

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

1. **Roll Call - Members present – Clr. Marsan, Clr. Santos, Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, Clr. MacLaren and Chair Soto (Clr. Pesce absent)**
2. **Acceptance of the Agenda - Motion to accept by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – Mayor Beauregard requested to remove TR-26-32 from the agenda – Solicitor Paul O'Neill requested that the Executive Session be removed from the agenda -UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**
3. **Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation/Moment of Silence** – Chair Soto recognized Vice Chair DiZoglio, “Thank you. Good evening, Council. I would like to request a moment of silence for our brother who passed away last week at this City Council meeting. Methuen Fire Department’s Lieutenant James “Jimmy Mac” McLachlan. Jimmy lost his battle to occupational cancer on May 8th, 2026. Jimmy served 29 plus years of service to the citizens and visitors of the city of Methuen with professionalism and integrity.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Santos for the Invocation, “Let's begin this meeting with gratitude for the opportunity to serve our community together. May we lead with wisdom, respect, and compassion to make decisions that affect our lives, the lives of our residents, families, seniors, and future generations. May this chamber be guided, united over division, understanding over conflict, and solution over personal interests give us the strength to listen with open minds, speak with integrity, and work together to the common good of our city. Thank you.”
4. **Public Participation**
 - **Hi, I'm Zachary Spindler and I reside at 26 Sugar Pine Lane.** “Good evening members of the City Council and Mayor Beauregard. My name is Zachary Spindler and I'm a student and resident. Tonight, to speak in support of keeping the pickleball courts open. Over the past few weeks, these courts have become more than just a place to play. For many students and residents, they've become a place to stay active, spend time with friends, and be part of a positive community. After school, instead of sitting inside on our phones, we're outside exercising, socializing, and doing something healthy and productive. I understand that some nearby residents have concerns about noise, and I believe those concerns deserve to be heard respectfully. But I also believe there's a major difference between addressing concerns and shutting down the courts entirely. The city has already taken steps to reduce noise by setting reasonable hours and installing sound barriers. That shows there are ways to improve the situation without removing access to something that so many people use and care about. I also think it's important to remember that Methuen is a large and growing community, and there are no other public court options available for people who want to play pickleball. Removing these courts would impact hundreds of residents, students, and families who rely on them as an accessible recreational space in the city. To show how strong the community feels about this, the petition supporting the courts has already received over 700 signatures, and that number continues to grow. Those signatures represent students, parents, residents, and community members who want to see the courts remain open. I also want to speak from personal experience. I live near the Methuen Rod & Gun Club in

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Methuen and hear gunshots on a regular basis, even though that noise is much louder than a pickleball. My neighbors and I understand that it's part of the recreational activity in the community, and we don't threaten lawsuits or demand it be shut down. We recognize that living in a community means balancing different interests and finding reasonable compromises. In the same way, I believe the answer here is balance, not elimination. The courts already operate limited daytime hours, and the city has already begun implementing sound mitigation measures. Instead of closing down the courts entirely, we should continue improving those solutions while still preserving an important community space. I also think it's important to consider the broader community. While a relatively small number of nearby residents may oppose the courts, there are hundreds of people across Methuen who actively use and support them. Public recreational spaces should serve the community as a whole, and I do not believe it would be fair to prioritize the preferences of 15 or 20 neighbors over the interests of a larger population that benefit from these courts every week. I also think it's important that we keep perspective. These courts are bringing people together. They give students and residents a place to be active, meet new people, and spend time outdoors. Where else do you see teenagers socializing with adults besides the pickleball courts? In a time where many teenagers struggle with isolation, excessive screen time, and unhealthy habits, having safe public spaces like this matter. We are not asking the City Council to ignore concerns. We are asking the city to continue working toward reasonable solutions that balance neighborhood concerns with the needs of a broader community. Please do not shut down these courts. They are helping create a stronger, healthier, and more connected Methuen. Thank you for your time."

- **Kevin O'Donnell, Local Staff Representative for AFSCME # 93** – "Yes, good evening, Mayor and esteemed City Council. My name is Kevin O'Donnell. I'm the new local staff rep for AFSCME #93. And I'm just here to speak on the budget that was put out and the layoffs that are forthcoming. It seems to me a lot of mistakes have been made over the years in terms of how things were budgeted and how the money was allotted. And it just seems sad that the people who had nothing to do with any of those decisions are paying for it and losing their livelihood. And it just doesn't seem fair to these people because they had nothing to do with those decisions that were made. But it seems that they're being the most impacted by that. And also, the manner in which it was decided on some people who would leave and some people would stay. I have reason to question going forward. And I just want people to know that these people are hardworking people. Some of them are not all that highly paid. One I know is losing 12% a year for the rest of her life. You know, people are going to be hurting, and city services are going to dwindle based on these layoffs. I know it's a difficult decision for all, but I just don't want to make that hurt. Thank you."
- **Diane Moore, 58 Lowell Boulevard.** "Good evening. I'm Diane Moore. I live at 58 Lowell Boulevard. If you don't know me, I am the Chair of the Historic District Commission. I also sit on the Historic Commission and the Preservation Commission. Good evening, Mr. Mayor and the members of City Council and all of the Methuen citizens. On behalf of the friends of Edward F. Searles' Estate, I would like to provide a brief update on the progress and the community engagement efforts taking place at the estate. We are very grateful to the city for allowing us to, for the opportunity to offer these lectures in the estate. After the past couple of weeks, we have successfully hosted two educational lectures at the estate with over 50 attendees participating. These events

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

reflect growing community interest and appreciation for one of Methuen's most iconic historical landmarks. The lectures have featured a variety of topics, including the life and legacy of Edward F. Searles, the history and architecture of his home, the remarkable artwork housed in the estate, and the six-point preservation and revitalization plan our group developed and presented as a roadmap for the estate's future. In addition, attendees were astonished by the opulence of the Marble Museum, where the lectures were held, and had the unique opportunity to experience the estate's historic organ through a special performance by volunteer organists, bringing renowned life to an important piece of the estate's history and offering visitors a meaningful connection to its past. These programs have helped raise educational awareness, foster public interest, and strengthen community support for the importance of future preservation efforts. For those who expressed concern, I would like to announce that prior to future events, attendees will be requested to sign a liability exclusion disclosure to protect the city. The Friends of the Searles Estate has had positive outreach from our community. Some of the comments that we've received through Facebook and website are as follows.

‘Wonderful lectures this evening. Thank you for all involved in this. I would happily be volunteering at any capacity if possible. Such a great series. Thank you so much for all that you are doing for the Searles for Methuen. Huge thanks to all involved. This was very informative information shared by the speakers, helpful greeters in the parking lot, and pleasant gals to check in --- one was my granddaughter, in fact. All the while, pleasant live music looking forward to the next lectures. Nice that all 50 seats were filled during the presentation. Thank you for your time and continued interest in preserving the history and the future of Edward F. Searles. These are just a few. The comments about the first and second lectures were all positive. We were pleased and pleasantly surprised because we found out that the second lecture had Mr. Searles’ relative in the audience. He was actually a descendant of Mr. Edward F. Searles’ brother's great-great-grandson, I believe, and his sister was there as well. He's a retired engineer, and he also offered to volunteer and help the city with restoration. We would also like to extend an invite to all the members of City Council to attend one of the upcoming lectures. We would be honored to have you join us and experience firsthand the educational and cultural opportunities taking place at the estate. The next lectures are next Wednesday, the 27th, and June 3rd, also a Wednesday evening. They start at 5:30. So please, please join us. Thank you.’

- **Ann DiBenedetto** – “Hello. My name is Ann DiBenedetto. I was a teacher in Methuen for 35 years. I am speaking tonight on the insurance coalition, the health insurance. I was around when the PEC was formed. So was my counterpart, Lois Jacobs. So, there's a lot of history here, and we have a lot of knowledge. I want to first say thank you to the Councilors and Mr. Mayor for trying to do the collective bargaining. The collective bargaining on this is very important to preserve the rights of everyone and get the practical and sustainable agreement for not only the city but also the employees. What happened in January as a retiree, the co-pays of the \$10 plus the split went from 75%-25% to 70%-30%, which it was a big increase for retirees. I just want to say that moving forward, Borislow Insurance has worked well with Blue Cross in getting rates and plans for the city that have been less money than GIC. So, I'm hoping that moving forward that the City Council or the Mayor can work with the PEC in establishing a plan that's going to help everybody. I just want to say moving forward, we know even Congress has a difficult time with insurance. Not only contingencies have to be put in place, but

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

sometimes during the year the drug tiers change. So, you could have, let's say, a hot medication or a cholesterol drug, and you'll be paying like a \$50 co-pay, and all of a sudden that co-pay will go up to \$75 because the insurance companies are allowed to change the tiers in which the drugs are in mid-year. So, these are contingencies that everybody needs to look at. Finally, I just want to say thank you to Ryan DiZoglio, Ella MacLaren, and Mike Simard for publicly stating that they have the best interest of the unions, and I'm sure the rest of you do as well. Thank you."

- **Linda Soucy, 10 Kirk Street, Methuen** – "First of all, thank you, everybody, for your support for the golf tournament today. It was a great success. We had great weather, and the Kattars are here tonight, and they really did a great job for all the people who were there at the golf tournament. So, thank you all for all your support. Next, I'd like to say something about dirt bikes. I don't know what we're going to do. I have no idea, but we have to do something. It's getting more and more dangerous. I think that Ryan (DiZoglio) has put forward something about the gas stations. I don't think everybody's in favor of that. I am in favor of it. I suggested it. I just think that we have to figure out something, and it has to be an overall plan. One thing is not going to work. It's going to take a whole bunch of things put together out of our magic boxes to figure out how to take care of this issue. And whatever we can do to solve that, I've told the Chief (McNamara), I've told everybody, we need to do something. First, I'd really like to say congratulations to that young man back there for being so brave to come up here and speak at such a young age. I'm almost 70, and I still shake when I come up here, even though I do it all the time. So, a round of applause for him. Great job. And then, finally, I'd just like to say congratulations to the well-deserving Police and Fire department promotions that you have in front of you tonight. We are very fortunate here in Methuen. Very, very fortunate to have the Police and Fire Departments that we have and the guys that are here. They're remarkable. The things that they do ---that you don't even know half of the things that they do for the people in Methuen. So, keep that in mind when you vote for these promotions tonight. Thanks a lot. Have a good night."
- **Kristen Maxwell, 5 East Prospect Street, Methuen** – "Good evening. My name is Kristen Maxwell. I live at 5 East Prospect Street. I'll be back again to speak on issues that I find important, but tonight I want to remind everyone that we're in this together, whether we like it or not. Before this week gets heavy and everyone starts coming to this podium to speak, I just want to say something that I think we all need to hear. Politics in this city have created such an ugly divide that people no longer see neighbors or community members. They see enemies. Honestly, it's sad and it's getting dangerous. As you all know, I recently resigned from my position on the school committee, yet the threats, attacks, and hateful comments continue. Somewhere along the way, we stopped talking to each other and started trying to destroy each other instead. I also want to say this loud and clear. I, just like all of you, am only responsible for my own words and actions. We cannot control what other people say online and in conversations, and it's unfair to hold us accountable for someone else's words while refusing to hold the actual person accountable themselves. We do not have to agree on every issue. Debate is healthy. Different opinions are healthy. But cruelty, humiliation, and intimidation are not, and it has to stop. I've sat in these meetings and clapped for people that I didn't even agree with because I understand how difficult it is to stand at this podium and speak publicly. I've never booed anyone. I've never tried to publicly shame anyone because I've disagreed with them. Yet we've all seen letters, coordinated efforts, and public attacks

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

against us over differences in opinions, which is ironic because they put us in these seats. In a sense, it's all because of the concerns that we bring forward that aren't even our own opinions. They're always of the concerns of families and staff who trusted in me and were too afraid to speak for themselves. Every person who comes to this podium is a human being first, and we need to remember that again. I'm a mom. I'm a wife. I'm a daughter. I'm a sister. I'm a friend. But first, I'm a person. There are real families and real children behind these conversations. You don't have to agree with me, and you don't have to like me, but we should all be able to agree that this level of hate is unhealthy for our city and especially unhealthy for our children to witness. At some point, we all have to decide what matters more, winning political arguments or rebuilding a community where people can disagree while still treating each other with dignity and respect. I truly hope that we can choose each other and can move forward in making Methuen a community that we all want to be in again. Thank you for your time, and good luck with the week ahead."

- **Eric Moreau, President, Methuen Fire Fighter's Union Local 1691** – "Good evening, Mayor Beauregard, Madam CAFO, Chair Soto, City Councilors, Council Clerk, City Solicitor and residents. My name is Eric Moreau, and I'm the president of Methuen Firefighters Local 1691. I stand before you tonight on behalf of my brothers and sisters of Methuen Firefighters Local 1691 with gratitude and sincere thanks for the support we received following the passing of our brother, Lieutenant James 'Jimmy Mac' McLachlan. The turnout and compassion have shown us all during his services, especially the support from the Mayor, City Council, City Hall employees, and across all city departments were truly remarkable. Your willingness to stand with us during a time of loss meant more than we can put into words. To the residents who lined the procession route and paused while the procession drove by, thank you. Your presence reflected what we already know about Methuen, that when someone in our community is hurting, we come together steadfast, respectful, and united. Again, on behalf of the members of Methuen Firefighters Local 1691, thank you for everything."
- **Cara Blatt – Methuen Education Association** – "Good evening, Cara Blatt, co-president of the Methuen Education Association. I would like to thank the City Council for their time and for many hours over the past week talking to many members of the Public Employees Committee, which handles the city insurance, as well as Mayor Beauregard. There is a lot going on in the city with the budget crisis, and it is so important, just like our retirees have said, that everybody is accounted for and able to afford insurance and be able to survive in these times. And I appreciate the Mayor this afternoon taking the time to really say that we need to work together and that the resolution tonight is tabled because working together in collective bargaining is so important. And no matter what is decided, we have to make sure it is responsible for the city as well as to our members. And all our unions here tonight, every union here tonight is representative, and that's because the PEC is completely together in supporting one another through this budget crisis, and we're supporting one another in making sure everybody gets the right insurance. We have disparity between lower and higher salaries, and we have to make sure that the splits, deductibles, plans, and everything else comes into one together. And everybody on this Council has listened, and we appreciate it, and we look forward to getting a solution very quickly. Also, during this budget crisis, we also have learned how much as a school all of these other departments are so important. I don't envy anybody right now, but also please keep in mind the amount of humanity

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

that goes into all these positions with anxiety and everything else. If it wasn't for the Police and Fire Safety or getting an ambulance to a school if somebody was in a crisis is key. The DPW helps make sure our playgrounds are clean. Snow removal, because we can't go to school if the snow isn't plowed. All of these budget crises, it's really can we focus on making sure what it takes to run the city and be honest with the residents and the voters of what it really takes. Relying on other funds or other things midway through the year doesn't give an accurate picture of what it costs to run the system, and we need better ways to do this, so we don't come back here year after year. Thank you."

- **Lois Jacobs, 3 Crest Drive, Methuen** – "Lois Jacobs, 3 Crest Drive. My handwriting was always poor, and I was a teacher. Good evening to our City Council and Mayor. My name is Lois Jacobs. I want to thank you for pulling TR-26-32, Mayor Beauregard. We want to continue with negotiations in good faith and now let's roll up our sleeves and find the best equitable solution between the city and the PEC. Ann outed me as being an old person and was in the beginning of these PEC meetings back maybe 200 years ago. But it does work, and we can negotiate together, come to a fair solution, and that's all I ask. Thank you. Good night."
- **Stephen Tarquinio, 64 Sycamore Road, Methuen**– "To start, I appreciate that young man from the high school coming up here to talk. It takes a lot of courage to come up here and speak, and I just wanted to speak tonight regarding the pickleball noise issue. So I just want to clarify that the issue isn't about the sport itself, the kids, the high school. It's about the noise levels and the frequency of noise created by the paddles and the balls at such a proximity to houses and the negative impacts it has on the quality of life to those who are paying taxes, paying their mortgages, to enjoy their house, their yard, and their neighborhood. Given the recent attention by the high school petition and social media, I just wanted to speak tonight on how we got here and make people aware that it's not just neighbors complaining to complain. So back around 2002, Methuen received \$46 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding from the federal government. \$1.3 million of it was budgeted for the Tennis Court Project. In November of 2023, the Conservation Commission made us aware that they were redoing the wetlands at the high school in advance of projects that were going to be conducted at the high school to do massive renovations for the courts as well as the bus loop area. I had emailed Steve Angelo and Councilor Faretra asking about the full extent of the projects, what was planned, and raised concerns about privacy and noise given the woods that separate our yard from the high school are not very dense. No response was received from either of them. In March of 2024, because of the Conservation Commission meeting on the wetlands, is when we saw the six pickleball courts on the site plan and immediately contacted Steve Angelo, raising concerns and even sending him a link to recent news articles in Braintree, MA that were happening at that time with issues with noise. Steve Angelo replied, thanking me for my note and stating the project is in the bidding process, bids would close in April, and they will know more about the final design once that was done. He assured me they were finding all feasible ways to ensure this would be a great addition to the neighborhood. Despite the many requests from multiple neighbors, there were no meetings conducted to go over the plans or address any concerns that the neighbors raised. The bid for the project came in at \$2 million versus the \$1.3 million budget --\$700,000 over. So, you assume the city would review the plan versus the proposal and figure out a way to scale back the activities. That's not what we did. Instead, the city approved Resolution TR-24-40 in June of 2024 to reallocate \$1 million

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

of ARPA funds away from the new DPW building and put it towards the Tennis Court Project. So, you would assume with, you know, \$700,000 over budget, why would they allocate \$1 million, that extra \$300,000? Maybe it would be to address all the noise issues that the neighbors were raising. It was not. Here's how that \$300,000 was spent. \$20,000 on trees, \$53,000 for fencing, \$100,000 for a shaded pavilion, \$151,000 for benches. So, despite multiple neighbors raising concerns about sound impacts, the city decided to spend over \$300,000 on aesthetics rather than put any money towards understanding or addressing noise issues. Throughout the summer and fall of 2024, I followed up with Mr. Angelo multiple times with news stories from across the country on the noise issues, asking what was being done to address the issues at the court that were going to happen, as well as requesting we do before and after sound surveys so we could understand the true issues. His response was they were hoping the woods would prevent the sound and would wait and see. So, after the courts opened last year, we filed a complaint about the noise because it was apparent. The city went and procured \$20,000 of noise mitigation panels. No sound studies --- just bought the panels. Did they work? No, they did not work. So here we are two years later since the original issue was voiced, one year since the courts opened, we've received emails, phone calls, letters, and have had personal discussions on the quality-of-life impact that this is having on numerous people throughout the neighborhood. Last week, all of you Councilors acknowledged this, those of you who saw it there firsthand. We are not against the sport of pickleball. It should exist in Methuen for the kids to play. We just need to find the right location to avoid it having negative impacts on the citizens of this city that are not using the courts. Where they are located today is not the right location, and I wish it had been handled differently so we would not be here today with both the players and the neighbors upset at what is happening. Thank you.

- **Heather Plunkett, 115 East Street, Methuen** – “My name is Heather Plunkett. I live at 115 E Street. I wanted to speak today. I had a dissertation, as you all know I love to do, but I won't because it's hot and people are waiting and we have firefighters that need to be seen, police officers and all the things, which are way more important than my comments, but I am up here so I will speak. My comments are in response to Councilor Valley's request for the solicitor to clarify the liability concerns for events being held at the Searles Estate. I just want to point out that all municipal buildings bear the same amount of liability concern, whether it's City Hall or any of our school buildings or the Searles Estate. If you've noticed the stairs after 100 years of people walking down them, they're not the safest stairs in the world. So, I'm hoping that this wasn't put forth as a way to maybe shut down having events at the Searles Estate. I think it's important to celebrate this piece of history in our community and do all we can while we have it to enjoy it. We couldn't even go into it until recently, so I would really hope that isn't something to try and shut down events being held in that space. Also, it's difficult to sue a municipality. You have to put it in writing. You have to have exact things, and it's capped at \$100,000. So, it's not like some lawyer is going to sign on and get a big old payday for that. Nobody wants to sue a city. It sucks. You're not getting anything out of that. And then waivers. I did look to see if waivers, because they said they're having people sign waivers. If they can be enforced, they can. They can be enforced as long as the language is clear and they're not doing something that would lend itself to big risk and getting hurt. So that's all I wanted to say. I just hope that this review isn't something

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

to try to shut it down. I think it's important it stays open. It's a big part of our history, and most people really love it. Thank you."

- **Ace Hayden, 33 Armory Street, Methuen** – "Hi. Ace Hayden, 33 Armory Street, Methuen, Mass. I just want to piggyback on what was said by Heather and Diane. We have had great success with what we've been doing right now with the Searles, with the Friends of the Searles. It's been very, very positive, and all the socials, all we get is let's not lose it, and it's all in unison. I hope you share and go on all the socials, the history, the Methuen history. We've had the Massachusetts Film Production Assistant to the Film Commission, Massachusetts Film Commission, come out with Jack (Wilson), and he gave him a tour, and he loved what he saw. Even the strangest things, like the bathtub that was in the nursing home section. You just don't know what's going to be good for somebody. We have so much at that estate. We have 19 buildings, 20 acres, give or take, and there's so much for everybody here to make it a community event, to bring money in. So please do not be short-sighted. I know you're in the midst of budget hell right now but just think long-term for this project because that's where your rate of return is going to come. Your money is going to come back to this city. Thank you very much."

5. Organizational Business - none

6. Reading and Acceptance of Minutes from Previous Meetings:

- **April 21, 2026 Regular Meeting** (*remove from the table*) – Motion to remove from the Table by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – **unanimously approved** – main motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – **unanimously approved**, 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)
- **April 28, 2026 Special Meeting** – Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Valley – UPON VOTE – **unanimously approved** – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)
- **May 4, 2026 Regular Meeting** - Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Valley – UPON VOTE – **unanimously approved** – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)

7. Proclamations/Correspondence: none

8. Consideration of Appointments:

- **Firefighter Jesse Kattar – Lieutenant** – **Motion to appoint by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Santos** - Chair Soto recognized Fire Chief Toto, "Good evening, Councilors, Mr. Mayor. It is my distinct pleasure to recommend Firefighter Jesse Kattar for promotion to the rank of Fire Lieutenant. This is a budgeted position, filling a current vacancy, and Jesse stands well qualified for this important leadership role. He is second on the Civil Service promotional list. Mr. Sean Wholley is first on the list. No candidates have been bypassed. Jesse has proudly served the Department for the past 19 years and is a lifelong resident of Methuen. A graduate of Methuen High School and the Methuen Public School System, Jesse has dedicated both his personal and professional life to serving this community with integrity, professionalism, and pride. Throughout his career, he has consistently demonstrated strong leadership, reliability, and a commitment to the safety and well-being of both the public and his fellow firefighters. He has earned the respect of his peers and his supervisors through his professionalism, positive attitude, and willingness to mentor new members of the Department. Over the past few months, he

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

has served as Acting Lieutenant, performing the duties of Lieutenant with confidence, sound judgment, and competence. In 2014, Jesse was recognized as Methuen Exchange Club Firefighter of the Year for actions above and beyond the call of duty, helping save the life of a choking victim during an emergency response at a local restaurant. This recognition reflects the dedication and confidentiality he brings to the job every day. Beyond the fire service, Jesse is a devoted husband and father. He and his wife Erin are raising their three children, Jesse, Jake, and Liv, and he takes tremendous pride in balancing his commitment to family with his dedication to public service. I am fully confident that Jesse possesses the experience, leadership ability, character, and work ethic necessary to excel as a Lieutenant. I strongly recommend the firefighter Jesse cater for promotion and respectfully ask for your favorable consideration.” Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, “I just wanted to mention that for all of the appointments, they’re budgeted for Fiscal Year 2026 and budgeted also in the Fiscal Year 2027 budget as well. Thank you.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, “Through you, Madam Chair to the Chief. Chief, just for clarification, this position is a position contractually required there to ensure that the safety of the men and women of your department are staffed properly, correct?” Chief Toto said, “Yes. Both positions are contractual for staffing the engines and the ladder with the Lieutenant and two firefighters.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Simard, “Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to thank both the Fire Chief and the Police Chief for adhering to Civil Serviceregulation. It means a lot to the men and women of your department who want a fair playing field and transparency and both of you obviously promote that and thank you for that.” – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

- **Firefighter Sean Wholley – Lieutenant - Motion to appoint by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Chief Toto, “I am pleased to strongly support the promotion of Firefighter Sean Wholley to Lieutenant. This is, again, a budgeted position filling the vacancy that was created by the promotion of a Deputy Chief. He was the top of the Civil Servicepromotional list and no candidates were bypassed. Sean is a lifelong Methuen resident, an 11-year veteran of the department who has earned the respect of his peers and supervisors through professionalism, leadership, and dedication to public service. For the last five years, he has served at Engine 5, East End Station, one of the busiest stations in the city, where he has gained extensive experience handling fires and medical emergencies. Also, in recent months, he has served as Acting Lieutenant. Sean holds an Associate's (Degree) in Fire Protection and Safety Technology from Middlesex Community College and numerous professional certifications. Additional experience in building construction as an emergency room technician at Holy Family Hospital further strengthens his ability to manage complex emergencies. Above all, Sean demonstrates the integrity, work ethic, leadership, and commitment necessary to excel as a Lieutenant in the Methuen Fire Department. He is dedicated to serving the community while continuing to support his mentor, fellow firefighters. Outside of his service to the community, Sean is a devoted family man who values his time with his wife, Kelly, and their two sons, Nolan and Rory, who remain the center of his life and a constant source of pride and motivation. I recommend Firefighter Sean Wholley for this promotion without reservation and respectfully ask for your favorable consideration.” – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

- **Acting Police Lieutenant Matthew Mueskes - Permanent Police Lieutenant - Motion to appoint by Clr. Simard, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Police Chief Scott McNamara, “Good evening, Madam Chairperson, members of the City Council, and Mayor Beauregard. Thank you for having us here tonight. Once again, the same story. These are budgeted positions. Both officers appear at number one on their respective lists. These positions were created by the recent retirement of Lieutenant James Gunter. So, I'll start with the biography of Lieutenant Matt Mueskes. Lieutenant Matthew Mueskes has served the Methuen Police Department with distinction since 2005. He began his career as a Reserve Police Officer and Police Dispatcher before becoming a full-time Patrol Officer in 2012. Over the course of his career, he's held numerous critical assignments, including Canine Handler, Traffic and Community Outreach officer, Field Training officer, and member of the NEMLEC Regional response team in the Methuen Special Operations Unit. In 2021, Lieutenant Mueskes was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and served as a Patrol Supervisor before being selected to lead the department's accreditation efforts. A true generational talent, he was the driving force behind Methuen Police Department's achieving full state accreditation for the first time just three years ago. For the past five years, he's commanded the Accreditation and Professional Standards Division and recently led the department through a highly successful re-accreditation assessment in December. He also serves as an assessor on the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission. In April, he was appointed as an acting lieutenant. On June 11th, next month, the Mayor and I will proudly join him as the department is honored once again for this outstanding achievement as we will receive our re-accreditation award. Lieutenant Mueskes is a lifelong Methuen resident and a proud graduate of Methuen Public Schools. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Northeastern University and a Master's degree from UMass Lowell. He's completed extensive leadership and specialized training, including the FBI Leader Trilogy, the FBI Leader Internal Affairs Program, the Impact Accreditation Training, and numerous advanced command and internal affairs programs. His exceptional service has been recognized with the Methuen Exchange Club Police Officer of the Year Award in 2022 and the department's Lifesaving Award in 2018. He currently serves as the treasurer and former secretary of the Methuen Police Superior Officers Association. Outside of work, Lieutenant Mueskes and his wife, Jessica, married for 18 years, are actively involved in their children's lives. They proudly support their son, Jonathan, at Bethune High School hockey and lacrosse games and their daughter, Anaya, at her softball games. Lieutenant Matthew Mueskes is an outstanding leader and a rare asset to our department. His dedication, expertise, and exceptional contributions continue to elevate the Methuen Police Department and the community he serves.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, “Thank you, Madam Chair. Chief, similar to the question I asked Chief Toto, these positions are in place to ensure the safety of your men and women on the force, to make sure they go home every night safe to their loved ones.” Chief McNamara said, “Without question, that is the case. And I also want to say that this promotion is consistent with the reorganization plan that was adopted by this very City Council in 2022 that determined there should be a certain staffing level among supervisors. So, this is certainly consistent with the will of the Methuen City Council. Chair Soto recognized Clr. Simard, “Thank you, Madam Chair. I know a lot of officers within the department, and one thing's for sure is that I'm glad that Lieutenant Mueskes came back from his leave of absence because this city is very

lucky to have him. If you talk to any officer within the department, they all say the same thing, that he's top-notch and he's very squared away and he's in the right position and he deserves what he gets. So, I just wanted to say that about Matt. Thank you.” – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

- **Acting Police Sergeant Matthew St. Jean - Permanent Police Sergeant - Motion to appoint by Clr. Simard, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** - Thank you again. Again, Sergeant St. Jean here is number one on the Civil Servicelist, and we only recommend an order. Sergeant Matthew St. Jean is dedicated, highly performing law enforcement leader, proud Methuen resident, devoted husband and father of three children. He's here tonight with his wife, Erin, his daughter, Stella, age 13, Vivian, age 11, and his son, Alexander, age four. Since graduating from the Northern Essex Police Academy in 2015, where he earned the top physical fitness award, Sergeant St. Jean has consistently demonstrated excellence, professionalism, and a deep commitment to service. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Southern New Hampshire University, a Master's degree in Criminal Justice from American International College. These advanced credentials, paired with his relentless pursuit of professional development, reflect his drive to lead with both knowledge and skill. Throughout his career, Sergeant St. Jean has distinguished himself in numerous critical roles. He is a certified field training officer, defensive tactics instructor, taser instructor, and CPR first responder instructor. He served with the Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council, contributing to regional operations and participating in multiple search and rescue missions for missing persons. His investigative expertise was further developed and strengthened in the Department's Criminal Investigation Division, where he successfully handled complex cases, supported victims, and brought resolution to serious crimes. He is a certified sexual assault investigator and has completed hundreds of hours of advanced training in interview and interrogation, crime scene processing, crisis intervention, and search warrant preparation. Sergeant St. Jean's exceptional performance has earned him significant recognition. In 2019, he was named the Methuen Exchange Club Police Officer of the Year for his life-saving actions when he performed the Heimlich Maneuver on a choking elderly man, showcasing the quick thinking, courage, and compassion that defines his service. Most recently, he completed the prestigious Supervisory Leadership Institute, Command Leadership Institute, and Executive Leadership Institute, and earned the highly coveted FBI Trilogy Award in recognition of his outstanding leadership achievement. Sergeant Matthew St. Jean has proven himself to be an exemplary officer who consistently places the safety and well-being of the Methuen residents first. His strong leadership, integrity, and dedication to the community make him highly qualified for this promotion. I respectfully recommend him to the City Council for this next step in his career. – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

9. Presentations/Projects/Department Updates – none

- 10. Mayor's Report – Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, “Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll begin my report. Even as we deal with a challenging budget season, I'll begin tonight with some positive news. We received word from S&P that they have affirmed the City of Methuen's AA bond rating with a stable outlook.** This is an important indicator of the City's overall financial credibility and long-term fiscal health. A strong

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

bond rating helps position Methuen to borrow at more favorable interest rates for major capital and infrastructure projects, which can ultimately help reduce costs for taxpayers over time. The stable outlook also reflects confidence in the City's ability to responsibly manage its finances and navigate ongoing fiscal challenges. While we still have significant work ahead of us, of course, I believe this affirmation demonstrates that the difficult conversations we're having and the steps we're taking to address long-term structural issues are being taken seriously, and that's validation not from me, not from the CAFO, but from S&P. I'm also pleased to share that out of 61 applications submitted statewide through a competitive process, the **City of Methuen has secured a \$1.7 million grant for critical energy efficiency upgrades at the Timony Grammar School through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's Green School Works Program.**

This funding will help modernize aging infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, reduce long-term operating costs, and create a better learning environment for our students and educators. We're going to keep aggressively pursuing outside funding opportunities whenever possible to offset costs for local taxpayers and invest in our community.

Regarding the budget, I submitted my proposed FY'2027 budget to the Council on Friday. As I noted in my transmittal letter, the budget takes a major step toward addressing Methuen's structural operating imbalance while avoiding a Proposition 2 ½ override, avoiding the unsustainable use of Free Cash to fund recurring operating expenses, and preserving critical frontline public safety positions, including all current patrol officers and firefighters. While it's a balanced budget, I was required to make difficult decisions, which we'll be discussing in further detail during this week's budget workshops. The most politically convenient move for me would have been to do precisely nothing different. Just maintain the status quo, punt the ball, kick the can yet again. But I wasn't elected to do that, and that's not why any of us are here. Despite the tough spot we're in, along with many other municipalities across the Commonwealth, what we're dealing with is something that is not unique or novel. I'm confident that we'll be able to work together constructively this week on the budget, keep our focus on moving our city forward, and act in the best interests of Methuen's taxpayers. We have some major projects in the works, and several contracts are on the agenda tonight. First, we have a **contract with Apex for Engineering Services related to the Milk Street Traffic Calming Project.** This has been one of our key projects as part of our **Safe Streets for All Task Force.** As most folks know, Milk Street serves as a prominent cut-through route in our city with vehicles traveling at high speeds along what amounts to a relatively narrow residential roadway. Our goal is to explore some traffic calming measures to help reduce vehicle speeds, improve safety along the corridor, and provide upgrades to pedestrian accommodations and accessibility. We have a contract with Weston and Sampson on the agenda. We had contracted with them to conduct a feasibility study years ago. This was during the Jajuga administration. We conducted a **feasibility study for a new public works facility**, and this **new contract will allow us to work with them to expand their scope of service to include a feasibility study pertaining to new police and fire facilities**, which we all know are badly needed. We also have a **contract ready to facilitate the repair of the Oakland Avenue Bridge.** We've received our necessary waiver from DCAM. This has been in the works for some time. The bridge has been closed, as you all know, due to a bridge deck hole and other structural issues. It's roughly a 100-year-old bridge. This will allow us to ensure the bridge's safety and reopen it as soon as possible. There's also contracts for engineering

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

and design services to develop a **comprehensive streetscape improvement plan for the Phase 1A project area of the (Methuen) Arlington Neighborhood**, the installation of the base of an outdoor fitness court at Veterans Memorial Park, paving work, and the replacement of chemical tanks at the water treatment plant. We're working on trying to fix a lot of big, longstanding issues, and I hope you'll consider supporting the initiatives on the agenda. Regarding upcoming events:

- Breakfast for Veterans will be held tomorrow morning at the Methuen Senior Center at 10 a.m.
- The next meeting of our Industrial Zoning Reform Working Group in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission is taking place this Wednesday at 1 p.m.
- The annual Memorial Day Parade will start at the American Legion Post on Broadway at 10 a.m. on Monday, May 25th.
- The Methuen High School Commencement Ceremony is scheduled for Friday, June 5th at 6 p.m.
- And our first concert in the park event will be held at Riverside Park on Friday, June 12th.

That does it for my Mayor's Report for tonight. Happy to answer questions. Otherwise, I'll address some of the requests on the other side." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Mayor, just a clarification for me. You touched on the bond rating and how we are well bonded now. When we take loans and bonds, we have interest rates who say we get favorable rates. Do we end up ever having to refinance those bonds? And I don't know. This is just for my own knowledge. I just wanted to know if anybody is listening." CAFO Duprey said, "So, that's not something that we have done, but it is something that you can do if the market is right versus what we have. So, it's something that our bond council looks at all the time, and it fluctuates quickly. So, if we do or can take advantage of it, then we'll move quickly to do so. We haven't been in a place where we've needed to or been able to do so that would be in our favor. But it is something that they're continuously looking at to see if it does come to that, we can do that." Clr. Drew said, "Thank you. I just know with the debt service, I just wanted to make sure that we're at the most favorable terms as possible."

