Simard said that is a lot to ask of the Mayor and the CAFO. No matter what they present, he is still going to do his own fact finding. That is just experience.

Councilor Pesce said she just wanted clarification. She agrees with what Councilor DiZoglio just said. She does not think the resolution says that. She is completely on board with this if it is for new positions or positions that the Mayor is seeking maybe some sort of large raise for as a means of justification to have some sort of barometer to measure the salaries. Totally for that. Her concern is all with the whole investigation as to where we are now because she is nervous as to how that is going to play out, if someone is over and someone is under. She agrees with what he just said. She doesn't know if he wants to change this resolution to reflect new positions or positions coming forward that maybe have a big jump, maybe attach a dollar amount like any raises over a certain amount plus new positions would have these sort of structures to getting us fair and appropriate comparisons that Council can use.

Councilor DiZoglio said whatever works for the Council to do.

Councilor Valley said her concern is the comparable cities that he used, Peabody, Everett, and Medford because of the proximity to Boston the property values are higher, rentals are higher, and the tax rate is higher. We are comparing apples to oranges here.

Councilor DiZoglio said they had similar population as us, 58,000/55,000, etc. Also, their budgets, one of them was lower than Methuen. He said he could get those and show that their budget was smaller.

Councilor Valley said she would like to see the revenue.

Councilor DiZoglio agreed.

Mayor Beauregard said this is not the law. We are not creating a new law. This is an ask of the administration to go about a specific exercise. One thing that we have had extensive discussions internally about is the idea of doing perhaps doing a salary study to look at how we rank in comparison to municipalities of comparable size and circumstance. But beyond that, something that we need to get after, just as a broader governmental reform, is a complete top to bottom reform of the wage and salary classification plan itself because the issue that we have now is that over time, over the course of however many years that that plan has been in place, it's kind of become mosaic, a random quilt with all these different patches where you have a particular administration in office, and they create a new position for whatever reason and they establish the pay at a certain amount. Then as long as that position, if that rate of pay is built into the wage and salary classification plan, it is there until a future administration or maybe a future Council removes it and changes the plan itself. Because of that, over time we have aspects of the wage and salary classification plan that really have no clear, definitive rhyme or reason. That is something that we are not going to address overnight. He does not think that is something that they are going to be ultimately able to fully solve in terms of addressing the issue in the short term. But over time, we really need to get after the idea of reforming the way that we handle that. There are other municipalities that he often looks to the towns and the town form of government where you look at Andover, look at Brookline, look at other municipalities. Arlington is a great example. He has experience with Arlington and know their system is a lot more straightforward. It is a lot more cut and dry where they have a standard grid and you are

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

plugged into wherever you're plugged into and there are no exceptions made position by position basis. This is yet another example of where rather than looking to what other cities are doing, we should look to the professionally managed towns and use a lot of the principles that are at play there, looking at Andover, Brookline, Arlington, etc. because it seems to be a system that works. It's a lot cleaner and it's not subject to maybe some of the Methuen issues we've had over the course of the past many years where actions are taken, positions are created, favors are granted, where that's not ultimately in the best interests of the residents and the taxpayers. We should look at a more streamlined process.

Councilor Drew said he agrees with this resolution, in the sense that hearing things that we are concerned about "*are we underpaying people?*". That genuinely bothers him. He is a strong believer that people should be paid a fair wage for their jobs, and they should be ensured that they are being compensated accordingly. If you have the right person for the job sometimes you pay more for things. What Councilor DiZoglio is trying to do here is ensure that we do see equity across everything in the city. There may be people that are currently overpaid and maybe we are going to freeze that salary until we can get to that point where we are going to be equitable with the remainder across the city. But if we are going to look at this and say we don't want to vote on it because we're concerned that we may have to pay people what they're actually owed, that's kind of a cop out.

Chair Soto to the Solicitor: federal law just passed regarding wages and salaries. Her understanding is where you could look at your salary and be like you're not paying me enough and I did my research at the federal level, at the national level, and this is what I should be paid. She asked if her understanding is wrong.

