



Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Angela M. Gitschier
Assistant City Clerk

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: May 19, 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. Mercier requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for former City employee Patricia “Pat” McCoy. C. Nuon requested moment of silence in darkened chamber for Bunrany Chak.

Motion to suspend rules to allow presentation regarding “Hometown Heroes Banners” by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Rourke. So voted. Eric Lamarche (Veterans Department) reported on the program and provided names of this year’s honorees. C. Chau commented on the program and the work of Mr. Lamarche. C. Descoteaux suggested location for the banners. C. Robinson commented on upcoming Memorial Day events. M. Gitschier recognized the events.

2. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

2.1. Communication Remote / Zoom Participation.

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



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2.2. Proclamation - National Public Works Week.

In City Council, **Motion** “To accept and place on file” by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Chau. So voted. M. Gitschier presented the Proclamation to Paul St. Cyr (DPW). Mr. St. Cyr recognized the department. M. Gitschier noted that public works was the third arm of public safety system in the City. C. Robinson noted the sacrifices made by the department.

2.3. Citation - Albert Ferreras.

In City Council, **Motion** “To accept and place on file” by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Chau. So voted. M. Gitschier read Citation outlining achievements of Mr. Ferreras. Mr. Ferreras thanked the body.

2.4. Citation - Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Heritage Month.

Angkor Dance Troupe;
Southeast Asian Water Festival;
Sreyvan Nget;
Kowith Kret; and
Richard Chhon

In City Council, **Motion** “To accept and place on file” by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Chau. So voted. C. Nuon noted the organizations and individuals recognized with these citations. C. Nuon presented citation to Angkor Dance Troupe recognizing their achievements. The Troupe thanked the Council and commented on upcoming events, including the 40th Anniversary. C. Chau complimented the Troupe. C. Nuon noted Citation to Southeast Asian Water Festival and the positive influence on the City by this organization. C. Chau noted citation to Ms. Nget outlining the benefits to the community she brings. C. Liang presented Citation to Mr. Kret and noted his accomplishments. Mr. Kret accepted and thanked the Council. C. Liang noted Citation to Mr. Chhon who had passed and his son accepted the honor on his behalf.



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Motion by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Descoteaux to take Item #6.6 out of order. So voted.

3. CITY CLERK

3.1. Minutes of Auditor/Clerk Oversight and Personnel SC May 12th; City Council Regular Meeting May 12th, for acceptance.

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

4. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

4.1. C. Descoteaux - Req. City Mgr. contact State delegation to report on State reimbursement to City for Charter Schools and if reimbursement is unlikely, request State delegation submit legislation to change/adjust the formula for reimbursement.

In City Council, seconded by C. Juran, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Descoteaux noted the state formula which does not keep pace with costs and enrollment which strains the budget. C. Descoteaux noted state delegation are not being aggressive enough at that level to make needed adjustments. C. Chau noted state delegation must be involved to prevent structural budget constraints. Conor Baldwin (CFO) noted the serious challenges for the City. C. Scott noted it is an unfunded mandate that will have to be picked up by taxpayers. C. Robinson noted Charter Schools are expanding which increases the money pressures. Mr. Baldwin outlined the present enrollment of the four Charter Schools.

4.2. C. Mercier - Req. City Mgr. provide a list of ARPA funded positions (name/amount of pay), as well as a list of new hires from within a year and a half ago.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Mercier noted the need for the information to ensure employees were treated fairly regarding the FY27 Budget in terms of layoffs. C. Mercier noted ARPA was temporary and that process for laying off should be last in would be first out. C. Mercier noted element of not using non-disclosure



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agreements in contracts and avoiding “brown outs”. C. McDonough noted the City Auditor would have that information and requested that this be added to the motion. C. Mercier did not object.

4.3. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. have an appropriate department look to install a four-way stop sign on the corner of South Loring & Shaw Streets.

In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted it was a resident request.

4.4. C. Juran - Req. City Mgr. provide information about last week’s layoff: overview of decision-making process; list of eliminated positions by department and by union; demographics of laid-off employees (length of service, gender, ethnicity, residency); how affected employees were notified and treated re: severance and closing out their relationship with the city; resulting budget savings; any concessions offered by particular unions; what lessons were learned.

