

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, JUNE 8, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

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1. **Roll Call - Members present – Clr. MacLaren, Clr. Marsan, Clr. Santos, Clr. Santos, Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew and Chair Soto – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**
2. **Acceptance of the Agenda - Motion to accept by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. MacLaren – Clr. Santos made a motion, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio to move deliberation of TR-26-63 to after #4 Public Participation – UPON VOTE - 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Drew) 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion by Clr. Valley, seconded by Clr. Simard to amend the City Council Meeting Schedule – July 6, 2026 and August 3, 2026 Council meetings will begin at 6:00 PM – Motion to accept agenda as amended by Clr. Valley, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**
3. **Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation/Moment of Silence –** Chair Soto recognized Clr. Santos for the invocation, “Here in service of our City, grant us with wisdom to make decisions with integrity in our actions, and compassion to those that we represent. Help us to listen with open minds, with respect, and work together in the common good of our City. Guide us to a place of need of our residents above personal interests, and to lead with fairness and understanding. In your name we pray.” Vice Chair DiZoglio said, “We’re having a moment of silence in honor of Salvatore "Sully" Zingales, known lovingly as "Nonno," was a devoted family man and painter by trade who filled every room with love, light, and laughter throughout his 95 years. From his blue van "Betsy" to his tireless work ethic that kept him climbing ladders into his mid-80s, he welcomed everyone with open arms and leaves behind a legacy of togetherness that will live on for generations.”
4. **Public Participation –** Vice Chair DiZoglio recognized Mike Welch:
 - **Mike Welch, 8 Nelson Avenue, Methuen,** “My name is Mike Welch, and I live at 8 Nelson Avenue. Since 2023, I've been working on a list of Methuen roadways. When I found out that my roadway was unaccepted and really didn't get much explanation for that, one of the Councilors mentioned to me that my roadway is unaccepted, but it's accepted by the State. So, I started taking the latest roadway list from the City Clerks, which was updated in July 2023, originally from 2014. So anyway, I started comparing these lists, and I was told by someone that once I'm finished, even though it's very valuable, it may end up in the bottom of somebody's drawer. So, I'd hate to see that happen. I've been working on this for three years, some of it under contract for the city. So, I've distributed to each and every one, the Mayor and the Solicitor and some of the other Department Heads, this master list, along with an introduction to explain the contents. As a taxpayer, I feel it's important for Methuen to have such a list to be able to operate efficiently. As an example, in 2024, the city paid to have the accepted roadways pavement study. Well, that time when I got that study, I compared it to the list of accepted roadways, and they missed 20 roads --- 20 roads that were never considered for any kind of rework in 2025. However, the survey did include Chilton Street for major rehab. Chilton Street is now a paper street with eight undeveloped parcels. It probably was accepted at one time, but that was before Route 213 was put in. So, there were a number of roads that were on the City Clerk's listing that were paper streets that had been eliminated by Routes 495, 93 & 213. In addition, the Malden Mills Fire in 1995 still had those three streets that were eliminated on that list. Another example of poor record keeping is there's 47 streets in the city that are unaccepted, but they are accepted by the State. So, we've been collecting Chapter 90 funding for those 47 streets, but never once spending any money on those streets because they're unaccepted. Another issue is the 17 accepted streets by the city, and when I submitted those to the State to be accepted, they rejected it back.

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They were only partially accepted. So, when I investigated more of the resolutions in the documentation, the State was right. So, there's 17 streets that the city is treating as accepted streets, yet they're only partially accepted. One of those streets is Observatory Road. I don't know if anybody is familiar with that road, but it's at the Water Tower on Forest Street. It goes all the way down to Route 113. Only a portion of that street is accepted. Yet we've been treating them as an accepted street when they're only partially accepted. I compared the city clerk's list, MassDOT, Patriot Property, which had a lot of valuable information because that's where you're collecting your taxes, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, My Map listing, the city's website recycle list, the plow routes I've even compared. So, all of those are there, but I can't go any further with this without some help from the city to validate. There are right now 105 misclassified streets, such as the three that I mentioned weren't. So, in closing, I'm hoping that someone here will complete this list, make this list work for the city. The taxpayers deserve to have the taxpayer funding spent efficiently. And if you don't have a complete list of roads, how do you do that? And I want to offer my help. So, I'm willing to continue working, but I need people to work with me to resolve those 105 and the other 17 and 47. The city has to do something about. Okay. Thank you."

- **Ann DiBenedetto, New Hampshire resident** – "Good evening, city council members and Mr. Mayor. My name is Anne Benedetto. I currently reside in New Hampshire. I am a retiree. I taught for 35 years. I was also a member of MacEwan PEC for over 12 years. I am here to explain three things. I want to have it explained to me the specific reason why the City needs \$6.5 million in funding. I don't remember this conversation coming up last year. Is there clear documentation of where the shortfall is coming from? We want transparency on this. Was there an independent outside forensic audit? Did you go through, Mr. Mayor, a procurement process for the new insurance advisors/brokers that the city is now using? The city needs to properly disclose what is happening. I would also like to mention and touch upon the GIC. When I was here earlier, I turned in a pamphlet for everybody. The last page contains a letter from Springfield Councilors. Nine Councilors signed this letter with concerns about the GIC. I'm asking that the Councilors and the Mayor please do your due diligence and investigate this. My understanding is when the city signs up for GIC, it's not a one-year contract. It's a multi-year contract. And at that time, the city has to negotiate whenever or if ever they want to resign from the GIC. That is kind of tricky. The other thing I want to mention is these employees are here for the long run. Councilors may come and go. Mayors may come and go. But whatever decisions are made here, the employees and retirees have to deal with them for years to come. These are people, human beings. I believe that the meetings for the PEC, Sir, should be held in person. When we worked with Tom Kelly, Mayor DiZoglio, Mayor Manzi, Tom Kelly, all of the people got together in the conference room on the second floor as people. It was a working relationship. Zoom meetings take away from the humanization of this. We are all humans. We're all going to have health issues. When you have a child, when you have a family member that needs health care, you want affordable, quality health care. I urge the city counselors and the mayor to please do your homework about the GIC and work with the PEC and negotiate in good faith, which I all know you are negotiating in good faith. But the knowledge that I have, that Donna Gogas has, that Lois Jacobs has, comes from years of involvement. And we now have Susan and Cara that are working along, and they're seeking different opinions because we need this, we need the history. Tim Sheehy of the Methuen Fire Department stood up here and said, please, don't go with this GIC, because he had been involved in the PEC, and we know and we talk to people that are involved. I've been involved back, Sir, when the social posting came out back in 2012. I'm the one that voted to change from Tufts to Blue Cross. I voted along with the Police and the Fire Department. We investigated. The

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city has come from John Hancock, then we were on Tufts, now we're on Blue Cross. So please, do your due diligence, because once you get involved with the state, you guys will have no control and be at the mercy of GIC. And remember, these are people. Thank you."

- **Donna Gogas, New Hampshire resident**, "Okay, good evening, Mayor Beauregard and City Council. My name is Donna Gogas, and I represent the Methuen Retirees and was the Methuen Education Association president for 10 years. The first eight years, I was the MPEC Chairperson, and my last two years I was Co-Chair. As a retiree representative, I serve the Mass Retirees Association Appointee, representing the interests of the retiree community within the PEC process. As you know, typically after retirement, there's a significant reduction in income. Since we are municipal employees, most do not qualify for Social Security benefits or work after retirement for various reasons to supplement our pensions. Medicare retirees now have co-pays for doctor's appointments, visits, and are subject to deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses. The supplemental health insurance through the city assists with medical costs. However, with the increased costs of medical care and current inflation, our COLA increases, if there are any, do not come close to meeting our financial needs as a retiree. The non-Medicare retirees not only have a reduction on their income when they retire but are still paying the same rates as inactive employees until they reach retirement age. When that occurs, the city saves a significant cost in their contribution of Medicare retiree health care benefits. The bottom line is that we continue to negotiate our health care benefits. We strongly request that the financial burden that all Methuen retirees must be front and center in helping to reduce their costs in health care benefits. Thank you for your time."
- **Albert Trott, III**, "My name is Jim Trott. I'm one of the two elected members of the Methuen Retirement Board. I was myself and Diane D'Andrada were the two originators of the PEC. We're the third in the commonwealth to do this. I know you all heard this two weeks ago, but I'm going to reiterate to you that I have done a little homework since then, and I found that over the years, the PEC contract has been broken. You're doing cost shifting onto the employees and to the retirees. When we signed that original memorandum of understanding, the split for the retirees was 80 for the city, 20 for the retirees. Now it's 70-30. It was never negotiated. Somebody here broke the law, whether it was the Mayor. And the other thing I'd like to, I read the Mayor's posting on Facebook. I understand you fired Jennifer. And I was shocked to see the amount of money she was being paid every year, \$400,000. I have a question for Maggie. Didn't you track health care over all these years? There was supposed to be a trust fund. I mean, it's not your responsibility as the accountant or the major accountant for the city is to track these numbers. How did this money just fly away? I mean, I can't see how we ended up with, I believe it's a \$5.6 million deficit. That's outrageous. That should have never happened, number one. And as I spoke to you two weeks ago, I mentioned that to have retirees join the GIC is going to be a real pain for a lot of retirees because the plans are a lot different than what we have right now. I think you should stick with what we have. I see Anne DiBenedetto here, Donna Gogas, Carol Blair. You know, a lot of us worked originally on this to save money for the city and for the employees. And it was a big failure. Somewhere along the line, somebody dropped the ball big time. And I don't believe this is the first year that we've had such a major deficit. And if you go into the GIC, you're going to be locked in for a long time. And I believe the state bailed them out last year to the tune of \$800 million. You want to be part of that? It's going to be cost shifting onto the employees and to the retirees. And as a side note, the Retirement Board votes for a COLA every year for the retirees. As a member of the Retirement Board for the last 36 years, my goal has been to keep the COLA and to increase, to pay for what the retirees' increase in health insurance is. Tim Sheehy and I tried to up it by \$2,000. It's a

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formula of 3% times the dollars. Right now, it's \$20,000. We tried to bring it up to \$22,000. The other members of the board voted us down. And, of course, unfortunately, the other members of the board, one is the Mayor's appointee, and one works in the accounting office. So, what do you do? We're fighting now to try to get the retirees extra money. They're going to get a big \$600 COLA this year. How much is that a month? Do the math. I hope you really look at this realistically. Okay, thank you. The retirees get their \$600 a year raise. The employees get a little more. But going into the GIC is going to be the biggest mistake you're ever going to make, and you're just doing more cost-shifting on the employees and the retirees. Thank you."