Solicitor O'Neill said he is not sure of the law she is referring to. Chair Soto said she sent him a link. Solicitor O'Neill said Massachusetts did pass the Pay Transparency Act, where every community, including the government, are required to post the full range of each job from the bottom to the top. We have always done that here at least if he has been. But some communities do not do that. Everyone must do that now so people know what they can expect in terms of range. He is not familiar with the federal law and will review it. He noted, based on some of the discussion, this does not apply to any union jobs. It only applies to department heads and unaffiliated supervisory roles. These are all non-union positions.

Councilor Pesce said she would like to make a motion to table this to rework it to at least change it to reflect Council's discussions more appropriately. Seconded by Councilor Valley.

UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Marsan), 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**TR-26-12** Resolution Authoring an Expenditure from the Edwin J. Castle Fund for the St. Patrick's Day Parade (Requested by the Commission on Trust Funds)

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve.

Councilor Drew stated he is the lead organizer with this. He has spoken with the Solicitor. His understanding is that he has no financial interest in this. All finances are handled through the Haverhill Chamber of Commerce Methuen Business Alliance. Councilor Drew said he has no financial interest in this. He asked the Solicitor to confirm and whether he should recuse himself or not.

Solicitor O'Neill said if Councilor Drew has no direct financial interest in a matter, he does not need to recuse himself, although he is free to do so if he feels that it is necessary. In this case, Councilor Drew just disclosed that he has no financial interest, so there is no appearance of impropriety. He is not benefiting from this in any way financially. Councilor Drew agreed.

Councilor DiZoglio disclosed he is a member of the Saint Patrick Day committee. He has talked to the Solicitor as well. He has no financial gain but wanted to disclose the fact that he is part of the committee.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**TR-26-13** Resolution Regarding Lighting Improvements on the Rail Trail, Including Blue Lighting (Req. of Clr. DiZoglio)

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve.

Councilor DiZoglio indicated he has been working on this for about five weeks. He met with the Chief. He sent a letter. He is in full support of this. It all started as he went down there one night, and he noticed it was pitch black and he could not see. One of us, all the campaign trail, one of the things we would love to do is develop the downtown. He talked to the Rail Trail Alliance and what they do. He spoke with the Mayor. One of his ideas that Councilor DiZoglio came up with is lighting it up. He also talked to the Haverhill Chamber of Commerce. They are interested in getting a plan together. We have a design of certain lights that we would see but also another portion to it is potentially turning it into a Veterans' memorial of all the fallen Veterans of Methuen, which would generate grants to supporting it. He has already reached out to certain grant organizations that support rail trails veterans. The question is just developing a plan. This is the idea. He is hoping Council supports this resolution and then subcommittees like the Public Safety Committee could work on certain things as well for grants, Veterans as well. He is trying to put things in place for this project.

Mayor Beauregard said this is a fantastic idea. The Rail Trail is a tremendous asset to our community. The fact that we have a Rail Trail opens our community up to various grant opportunities, as the Councilor indicated. As he has experienced personally, he remembered there was a time when folks who were part of the Rail Trail Alliance, they were looking to install some new benches and they had an opportunity to go after a grant. When he was on the Council, he wrote a letter of support in favor of that. There is a lot grant tie ins with this, not to mention this effort to increase the level of connectivity between the downtown and other parts of the community that are along the Rail Trail. From a public safety standpoint, it makes sense as well. This is something that we can get creative with, whether it is through the grant opportunities or maybe even as something he's discussed in the past with the individuals in the Rail Trail Alliance, the prospect of having a carve out, maybe in the CIP for improvements to the Rail Trail, just by way of being a public asset that folks rely on in the future. There are opportunities here to be creative and he is all for it.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

### **Ordinances:**

**TO-26-6** An Ordinance FURTHER UPDATING THE Winter Parking Ban, Enforcement and Notification Provisions, of the Municipal Code of the City of Methuen (EPA REQUESTED) (Req. of Chief McNamara)

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve.

