

Chair Soto called the regular meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Members present: Clr. Santos, Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. Ryan DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, Clr. MacLaren, Clr. Marsan, Clr. Pesce, and Chair Soto.

Acceptance of the Agenda

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

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor Drew to move TR-26-14, Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of a FY26 Shannon Community Safety Initiative Grant (Requested by the Mayor and Chief of Police) as amended, out of order as the next item of business after Consideration of Appointments. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Simard to move TR-26-24 Resolution Approving the Oakland Avenue Trust's Offer to Purchase the Oakland Avenue School with Such Other Conditions and Terms as Are Further Determined Appropriate by the Mayor and Authorizing the Mayor to Execute Whatever Documents Are Required to Close the Sale and Convey the Property (Request of Mayor David P. Beauregard, Jr.) out of order as the next item of business after Councilor Requests.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

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

Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation/Moment of Silence

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and the Invocation given by Councilor Santos. The City Council observed a moment of silence for Thomas L. Grondine and James K. Staples.

Public Participation

Linda Soucy, 10 Kirk Street, thanked the Council for their kind words for James Staples. He worked for them for many years. He started out as a participant and the nicest young man you would ever want to meet. Linda spoke in favor of resolution TR-26-14 Resolution Authorizing acceptance of FY'26 Shannon Community Safety Initiative grant. This goes towards the help at Methuen Arlington Neighborhood and the Methuen Police Department. She would appreciate Council's support.

Shaban Catalbes, 131 Lowell Street, said in 1984 he moved to Methuen and Methuen, bought his house and Methuen became his hometown. And then God gave him opportunity, they opened our mosque. This is a mosque, the North New England first mosque in Methuen. After that, and then start a Muslim community, move in this area and then town of Methuen. He never forgot Chief of Police Bruce MacDougall. He came to me. He said, Saban, what do you think, you think you would like to have this school? *"I said Chief what am I going to do with this school? Try maybe one day you open the school of your community. I said, well, hold up*

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and then Sharon Pollard and all the Methuen Mayor and Councilors all helped me since then. I cannot tell all the names, Dennis DiZoglio, Sharon Pollard, Manzi, Zanni, Jajuga, Perry and my friend DJ is a very good friend for us, our community. I appreciate it. We thank you for our friendship to be our community and help us". This is a growing community in Methuen, and we have over 200 students now in the Islamic Academy on Oakland Avenue, and our school is very successful. Brother Basheer is going to be talking about us hopefully, and our school does very, very well. This is an opportunity. We can have the school if you want you support each other. Thank you very much. By the way, He would love to invite everybody this Friday night, dinner at the mosque, 105 Oakland Avenue at 5:30 p.m. Please try to attend it. thank you very much. Have a nice evening.

Karima Malihani, 32 Garden City Road, Methuen – said he has been a teach at TIA for fifteen years, led many projects and programs, including EEC and Student Council. TIA is accredited by the New Association of Schools and Colleges, which means the school has been officially reviewed and meets high educational standards. This accreditation show that TIA provides quality, quality instructions, follow strong academic guidelines in curriculum, and is committed to continuous improvement ensuring that students receive a well-respected education. In addition to that, because TIA is committed to ongoing improvements and maintaining high standards, the school has obtained a licensed exempt care provider from the Department of Education and Care. This means that TIA meets specific regulations and requirements that allows it to operate and continues to uphold requirements that allows it to operate and continues to uphold quality, safety, and educational standards for its students. TIA is not just a school. It does not only focus on academics. It also deeply committed to community service and outreach beyond the classroom, TIA actively supports and collaborates with local initiatives. Some of the programs are, Glove drive with Methuen Dream Center, Regina drive with the Nevins Memorial Library, Arts and Crafts with senior citizens at Nevins Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, volunteering at MSPCA Nevins Center, sponsor lunch for the police officers on Hampshire Street, and also we have food drives. They have collaboration to collect hygiene and baby needs for the victims of the explosion of the gas that happened years ago in the North Andover/Andover area, participated in the poetry contest. Students also conducted summer programs at the Methuen Your Community centers. They also participated in fun activities such as skating at the ice rink of Methuen High School. Our recent activity is the sweet treats for the neighbors because we welcome the month of Ramadan. The list is long, and we have so many activities to offer to the community. They are looking forward to building even more partnership and work together with local organizations to support and enrich the town of Methuen and its citizens. Thank you so much.

Amir Kaplan, 81 Woburn Street, Methuen. He was at TIA for six years, and after his time at TIA he attended Methuen High School and graduated from Methuen High School. He is pursuing a Bachelors' to Masters at UMass Lowell. He stands before Council not only as an alumni of TIA, but as a reflection of what the school stands for. He highlighted the greatest achievement of our school of the establishment itself, its students, and its alumni. Their most

valuable contribution to this city is not a building or the program it holds, but its people. Their school's purpose has never been to profit, but it has been its people. Students who are taught from a young age to lead with knowledge, to take on responsibility, and to commit acts of service towards this community and towards many others. This commitment extends far beyond just academics. From a young age students are engaged in meaningful community service, whether than be volunteering at local soup kitchens or supporting nursing homes, or even supporting orphan initiatives, it continues through high school and into college, and through professional life. Many of our alumni have received formal recognition in high schools for their community service and their civic leadership and initiatives. Others have gone on to participate in fellowship and research, focus on specifically uplifting underserved communities and challenging real life social imbalances, and at the same time, the academic outcomes of our students and our alumni speak for themselves. This is not a claim made lightly. One of their alumni who is a genuine good friend of his, through an internship at NASA, developed the software that is now used in the international space station currently as we speak. Our students leave the TIA and leave the eighth grade prepared for the most rigorous academic curriculums and environments. They are admitted to highly regarded secondary schools, such as, Phillips Academy, Andover, and Phillips Exeter, Bryan School, Pingree School, Central Catholic High School, and our very own Methuen High School. They do not just attend these schools, but they excel. One student advanced so far in mathematics at Phillips Academy, Andover, that she was placed into an independent, self-designed senior mathematics project because it was the highest level of study available. Our students consistently earn top honors at regional science fairs and Massachusetts state science and engineering fairs. Another eighth grader at the TIA designed an assistive device for the visually impaired that impressed the judge to the extent that she was encouraged to pursue a patent for this device as an eighth grader. Many of our students and alumni have ranked in the top 300 nationally in the Broadcom Masters, and have been recognized in the Thermo Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge. After graduating universities, they contribute at organizations in many different sectors from tech to health care, education and policy and law. But what I believe matters most is that they return. They return to mentor. They return to serve and give back to the community that raised them. When you consider this building tonight, he respectfully asks that Council consider what it truly represents to this community. It is not simply a structure, but it is more a foundation for academic excellence and taking responsibility and long-term community impact. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Rashid Khan, 41 West View Road, Westford, Massachusetts, *“that’s where I sleep but my heart and mind lives in Methuen, Massachusetts every night. I was a long-time resident of Methuen. My children went to the Islamic Academy, and I have the honor and privilege to serve on the board of the Islamic Academy for peace, which is called the Oakland Ave School in your papers, Merrimack Valley Islamic Academy, all of the above. We call it like a nickname TIA which is the Islamic Academy. It rolls easier on the tongue. I would first like to start with sincere and deep and wide thanks to all the support we have received over the years. I would*

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like to echo what brother Shaban was saying that over the years since Mayor Pollard, then I do not want to miss anyone Mayor Manzi, Mayor Zanni, Mayor Jajuga, and our current Mayor D.J. Beaugard. But all the Mayors and all the city councils and all the departments have been tremendously supportive of our community. We appreciate it tremendously. Also, the building department, health department, and particularly the schools department and all the superintendents since 2001 every single one of them has been so supportive of our school and community. We all are here to appreciate them, every one of them. above all, the police department, fire department and all the first responders have been tremendous, and we appreciate them. When I was a freshman in UMass Lowell, I made it to the Dean's list. I got a letter from this person called James. Jajuga and I was like, I do not know what that is. He was a state Senator at that time. I still have that letter because it was just an appreciation of the accomplishment that I had received. So, me and Methuen and Mayor, who was a state Senator at that time go way back. Methuen is a great city. It absolutely is. I really mean it. I am not here just to say it for the words only. It is a large open tent that welcomes everyone. It welcomes the faith-based communities, cultural communities, ethnic communities, and everyone. It has unmatched accessibility. Access to the highways is something that we take for granted in Methuen but trust me, I live in Westford. It takes me 15 minutes to get to the highway to get anywhere. Methuen is fantastic. The Loop, the Italian bakeries, as I said my heart and mind lives here. People are as sweet as the Mann Orchard's apple pie. New businesses are opening. There are two Middle Eastern butcher shops and grocery stores that recently opened and a fantastic restaurant opened up called Faz Cafe. Its on exit 46 from Rt. 495. If you have not eaten at the Faz Café, I really urge you to try it. If you go there, it is owned and operated by one of our parents and the social media and the party planning and everything about that café is done by one of our alums, but the café is very warm and welcoming and the quality is excellent and the product is good and the price is absolutely fantastic. Why I bring that up is because some of you might have visited it. It is Ron's district where he lives. When you go there its warm and welcoming. That is the way our school is, warm, welcoming, family administered, and then on top of that quality products. Imagine Phillips Academy running out of math to teach one of our students. TIA mosque is the center of our community. Our community is full of law abiding taxpaying, middle class citizens who vote a lot. We have earned multinational scholarships. Two of the United States presidents sent their letters. One from President Obama and one from President Trump for the spirit of community, etc. For 25 years, our school has been a center of academic excellence, a pipeline for nationally recognized students, our training ground for civic leadership, a contributor to Methuen Community's identity, and our students are putting Methuen on the national map and on the Commonwealth's map. Our offer on our proposal to purchase is for the continuity of the mission, stability for the families, preservation of the community, legacy and long term responsibility of stewardship. We are not proposing to purchase the property alone. We are asking to continue 25 years of legacy and impact to Methuen. On behalf of the School Committee, on behalf of the board, we sincere and on behalf

of the community and all the people who could not make it, I sincerely appreciate every single thing you all do and what the town does for our community. Thank you very much.

Yousef Tayb, 30 year resident of Methuen, currently the Director of Manufacturing Engineering for Excel Technologies. He also owns multiple commercial properties here in the state of Methuen, in addition to his residence on Piedmont Street, where he and his wife raised three beautiful children, all three of them were born in Methuen. All attended TIA from pre-K all the way to grade eight before moving on to Methuen High School and then to colleges. They all graduated. They are all successful professionals. He stands here not just as a parent, but as someone who has witnessed the long term impact of TIA on families and the city. TIA is more than a school. It is a launchpad for a lot of these students. Over the years, TIA alumni have been accepted in top universities, including Harvard University. They have won numerous science and robotics competition and presented mission and message at the state level and in the national level, and they won numerous prizes. These are small achievements. They reflect discipline, strong academics, and culture of excellence built early. Our graduates have also contributed greatly to Methuen athletic. TIA students have strengthened to win Rangers different teams from soccer to football. One of the Methuen Rangers, Omar Abu Tsui is a graduate of TIA. He used to be the kicker from Team Rangers. He is in the University of UMass of Maine and he is an NFL candidate. He is going to represent Methuen at some point. He is one of our students that attended TIA that we are proud of among other students. TIA graduates have had 100% college admission. All our students made it to college. That is a big thing that this school, we must give credit to. They became educated, productive, and responsible citizens. They are giving back and the impact goes beyond academics and sports because of TIA many families chose Methuen. They did not just move here. They invested here. They opened businesses. They bought properties here. They created jobs here. He would like to list a few of them: Alpha Civil Engineering Consulting Firm, Faz Café, Galloway convenience store, mini gas station, Leban door, Yella Grill and many commercial and rental property owners who continue in reinvesting in our neighborhood. These businesses strengthen our tax base, energize our commercial districts, and contribute to Methuen economic growth. When you support TIA, you are supporting education, entrepreneurship, civic pride, and long-term investment in the city. My children are living proof of what happened with school instill strong values, academic rigor, and discipline from a young age. Many families here can say the same. TIA builds students and those students build Methuen. Thank you for your time and thank you for your commitment to our city.

Organizational Business

Chair Soto announced any Councilor who is interested in participating on the Memorials Committee to contact her. She plans to appoint Memorials Committee members at the next Council meeting.

Reading and Acceptance of Minutes from Previous Meetings: February 17, 2026 regular meeting MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Santos to approve. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Proclamations/Correspondence: NONE

Consideration of Appointments:

David DiZazzo – Reappointment to the Conservation Commission

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

Mayor Beauregard explained that three of the appointments on the agenda, David DiZazzo, Ken Sateriale, and Ray DiFiore, are all ten year plus appointments that he had on a previous Council agenda that Council tabled to take a further look at the ten year appointment requirement. These are simply back on the agenda.

Solicitor O'Neill explained pursuant to the change in the ordinance, they require six votes.

Councilor Pesce asked if there were any other applicants for consideration for appointees and are there still vacancies after these appointments.

Mayor Beauregard explained in terms of the Conservation Commission we do not have an extensive list by any means of applicants. That necessitated the reappointment. At the very least this will eliminate any expired appointments on the commission, which was one of his goals. In terms of the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District, he appointed Mr. DiFiore a month or so ago. At that time, there was nobody else in the running. There has been some renewed interest since then, but that was in between when he initially made the appointment and now. Beyond that regarding Conservation, we do not have any other candidates that are new and qualified that otherwise would be on the agenda.

Councilor Simard commented that was his question also. He is glad the Mayor just said not only new applicants but a qualified applicant. He just hopes that whoever Council votes on is qualified.

Councilor Santos asked if after a candidate is appointed and someone comes and applies is there any to replace the members if they have already served over the ten years.

Solicitor O'Neill responded, not currently. That is not the way the ordinance is written. Once Council appoints this person, they will serve a full term, whatever that is. Some boards its three years. Some are two year. But they would serve the full term.

Councilor Pesce reminded everyone – she sees real value in some of these appointments over ten years. She does not want anyone to get hung up on just the ten years, because there is some credentialling and experience that goes along with this, and she wishes we could rework it Mayor. She knows this is somewhat unrelated but she almost wished the boards could be a mixture of ten year people and new people to have that mentor sort of system, because she doesn't think the intent is to keep people on to negate having new people come in but there is a

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wealth of information and a history and an experience that comes along with some of these more tenured applicants as well.

Mayor Beauregard said he could not agree more. That is really the goal of this whole exercise where whenever we do have after a vacancy or in a case like this an expired appointment, we can have some new applicants that add some fresh blood who are qualified. That is ideal to have the new individuals in the mix along with the people who have been around for some time and have that institutional knowledge.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. Soto)

Kenneth Sateriale – Reappointment to the Conservation Commission

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

Councilor Drew questioned his resume which lists his address in Maryland.

Mayor Beauregard explained he is a Methuen resident and lives in one of the Regency developments. There was a meeting recently where there were new Conservation Commission people. Although these are new appointments, we have had some new people in recent meetings.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. Soto)

Cheryl Watson Fisher, Esq. – Appointment to Licensing Board

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

Francis McLaughlin – Appointment to Methuen Historical Commission

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

Raymond DiFiore – Reappointment to Greater Lawrence Sanitary District

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

Councilor Simard said he received a phone call from a resident who was interested in this commission and he also checked with the Mayor who just confirmed that was the case that this was already presented or projected to come before Council before this person's talent bank application went through. He knows this gentleman has done a lot for this city, thirty years on this board. This other person who has been on other commissions. He is part of the airport commission, would probably be a good replacement if we so chose. But he just wanted to make the Council aware that there is another person who may have contacted Councilors also that he is considering as a replacement.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 yes, 3 no (Clr. Soto, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Simard)

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TR-26-14 A Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of a FY26 Shannon Community Safety Initiative Grant (Requested by the Mayor and Chief of Police) as amended

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

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Presentations/Projects/Department Updates: None

Mayor's Report

School Updates

The School Committee voted to approve Dr. Lisa Golobski Twomey as the Acting Superintendent through June 30, 2026. On Monday, March 23, the School Committee will interview two superintendent search firms to learn more about their qualifications and offerings. Both firms were rated "highly advantageous" through the RFP process. Following these interviews, the committee will vote to select the firm to lead the search for Methuen's next permanent superintendent. The central office staff is busy developing a budget proposal for the School Committee to maintain services and address increased costs. Over February break, tile flooring was installed in six classrooms at the Timony. The work will continue in additional classrooms over the April break. It is Read Across America Week. The PTOs at the Timony and Marsh grammar schools and the team at the Early Childhood Center have prepared guest reader events for students and readers alike. The CGS and Tenney events will take place later in the spring. The Methuen/Tewksbury Varsity Girls Ice Hockey team's undefeated season continues. They have advanced to the elite 8 of the MIAA Division 1 State Tournament and will face Algonquin on Wednesday, March 4, at 5 pm at the Chelmsford Forum.

Payroll Report Update

The payroll reports for calendar year 2025 are on the website. Visit Methuen.gov and view the reports on the Budget and Finance section. This is information that most municipalities do not go out of their way to publish, but for us, this is another way to help ensure that our government is operating in the most transparent way possible.

RFP Update

Regarding some RFPs that are in progress, the RFP for grant writing services is up until Thursday. The trash and recycling RFP is also up until Thursday – there's a chance we extend that but at this point, it's up until then. Councilor Drew is asking about the RFPs for the parks and facilities assessments – we have RFPs in the works for solar, environmental and river cleanup services, some school safety measures, a retail incubator program, the school bus stop arm cameras, the Pleasant Valley and Currier Schools. We will work the RFPs for the assessments into that mix.

Trash/Recycling Update

Speaking of trash and recycling, we have the final statistics for solid waste and materials management for calendar year 2025.

Beginning with curbside collection, annual trash tonnage collected curbside in CY25 totaled 14,709 tons. That marks the first time in at least 15 years that curbside trash has fallen below 15,000 tons. The 2025 total represents a 2.7% decrease from 2024 and a 28.4% reduction from 2021 – the last full year before the carts program was implemented – when curbside trash totaled 20,536 tons.

With respect to recycling, single stream recycling collected curbside in CY25 totaled 3,502 tons. That reflects a 9.5% decrease from 2024; however, it remains 28.7% higher than pre-carts program levels in 2021, when single stream recycling totaled 2,722 tons. In 2021, the City's recycling rate stood at 11.7%. In 2025, that rate increased to 19.2%, reflecting continued progress in waste diversion efforts.

Turning to additional waste diversion measures, as I have mentioned numerous times, the City began a partnership with Planet Aid in March 2025 to provide biweekly curbside textile collection on the first and third Saturdays of each month. Residents schedule collection in advance, and over the program's first 10 months of operation, 19,895 pounds – or 9.95 tons – of textile material were diverted from the waste stream.

In addition to curbside textile collection, the City continues its partnership with Bay State Textiles, which maintains donation bins at the transfer station, all four K-8 schools, and Methuen High School. In 2025, those donation boxes collected 150,650 pounds – or 75.3 tons – of material that was kept out of the trash stream.

Regarding mattress collection, the City's partnership with UTEC resulted in the collection of 2,364 mattresses and box springs in 2025 through curbside pickup and transfer station drop-off.

Food waste diversion continues to be an area of focus. Approximately 20% of household trash consists of food waste, making it the single largest component of the residential waste stream. In late 2025, Methuen received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to distribute food waste carts as part of a pilot subscription-based collection program in partnership with Black Earth Compost. The program is scheduled to launch in late Spring 2026, with a goal for the two-year pilot of enrolling 1,000 Methuen households.

Finally, with respect to transfer station activity, there was an increase in drop-off collections in 2025. Single stream recycling drop-off totaled 157.7 tons, up 5.2% from 2024. Household trash drop-off totaled 152.3 tons, up 36.4% from 2024. Additional materials collected at the transfer station in 2025 included 3,137.7 tons of construction and demolition debris, 457 tons of yard waste, 46.5 tons of e-waste, and 158.84 tons of scrap metal and large appliances.

These numbers reflect continued progress in reducing overall trash tonnage, increasing recycling rates, and expanding diversion programs – all of which help control long-term costs and promote environmental responsibility in our community.

Regarding the trash barrels, which Councilor Drew asked about, they have arrived and are actively being distributed – so anyone who has paid for a barrel is in the process of receiving one. DPW is distributing them as quickly as they can.

Kratom (“Kray-tum”) Emergency Regulations

I would like to talk for a moment about kratom – it is a synthetic opioid-like drug that studies suggest is more potent than morphine. Director Tegan Zampach of the Department of Health, Human Services, and Inspections has been working in partnership with assistant city solicitor to draft emergency regulations regarding a kratom ban that the Board of Health will be discussing on Wednesday night. Chief McNamara initially brought this concern to us and shared information about how kratom use can lead to serious adverse effects such as addiction, liver toxicity, seizures, and in some cases, fatalities. This is an unregulated product that is readily accessible over the counter at gas stations, vape shops, convenience stores, and other retail locations in Methuen. Lowell, Dracut, and Chelmsford have all recently implemented kratom bans. There’s legislation dealing with this at the state level but so far, it remains under consideration on Beacon Hill. Methuen will be the next municipality to take proactive action at the local level and help serve as a model for other cities and towns that might want to follow suit.

Social Media Resolution

We have a resolution on tonight’s agenda that aims to protect youth in Methuen under the age of 16 from the dangers of social media. We are seeing countries across the world take steps to enact protections and restrict access to social media for kids under 16, such as Australia and “small ‘d’” democratic governments across Europe and Asia. However, we have seen little to no action here in our country and in the Commonwealth, so this is a great opportunity for local government to take proactive steps to safeguard kids and preserve the healthy adolescence children deserve. We hear from parents and educators who are concerned about the role social media is playing in the lives of young people, and while broader regulation will ultimately require action at the state and federal levels, we can take responsible steps locally to limit social media usage among children and to educate and support parents. I’d like to thank Councilors DiZoglio, Drew, MacLaren, Pesce, and Valley for joining me as co-sponsors of this legislation – and I hope it has the impact of serving as a model for other municipalities while we wait for action from Washington.

Methuen 300 Earmark

On tonight’s agenda is a resolution to accept the state earmark secured by Representative Hamilton for the Methuen 300 festivities. The Methuen 300 events are starting soon and we are at a point where we’re able to formally vote to accept the earmark, so I ask for your support once we get to that part of the agenda.

Unaccepted Ways Map

The new GIS map of accepted, unaccepted, and state roads is now live – you can view it at [Methuen.gov/unaccepted ways](https://Methuen.gov/unaccepted-ways). Using the map, you can search for a specific street, select a street to view its status, and submit feedback directly through the interactive form displayed on the map. We will continue to refine and improve the map, but we wanted to make those key

features available as soon as possible. Thanks to Councilor Valley for continuing to follow up on that.

Community Project Funding Update

Wednesday is the deadline for the City to submit a request for Community Project Funding from the federal government. We are in touch with the offices of Senator Markey, Senator Warren, and Congresswoman Trahan, and the push we are making is for additional funding for the Arlington Neighborhood infrastructure project. As you know, the first phase was fully funded through ARPA, but since the new administration took office last year, funding for future phases is now in question. We have been advocating for additional help from our federal partners so we can complete the project, so this is the next step for us in that regard.

The Islamic Academy

I am going to share publicly the letter I submitted to the council regarding the Islamic Academy for Peace. It reads:

“Dear Madam Chair, Madam Vice-Chair, and Esteemed Councilors,

I respectfully submit for your consideration the attached Resolution approving the Oakland Avenue Trust’s Offer to Purchase the Oakland Avenue School at 125 Oakland Avenue.

For more than two decades, the Oakland Avenue Trust and The Islamic Academy for Peace have been responsible, long-term stewards of this City-owned property. Since 2001, they have operated a Pre-K through 8 grade school at this location, investing approximately \$1.38 million of private funds to maintain, repair, and improve the buildings and grounds – at no capital cost to the City.

Pursuant to Section 1.5 of the 2011 Lease Agreement, the Trust has exercised its right to submit an Offer to Purchase. The proposed purchase price of \$2,680,100 reflects the City Assessor’s certified 100% valuation of the property. The offer allows the Trust to explore outside financing or financing provided by the City, with a \$200,000 down payment and the balance financed over 25 years at a fixed 6% interest rate. Under that structure, the City would receive \$200,000 in immediate revenue at closing, in addition to consistent monthly payments and substantial long-term interest revenue if the financing is carried to maturity.

Beyond the financial benefits, this proposal recognizes the Academy’s longstanding educational contributions to our community. Its students consistently demonstrate excellence, including recent statewide recognition in competitive STEM programs, and its graduates have gone on to distinguished academic and professional careers.

After consultation with the Chief Administrative and Financial Officer and the City Solicitor, I have determined that approval of this sale, on the terms outlined and with appropriate closing conditions, is in the City’s best interests both financially and for the continued success of education in our community.

If you've read your packet, keep in mind that on page 2 of the 2011 lease agreement, it states that "at any time during the term of the Lease the Lessee may make an Offer to Purchase the subject premises. The Lessee shall provide to the then current Mayor and the then current City a written offer. Said offer shall not be binding upon the City. The City, through the Mayor, shall submit said offer to the City Council who, in its discretion, may vote to allow the sale of the premises."

In his opinion, this is a major win-win for the City and the Islamic Academy. If there's a "yes" vote from the council, it'll allow the academy to own their building and their future, and it would allow the City to generate \$200,000 in immediate revenue and, if the financing is carried to maturity, generate total estimated revenue for the City amounting to \$4,793,795.38 when all is said and done. If we have a "no" vote tonight, the lease will remain in effect, and the Oakland Avenue School Trust will continue to pay the City \$5,000 to rent the property for the next 10 years in accordance with the 2011 lease.

Upcoming Events

Regarding upcoming events, as I mentioned earlier, Read Across America is happening this week. We were at the Timony today, and we will be at the Early Childhood Center tomorrow and the Marsh on Thursday – information about event dates and locations have been sent to the council, so be sure to check your email. The Methuen 300 kickoff luncheon will be held this Friday, March 6 at 12 pm at the Nevins Library. The Methuen 300 Firebird Pops Orchestra concert is taking place this Saturday, March 7 at the high school. The St. Patrick's Day Parade is taking place on Saturday, March 21. Lastly, the Methuen Literacy Partnership is hosting their launch event on Tuesday, March 24 at the Timony at 6 pm. That will do it for tonight's Mayor's Report. As always, I am happy to answer any questions.

Councilor Pesce a minor point Mayor, the Read Across America, she had no idea and asked several other Councilors. She did not receive an email and some other Councilors did not. she only found out about it today when our auditor posted some pictures from the Timony. Going forward, she knows we switched over our emails. She doesn't know if that was the issue or not but the Mayor could maybe on behalf of the Council, extend our apologies and let them know what happened because there was no Council representation from the pictures. From the pictures she does not think anybody knew about it. if we could get that over to them and then going forward just make sure if they want us to at least confirm that we did get that invite.

Mayor Beauregard agreed to share that. He noted the invites were sent out by the PTOs to all elected officials. He said he would go back into his email and find those and forward them Councilors.

CAFO Report

CAFO Duprey said Council will see on tonight's agenda multiple transfer requests pertaining to the fiscal year 26 budget. This is standard practice as far as this point in the year. We have done our mid-year review and done projections for fiscal year 26 through the end of the

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year. In that practice we have noticed a need for some of the transfers to cover a few areas as detailed in the individual resolutions. All transfers that are presented tonight are being covered within the budget whether it is the general fund or water, sewer, from areas that we are projecting surpluses. We are not asking for additional funds tonight. We are asking to move within the budget to cover areas that we are projecting needed.

She was out of the office last week and apologized for not being able to provide responses to the requests under the CAFO. She will review them and get you responses as soon as possible. I do have one follow up question and I am sure who requested it so if I could ask. It is asking about the detailed accounting of the stadium improvement project. I just want to confirm that that is the project from fiscal year 16 to 19 that she had emailed to the Council about. There were a couple of different projects and she wants to make sure she is getting the right one. She is not sure who asked.

Chair Soto said she placed that on the agenda. The request had an additional line and that line read accounting. Based on the email you had sent the account, there was about \$600,000 on her math. She is not saying that was the exact number that was missing when you replied that you found it. Her clarification was great we found it. "Where was it?" "What happened?" "Can I have details as to how it was spent?" That is basically the request. Understanding that you were not able to provide or get that done for this evening, I will keep it on the agenda for the next meeting. But if you could reply to the entire Council in the meantime that would work. It was just clarification on those two emails you had sent.

Projections on past and future funding sources as well as overtime on the Mayor's Executive Order # on Paid Parental Leave (Clr. Pesce) Keep on agenda

Request of detailed accounting regarding the Stadium Improvement Project". Keep on agenda

- Request to CAFO: Pursuant to the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 200A (Unclaimed Property), specifically Section 4 and 7 through 9, regarding property presumed abandoned and the required reporting and custody procedures, I am requesting clarification on how long any applicable performance deposits, warranty deposits, or developer bonds have been held in the City's possession, and whether the three-year abandonment period applies to these funds (Req. of Clr. Valley) Keep on agenda

Requests of Councilors

Chair Soto noted that the Mayor answered a few of the items on the Request of Councilors. an observation, Mr. Mayor, some of the answers, not that I want to cut you off but some of the answers, I do watch the meetings after the meeting and we go on for about 12 minutes. So, if you guys want a specific yes or no, please tell the Mayor if that's what you want so that we can kind of, of course if the response alludes to an explanation as to why the no or why the yes, please elaborate. Moving on to any of the requests that the Mayor did not touch upon in his report, if you have additional questions.

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I do have an item at the end, but again, I know there is a few on the Request of Councilors that were not referenced to on his report.

Mayor Beauregard said he would go through them and provide some additional clarity and answer any other questions.

- Update regarding the status of the RFPs for garbage and recycling services (Req. of Chair Soto) Mayor Beauregard: as I mentioned, the RFP for garbage and recycling services closes on Thursday.
- GIS Map for Unaccepted Ways - Update on the GIS map for unaccepted ways is not yet live on the City's website and whether there is a tentative timeline for when it will be available to the public (Request of Clr. Valley to the Mayor and DPW Director) Mayor Beauregard restated that the GIS map is online with [Methuen.gov/unaccepted ways](http://Methuen.gov/unaccepted-ways).
- Echo Lane Sewer Connection – Update on the proposed sewer connection for Echo Lane, including whether there is a tentative schedule for when the project will begin, so residents can be kept informed (Request of Clr. Valley to the Mayor and DPW Director) Mayor Beauregard said he has nothing new to report on the Echo Lane project. We have had our hands full between the snow and more recently the Oakland Avenue bridge issues. Feel free to keep this on the agenda.
- An update/explanation and potential cost to City (if any) for the Executive Order by Mayor involving FMLA. (Request of Clr. Pesce) Mayor we have information requested regarding the Executive order by me involving the FMLA. Just to provide some clarity, the executive order does not deal with FMLA. FMLA is an unpaid benefit that, in essence, provides job protection for somebody who goes out on leave for up to 12 weeks and typically at the state level FMLA covers leave to care for an immediate family member that can be, a child, a spouse, a parent, etc. The executive order that he signed only deals with parental leave. It does not factor in anything related to other family members, a spouse. Its just for new parents. In essence, it provides for the functional equivalent of four additional weeks of vacation time for new parents. As you can imagine, when somebody uses vacation time, there's implications to that. He knows there is interest in more information about the financial impact of it. The CAFO provided some details of it in the February 11th email that can be shared with the full group. It was provided to leadership. We are having this conversation about impact, if you consider all the various departments, every employee who has benefits, they receive a certain amount of vacation time. Think of this, in essence, the functional equivalent of having four additional weeks. And its only for new parents whether you are giving birth to a child or adopting. That might provide some clarity in terms of the way to think about that.
- Request to City Solicitor – Has Section 9A of G.L. c. 200A been formally accepted by the City of Methuen and is it currently in effect? If so, what specific procedures must be followed to lawfully access, claim, and utilize such funds in full compliance with state law? Additionally, could those funds be used to improve unaccepted ways? (Request of Clr. Valley)
- Status of RFP on Parks assessment (Req. of Clr. Drew)
- Status of RFP on Building assessment (Req. of Clr. Drew)
- Status of charter review (Req. of Clr. Drew) Mayor Beauregard said this is something he is not a part of. He would have to consult with Chair Saba regarding the status of that.

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At some point it is going to arrive on his desk, its going to be submitted to the Council, and then we are going to go from there.

- Status of New Trash Barrel order delivery and distribution (Req. of Clr. Drew)
- Status on confirmation for Request for Comprehensive Council Presentation on the Searles Estate made by the Chair on 02/18/2026. There was the request made by the Chair in a recent email regarding a Council presentation regarding the Searles Estate. He is willing to do that. Keep in mind we have an active RFP open until March 23rd. The date recommended was March 18th, which is right up against that time when the RFP will close on the 23rd. If there is a desire to have the meeting before the RFP is closed, then he would recommend that's something we ought to have an Executive Session if its before the 23rd, simply due to the intricacies involving the RFP process. We are not in the mood to mess that up in any way. That is something we can coordinate, Madam Chair. He wants everyone to be cognizant of the March 23rd date. That is going to be opening of the next chapter as it relates to the estate.

Councilor Pesce I think you answered it last and we probably should remove it going forward. It falls better under the CAFO that she is working on those numbers for her. that is really all she is looking for at this point.

Councilor Valley asked the Mayor regarding Echo Lane sewer connection. When Mayor Perry, Councilor Saffie met with the residents two years ago, the betterment was never discussed. In the previous meeting the Mayor mentioned that. She asked if he knew how that would play out for instance the terms. She knows he does not know the amount that is going to be for the property because we do not have an RFP yet. One of the residents called her and told him she would get back to him once she heard from the Mayor.

Mayor Beauregard said he is not privy to the conversation that happened between Mayor Perry and Councilor Saffie. But just going forward with the process that we have available to us in a legal sense, we included the funding for it in the CIP. The funding is there. The challenge that we then run into from a legal is that this would not be a project that benefits the broader community. This would be a project that benefits a small handful of residents who reside on Echo Lane. Its not to say that we are not able to do it. We certainly are but there would have to be some type of arrangement established with the residents given the fact that this is not something that would have a widespread benefit to a part of the city. We're talking about literally one roadway with perhaps X amount of residents. Councilor Valley indicated there are twelve residences. Mayor Beauregard said this is something that would benefit just those twelve residents. We would probably have to legally establish some type of arrangement with them. But, we did set aside the funding for it. It is there and we can proceed with that. That is something that he would rely on legal to guide us through the process so we are able to do it in a way that is completely above board. This is like the conversation about the unaccepted ways of dealing with that type of situation. This is an issue that we need to get after, and he will invite the solicitor to share any other thoughts about it. But we want to make sure we are solid on a process.

Councilor Valley said just to make sure: the residents will have to go over the full cost of the sewer connection will be divided by twelve.

The Mayor said he does not want to state what that would look like. That is something that we would have to discuss with legal, but we would have to have that conversation further and provide specifics to the residents and you Councilor. But I do not want to speak out of turn on the floor regarding about something that would be a legal issue. Lets stay in touch about it and he will bring her in to the loop as they have those conversations.

Councilor DiZoglio asked the Mayor the status of the Oakland Avenue bridge. There were some residents that touched base with him after it was closed.

Mayor Beauregard explained on December 31st, DOT visited the bridge and they saw that there was some exposed rebar and a pothole of noticeable size on the bridge. Then they issued a determination that they wanted the city to fix the issue with the rebar and the pothole, etc. inside of 90 days. That was on New Year's eve but then more recently, it was discovered that separate from the pothole and the rebar, is an actual hole in the deck where people could see straight through to the rail trail below. The issue with this bridge is that it is 91 years old. It was built in 1935 using money from the New Deal. The challenge that we have with that bridge is that it spans an MBTA right of way that was previously the Boston and Maine Railroad. Its now the rail trail, but technically that's state property. As a result, the bridge is a state element there. That bridge is on Mass DOT's list to be completely replaced in 2026. Whether that happens, he does not have an answer for from DOT currently. He has been in touch with Lieutenant Governor Driscoll. She got him in touch with Phil Lang, who is the GM of the MBTA, but he is also the acting secretary of transportation. We have been in touch with DOT. The thinking that we have is lets at least fix the issues related to that hole in the deck, address the issue with the exposed rebar. Once we are at a point where the bridge is safe, then we would reopen. There is a conversation about total replacement but we're subject to the state's timeline. He does not have any specifics from them about that. A fix is on the way. The city is working with TDC out of Lawrence on the engineering specs and the like. This is a high priority project for DPW in partnership with our state partners. He has been in touch with Senator Payano as well, Representative Reyes. This is her district, as well as Representative Hamilton. He would like to do some door-to-door outreach this week to the residents in the neighborhood to keep them informed with what is going on. He has been in touch with Abbie Hoffman from Twaites Market, as well as Alvin Alarcon who has a restaurant or some type of food business in that area. He is trying to keep the local business owners and residents informed and keeping touch with the state. This also impacts the Mosque and the academy on Oakland Ave. We are trying to do everything we can to ensure that we have safe conditions on the bridge for it to be utilized, but we do not want to do anything too soon. But a fix is underway.

Councilor Drew said it sounded like we are down on some trash and up on other things with a lot of numbers. When we get to the RFP opening is he anticipating this to be a more significant increase in our cost in trash.

Mayor Beauregard said he would virtually guarantee that given the fact that we're now in 2026, we're going to be dealing with significantly higher trash contract costs that we otherwise would have had back in 2021, 2022 when the Harvey contract was first established. There are some things being discussed internally regarding Harvey. We do have the option of one more extension year with Harvey. Those have rates that were locked in back when this contract was initially established. He will guarantee where we are in 2026 and the increased costs of everything over the past five years, no matter what we do, we are looking at higher costs. That is why it is important for us to keep every option on the table. We do not want to completely foreclose the option of utilizing the final extension year, but at the same time what we are aiming to do is try to achieve some improved service delivery by way of our trash vendor. He is aiming, as he mentioned before, for a reset, a complete reset of the program. There are things that have been messed up coming right out of the gate. If we are not following various parts of the ordinance, it's difficult to get things back unless we do some type of wholesale reset like we are looking at. But the beauty of RFPs it is a conditional exercise. If we determine that the cost compared to sticking with that last extension year, if there is going to be a significant chasm between the new rates that we're getting from the RFP and the option that we have with that final extension year, that's going to come into consideration because we don't want to break the budget when we have another option that we could consider. These are a lot of the internal dynamics at play that we've been discussing just to ensure that we're getting the best service for residents, but we're also not causing trouble from a budget standpoint that our taxpayers would then have to deal with.

Councilor Drew when the RFP gets opened on Thursday, we have the option to keep going with what we have got or pick somebody. He asked: "How long after the RFP is opened is that going to be valid?"

The Mayor said he would aim to make a quick of a decision as possible, simple because of the fact that historically, in the context of trash programs and when we switched to Harvey from JRM initially, that contract was signed by former Mayor Perry. It was close to the last week of the fiscal year. With the extension last year, that was late as well. His goal with this whole exercise is to have a system in place, not only before July 1st, because we don't want to be bringing that close to the end of the fiscal year, but he wants to have everything in place before we dive into the budget, because ultimately the cost of whatever we pursue is going to greatly impact the trash line in the budget. He would aim for a very quick decision after Thursday or whenever the RFP closes.

Councilor Drew said the Mayor mentioned that a lot of the RFPs are in the procurement office. you mentioned 29 of them or something like that. He is starting to look through on the parks and things like that, trying to see what is going to be available and forecast in fiscal year 27/28. His concern, because it does take some time to get an RFP squared away, get it out, get it awarded, and then do the work. He asked when we could expect to see an RFP for the parks presented and out for bid, along with the buildings.

Mayor Beauregard said he doesn't want to make a commitment that he can't keep in terms of the timeline but he does understand with the grant schedule that's a major factor, but also to as we're preparing the budget, we're also preparing the CIP. Whatever information we have is information that will help that whole planning process. His goal will be to have those two RFPs out by the end of the month. Councilor Drew commented that is reasonable. The Mayor said Councilor DiZoglio has been a strong proponent along with the whole Council of trying to get some action going on the rail trail regarding our Veterans and other improvements. He thanked Councilor Drew who sent him a message regarding a grant opportunity that is being offered through AARP for communities. Jordan in his office is at work on that grant application that's due Wednesday. He is grateful that Councilor Drew brought that to his attention and Councilor DiZoglio that is something we would aim for to help with the ongoing rail trail efforts.

Councilor DiZoglio: I also want to give you and Councilor Valley too because she went to Washington, D.C. and talked to Ed Markey's office about getting grant funding through the rail trail. And you said that is due on Wednesday as well.

Mayor Beauregard said there is the request for its not technically its an earmark, but there is some variations between what's due on Wednesday for Congress and the usual earmark. This is something that we are going to have to put all our attention just in the context of the program, that there is the application due on Wednesday. The focus there is on the Arlington Neighborhood Project just so we do not leave that open ended. Other opportunities that Senator Markey, Senator Warren, and others may have identified. He is in constant touch with Laura Beiman from Senator Warren's team and Mark Hannigan who is the new representative from Senator Markey's team as well as Jim Cantwell. He has become texting buddies with Senator Warren. This is something we can follow up on about other opportunities for the rail trail.

- Request to City Solicitor – Has Section 9A of G.L. c. 200A been formally accepted by the City of Methuen and is it currently in effect? If so, what specific procedures must be followed to lawfully access, claim, and utilize such funds in full compliance with state law? Additionally, could those funds be used to improve unaccepted ways? (Request of Clr. Valley)

Solicitor O'Neill said he has not found any evidence that it has been accepted in the city. Councilor Valley asked what the process is to get it accepted.

Solicitor O'Neill responded it would be a resolution at the Council level for acceptance. He has not run down what all the permissible uses are for that fund, but he is still looking at that to see. There are other statutes that allow for borrowing to address public ways and private ways as well. There are avenues to fund those tasks. Councilor Valley said it is her understanding that if the city does not adopt the 98, then the funds should be sent to the state. The Solicitor responded that is correct. Councilor Valley said we need to do that ASAP. She then asked if those funds are considered public. Solicitor O'Neill responded: "not yet". Councilor Valley said she remembered the Mayor saying that for the unacceptable way, the city cannot use funds from the public. Solicitor O'Neill said he does not know the answer to that question. He is still researching that in terms of whether they could be used for that purpose. Councilor Valley asked if Council could have an answer to that for the next meeting, The Solicitor agreed to do so.

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Councilor Drew asked if the Mayor could check with the Charter Commission, for the next meeting, to see when the anticipated time that the Charter is going to be ready. People keep talking about it and he just wants to give people an answer.

- Status on confirmation for Request for Comprehensive Council Presentation on the Searles Estate made by the Chair on 02/18/2026. There was the request made by the Chair in a recent email regarding a Council presentation regarding the Searles Estate. He is willing to do that. Keep in mind we have an active RFP open until March 23rd. The date recommended was March 18th, which is right up against that time when the RFP will close on the 23rd. If there is a desire to have the meeting before the RFP is closed, then he would recommend that's something we ought to have an Executive Session if its before the 23rd, simply due to the intricacies involving the RFP process. We are not in the mood to mess that up in any way. That is something we can coordinate, Madam Chair. He wants everyone to be cognizant of the March 23rd date. That is going to be opening of the next chapter as it relates to the estate.

Chair Soto: I want to loop back around to the item I requested from you, Mr. Mayor. She read the email she sent to the Mayor. She does not think it in any way will hinder the RFP process. She did schedule a meeting for March 18th. Once she reads this because we were in transition of switching the email. If some of you did not receive it, please ask her to forward it back to you but I will read it into the record.

“Dear Mayor,

I respectfully request that the administration coordinate a comprehensive presentation before the City Council regarding the Edward F. Searles Estate. Given the significance of this municipal asset and the recent extension of the Request for Proposals (RFP), it is important that the full Council be provided with a thorough and transparent overview to support informed decision making.

Additionally, as five current Councilors were not part of the original acquisition process, a historical briefing would provide necessary context for current and future decisions related to the property.

Please arrange for Mr. Wilson from the Economic Development Department, Mrs. Duprey, Chief Administrative and Financial Officer (CAFO), yourself, and Mr. Bowers from the Department of Public Works to appear before the Council and deliver a detailed presentation on March 18, 2026, at 6:00 PM, including but not limited to the following, historical data

on acquisition, timeline, funding sources, due diligence, and strategic rationale for the purchase.

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Disposition Efforts from the administration its objectives, process to date, and prior actions taken to market the transfer of the property.

Maintenance information on ongoing operational responsibilities, capital needs, and any deferred maintenance.

Financial overview including but not limited to total expenditures to date, revenues (if any), current carrying costs, and projected financial impact.

RFP extension and the specific reasons for the extension, level of bidder interest, and a summary of marketing and outreach efforts undertaken to attract qualified respondents.

Provide any studies and grants along with their resolutions as well as status of all studies commissioned, grants received, funds expended, and any outstanding obligations.

Provide details of access to the estate. A detailed list of all individuals, organizations, or entities that have been granted access to the property, whether by formal request or for scheduled events, including the purpose and authorization for such access.

Details on any contingency planning (administration's detailed plan) should the property not be disposed of through the current RFP process.

To ensure the Council has adequate time to review and prepare, please provide all presentation materials and supporting deliverables no later than seven (7) days prior to the presentation, on or before March 11, 2026.

For organizational purposes, I will be forwarding a suggested agenda for the administration's consideration to help guide the presentation and ensure a structured and productive discussion.

Please confirm as soon as possible as I already reserved the Great Hall for this meeting and upon your confirmation will respectfully request that the Special Meeting be formally posted in accordance with all applicable open meeting requirements.

The presentation should also include an opportunity for Councilors to ask questions and request additional information during the meeting.

Given the fiscal and strategic importance of the Searles Estate to the City of Methuen, I appreciate your prompt attention to this request and look forward to the administration's participation. "

Chair Soto: With that being said, Mr. Mayor, she would implore that his administration entertain us on that request for March 18th, because, as you may know, your deadline is just a few days after, and you will most likely have to come in front of this body again to talk about the Searles Estate. Why not get ahead of the game with what we've done, what we've spent, where we are and where we foresee we should be going. Hence, there is an RFP or there isn't or

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lets see what happens. A few days before the 23rd would be ideal. Now, if you're telling me that the administration does not have the capacity or has not done the due diligence or work she would respect that. But she needs communication from him because as you know all know and as my dear Councilor when we bought that property, stated he wanted a plan in front of him to make a decision, that plan was really never presented to that body. She would like this body, since they are under her watch, to be ready to pull the trigger if they must. Again, if you could entertain us for March 18th? The room is booked and all their schedules. They have all said yes.

Mayor Beauregard: Thank you, Madam Chair and just for the sake of transparency, and I know this is something that has been difficult with the email migration, I'll share briefly my response to that email, I stated: Chair Soto, thank you for your email regarding the Searles Estate. Given the fiscal and strategic importance of the property to the City of Methuen, I agree that it is appropriate to provide the City Council with a comprehensive update. Transparency and accountability are essential when discussing significant municipal assets, and my administration is prepared to participate in a structured public presentation. We will coordinate internally to ensure that the requested information is compiled in an organized and thorough manner. With respect to scheduling, I would ask that we confirm the availability of the relevant department heads and ensure sufficient preparation time so that materials can be provided to the Council in advance. My office will follow up shortly to confirm logistics and timing. I look forward to a productive discussion focused on facts, context, and a best path forward for the city. I know that you have indicated that the rooms already booked. Its on everybody's schedule. We have not had the opportunity to follow up on our end regarding logistics and timing. He would recommend a time following the 23rd of March. That is something we can follow up on. He just wanted to state and share with the Council that we have not actually worked out logistics between the administration and the Council just yet. We will get there.

Chair Soto: so basically, Mr. Mayor, I think you would know if any of your department heads would be on vacation for that week of the 18th because that I would believe that's the only thing impeding them from being present to present because if my boss told me, you have to be at a this meeting to present to the body, the appropriating body, I'd be ready to perform.

Mayor Beauregard said the meeting will happen. It will happen after the RFP closes on March 23rd.

Chair Soto: asked the Solicitor, the reason, the rationale why we must wait after. What was your rationale, Mr. Mayor? That is a question for both.

Solicitor O'Neill said he has no answer to that. This is between you and the Mayor. The Council can hold whatever meetings it wishes and could summon people before it if it wishes on specific days.

Mayor Beauregard said the challenge for him is about doing this before the 23rd is that we have been burned very badly in the recent past as it relates to all things elated to the Searles Estate. There had been a time when there was a public interest in the estate from somebody who was a very well qualified prospective buyer, an artist from Manhattan who sent a letter to the late

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Mayor Perry, to himself and indicated public interest and had been speaking in some cases with a reporter from the Eagle Tribune. And this is where he can derive this information from those stories. We had a lot of public discussion between the Council. There were some things mentioned publicly that were not accurate about how there was talk of artifacts being moved from the estate, which was not accurate. They had a follow up tour with Chair Marsan, the Solicitor, the CAFO, as well as a reporter from the Tribune. They were all there and saw that there were no issues with that. But there was this public Kerfuffle, so to speak, regarding artifacts that was not true and drew negative attention to the estate and to the city in that context. There have also, from what he's heard, there were calls made to this person who was interested and he doesn't know exactly who made those calls in every instance, but there were calls made to this person that, from what he can tell, potentially scared this person off. And he indicated to the Eagle Tribune that after pulling the initial RFP before the December deadline, he pulled the RFP and was very interested and decided that he was going to completely back away. And he told the Tribune reporter that he was no longer interested. That individual just spent 30 million dollars on a seaside mansion in Newport, Rhode Island, just to indicate the capacity of someone who was interested. And so anytime we've had a type of discussion about this in a Council setting or any other setting, it's resulted in problems and I look at that case as a terrible example of opportunity lost for the city and so on the 23rd of March that's the deadline for people to submit proposals. He wants to make sure we do everything in our power as a city to ensure that we have the best possible, highest quality proposals coming in, and there is nothing done to potentially scare away anybody who might be interested in being a partner with us on this very important endeavor. Given that fact, but also the fact that this RFP is very complex and there are a lot of legal considerations, and he wants to be very careful about what we discuss publicly while this is still out there and while this RFP continues to unfold. The requested date for this meeting is March 18th. The RFP closes five days later. He does not see any real difference in having this on March 28th or perhaps March 24th the day after this process ends. He wants to do this to protect the city's interest here and to ensure that we keep any potential and he's not saying that there would be but, keeping any possible drama out of the mix while people still have the opportunity to take a look at this and decide whether they want to partner with the city. That is his fully transparent, open, reasoning why we need to wait until after March 23rd to have conversations about this as a city. He does not want to mess up that process.

Councilor Simard said he would be strongly opposed to having any sort of meeting prior to that deadline. He does not know what the rush is with the budget season upon us soon, he thinks we are going to get it done sooner than later. And why not have a summary of the RFP process at that presentation by the proper department head? If we did have the meeting, if that were the role of the Council or the Chair, he would think that executive session would be appropriate. He would rather wait and maybe have some public participation in an open meeting where amongst ourselves and whoever else wants to come to the meeting.

Chair Soto clarified that the request of the meeting is not to discuss the RFP or any potential buyer or any potential bidder. That's why when she read the email she said the one line

item she would scratch out is the request of has there been any level of interest? It is a request to brief the new councilors because she is aware you were not here when this happened, neither were any of the other four Councilors that are sitting here. If she had to discuss a property or an acquisition or something that we must reconsider for a new RFP, before she goes to that conversation, because there was no bidder, potentially, we must talk. Now you are talking without historical data. You are talking without discussing all the points that you should have been briefed on. You are basically back on the bandwagon of, we must do it and we must do it now. There are four Councilors that were there that are still here now, that felt that they were rushed into deciding back then. If it's the will of the Council to be rushed again, you may have it your way, but the way she operates is that she'd like to be briefed and told because she doesn't want surprises for this Council or want to be pushed into making a decision without the proper timeline. She respects that the Mayor would like to wait, but she differs in the opinion because transparency to her means discussing the historical data of how, why, when, and bringing it to this body. It is a conversation. There is no vote there. Its data that is going to be presented. Because if we must keep the estate, which we may have to the Mayor has to look at those numbers and make an informed decision. For her, as the Chair of this body, she requests that the meeting still happen on March 18th. If the Mayor is telling her that this administration cannot pull it together, that is a different conversation. We can have that and be honest about it. that is fine.

Mayor Beauregard said its not that we cannot pull it together.

Chair Soto: Mr. Mayor, it has taken you two weeks to answer on this floor to tell her that he has not gathered his troops to discuss if we could host the meeting on March 18th. She followed the Mayor's protocol. Your protocol was, Madam Chair, any of the Council members that want to request anything, must go through the Chair and in writing. So here the Chair does that directly to you and it has been two weeks. So yes, if you are telling her that you think historical data that already exists, by the way, that we can potentially look. All we are looking for is presentation from your department heads so it can be conclusive and it could be put in front of this body so that they can be informed when you come back to us. That is the way she would like this body to operate. But if that is not going to happen, that is fine. She called each individual member, asked them for their schedule 30 days in advance to accommodate that.

Mayor Beauregard said there will be no rushing. There will be no bullying. There will be none of that. There will be no decisions made without sufficient information. It has not taken them two weeks to get it together. It has taken very little time for him to determine that this is a conversation that we will absolutely have and will bring the new Councilors up to speed. We will do so after the 23rd of March.

Councilor Santos asked if there are any potential buyers.

Mayor Beauregard said that is a question he is unable to answer before the 23rd of March.

Solicitor O'Neill said there have been several people who have taken out and several organizations that have taken out the bid package. We don't know whether they will return the bid package, but there was a significant amount of people who downloaded the package, and

that's public information, whether they will return the package on that date, we do not know yet. We did have people submit questions, which is always a good sign, and some people have toured the site. The city offered a tour in conjunction with the RFP. We are hopeful. He noted for the Council that this procurement is different from other procurements. When the RFPs are returned, they are public, they are opened publicly and they are publicly available from the day that they come in. So everyone will get to see what's coming in while the evaluation team evaluates it. It is not the same as others that are evaluated in secret.

Chair Soto said you can also request to be present.

Solicitor O'Neill said it is a public meeting when they come in. You can be here when they come in.

TR-26-24 Resolution Approving the Oakland Avenue Trust's Offer to Purchase the Oakland Avenue School with Such Other Conditions and Terms as Are Further Determined Appropriate by the Mayor and Authorizing the Mayor to Execute Whatever Documents Are Required to Close the Sale and Convey the Property (Request of Mayor David P. Beauregard, Jr..)

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

Councilor Marsan requested a copy of Exhibits A, B, and C. It says there was exhibits of the different parcels. There is no map with the different easements that are there or the right of ways or the different parking lots, that they can.

Solicitor O'Neill said he would provide the exhibits.

Councilor DiZoglio asked when they did the assessed value, how the Assessor came up with the number. He asked the Mayor to explain how the assessor's office came up with this value of the property.

CAFO Duprey explained the Assessor values all properties within the city on an annual basis. This was part of that. It was not an additional appraisal. That is the value they came up with and the state approved.

Councilor DiZoglio said the city does not do what real estate agents do. They pick out similar buildings and see how they were sold in areas and then come up with a value for the property.

Mayor Beauregard explained the Assessor's office does not do spot assessing or anything like that. They have a consistent process that they follow annually. The only concern that he has, (he is in support of this) it is that due to the budget season we are always going to be crunching numbers. The one thing he is concerned about is that we are not selling the property and getting money. As we are always asking for more money and we are selling buildings. He doesn't think its right, right in that sense that we just sell this building based off our assessor's value and not going out and looking for similar properties in areas that are selling in that amount and seeing what their value is as well. That is his only concern about this.

Mayor Beauregard: fair enough – just keep in mind that over the course of the lease, since the Academy has been utilizing the school, there has been quite literally zero capital outlay from the city in that context. All improvements have been done by the Islamic Academy to roughly \$1.38 million dollars at no cost to the city in terms of those improvements. His suggestion to the Council to keep in mind there is currently this lease in place, going back to December 2011, where the Oakland Avenue School Trust has been paying \$5,000 a year and they do not own their building. They do not have ownership of their future under the context of

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that lease. As he mentioned earlier, this would allow for immediate revenue of \$200,000 at closing. Then from there, there would be this term of paying to the city of the funds that we have discussed and ultimately generating significant revenue by way of that arrangement as well. In his opinion, if he were sitting on the Council side, for him, this is a no brainer in terms of the generation of revenue, getting away from that lease agreement, but also getting the academy into a place where they are able to have ownership of their building of their future with this win/win for the city. He would try to encourage Council to think along those lines if such encouragement were asked of him.

Councilor Marsan asked if the financing portion is set in stone because in one phrase it says that they are looking for outside potential, outside financing or would the city be financing it. both options are there. He did not know if that decision was made of if we are making that decision if we are looking for that.

Mayor Beauregard said this will be the beginning of a significant process that would directly involve legal. This is the language of the offer that had been made. At this point, tonight's resolution, this would be, in essence, that first step in authorizing us to proceed with the establishment of that framework. He will the legal specifics to the Solicitor.

Councilor Marsan said he did not know if that was the only option on the table as far as financing because he is torn between it because he wants the extra money. He likes the city financing it because they are going to get an extra \$2 million dollars through the 6%. On the other hand, he's rather has the cash in hand. These people have been so good to us, and they have spent so much money into this property. He thought about this a lot over the weekend, about the assessed value and market value. And you say, we have got to be fair to these guys. They have been committed to us. The assessed value, at some point, at least we have a value. Its just like we all have a value on our properties, on our own homes, and its not 100% of the market value, but it is a good indication of what its worth. They are committed to us. We must be committed to them.

Councilor Pesce said she has had the opportunity to visit the Mosque several times and see presentations of how the school has continually grown year after year. We heard all these people who came out speak about the students who are coming out of the school. They have done such a wonderful job. She is a little taken aback that there would be any reservation whatsoever. It really is a win/win and even the assessed value, when we look at it to Councilor Marsan's point, there is more value in this for this community vs. someone off the street, who just has an opportunity for investment or something like that. This is what we want to see in our community, a school thriving, growing, a community focusing, bridging this school community within our community, and just thriving. She thinks the assessed value is more than fair. With the current lease, the city has basically been getting nothing. This is a win/win. We are getting money up front. We are getting a fixed interest rate, which is very fair on both sides and assessed value she has looked a lot at assessed values for commercial properties. In her opinion, as a lay person, this is more than fair. She hopes it passes. Its wonderful for our community

Councilor Valley asked if the city is following the procurement law, Chapter 30 B. She asked if the property was declared surplus.

Solicitor O'Neill responded it was. It was declared in 1999. TR-00-59 on July 10th, 2000, the town issued an RFP for the disposition by sale and or lease. On October 29, 1999, the Oakland Avenue School Trust submitted a response to that RFP that was on October 29th, 1999. The first lease the city wrote was the town at the time, wrote a lease on January 16th, 2001, approved by the City Council in Contract 01-22 and then in March of 2001, that went from 2001

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to 2011. On 3/21/11 the Council passed TR-10-30, submitting a Home Rule Petition to allow the continued lease with an option to purchase for 25 years to the Mass Legislature for \$5,000 a year, approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor on September 6th, 2011, Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2011.

Councilor Valley asked how come the records and the meeting votes and the minutes are not attached to the resolution.

Solicitor O'Neill explained it is the Mayor's resolution. You could have asked for that. We have all that.

Councilor Valley said she did not know it was declared surplus. How would she ask if she didn't know something that already happened 20 years ago? She was not here.

Mayor Beauregard said he included the resolution, attached the lease from the Solicitor. He did not attach an exhaustive series of supporting documents going back to 1999. That information is available upon request. When he submits legislation to the Council, he doesn't submit supporting documentation beyond the resolution, the lease, going back all that time simply due to the fact that it's not relevant to this.

Chair Soto asked the Mayor if the Council must guess it was surplus.

Mayor Beauregard responded, no, he is not saying that.

Councilor Valley referenced page 86, showed the manual of Chapter 30 B, that after declaring the property surplus, we need to determine the value of the property, which you are right. It was assessed at 100%. But you said that you have the confirmed and certification from the city assessor that is not attached. She would like to see the certification. It is not that she does not trust him. It is just that she comes from the private sector and they have supporting documents for everything. They like the paper trail and saving files for the future, just in case. If the property was declared in surplus in 1999, what happened with the follow steps for the law?

Solicitor O'Neill responded they were all followed to the letter.

Mayor Beauregard clarified that in 1999 he was ten years old and at the Timoney School, so he cannot in advance he cannot speak to any process, questions about the administration in 1999.

Councilor Valley said she does not feel comfortable voting on something that she does not have the documents in front of her.

Solicitor O'Neill said he could provide those documents. He reviewed the documents, and the process was followed to the letter of the law. The property was surplus. There was an RFP that was put out that included lease and or sale. Then in 2011 the community took a further step to extend that lease by Home Rule Petition to the state Legislature, which allowed that with a sale or lease option, and that also included what other terms the Mayor wished to do at that time. He does not think they included other terms, but it was at the Mayor's discretion, and that is where we are today. The lease that is current is from 2011 and includes an option to purchase only with the approval of this Council. It specifically requires the approval of the Council. The Islamic Academy of Peace is free to make an offer at any time and if it meets with the Council's approval, it goes forward. If it does not, then it does not.

Councilor Valley asked the Solicitor if the city has the authority, under Chapter 44 of Massachusetts General Law to finance a municipal property.

Solicitor O'Neill said if you are asking if the city can take back a mortgage and do it that way, the answer is yes, they are authorized to do financing.

Councilor Valley financing and mortgage is kind of the same.

Solicitor O'Neill said the city is authorized to do that. We can do it by out right sale. We can do it by lease to own. We can do it by mortgage. We are authorized to do that.

Councilor Drew said in his research over the weekend, looking at different things, he came across an anti aid loan of credit summary. It was an amendment in Massachusetts. What it basically said anti-aid amendment prohibits the use of public money or property for the purpose of founding, maintaining, or aiding any church, religious denomination, or society. This amendment is designed to prevent the use of public funds to support private or charitable institutions. The amendment was ratified by the people in 1855 and has been amended several times since then. It is important to note that the amendment does not prevent the Commonwealth from making grants in aid. He asked: "Are we legally able to take a municipal building and basically lease to own that property to a religious group, regardless of who it is?"

Solicitor O'Neill responded, yes, you can. It was done by RFP. If it done the correct way. It was done through an RFP process and it was negotiated at the time. He does not know who else responded to that RFP. He has a copy of it. he found one in the file today, but it was not just for this school at the time. It was the Oakland Avenue School and the Ashford School. He does not know what is there now, but they were disposed of at the same time. If it was bid appropriately and it was bid on response, that anti-aid amendment is designed to prevent a direct appropriation. The city could not do a direct appropriation. We could not give somebody a gift, let them use property for free, that kind of thing. There was an economic development piece to this project, too. The RFP spoke to whoever bidding, putting into investment in the property and overseeing all maintenance and the folks in the property now did invest significant amounts of money in it. he does not think that is an issue here.

Councilor Drew said that he wants to be clear that the great schools are doing great things with all communities. He just wants to know that we are going to be legally sound and not have any sort of blowback on this in any way, shape or form that looks like we're doing something outside of what we are legally allowed to do.

Solicitor O'Neill said it does not prohibit a sale based on an RFP. If there were no RFP well that would be a different story if it was just some kind of secret deal. But that is not what went on here. It is a public process. He is assuming there were multiple responders because the other school was disposed of, not with this group, but with somebody else. As far as he can tell there is no issue with that here.

Councilor Drew you are saying we can just own, no problems, no issues.

Solicitor O'Neill responded yes, and it was approved in 2011 by the state Legislature signed by the Governor.

Councilor Drew said we will be putting mortgage documents to this, basically to allow them all the same things that most businesses and anybody who buys a property must adhere to.

Solicitor O'Neill explained it would be a standard commercial mortgage requiring payment. A mortgage is a mortgage deed. We still technically own the property while they are making payments. That is how every mortgage works. That is what gives you the right to foreclose. And if at some point there were issues with payment or the organization ceases to exist and stop making payments, the city would be able to claim the property just like every other mortgage that you have. It would be a standard commercial mortgage.

Councilor Pesce suggested. Some of the procurement issues especially we've had some issues with this body and other properties in the past, which maybe is creating some confusion and asked if it is possible to suggest an amendment to this even going forward with other similar orders, maybe one line. She does not necessarily think Council needs all those supporting

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documents especially if they are going back almost 30 years. She does not want to waste that amount of paper and kind of rest on the fact that she would hope that our Solicitor and the Mayor have done their due diligence already, before they brought this forward. But in order to alleviate maybe some of the concerns, if we could add a line somewhere and she'll defer to the Solicitor on exactly how to word this if he wants to incorporate it: "Whereas, all procurement has been solidified and maybe reference those ordinances or resolutions" so that if someone like Councilor Valley is reading this, she sees that it was followed and she can look up those or request those on her own, just to alleviate the 15 plus minutes Council has just deliberated about something that has already been done 26 years ago.

Councilor Simard said he finds Solicitor O'Neill's opinion to be satisfactory and knowledgeable and he is a yes vote. When you look at this community and what they have done to this city, if he were the owner, he would give them a perfect tenant discount, but he cannot. and you think about the lawyers and the doctors and the scientists they put out, would you rather have a commercial developer come in and try to rezone, or get a variance or an easement to put in a 30 unit apartment building where it's going to impact us, our schools, public safety. There has not been one financial impact to the city since they have been there. He does not know why all the deliberations. He trusts the Mayor, Mr. O'Neill, and he is a yes vote. he hopes Council can vote soon on their future success.

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to amend to add one line into this that says something along the fact that whereas the proper procurement and satisfaction of the same has been done for this property by the city Solicitor. (something Whereas, proper procurement and the satisfaction of the same has been researched by the city Solicitor and found to be adequate by way of whatever ordinances he just referenced". Going forward that would alleviate this sort of issue.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 yes, 4 no (Clr. Santos, Clr. Valley, Clr. Marsan, Clr. Soto)

The Solicitor stated he will fill in the chronology.

Chair Soto passed the gavel and said her concern is in 20 years/30 years, if any of the procurement laws have changed, even in your review, that that suffices any new updated procurement change. That is her concern. Because if it does, then fine, because she does feel they should buy the school. She does not feel the city should be the bank. She asked the person in charge of the school about paying \$416.66 a month and your payment is going to be \$15,979.32 a month. She would have stayed as a tenant with the school. She needs some rationale on why the purchase versus the lease. The rationale for her as an investor does not make sense.

Rashid Khan from the school said they had approached the Mayor to extend the lease beyond the 2036 timeframe. They have ten years left in the lease and approached the Mayor's office to extend the lease. Because they were looking for an even more capital investment, for example, solar panels and that would alleviate their electric bills and secure that. They enough real estate on the roofs, so they were thinking of putting it, lets say another \$200,000., around that and at that time they indicated that they were given the information that it would be very difficult for the city to extend the lease and maybe it would be an appropriate time for them to try to purchase the lease, purchase the building. They looked at banks, looked at their payment plan, looked at their donors, etc., and talked to all of them. The terms they have proposed to the Mayor the Mayor has accepted, they can afford it. that is why they wanted to secure the building now, as opposed to wait ten years from now. As you know, the political climate in the federal

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government has been changing a lot as well with the backdrop of all of that. All these combined factors and with the support of this body and the Mayor, we thought it was an appropriate time to take the step and try to purchase the property. That is the beginning and end of it. There is nothing secret around it. That is how it happened.

Chair Soto so what is attractive to you on the school and the board is that we are financing this for you. You are putting down \$200,000.

Rashid Khan said that is quite attractive for them.

Chair Soto said she sees hesitation on this floor about the city financing it as a municipality, also on the purchase price based on the assessment value here, you're saying you put a lot of money into that property. She understands that. But understanding those hesitations, if this body would say, yes, you can buy it at the assessed value but you need to get your own financing. "How is your school position to still buy it with what's in front of Council but not us financing it?"

Rashid Khan said it would be very difficult for them. He is not saying its impossible but it will be difficult.

Chair Soto retrieved the gavel.

Councilor DiZoglio said the reason he asked that question is because he knew there would probably be people that know this about the appraisals, etc., and he heard especially from the past, she's actually very comfortable with the assessments and has done that. He has been in this community for 27 years and he remembers when the school came. He appreciates what they do for this community, especially being part of the community. He knows a lot of people he grew up with that went through the Academy as well. He absolutely supports selling the school to them.

Councilor Valley clarified she is not opposed to the sale of the school and recognizes the great job they have been doing with families and students. She would like to see the supporting documents before taking a vote.

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Santo to table until Council receives the proper documents. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 no, 2 yes (Clr. Santos, Clr. Valley) Motion to table failed.

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Pesce to adopt as amended. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 yes, 1 No (Clr. Valley)

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Drew to take a brief recess. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS. Members present upon return to meeting: Clr. Santos, Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. Ryan DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, Clr. MacLaren, Clr. Marsan, Clr. Pesce, and Chair Soto.

Chair Soto made a statement that this agenda was posted downstairs, where it has to be posted to become public and us to host our meeting but it was not available continuously online. There were several phone calls and text messages to some of the members of this including her, that they could not see the agenda, nor any of the attachments for the agenda items. Most of these will have a second read but if a Councilor feels there is an item that must be tabled, please exercise that right.

Solicitor O'Neill clarified that the official posting place for the City of Methuen is the bulletin board outside the tunnel, and that fully complies with the open meeting law in all respects. We generally post for the convenience of the public on the website and provide convenient links for people to see what is on the agenda. But anyone is free to come to the City

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Council office at any time and pick up copies of anything that is on the agenda. There was a slight glitch this week. we did have the agenda posted for several days without issue and then it disappeared. It had something to do with the vendor that the city uses for the website. It was put back up today. There was ample notice. He does not want anyone to think there was any issue with the open meeting law. There is no issue with the open meeting law. The Council gets physical packets as well as delivered by email. There is no issue with that.

Public Service:

Grants: None

Licenses: None

Contract(s):

C-26-72 Complete Cleaning Co., Inc., 548 Chestnut Street, Lynn, MA 01804 for Custodial Cleaning Services for 3 years in the Amount of \$156,000.00

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

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

C-26-73 Insight Public Sector, Inc., 2701 E. Insight Way, Chandler, AZ 85286-1930 for 40TB standard back-up service and support for 5 years in the Amount of \$29,036.20

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

C-26-74 Turf Products Corp., 157 Moody Road, Enfield, CT 06083 for (3) Three toro 60-inch Zmaster 6000 mowers in the Amount of \$63,903.81

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

Councilor Valley said when she reviewed FY'26 the existing balance is \$53,201.52. She asked where the CAFO got the difference of \$6,000 from.

Councilor Marsan noted he is usually a critic of the cost of the things that go through the DPW. He looked up the Z master 6000, and they are over \$21,000 each when you look at them online.

CAFO Duprey asked what line Councilor Valley is looking at and the balance she is seeing.

Councilor Valley said it is account 505134, CIP FY'26. The balance is \$53,201.52.

CAFO Duprey looking at 501134-26001 the current balance available is \$174,065.

Solicitor O'Neill said 26001 is the account number

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

C-26-75 Northeast Pumps (NEPV LLC), 30 Grando Drive, New Haven, CT 06513 for Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Vertical Turbine Pump Rehabilitation in the Amount of \$168,880.00 MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

Councilor DiZoglio said this is one thing we need to do and asked if there are going to be more of these contracts coming forward for the treatment plant and when would we expect them. he heard the treatment plant needs a lot of updating.

CAFO Duprey explained part of it is that we are going through and costing out what things would be so we could do an RFP, etc. having that work done. Part of it is also funding. This kind of dovetails with TR-26-5 where we are trying to move funds from one old CIP into the water treatment plant. That is only \$19,000. That is not going to cover this. But those type

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of things that we are trying to do to get ourselves set up so that we can get after some of those things and we will also be looking at it during our 27 CIP.

Councilor DiZoglio asked if the city has considered grants or anything of that sort.

Mayor Beauregard said the issues at the water treatment plan are very old issues. There is a lot of infrastructure that has been neglected for many, many years. We have a lot of catching up to do. The DPW Director has been down there daily, being present and sorting through the issues that exist. The former superintendent recently departed the city. We are in between superintendents. Anything that is urgent in terms of fixes that need to be made, we are getting after them by level of need. We already have some things on the agenda like this, but we are going to keep at it. There is a lot to catch up on, a lot of very old issues.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

C-26-76 McGovern MHQ Inc., 401 Elm Street, Marlborough, MA 01752 for (3) 2026 Ford Police Interceptor Utility AWD, (1) 2026 Hyundai Tucson SE AWD, (1) 2026 Chevrolet Tahoe 4WD 4DR LT in the Amount of \$234,31.00

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

C-26-77 One Stop Trailer Shop, LLC, 190 Beauty Hill Road, Barrington, NH 03825 for Cargo Trailer with Landscaping Package in the Amount of \$29,399.00

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Santos to approve. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

C-26-78 Addendum to C-25-78 Evoqua Water Technologies, LLC, 558 Clark Road, Tewksbury, MA 01876 – Emergency Waiver for the Replacement of Sluice Gates & Traveling Screens at the Water Intake at WTP - \$335,850.00 **to correct clerical error to reflect the correct contract Amount of \$355,850.00**

Chair Soto removed contract from the agenda. It will be on the March 16, 2026 agenda.

Other Officers and Committee Reports

Councilor Pesce reported that the Finance Committee met prior to the Council meeting and are trying to streamline how to move forward. Councilor Drew and Councilor Santos had some great ideas about different things they can do to streamline the budget process prior to receiving it. Their next meeting is scheduled for April 8th and are hoping to have some potential projected numbers as well as the Finance Committee from the School Committee joining them to keep them apprised as to what is going on there. They are hopeful that the budget will be early this year. The CAFO is going to relay what those discussions were to the Mayor.

Mayor Beauregard said he is excited about the budget for that they are going to be using now going forward. Every year we have used series of spreadsheets for each department. They are changing it up to a performance based model, where they're going to have budget narratives for each department, each department is going to have their mission statement, accomplishments for the past calendar year, their organization chart, as well as a strategic planning outlook for the next couple of years, one year, three years, five years, everything that we're aiming to get after in terms of projects. Its going to be much more of a narrative based document rather than just the spreadsheet format. Municipalities like Brookline, Cambridge, Andover, Lowell use a similar format and he wants to copy what they are doing.

Unfinished Business

Resolutions:

TR-26-14 Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of a FY'26 Shannon Community Safety Initiative Grant (Requested by the Mayor and Chief of Police) as amended
Taken out of order and approved.

Ordinance(s): None

New Business:

Resolutions:

TR-26-15 Order Authorizing an Amendment of Order No. 5754 Borrowing to Pay Costs for FY23 CIP to Reclass \$19,359 Between Enterprise Capital Projects (Requested by the Mayor and Director of Public Works)

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

EPA REQUESTED

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve EPA.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-16 Resolution Authorizing Expenditure of \$1,300 from the Castle Fund for the Methuen Business Alliance/Greater Haverhill Chamber (Request of Commission on Trust Funds) MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-17 Resolution Authorizing Intrafund Transfer of \$50,000 from Legal Personal Service Expense to be transferred to Legal Other Expenses to fund outside counsel expenses (Req. of Mayor Beauregard and Solicitor)

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

EPA REQUESTED

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-18 Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$292,000 from General Fund DPW Personal Service Expenses to General Fund DPW Other Expenses to fund increase in utility costs (Req. of Mayor Beauregard)

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

Councilor Drew said we are moving money from a personnel line item to fund utilities that we flatlined funded in the last budget.

CAFO Duprey responded, yes, and that is all within DPW.

Councilor Drew said DPW is a bucket. We are just moving it from personnel. We had positions that were not filled. We are funding utilities. We are just patching. We are not fixing a structural issue here. We are just patching an issue that we can see as a glaring problem.

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Councilor DiZoglio asked if these positions have been posted. He is assuming these personnel were open positions. He knows DPA has been short staffed.

CAFO Duprey said some have, some have not been posted intentionally. The working foreman and boots on the ground have been posted. the amount that is available is due to the vacancy that is already existed. We are still projecting filling those going forward. It is just for what has been vacant thus far this year.

Councilor DiZoglio asked if the funds go back to personnel if a position is filled.

The CAFO explained they are leaving enough in those lines to cover it if those positions posted are filled but they have not been filled for a portion of time during the year. For example, if there is \$50,000 left in there for that position. There is only so much time left of the year. They have left whatever is in there if they were to fill the position and the difference is now being moved.

Mayor Beauregard we are taking the amount that we did not use for XYZ positions that had been budgeted going back to July 1st. We have it in there going forward if we need to use it.

Councilor DiZoglio if a position is \$80,000 and there is \$30,000 left of the year, you are taking the \$50,000. The CAFO agreed.

Mayor Beauregard said typically other departments' utility needs will usually be charged to DPW budget. That is why this is on the higher end because it is incorporating a lot more than just what DPW uses. Late in the fall we got these projections from the utility companies as to what they would be charging us for utilities.

CAFO Duprey explained that around October timeframe, we got on our invoices a not that was "we're decreasing your rates". Then the following month in November, we got one that said, and now we are spiking it for our seasonal spike. It went up three times the amount that it normally would be. The amount they are charging for the peak time is huge.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-19 Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$20,000 from General Fund Fire Personal Service Expenses to General Fund Fire Other Expenses to fund increase in utility costs (Req. of Mayor Beauregard)

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

Mayor Beauregard said the Fire Department has their utilities coming out of their budget.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-20 Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$10,000 to General Fund City Clerk Other Expenses, of which \$5,000 from Fund Economic and Community Development Personal Services and \$5,000 from General Fund City Clerk Personal Services to fund additional election related costs (Req. of Mayor Beauregard)

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

Mayor Beauregard said this amount is to cover the cost for the preliminary election held. Chair Soto said that was a total of \$10,000. Mayor Beauregard agreed.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-21 Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$2,500 from General Fund Legal Personal Service Expenses to General Fund City Council Personal Service Expenses to fund unanticipated personnel costs (Req. of Mayor Beauregard)

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

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

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

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Councilor Drew asked what the out of class pay means.

Councilor Marsan responded when our clerk was sick our assistant clerk stepped up to do the job. We increased her pay through the clerk's job to the clerk's salary until our clerk came back. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-22 Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$60,000 from General Fund Economic and Community Development Personal Service Expenses to General Fund Health, Human Service, and Inspections Personal Service Expenses to fund unanticipated personnel costs (Req. of Mayor Beauregard)

MOTION BY: Councilor Santos seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.

Mayor Beauregard said when they were doing the budget last year, they included funding for half a year for the building commissioner position and they ended up finding the right candidate well before the halfway point in the fiscal year. Given the fact that they had budgeted for half a year, there were other positions, for instance, the economic development coordinator role that they are getting around now to hiring. There is funding available to cover the earlier than expected hiring of the building commissioner. This deals with that timing issue.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 abstention (Clr. Marsan)

TR-26-23 Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of a State of Massachusetts Fiscal Year 2026 Budgeted Earmark of \$50,000 from Department of Economic Development for the Methuen Tricentennial Celebration (EPA REQUESTED) (Req. of Mayor Beauregard)

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Santos to approve. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

EPA REQUESTED

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve the EPA. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-24 taken out of order and approved.

TR-26-25 A Resolution Regarding Social Media Safety for Youth Under Age 16 (Req. of Mayor Beauregard, Councilors John Drew, Ella MacLaren, and Jana Pesce)

Chair Soto said originally there were five council members that signed on to the Mayor's resolution. She removed two of the Councilors, Councilor DiZoglio and Councilor Valley, for the appearance of five members of this body. Even though she was told by the City Solicitor that you could sign on to the resolution she felt the observation from the Council police out there was going to be that we are acting already in a manner that we had consensus, and to avoid that two of members were removed. She knows they are in support of this resolution but wanted to give the public an explanation as to why that happened.

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

Mayor Beauregard said as he referenced previously when he was reaching out to Councilors, it was not as if the Councilors were all deliberating in receipt of the item and talking amongst themselves. It was him dialing or texting individuals on their own, without any deliberation, without any violation of the open meeting law. He thanked the five Councilors for their support and co-sponsorship. To provide a little more context, he referenced this during his

report, but this is a major issue when they're talking about the impact that social media has on our youth and they're seeing other countries doing things to actually address it. Australia recently banned social media for people under the age of 16. The UK, France, India, other countries are doing the same thing. There is quite literally no tangible action right now here in our country. There is some talk at the federal level in Congress of trying to do something at the state level. There's talk about trying to do something in some quarters, but this something that really has not gotten the traction it is received in literally most other Western democracies. When you see a lack of traction regarding an issue that is of extreme importance, especially in the context of mental health and digital safety for our cities' young people, this is an opportunity given the vacuum at other levels for us to do. We can at the local level take steps to protect our kids, to educate parents, and to call for increased advocacy. This is something that other countries are taking steps to address. We are kind of behind. He has reasons why he thinks that is probably the case, given the fact that many of those companies are headquartered here. If we have an opportunity to do something about it at our level, we should. That is why he is pushing for it.

Councilor DiZoglio said the reason he supports this is, as an educator, he feels like he is battling the technology where he has students listening to people on Tik Tok or Instagram more than listening to their textbooks or going online and looking u facts. Also, what he experiences in the classroom, where social media has been a tool for bullying and a tool to getting information where kids are acting out based on what they are seeing on these social media platforms. As he sees other countries progressing, working towards to limit, but mostly it comes down to the parents as well. He signed on because he feels like it's time for the government to say to parents and say to people that we need to control these platforms as well to protect our kids because it's beyond just social media, it is also a room for people to hurt children to go on as well. That is why he is supporting it. This is a great step. He thanked the Mayor for doing that.

Councilor Pesce said this is great. She told the Mayor as soon as she saw this. She has three children. Battling the effects of social media is a constant struggle every day. She asked if this will be brought to the School Committee as well.

Mayor Beauregard explained the School District already implements restrictions on social media on any device within the schools. This is something that the Methuen School District is already ahead of the curve on. For us, this is establishing more of just an overall broad city policy that as it relates to digital safety, these are the steps that they are going to take. The goal here is to take this step to address these issues in the context of Methuen, to empower parents, provide more information about the resources that are available and that's something that this would call for establishing at the local level. He also views it as an opportunity to partner with various civic groups, for instance at the high school they have a civics groups and the like. He thinks they would be quite interested in this. But, beyond that he's also sensing the opportunity for a partnership perhaps with Northern Essex, UMass Lowell, and Merrimack College when it comes to the idea of putting together a local parent toolkit, for instance, and for and for taking additional steps to get after the issue of youth safety. But this is something that to the school districts credit, they are on the leading edge of addressing this issue. This will allow us to establish a more formal city policy.

Councilor Pesce asked if they could broaden it to include safety of social media from elected officials as well. Mayor Beauregard said it would not hurt. Councilor Pesce said this is awesome to put on the books.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

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

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Councilor MacLaren said as the resident young person on the Council, she is only four removed from being 16 herself. She can personally testify to the impact of growing up in the age of social media. She had it as a teenager, and know how it impacted her, and saw how it impacted her peers. She thinks it would be naïve to suggest that there is any action Methuen could take to limit access independently and unilaterally to social media for those under 16. That is not what is happening here, obviously, but it is a great first step in terms of providing tools and education to young people to feel less along to their families, to understand how to approach these mental health issues. It puts us on the right path. There is no reason to say “no” to it.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Ordinances: None

Any Other Business for the Good and Welfare of the Community

Councilor Simard said everyone knows Methuen Tricentennial is upon us. Representative Hamilton is in the audience tonight and thanked him for what he is doing for the city and the Mayor. Representative Hamilton said he will see everyone on Friday.

Chair Soto mentioned Dominican Independence Day art display and they will be here for the month of March. She thanked the Mayor for that.

Adjourn

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

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Linda Gagnon
COUNCIL CLERK

At a meeting where a quorum was present, the foregoing minutes were approved by the Methuen City Council on March 16, 2026 by a unanimous vote.