- **Stephen Tarquinio, 48 Sycamore Road, Methuen,** "Good evening, Councilors. Steven Tarquinio, Sycamore Road. Tonight I am speaking directly to you, Councilors, as well as the residents of this city, for transparency. The Mayor and Solicitor's office are exposing this city to serious financial and legal risk. I ask you to bypass them and protect both the neighbors, whose quality of life has been destroyed, and the taxpayers who they're setting up to pay the price. Just one month ago, you all agreed that something must be done about the excessive noise from the new pickleball courts. Yet nothing has happened. While the city has delayed and deflected, I have used public record requests to expose how this issue was known and could have been prevented prior to construction even starting. On May 7, 2024, an email from Falmouth Mass Town Council was sent to Methuen Solicitor Ken Rossetti about pickleball noise issues in Falmouth. The Methuen Solicitors in the office initially tried to withhold this email under attorney-client privilege, but after I refined my request, they produced both a redacted and apparently by mistake an unredacted version. The full email shows former Solicitor Ken Rossetti putting Police Chief McNamara, Deputy Chief Randy Haggar, former Mayor Perry, former Councilor Faretra, Recreation Superintendent Steve Angelo, as well as current Solicitors O'Neill and Schultz on notice about Falmouth's serious pickleball noise problems and the ordinance changes, they were being forced to make. In the redacted section, Rossetti even warned --- you might find this interesting --- since I suspect this activity will increase significantly once recreational infrastructure improvements are completed. I, in addition to other neighbors, raised concerns about sound issues in March of 2024. This warning came in May of 2024, before construction even began. The City ignored it. They prioritized quickly spending government ARPA funds in meeting the construction schedule and planned to deal with the consequences later. When extra funds became available in late May of 2024, \$300,000 was wasted on cosmetic items, including \$150,000 on benches and \$100,000 for a pavilion, rather than even attempting to understand and address what was going to happen with noise. Two weeks ago, I had a noise analysis conducted at multiple homes on Sycamore Road and at the courts themselves. The data, which I'll enter into the record tonight with photos, confirms repeated violations of the City's noise ordinance. Levels exceeding 70 db. and even spiking past 90 db. This matches what Councilors Drew and DiZoglio witnessed in early May in one of the neighbors' yards. The data was provided to the City last week, yet the Police Department and the Health Department appear instructed to not enforce the City ordinances. Even MassDEP urged action after reviewing clear violations of State noise regulations. This past Friday, my attorney received the City's latest proposal, which was absolutely absurd and not in good faith. Of four measures, only one addressed noise, and it will not resolve the violations. The City ignored proven data from Kittery, Falmouth, and other communities nationwide showing courts this close, within 300 feet of residences, cannot be effectively mitigated. I submitted reasonable measures based on this Council and the Park Recs Committee recommendations from May 4th Council meeting that would have allowed operations until a new location was found. Every one of those measures was ignored by the City in their

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proposal. The Mayor's text messages obtained through public records reveal his attitude. He dismissed concerns as only a few people trying to ruin it for others and even wrote, anyone who lives adjacent to a baseball field, tennis or pickleball court or High School should expect some degree of noise. This was in response to a letter from a mother of three and a nurse that cannot sleep during the daytime when she has to work at night. Truly disgusting behavior from a person that is available for parades and photo ops but not available to witness this issue himself or even speak with the neighbors. The Mayor and Solicitor's Office appear willing to let this go to court knowing taxpayers will pay for the damages and the forced shutdown of the courts. For everyone's awareness, we are currently wasting money today. Right now, as I speak, the Rec. Departments arrange for DPW workers to lock up the courts each night. When they do show up, they arrive 30 minutes early sitting in idling trucks waiting to lock up the courts. This is a waste of taxpayer dollars while the City is going through a financial crisis and fighting to protect teacher, police and firefighter jobs. Councilors, I urge you to act tonight. Pass an emergency resolution by closing the courts until real data-driven solutions can be implemented and a new location is secured. Stop the delay tactics, protect our residents and the City's finances. As I stated earlier, the City knew this was going to be an issue prior to construction starting but wanted to proceed and deal with the consequences later. That time has come. My attorney has sent a letter to the City today stating if the City does not take action immediately, we will be going to court. Our patience is at an end. Thank you."

- Vice Chair DiZoglio read letters from Tom Duggan of North Andover, Jonathon E. Smith and Julio Escobar, 4 Short Street, Methuen

5. Organizational Business – none

6. Reading and Acceptance of Minutes from Previous Meetings:

- **Monday, May 18, 2026 Regular Meeting – Motion to accept by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**
- **Thursday, May 21, 2026 FY2027 Water & Sewer Public Hearing - Motion to accept by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**
- **Thursday, May 21, 2026 FY2027 Municipal Budget Public Hearing - Motion to accept by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**
- **Thursday, May 21, 2026 FY2027 Municipal Budget 1st Read - Motion to accept by Clr. Marsan, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

7. Proclamations/Correspondence - none

8. Consideration of Appointments:

Firefighter Craig Langlais– Lieutenant – Motion to appoint by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Santos – Chair Soto recognized Fire Chief Toto, "Thank you, Madam Chair and City Council and Mayor. I am honored to recommend and request your support in the promotion of Firefighter Greg Langlais to the position of Lieutenant. This is a budgeted position for this year and in Fiscal Year 2027. This promotion also fulfills a contractual obligation for staffing of apparatus. Greg is at the top of the promotional list, and no candidates have been bypassed. Firefighter Langlais is a 14-year veteran of the Fire Department. He began his public service

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career in the city in 2004 as a member of the DPW before joining the Fire Department in 2012. A graduate of Methuen High School, he went on to earn an Associate's Degree in Fire Protection and Safety Technology with honors from North Shore Community College. During his 14 years with the Department, he has gained extensive experience in emergency incident response, fire extinguishment, and mentorship. Assigned to Engine 5 at the East End Station, which is one of the busiest in the city, he's benefited from working alongside some of the Department's most seasoned and experienced officers. He holds numerous certifications including Firefighter 1-2, nationally certified EMT, hazardous materials at the operations level, crowd manager, as well as completion of the firefighter safety survival through the Mass Fire Academy. Beyond his operational duties, Firefighter Langlais is deeply committed to the community outreach. He actively participates in local events such as parades, senior suppers, and the annual fishing derby to name a few. A dedicated family man, he and his wife Kristen of 14 years are raising their two children, son Carson age 6 and daughter Julian age 4. So, I am proud to recommend Firefighter Langley for this promotion. He will be an excellent addition to the officer ranks and will continue to serve this community with distinction and honor. I appreciate the support." Chair Soto said, "I have a question for you and it's a concern from calls I've been receiving. My question is not regarding this promotion. It's in general. In the midst of where we are now with furloughs, and I know that when one gets promoted, it's kind of like a domino effect, right? You have to promote the others behind them. So, my question to you is, is that something that we continuously need to do now where we're in these uncharted waters with furloughs and conversations of potential layoffs? And I don't really know how that's going to work for your (Fire) Department or the Police Department as public safety is vitally necessary. But my question is, just your opinion on that, because it is a common phone call that I receive as a Councilor, not speaking for my fellow Councilors. They've called me personally. So, I'd like to hear from you." Chief Toto said, "Yes, this position is, it was, it's a contractual obligation for per piece staffing. So, the way our Department is structured, we run four shifts, and each fire engine or the latter has to have a Lieutenant and two firefighters. So, with the unfortunate passing of Lieutenant Jimmy McLachlan, that's what created this opening. So, he fills that need in a group. So, without having someone to fill that role, it has to get filled with overtime, which is always a hot button topic." Chair Soto asked Mayor Beauregard to chime in, "Just to share some additional context, especially at a time when we've made some reductions to overtime in the budget. It's really important, in my opinion, for us to ensure that every budgeted position is backfilled so that we can help mitigate some of the impacts in terms of operations. So that's the thinking of proceeding with this, even in the midst of the challenging environment that we're in. It's in the budget, and this will help us from a personnel standpoint to ensure that we're able to meet the requirements." – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

8. Presentations/Projects/Department Updates - Presentation from Ken Lombardi and Kevin Paicos of NFP – City of Methuen's Health Insurance Program (*Requested by Mayor Beauregard*) – Chair Soto invited Mr. Lombardi to the podium, "So we have a presentation this evening from Ken Lombardi and Kevin Peikos of NFP, City of Methuen Health Insurance Program. This is a request of the Mayor, so we'll give the Mayor the floor first, and then we'll begin your presentation, Sir. Thank you." Mayor Beauregard said, "Thank you, Madam Chair. So, before I pass it off to Ken Lombardi from NFP, we're not going to be joined tonight by Kevin, who wasn't able to make it. I want to share some information with all of you in public by way of some context, and also to answer some of the concerns that were raised during public participation. I'll begin there, just speaking frankly. So, I think at one point I was accused of breaking the law by violating the PEC agreement by way of the city's adjustments of premium

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splits. I want to point out, just as a matter of fact, and this is not meant to cause any other issues with the PEC, but just to state as a matter of fact that going back to FY'2020 the city has paid out roughly \$12.7 million in employee benefits above and beyond the PEC agreement. That has lapsed since 2013, just stating that as a matter of fact. Secondly, an issue was raised about why didn't the CAFO know about the payout of fees and commissions to our former broker. The city has never paid those fees and commissions directly. They've always been taken out of this broader health care bucket. We've never received an itemized invoice outlining payment for fees and commissions, so that has not been a direct payment by the city. With the exception of a recent informational session, all of our meetings have been held in person, in either the second floor conference room, I think one or two of them might have been held in my office, but they have been for the most part in person just to address a few concerns. So shortly after I took office last year, we came to the Council with the issue of a Health Insurance Trust Fund deficit for FY'2025. And when I came to you to address that, I committed to the council and to the public to take a very long overdue look under the hood to get a sense of exactly what was driving that situation. And so there were initially some thoughts about the likely drivers of that cost, including GLP-1 drugs. That was something that had been cited previously. Of course, we've had our share of high claims because we're a self-insured plan. We are on the hook for these expenditures. It's in essence an uncapped liability for the city. But when I brought in Ken from NFP, first of all, when the city was under fiscal oversight back in 2019, it was Sean Cronin, who was the city's Fiscal Stability Officer, who first brought in Ken and Kevin from NFP to take a look at the city's health insurance plan and make some recommendations. And so, at that time, they provided a report to the then mayor. This is addressed to former Mayor Jajuga, who was in office back in 2019, regarding their recommendations. They came in December, I believe, to present to the City Council at the time what their recommendations were. And at that time, they indeed recommended that the city consider entering the GIC. And they estimated that at that time, if the city were to make that switch, the city would be able to save roughly \$2.9 million on health insurance costs. So, considering, of course, the issues with the GIC that have been raised by folks, especially involved with the unions regarding concerns that they've heard, perhaps from various rumors or insights from others who might be on the plans, the City Council never took action, and the city did not enter the GIC. And so, as part of this review, I asked NFP, who is working alongside the city on an informational basis, we're not engaging with them beyond assistance with getting to the bottom of these issues. I asked them to take a look at what the city would have saved hypothetically if the city had taken the state's guidance through NFP to join the GIC back in 2019. If the city had made that switch at that time, as Ken will share tonight, the city would have saved \$27.9 million in health insurance costs going back to that time. Now, another issue, and this gets to something that I know Ken will share tonight, the issues that have driven the ongoing deficits that the city has experienced. So going back many, many years, the city has had a relationship with a local broker who has had a fiduciary obligation to provide recommendations to the city by way of all things related to health insurance. And going back the past couple of years, but especially this year, going into FY'2027, the adamant recommendation provided with logic outlined in writing was for the city to increase health insurance rates for the Blue Cross plan by 6.5%. And as Ken and several other underwriters have confirmed, that is nowhere close to the level of rate increase that is needed in order to protect the basic solvency of the city's health insurance program." Chair Soto said, "Mr. Mayor, and I'm sorry to interrupt you, do any of you Councilors have this presentation? We don't. Mr. Ken, could you email this presentation to my Clerk, please?" Mayor Beauregard agreed to do so and said, "So long and short of it is that ultimately, we've had this Blue Cross program that our employees have relied on for the past many years. The issue, especially in recent years, is that we've had this outstanding plan, but through the inadequate, to say the least, rate increases over the past couple

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of years, the true cost of that plan has not been borne by employees. Ultimately, the city has run up these deficits that we've had to address. And so, what I am doing tonight is obviously wanting to share this information in a transparent way with the public, with you, from Ken and NFP, but also to begin this process of making the case for some much-needed structural reforms in our city. And so we have some items on the agenda tonight that address, with truing up, the difference between the initial projected increase of 6.5 %, which was simply inadequate, to roughly 19.3 %, which is what is needed in order to adequately maintain the solvency of the health insurance plan in FY'2027 for NFP and multiple other underwriters. And beyond that, we have, yet again, another deficit in the Health Insurance Trust Fund going back to this issue with the inadequate establishment of these rates. And so the presentation will be shared. I think the assistant clerk must be printing it. But with that, I'll invite Ken to begin his presentation, maybe not getting too deep into the slides until we have the printouts, but at the very least perhaps providing some additional context regarding this issue. One other fact is that it is very interesting. The Solicitor did some digging in the city's archives and found a resolution that had been sponsored by then-Town Councilor Carol Delano when Methuen was a town and we had a town manager form a government, the first reading of this resolution was passed on April 17, 1990, three days before my first birthday, and it contemplated a town of Methuen Health Insurance Trust Fund deficit. So, this is an issue that goes back a very long time by, you know, because we've been self-insured all these years and we have now for the first time an opportunity, perhaps, to change that. And so, with that, I'll invite Ken to proceed from there."

NFP's Ken Lombardo said, "Okay. Thank you, Mayor. If it's okay to kind of go through some of these slides. We won't go through all of this. There's a lot of information here. It's obviously very complicated. I've been fortunate enough, at the Mayor's direction, to be able to work with the members of the Public Employee Committee (PEC) to kind of disseminate this. So, most folks will recognize this information. We have shared most of this with the PEC members. So, they've seen a lot of the same stuff that you folks are saying. So just to kind of rehash health care really quick --- in Massachusetts for municipalities, there's basically three ways that a municipal employer purchases health insurance. It's direct through an insurance company, which is the way Methuen does today. That can either be on a self-funded or fully insured basis, and right now it's with Blue Cross Blue Shield. You can consider purchasing with other communities under a joint purchasing arrangement. And finally, you can consider the Group Insurance Commission. So, our focus was if the city is going to continue self-funding was, as the Mayor mentioned, to make sure that the premium rate structure is adequate. So, a couple of details to help support why I recommend that the city look at the 19.3%. We work closely with Blue Cross Blue Shield, like most insurance advisors in Massachusetts that are in this business space. When Blue Cross Blue Shield assembled its recommendation for the city's health insurance plan, when we looked at that data, the components of the program, claim estimates, administration, and small insurance costs for medical stop loss, it totaled 19.3%. So far exceeding sort of the initial recommendation. Now, the initial recommendation comes from an historical analysis that the current advisor provided. We do the same thing with our self-funded clients. This is an opportunity based on our escalating costs where it's appropriate for the city to look towards Blue Cross as really the organization that directs what the rate increase should be for FY'2027. So, the starting point should be 19.3%. Now, I want to advise the council that projection does not presume any deficit recoupment, and it doesn't assume any adjustment for incurred but not reported claims because that amount, which is roughly two months' worth of premium, should be sitting in a trust fund somewhere in the city's accounts. It does not exist." Chair Soto said, "I'm going to request that you dumb it down a little for me. And I don't understand the insurance lingo. So, if you could say you expressed a deficit, correct, that we should fund the deficit?" Mr. Lombardi said, "No. All I'm saying here is the city's position should be if there's a

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presumption to assume continuing self-insurance for another year, the rate basis should reflect what Blue Cross Blue Shield has presented, which amounts to 19.3%. If that runs according to plan, then we cover our expenses for the next 12 months. It doesn't do anything other than that. So, I want to make sure that point is clear because that becomes the baseline." Chair Soto said, "Thank you for that. But you did say there were three ways for us to do it, self-funding. We could go in the same with other communities or the GIC. We've only talked about what we have and the GIC. Why haven't we talked about the middle option?" Mr. Lombardi said, "Well, because our claims experience doesn't allow it to be a good business partner for anyone else at this point in time because we have..." Chair Soto said, "Who doesn't allow it, Sir?" Mr. Lombardi said, "We would need to be an attractive risk for other communities. By the way, the three largest employers around here are also in the GIC. I will mention to you that we also approached Blue Cross Blue Shield, and we said we don't want to be self-funded anymore. We would want to go to an insured contract effective July 1st. They quoted a rate of 36.9% over our current costs. The insurance company, to insure us, pretty much almost twice of what we're coming up with just on a self-funded basis. Why the GIC is of consideration is a couple of reasons. Number one is I want the Council to know that the PEC has been engaged over the last couple of weeks with meetings and listening to us explain why we thought the GIC is a good opportunity. Lots of great questions, lots of information. It's a very complicated subject. We're only addressing what might be in the best interest of the city and the members. The earliest the city could consider joining the group insurance commission is January 1st of 2027. The initial engagement would be for 42 months because the GIC requires the initial engagement to be at least three years. It could be as long as six years. But obviously, since we're joining off anniversary, it would end up being 42 months beginning January 1st (2027). So reason number one why this makes sense, in working with the public employee committee, we suggested that it may make sense for, since there is a reduction in premium if we move to the GIC, that we propose changing the contribution splits, which we are thinking about and reviewing and evaluating with the public employee committee (PEC) where we would actually have the city incur a higher contribution on average than they're doing today. So, in other words, most of the members, either at 75-25 or about 64-36, what we're proposing is that most members would all move to 75-25. More importantly, the retirees would move from 70-30 to 75-25 and lower their monthly premium. So, step one was we improved costs for the retirees. In addition to lowering their cost, we're increasing the contributions, and we're avoiding a January 1, 2027, rate increase. If we stayed self-funded, the retirees see a calendar year increase, not a fiscal year, because they follow the Medicare year, which is January through December. So, we lower their monthly premium. The benefits, by the way, under the Group Insurance Commission for Retirees are almost identical to the current Blue Cross Blue Shield Medics Plan that the 900 or so retirees have today. The plan works the same. Medicare retirees can go to any provider in the country that accepts Medicare. That's the way it works today. The plans the GIC offers work exactly the same. You can go to any Medicare provider that accepts Medicare in the country, so there's no disruption. It's the easiest plan to present and evaluate, and it improves, obviously, the retirees' contributions. There are also four retiree plan options. We only have one today. One of the options actually lowers their cost by about \$40 a month and does improve benefits. So, there's a huge advantage for the retirees, considering the Group Insurance Commission. I am concerned that on January 1st of 2026, we saw about a 20% increase on retiree costs. It's very likely that we'll see another increase on January 1st of 2027. More importantly, you're looking at just the retail costs to the city and the members. We also need to worry about Maggie has to manage the impact of rising health care costs on OPEB and GASB valuations. You have almost 1,000 retirees. When I first started looking at the city of Methuen, you had 600. That population is going to continue to increase, so it is something that probably should be primary focus. In

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addition to that, all of the active employees, with the change in splits, other than seven subscribers that we identified, and that's roughly 950 subscribers that we're looking at. Out of that 950-subscriber pool, by going to the GIC, by going to 75-25, by going to the plan options that we're presenting, because there are eight plan options within a Group Insurance Commission, no one member is restricted to a plan selection. The GIC does have a requirement based on where you live, what plan options you can enroll in. This was one of the reasons why we identified the GIC as an option to consider in FY'2020, because you have almost 100 employees, 97 to be exact, that live in New Hampshire. So, they can't necessarily have all of the same plan options as all the other employees. They are limited because under the GIC, selection process is based on where you live, and that's how the program kind of gives members various options. And I think you'll see that in the information that we've presented. What we did do, right, to try and get to kind of the point here, is what we did do is we, I don't know if this is probably difficult for the audience to see, you'll see Christmas tree charts, right, green and red there, I guess at some point, it should be page seven and eight. What we have done in working with the PEC is reviewing, I don't want to ignore plan design. I'll get to that next. I want to talk about premium contributions first, right. We all want to know what it's going to cost us, so that's important. And then we'll get to the plan cost sharing features. So what we did was look at the different populations. You have basically four groups to be concerned with. There are members that are in our PPO plan, right. They're in Massachusetts. There are members that are in the HMO plan. Now this is a little bit of a challenge because the HMO is Blue Cross Blue Shield, Network Blue New England, so it includes folks that are in New Hampshire and possibly Maine, can be in that plan. So, what we've structured is 75-25 for the most popular GIC plans. That gives all of the population, other than those seven members, all the population a way to reduce their premium costs. And you can see on these charts, and I'll take the PPO family, which is currently 186 members that are in Massachusetts, the monthly cost on July 1 will go to \$1188.83 a month, or about \$14,000 a year in premium. As an example, they have five plan options in which to select from. We will educate the membership with the carrier options, WellPoint, Harvard Pilgrim, and Mass General Brigham Health Partners, to understand network access, any provided disruptions, and benefit plan design to make sure that folks are aware that there's one of these plans that fits the best for their needs, where they live, whether or not they need access. By the way, the GIC plans work fundamentally different than our current HMO plan. Currently, we need a primary care physician and specialist referrals. The Group Insurance Commission doesn't require any of those. They just want you to use a network. The WellPoint plans, and I'll focus on those because it's easy to explain sort of the consideration, the WellPoint plans are most popular in New England. Number one is WellPoint is actually Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, our network, uses Anthem in New Hampshire and Maine. We have 99% of all of the utilization out of Massachusetts in the WellPoint plans. The WellPoint Plus plan is the plan I would recommend that most of the members consider because they will likely have no disruption. Very rarely do we see a provider doesn't accept the Group Insurance Commission option. They may think it's not covered because they're used to the plan called Unicare, but some of the providers now will understand that it's currently WellPoint. Each of the plan options, for the most part, has a similar plan design. So, if you go to slide 2, this is really important because one of the details in the process is making sure the members understand what are their current cost share features and then what are the cost share features under the Group Insurance Commission. So, our current plan is slightly different because it comes with a \$1,500 deductible for individuals, \$3,000 for family. We are very creative here in Methuen. There are two HRA programs based on whether you're a wellness care participant or not. If you do participate in the city's well plan, you can get up to \$750 of your \$1,500 deductible reimbursed or \$1,500 of the \$3,000. If you don't participate and

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two-thirds of the members do not participate in the wellness plan, then you only are entitled to \$250 of deductible reimbursement or \$500 family. The GIC's deductible is only \$500. It's less than the current plan after the HRA." Clr. DiZoglio said, "I'm trying to grapple with all the information you're giving us right now, but I can see clearly in the audience right now, you are providing so much information right now that it's a lot, and I'm part of the GIC. So, I think one of the things we should do is kind of slow it back just a bit. One of the questions that I have is when it comes to specialties, because that's what a lot of people are scared about. I personally can relate to them. I have to go see a specialist for my MS. So, for certain diseases like cancers and stuff like that, how would that be affected under the GIC?" Mr. Lombardi said, "Great question. Great question. So, this is the benefit to the Group Insurance Commission plans. The plans I've been referring to are open access. What that means is under the WellPoint Plus plan, as an example, just to make it simple, right, it uses all of the same network providers the members have today. Outside of Massachusetts, it uses Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, all of the same providers, because Blue Cross of Mass uses Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield. So, all of the specialists are likely in these plans. If, in fact, there isn't a specialist in the plan, highly unlikely. These plans have non-network coverage. You can go to any provider. If you decided you needed to go to New York for treatment, if you decided you wanted to go to the Brown Medical Center for treatment, if you decided to go to Cleveland Clinic, it's covered. They're not covered today under our HMO plan. They are covered under a non-network benefit under the PPO, but there really is no limitation to provider access. It might be under a non-network side of the benefits, but it is covered. You can go anywhere you need to go. So, I highly suspect that in Massachusetts you'll have access to the specialist here, not need to go outside, but that GIC does permit non-network access. That is a huge benefit, much different than our current plans. In addition to that, remember I mentioned Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield. It is larger than Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, which uses the Anthem network on a national basis. So, I highly suspect we won't run into a specialist here. We told the members that during the way this would work is the Mayor signs with agreement from the PEC. We sign the letter of intent. We go to the GIC, and we tell Matt Vito we're joining on January 1st. We spent pretty much the whole fall, educational meetings, all of the carries on site, answering questions, working with HR, inventorying all of the FAQs, trying to find out questions people have. WellPoint actually mentioned to the members at a meeting that if they have someone that's not in their network, they would go and try to contract with them to be in network. But access to care is not the issue. The issue here really is understanding what the plan options are and then educating the members to pick what we think would be the best selection. Does that answer your question?" Clr DiZoglio said, "Yeah, it's a lot. So, I have more questions, but I feel like I've got to keep waiting." Mr. Lombardi said, "Let me keep going on this because this is really the point. So, we've kind of shown here the Harvard Pilgrim Explorer Plan. That's determined in the state regulations to be what the state refers to as the benchmark plan design, which is legislatively the target for all municipalities. You can see that. What are the differences? So, we know the deductible is lower even after the HRA. We know that some of the office visits are either equal to or less, but there are some specialists and some primary cares that are actually higher in cost. What the GIC does, whether we agree that this is appropriate or not, is they do tier providers. They tier providers on quality and cost, right? And they also separate hospitalizations where in Massachusetts, each hospital is put into three tiers. One would be for behavioral health. That's the lowest at 275. The second tier is \$500 for hospital inpatient, Lawrence General, for instance. And then Mass General is obviously one of the more expensive facilities, as is like Brigham and Women's, for instance. And that comes with a \$1,500 copay. So that's the basic difference. There's a couple of other copay differences, but that's the basic difference. There's a deductible, and then if there's hospitalization, then there's a hospital copay. We know, the mayor's office is

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evaluating what is the impact of those hospitalizations on this population. We are now getting data. We can tell the PEC. I just studied the last 12 months of utilization. We can tell you how many people went to Lawrence Memorial, how many went to Winchester, how many go to Mass General, Brigham and Women's. So we can identify what that cost has been to the membership, and we'll have a discussion about that, right, because we do know that's an additional cost share feature that doesn't exist today. In addition to that, what we will do is we know that non-Massachusetts hospitals, they all come with a \$500 copay, and we can measure those as well. So, we have a good sense on what does the cost share mean to the membership so that we can value that as well. So, goal one was to try and reduce everyone's cost over the renewal. So, we can do that generally other than those seven members that I mentioned to you. We can talk about how does the cost share structure work under the GIC versus the current plan. We can establish and tweak the HRA that's in effect today. We don't have to do away with that. So, there's a number of advantages for the population. What do I like about this the most is as you hire, you had like 700 employees when I studied this plan in 2019. You have almost 1,000, right? That changing demographic is going to continue to pressure not just the budget clearly, but obviously the risk itself. The GIC has a health care plan, the community choice, which has a low premium because it limits hospitalization under the network side of the arrangement, but gives a member the opportunity if they need to go to an expensive hospital. It still provides coverage. There is an out-of-pocket co-insurance amount. We can talk about that with the PEC as well. But the variability and the flexibility is really the key here, right? So, if we're going to stay self-funded, we really need to think about that percentage increase that I had mentioned. The GIC can meet a lot of different demands with a focus on benefiting the retirees, number one, right? That's our goal. And that keeps them with a lower premium than they're paying today, avoids the January 1st rate increase, keeps their benefits the same, and gives them more options. That's half your population, right? That's the 2,000 subscribers and half of them retirees. Well, I don't think you want me to go through all the rest of these slides. I think it might be important maybe to answer questions that folks might have at this point." Mayor Beauregard said, "If I could maybe to help guide the conversation, and this might help with some additional questions that the Council might have. So right out of the gate, I think Ken addressed some concerns about loss of coverage, which is a common, from what we've learned just here in Methuen, very likely misconception about the GIC. I think it would be helpful, given the fact that on tonight's agenda, one of the items that we have is a free cash transfer to true up the health insurance rate increase, Ken. So, we're going from an initially projected 6.5 percent per the prior broker. I think it would be helpful to get into how that was calculated and how it's wildly off from the 19.3, which is required of us. And then the second thing I'll ask is, if you can share very briefly, how many more times Methuen will have a health insurance trust fund deficit if we were to switch to the GIC and why?" Mr. Lombardi said, "Well, the budget certainty becomes a huge asset, right? Because at the beginning of the year, we have an enrollment into the Group Insurance Commission, and we have a premium number. That's it, right? We are done. We can get on with providing services to the city, and that's exactly our goal here. This is really – I'm going to answer the two questions this way. A big concern with the rate forecast based on the initial – any competing organization will analyze my data and say, ah, you did this wrong, you did that wrong. Here's my concern. The renewal was set using data through September 2025. Since then, we've had a number of claim months, and Maggie knows this, three of which would keep me up pretty solid most of the night. In February, we had a 142 percent loss ratio. That means we paid a claims bill to Blue Cross at \$2.6 million. We collected \$1.8 million from the city and the members. We had another one in March, \$2.366 million. The last three months have run over 120 percent alone. Those three months were excluded from the rating calculation. We need to kind of like – this is mission critical to be on top of this every minute. Someone

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needs to run into Maggie's office and explain, hey, did you know this? That's not a job that's easy to do when you've got a budget, you're putting it together. She's got money coming in from retirement systems. She has money coming in from various enterprise systems. She has money coming in from all over these different accounts. It is extremely difficult to put a handle on all that and what it means. I've reconstructed what the numbers should be based on the enrollments and their working rates. Again, working rates are not premium rates. Premium rates are fully insured. We don't have those. We have our best guess at what the cost should be over a 12-month period. With adjustments based on this type of data. But these last couple of months have been huge. More importantly, when you look at the data, and we discussed this with that company, there's a couple of large claimants that were in this earlier data that are not continuing. We would have expected this data would have been supported by a couple of really large claims. They are gone off of the plan. Either they've resigned off the plan or they've recovered, hopefully recovered. That claims data doesn't support, this claims data doesn't support large claims. That means our utilization is elevated. Unless someone can tell me health care next year is going to be cheaper than it is this year, we're already at 112% through these 10 months. You can't tell me 6.5% is going to be the right number. It doesn't even cover part of our current deficit, excuse me, the current difference between what we're collecting and what we have for expenses. So, the Mayor is right. This is going to continue. This isn't getting any better. I hope I'm wrong. It's why we say to any client, I hope I missed this thing tremendously, let's rely on Blue Cross Blue Shield. They're the experts. They have data. They have expensive actuaries who are looking in. Their data eliminates GLP-1 drugs. That was a million-dollar spend, and it's gone. And they still came up with 19.3% over coverage. It would be, I think, irresponsible to settle on 6.5%. I think that 19.3% is solid for a projection for FY'2027." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Thank you, Madam Chair. Ken, this is a lot of information. I'm usually pretty good with numbers, but this is a lot of information. I wish we had this when we got our packets so we could have digested it a little bit more. When I look at this page, the one you have up right now, this is currently what the city has, and this is what the GIC would be." Mr. Lombardi said, "That's just the benchmark plan. Not all of the plans, Councilor, that we have that we're showing have that level. Some actually have lower deductibles and co-pays. This is the benchmark. This is the most popular plan within the GIC today." Clr. Drew said, "Okay. So, the column on the right is what we currently have. The column on the left is what the GIC and the most popular plan would suggest to most employees." Mr. Lombardi said, "Just remember, our current plan has an HRA, health reimbursement arrangement. So, the members don't have a \$1,500 final deductible. If they're in one of our wellness plans, it's only \$750 and \$1,500 because the city pays half of it. If they're not in the wellness plan, then the city will contribute \$250 individual and \$500 family. So, then their deductible is \$1,250 and \$2,500. Even after the HRA kicks in, the GIC deductible is less than the net result for the members. So that's sort of the starting point of how to look at the cost share." Clr. Drew said, "Okay. So, when you went through and you looked at all of these dollar figures for everybody in the city and all of the employees that we currently have in historical data, how many people actually hit their out-of-pocket maximum?" Mr. Lombardi said, "So, I don't have that, but I can certainly check on that because that's one of the issues. That's the reason why what we want to consider is asking the Mayor's office to consider the deductible, excuse me, the co-pays for hospitalization. Think about it this way. If the member gets \$1,500 paid and they happen to have an inpatient hospitalization, the carrier, WellPoint, for instance, is going to accumulate the exposure, even though they didn't pay it, towards their out-of-pocket maximum. So, there is a difference. You're right. There's a difference between the out-of-pocket maximums under our plan and the GIC." Clr. Drew said, "I mean, there's a \$4,000 maximum per year for a family and a \$2,000 max a year for an individual. So, I mean, we're talking about saving \$4,000,000, \$5,000,000, \$6,000,000