Councilor Pesce thanked Chief McNamara. She wanted to point out to the public that he did add in language to protect short term, small businesses from having short term customer parking if they are open. There are safety conditions put on that, but it was exactly what she was looking for when she asked him about that. She knows we have the small businesses in the center of town write in. She wanted to thank him for doing that.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Councilor Marsan asked the Solicitor about abolishing an ordinance by placing it in another ordinance. We are abolishing TR-25-21. He asked: “*Council doesn’t have to take a formal vote to abolish an ordinance?*”

Solicitor O’Neill responded, no. Council can strike the section and replace it in the same vote. As you recall, when this ordinance came before Council, it had not come through the Solicitor’s office and there was a little confusion about whether it was in committee and Council was presented with options A, B, and C. It was not actually written in the form of an ordinance. It was not actually sitting anywhere in the ordinances. There were some things that needed to be adjusted and that is what was done working with the Chief. This will simply substitute this text for the currently existing text that is there in total. It makes no substantive changes other than the ones that were requested at the last meeting with the Chief. Councilor Pesce has identified those changes. It just provides a structure and it also allows us to designate, instead of naming specific parking lots, for instance in the ordinance, it requires the city to designate a minimum of three and then to publicize those so that we can, instead of having to change the ordinance every time we change parking, the Chief and the Mayor can do that separately. Those kinds of things do not really belong in an ordinance. They belong at the administrative level. They have cleaned that up so that they can designate more than three. But they can change based on the needs of the community. Yes, you can repeal and enact in the same vote.

Councilor Simard asked the Solicitor if this meets the EPA requirements.

Solicitor O’Neill said he does not know if this needs an EPA. It is totally up to Council because we have the ordinance in effect. It can certainly wait for enactment in the next meeting. It is just a clarification of the current ordinance and putting it in the proper structure and siting it in the code in the correct place. He does not necessarily see an EPA need but that is up to the Council.

Councilor Simard asked if Council could say it is because of a snow emergency that is pending or looming.

Solicitor O’Neill explained Council could certainly say that there is another potential snow emergency potentially heading for us. That would suffice if Council wants to do an EPA. It will enact no substantive changes to the fines. Everything will stay the same. The authority is still the same. It just adds some clarifying language. It does change in terms of the business parking. It has a provision for that which was requested by the Council. That piece is a little different, but it is not a significantly substantive change.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to adopt an EPA.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

**TO-26-7** An Ordinance Allowing for Continued Service on Boards and Commissions by a Two-Thirds Vote (Six Votes) of the City Council

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Drew to approve.

Mayor Beauregard said the purpose of this ordinance is to add some clarity to the municipal code. Right now, in Section 3-80 this is regarding the establishment of the ten-year limit on

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

terms of office for members of boards and commissions. If you look at that section of the code, the first sentence is very straightforward. It says that if you are a member of a board or commission and you have served in excess of ten years you may not be reappointed unless you receive a super majority vote in favor of your reappointment beyond ten years by the City Council. That would be six votes. There is a second sentence, and this relates to legislation that had been passed back in 2010. In essence, what it states is that, let us say, hypothetically you have an individual who serves on a board or commission, let us say they have a three-year term. They have a three-year term, a three-year term, again they are reappointed, and they get to year nine and it comes time to be reappointed in this case. Because that reappointment would then kick them over the ten-year mark, they would not be able to be reappointed at all. It's a total prohibition on appointments that would go over the ten years if they're say hypothetically in year nine of their term, which contradicts the first sentence, which says that you can have a ten plus year reappointment with a super majority vote of the City Council, six votes. The goal of this is to add some clarity to the code stating definitively that if you are serving on a board or commission, your time is under ten years, your reappointment requires a simple majority, five votes, or conversely, if you are a ten plus year appointee, then you would only be able to be reappointed with a supermajority. This adds some clarity to the code. It takes away the ambiguity that you have two lines in that ordinance that, in essence, contradict each other in terms of what you can do. Something to keep in mind is that we have been very intentional about trying to recruit new blood for our boards and commissions. In some cases, we have been successful. In other cases, there are boards and commissions where we do not have a line of people, qualified applicants who are at the door waiting to serve. There are those times when we must reappoint someone who might be over the ten year mark in order to maintain some continuity and stability on these boards, but also simply because there isn't anybody waiting in the wings to succeed them, if hypothetically, they were not reappointed. This would eliminate the ambiguity in the code and allow for in those cases where we do not have new blood at the ready, allow us to maintain consistency and allow for the ten plus year appointments.

Councilor Santos asked what kind of efforts we are making to bring more people to participate in our government.

Mayor Beauregard explained right now, on the city website, we have an application where individuals can log in, they fill out their information, they indicate their preference in terms of the boards or commissions they would like to serve on. They are required to upload a resume so that we can look and do some vetting in terms of the background of these individuals, they must pass a CORI check. But in terms of the marketing piece for a time there had been just this link on the website and people would probably seek it out if they wanted to apply. But what we try to do in recent months is be more intentional about getting the word out there by way of social media, basic networking, if you know of people who are interested in say, zoning, or planning board or community development, in this case, historic preservation, getting involved with conservation matters, and they have a background in that field or at least an interest in that field, then we've had an increase in applications as a result of that push for people. We have made great strides in the past couple of months. We had many boards where people were

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

...serving long expired appointments. He is trying to incrementally get every board into full compliance with these term structures so that we do not have anybody serving an expired appointment. That would require people to come before the Council for a vote and either they would be reappointed or we would have a new person appointed or Council would perhaps vote against an appointment if they are not in favor and we would be able to proceed from there. The bottom line is to really clean up these boards and commissions and get back to a place where we do not have the expired appointments.

Councilor Santos said the reason that she asked is because she has several people that she has spoken to about this in the past week. They have applied and have never received a reply or notice back. She would like to follow up on it if she could bring the Mayor some names.

Mayor Beauregard said that would be very helpful because there have been instances where at one point there were some people who were interested in the historic district commission, something along those lines. One local business owner indicated that they had applied. He looked back and we did not have a record of the application. He needs to do a better job at closing the loop. In some of these cases where he is hearing that someone wants to apply, if they have applied, that is great. But if not, maybe doing some follow up and seeing if they have the right link and are able to complete it. The Mayor suggested Councilor Santos email him the names and the specific boards and commissions they have applied to; he would be happy to follow up. And the same for any other Councilor who has people in their network who wants to serve.

Chair Soto asked if Council read the email she circulated from the Solicitor regarding this item. Councilor Drew responded yes.

Councilor Drew asked if Council votes es to this, we are keeping the ten-year requirement in place, and we would still need a supermajority of the Council to approve somebody over the ten-year mark. This is just getting rid of that ambiguity that's nine years you can go past, but you cannot go past ten.

Solicitor O'Neill explained that the way that it works now, the 2010 ordinance currently allows people to be appointed, say nine, if you have a three year appointment, you have had three terms and you come back at year nine for another term, you can do that now under the current ordinance by a two thirds vote. But that person after they have passed that ten-year threshold can never be reappointed. There are a lot of people and as we have seen at the last meeting that have served more than that period of time there, they're over the ten years, whether that's good or bad, that's a policy decision. But the power still rests with the Council. They cannot approve anyone at any point. This change just allows people, it makes it much clearer. If you are under ten years, it is a majority vote. If you are over ten years in time, it must be by two thirds vote. Council can still vote no for any appointment and send it back to the Mayor and he must come up with another appointment. He wants to draw the Council's attention to the fact that this ordinance only applies to the boards and commissions that are defined in it. And so those boards and commissions that are currently defined in the current ordinance are the Community Development Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Licensing Board, the Housing Authority, and the Conservation Commission. Those are the ones that exist now in the ordinance that have this restriction. It would not apply to many other boards and

commissions. These were selected because they are generally boards with a significant amount of legal authority that affect development, that affect public health, things like that. It does not have public health. Again, those are the ones that are in now. Obviously, there can be changes, but some of the appointments that came through are not part of these boards. Right now, those would be allowed to serve beyond ten years with just a majority vote, unless there were further changes to this ordinance. There is another ordinance that he circulated that goes to the recruitment piece and it does currently require us to advertise these positions in a newspaper. He does not know whether that is happening or not happening. It has some parameters about whoever responds is supposed to be the pool of candidates that is presented to the Council. Those are procedural issues that the Mayor is trying to get his hands around in terms of streamlining this process. To be fair, as he indicated in his email, there are not a lot of people banging down the door to do these jobs. These are difficult jobs and most of us are familiar that it is a tremendous amount of work to serve on these boards: community development, zoning board of appeals, licensing board, housing authority, conservation commission. These boards meet very frequently and do a lot of work and they are currently uncompensated. As he indicated in his email, if Council wants more people, it may be time to consider compensating some of these boards to increase the quality of candidates that you are recruiting and getting people more interested. That is a policy decision that the Mayor and the Council needs to make. He knows that recruitment of these positions, just like a lot of positions in the city regarding the salary schedule, are difficult for us to fill. That is directly because the monetary reward that goes along with it.

