

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – April 6, 2022

Meeting held at 50 Payson Avenue and remotely due to COVID 19 Pandemic Restrictions

6:00 p.m.

Members Present: President Homar Gomez, Vice-President Salem Derby, Daniel Rist, Owen Zaret, Lindsey Rothschild, Thomas Peake, Brad Riley and Koni Denham. James Kwiecinski was in attendance remotely.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes: On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Zaret it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2022 meeting.

Public Speak Time Summary (some in person/some remotely):

- ***Rachel Nichols*** speaking against school budget cuts. She is teacher in the local school system.
- ***Shawn Sheehan, President of the Easthampton Education Assoc.*** He urged accepting the School Department budget proposal that was approved by the School Committee on March 29th. He also spoke about the Mayor’s verbal comments made during a visit with the high school’s We the People Team.
- ***Eric (last name unknown)***, also a teacher in the local school system. He said that now is not the time to reduce staffing in the schools.
- ***Marvin Ward, 15 Cottage St.*** He said he thinks that Easthampton needs a noise ordinance.
- ***Patty Benson, 117 Park St.*** She agreed with the school supporters, but was in attendance primarily to voice her support for the creation of a dog park.
- ***Lisa Downing, vice-president of the dog park supporters group.*** She said there would be a fundraiser for the creation of a dog park on May 21st in the Dollar General parking lot.
- ***Jamie Paquette, chair of the Energy Advisory Committee:*** He spoke in support of the Municipal Aggregation Program Resolution which is under “new business” on the council’s agenda.
- ***Joan Kurtz, president of the dog park supporters group.*** She read a letter on behalf of a supporter of the dog park.

On motion made by Councilor Derby and seconded by Councilor Rist it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to open the public hearings.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – STARTING AT 6:15 p.m.
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1. **Interdepartmental Transfer – Electronics Recycling:** Second reading by Councilor Rist on the request to transfer \$3,000.00 from the Reserve Fund for the disposal of non-functioning computer equipment, radios and batteries. Recommended 3 to 0 by the Finance Committee.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Peake it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to transfer the sum of \$3,000.00 from the Reserve Fund (#001.9510.5967) to Recycling (#001.4300.5319) to fund the disposal of a stockpile of obsolete and/or non-functioning computers, monitors, radio equipment and associated batteries. This stockpile is the result of multiple communication and technology upgrades that have been completed over the last several years at City Hall and the Public Safety Complex. These items must be securely and properly disposed of.

2. **Supplemental Appropriation from CPA Funding – Acquisition of property at 17 Ward Avenue:** Second reading by Councilor Rist on the request to appropriate \$137,500.00 from the CPA Undesignated Fund to acquire land to create a new rail trail connection to Park Street. Recommended 7 to 0 by the CPA Committee and 3 to 0 by the Finance Committee.

City Planner Jeff Bagg was in attendance. He asked that the public hearing be continued to May 18th. He said more time is needed to continue a dialogue with the property owner. This vote would authorize the funds, there would be another vote for either an easement or purchase of property. Mr. Bagg presented images of the area and parcel, which would be used to provide access from the bike path to Park Street and then to the 10' wide accessible path to the new Mountain View School.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Zaret it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to continue the public hearing for acquisition of property at 17 Ward Ave. to the May 18th council meeting.

3. **Supplemental Appropriation – Pedestrian Safety Improvements on Holyoke Street:** Second reading by Councilor Rist on the request to appropriate \$39,354.00 from Cannabis Stabilization for pedestrian safety improvements on Holyoke Street. Recommended 3 to 0 by the Finance Committee. Sidewalks and intersection crossings in the East Greene Street area of Holyoke Street will be rebuilt/improved through this appropriation. Councilor Peake, who lives nearby, said this has been a major constituent (and personal) concern for some time and he voiced his strong support of the project.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Peake it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to appropriate the sum of \$39,354.00 from Cannabis Stabilization (Fund #087) to FY '22 Professional Services – Pedestrian Safety (#001.4260.5841.2022) for pedestrian safety improvements on Holyoke Street at the intersections with East Green(e) and Allen Streets. In order for upgrades or improvements to take place at these intersections, design and survey work must be completed. This appropriation will fund completion of the necessary survey and design to move forward with pedestrian safety improvements at these locations.

4. **Supplemental Appropriation – EV Charging & Electric Bike Revolving Accounts:** Second reading by Councilor Rist on the request to appropriate \$10,000.00 from Free Cash to fund the continued operation of the EV charging and Valley Bike Share locations. Recommended 3 to 0 by the Finance Committee.