11. CAFO Report – Chair Soto recognized CAFO Maggie Duprey, "Thank you. I handed out a couple of handouts just before the meeting. The first thing that I want to just talk about is the FY'2026 CIP. I only provided a CIP for FY'2026 this week, and that's because we've changed the way that we are addressing the FY'2026 CIP. Instead of spending and bonding the full amount that has been authorized and approved by Council, which was \$12.5 million, the administration has gone through and looked at all of the open years, looked at all of the prior balances available, projects that have already started for FY'2026 CIP or are ready to start, and decided to go forward with an abbreviated plan for what you can see here. So, on this document, you'll see the original appropriation. This is part of the bond approval that we received from council in the fall for the FY'2026 CIP. And next to it, you see available balance of 7/1/2025. I have added in there what we are moving forward with, with the bond issuance, which is currently ongoing and will happen before the end of this fiscal year. So, you can see that originally, we were approved at \$12.5 million. We're moving forward with projects and bonding of just over \$4.6 million. I want to be super clear; this is not an abandonment of any of these projects. Once the council has approved them, that approval stays out there. It's approved

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

and unissued debt. So, we are planning to move forward with those. This is considered a pause with the bond, not with the bond, the budget in front of us for FY'2027. We thought it would be more appropriate to pare down what we're looking to bond and therefore have to pay debt on it in FY'2027. So, in doing so, we were able to save about 75 percent of what we originally had planned for FY'2027's debt service payments for the new bond. But again, this is just a pause. We are going to continue with these projects, just a little bit more down the road than the immediate, which we originally had planned for. The next document is the Searles Estate expense and revenue as requested. Really straightforward, nothing more to this other than additional utility costs have really been the expenses since the last update. I'm happy to answer any questions there. The last piece of document that I provided is an update. I've been giving periodic updates over the past few months about where we stand with snow and ice. I just wanted to provide a final update based on the heat in here, the heat outside. I think we're past the snow and ice period. So, we're looking at a deficit of just under \$2.5 million. So, we'll be coming forward at the next council meeting with a requested solution for that deficit. But I wanted to just give you a heads up before the first time you see it is when we're asking for action. The only other thing I wanted to mention was Clr. Santos reached out to me directly about an update for the Oakland App School, so I thought it would be helpful just to provide everyone. We did receive some financial information, but we do need additional and more current information that we've requested. I know that the city solicitor is working with their legal counsel as far as getting the documentation that we need. So, hopefully we'll get that in the near future, and we'll be able to move forward with that. Happy to answer any questions that you might have." Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "So quick question on the other, it says police tasers and cameras expense \$235,000. I remember this was before I was on the Council. Were those the body cams that have different cameras?" CAFO Duprey said, "Yes, so part of those are tasers and part of them are body cams. So that's a contract that we have." Clr. DiZoglio said, "Okay. I was going to say, I thought, and I could be wrong, back like five years ago when we started getting the body cams, it was a grant or it was like a pilot program type of thing. Are we still on that where we're getting some partially paid for?" CAFO Duprey said, "No." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam CAFO, I think it's great, the idea. I think it's a little forward thinking about minimizing the amount of bond that we took to help minimize our debt servicing. I think that's a very good idea when it comes to this budget constraint that we're in. My other question is, and we brought it up a little bit at our Finance Subcommittee meeting about a week ago, but the \$2.4 million that you're looking for in the ice and snow, are you going to be bringing to us prior to the ask of the Free Cash to supplement that, the departmental shifts that need to happen to minimize the amount of Free Cash that we're going to allocate to this, or is this ask going to happen prior to those departmental shifts?" CAFO Duprey said, "So, our plan would be to bring it all at once. So however we need to, we're currently discussing how we're going to bring forward action to cover that, but we would bring it all at once to say, you know, if we need to transfer some funds in order to do that and Free Cash or one or the other, we'll be doing that all at the same time." Clr. Drew said, "Okay, because I remember there was roughly about, there was quite a bit of money from other line items that needed to be dropped just to help us minimize the amount of free cash that we do move so that we don't tie it up through the remainder of the year. That was just my question. I just want to make sure that's all going to kind of happen in conjunction." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Valley, "Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you to the CAFO. Madam CAFO, I see here on the FY'2026 CIP, the **Echo Lane sewer connection**, the original appropriation was \$450,000, and the balance right now is zero. So, what happened with those

funds?" CAFO Duprey said, "**So the Echo Lane connection** --- yes, we are not bonding for that right now as far as this bond is concerned. However, we're looking at that project as a FY'2027 project, which is really in about six weeks that we can start looking at that." Clr. Valley said, "So, it's going to be rolled over?" CAFO Duprey said, "So the authorization to borrow rolls over, yes. So, there's no actual bonding for it yet, but we're going to be able to roll the authorization into 2027 and take after that project at that time." Mayor Beauregard said, "Just to add to that: Trying to identify additional savings in the budget, some things that can hold until after July 1, and this was one of the projects that will benefit a relatively small number of residents in the city, and granted, we would probably have to explore betterments and things like that anyway, but this is something that we would look at after July 1st, given the need to reduce the debt service line." Clr. Valley said, "Thank you." **Request for Update on Searles Estate Expenses & Revenues (Req. of Clr. Soto)** Chair Soto said, "I have a question for the CAFO. So, I'm looking at the insurance. I have an ask for you. I'd like these (Searles Estate expenses) with their totals under their category. For example, and I don't know if this is just the system we're using, but you have everything --- natural gas, Searles Estate, right, Eversource, and that's an account G-34, but there are no totals of how much we've spent on each category." CAFO Duprey said, "You're looking at the Searles Estate?" Chair Soto said, "Yes, Ma'am." CAFO Duprey said, "Yes. I can do it however you prefer." Chair Soto thanked CAFO Duprey and continued, "I'd like, if possible, if you could provide Eversource, since its inception of this purchase, we've spent \$36,000. I see that we have insurance in February of 2025 for \$111,000. I see that's the biggest ticket item that we're paying for. And then we paid again in September \$107,000, and then again just in March, \$100,000." CAFO Duprey agreed. Chair Soto said, "So that means next September, we're due for another \$100,000, and this is all coming out of our General Fund." CAFO Duprey said, "That's right." Chair Soto said, "Okay. I'm going to keep this item on the agenda. Could you please provide that to the Council in advance, because I had to look at it here while we're at our City Council meeting. If you could provide it to us in advance, and that way if there are questions, it's already been reviewed, and at least with their totals." CAFO Duprey said, "The totals by vendor?" Chair Soto said, "Correct, yes. Or category, however you feel that should be."

12. Requests of Councilors

- **Request for paving list to be submitted on the Methuen Website (Req. of Chair Soto)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "Regarding the paving list. Yes, the DPW have a draft paving list for 2026. We're putting the finishing touches on that, and we'll post it to the website once we're finished with it. We have a contract on the agenda tonight. This is for full-depth reclamation projects. We're in the process of also going out to bid soon for the milling and paving work. That will commence once the new fiscal year starts. So, once we get that list completely finalized, we'll add that to the website."
- **Discussion and request for legal opinion regarding the appointment authority and process for appointing the Acting Assessor, City Assessor, or Chief Assessor positions (Req. of Chair Soto)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "Yes, Madam Chair. First of all, I would defer any legal questions to the Solicitor. However, in terms of that appointment, the Board of Assessors did take it up at their last meeting. Pursuant to, in our view, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Section 25A relative to function of the Board of Assessors in terms of appointing staff. Now, I want to mention that there is no ambiguity in the Municipal Code of the City of Methuen. I believe it's within Section 3, if I'm not mistaken, of the Municipal Code. There is a definitive listing of department

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

heads for each department. If you look at that list, it clearly states that, for instance, for the Police Department, the department head is the Chief of Police. For the Fire Department, the department head is the Chief of Fire. DPW, DPW Director, Economic and Community Development, Director of Economic and Community Development is the department head there. For the Assessing Department, it states, again, clearly, that the department head is technically the Chair of the Board of Assessors. And so, if you look back at recent history in Methuen, I remember when I was on the Council, I voted on the appointment of Michelle Mastrangelo to be the Assessor. I voted on the appointment of Suzanne (Doherty) to be the Assessor. But the issue is that, although this has been something that had been going on in the City for many, many years. Just because it's something that the City has been doing for a long time --- doesn't mean that that is indeed the correct process in compliance with the Municipal Code and the laws of the Commonwealth. And so, given that, I think we ought to be in the business of, number one, following our Municipal Code, number two, adhering to State statute. And, again, I'll defer to the Solicitor regarding any specific questions, simply because I am not an attorney. However, I will state, for the record, that our Assessor is a competent, qualified, and he's someone who possesses the necessary credentials to serve in the role, which is exactly the type of candidate anyone, I think, with an interest in good government would want to see in a position of this importance. And so, I think that we are in compliance with our own Code, in compliance with State law, and I'll defer to the Solicitor with any other questions." Chair Soto said, "Thank you for that, Mr. Mayor. So, you're basically saying that our Municipal Code trumps our Charter, supersedes our Charter. Same section reads 3-3 on the Municipal Code, and then it reads 3-3, which is referenced in our Charter." Mayor Beauregard said, "So, I'm not saying that. What I am saying is that it's clear that the Council does have the authority to appoint department heads. In fact, the Council exercises that authority with its appointments of individuals to the Board of Assessors. (Chair Soto passed the gavel to Vice Chair DiZoglio.) So, as you know, the City Council appoints the members of the Board of Assessors. The Board of Assessors in the City of Methuen meets monthly. They are not full-time employees. However, that office has full-time functions. And so, in essence, my understanding is that the Board delegates those day-to-day full-time responsibilities to staff that ought to be appointed in keeping with Chapter 41, Section 25A of the Massachusetts General Laws. And so, just to reiterate, according to the code, the department head for the Assessing Department is the Chair of the Board of Assessors, and that is in keeping with, I believe, in fact, the Council's appointment of the department head, which is the members of the Board itself." Chair Soto said, "So, I wanted to just put it on the record tonight that we advertised this position on February 5th of this year. It was posted as a job opening for a City Assessor, stated department head. I brought with me the actual advertisement. I have it with me. And it reported to the CAFO in that advertisement. So did the job description that the administration provided. And that, of course, was subject to City Council appointment, exactly like it happened in 1998 with Mr. John Cena, Senior, not the wrestler, in 2000, 2005, 2019, 2020 and 2021. The Council exercised its Charter authority when we voted six to three on that nominee, Mr. Mayor. That was, to my understanding, a lawful vote. And I believed it was due to the Charter, right? We were acknowledging the Charter when we did that. The very next day, on April 8th, you appointed the Assessor as a temporary appointment, under your executive authority, which I thought, what a great opportunity

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

because not going into detail why I personally voted no on that candidate. I called the Chair of that board. And I'm not sure if this body knows, but I was an Assessor in 2021, 2022 and 2023. This is why I know this. OK, so, I said, what a good opportunity for you to work with this gentleman and maybe prove us wrong. Or me anyway, because there were six no votes and you could accompany that nominee when the Mayor brings them back and vouch for that person on the floor for character interaction. You know how they've been working in these, I don't know, six, eight weeks, because I would assume you would have brought them before us before the three months (deadline). And that was a question I had with that chair. Yeah, so we agreed that would be a great opportunity. So that appointment happened. But you also in that post that you made public, and I believe it was in the Eagle Tribune; you stated that you will officially be making that a permanent position. And you cited the general law back then. That was April 8th, that the job description had not been rewritten yet and that the plan was announced. It was announced before that paperwork even came out. To me, that's premeditation of what you were already planning to do. You already knew on April 8th that that was the plan. Now, we missed that, I think, as a body. I think that we were too in the gist of all the comments on social media and we did and we did not see that." Mayor Beauregard said, "I would just ask that you don't insinuate motives. That's not really fair." Chair Soto said, "That's fair. So, on May 11th, the new job description was created. It was signed on May 12th, and it was emailed for signatures through HR. So, for me, my question to this administration is that people get into a room and say, how do we circumvent the sitting ducks that are there? Because that's what I think you may think we are --- so that we can make this happen. Because I don't think that a municipal code can supersede our Charter." Mayor Beauregard said, "I agree. It does not. And as I stated earlier." Chair Soto said, "So I want to say that for 26 years, every Mayor after every Mayor has brought that City Assessor in front of us as a department head. And that body has appointed that department head. So, we're saying that those Mayors were wrong, that they did not know what they were doing. And that law, which sites that that Chair would now be the department head and would have managed that department, which, by the way, has never done that." Mayor Beauregard said, "The process was incorrect all that time. And I was incorrect originally in my own submission of the appointment to the Council." Chair Soto said, "And I want to also state that the City Solicitor's opinion was written at your request. The City Solicitor to the body that hires him never told us of that request. Never let us know of dialogue that I thought we should have been privy to. I am disappointed in that office as our employee for not including us in the conversation. And if he's conflicted because he's working directly with you, Mr. Mayor, we should be afforded the opportunity to have a legal opinion. Because we wouldn't be debating this on the floor if that wasn't the case. My issue is, Mr. Mayor, circumventing executive orders, vetoes, putting things on the floor, forcing things down our throat without allowing us to be the checks and balances here. And using our authority as a Legislative body. And I say this respectfully. Because at the end of the day, you could have brought that gentleman back within the three months." Vice Chair DiZoglio informed the Chair that her 10 minutes had expired and recognized Mayor Beauregard, "Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair, for the opportunity to respond. So right out of the gate, there has been no attempt to circumvent any rules or procedures. There has been no attempt to violate, I think, the sacred institutional notion of checks and balances, which I take very seriously. I fully agree with actually several things that