In City Council, seconded by C. McDonough, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Juran noted the difficult position with laying off and she understood both sides of the equations due to her past employment. C. Juran noted there is always a need to strive to improve and that information is important to better the process. Chair was released to Vice-Chair Nuon at 7:30 PM. M. Gitschier did not agree with C. Juran approach and noted the process was unfair as the facts indicate there were apparent issues. M. Gitschier questioned if there were layoffs or separation agreements. City Solicitor Williams noted document was labeled as a separation agreement. M. Gitschier noted that there was a reason for that and that it was unfair and that they employees needed to be treated better. Chair was returned to M. Gitschier at 7:34 PM. C. McDonough noted the separation agreement and that a layoff procedure was not followed correctly. C. McDonough reference prior Council action regarding not using non-disclosure clauses in the contracts. C. Juran noted the purpose of the motion was to get information to improve the process if needed by gathering facts. C.



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Robinson questioned Neil Osborne (HR) regarding the process used to layoff individuals. Mr. Osborne outlined the process used and the role of his office. C. Robinson questioned documents presented to employees.

4.5. C. Chau - Req. City Mgr. direct the Department of Public Works and the Traffic Engineering Division to conduct a comprehensive traffic and pedestrian safety study at the intersection of Pine Street and Georgia Avenue, with particular attention to school bus pick-up and drop-off operations.

In City Council, seconded by C. Descoteaux, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Chau described the area and the need for safety study.

4.6. C. Robinson - Req. City Council consider addressing Community Preservation Act (CPA), Community Preservation Commission (CPC) recommendations due to timeliness.

In City Council, seconded by C. McDonough, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted the petition should come before full Council for a vote. C. Scott commented on prior procedures regarding these types of petitions. Mr. Baldwin noted that prior they have gone to a subcommittee, but they can go directly to the Council. C. Descoteaux noted matters could be resolved without subcommittee involvement. C. McDonough requested to separate petition to bring forward quicker. Mr. Baldwin noted earliest possible date would be June 16th. Yovani Baez-Rose (DPD) noted process is longer as votes need to be drafted and put before body.

4.7. C. Robinson/C. McDonough/M. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. have the proper department work with the City Council to carve out a requirement as part of the application process for utility companies to provide all supporting documentation that justifies replace vs repair of utility property.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted the need for transparency and that documents should be part of the application. C. McDonough noted that a small summary could be used to gather information quicker. C. Juran noted upcoming



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subcommittee with utility to improve process. C. Nuon noted that utility should be able to provide direct explanation for the work being done.

4.8. C. Robinson/M. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. provide an update on draft apprenticeship/residency requirements assigned to solicitors' office.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted the importance of the information.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

5.1. Motion Responses.

A) Motion Response - Perkins Street - In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. McDonough, seconded by C. Liang. So voted. C. McDonough commented on the work.

B) Motion Response - RAISE Grant - In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Juran, seconded by C. Descoteaux. So voted. C. Nuon noted next steps with construction and that it is a long process. Elizabeth Oltman (Transportation Engineer) noted that the state is involved with design process which would extend time element. C. McDonough noted the need for bridge repair throughout the City. Manager Golden, Jr. recognized the assistance of the federal delegation.

C) Motion Response - Methuen St. - In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Nuon. So voted. C. Robinson commented on speed issues in the area.

D) Motion Response - Cross St. - In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Juran, seconded by C. Chau. So voted. C. Liang noted the plan coming into place, but there are still many concerns.

E) Motion Response - LFD Nick Spinale - In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Scott. So voted. C. Robinson noted the available options and legislation being drafted.



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5.2. Informational Reports.

Informational Report - Traffic Ordinance Schedule - In City Council, **Motion** “To accept and place on file” by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Nuon. So voted. C. Mercier commented on speed bumps along East Merrimack Street. Ms. Oltman noted the speed bumps along East Merrimack Street.

Informational Report - Bridge St Jersey Barriers Letter to State Delegation - In City Council, **Motion** “To accept and place on file” by C. Descoteaux, seconded by C. Chau. So voted. Manager Golden, Jr. noted need to clean area and that state would have to be involved. C. McDonough noted the need to clean up the area.

RT

Informational Report - Sick Leave Usage and OT Update for FY2026 - In City Council, **Motion** “To accept and place on file” by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Robinson. So voted. Manager Golden, Jr. commented his responsibility is to protect the long-term financial position of the City. The Manager noted that City is dependent of state and federal aid and that this funding source is shifting greatly. The Manager noted the acceptance by the unions to temporarily forego a COLA adjustment to salaries as well as ordinance employees. The Manager noted that this adjustment reduced the number of layoffs in the City. The Manager stated that discussions regarding budget is data driven surrounding the financial information. The Manager noted possible use of a supplemental budget if the financial picture improves and noted concern with referendum regarding state income tax being reduced, which could affect state aid to the City. The Manager noted improvements by some departments and that his comments are directed to departments surrounding sick leave and overtime. The Manager noted that these issues have been part of budget discussions beginning long ago. The Manager noted the fire department did not address these issues as other departments did and chose to layoff personnel as opposed to some changes. The Manager noted that the fire union did not want to negotiate, but further noted his door remains open and is confident this can be resolved. The Manager noted that the pace of overtime is astronomical in the department and cannot be sustained. The Manager noted that the overtime in the department is not in line with what



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other like communities are paying. The Manager data indicated the use of sick time driving overtime expenses. The Manager noted projections for next year will increase dramatically and cause further fiscal strain on the budget. The Manager noted the department is a vital part of the community, but efforts must be made by the union to address the matter. Chair released to Vice-Chair Noun at 8:30 PM. M. Gitschier noted it was unfair to compare departments as scheduling and hours are different. M. Gitschier questioned Fire Chief Charron regarding shifts in the department, who indicated the 10- and 14-hour shifts. M. Gitschier noted that laying off people in the department would cause more overtime costs, but union must meet to try and resolve. The Manager noted he was not comparing departments but merely pointing out financial data and that the union could be part of the solution if they choose to meet. Chair was returned to M. Gitschier at 8:40 PM.

Motion to bundle, waive second reading and adopt Items #6.1 to #6.5 by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Descoteaux. So voted. C. McDonough noted his opposition to the motion. C. McDonough questioned the appropriateness of prior Motion to Table for Item #6.6. City Solicitor Williams noted it was done in proper form.

6. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER

6.1. Vote - Accept/Expend \$130,991 Community Compact Municipal Fiber Grant – MIS.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** “To Accept” by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Descoteaux. Adopted per Roll Call vote 10 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Rourke, C. Scott), 1 absent (C. Robinson). So voted.

6.2. Vote - Transfer \$1,799,000 - General Energy.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** “To Accept” by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Descoteaux. Adopted per Roll Call vote 10 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Rourke, C. Scott), 1 absent (C. Robinson). So voted.



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C. Juran questioned amount regarding trash funding. Austin Ball (Asst. CFO) noted typo and correction.

6.3. Vote - Transfer \$1,881,465 - Various Year End.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** "To Accept" by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Descoteaux. Adopted per Roll Call vote 10 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Rourke, C. Scott), 1 absent (C. Robinson). So voted. C. Nuon questioned where funds come from. Mr. Baldwin outlined the vote and the funding.

6.4. Vote - Transfer \$364k - Water Energy.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** "To Accept" by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Descoteaux. Adopted per Roll Call vote 10 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Rourke, C. Scott), 1 absent (C. Robinson). So voted. C. Nuon noted arrangements of votes. Mr. Baldwin outlined the voting procedure and that energy costs have been challenging.

6.5. Vote - Transfer \$422k - Wastewater Energy.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** "To Accept" by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Descoteaux. Adopted per Roll Call vote 10 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, M. Gitschier, C. Juran, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Nuon, C. Rourke, C. Scott), 1 absent (C. Robinson). So voted.

6.6. Vote - Transfer \$822k - Fire Department OT.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** To Table by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Nuon. Adopted per Roll Call vote 6 yeas (C. Chau, C. Descoteaux, C. Juran, C. Nuon, C. Rourke, C. Scott) 5 nays (M. Gitschier, C. Liang, C. McDonough, C. Mercier, C. Robinson). So voted.

7. ORDERS FROM THE CITY MANAGER



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7.1. Order - 60 Day Trial.

In City Council, Given 2nd reading. **Motion** “To Accept” by C. McDonough, seconded by C. Liang. 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.

8. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

8.1. Auditor/Clerk Oversight and Personnel SC May 12, 2026.

In City Council, **Motion** “To accept the report as a report of progress” by C. Descoteaux, seconded by C. Chau. So voted. C. Juran provided report outlining the attendance and discussion regarding the day-to-day operations of the Auditor and Clerk Departments; in addition to discussion of the demographic report produced by HR Department.

8.2. Rules & Election Law SC May 19, 2026.

In City Council, C. Juran requested to provide report at next meeting. No objections.

9. PETITIONS

9.1. Claim - (1) Property Damage.

In City Council, **Motion** to refer to Law Department for report and recommendation by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Robinson. So voted.

9.2. Misc. - Mary Lou Carroll request waiver of demand for excise tax payment.

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

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS



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In City Council, C. Mercier commented on two Memorial Day events. M. Gitschier noted recent graduates from UMass-Lowell and Middlesex Community College.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk