



Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Angela M. Gitschier
Assistant City Clerk

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: May 5, 2026

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor,
Lowell, MA / Zoom (Hybrid)

1. ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed 11 present (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Robinson, C. Rourke, C. Scott).

M. Gitschier presiding.

C. Robinson requested a moment of silence in darkened chamber for Timothy Keane.

Manager Golden, Jr. informed the Council of a large fire in Centralville off of Bridge Street. C. Robinson noted all of the safety personnel involved.

2. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

2.1. Communication Remote/Zoom Participation.

In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Nuon. So voted.

2.2. Greetings - Cork Ireland Lord Mayor Fergal Dennehy.

In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Mercier, seconded by C. McDonough. So voted. C. Juran presented the Citation on behalf of the Mayor. Mayor Dennehy commented about the relationship with the City and noted the agreement regarding the UNESCO Learning City Program. C. Mercier commented about the agreement and her recent trip to Ireland.



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Motion by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Robinson to take Item #6.4 out of order. So voted.

2.3. Proclamation - Mental Health Awareness.

In City Council, **Motion** “To accept and place on file” by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Juran. So voted. M. Gitschier read the Proclamation. Lisa Golden (HHS) noted upcoming events surrounding mental health awareness. C. Liang commented on mental health issues in society.

3. CITY CLERK

3.1. Minutes of Finance SC April 28th; City Council Regular Meeting April 28th, for acceptance.

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

4. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

4.1. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. have appropriate department create a reinspection schedule yearly for all utilities.

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

4.2. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. provide City Council with an update concerning the Hot Pot restaurant on Middlesex Street at an Early garage.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted the long-standing issue with the location that needs resolution. C. Robinson requested update regarding all vacant commercial property. C. Nuon did not object to that request. C. Rourke commented on properties that are part of the RFP process by the City.



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4.3. C. Nuon - Req. City Auditor provides City Council with an annual report of grant expenditures, said annual report should include, but not be limited to, the process relative to monitoring expenditures, total expenditures, itemized and school allocation grants.

In City Council, seconded by C. McDonough, referred to City Manager/Auditor. So voted. C. Nuon noted the use of grants and that review of process of procuring grants and disbursing them is needed.

4.4. C. Nuon - Req, City Auditor provides City Council with an annual report detailing how and where Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds are allocated, including information concerning the balances remaining from unused funds.

In City Council, seconded by C. Descoteaux, referred to City Manager/Auditor. So voted. C. Nuon commented on the types of projects funded and that these projects should be spread throughout the entire City. C. Juran commented on the strategy for funding larger projects. C. Robinson noted the importance of the money. C. McDonough noted the need to dedicate funds to larger projects. Conor Baldwin (CFO) noted option to fund parks and open spaces. C. McDonough noted it was important for neighborhoods to use open space.

4.5. C. Liang - Req. City Mgr. have the proper department provide a detailed list of all motor vehicles owned or leased by the City of Lowell, including Make, Model, Year, assigned Department, take-home status, and information about the assignment process policy.

In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Liang noted all City vehicles should be identified and maintained.

4.6. C. Juran - Req. City Mgr. have the proper department provide an outline of the process for resolving claims of pothole or plow damage.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Juran requested a broad review so that residents have basic information.



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4.7. C. Juran / C. McDonough - Req. City Mgr. have the proper department provide information about the plan to address the sinkhole at the Pawtucket Prism Sculpture Park near Lower Locks Garage.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Juran noted the concerns about structural issues. C. McDonough noted concerns of Middlesex Community College. C. Mercier commented on sink hole on Aiken Avenue.

4.8. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. install an appropriate placement of permanent recognition at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium (LMA) highlighting the 2027 National Golden Gloves Tournament being held in Lowell; the recognition would highlight the 80 Years of Golden Gloves within the City of Lowell, sponsored by the Lowell Sun Charities and the leadership of Robert Russo, Executive Director and National President; this recognition would be dedicated during the National Hall of Fame Banquet on June 6, 2027.