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a year going to GIC. Is that my understanding?" Mr. Lombardi said, "How much are we talking here? We're not saving that kind of money. We're saving about \$3,000,000 and we're working on how much of that savings would be redeployed through the discussion with the public employee committee. Because there's two things we're looking at, right? We're changing the contribution splits and we're looking at potentially another program to help with some cost sharing. So, it's a little bit more complicated than that." Clr. Drew said, "I just want to know how many people are hitting that maximum out as it is now. Because if there's 350 people, 500 people that are doing it on \$4,000 a year, I mean, that's a lot of money. I mean, is that what we're seeing in the savings that we're going to put back on the people that work for this city?" Mayor Beauregard said, "So, there's one other element of savings here that I think it's important to dive into, and that's the fact that under the GIC, which is fully guaranteed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the City of Methuen would never have a deficit ever again as long as we're in the GIC." Clr. Drew said, "I love the fact that we wouldn't have a deficit, but at the same time, I don't want to put a deficit on the people that are working for this city." Mayor Beauregard said, "Ken can get into that. That's not true." Mr. Lombardi said, "If I may, Councilor, can you take a look at page 7 for me? Because I think there's two pieces to your discussion. If you look at the family, which is the second row, you'll see the annual cost is \$14,265. That member, if they enrolled in the WellPoint Plus plan, saves about \$6,000 in premium." Clr. Drew said, "And that's equivalent to what they currently have. There's no interruption in any of their service, all of their doctors, prescriptions, everything." Mr. Lombardi said, "As best as we've been able to learn, there's no differences in access to providers." Clr. Drew said, "So, your costs, when I look at this, it's just a lot of numbers here to try to digest on the fly." Mr. Lombardi said, "I'm trying to tell a lot of messages all in one night." Clr. Drew said, "So is this plan that you just referenced the \$14,265?" Mr. Lombardi said, "That's what your employees will be paying for family coverage beginning July 1st." Clr. Drew said, "That is, I mean, everybody seems, they're individual tiers." Mr. Lombardi said, "You have either individual family coverage, either PPL or HMO coverage." Clr. Drew said, "So on that one that you're talking about, there's 186 families and 213 individuals?" Mr. Lombardi agreed. Clr. Drew said, "On that type of plan?" Mr. Lombardi said, "On that plan, yes, Councilor, some employees might select plans that are even less money than the Plus. That's their prerogative. We're not going to tell them they can only select certain plans. They have all of these plan options. We'll educate them to see which ones make the most sense for them to consider. So, here's another huge advantage, and this is the reason why I'd like you guys to consider the timing. We do this for January 1st. We'll have a fall educational meetings and members will have an open enrollment. HR is going to love us, probably in September, October, or in November. They have another open enrollment in April because this plan will renew on July 1st, 2027. Your self-funded plan, if we stay where it is, will renew on July 1st, 2027. There's going to be a relative adjustment for both plans. We're not sitting at 19.3% and walking away. We're just trying to get through the fiscal year." Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "Yes, so the question that I have, and like I said, I'm not going to speak on behalf of the members. You're saying that if we go up to 19%, that goes back, that's getting their premiums up. The 19% is basically them going up on their plans and paying for it, correct?" Mr. Lombardi said, "That's to break even, Councilor." Clr. DiZoglio said, "Yes, but that's going to raise their premiums, correct? Yes, raises everyone's premiums, correct. So again, and I understand that, I think what they want to see is the comparisons. What's going to happen with their 19% compared if they go to the GIC? Also, I'm on the Explorer. There are good things about it. I was able to keep all my doctors, but also at the same time, there are certain things that charges go up. Lab works after certain things that they also say to me, well, you can get this lab, but you can't get this lab. But then the next time I go, they say they'll cover the lab. There are good and bad things about these plans. And I think what is discouraging them is they hear about

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it and it is little information at a time to them. And then the timeframe. It's always the thing about Methuen. We always have to do it now. It's never, never, it's like let's get it together and have a plan together. And then, because I bet you if we did it and we had more of these hearings leading up to it and having these conversations. Because honestly, Ken, you have been great with enlightening all of us, but I'm still grappling with all this information and I'm part of it. I can only imagine what they're feeling. And I just feel like if we had more hearings of this and understandings, maybe Q&Rs and stuff like that openly, people might be on board. But they have lived here as long as I have, and they always rush it here in Methuen. They always do things and it backs them in the corner. And I just feel like, Mr. Mayor, just one second, Mr. Mayor. And I'm not saying the mayor is doing it or you're doing it, but it's history to them. And it's not fair. And I feel like we need to do more, too, on top of it. And that's where I want to hopefully keep this conversation going. But I can see it in their eyes over there. They are so confused right now. And I just feel like we need to do more in this Q&R stuff and hear their questions as well. Just figuring that out.” Mayor Beauregard said, “Very briefly, if I can just quickly respond. So, I am now six months into a 24-month term. We have two-year terms in the city. This has been a structural issue and a missed opportunity for the city going back years, probably more like more of a decade plus. And so, for me, I'm in a position where we have these major structural issues, right? We have a health care plan that's fantastic with Blue Cross that folks love, but people have not been paying the full cost of that plan, right? And so, right now on July 1st, I'm having to increase rates on average 19.3% just to ensure the solvency of our health care system in the city of Methuen. If I don't do that, we will run yet another \$5 million + deficit in FY'2027. With this information and with this look under the hood that I promised I would do this fiscal year, if I have this data and I sit back and I do nothing about it, then shame on me because then I'm not doing my job and acting in the best interest of the taxpayers who hired me to try to fix some of these issues and do this work. So, the issue that we have is that we have been engaging in ongoing conversations with the PEC. One of the challenges that we're seeing here is we're trying to be transparent and share this information with the Council, with the public, and with everybody. The issue is that not every member of the PEC has been part of every single conversation among the actual bargaining unit in the second-floor conference room. So many folks are indeed hearing this probably for the first time tonight, and I appreciate the challenge with that, and I don't want to diminish that. There's a lot of concern, and I know people feel like they have their backs up, right? But at the same time, I said that I would get a look under the hood. I'd bring in, of all people, the same folks that Sean Cronin brought in back in 2019, strongly suggested we take a course of action. We didn't, and now we have all these consequences and wasted money, if you will. And so, you know, given that context and with this information, if I don't act on that and at least bring this to you, try to initiate this conversation with the PEC, then I am no better than anyone else who has simply kicked the can down the road, and I can't do that.” Clr. DiZoglio said, “Just to clarify. So, Mr. Mayor, I'm not saying going under the hood is perfect and raising the rates 19 % to cover a deficit. That is your job as Mayor. I totally understand that, and they have to understand that as well, that there was obviously something happened in the past. You are cleaning up other administrations that maybe did not fulfill their obligation, so I commend you for doing that. But I'm just saying, I just think, like I said, I'm not saying that this is not a bad idea. I'm not saying, but to these members that they're hearing it for the first time, I just feel like we just got to keep asking questions. I understand the rates have to go up. I'm not disregarding that. I'm just saying I'm looking at them, and they feel like they're being rushed, but you're right. You've been in this term for six months, and you're fixing something that has been probably asked to fix for now a decade. But again, change, for some people, change is difficult, but also at the same time, you have to explain what is going on, and I feel like to all members. And that's all I'm going to say about

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that. I can see it, and I'm trying to make sure they're all taken care of." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Santos, "I'm just going to piggyback on Councilor DiZoglio's comments. This is an issue that cannot be resolved in a day. This is too much information. We were not even provided with a PowerPoint for us to review it before it was presented to us. So, it is unfair to our teachers, to our police department, that we make a decision on something that we just don't even have the correct information on." Mayor Beauregard said, "So Councilor, respectfully, there is no decision for you to make tonight. I'm simply providing information. I'm trying to be transparent and share that with you. Ken, I think it would be helpful as well to share with the Council what the consequences would be if, hypothetically, we were to make zero changes. If we were to maintain the original broker recommendation of 6.5 percent, if we were to stay self-funded on an ongoing basis, and if we were to still continue to run up deficits year after year, what would be the end result of that to share with the Council?" Chair Soto said, "Ken, if you can hold that for a minute. I don't want my meeting to be taken hostage. So, I'm going to reel it back in. Mr. Mayor, thank you. The question, and I want to allude to the Councilor's question, too, because I am feeling that they are confused. And I'm talking directly about Councilor Santos. I think that with that vote of \$6.5 million, which is separated, I think maybe that's what she's alluding to. So, I think, if you could clarify what those votes mean in context to what Mr. Ken's going to answer. Because, as we discussed on Friday, my question to you was pretty much --- what happens if we do make these transfers, but we don't go into the GIC, or we do, or is the plan, does it matter if we make it and go into the GIC? So, I think explaining that might help." Mayor Beauregard said, "Sure, absolutely. Thank you, Chair. Right out of the gate, there are two. The only things that are on the agenda tonight deal with covering the costs that we need to have covered by the end of the fiscal year. So, there's two items on the agenda that relate to health insurance and covering those costs before June 30th. The first is the big transfer. It's \$5 million to cover the health insurance trust fund deficit that is projected for FY'2026. We either take it out of Free Cash ourselves, right, and make sure that that's covered by June 30th, or what's going to happen is we would end the fiscal year, not have it covered, and then the state's just going to take it from us anyway. So, it either is going to come from a vote of the Council to transfer that and cover that cost, or it'll be held against us by the state. Secondly, there's the transfer for the \$1.5 million that would be the true-up between the initial projected 6.5 percent increase that our prior broker had recommended that the city pursue. And so that is completely inadequate as a result of this study that we've gone about with NFP. It should be 19.3%. So, the second transfer is to ensure that we have enough funds to provide for the employer contribution towards health insurance in FY'2027. If, hypothetically, we do not go about that transfer and if we just proceed as if we have on paper a 6.5 % increase in rates, then we're just going to run another massive runaway deficit in FY'2027. So, in essence, the votes before the Council tonight are to end the fiscal year to the good without these issues and be able to correct them ourselves using our ability to do so, right, versus going through this process of having the state hold it against us. And I was sort of asking the leading question of Ken. The end result, if we do nothing, if we simply maintain status quo, go with the prior broker's recommendations year after year, run up these deficits, stay self-insured but we don't actually assess the proper rates to our employees, ultimately we are on a fast track to receivership. And at that point, we're looking at a situation similar to what Lawrence had back in, I don't know, 2010-ish, where they ended up telling the City of Lawrence, you have to go to the GIC. And so, we have the ability with all of this information, right, to be able to make decisions as fiduciaries ourselves, act in the best interest of the people we represent, make this right, clean up the mess, and then proceed with some structural reforms from there. And so that's really the long and short of what we have on the agenda tonight. And Ken, I'm sure, can elaborate further. But I guess in response to the Chair's question, that sums up what we need to do. And if we don't, we don't. And we'll just have to deal with the

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consequences of that.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Simard, “Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree with the Mayor. I think we're fiscally responsible and obligated to explore the GIC. Nobody wants to lose the votes of the unions. The unions are very important. But I think we're going in the right direction where we're going to have a conversation, because I don't think everybody in this audience has the information that maybe some of the unions have, because they've been having that conversation with the city, the unions, the PEC. So, we could go on all night. We have a very thick agenda. We can go on all night. If Ken is almost done, I say we do a Q&A from each union to their union reps, to Ken, to the city, answering the questions. And we do it quickly, maybe a public meeting. But like I said, we can go on all night asking questions that deserve to be answered. But I think tonight is not that setting moving forward. So that's my take.” Chair Soto said, “So, if you would at least answer what the Mayor asked of what's the worst-case scenario.” Mr. Lombardi said, “I think you're referring to these bulletins?” Chair Soto said, “Yes.” Mr. Lombardi said, “So, we are advising that the DOR just issued a bulletin in February. So, both issues now impact the city. So, we have a self-insured trust fund without an adequate incurred but not reported estimate. So, Maggie is going to have to decide what that is with some recommendations, probably Blue Cross Blue Shield, and take action about how it gets recorded. And I don't know the details of the internal service balance sheet. So now that has to be identified. And roughly maybe \$4 or \$5 million is that figure, several months' worth of premium. And then we will have a deficit. We are in deficit today. We will have a deficit based on projections. And then the deficits are, as you can see, reduction to free cash. And I think that's what the Mayor is talking about. So, you'll have whatever the free cash amount is reduced by the estimated deficit or the actual deficit under the healthcare trust fund. So those are the two negatives that we're trying to get out from underneath, right, by getting out from self-funding. We don't worry about this with the GIC. But we do so long as we're self-funded with Blue Cross Blue Shield. So, these were also – these are also part of our review, right? We just can't – the Mayor is right. We just can't ignore this. If 19.3 % is adequate, covers us for the year, at least we know what our deficit is today. We can – well, I don't want to say manage it, but at least we'll identify it. If it deteriorates because of an inadequate rate level, the city is paying a disproportionate amount of cost under the health plan. Right now, it's about 69-31 split --- city versus members based on all the variations of plans. Every million dollars we miss, right, in premium costs the city of Methuen about \$690,000. So, if we miss the mark by several points, say it's five points, right, and we're talking well over \$4 million that you're now paying, not being insensitive here, but the members pro rata share is not in any of those deficit numbers. So, Section 3A of 32B does permit, and I would advise the city to look at that provision, does provide for the city to redevelop the contribution ratios to the extent that the city has overfunded the costs that were previously incurred. So, there's a lot of moving pieces here. They're trying to solve just about four or five different issues by thinking about getting out from self-funding. I mean, that's the basic issue here is we're just not adequately rated to be self-funded. We would love to hear that we have a \$10 million surplus in our Health Care Trust Fund, keeping in mind the health care trust fund is a checking account only to be used for employee benefits. So, it's okay, right, you put money in, the members put money in, and for it to create a surplus. That's the goal, to handle those adverse risk years. We don't have that right now.” Mayor Beauregard said, “This is also very important to share, just eyes wide open for everybody. If hypothetically we don't use our available funds tonight to resolve the health insurance trust fund deficit for FY'2026, there's another part of this bulletin from DOR that states that another mechanism to recover the deficit...” Mr. Lombardi said, “Is by raising it under the tax rate. So, you have another option where we just send the bill on to the taxpayers, and that is an option as well. Yes, that's really up to the Council and finance...” Chair Soto said, “Mr. Ken, final question, and I'm not sure if anybody else has anything, but what happens the day the state says, I'm no longer

going to bail you guys out as municipalities? Do we go back under the GIC to square one? And again, I might be thinking way outside the box. So, you're saying by going to the GIC, we're saying here, any deficits are covered by the state, correct?" Mr. Lombardi said, "Yes, once we're part of the GIC, the 60 or so communities along with the state employees are all in one risk pool. If it runs a deficit, then Maura (Healey) will go to the Legislature and say, hey, I need..." Chair Soto said, "So what happens, right, we're in elections and in the future, they say, I'm not covering your deficits. Municipalities, handle your business. At that point, we're back where we are now." Mr. Lombardi said, "No, I don't think that's the case. What happened this year was the commissioners. Remember, the GIC is made up of a number of commissioners that represent labor and government employees, if you will. They voted against plan design changes this year. The GIC did not make any recommended plan design changes. That forces the legislature to come up with a difference in premium. So, I would fully expect that would continue to happen because the commissioners are very pro-labor at this point. And that's fine because they obviously understand that municipal employees deserve solid benefits. But ultimately, we're not going to be on the hook for a deficit. That's going to be handled at the state level. Rainy day, fun type stuff." Chair Soto said, "Okay. Thank you for that. Well, thank you for your time this evening and your presentation."

9. Mayor's Report – Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, "Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll try to keep this brief. I know we have a long agenda. So, since the budget process concluded, we've had an extremely busy couple of weeks. **We are in touch with representatives from Verizon about installing a new cell tower in the Howe Street area.** There's a notable dead zone there. And it's an opportunity that could help generate some new revenue on top of improving cell service in that neck of the woods. So, we're continuing to stay in touch with them and assess potential next steps. We have a contract for grant procurement services on tonight's agenda, which will allow us to finally **begin the process of establishing a citywide grant dashboard and double down on our existing efforts to chase after grants and avoid leaving money on the table.** The target annual funding goal I've established is on average in the ballpark of \$3 to \$4 million annually in competitive operating capital grants, not counting formula or entitlement grants. So that's something that we have factored into the RFP when we put that out there. I'm in touch with folks from **a program called Summer to help our residents tackle the issue of student loan debt and connect folks with customizable student loan repayment options.** Stay tuned for more information about that. The Board of Health, this is regarding an item on the agenda under Request of Councilors. The Board of Health will be reviewing and voting on a fee schedule for changes for all health permits at their meeting this Thursday. In the meantime, HHSI is reviewing all building-related permit fees and comparing them to similar communities in preparation for changes to be proposed to the council. I had a meeting today with **Leslie Melendez from Groundwork Lawrence. We're exploring the prospect of establishing a Methuen outfit for Groundwork Lawrence,** which would be fantastic. We'll be coming to the Council in July with a **funding solution for the Constellations Program, which would represent yet another major structural reform.** We keep talking about health insurance. Special Ed is the other big-ticket item in each budget year after year. As I've mentioned, I think that an investment like this, and I know most of you agree, and members of the school committee are certainly advocating for this, an investment like this would go a long way toward keeping students in our district instead of paying outrageous out-of-district tuitions to send them to other places for Special Ed services. This is sort of unrelated, but somewhat in the same vein. I'm going to keep advocating. **I think we should all keep advocating for Methuen to ultimately become a school choice-receiving community, not just a school choice-sending community,** which would give us the chance to generate some much-needed revenue to fund our schools amid declines in enrollment. Regarding **Alderbrook Lane,** I was able to visit with residents there. Councilor Drew joined me last

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night to chat with the residents, hear their concerns about the recent event that had happened. We shared information that we also passed along to the Council relative to the use of this property as housing rather than an actual church facility, so that seems to be largely resolved. I gave them my contact information. If there are any other issues, they can certainly feel free to reach out.

Regarding some recent events:

- Today was the **Pride Flag Ceremony**.
- We held the **Teacher of the Year presentation** tonight as part of the School Committee meeting. Those were two great events.
- This Friday, we have our first **Concert in the Park** event, **Friday at 6 o'clock. This is at Riverside Park.**
- **There's the Firefighters Memorial event. It will be held this Sunday, the 14th, at 9.30 a.m.**
- The **Methuen 300 Festival** will be held **Friday, June 19th, and Saturday, June 20th at Nicholson Stadium.**
- There's going to be a **Juneteenth** celebration at First Baptist Church on Saturday, June 20th at 1 p.m.
- And then we have our **Independence Day Fireworks**, also celebrating, of course, the country's 250th anniversary of its founding, on top of the 300th, the tricentennial for Methuen. We're having our event this year, **Saturday, July 11th**. It's going to be at The Loop. For the past couple of years, we've held it after the actual date of the 4th. That's helped us to attract visitors from other communities, frequenting businesses at The Loop and the like. And this is also in keeping with the date that was in the fireworks vendor contract from several years back. So that will be on the 11th.
- And then just something I think Councilor Santos tried to bring this up. I was referring earlier to the very abbreviated length of our terms, our ability to actually make change in the community. So just to clarify what I was saying with that, as a Mayor and as a Council, we have 24-month increments to effect change. And so that was what I was speaking to there, just to clarify.

Thank you. I didn't think I closed the loop on that. Anyway, that's my report. We'll get into other questions under requests of councilors, but that will do it for now."

10. CAFO Report – Chair Soto recognized CAFO Maggie Duprey for the CAFO report. CAFO Duprey said, "If I could merge mine with a few requests from Councilors that are related to myself, if I could just merge it all together and power through. So just an update on the **Searles Estate expenses and revenues**. Really most of the expenses are the standard monthly utility costs. The only real outlier there to mention is that we rolled the bond anticipation note, the \$3.5 million. The bond anticipation note is a short-term debt issuance, and that's what we had decided to do when we originally purchased the property. And we had only – it's usually a year or less. We had done one year for that. We call it a ban. And that was so we were discussing the RFP and whether we were going to sell the property, et cetera. So, we did a ban to have that short-term tie over. Now we're at a point where I think there's uncertainty about where we're going with that, so we thought it would be best at this point to renew that ban so it can roll for an additional year. That saves us long-term on principal payments, et cetera, until we know where we're going with that property. But that does create an interest payment that's going to be due that wasn't anticipated. So, you'll see that in TR-26-65. We've been able to cover that interest payment within the general fund budget, but that is creating an expense there that I wanted to note." Chair Soto said, "The penalty for not renewing the ban." CAFO Duprey said, "So, there's no penalty. There's an interest payment because it's debt. But with a ban, you either pay it off,

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which was the original intent. We would sell the property. I think we had put, say, for \$4 million. We would be able to pay off the ban and the expenses that have gone with it. The other option is to roll it into a long-term bond. So, if we're going to keep the property, then we could issue it as a bond, roll it in, and pay it off over. It's a big property, 30 years, say. Since we're in this place of unknown, we thought it would be best at this point to roll it again to give us more time to figure out a plan." Chair Soto said, "Okay. So, if I may ask, could you provide the body with a comparison of a one-year renewal versus doing a bond for the amount? Because if we don't know where we're going or what the future is going to bring to us on this property in a year, it could be longer than that. Could we at least compare the options to see if we'd like to do the long-term as opposed to the one-year?" CAFO Duprey said, "So I can show you what that would look like. Basically, we wouldn't have any principal payments on the short-term debt, we would only pay the interest, whereas on the long-term debt, you'd pay principal and interest. Okay. So that's where that savings would be." Chair Soto said, "Thank you for that clarification. That's why renewing the ban makes sense." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah. Madam CAFO, the ban, I'm just trying to understand it. So, you sent me a highlight of it today. I appreciate that. So, this is just for one more year. We're spending \$262,000 on that. Next year, if we don't sell the property, we're going to have to do it again." CAFO Duprey said, "Well, so I would hope my plan, our plan, would be that at this point, it would be do it or don't do it. So either we're going to roll it into a bond, and you could roll it into our CIP bond that we, you know, we do our bond issuance every year, but it would roll it into a bond and pay it over long-term, or we'd have the cash on hand to pay it out. You can't roll the ban forever. So, I think at this point next year, because we bond usually in the spring, we would have to either do it or don't do it." Clr. Drew said, "You just transferred from one credit card to another credit card." CAFO Duprey said, "Yes. Or pay it off because we've..." Clr. Drew said, "Zero percent interest on this one. We'll move it over here because this zero percent expired." CAFO Duprey agreed. Clr. Drew continued, "Okay. So next year, we have to look and say, are we going to bond this thing long-term and hold on to it and develop it, or are we going to figure out how to move on from it? But from everything we saw from the RFP that came in, it doesn't look like it's something that's possible. So, I'm just wondering, just looking at the palette of what was there, why we didn't just explore that bond?" CAFO Duprey said, "Because you're committing then to 30 years of a bond that I feel was premature at this point because there is such uncertainty over where we're going with it right now that I thought it would be premature to start paying on something that we're not sure what we're going to do with it." Clr. Drew said, "But, I mean, paying the \$260,000, isn't that paying on it anyway? It just feels like we're throwing money..." CAFO Duprey said, "It would be more. So, yes, we're paying either way, but it would be more if we had to start paying it back." Clr. Drew said, "So if we took a 30-year loan, we'd be paying over \$260,000 for 30 years." CAFO Duprey said, "Well, I don't know what the terms would be. I don't know if they'd give us 30 years." Clr. Drew said, "I mean, I know when I bought my house, it's not going to pay three times more than when I paid for it. I get that. But that math of \$262,000 over 30 years, it doesn't add up, even if you add in the principal cost." Solicitor O'Neill said, "No, it doesn't work like that. When you're banding, it's an interest-only payment." Clr. Drew said, "No, I understand that. I mean, for the bonding payment, it would be interest and principal." Solicitor O'Neill said, "An interest payment. Correct. So that's why it will be a larger cash flow. I mean, yes, it has its advantages. We'll be paying down the cost of it, but it will be a net larger expense to pay." CAFO Duprey said, "This is not necessarily the same as a mortgage where the payment might be exactly the same for 30 years. They get their interest up front, so it's a different capacity." Mayor Beauregard said, "And about the Searles Estate, I think the RFP, one of the clearest things there, there's no silver bullet for the Searles Estate. It's going to end up being some type of, I guess, determination of how to put each

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aspect of the property to use, and that's something that I know we've been talking about." Clr. Drew said, "But even if we bonded, we could sell whatever at some point. If we ever did decide to go down the sale route, it's just like selling a property." Solicitor O'Neill said, "You still can sell it and pay off the bond." CAFO Duprey said, "Assuming there weren't fees, et cetera, yes, we would have to go down that path."

11. Request of Councilors: Mayor Beauregard said, "Speaking of the **Searles, there will be tours, again, on June 13th**. So, check that out. There is a sign-up online. And, of course, as part of that process, they ask anybody who sets foot on the property to sign a waiver, things like that to protect the city from a liability standpoint. So that will be on the 13th of June. I'll go right down the list. I'm going to kind of riff here because there are some things that we are still trying to sort out and work on. So, there's a **question here about trash collection at Housing Authority (properties.)** I need to follow up on that." Chair Soto said, "That's my question, Mr. Mayor. It is my assumption that we are covering their trash expense. And so, I want clarification from the administration how that agreement was made and if it's something that we have to bear for because other, in my research, other housing authorities pay for their own garbage pickup. And so, since garbage has been such an issue here in Methuen, you know, we wanted to make sure that we are accounting for what we are supposed to be paying." Mayor Beauregard said, "Yes, it makes sense. I've been hung up with health insurance and special ed." Chair Soto said, "Yes, I understand. No worries. So, we'll keep that on the agenda for the next one." Mayor Beauregard said, "That's perfect. Next, **we have a request for the paving list to be submitted**. So, we have the draft list. It's online. Felix requested today that (CIO) Luis (Santiago) put that online, so that's up there now. The next thing about **recovery of abandoned and unclaimed property**, it looks like this is a request for the CAFO and the Solicitor." Solicitor O'Neill said, "So I could speak to that. (Treasurer) Jennifer (Finnigan) has been advertising. She's in the initial process of publishing the abandoned funds as she's required to do under DOR rules in the newspaper, and she's proceeding forward with that." Clr. Valley said, "How long is it going to take the process?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "It takes a while. She has to publish twice over a period of months. I can get you the exact schedule. It's a little bit convoluted." Clr. Valley said, "I'm just thinking that we have \$700,000 there that we can use towards the school, save some positions, or cover part of the deficit that we have with the health insurance. That's money that we could be using." Solicitor O'Neill said, "I don't know the number, but it comes in. I don't know if it will all come in at once." CAFO Duprey said, "I hate to jump in. The first step of the process is to advertise it the first time. Then the clock starts ticking. It's actually a year from that point. We can't consider it abandoned until a year after the first initial advertisement. So, she advertises it. The clock starts. She has to advertise it again. There are a couple months in between there to give people a chance to see it and respond to it. If then, after a year from the first initial time that she's advertising, which is what she's doing right now, and they have not requested to get those funds, then the city can claim them as her funds." Clr. Valley said, "OK, thank you." Mayor Beauregard said, "Next on the agenda, we have an update for the rail trail. I have nothing new there. That's something I'll defer to the Legal Department, just given the fact that it sounds like it's not exactly cut and dry. I recommend keeping it on the agenda." Clr. Valley said, "I didn't understand what you just said, Mr. Mayor. What are you trying to say?" Mayor Beauregard said, "**The depot overhang?**" Clr. Valley said, "Yes. I had a conversation with Mr. Gagliardi, and he's willing and able to transfer the property to the city as long as the city presents a plan. So, my question is, is it feasible, yes or no? And can I keep the Rail Trail Coalition informed? Then I can close this chapter and can move on." Solicitor O'Neill said, "I would not recommend that. I mean, it's a portion of a building that belongs to, I think, the

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International Laborers Union. It has been the subject of enforcement letters in the past. They're under an obligation to fix it. I mean, I defer to the Mayor as to whether or not he wants to accept that responsibility, but if it's transferred to the city, then the city is going to have to spend significant funds to fix that when it's the obligation of the building owner to do that. I'm happy to provide that information to the Council. And if the Mayor wants us to take further action to try to facilitate that getting done, we certainly can do that. You know, it's something that we can pursue on a legal basis, just that hasn't been requested." Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "Thank you, Madam Chair. So my understanding of it was partial was owned by the city, and then it was part by the Laborers Union, and then there's a portion owned by the BFW, that when they received their property, there was a deed exchange where the city or someone said, yeah, you want part of this parking lot, you have to take part of the overhang as part of the parking lot. And then they retained the information. That is what history has been telling me. And the question is, does the VFW own part of that building still? Do we know?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "So I have no idea whether the VFW owns part of that building, but I can tell you that the city owns none of it. The overhang belongs entirely to that building. And it was the subject of an outside Counsel enforcement letter by the city in 2018 requesting the owner of that property to fix it, and it's now been eight years and they've done nothing. So, I don't know what to tell you about that. I wasn't here then, but I can tell you that the Legal Department is prepared to enforce that order that was sent to them, if that's the will of the City and the Mayor." Mayor Beauregard said, "I'll just say that the city shouldn't be in the business of making fixes to private property, right? But if there are certain aspects of this that are unanswered, questions about perhaps ownership, things that we would need to get to the bottom of, certainly we would need to do that on our end and do our full research on it. So, I don't have anything to share about the next step right now. But if this is something where there are other nuanced factors at play, then we would certainly take that into consideration. But I just have nothing tonight." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Thank you, Madam Chair. I spoke with Mr. Gagliardi as well, and the laborer's position is that the city owns the front half." Solicitor O'Neill said, "It does not. It does not own the front half." Clr. Drew said, "They own the back quarter, which overcovers their parking lot, and the VFW owns the other quarter on the other side. I'm asking, is it possible for the city to engage the laborers, have a discussion, come to an understanding of what is where, do all of our appropriate research, and see if there is a path here. Because it sounds like we've sent something to them, they're saying we don't own that, nothing's getting done with a dilapidated historic piece of property in this city that we should be looking at. It's right on the Rail Trail, it's a beautiful area right on that Rail Trail, and I would love to see them try to do something. Is that something we can productively do and go and have a conversation about, or is it just going to be we're going to get into a legal war over? I know we sent a letter in 2018, and that's fine. Was that correct? I wasn't here; I wasn't even in the city. So, I don't know all of the history. I'm just saying from my conversations with the laborers, this is their stance. Obviously, we know the city's stance. Is there a conversation to be had so that we can find a middle ground that makes sense?" Mayor Beauregard said, "We can follow up on it." Solicitor O'Neill said, "We'll do our best. It's just going to take money that the Mayor will have to allocated to that to fix it if we were to contribute to that." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Valley, "For the repairs, I had a conversation with the president of the Rail Trail Coalition, and he stated that there are some grants available for that, but they can't apply. The only way you can apply is if the property is transferred to the city." Clr. DiZoglio said, "Also, I know for a fact that because you have your Rail Trails restoration grants that you can apply for, you can apply for history grants. And, just recently, **(State Senator) Pavel Payano**, I saw his list, and he's been hearing us about what we're doing here, that we're trying to get that Rail Trail, supposedly gave the city **\$50,000 for our Rail Trail**. So, we have \$50,000 that we can look at, and with partnership with grants and with the Labor's

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Union, that's just an idea, to solve a historical building, because it is historical, and it is a beautiful building. And again, as we continue to do this repeatedly, we're trying to protect the Searles Estate, we should consider protecting all of our buildings, because that's what makes us sound 300 years, but we seem to be diminishing the 300 years of history. So, we have that, and we can talk about it, but I think it's our job to figure out who that belongs to, and if it doesn't belong to us, we squash that history of saying that we own it, and also VFW owns it, if they don't want it, we can have conversations with the Labor's Union saying, hey, we're willing to do partnership, but you need to fix your side of the building as well. I know it seems like a wonderful world problem to solve, but let's do something." Mayor Beauregard said, "We'll take a look at it, Councilor. So, next on the agenda, we have an **update on the feasibility study for public safety buildings and DPWs**. So, as you know, the City Council literally just approved a contract with Weston and Sampson, which I'm very grateful for. We're working on scheduling a kickoff meeting with them, just to really take that to the next step. Of course, it's been a slightly hectic few weeks with the heavy **focus on solving the health insurance crisis**, and all that fun stuff, and so with that, we'll have an update to share once we have that kickoff meeting. We have a request for the first report from the **Sanitation Coordinator regarding fines** and the like. So, of course, this is a request. I imagine we're going to want it for the next meeting. **However, I do have an update that I received from Director Bower sharing this on behalf of the Sanitation Coordinator. This employee has been out there tagging in over 100 instances, situations where there's been the need to reject trash pickup or recycling due to overflowing trash, contaminated recycling, overflowing recycling, using non-City-issued barrels.** The employee's also working in conjunction with Luis (Santiago) in IT from the standpoint of getting that ticketing system up and running, and it sounds like that is moving forward in an expeditious way, hoping to get that up and running in the next week or so. Then beyond that, the **Sanitation Coordinator has been working on establishing a brochure** to provide some information to residents. I think that's really half the battle in terms of tackling the issue of tonnage. It's really a matter of getting education out there to residents about the do's and don'ts associated with the program, and they're working on the establishment also of some type of a citywide mailer. So that's something that we can put together in the monthly reporting going forward. The stats that I think are being requested here will include that in the next agenda. We have requests for information about the **Alderbrook Lane** situation. I got into that during my report. The esteemed and honorable Councilor Drew is going to want to reach across the table and give me a good smack on the nose. I'm sure I have nothing new to share on the **parks and buildings audits** in terms of funding those. They're not in the budget, so that's something that would have to probably come out of free cash, and it's something that we are dealing with tonight in terms of significant drawdowns, so whether we can find potentially other sources of funding for that. I know it's something that I've committed to getting off the ground. We've just had a game of whack-a-mole going on in the city right now just in terms of putting out fires and the like, so keep it on the agenda. We need to get around to it. We have a request about **standardizing city employee e-mail signatures**. I'm sure Councilor Drew can get into that. **Fire department fees update.** The plan is during the July meeting to bring forward the increases in the fee structure relative to the Fire Department, namely surrounding the ambulance rates, which are quite low compared to other comparable municipalities in the region, and also the lift assist fees, which we discussed during the budget, so those will come to you in July. I'll defer to the CAFO on MUNIS, and I referenced during my report the **HHSI permit fees review**, so all that is ongoing, and that, I think, includes what I have on the list for requests. CAFO, do you want to get into MUNIS?" Chair Soto recognized CAFO Duprey, "As far as the MUNIS update goes, we are in conversations with IT and Tyler Technologies. We're looking at whether we can go with October or wait until January and what the two different timings would mean. It's cleaner to do

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it in January, but if we're ready in October. So, we're having those conversations right now. We are scheduling another follow-up meeting in the next week or so to decide so that we can move forward, but that's where we're at right now, either October or January. We're just trying to figure out the logistics." Clr. Drew said, "Thank you, Madam Chair. So, we'll just touch on that really quickly. So, October versus January, I mean, are we seeing cost savings, assumably?" CAFO Duprey said, "From the Harper's standpoint, so yes, it would be a little bit of a savings there. It's cleaner to do it in January because of W-2s for our employees, so that's the draw there, especially going to a new system, so that's driving that. Also, my department is losing a payroll person as of July 1, so that is also critical. This person is actually the person who's been doing this MUNIS project, so that's a critical loss for us, and so trying to figure out how we can manage that and still pull off October. So, we're just working on that right now." Clr. Drew said, "Okay. If you could update us at the next meeting what that cost would be, savings, if you go in October versus January, so we're just out there and open on it. Mr. Mayor, I hear you on the parks. You're worried about the money. I mean, we're just looking for an RFP, so it's not even securing us to have to spend the money. It's a request to see what's the cost is to do the actual audit. I mean, if you'd like me, I can write the RFP if you'd like." Mayor Beauregard said, "We don't need you to do that." Clr. Drew said, "Well, it's on the list. All right. As for the standardization of e-mails, it sounds petty, but as I get e-mails from a whole lot of people across the city, I mean, we're a \$250 million a year organization, and there's not a single person in this city that has the exact same e-mail signature. My company, we're similar in size. I hired a guy on Monday. He had an e-mail signature that matched every other person in my organization. It just seemed like something that HR and IT could get together and put something quickly together and make us look like a professional organization. So, this is just a cleanup item that I'd love to see cleaned up across the city."