Conservation Agent Cassie Tragert said this funding would pay the EV charger electric costs. It would also cover the Valley Bike membership fee. Councilor Kwiecinski said he had thought the chargers would be self-funding? Ms. Tragert said the Eversource rate plan is not good right now and the charger costs vs. the city costs are not the same. She said that hopefully that will change in the future. Councilor Rist said he'd love them to be free! Councilor Zaret asked about solar chargers. Ms. Tragert thought it was an interesting idea but didn't have any information on that.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Peake it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 from Free Cash to the following:

Revenue Electric Bike Revolving (#028.4210.3489.4452):	\$8,000.00
Revenue EV Charging & Bike Dept. Revolving (#028.4210.4399.4452):	\$2,000.00

to fund the continued operation of Electric Vehicle Charging and Valley Bike Share locations at multiple locations in the city. Costs associated with operation of these stations include utility bills, maintenance and membership agreements.

5. **Supplemental Appropriation – NPDES Permit Compliance Consulting Services:** Second reading by Councilor Rist on the request to appropriate \$25,000.00 from Enterprise Retained Earnings to hire consulting services to assist in compliance with the NPDES Permit at the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). Recommended 3 to 0 by the Finance Committee.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Zaret it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to appropriate the sum of \$25,000.00 from Enterprise Retained Earnings to FY '22 NPDES Permit Compliance (#060.4461.5808.2022) to hire consulting services to assist in compliance with changes to the WWTP National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES). This appropriation will also fund compliance assistance with new Mass DEP regulations regarding public notification in the event of a sanitary sewer overflow.

6. **Supplemental Appropriation – Structural Evaluation at WWTP Headworks Bldg:** Second reading by Councilor Rist on the request to appropriate \$32,500.00 from Enterprise Retained Earnings for structural and code compliance evaluations at the WWTP. Recommended 3 to 0 by the Finance Committee.

DPW Superintendent Greg Nuttelman said there have been code changes for chemical storage and this is a priority in the Integrated Water Resource Management Plan

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Derby it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to appropriate the sum of \$32,500.00 from Enterprise Retained Earnings to FY '22 Professional Services – Headworks Structural (#060.4461.5837.2022) for a structural evaluation at the WWTP Headworks building and evaluation of fire code compliance options to safely store sodium hypochlorite at the WWTP. Attending to these issues was noted as a priority in the 2018 Integrated Water Resources Management Plan.

7. **Supplemental Appropriation – Pump Station Improvements:** Second reading by Councilor Rist on the request to appropriate \$58,000.00 from Enterprise Retained Earnings for the design of repairs and upgrades at the Lovefield Street Waste Water Pumping Station. Recommended 3 to 0 by the Finance Committee.

Superintendent Nuttelman said this pumping station was built in 1972. The by-pass will allow work to be done on the station.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Peake it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to appropriate the sum of \$58,000.00 from Enterprise Retained Earnings to FY '22 Pump Station Improvements (#060.4461.5806.2022) to fund the design of repairs and upgrades at the Lovefield Street Waste Water Pumping Station. This design will include plans for replacement of the discharge piping air release valve and development of a bypass pumping connection to allow for larger repairs to be completed on this station in the future.

8. **Supplemental Appropriation – Purchase of Dump Truck:** Second reading by Councilor Rist on the request to appropriate \$108,188.00 from Free Cash for the replacement of Highway Division Truck #61. Recommended 3 to 0 by the Finance Committee.

Superintendent Nuttelman said this is a 2008 truck and it will be moved to a backup role once the new vehicle is in service. Delivery of this truck is expected to be delayed but he said they should be able to get one more winter out of the current truck.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Kwiecinski it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to appropriate the sum of \$108,188.00 from Free Cash to FY '22 F550 Dump Truck (#001.4210.5807.2022) to fund the replacement of Highway Division Truck #61. This vehicle is a 2008 Ford F450 with approximately 100k miles to being phasing this truck out of snow and daily operations. It could take up to 18 months before this replacement vehicle can be delivered due to supply chain issues.

9. **Supplemental Appropriation – Lowhead & Pines Pump Removal:** Second reading by Councilor Rist on the request to appropriate \$120,000.00 from Enterprise Retained Earnings to remove, inspect and repair pumps at the Hendrick Street Water Treatment Facility. Recommended 3 to 0 by the Finance Committee.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Derby it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to appropriate the sum of \$120,000.00 from Enterprise Retained Earnings to FY '22 Lowhead & Pines Pump Removal (#060.4510.5826.2022) for the pumps at the Hendrick Street Water Treatment Facility to be removed, inspected and repaired as necessary. New mechanical seals need to be installed once the pumps are returned to service and communications systems between the Hendrick Street Treatment Facility and remote locations need to be update.

10. **Supplemental Appropriation – Addition onto the Sewer Division Garage:** Second reading by Councilor Rist on the request to appropriate \$150,000.00 from Enterprise Retained to

build an addition onto the Sewer Division garage. Recommended 3 to 0 by the Finance Committee.

Superintendent Nuttelman said this funding would allow for the construction of an extension onto an existing garage bay. It would add space for storage of the Sewer Division's Combination Truck. Currently it sits outside; this will extend the life of the truck, Mr. Nuttelman said.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Peake it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to appropriate the sum of \$150,000.00 from Enterprise Retained Earnings to FY '22 Combo Truck Storage (#060.4411.5800.2022) to fund an addition to the Sewer Division garage. This addition will allow for proper storage and an extended service life of the Sewer Division's Vacuum/Flush Combination Truck. It will also allow for reduced response time during sewer system emergencies.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Derby it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to close the public hearings.