In City Council, seconded by C. Descoteaux, referred to City Manager. So voted. Motion by C. Chau, seconded by C. Rourke to allow Kevin Coughlin (Sun Charities) to address the Council. So voted. Mr. Coughlin noted the importance of the event and the need to be recognized. C. Chau noted the event will be a success for the City and the Golden Gloves. C. Rourke commented on the effort to get the event here. C. Descoteaux recognized the efforts of Mr. Russo regarding the event.

4.9. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. work with the appropriate department to provide the City Council with a report on adopting the available state local options under the 2024 HERO Act that would increase property tax exemptions for Lowell's disabled veterans — including tying annual increases to the cost of living and the option to double current exemption amounts — with a recommendation brought before the full Council prior to July 1, 2026.



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In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Chau outlined the act and the need to continue and enhance it. Mr. Baldwin noted the financial analysis needed to accept the second part of the act. C. Chau hoped it would be able to move forward after financial analysis. C. Robinson commented on other paths for reimbursement. C. Juran noted the need for an impact report.

4.10. C. Chau - Request the Mayor refer the matter of Louisiana v. Callais (SCOTUS No. 24-109) and its implications for Lowell's consent decree and current district maps to the Rules and Elections Subcommittee for a public hearing; further request the City Manager coordinate community engagement sessions in the affected districts, including multilingual outreach in the Acre, Lower Highlands, and other minority-concentrated neighborhoods, prior to any policy recommendations being brought before the full Council.

In City Council, C. Chau withdrew the motion after discussion with the assent of C. Descoteaux who had originally seconded it. So voted. C. Chau noted the decision should be discussed in a subcommittee and requested information from the City Solicitor. Atty. Williams referenced earlier memo drafted which noted it is premature to discuss matter, and any discussion should be done in Executive Session. M. Gitschier noted the need for more information. C. Rourke noted not the right point in time to discuss it. C. McDonough noted memo which indicated it was a tough time to discuss decision, even though he is not in agreement with the decision. C. Juran noted the need for more thought and that motion was premature. C. Liang noted he was not supportive of discussing at this juncture. C. Nuon noted intent of motion was good, but timing was not. C. Scott noted the need to protect the Consent Decree. C. Robinson noted the importance of the matter and requested maker of motion could withdraw for a later date. C. Chau noted decision was national news but after discussion he withdrew motion with the assent of C. Descoteaux.

4.11. C. Chau / C. Descoteaux - Req. City Mgr. work with the appropriate department to provide the City Council with a status report on Lowell's functional zero designation for veteran



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homelessness, including current data on veteran housing placements, available supportive services, and the City's coordination with the state's End Veteran Homelessness campaign.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Chau noted the support by the City for these programs. C. Descoteaux noted grants come from the federal government and that our delegation in Washington should be pushing for same support. C. Mercier noted need to provide for those who protected us and further noted the success of the Bridge Club of Greater Lowell. C. Robinson noted possible use of preservation act funding. Manager Golden, Jr. noted use of money from the Affordable Trust Fund.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

5.1. Motion Responses.

A) Motion Response - Improved Street Lighting Barker and Billings Streets - In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted. C. Robinson noted corrective action was taken and is looking for

B) Motion Response - Polling Place Feasibility - In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Mercier, seconded by C. McDonough. So voted. C. Scott noted difficult task with new restrictions. William Rosenberry (Election Dir.) noted the process of polling place selection and the vote needed by the Council, further commented on continued communication with school department. C. Juran noted need to focus on voter turnout and to take opportunity to work with schools especially for special elections. C. Chau commented on use of Lowell High School during special elections. Mr. Rosenberry noted prior success with the use of the high school during special elections. C. Liang noted any changes need to be communicated efficiently.

C) Motion Response - Special Election in Schools Report - In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Descoteaux. So voted. C. Juran noted her prior comments to increase



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voter turnout. C. McDonough noted the schools have some issues so locations should be identified outside of that area.

Motion by C. Juran, seconded by C. Nuon to take remaining items of #5.1 out of order. So voted.

D) Motion Response - Irrigation at Alumni - In City Council, **Motion** “To accept and place on file” by C. Descoteaux, seconded by C. Liang. So voted. M. Gitschier noted the capital plan was in place.

6. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER

6.1. Vote - Accept Gift of Materials for Botto Concession Stand.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** “To Adopt” by C. Rourke, seconded by C. McDonough. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Robinson, C. Rourke, C. Scott). So voted. Manager Golden, Jr. noted many individuals who made project such a success.

6.2. Vote - Accept/Expend \$10,620.23 Fire SAFE Grant.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** “To Adopt” by C. Scott, seconded by C. Mercier. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Robinson, C. Rourke, C. Scott). So voted.

6.3. Vote - Amend COLA for Ordinance Employees.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** “To Adopt” by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Descoteaux. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Robinson, C. Rourke, C. Scott). So voted. C. Robinson commented that all increases should be stalled; including step increases. C. Rourke noted the ordinance employees are leading by example. C. Juran noted the ordinance employees are leading the way. C. McDonough noted the concern for more salary freezes. Manager Golden,



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Jr. indicated that not all ordinance employees are managers or department heads. C. Mercier noted this was an example of people being strong for the City. C. Liang noted deeper freezes are needed to avoid layoffs and loss of services. C. Robinson noted effort of the Manager and that all employees must pull together. M. Gitschier released Chair to Vice-Chair Nuon (8:15 PM). M. Gitschier commented on step increases for union and ordinance employees and further commented that two percent has a limited effect on the budget. Manager Golden, Jr. noted steps for ordinance is not until January and that is still being reviewed and that steps for union are different. Chair returned to M. Gitschier at 8:20 PM. C. Rourke noted union negotiations cannot be done in an open session. C. Robinson noted there is still work to be done.

6.4. Vote - Authorize City Manager Enter into MOU with Cork City, Ireland.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** "To Adopt" by C. Juran, seconded by C. Descoteaux. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Robinson, C. Rourke, C. Scott). So voted.

7. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

7.1. Finance SC April 28, 2026.

In City Council, C. Juran provided report outlining budget updates noting the presentation attached to minutes online. C. Juran commented on the ARPA sunset clause, structural issues, charter school reimbursement and the available information online. **Motion** to accept the report as a report of progress by C. Rourke, seconded by C. McDonough. So voted.

7.2. Non-Profit Organization SC May 5, 2026.

In City Council, C. Liang requested to report next week. No objections.

7.3. Wire Inspector Reports:



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1) Boston Gas - Request permission to replace existing cast iron gas main at 24-360 Gorham Street; 2) Boston Gas - Request permission to replace existing cast iron gas main at 67-94 Kinsman Street; and 3) National Grid - Request permission to install underground electric conduit at 50 Dracut Street.

In City Council, **Motion** to table by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Liang. Matter tabled per Roll Call vote 9 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Scott), 2 nays (C. Robinson, C. Rourke). So voted.

8. PETITIONS

8.1. Claims - (2) Property Damage.

In City Council, **Motion** "To refer to Law Department for report and recommendation" by C. Liang, seconded by C. Descoteaux. So voted.

8.2. Misc. - Trem Caipira Brazilian Cuisine (Cristiane Pinheiro - Owner) request installation of "15 - Minute" parking sign in front of business located at 62 Gorham Street.

In City Council, **Motion** "To refer to Transportation Engineer for report and recommendation" by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Rourke. So voted.

8.3. Misc. - Jose Perez for the benefit of Carmen Rivera request installation of a handicap parking sign at 55 Walnut Street.

In City Council, **Motion** "To refer to Transportation Engineer for report and recommendation" by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Nuon. So voted.

9. CITY COUNCIL - EXECUTIVE SESSION

9.1. Executive Session - To Consider and Discuss Ongoing Negotiations Relative To The Disposition of HCID Parcels 11,12



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(WinnDevelopment Company, LP), Public Discussions Of Which May Have Detrimental Effect On Negotiating Position Of The City.

In City Council, M. Gitschier stated purpose of the session, **Motion** to enter executive session and adjourn from that session by C. Scott, seconded by C. Chau. (8:30 PM). Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Robinson, C. Rourke, C. Scott). So voted.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In City Council, C. McDonough noted upcoming fund-raising music festivals. C. Descoteaux noted Walk for Hunger event. Manager Golden, Jr. updated Council on continuing fire. C. Robinson noted the availability of the Senior Center for impacted families. M. Gitschier noted effort of school department to assist families.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned from Executive Session at 8:45 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk