

Methuen City Council – Regular Meeting

Monday, February 6, 2023 – 7:00 pm

Great Hall, Searles Building

Chair Zeigler called the February 6th, 2023 regular meeting to order. Members present: Councilor DiZoglio, Councilor Faretra, Councilor Finocchiaro, Councilor McCarty, Councilor Saba, Councilor Saffie, Chair Zeigler.

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Faretra to declare a brief recess. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

Chair Zeigler announced Council's options for tonight's meeting. The Council meeting resumed. Members present: Councilor DiZoglio, Councilor Faretra, Councilor Finocchiaro, Councilor McCarty, Councilor Saba, Councilor Saffie, Councilor Simard, and Chair Zeigler.

Acceptance of the Agenda

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to accept the agenda.

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to move Consideration of Appointments out of order following the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to accept as amended. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and remained standing for a Moment of Silence for each of the following community members: Devin Melia, former Councilor Joseph Pappalardo, Barbara Greenwood, Retired Fire Chief James Clarke, and Carlos Bello II.

Recognition of Service to the Community presented to Linda Dean Campbell

Chair Zeigler read and presented a City Council Citation to Linda Dean Campbell for her years of service to the community and the Merrimack Valley.

Linda Dean Campbell thanked everyone in Methuen for allowing her the privilege to serve for seventeen years after serving six years on Council. She said a lot of bills passed, many that benefited Methuen. We are moving in the right direction. She congratulated the Council and their predecessors who filed legislation for the loan for the city. Council cannot pass a budget if they do not have the information, they need to pass a budget. Given the size of Methuen we need a CAFO to make sure we have this information. We need someone for short term and long-term planning. Council does not get a lot of calls saying they are doing a good job. She thanked them for the courage to do reforms in the police department. The new investigation would take a long time a lot of time. The Inspector General needed time with the Feds, the courts, Ethics Commission. He stood up for the city. She thanked the Police Chief and new members going forward. She noted so much good has been done in the city, noting that this partnership has worked well. She thanked the citizens again for the opportunity to represent them.

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to declare a two-minute recess. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

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Chair Zeigler called the recessed meeting back to order. Members present: Councilor DiZoglio, Councilor Faretra, Councilor Finocchiaro, Councilor McCarty, Councilor Saba, Councilor Saffie, Councilor Simard, and Chair Zeigler.

Consideration of Appointments:

At the request of Fire Chief Sheehy everyone stood for a Moment of Silence for retired firefighter Robert St. Onge.

Chief Sheehy gave background information on the promotion of Sean Quick to Lieutenant.

Firefighter Sean Quick promotion to Lieutenant

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

Lieutenant Quick thanked the Council and the Mayor.

Chief Sheehy provided background information on the promotion of Michael Ferris.

Firefighter Michael Ferris promotion to Lieutenant

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

Lieutenant Ferris thanked the Mayor, Council, and his brothers (firefighters)

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to declare a brief recess. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

Chair Zeigler called the recessed meeting back to order. Members present: Councilor DiZoglio, Councilor Faretra, Councilor Finocchiaro, Councilor McCarty, Councilor Saba, Councilor Saffie, Councilor Simard, and Chair Zeigler.

Marc Jordan appointment to Superintendent- Environmental

REMOVED FROM AGENDA 2/6/23

Organizational Business

- Request of Councilors Structural Format Changes

Chair Zeigler explained the change to the agenda regarding requests to be submitted for the agenda by Tuesday at 12:00 p.m. All responses will be on the next agenda with backup. Request can still be brought up on the floor.

Solicitor Rossetti explained this will help improve Council's ability to comply with the Open Meeting Law. The Executive Branch would respond to the request and response would be incorporated into the agenda. The Councilors' requests get put on the agenda which requires a response by the Administration. Then it gets distributed with the agenda to the Council and public viewing audience.

Councilor McCarty asked if a request stays on the agenda until it is resolved. It creates a great number of items on the agenda.

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Chair Zeigler said the onus is on Council leadership to make sure there is a record of any requests made.

Councilor McCarty asked who makes the decision when an item is resolved.

Chair Zeigler noted if a Councilor made a request and still has questions, it persists.

Councilor Finocchiaro said she would like to look at this. If you go back to 2018 you would have been accused of Open Meeting Law questions done on complex work done in 2018. The deadline is less than a week. There is the issue of receiving information at the last hour. This could increase the opportunity for Open Meeting Law violations. Councilors may or may not discuss with another Councilor. Requesting information, she would appreciate things happening in front of residents.

Solicitor Rossetti clarified that emergency situations, such as Day's Inn, does not require 48 hours in advance. That was clearly an emergency. The Open Meeting Law does not prohibit two Councilors from having a conversation. It does not constitute a majority. It is when an opinion is communicated to a quorum of a body.

Chair Zeigler said this makes it so there is a reduction of behind the scene discussions. Responses will be put online and may be researched online. Councilors may submit a request on floor as well.

Councilor Saba noted he likes the concept to hopefully get a better answer and requests on the floor are not prohibited.

Reading and Acceptance of Minutes from Previous Meetings

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve the minutes of January 17, 2023 – Regular Meeting. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

Presentations/Projects/Department Updates

City Hall ADA Accessibility Presentation (Presentation by Sandy Almonte, ADA/DEI Coordinator, on How Disabled Persons Can Access City Hall for City Council meetings)

Sandy Almonte spoke about the accessibility of handicap doors city hall has in the back and the front of the building. There are three accessible parking spaces near the tunnel area. There is a sliding door where residents are greeted by two people. All elevator access to every part of the building. The other entrance is on the first floor with one parking space in the back. There is no lighting. It is not simply just to put fixtures. The city needs a lighting plan and get permission from Historic Commission to change it. She took a picture of what the electric is doing.

Councilor Faretra asked “instead of going through the Historical Commission?”.

Sandy Almonte said this is being done in the meantime to have a solution that lighting is going to be operational.

Councilor DiZoglio asked where we can improve city hall, more handicap space as we grow as a community, he would want this to be welcoming.

Sandy Almonte said the city needs to get Capital Improvement funds.

Councilor DiZoglio noted this is something new. “Have you been able to make things work?” Could we have handicap parking spots on the back. If the elevator is down, residents are looking for other opportunities.

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Sandy Almonte said this is different from the Capital Improvement. They want to make it more accessible as well.

Councilor Saba asked about the front exit.

Sandy Almonte said there is one space closer to the entrance door.

Councilor Saba said we do not have sufficient lighting.

Sandy Almonte agreed there is a need for additional lighting. The only thing we could get was having the electric company install a spotlight.

Councilor Saba asked if we applied for grants.

Sandy Almonte responded: “not that she is aware of”.

Councilor Saba asked if she was ADA certified. Sandy responded, yes. Councilor Saba said it is a lighting issue, the way we turn into space and back out could be difficult for someone with limitations.

Sandy Almonte said the city is not required to have a handicap space there.

Councilor Simard asked if the city is complying.

Sandy responded, yes, we are complying.

Councilor Finocchiaro asked if the information could be placed on the website.

Sandy responded, yes.

Councilor Finocchiaro said the tunnel is very long and a slight incline making it more difficult for someone walking in. Might be possible to have items handy like a walker or wheelchair, put in an area for those that need help. This is something we can consider, stored out of the way. The water in that area makes it slippery.

Sandy Almonte said if they know ahead of time the city could make accommodations.

There are things in HR that maybe the city could get an upgrade.

Councilor Finocchiaro suggested putting a phone number on the door to call for assistance.

Sandy Almonte indicated that is something she could investigate and work on it.

Councilor Saba asked if the handicap spot on Pleasant Valley Street a legal spot is.

Sandy said the city has one spot that is legal. They will find out if there is anything the city can do to make that better.