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Madam Chair just stated. The Charter does authorize the city council to approve mayoral appointments of department heads. That is 100 percent correct. It is also 100 percent correct that according to the municipal code, the department head for this particular department is the chair of the board of assessors. That is also abundantly clear in the language. It's online, available for anybody who would like to take a look at it. If you look up the city of Methuen's municipal code, you will see this. Now, in terms of trying to go around the council and, I guess, shake up well-established norms, I just want to state that just because, and I referenced this previously, but I'll say it again, just because the city of Methuen did something a certain way, I don't care if it is for five years, 25 years, 50 years, 100 years --- if the City of Methuen has done something a certain way, that does not automatically mean that that was the correct way that the City of Methuen went about doing things. And, in fact, there are many examples that we can point to make that exact case. So, there is no inconsistency from where I'm sitting, and I'm not a lawyer. I'll defer to legal counsel. However, there is no inconsistency with what we're talking about here, where the Council does have that authority, and there's also the established department as the chair of the board. If the Council wishes to obtain outside legal counsel, that's not my call to make. We have checks and balances for a reason, Madam Chair. So, you know, with that, I am 100 percent convinced that we have done things in keeping with the letter of state statute, in keeping with the Charter, in keeping with the code. I don't see any inconsistency whatsoever, and perhaps we may have to agree to disagree, but ultimately, I would hope that we would defer to the advice of legal counsel, because the only attorney on the City Council is Councilor Pesce, and that's important. Thank you." Vice Chair DiZoglio said, "For me personally, I understand state law. And the thing I think, I'm not going to speak on behalf of everybody here, but myself, the only issue I have with it was it kind of blew up online to the point where we were being criticized, some of us. And if this was already put in, and trust me, I understand Methuen isn't always consistent, but I just think for the future, instead of putting, again, things online or putting us in a position that we are, there is this other mechanism, just to go to this mechanism, just instead of putting us in a position where some of us that voted no feel like their votes don't matter. And I'm not saying that doesn't matter to you, Mr. Mayor, I'm just saying on behalf of me, with the thing that blew up that week, that was unneeded, because you had this mechanism. So that's all I have to say. I understand what you had to do to get your job done. I'm just saying on behalf of the, well, I shouldn't say on behalf of the Council, I'm not going to speak. But to me, it's like down the road, this could have been avoided, in my opinion." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Simard, "Thank you, Madam Chair. The fact that we're talking about this at this point in our budget season is ridiculous. It seems personal, to be honest with you. Before me is a 10-page floor argument, which is public record. And it says, prepared for Councilor Nellie Soto. I have a question, who prepared this?" Chair Soto said, "Myself." Clr. Simard said, "Yourself, okay. So, I think it's personal. You have a problem with him circumventing. Looking at this proposed FY27 budget, if you refer back to TO-26-2, which was the wage and salary classification that you put forward for our Assistant Clerk. Okay, that failed, correct?" Chair Soto agreed. Clr. Simard continued, "On the proposed 2027 budget, I notice there's a \$12,000 bump in the Assistant Clerk's salary. Who prepared that?" Chair Soto said, "The CAFO requested a budget from me, and I sent it back to the CAFO." Clr. Simard said, "And did you propose a \$12,000 bump in the Assistant Clerk?" Chair Soto said, "I did not." Clr.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Simard said, "Who did?" Chair Soto said, "And that's not on the agenda right now. Are we discussing that?" Clr. Simard said, "It relates to circumventing." Vice Chair DiZoglio said, "Because, Madam, this is my first time in this position, but if that's the case, shouldn't it be going through the Vice Chair, speaking back and forth, so we can keep cordial?" Clr. Simard said, "Thank you. So, we have a 10-page floor argument that we got tonight that we can't even read prior to this discussion. So, we should have tabled this in the first place. We should speak about it down the road. But I feel you circumvented our vote when that classification failed. And then you add \$12,000. It was cut by \$2,000. So that's a \$10,000 raise. That's what it looks like to me. But it seems like it's tit for tat and it's personal and it's got to stop. We've got to move forward, and we've got to just focus on what's important, Madam Chair. That's my opinion, and quite frankly, I'm getting tired of this petty BS." Chair Soto said, "The fact that I put something under Request of Councilors to the Mayor, Councilor Simard. Yes. By the way, you received a 50-page packet right at the meeting from the Solicitor. And you have not had the opportunity to read that as well. Those are e-mails back and forth from his office and myself, because since before it happened, I've been in communication. So, yes, please dabble into that and then look at the research I did. But at the end of the day, if this appointment stands, we are telling any appointed board that they can basically appoint their own department head by bypassing this body. That is the message that that sends. Because that law cites Assistant City Assessor, not the Assessor. And changing a job description and changing the title does not amend a municipal code and does not amend our City Charter. So, I don't know if you guys want to be sitting ducks, but I don't. And so, what I am telling you, what this body should be looking at and discussing is passing a resolution to declare that that position should be null and void because it's contrary to our City Charter, Section 3-3. And we demand the administration submit a proper nominee to this Council. That's what I feel should happen. Now, this is me speaking because I feel that, yes, we were circumvented as the body. That is accurate. And this is not the first time it's happened on this floor. It's happened previously. And then I also want to say the budget is around the corner. And if that doesn't happen, this body can exercise its duty there. That's all I'm going to say. But at this point, Councilor Simard, for you to sit there and say that this is personal and about the Mayor and about this and that. If you want to be a sitting duck, you may be a sitting duck. But when I see that process and procedure are not being followed, here on this body or in this building, I will speak up about it. And I'm sorry if that bothers anybody here. Thank you, Mr. Chair." Mayor Beauregard said, "If I may briefly respond. I didn't write the state statute. I didn't write the Charter. I didn't write the municipal code. As a Mayor, I have to operate within those frameworks, but I didn't create them. Ultimately, it is the Legislative Branch of government that has the ability, technically, to change the rules if you don't like them. I can't do that. I can only operate within them as they exist. And so, you know, I think that there's an effort to try to portray me as shady, trying to portray me perhaps as underhanded, trying to make a mockery of checks and balances. However, I strongly dispute any such insinuations. Thank you." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, "Mr. Mayor, you know how I feel. I went to the meeting. I'm not going to put off here. I did that in a meeting that wasn't on TV. I didn't do it to grandstand. I made my point there. We just need to fix it. That's all. If that's what this body chooses to do is to fix how we appoint that person, then we just need to fix that, I believe. And that's our prerogative. I made all my points at that meeting. You thought it was personal.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

It's not. I just think it goes against our Charter. That's how I feel. And I know that the Solicitor does it. I made my point, and I'll stick to that. But we just have to legislatively fix the problem if we think it's a problem. So that's all. Thank you." Chair Soto recognized Solicitor O'Neill, "So, I will say I understand why everyone feels the way that they do. And I was asked by the Mayor to look at this issue after the last vote. In my opinion, it doesn't violate the Charter. And I agree that there's a disconnect between the Municipal Code and the Charter. And as the Mayor said, this is not unusual as we go through. This is why we have the Charter Commission going through, getting ready to send you an updated Charter version. Perfect place to make those changes if you want to make those changes. Right now, there's no question that the municipal code in Section 3.3 designates the Board Chair as the Department Head. The Chair points out that maybe in years past, that hasn't been how it's been operating, that the person in the position was not a member of the board that was running the department. I can't speak to that. I wasn't here. But there's been a disconnect as to how that works. In many cities and towns around the Commonwealth, the three-member board of assessors is two part-time members and a full-time member. And the full-time member who is designated as the Chair of the Board of Assessors is the full-time person that works for the town. And in fact, in the memo that I sent you, you can read all those things, and I'm happy to discuss it with everybody. In years past, that job description for Suzanne Doherty, for the other person who was in the role before her, said that they were a member of the board. But they were never a member of the board, which means they weren't the department head, according to the ordinance, and they weren't the Assistant Department Head. If that's true, they didn't have to come before this body. So, the disconnect happened somewhere in the past where a Mayor or Town Manager --- they may have even happened before the city transitioned, somebody decided they were going to split these duties, and we had this three-member board and then separate employees that were appointed in a different way. The bottom line is you, as a body with the Mayor can fix it. You can change the ordinance. You can change the Charter. You can file a reorganization plan if you don't like the way that it works. Unfortunately, you have to work together to make that happen, and I suggest you do that. I can only call it the way I see it, and I was asked by the Mayor, and I just want to address the Chair's comments. I work for the entire city, all city officials in the city." Chair Soto said, "For the institution, correct." Solicitor O'Neill continued, "And so when Councilor Santos asked me a question or asked me for a memo, Councilor Santos gets a confidential memo, and if it's some issue of general concern, I would ask Councilor Santos, would you like me to share this memo with the rest of the Council? And she either says yes or no. If she says no, then I'm not going to share her memo because I have a duty to her and answer her question. Same with you, Madam Chair. Same with the Mayor. The Mayor and I discussed this. I left it to the Mayor to share that memo or not share it. Up to him to do so. I did have discussions briefly, obviously, with you, Madam Chair, and with Mr. Marsan, but not to the level of that memo, clearly. And so, but I just want to make it clear, like, I'm not sharing your confidences or your confidence, and I take great pains to separate that when I can." Chair Soto said, "In that conversation, you also stated, Mr. Solicitor, that regardless of what the Mayor decided to do, that person would still have to come in front of us for appointment. And today you're saying that's not accurate." Solicitor O'Neill said, "No, those were your words. That was a temporary appointment, and the temporary appointment is temporary for 90 days and has to be reappointed, but

it's a limited appointment. At the end of that appointment, it would be done." Vice Chair DiZoglio said, "I'm sorry. I just feel like we're just going back and forth. And can we just, again, if you have comments, let's go through the proper procedure of going through me instead of going back and forth, because going back and forth over this matter is just, it just seems like we're fighting. So, I'm sorry. I just feel like we're just not going anywhere." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Soto, "Madam Chair to the Mayor: I just feel that this is not personal. We just need to focus on solutions. It's a matter that it was not done properly. I read the Charter, and I even have samples of how previous Assessors have been appointed in the past for the last 20 years; I printed it out, so I did my homework on it. And this is not a personal attack. There's nothing in that matter. We just need to focus on what the problem is, and let's get the solution. Because at the end of the day, we need to focus on what is the best for our city, and that's what we're here for. That's what we got elected for, to work together as a team and to make sure that our city moves forward. So, this is not personal at all. I don't feel it's personal from Sharon or anyone else that has spoken about this matter. It's just let's focus on the solution." Chair Soto recognized Clr. MacLaren, "To be frank with you all, I think everybody's made their opinion very clear. There's a lot of grandstanding going on, and I think that our constituents are sick of it. Honestly, I can see both sides. I know where I stand. I know now where pretty much everyone who sits here stands. If someone wants to change it, it's very clear. The Mayor has made it very clear what the law says. The Solicitor has made it very clear what the law says. And if you don't like it, you have the power to put forth a resolution to change it. So do that. But I think we're wasting our constituents' time sitting here talking about something when we all know where we stand and the steps that we are allowed to take to change it if we don't like it. So, let's do that instead of sitting here and bickering and grandstanding. Please. Thank you." Chair Soto said, "We're going to move on, but I also want to address that. If you need to share your opinions, don't feel that you're grandstanding. Please share your genuine opinions on this floor. That is what you've been elected to do."

- **Request that the Mayor and City Solicitor provide an update regarding the Rail Trail Depot overhangs, including the status of potential acquisition or transfer of ownership to the City, available legal options, and whether grant opportunities may be pursued to preserve and repair these historic structures for the benefit of the community (Req. of Clr. Valley)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "I don't have an update regarding the rail trail, and I don't know if the solicitor has anything to add to that at this point.
- **Request that the Mayor provide an update regarding the anticipated completion date for the Route 110 sidewalk-bike lane project (Req. of Clr. Valley)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "Regarding the Route 110 project, I reached out to Dan Fielding. He's our Field Rep. for MassDOT asking about any updates regarding expected timetable for completion. I haven't heard back from him but probably going to keep it on the agenda. I'll try to get a hold of him this week to firm up what they're thinking, unless you have more information." Clr. Valley said, "Through you, Madam Chair. Is that a bike lane or a sidewalk? Do you know? Because in Dracut on Route 110, it's a sidewalk." Mayor Beauregard said, "So originally, well, the project is starting in Lowell, making its way through Dracut, eastbound through Methuen. And this came up a couple of years back when I was on the Council. I heard that they were going to be having this bike lane on Route 110. And I reached out to Gus Bickford, who works for MassDOT. And my

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

question was, it's a heavy trucking route, and cars use it as a racetrack. It doesn't seem like a very safe place for a bike lane. So, in terms of what their exact plans are for that, it's completely at the state level in terms of planning and implementation. But once I hear back from Dan, I'll be sure to fill you in, Councilor." Clr. Valley said, "So you don't know if it is a bike lane or a sidewalk?" Mayor Beauregard said, "That was part of the original plan ---It was a bike lane. In terms of whether they made any modifications on the basis of the feedback they've received, perhaps. But I need to confirm that." Clr. Valley thanked Mayor Beauregard.

- **Request for clarification from the City Solicitor regarding liability concerns related to meetings or events being held inside the Searles Estate (Req. of Clr. Valley)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "There's a request on here for information from the Solicitor about holding events inside the Searles Estate. I'll defer to him on that."
- **Request for the Report done by the State on the Oakland Avenue Bridge (Req. of Clr. Santos)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "The report for the Oakland Avenue Bridge was provided to Clr. Santos. And, of course, we have the contract on tonight's agenda to actually follow through with the fix and reopening it. Ditto for the feasibility study."
- **Update on the feasibility study for the public safety buildings and DPW – (Req. of Clr. Santos)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "We have a contract with Weston and Sampson on the agenda. We had contracted with them to conduct a feasibility study years ago. This was during the Jajuga administration. We conducted a feasibility study for a new public works facility, and this new contract will allow us to work with them to expand their scope of service to include a feasibility study pertaining to new police and fire facilities, which we all know are badly needed."
- **Parks Audit RFP status update – (Req. of Councilor Drew)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "Mayor Beauregard said, "Regarding the parks and buildings audit RFP, now that we've submitted the budget to the Council, there may be some refinements that we need to make once the Council makes additional tweaks to it. But that is resulting in a little bit of a clearing up of the calendar in terms of not spending 80 hours a week getting ready for budget submissions. So, we're at a point where we're following up with Lori Antonacci and the Procurement Office so we can get these out finally. Long overdue."
- **Buildings Audit RFP Status update - (Req. of Councilor Drew) -** Mayor Beauregard said, "Regarding the parks and buildings audit RFP, now that we've submitted the budget to the Council, there may be some refinements that we need to make once the Council makes additional tweaks to it. But that is resulting in a little bit of a clearing up of the calendar in terms of not spending 80 hours a week getting ready for budget submissions. So, we're at a point where we're following up with Lori Antonacci and the Procurement Office so we can get these out finally. Long overdue."
- **Pickleball Court Update Regarding the Public's Petition (Req. of Clr. MacLaren)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "Regarding the Pickleball Court petition update request from Councilwoman MacLaren, that's not something that I have really any involvement with. I don't know if the Solicitor wants to share additional thoughts there."
- **Are there any plans to pave Forest Street in FY'26/FY'27 (Request of Clr. MacLaren)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "Regarding the paving of Forest Street, it is on the draft list for this year, finally. There are areas of Forest Street on which when I drive down the road, it's almost like driving along the surface of the moon. And so we have

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

some long overdue improvements in the works on Forest Street and other roads across the city.”

11. Public Service:

Grants: None

Licenses: None

Contract(s):

C-26-87 – Apex Companies, LLC (APEX) 18 Commerce Way, Suite 2000, Woburn, MA 01801 – Engineering services for Milk Street Traffic Calming Project, through the Methuen Department of Public Works - **\$48,600.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Simard, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-88 – Weston & Sampson CMR, Inc., 55 Walkers Brook Drive, Suite 100, Reading, MA 01867 – Engineering Services for Expanded Feasibility Studies of Public Works, Police and Fire Facilities - **\$75,750.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. Drew – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, “Thank you, Madam Chair. So, this is for you to the Mayor. This is regarding Councilor Santos's question about the possible spot for the next public safety building?” Mayor Beauregard said, “So, this has been something that has been ongoing for some time. The issue has been that the current scope of the contract with Weston and Sampson pertains only to a new DPW facility. This certainly maintains that aspect of the conversation here. However, it simply is an expansion of scope to include looking out for locations for Police, Fire. There's a whole host of possible options that they'll be looking at. But nevertheless, this represents a tangible next step forward so that we can proceed with the investments we need to make.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Santos, “I have a question about the feasibility test that was done for DPW. Here it is listed that the feasibility test that is planning to be done is also, is going to be done in the DPW, Police Department and Fire Department. It was my understanding that it was already done --- the DPW feasibility study was already paid for. So, I would like to know if this is going to be a new one from, starting from the ground or are we going to start from the one that we already have in place, which I already have requested several times to get a copy of the feasibility test that was done previously. And it was never provided to me.” Mayor Beauregard said, “Thank you, Councilor. So, I was copied on the email when that was provided. And I'll forward it to you again from the DPW folks. But what this is, is simply an expansion of scope. So, we already have this existing agreement in place with Weston and Sampson relative to DPW. They've done some initial work, I believe, during the Jujuga Administration. And now what this does is rather than starting from scratch with a completely new vendor who is yet to work with the city, we're simply taking that existing agreement, expanding it, and now it's going to take into consideration Police and Fire as well.” Clr. Santos said, “So, this is to start all over again? So, what about the one that was already done?” Mayor Beauregard said, “No, so they already done a report initially on prospective DPW sites. This is simply an expansion and continuation, effectively, of their existing work. Nothing would start from scratch. In fact, it would simply be an expanded, look at all options, but now taking into consideration Police and Fire as well as DPW.” Clr. Santos said, “So, it will be a continuation of the work that it was already done?” Mayor Beauregard agreed. – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

C-26-89 – NEL Corporation, 3 Ajootian Way, Building B, P.O. Box 929, Middleton, MA 01949 – DCAMM Waiver #5291: for the emergency repair to the Oakland Avenue Bridge through the Department of Public Works. - **\$57,503.34 - Motion to approve by Clr. Marsan, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Santos, “Madam Chair to the Mayor. So, do we have a time frame of when it's going to start and when it's going to be done because this bridge has been closed already for months. And I have a lot of constituents calling me, asking me about it. So, I want to have an answer for the next time someone calls me.” Mayor Beauregard said, “So, thank you for the question, Councilor. This is something that we've been going back and forth with the State about. We needed to receive, it's called a DCAM waiver, so that we could go ahead with simply obtaining three quotes. We received that. We've identified the funding source through the CIP. And at this point, once the Council approves the contract, this is the last step bureaucratically needed before work can commence. So once, hopefully, we have a favorable vote on the contract, we'll be able to proceed with the work and get it done as soon as possible. It has been a while. I'm sensitive to that. And, you know, in terms of the longer-term picture, this is on the State's list for total replacement. However, as with anything, there's no guarantee about when the State is going to be able to have the capacity and the financial resources to be able to conduct that work. So, we're here now with a closed bridge. We need to get it open. It needs to be safe. And so, this work will allow us to do that, at this point now, in the process, expeditiously.” Clr. Santos said, “So you just said that we are getting the resources from the State?” Mayor Beauregard said, “So, we're in the process of getting some assistance from the delegation. However, we have the funds available now, and we need to get moving on the project, rather than waiting for additional funding from the State. Once it does arrive, then we'll be able to have that taken in. But nevertheless, we need to simply get the project done.” Clr. Santos said, “Because I wanted some clarification on where the funds were coming, because I read that it was budgeted.” Mayor Beauregard said, “So we are able to absorb the cost of the contract using financial resources that we have now.” Chair Soto recognized CAFO Duprey, “I just want to make note of two things. One is that it is being funded by the Capital Improvement Plan. We have funds in 2025 CIP to cover the project. But also, the contract stipulates the final completion date is by the end of June. So, it says that right in the language of the contract.” Mayor Beauregard said, “So not a correction, Madam Chair. But nevertheless, added color for that statement. So of course, that's the anticipated date. However, again, with any projects like this, I would rather under-promise and over-deliver. Thank you, Councilor.” – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-90 – Woodard & Curran, 138 River Road, Suite 212, Andover, MA 01810 – Engineering services for Phase I-A – Arlington Neighborhood Streetscape Improvement – Department of Public Works - **\$235,500.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, “Through you, Madam Chair, to the Mayor. So, I see that there will be sidewalk improvements in the Arlington Neighborhood. The question I have is, are they going to be cement or hardtop?” Mayor Beauregard said, “I know this is an issue of deep concern to you, Councilor. Perhaps I can invite Director Bower to provide a little more detail regarding the actual materials. I know this is a serious concern.” DPW Director Patrick Bower said, “So, the cost to do completely concrete sidewalks would be exorbitant, so we have to go with the asphalt. We will, depending on what we get for prices, we'll have concrete at the intersections. So, the handicap ramps will be concrete, which is typically something we do. We prefer to go concrete. Largely, we salt

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

heavily, particularly in that neighborhood. And you could lose an entire brand-new sidewalk in one winter by placing salt on it. So really, the decision to go with bituminous concrete with asphalt is based on finances.” Clr. DiZoglio said, “Through you, Madam Chair, to me, I understand that. But there's other cities that I know that have cement sidewalks. They plow, they salt, and it seems like it doesn't take that much. And I'm not a professional when it comes to how salt hits cement. But again, many of my residents or constituents will say it looks cheap. And when you have the handicapped ramp and then the hot top, you can look at Merrimack Street. And they did that, I think, in the last couple of years, and it's already breaking apart.” DPW Director Bower said, “So it's very easy for us to just add concrete sidewalks as a bid alternate. So, the contractor will bid on asphalt sidewalks, and we'll get a number. And then we'll ask for concrete sidewalks. We'll get a number, and we can make up our minds then. So, what you're voting on right now is the design work, and to take it through permitting. So, we will – I'm sorry, through bidding. So, I will instruct the consultant, if this passes tonight, to add a bid alternate for concrete sidewalks.” Clr. DiZoglio thanked Director Bower. – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-91 – Hilltown Demolition, LLC, 80 Middle Road, Clarksburg, MS, 02147 – Installation of a cement/concrete slab at Veteran’s Memorial Park for the base of an outdoor Fitness Court, through the DPW-Recreation Department - **\$34,900.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, “I just want to say, after living here for 27 years, I think this is the best thing that can be brought to our city. So I want to say thank you, because growing up in the East End and the veterans, having that broken skate park rink for God knows how long, the fact that we're doing something over there now, bringing in a fitness court and all this other stuff, that's going to be great for the city of Methuen. And so, I just want to say thank you to everybody.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, “Thank you. So, we don't have a map of where it's going, but I did speak to the Recreation Director. Hopefully we can move the pad enough, because it's not that huge in relation to the size of the hockey rink that was there, so in case we need to incorporate something else in the area. So, we don't have a map of it, but not that we have to have that typically, but I'm sure it exists. Hopefully we can move it and keep it to one side, so if we want to add something. I know this has been in the works for a long time. All the equipment's been bought already, so we've just been waiting on the pad. So that's what we're loading on. Thank you.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, “Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to allude to Councilor Marzan, I did go out to Veterans Park with Steve, and we did look at that, and he is pushing it as far up, as close as we can forward, to leave that other section that will allow another pad of some other point. I know there's talk of a skate park or maybe some other type of recreational activity needed to go there. So, he is very well aware of it, and that's his plan. – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-92 – E.J. Paving Company, Inc., 101 Lindberg Avenue, Methuen, MA 01844 – Superpave Surface Course 9.5; Superpave BSE Course 19; HMA for Patching; Hot Mix Asphalt Berm Type-A; Hot Mix Asphalt Curb funded through Chapter 90 for the City’s Paving season FY’2026 through the Methuen DPW - **\$1,197,448.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Valley, “Madam Chair. Yes. Could Director Bower or Deputy Felix, please come to the podium?” Assistant DPW Director Garcia said, “Good evening.” Clr. Valley said, “How many miles of roadway will this funding be expected to cover?” Assistant DPW Director Garcia said, “So for this contract, this

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

is for the full debt reclamation. So, what you have right now is just the paving of it. There are some other contracts that are not in front of you because we're still waiting for the signatures from the contractor. But the other contracts are for the reclamation itself. And there's another contract for the frames and covers. So, this would be around 3.5 miles of roadway. But this is for four inches --- you have two and a half inches for the base and then another inch and a half for the top course. And then there's a little bit of fluff within the quantities. We have another contract that is not in front of you, which is the milling of certain locations throughout the city where we have water main breaks, where we have had breaks, those are patched right now. But what we want to do is curb to curb restoration. So hopefully by next month we have the contract in front of you for the milling. We'll mill those locations. And then we have EJ paving. If it is approved, they'll be placing an inch and a half where it was milled." Clr. Valley said, "And do you have the list of roads for this one?" Assistant DPW Director Garcia said, "Yes. If you don't have it, then I could provide it. I have the list for the full depth." Clr. Valley said, "I appreciate that. I have one more question for you. I understand that DPW went out to bid for reclamation work, and I don't see that contract in front of this body tonight. What happened with that?" Assistant DPW Director Garcia said, "So, for that contract, we're just waiting for their signatures. So, once they're signed, and then it will go around, and then it will be in front of you for the reclamation. The reason why we went out to bid this way is because full depth reclamation is super expensive. So, if we put everything together, then what the contractors tend to do is that they have subcontractors. So, they will put, you know, another 10% on top of it because they're managing the project. So, what we do is separate certain tasks. We have to manage it, but it will save the city a lot of money." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Just one more question. This is just roads, right? There are no sidewalks?" Assistant DPW Director Garcia said, "This is roads and curb. So, there are locations where the curbing may not be the best. So, it will be a great opportunity to also replace the asphalt curbing on particular streets." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, "One more, Felix. So, the patching portion is after you put the curbs in, like sidewalks and stuff, the certain areas where you have to patch, where you're not doing full reclamation?" Assistant DPW Director Garcia said, "Yes. So, there are locations with the water main breaks. It's just patch. So, we just wanted it to be a smooth transition. We don't want the patchwork to be there anymore. So, we're going to have the trim milling, they're always better, go and mill. And then EJ paving, once it's milled, once the structures are adjusted, they will come in and pave. And there's some other things we could do, too. There are also locations throughout the city where we have a street that is decent, but there's some spots that it's just very bumpy. So those are some other areas, too, where we could have the contractor mill and then EJ paving pave afterwards." – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-93 – DCAMM Waiver No. 5289 Granted on 5-6-2026 for the Emergency Purchase & Replacement of Bulk Chemical Tanks (7) as well as the Pipes/Valves/Fittings & Transfer Pumps in between the Bulk Tanks & Day Tanks at the Water Treatment Plant, a Division of the DPW - **\$897,677.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "It seems like since I've been in office, there's been just repairs after repairs for the water treatment plant. Is there any grant funding that we've been asking the state or earmarks or any of that sort to help us instead of pulling money out of the General Fund? Because it seems like this is a lot of work that has probably been put off for so long." Mayor Beauregard said, "There is a significant amount of deferred maintenance that we're obviously in the process of trying to catch up on. This is not coming out of the operating

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

budget. It is coming out of the CIP. But nevertheless, you know, I think this is certainly something that perhaps at a future time, you know, when we're talking with (US) Representative Trahan and others about possible funding opportunities from other aspects of the government, we could certainly explore that. At this point, my focus in any conversations with Congresswoman Trahan, Senator Warren, Senator Markey, etc., has been on trying to get funding from the feds for the additional phases of the Arlington Neighborhood Project. It's really been a focus given the fact that there are so many infrastructure needs in that neighborhood that we need to get after once Phase 1, which is funded through ARPA, is complete. So that's really been the major focus in terms of federal help. However, this is something that we could certainly keep in the mix in those conversations. There's a lot of work to be done down there." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Thank you. Just less of a question, more of a point. My professional experience, these types of valves in these systems are constantly being utilized as much as they are, constantly seeing turnover and fixing needed. So, I believe this is a pretty fair contract from what I typically see in my day-to-day." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, "So, we all know the plant is old. It's fallen apart. We haven't done the maintenance to it. The concrete is wearing out. It's just everything is new at once. It's just falling apart, and we need to keep it going every day. It's our water supply, so we have no choice, and we have to do this. But it's just old. So, until we make a huge capital improvement to fix, you know, we're fixing gates. We're fixing many, many things along the way here because we have to just to keep it going." Mayor Beauregard said, "I couldn't agree more. I want to use this as an opportunity to share a preview of something that we're going to have to look at addressing, and that is the issue of water and sewer rates. We have a habit in the city of Methuen, and I'm sharing this because it's in the same context, I think, of addressing, you know, various needs relative to the water and sewer system in our city. So, we have a bad habit in Methuen of going an extended period of time without making any adjustments to those rates. And so as costs increase and the bills pile up and the capital needs pile up and all these different things that need investment continue to accumulate, the issue is that unless we make more frequent adjustments to those rates, we're simply not going to be able to keep up with ensuring that we're providing our residents with the safest possible infrastructure when it comes to water. And so that's something that we are going to be bringing before the Council in the coming weeks, especially as we are dealing with revenue for the budget. It's something that we just must keep up with, or else we risk falling behind in an area where we don't want to fall behind and can't afford to. Thank you." – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

12. Other Officers and Committee Reports – Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "Thank you. Last week Public Safety met. We had some good news regarding the rail trail. (DPW Director) Pat Bower and myself and Madam Chair Soto went on with Conservation, and they approved the clearing of the bird sanctuary behind the Public Safety building. I'm just trying to get together with Pat. I know he's been dealing with a lot of crazy for the last couple of weeks, so I will follow up with him. So that will be great access for people to go down there to that part of the bird sanctuary. Also, the most important thing is Chief McNamara will now have access to the Rail Trail from the Police Department, which is a big boost instead of going up and around the two access points that they have. Now they can get their golf carts, four-wheelers, to actually go onto the Rail Trail from the side, especially with all these possible crimes that could be taking place down there or those dirt bikes that use that as an access point. They could go and cut them off through the bird sanctuary now. I've also asked for volunteers. Volunteers are more than happy to go down there as well. Chief McNamara and myself, I don't want to speak

on behalf of him, but he said he's willing to go down there with me to start cutting up stuff and hopefully get that cleared out for everybody to start using. Another thing we went over is Madam Chair, SOTA has a utility with the companies that are coming in and tearing up our roads. We're hoping to get that done. It was Councilor Soto that had another policy that she's working on that. We're working with Chief McNamara regarding handicap parking in the city. So, we're hopefully going to bring that to the table soon. I've also got in contact with Salem Mass Electric guy that did all the lantern lighting down there, so he's happy to work with us. He gave me in contact with their contract to bring lantern lighting down to the Rail Trail as well, and I heard they did an estimate with Natural Grid and lighting. I just haven't had to talk to Pat yet. Hopefully we can have everything to the City Council soon. I know budgets are tight, but maybe we can look for grants for next year as well. And also, we discussed the dirt bikes with Chief McNamara regarding gas stations, which we'll be talking soon about later in the agenda. That's all for Public Safety."

13. Unfinished Business

Resolutions:

TR-25-75 A Resolution Approving the Request of JR Builders, Inc. for the City to Approve the Lay Out of Cooper Lane for the Purposes of Accepting Cooper Lane as a Public Way (Sponsored by JR Builders, Inc., Owner and Developer) (*Request of Clr. Marsan to remove from the table*) - **Motion to remove from the table by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to accept by Santos, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, "I put this on here. I'm hoping to get Cooper Lane approved. It's in our district. It seems like we've been in front of us. They've been in front of us five or six times, and I know there's a process we're using now. I just don't want the builder to walk away because his bond gets so little, and then we have another unaccepted way in our city. Not that he's threatening that. I'm not saying that. I don't know him that well. I just want to get it done. I've had correspondence and spoken with the people there that live on Cooper (Lane). They have an HOA that takes care of some of the land that's there. So, they just want to get their road approved. I know there's costs that go along with it, but I'd like to just see us get it approved, and then the Community Development Board will finish working out with the bond issues that they have. Thank you." Chair Soto recognized Solicitor O'Neill, "So, I just have an update, and I would defer to Conservation and to the DPW, but I don't believe this is ready for acceptance yet. There is a swale that goes through people's backyards that has not been appropriately maintained, and we have worked with the developer and the Homeowners Association to ask them to make sure that that is cleared and cleaned out, and that that is taken care of before we accept the road. We generally don't accept a road that isn't in tip-top condition, because as soon as we accept it, we're going to have to maintain those things. That was supposed to be scheduled to be done. I don't know if it's been done or not, but the Conservation agent was following up with both the developer and the Homeowners Association. There was some confusion as to who was responsible for that, because there's been, I guess, some disputes between the two of them. And then there's also an issue of the current bond. So, when the project was originally approved, it was granted relief in the form of only being required to put a sidewalk on one side of the road, which is pretty standard. But when you do that, you're required to make a concomitant donation to the sidewalk fund to fund a city sidewalk in another place. And so, he has not done that yet. There is an amount that's being requested. I think it's just the bond amount. Planning and Conservation and DPW are following that. I will just tell you that it has nothing to do with him.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

And Councilor Marsan and I have discussed this. As we go forward, I think we want to revisit what we're asking people to do, because the amount of money is so low, you can't really build much of a sidewalk at all with it. But that has not been made yet either. So, I would want you to see both of those things completed before you accept the road, but certainly at your discretion." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Simard, "Thank you, Madam Chair. I know JR Builders is a very reputable developer, and I'm sure they'll be in compliance with these issues. But I'd be a no at this point unless we table it and then get an opinion from our Solicitor down the road and Conservation to make sure these things are fixed so there's no cost to the city once we approve it. Thank you." - **Motion to REMAIN ON THE TABLE by Clr. Simard, seconded by Clr. Valley – UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – 6 yes, 2 no (Clr. Marsan & Clr. Santos) 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

~~TR-26-32 – A Resolution Accepting Sections 21 to 23 of Chapter 32B of the Massachusetts General Laws for the Purpose of Evaluating Health Insurance Options (Req. of Mayor Beauregard) (remove from the table)~~ **Mayor Beauregard removed this item from the agenda**

TR-26-49 A Resolution Authorizing the City of Methuen to Participate in the Massachusetts Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE Massachusetts) (*Requested by Mayor Beauregard and Director Wilson*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

Ordinance(s):

TO-26-11 An Ordinance Requiring Pest Control for Demolition, Site Clearing, and Commercial Waste Activities (*Sponsored by Councilor Ryan DiZoglio*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

~~**TO-26-13** An Ordinance Amending the Methuen Municipal Code, Section 4-1 (J) Nepotism (Req. of Chair Soto) (remove from the table) (as amended)~~ **Chair Soto removed this item from the agenda – (will reappear on the June 8, 2026 Regular Meeting agenda.)**

12. New Business:

Resolutions:

TR-26-50 - A Resolution Requesting a Home Rule Petition Regarding the Reinstatement of Positions in a Departmental Unit According to Seniority in the City of Methuen (*Sponsored by Chair Soto, Councilor DiZoglio, Clr. Valley and Mayor Beauregard*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. Valley, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto invited Chief McNamara to the podium, "Good evening again, Councilors. We brought this home rule petition up four years ago and it made its way to the State Senate and kind of died on the vine. We brought it up again two years ago. Representative Hamilton was juggling three or four of our requested home rule petitions. I think he got three of them across the finish line and this one died on the vine again. So, we're back a third time trying to get this accomplished. This would address a catastrophic type of situation where God forbid, we had to demote superior officers. And if we had to demote superior officers, I think you'll find Civil Service rules as being counterintuitive in that strangely if you have to do demotions, they're done by time on the job,

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

not time in rank. So, you might have a situation, for example, where you just promoted a Lieutenant tonight, right? I could have a Lieutenant who was in that role for ten years and a Lieutenant who was just promoted tonight. And tomorrow if we were doing demotions, you would think, of course, that the junior Lieutenant would be demoted. But that's not how Civil Service works. Civil Service accomplishes that by going by time on the job, not time in rank. So, if the Lieutenant who was promoted tonight had more time on the job overall than the lieutenant with ten years in rank, the demotions would be done in that way. And reinstatements are done in the same manner. So, by way of this home rule petition, you're saying that we want to protect senior officers by time in rank, not by time on the job. There's been a number of cities and towns that have done this in the past several years. Ideally you do it when times are really good so it's not all that controversial. I do know that the Superiors Union is here and they're prepared to answer any questions that you have. They're in favor of this proposal as well. They think that the obvious right thing to do is protect their senior officers over the junior officers in each rank. I want to say it looks like, thanks to Mayor Beauregard and all of his efforts, we're obviously going through a very, very tough time with respect to this budget and emotions are running high and I'm guilty of that more than anyone in terms of how I've had to deal with this the last few weeks. I want to thank Mayor Beauregard because through monumental effort, we've kind of shipped it around the deck chairs and I think we're at a place where that's not going to be necessary this year. I hope, pray that it's not. I know that we still have to navigate the next couple nights but I'm hopeful that we won't have to address this this year in terms of how to handle demotions and reinstatements by way of Civil Service law. But it's still something that structurally we should fix now so that God forbid if we ever get to this situation, we at least do it the right way.” Chief McNamara then requested an EPA to be attached; however, it couldn't be because it wasn't on the agenda. Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, “I want a clarification Madam Chair. Does this need six yes votes because it's a change to the Charter? Or is this just a simple majority?” Solicitor O'Neill said, “Just the standard approval. It has to be signed by the Mayor for it to go anywhere.” Chair Soto said, “Will the Mayor be signing this?” Mayor Beauregard said, “Yes.” – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-51 - A Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of a \$15,200 Fiscal Year 2026 Massachusetts Department of Fire Services SAFE and Senior SAFE Grant (*EPA Requested*) (*Requested by Mayor Beauregard and Chief Toto*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, “Thank you Madam Chair. There's an EPA request because we have some concerns about putting the money to work in time for a specific deadline. And I think this summer, so the goal is to try to get this taken care of tonight. Thank you.” – **UPON VOTE - unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Marsan, seconded by Clr. Drew – UPON VOTE - unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

Ordinances:

TO-26-14 – An Ordinance Adding Chapter 9, Section 9-92D, “Self-Service Gas Stations”, to the Municipal Code of the City of Methuen – (*Requested by Clr. Ryan DiZoglio and Chief Scott McNamara*) (*EPA requested*) – **Motion to approve by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, “I was approached by Linda Soucy to talk about this. And I brought Chief McNamara on board. And we had this on our agenda for CC

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Public Safety's (agenda). Until the incident occurred on Pleasant Valley Street. I think it was last Saturday or two weeks ago from Saturday. I was actually behind the motorcycle that crashed. In front of my student's Aunt's house. So, this is why. It's a little bit personal for me right now because they were there in the front yard before the guy decided to do a wheelie. And basically, hit his uncle's car and flipped and ran into someone's yard. These bikes have been wreaking havoc in our City and in the State for at least the last 2 years. Before I say my other concerns, I would like Chief McNamara to come up here to explain the ordinance. And then we could discuss it." Chief McNamara approached the podium and said, "Good evening again. Council. So, this latest ordinance was championed by Councilor DiZoglio. The City of Lawrence recently passed a similar ordinance. The one about gasoline and limiting gasoline for off-road vehicles, off-highway vehicles as they're called. So, we obviously have a major problem. But it's not limited to the City of Methuen. It's not limited to the Merrimack Valley. Frankly this is a nationwide problem with these aggressive drivers. And it's a difficult thing for local law enforcement to deal with. But the way we deal with it is by working with our partners in local and state government. We have participated in a number of operations with the State Police and their air wing, and the city of Lawrence, Lowell, Dracut, North Andover and Andover and others. And because these groups, as we all know, meet at a certain location. And they just make their way around the Merrimack Valley and beyond. And it's difficult because most Departments, including our own, have restrictive pursuit policies. Because the most important thing in the world to us is not endangering the motoring public. So, we're limited to when we pursue and when we don't. And, in the city, we only pursue vehicles when there's a violent crime involving the use of force or the use or possession of a firearm in an unlawful manner. Those are the two triggers for us to begin a pursuit. And if we begin a pursuit, then we manage the pursuit. Managing a number of other variables like traffic congestion, time of day and speed, those sorts of things. These are difficult things to do. And I think that the way out is continuing to work with our partners. But also, the Mayor and I are very much interested in technology that can help pave the way. Over the last several years, we've been expanding Mayor Beauregard's public camera system. Every month, we go over our data. We look at how technology helps us. And time and time again, we're finding the public cameras are often the only lead that we have that allows us to close a crime. We're about to implement our license plate reader program which we think is going to be instrumental in helping solve some of these issues. And finally, we're looking at a drone program. And, I think we would already, probably have that technology here in the city if not for a federal regulation that limits the use of the current technology that's available. Now we're looking for a comparable, American made model. We think that drone technology is kind of like the way of the future in policing and the drones that are out there now are capable of locking on a target and follow it and they could. Unlike in the past, we'd have a police officer in the field with the joystick in the video screen monitoring and having a line-of-sight requirement. Now we can launch drones here in Methuen. But across the country, drones are allowed to be launched from behind a computer. They are that safe. You implement radar systems. I think that's going to make a big difference when we get that technology here in the city. We're in close contact with a number of vendors.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

We're hoping that we're one of the first to implement it. Because we think it'll make a meaningful difference. Back to your ordinance, Councilor, I think the idea is to go back to the drawing board a little. And see how we can bulk it up. I know that there's been some kind of pushback. It seems like a lot of pressure to kind of put on the gas station owners themselves. So, if we're going to do that, maybe we should do some things in addition to that. There's a couple of cities and towns out there that have instituted their own local ordinances that allow for significant fines for those people who are captured driving in an aggressive manner with these vehicles, so we'd be looking at significant fines, hopefully seizure of the vehicle itself until the fine is paid. I think that would be a wonderful first step in terms of mitigating this situation we're experiencing." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Santos, "Thank you. Madam Chair. I feel that public safety should be our priority and remains to be our priority instead of putting responsibility on our Gas Stations and their employees. We should implement stronger measures in this matter, so I don't agree with the resolution. I appreciate what you're trying to do but I think it needs to be stricter. We need to start impounding these vehicles and motorcycles and finding the people who are operating them, without having insurance or being registered. I think this needs to be reworked for the betterment of our city. Thank you." Chief McNamara said, "I agree with all those points. And I want to say again. Just reiterate that's how we kind of attack it. With technology. The idea is whether we're using a drone or using the State Police helicopter or their air wing. The idea is they're followed until the point where they stop somewhere. Because eventually, they stop them. And then they could be stopping, finally, to garage the vehicle at their home. And the idea is once they're safely stopped, that's when we should kind of zero in on them. And then take them into custody in the safest manner possible. So, I agree. We need to continue to do all we can in terms of our enforcement efforts." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Simard, "Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to say it's a noble gesture, Councilor DiZoglio. But this is going to have no impact on these criminals who have plagued in many cities, like Lawrence, Lowell, Methuen Springfield and Brockton. I think we need, like Clr. Santos said stricter laws. And I think maybe we should table this so we can add some more bite to this. But the bigger problem is our courts. They are not holding these criminals accountable. And I'll give you an example. The gentleman, who had the gun that you saw wipe out. And he had a gun. He was charged on May 10th with possession of a large capacity feeding device, possession of a firearm without an FID card, possession of ammunition without an FID card, possession of a machine gun, reckless operation of a motor vehicle, unregistered motor vehicle and speed that was greater than reasonable. He was injured so the city had to pay our officers \$1770 to watch him at the hospital for two days, until he was arraigned. Because it was very serious. Right? Very important to us. Guess what happened at his arraignment? He walked out of court with no bill and conditions not to do it again. So, holding our gas station attendants accountable --- You want that kid who's pumping gas to tell a guy in an ATV that might have a gun on him to not do it again. So, holding our gas station attendants accountable? You want that kid who's pumping gas at 17 years old to tell a guy on an ATV that might have a gun on him, 'You can't get gas here.' There's nothing more frustrating as a police officer, to be sitting in traffic in your mock cruise or when a bunch of rogue motorcyclists come

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

up and it's a mob mentality. And they're doing wheelies next to you because they know you can't do anything. So, I love the drone thing because the only way to be effective is to figure out where they're going when they finally come to a resting spot. And that's really the only way to combat this. So that's what I think we need to do. And the fact that this garnered attention in the media, I think, made it worse yesterday for our police officers because I spoke to a few officers and yesterday was Bedlam with the motorcycles. So, it probably prompted them to say, you know, here we are, Methuen. We're going to keep coming back. So, I think we need to get stricter. We need to have the same Ordinances that Lawrence has and Brockton has. I know the Chief spoke about Brockton and Springfield. I think we need to give our officers more tools to do the job. So, I hope we can put this to rest for now. Maybe table it and come up with better ways to help our Police Department and our citizens. Thank you." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Valley, "Point of information, Madam Chair. This ordinance was amended and this doesn't reflect the amendment here. And that was Section 9-92 - self-service gas stations, Section B. The last line should say, 'Signage shall be provided by the Police Department with a copy of the ordinance.'" Chair Soto said, "Thank you for that clarification. I'd like to point out also, Mr. Mayor, that we have an ordinance already --- preexisting --- that we can impound these vehicles. Why aren't we doing that?" Chief McNamara said, "We most certainly impound vehicles when they're found in violation of the law. So, if they're unregistered or if they're uninsured..." Chair Soto said, "Aren't they unregistered, these bikes? We already have that in the books. Why aren't we turning on our lights on and pulling them over and taking the vehicle? Is it because they speed off?" Chief McNamara said, "Because they don't stop. If we get someone successfully stopped and we find them in violation of the law, and then that could be a normal motor vehicle or a off-highway vehicle --- certain types of vehicles are allowed to be properly registered and actually drive on the street --- If they're in violation whether they're unregistered or uninsured, they absolutely get towed. But I do want to look at or work on having an ordinance that would allow us to seize the vehicle until which time the fine is paid. Because often, when we take a vehicle or when we impound a vehicle, as we're saying, we're simply towing it to a local tow yard. And they'll come to the tow yard; they'll pay the applicable fee, and they'll take possession of the vehicle again. Now, if it's unregistered or uninsured, they're required to then get it towed from the tow company to private property because they can't drive it on public property to get to where they live. But I like the idea of seizing the vehicle itself until a fine is paid. And I think we have to look at whether or not that's lawful to do. I suspect that it is but I would defer to the City Solicitor after we can get a couple of examples of other ordinances that are effective in other cities and towns in the Commonwealth." Chair Soto said, "But meanwhile, with this on the table, they can get gas at our gas stations right now." Chief McNamara said, "Yes, they can." Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "I'm going to be brief. It was brought to my attention to do it because, again, the law is as Councilor Simard, as a police officer, said so I take his expertise very seriously. This is in the scope that I can do as a Councilor and because let's be real, with the police reform that has happened in the last few years. And that it has strained our police officers to do their jobs. And we talk about the legislation that has passed in Massachusetts which has been against our police officers from doing their jobs. I've talked to

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

many officers that say they are afraid to pursue them. Because if something was to happen, they're going to get blamed for it instead of the criminal. And they just passed and the Chief can also agree with me on this. They used to be, for these little petty crimes like shoplifting and all that. You would get bail for \$40 but because they were worried about the person being poor. They got rid of that because it shouldn't be for someone shoplifting for \$40. They should be in jail for 3 days. I hate to break it to you but if you didn't break the law, you wouldn't be in jail in the first place. But again, the state thought we should be catering to criminals. As you just heard from Clr. Simard, the guy had a list of charges and that he should have been behind bars. And they let him out saying, 'Don't do it again'. Just as the Cambridge shooter that just got let out after five years of being in jail. For what? Shooting at police. And he had an illegal firearm. And he started shooting at people. And that's why they passed this gun reform for people like me that is a license that they have restrained us from getting firearms. But these criminals continue to get guns. And I've said it. And I would continue to say it. Gun laws do not stop criminals from getting guns. That's just a fact. And it's happened in many states. So, I would love to hear. And I bet that's why this ordinance is a starting step because I can only do this in the scope as a Councilor." Clr. MacLaren said, "Councilor. I agree with you. That in this specific instance, it's important that we be harder on these people. That we don't let this happen. Obviously, it's an enormous public safety risk. And that is our top priority. I just have to agree with Clr. Simard. That this places an unfair burden on the employees at gas stations who didn't sign up to be police officers. They didn't sign up for the responsibility of walking up to people who like Clr. Simard said, may or may not be armed, may or may not being angry, and tell them that they cannot fuel up their vehicle there. I mean, I can imagine if I was a gas station attendant, I would feel very nervous doing something like that. That potentially puts you in an unsafe position. And while I completely respect that you took this initiative. And I think that there are things that we should be doing that we're not presently. I'm very grateful to the Chief for being receptive to that. I don't think that this is the answer. I just think that we need to be harder on these individuals. But I don't want to place that burden on the backs of your average gas station employee whose responsibility it certainly is not." Clr. Simard said, "Just a quick point of clarification. So, I'm glad that you touched more on what I said about the justice system. We need a reform. So, we need to talk to our State Representatives, our US Representatives and our Senators to change the laws. And that's what we need to do. If we don't do that, then nothing's going to happen. Just for the record too, I spoke to a Superior Officer today from our neighboring city. That ordinance has been in effect for, I believe, six years. No one's ever been cited." Clr. Valley said, "Madam Chair. I have a question for Clr. Simard. The reform that you proposed, can that be done by the City Council, through a letter to the delegation?" Clr. Simard said, "I would think so. I know we all have friends that are at the state level. And I think we should push for that because it is out of hand. And I think that's a good start." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Santos, "In the meantime, I feel that we need to do something about our city. Yes. Definitely. We should reach out to the delegation, so that it comes from the state. But in the meantime, the summer is coming. And this is the time that they are more out there and more accidents are going to occur. So, we need to implement something fast so our city can be

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

protected.” Clr. Simard said, “One more caveat is two State Representatives right now are trying to pass a bill through at the State House to change the juvenile age from 18 to 21. So, think about that for a second. You can go to war at 18 years old and carry a rifle, but you’re not held accountable. If you’re 19 or 20 years old, if you do something stupid. How many times are these victims going to be victimized because of a lenient court? So, I hope we can do something about it.” Chair Soto said, “A comment about that. What happened in particular in Methuen, I asked what the age group of these individuals was and I was told it was 22- and 27-year-olds, so even older, I believe they were all men. These are older guys on these bikes. - **Motion to table by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Simard – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

Motion to adjourn by Clr. Valley, seconded by Clr. Drew at 10:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Yarid Ferry
Assistant Council Clerk

I do hereby certify the foregoing minutes were approved by the City Council by a unanimous vote on June 8, 2026.

Linda Gagnon
COUNCIL CLERK