Correspondence & Announcements: Councilor Zaret welcomed everyone back to the in-person meeting. He also spoke about the Riverside Industries fundraiser auction and offered his thoughts for those in Ukraine.

Mayor Communications: Mayor LaChapelle spoke about the announcement made by Attorney General Maura Healey about the \$525 million nationwide settlement with opioid distributors and Johnson & Johnson. Easthampton is due to receive \$561,485.00 between 2022 and 2038. The first payment to the city will be \$63,143.00.

Councilor Zaret asked about the status of the Honeywell project. Mayor LaChapelle said the project is being phased – the first phase will be HVAC work at 50 and 32 Payson Avenue. Solar is down the road, she said.

President/Vice-President Communications: President Gomez thanked Treasurer Jennifer Gallant for her service; she has left the city for other employment. Procurement Officer Michael Owens is filling in as Interim Treasurer.

Reports of Standing Committees:

FINANCE: Councilor Rist said the Finance Committee will meet next on April 13th at 5 p.m. They will consider the new business items as well as review council salaries.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Derby it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to extend by 90 days the following agenda item:

- Charter required review of elected officials/board & committee stipends.

PUBLIC SAFETY: Councilor Zaret reported the Public Safety Committee had met on March 24th and had discussed the electronic speed monitoring signs. Police Chief Robert Alberti was in attendance and they had come to a preliminary consensus on the signs. There is more to discuss including where the signs might be placed.

The last scheduled Public Safety meeting had been cancelled. The next regular meeting is set for May 3rd; they will meet with the DPW at that time. Councilor Zaret said there would probably be another meeting sometime in April.

APPOINTMENTS: Councilor Rothschild said the Appointments Committee had met on March 30th to review two Mayoral appointments. She said one appointee (Robert Wild) had withdrawn his request. The other appointment was approved 3 to 0 by the Appointments Committee.

On motion made by Councilor Rothschild and seconded by Councilor Riley it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to **REJECT** the appointment of Robert Wild to the Commission on Disability since he had withdrawn his request for appointment.

On motion made by Councilor Rothschild and seconded by Councilor Riley it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** (by roll call) to confirm the following Mayoral appointment:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Board/Committee</u>	<u>Term Expiration</u>
Richard Ricci	Veterans Council	Dec. 31, 2024

ORDINANCE: Councilor Derby said the Ordinance Committee had met last on March 29th.

On motion made by Councilor Derby and seconded by Councilor Peake it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to extend by 90 days the following agenda item:

- Ordinance Review Committee’s final report.

On motion made by Councilor Derby and seconded by Councilor Peake it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to schedule a public hearing for the April 20th meeting on the Mayor’s request to add the position of Executive Assistant to the Classification & Pay Plan.

On motion made by Councilor Derby and seconded by Councilor Peake it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to schedule a public hearing for the May 4th meeting on the zoning amendments regarding Affordable Housing – Smart Growth District & Planned Residential Developments.

On motion made by Councilor Derby and seconded by Councilor Peake it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to extend by 4 days the following agenda item:

- Zoning amendments - affordable housing – Smart Growth District & Planned Residential Developments.

The Ordinance Committee meeting will meet next on April 11th at 6 p.m.

PROPERTY: No report

RULES & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS: Councilor Rist said the Rules Committee will meet next on April 14th to consider two resolutions.

Ad Hoc Committees:

Senior Tax Work-Off Committee: A report will be given on April 20th.

New Business:

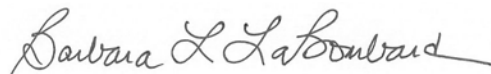
1. On motion made by Councilor Derby and seconded by Councilor Denham it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to refer the following resolution to the Rules & Government Relations Committee:
 - A resolution in support of Municipal Aggregation for the City of Easthampton.
2. On motion made by Councilor Derby and seconded by Councilor Peake it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to refer to the Public Safety Committee a discussion of Narcan Boxes in the City of Easthampton. *Note:* Councilor Rothschild questioned whether it was appropriate to refer an item to committee “just for discussion”. Councilor Zaret said due to the Open Meeting Law no subjects could be discussed if they were not on the agenda and so that was why he wanted the matter referred to committee. Councilor Rist said other items (such as the South/Main Street sidewalk and traffic light) had been referred to committee for discussion.
3. First readings by Councilor Rist on the following interdepartmental transfer:
 - \$15,250.00 for Police Academy expenses, public safety supplies and ammunition.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Derby it was unanimously voted (by roll call) to refer this request to the Finance Committee and to schedule a public hearing for the April 20th council meeting.

On motion made by Councilor Rist and seconded by Councilor Peake it was unanimously voted (by roll call) that this meeting **ADJOURN**.

TIME: 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Barbara L. LaBombard, Clerk to the City Council