Public Participation

Sid Harris, 2 Apple Blossom Way, said the issue he has is he gave his opinion and now it is at the Attorney General’s office. He, as a person with disabilities, cannot speak at a meeting. He could call or could reach out to Council about the fifteen ADA violations sent to the Mayor and Disabilities Commission. He read a statement from Mark Dempsey. He said his intent is not to have needless debates. Sidewalks should be made accessible. This was presented to the city along with many others. There has been no support from this Council. These are ADA non-compliance issues. It comes at a price. The conversation is more about ADA compliance. People with disabilities deserve that respect.

Bill Hannafant, 6 West Ayer Street, spoke on the pay raise ordinance. He believes this is something that should happen. During the first discussion it wasn’t about the money, it was about timing. Council could let it happen after they are termed out. He disagreed with the automatic 3% increases. He suggested increasing the \$5,000 that is eligible for state pension and bring that up to something more modern. These are part-time jobs to service the community.

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Maybe Methuen could ask the state to bring that number up to what is a more reasonable part-time number.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Perry thanked Jack Wilson for the Master Plan session. There were over sixty-five residents who participated. Residents may also go to the city's website and look it up.

He reported the Plethora statute is here at no cost to the city, on loan to the city. Pat Bower and DPW staff set it up to bring residents to the downtown area. A resident developed the ton statute entirely from a 3D printer. It is at Riverwalk Park until October.

The Mayor reported the ARPA spending report is up to date.

Councilor Faretra asked for an update on how the city is handling frigid temperatures.

Mayor Perry indicated during the height of the cold; we had a break at the end of Daddy Frye Hill. Eversource reported a power outage. A warming center was open 6:00 p.m. Saturday to Sunday. Only two individuals stayed overnight. They encouraged seniors to take advantage of these services.

There was a tree down on Maple Street. The situation was fixed in a three-hour period.

Councilor Simard asked how many children there are out of the 201 families at Day's Inn.

Superintendent Kwong said 83 are in our schools.

Councilor Simard said it is our taxpayers' dollars.

Superintendent Kwong said there are eighty-three students on record that came from Day's Inn. Some are transported with a \$75,000 cap going to all transportation costs (Marsh, CGS, and the high school). There are a lot of families that have come. If they are in Methuen or go to school where they are housed. Methuen services other homeless students as well.

Mayor Perry said he's been pushing HUD and DHACD. The city is required by law to take a look at homelessness.

Councilor Simard commented the state doesn't care about Methuen. It is never ending.

Superintendent Kwong said a one-time grant was given to districts affected by homelessness.

Councilor DiZoglio asked the Superintendent if she sees the city going over budget.

Superintendent Kwong said they have budgeted an amount for homeless transportation. They are using budgeted funds and are hoping for more money. They are balancing the transportation budget carefully for the number of students that they have.

Mayor Perry said the city is demanding additional funding from the state. There is a legal requirement.

Councilor DiZoglio said we were promised that from the previous administration.

The Mayor indicated that in talks about supplemental budget, we are going after more funds.

Councilor McCarty said looking at 84 children, the per pupil cost would be higher than one million dollars. It would be nice to get more in the supplemental budget. We need to document everything ahead of time. \$75,000 is nothing.

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Councilor Finocchiaro indicated she is happy the reports for ARPA are going on the city website. Two items of financial updates regarding ARPA and periodic update of trash and recycling. She said she wants to confirm that every person that works for the city has received hazard pay. Also, at the meeting she requested information to be determined with the Solicitor, about the Searles Estate.

Mayor Perry said the hazard pays were different amounts. Not everyone got it.

Councilor Finocchiaro said she was told those that didn't get it, it was in their contract.

Mayor Perry responded that was in 2020 and no one is getting an additional amount.

The CAFO said the \$1500 was paid.

Councilor Finocchiaro asked if everyone who was supposed to receive one, received it.

CAFO, Maggie Duprey, said anyone who qualified, and it was reflected in their CBA, received one.

The Mayor said the Searles Estate is sale of private property. He has said all he can publicly.

Requests of Councilors

Vice Chair Faretra - Req. Mayor. Provide a snow and ice line item update as of 2/1/23

Councilor Faretra said the updated information for snow and ice can be submitted by the next council agenda. He also requested that it be broken down and posted on the website.

Vice Chair Faretra- Req. Mayor. Provide an update from HR regarding workman's comp being outsourced as of 7/1/22. For example, number of claims, length, any claims contested by the city, etc.

Councilor Faretra asked if the city has seen a decrease.

Mayor Perry indicated there is greater control, what occupations drive most claims. They were asked for information Thursday at 1:00 and he received information at 2:00 p.m.

Councilor Faretra asked if there have been cases where city employees have been told to come back.

The CAFO said, going forward, the city is going to have better controls, recordings, and third-party review. An audit was not done.

Councilor Simard commented before someone would come back six months but now come back on light duty until they get better.

Councilor DiZoglio asked if that included schools.

Councilor Saffie asked for an update of gas costs until the pumps are fixed.

Mayor Perry indicated the vendor reports are published every month. For the gas, they are trying to remediate the issue at the town yard.

Councilor DiZoglio commented that MCTV does a great job. It is the equipment. The city needs to get an RFP for equipment. We need to get a new location. It is not fair to the residents who try and listen.

Chair Zeigler said MCS was testing the audio and everything worked well. We will be working on this and get a solution. The studio has been offered as an alternate location.

Councilor DiZoglio indicated he is not criticizing MCS. This is going to be a city problem getting this up and running.

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a. General Requests

Public Service

Grants: None

Licenses: None

Contracts:

C-23-64 Andrew M. Brockway & Associates \$28,500.00 Tenney Grammar School Re-Roof Project

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

Councilor Saba expressed concern of the \$28,000 coming from ARPA funds. He asked if there is an alternate maintenance fund instead of this coming out of ARPA.

Mayor Perry said the city does not have a maintenance account. He can budget and put in maintenance. CIP will be used and bonding. This is an immediate fix.

The CAFO explained this is not an actual repair. It would be for design/architectural review of roof.

Councilor Finocchiaro said \$28,500 is a lot of money without any work being done. We are not required to go out to bid. She asked if others were contacted. We must do this one way or another.

The CAFO explained this is a critical need. We know this is a valid engineer/architect. We needed someone right away as we must work in a short period of time. We do not feel \$28,500 is expensive for this project. It is not your typical roof. This is the best path moving forward.

Mayor Perry indicated it is well over a million dollars to fix the roof and what must be done will be bid out.

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

C-23-65 Bigelow Electric \$33,727.00 Generator for the Central Fire Station

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

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

C-23-66 Woodard & Curran \$870,000.00 Engineering -Lead Service Line Inventory

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

Councilor Saba asked if this is to evaluate all water lines citywide.

Director Pat Bower explained it is to look at all our existing records. We do not have lead lines in the city. We do have lead goose necks. We need to make sure we have exposed all lead pipes and get them out of the system.

Councilor Finocchiaro asked if this price is on target with estimates, more or less than anticipated.

The CAFO said they didn't get prices on this. It is a separate type of project taking on a 100% forgiveness loan from the state.

Councilor DiZoglio asked if 100% approval is that resolution (TR-23-9).

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The CAFO explained that this contract will not happen unless we have a contract and resolution in place. It is all in tandem or we do not spend anything. She is confident the city will be able to secure the loan.

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

C-23-67 Woodard & Curran \$975,000.00 City-Wide sewer Infiltration/Inflow (I/I)
Analysis Program

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

Councilor Finocchiaro asked what the comparison is for estimates.

The CAFO responded the number is right on target.

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

Other Officers and Committee Reports

Councilor Faretra reported CARE met on Tuesday joined by Phil Lahey who comes to their events, setting up tables and getting information out that way. He is putting together a list of our projects for parks. There will be a March 15th meeting. They will bring in someone for mental health issues.