Councilor Drew said the other boards are not touched. They still have that ten year you are done.

Solicitor O'Neill said other boards not mentioned here have no restrictions. An individual can serve beyond ten years by a simple majority vote. They are just not included in this. They were never included in any ordinance. This issue has gone back and forth. He did look at this historically, for decades it gone back and forth depending on the Council's preference. At one point there was no restriction. Then there was a restriction of just ten years with a two thirds override, which is what we are sort of going back to now if Council adopted this. In the last iteration, they basically said, well, we will let you go over ten years but once you do that, we do not want you back. The Mayor can speak more to this because he is doing his appointments. But there is a good number of people in that group who have more than ten years of service on these important boards. There is an interest obviously in having some historical knowledge and continuity and experience transmitted to new board members, too. It is important to have some structured transition in who sits on these boards because, as he said, they basically do all development in the city.

Mayor Beauregard added something that we really try to get after is for instance with the zoning board, we have every member serving a current term, but we have tried to be intentional about filling the alternate slots as well. Because when you have, say, hypothetically, a board like that, there is a lot of institutional knowledge. Its important for people who are interest in continuing to serve over a period, there might be a new applicant. By being an alternate member, you are still able to participate in discussions and engage, even though you might not

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

have a formal vote when you have a full membership present and voting. But that has given us an opportunity to, in essence, build up and train the next round of people who will be on those boards. A great recent example is Mateo Zingales joining the Zoning Board. What is great is they can learn alongside individuals who have been there for some time, but that institutional knowledge will be able to be passed off to the next generation. We are trying to get creative about doing some bench building in this context as well.

Chair Soto said personally what she would like to see on an ordinance like this is a stipend for these particular boards, like your zoning and your planning board, not only the stipend regardless of what that looks like, she would think it would fall under those departments when we do budget season for them to be on those boards. But to clean up the requirements that we have currently of having to advertise, and maybe that changes to online as opposed to the Eagle Tribune or any newspaper. Aside from that, the resolution that Council passed that asked you to fill those seats kind of ties back into this voting because she thinks that we are looking at what comes first, the chicken or the egg. Like we are just playing that game. It's the will of the body but she for the piece that was in front of Council, for a member that had been there for over twenty years she thinks it was being reassigned for the 30<sup>th</sup>, like the next ten years, basically. She thinks that ten years is too long for a board.

Mayor Beauregard agreed it is a long time. When we talk about that, it brings us back to that square one point where he could not agree more. That is a long time. But the challenge that we have is if we don't have that level of interest in some of these cases, by necessity we find ourselves in that position where it's not ideal, it'd be great to have, a new qualified person ready to go.

Chair Soto but you think if you had let us say, the stipend piece, somebody in that field would potentially now be interested in doing that as well.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

Any Other Business for the Good and Welfare of the Community

Councilor Simard commended the Saint Patrick's Day Parade Committee, two members here and the Haverhill Chamber of Commerce and all the volunteers that were there last Friday. He is never seen that many people at the Irish Cottage. Thank you for what you did. It is going to be a great event and for years to come.

Councilor Valley announced on the 17<sup>th</sup> Luis Navarro, the energy advisor, will be hosting the community outreach at the Nevins Library, at 1:00 p.m. The need and the demand are there. They are all invited. If you need an energy assessment in your house, heat, windows, high bills for gas, electric, you are more than welcome to attend.

Adjourn

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Valley to adjourn.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. MacLaren)

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.  
GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

*Linda Gagnon*

COUNCIL CLERK

*At a meeting where a quorum was present, the foregoing minutes were approved by the Methuen City Council on February 17, 2026 by a unanimous vote.*