Councilor Finocchiaro announced the next meeting for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health will be in March. She noted the Nevins Library helped with mental health training.

The Veterans' Affairs Committee will meet in February or March. She noted that Methuen has a strong Veterans' preference when hiring employees.

Councilor Finocchiaro also spoke of the student pilot partnership program. Participation will be chosen through the democratic process training the next pool of potential candidates for office.

Unfinished Business

Resolutions:

TR-23-1 Resolution Accepting a Gift of Land – The Alfred A. Fiskelli Revocable Trust – Parcel M1111 B110C-L113 - Daisydell Avenue

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

Councilor Finocchiaro questioned if this resolution came from the Mayor or Conservation.

Mayor Perry indicated it came from a Conservation employee.

Councilor Finocchiaro asked if the city is looking at the financial impact of losing this tax revenue. She does not have an issue accepting land. But the city needs to develop a set of policies as to which type of properties we are going to accept.

Mayor Perry said they are not buildable properties.

Councilor Finocchiaro suggested moving forward with an approval policy from the Solicitor as to whether the properties meet certain criteria and whether it could be used in combination with other land.

UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Faretra), 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

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TR-23-2 Resolution Submitting a Home Rule Petition for the Purposes of Authorizing the Mayor of the City of Methuen to Appoint Police Cadets to the Methuen Police Department (remove from the table)

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to remove from the table. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

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

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to change the title of the resolution to “An Act Authorizing the Chief of Police to Submit a Candidate to the Mayor for his approval as a cadet”.

The Solicitor suggested “appointment” is a better word to use. The Mayor is the appointing authority.

Councilor Saba indicated it is important that this does not become political. Councilor Simard agreed with Councilor Saba. We have an honest collaboration with the Mayor and Chief. This is a safeguard.

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Faretra to adopt amendment. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saba to adopt as amended.

Councilor Finocchiaro suggested that there be a written policy in place and procedures sent to Council before this process starts. She would like to make sure the city is not politically hiring and nepotism. It should be handed down to future Mayors and Chiefs.

Mayor Perry noted the Chief replicated other communities.

Councilor Finocchiaro insisted she wants written procedures. At the last meeting there were discussions of written procedures.

Chief McNamara said as we go about the process, involving a committee of a Councilor, community representative, representatives of Methuen police department to select people they think will thrive in this program. He noted they do not have a written document.

Councilor Finocchiaro reiterated prior to any appointment to this program she wants a written policy in place. These are diverse groups. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Chief McNamara indicated he wants to have a fair and transparent process.

Councilor Simard said he wants to have a fair and transparent process.

Councilor Simard said he is sure that will be the case moving forward.

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

TR-23-3 Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of a Fiscal Year 2023 Shannon Community Safety Initiative Grant

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor McCarty to approve.

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

TR-23-4 Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model (REFM) \$26,000 Grant

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

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

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TR-23-5 Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$191,080 from Water and Sewer Retained Earnings for Emergency Water Repairs

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

UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 1 out of the room (Clr. Simard) 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

TR-23-6 Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$130,000 from Water and Sewer Retained Earnings for Water Treatment Plant Projects

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

UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 1 out of the room (Clr. Simard) 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

Ordinances:

TO-23-1 An Ordinance to Amend Ch6A-Sec2 & Ch2-Sec10 of the Methuen Municipal Code and the Creation of Section 8 of Chapter 4 (Req. of Clr. Faretra, McCarty, DiZoglio, Simard) (remove from the table)

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor McCarty to remove from the table. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

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

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Finocchiaro to remove the 3% automatic raises from this ordinance.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. McCarty) 1 Absent (Clr. Beauregard)

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Faretra to change the School Committee to a flat rate of \$6,000 across the board for all members.

Councilor Finocchiaro said Council is going to make \$11,000/\$13,000 which is too sharp of a difference. The School Committee is half that pay while other officials make zero. She does not agree with a bigger disparity between the two and will be voting “no”.

Councilor Saba said he does not know how successful state limit would be, pension ability of all of these. He will support the \$6,000 across the board for School Committee which he does not think it will attract better candidates.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 yes, 2 no (Clr. Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. McCarty)

MOTION BY: Councilor Finocchiaro to change the title to read “to increase salaries of elected officials”. Seconded by Councilor Saba.

Councilor DiZoglio said there is only one salary, the Mayor. The rest is stipends. He doesn’t want to call something salaries if it is not.

Councilor Saba said it is pensionable. A person could run for Council then School Committee and back. If they got a job with a higher salary, they could get a higher thirty-year pension.

Councilor DiZoglio said it is clearly a stipend.

Councilor Saba asked him to define the word stipend.

Councilor DiZoglio said you could say a stipend is given for services provided as an elected official.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 4 yes (Clr. Saba, Clr. Saffie, Clr. Finocchiaro, Chair Zeigler), 4 no (Clr. Simard, Clr. Faretra, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. McCarty) (failed) 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

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MOTION BY: Councilor Finocchiaro, seconded by Councilor Saba to amend language to read “to increase salaries and stipends of elected officials”.

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra to amend the language to read “adjust compensation for all elected officials in the City of Methuen”

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Saba to move the start date from January 2024 to January 2025. The Mayor will go live in 2024 and Council will follow in 2025.

Councilor Saba withdrew his second to the motion.

Councilor Finocchiaro seconded the above motion.

Councilor Saba said moving it to 2025 gives Council an increase in the middle of their term. It does not make any sense. The previous resolution called for incremental increases.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 no, 3 yes (Clr. DiZoglio, Council Finocchiaro, Clr. Saba)

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Finocchiaro to make the ordinance effective date 2026.

Councilor Saba said he doesn't believe sitting Councilors should vote for their own raises. This is the right thing to do, excluding the Mayor.

Councilor DiZoglio “does that include Health insurance or removing it?”

Councilor Saba said all he is talking about is salaries for School Committee and Council.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 no, 3 yes (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. McCarty, Clr. Saba)

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to adopt TO-23-1 as amended.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 yes, 2 no (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. Saba), 1 absent (Clr. Beaugard)

New Business

Resolutions:

TR-23-7 A Resolution Providing for the Submission of a Home Rule Petition Rescinding Chapter 60 of the Acts of 2017 – An Act Authorizing the Appointment of Sean Fountain to the Position of Permanent Intermittent Police Officer of the Police Department of the City Known as the Town of Methuen (Req. of Clr. Beaugard, Simard, Saba, and Finocchiaro)

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to adopt.

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to include entire Council as sponsors. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beaugard)

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to table to a public hearing. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beaugard)

TR-23-8 Resolution Authorizing Transfer \$175,000 from the General Fund Employee Benefits other expenses budget line, to the Police Department Personal Services budget to fund the agreed upon Police Superior Officer Association's Collective Bargaining Agreement

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to adopt.

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CAFO, Maggie Duprey, explained the city needs to move the budgeted amount for Superior Officers into police budget.

Councilor McCarty asked if this has been done for other CBAs in the past.

The CAFO said this is to fund the current increase of \$175,000 only, nothing else.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 1 out of the room (Clr. Saba), 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

TR-23-9 Order Authorizing a Borrowing of \$950,000 to Pay Costs for the City's Lead Service Line Inventory Project

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Simard to adopt.

Councilor McCarty asked about the terms of the loan.

CAFO, Maggie Duprey, explained the loan is 100% forgiveness, doing this in tandem.

Councilor McCarty asked if that is guaranteed.

The CAFO explained it is called 100% forgiveness loan.

Councilor Finocchiaro asked what we are doing to make sure to fulfill requirements.

The CAFO responded, apply for this loan is that we have that contract in place. If we were not to be approved, no money would be spent.

Councilor Finocchiaro asked if there are any remaining guidelines you feel the city will be able to complete.

UPON ROLL VOTE: 7 yes, 1 out of the room (Clr. Faretra), 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

Ordinances:

TO-23-2 An Ordinance Amending the Wage and Salary Schedule of Chapter 6 of the Methuen Municipal Code, Unaffiliated, to create the position of Finance Director

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Simard to adopt.

Councilor McCarty asked what the purpose is of creating this position.

The CAFO, Maggie Duprey, said an employee in a similar position is retiring after thirty-eight years. We are transitioning to Munis and need someone in that role with Munis conversion. Also, this position would take some things from her role, moving the department forward.

Councilor McCarty asked what happens to the existing position.

The CAFO explained the current position is outdated and doesn't fit in with the CAFO's position. The individual in the position is retiring in June.

Councilor McCarty asked if the CAFO is striking the current position.

The CAFO explained that right now it is a union. This ordinance is an unaffiliated position due to sensitivity of what goes through this position.

Councilor Finocchiaro agreed with this concern. The ratio is top heavy. She noted the current position should be removed and start anew, added to the budget process. She asked the CAFO if saw her department wanting to bring the current position back.

The CAFO explained once the individual leaves the position, there are no plans to fill the Deputy Director position.

Councilor DiZoglio questioned the job description. There is no mention of Munis.

The CAFO indicated she wrote the job description. There should be Munis experience.

Councilor DiZoglio commented the Deputy Director position is a lot higher.

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CAFO, Maggie Duprey, said she consulted with Sean Cronin. That is average of what the salaries are. Sean Cronin said to make this Batcheler’s degree preferred. We want to keep options open A lot of conversation and research went into this.

Councilor DiZoglio reiterated Munis should be on this. The CAFO said it will include Munis in the description.

Councilor Saba questioned why the Human Resource Director did not sign it. The CAFO responded she did not know why it was not signed.

Councilor Saba asked if the CAFO said she wrote the description. The CAFO responded yes, but the Director wrote the form.

MOTION BY: Councilor Finocchiaro, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to table. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 yes, 2 no (Clr. Simard, Clr. McCarty) 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

TO-23-3 An Ordinance Amending the Wage and Salary Schedule of Chapter 6 of the Methuen Municipal Code, AFSCME A, to create the position of Environmental and Energy Planner

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to adopt.

The CAFO explained this is to combine two positions into one. There is no financial impact. Joe Cosgrove is in the two position. It is more of cleanup of paperwork. The city has budgeted for this position.

Councilor Finocchiaro asked if this is one grant or multiple grants.

The CAFO explained this is an energy management grant for \$25,000. This is combining his two roles into one role.

Councilor McCarty asked if there is a way to seek out other grants.

The CAFO said the position is responsible for duties of both roles having one person do this. It makes sense to do this.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Beauregard)

Any Other Business for the Good and Welfare of the Community

Councilor Finocchiaro announced there is a Washington dinner (140th) at the First Congregational Church, Pleasant Street, Methuen, on Saturday, February 25th from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Councilor Finocchiaro announced T-Ball registration is open for Spring 2023 for ages four through six years old. The Methuen Recreation department also has some great vacation programs. Interested individuals may check it out at MethuenRec.com for more information.

Councilor DiZoglio reminded everyone that “Dollars for Scholars” Telethon is March 20 and March 21, 2023.

Mayor Perry announced on February 7, 2023 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Senior Center representatives from the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, National Grid, and city representatives are available to assist Methuen residents who are struggling with gas/electric bills or in need of fuel assistance. Individuals should bring copies of latest energy bills, gas, electric, rent, Raft or Light assistance (if applicable).

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Adjourn

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to adjourn.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 absent

I do hereby certify that at a meeting of which a quorum was present, the foregoing minutes were approved by the Methuen City Council by a 5 yes, 1 present vote on February 21, 2023.

Linda Gagnon
COUNCIL CLERK