11. Requests of Councilors

- **Does the Methuen Housing Authority currently receive trash collection services through the city's municipal trash contract? (Req. of Chair Soto)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "So, there's a question here about trash collection at Housing Authority (properties.) I need to follow up on that." Chair Soto said, "That's my question, Mr. Mayor. It is my assumption that we are covering their trash expense. And so, I want clarification from the administration how that agreement was made and if it's something that we have to bear for because other, in my research, other housing authorities pay for their own garbage pickup. And so, since garbage has been such an issue here in Methuen, you know, we wanted to make sure that we are accounting for what we are supposed to be paying." **KEEP ON LIST**
- **Request for paving list to be submitted on the Methuen Website (Req. of Chair Soto)** Mayor Beauregard said, "That's perfect. Next, we have a request for the paving list to be submitted. So, we have the draft list. It's online. Felix (Garcia) requested today that (CIO) Luis (Santiago) put that online, so that's up there now.
- **Update from the CAFO and City Solicitor regarding the implementation and status of the City's adoption of M.G.L. Chapter 200A, Section 9A relating to the disposition and recovery of abandoned and unclaimed property ("tailings".) (Req. of Clr. Valley)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "The next thing about recovery of abandoned and unclaimed property, it looks like this is a request for the CAFO and the Solicitor." Solicitor O'Neill said, "So I could speak to that. (Treasurer) Jennifer (Finnigan) has been advertising. She's in the initial process of publishing the abandoned funds as she's required to do under DOR rules in the newspaper, and she's proceeding forward with that." Clr. Valley said, "How long is it going to take the process?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "It takes a while. She has to publish

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twice over a period of months. I can get you the exact schedule. It's a little bit convoluted." Clr. Valley said, "I'm just thinking that we have \$700,000 there that we can use towards the school, save some positions, or cover part of the deficit that we have with the health insurance. That's money that we could be using." Solicitor O'Neill said, "I don't know the number, but it comes in. I don't know if it will all come in at once." CAFO Duprey said, "I hate to jump in. The first step of the process is to advertise it the first time. Then the clock starts ticking. It's a year from that point. We can't consider it abandoned until a year after the first initial advertisement. So, she advertises it. The clock starts. She has to advertise it again. There are a couple months in between there to give people a chance to see it and respond to it. If then, after a year from the first initial time that she's advertising, which is what she's doing right now, and they have not requested to get those funds, then the city can claim them as her funds."

- **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, "Next on the agenda, we have an update for the rail trail. I have nothing new there. That's something I'll defer to the Legal Department, just given the fact that it sounds like it's not exactly cut and dry. I recommend keeping it on the agenda." Clr. Valley said, "I didn't understand what you just said, Mr. Mayor. What are you trying to say?" Mayor Beauregard said, "The depot overhang?" Clr. Valley said, "Yes. I had a conversation with Mr. Gagliardi, and he's willing and able to transfer the property to the city as long as the city presents a plan. So, my question is, is it feasible, yes or no? And can I keep the Rail Trail Coalition informed? Then I can close this chapter and can move on." Solicitor O'Neill said, "I would not recommend that. I mean, it's a portion of a building that belongs to, I think, the International Laborers Union. It has been the subject of enforcement letters in the past. They're under an obligation to fix it. I mean, I defer to the Mayor as to whether or not he wants to accept that responsibility, but if it's transferred to the city, then the city is going to have to spend significant funds to fix that when it's the obligation of the building owner to do that. I'm happy to provide that information to the Council. And if the Mayor wants us to take further action to try to facilitate that getting done, we certainly can do that. You know, it's something that we can pursue on a legal basis, just that hasn't been requested." Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "Thank you, Madam Chair. So my understanding of it was partial was owned by the city, and then it was part by the Laborers Union, and then there's a portion owned by the BFW, that when they received their property, there was a deed exchange where the city or someone said, yeah, you want part of this parking lot, you have to take part of the overhang as part of the parking lot. And then they retained the information. That is what history has been telling me. And the question is, does the VFW own part of that building still? Do we know?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "So I have no idea whether the VFW owns part of that building, but I can tell you that the city owns none of it. The overhang belongs entirely to that building. And it was the subject of an outside Counsel enforcement letter by the city in 2018 requesting the owner of that property to fix it, and it's now been eight years and they've done nothing. So, I don't know what to tell you about that. I wasn't here then, but I can tell you that the Legal Department is prepared to enforce that order that was sent to them, if that's the will of the City and the Mayor." Mayor Beauregard said, "I'll just say that the city shouldn't be in the business of making fixes to private property, right? But if there are certain aspects of this that are unanswered, questions about perhaps ownership, things that we would need to get to the bottom of, certainly we would need to do that on our end and do our full research on it. So, I don't have

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anything to share about the next step right now. But if this is something where there are other nuanced factors at play, then we would certainly take that into consideration. But I just have nothing tonight.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, “Thank you, Madam Chair. I spoke with Mr. Gagliardi as well, and the laborer's position is that the city owns the front half.” Solicitor O’Neill said, “It does not. It does not own the front half.” Clr. Drew said, “They own the back quarter, which overcovers their parking lot, and the VFW owns the other quarter on the other side. I'm asking, is it possible for the city to engage the laborers, have a discussion, come to an understanding of what is where, do all of our appropriate research, and see if there is a path here. Because it sounds like we've sent something to them, they're saying we don't own that, nothing's getting done with a dilapidated historic piece of property in this city that we should be looking at. It's right on the Rail Trail, it's a beautiful area right on that Rail Trail, and I would love to see them try to do something. Is that something we can productively do and go and have a conversation about, or is it just going to be we're going to get into a legal war over? I know we sent a letter in 2018, and that's fine. Was that correct? I wasn't here; I wasn't even in the city. So, I don't know all of the history. I'm just saying from my conversations with the laborers, this is their stance. Obviously, we know the city's stance. Is there a conversation to be had so that we can find a middle ground that makes sense?” Mayor Beauregard said, “We can follow up on it.” Solicitor O’Neill said, “We'll do our best. It's just going to take money that the Mayor will have to allocated to that to fix it if we were to contribute to that.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Valley, “For the repairs, I had a conversation with the president of the Rail Trail Coalition, and he stated that there are some grants available for that, but they can't apply. The only way you can apply is if the property is transferred to the city.” Clr. DiZoglio said, “Also, I know for a fact that because you have your Rail Trails restoration grants that you can apply for, you can apply for history grants. And, just recently, **(State Senator) Pavel Payano**, I saw his list, and he's been hearing us about what we're doing here, that we're trying to get that Rail Trail, supposedly gave the city **\$50,000 for our Rail Trail**. So, we have \$50,000 that we can look at, and with partnership with grants and with the Labor's Union, that's just an idea, to solve a historical building, because it is historical, and it is a beautiful building. And again, as we continue to do this repeatedly, we're trying to protect the Searles Estate, we should consider protecting all of our buildings, because that's what makes us sound 300 years, but we seem to be diminishing the 300 years of history. So, we have that, and we can talk about it, but I think it's our job to figure out who that belongs to, and if it doesn't belong to us, we squash that history of saying that we own it, and also VFW owns it, if they don't want it, we can have conversations with the Labor's Union saying, hey, we're willing to do partnership, but you need to fix your side of the building as well. I know it seems like a wonderful world problem to solve, but let's do something.” Mayor Beauregard said, “We'll take a look at it, Councilor.” **KEEP ON LIST**

- **Update on the feasibility study for the public safety buildings and DPW – (Req. of Clr. Santos)** - Mayor Beauregard said, “So, next on the agenda, we have an update on the feasibility study for public safety buildings and DPWs. So, as you know, the City Council literally just approved a contract with Weston and Sampson, which I'm very grateful for. We're working on scheduling a kickoff meeting with them, just to really take that to the next step. Of course, it's been a slightly hectic few weeks with the heavy focus on solving the health insurance crisis, and all that fun stuff, and so with that, we'll have an update to share once we have that kickoff meeting. **KEEP ON LIST**
- **Request for the first report from the Sanitation/Zero Waste Coordinator and trash related fines, tonnage, etc. (Req. of Clr. DiZoglio and Clr. Drew)** – Mayor Beauregard said, “We have a request for the first report from the Sanitation Coordinator regarding fines

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and the like. So, of course, this is a request. I imagine we're going to want it for the next meeting. However, I do have an update that I received from Director Bower sharing this on behalf of the Sanitation Coordinator. This employee has been out there tagging in over 100 instances, situations where there's been the need to reject trash pickup or recycling due to overflowing trash, contaminated recycling, overflowing recycling, using non-City-issued barrels. The employee's also working in conjunction with Luis (Santiago) in IT from the standpoint of getting that ticketing system up and running, and it sounds like that is moving forward in an expeditious way, hoping to get that up and running in the next week or so. Then beyond that, the Sanitation Coordinator has been working on establishing a brochure to provide some information to residents. I think that's really half the battle in terms of tackling the issue of tonnage. It's really a matter of getting education out there to residents about the do's and don'ts associated with the program, and they're working on the establishment also of some type of a citywide mailer. So that's something that we can put together in the monthly reporting going forward. The stats that I think are being requested here will include that in the next agenda. **KEEP ON LIST**

- **Request for information regarding operation at 4 Alderbrook Lane of non-residential use (Req. of Clr. DiZoglio and Chair Soto)** – Mayor Beauregard said, “Regarding Alderbrook Lane, I was able to visit with residents there. Councilor Drew joined me last night to chat with the residents, hear their concerns about the recent event that had happened. We shared information that we also passed along to the Council relative to the use of this property as housing rather than an actual church facility, so that seems to be largely resolved. I gave them my contact information. If there are any other issues, they can certainly feel free to reach out.”
- **Parks & Buildings Audit RFP status update – (Req. of Clr. Drew)** – Mayor Beauregard said, “The esteemed and honorable Councilor Drew is going to want to reach across the table and give me a good smack on the nose. I'm sure I have nothing new to share on the parks and buildings audits in terms of funding those. They're not in the budget, so that's something that would have to probably come out of free cash, and it's something that we are dealing with tonight in terms of significant drawdowns, so whether we can find potentially other sources of funding for that. I know it's something that I've committed to getting off the ground. We've just had a game of whack-a-mole going on in the city right now just in terms of putting out fires and the like, so keep it on the agenda. We need to get around to it. **KEEP ON LIST**
- **City employee email signature standardization (Req. of Clr. Drew)** – Mayor Beauregard said, “We have a request about standardizing city employee e-mail signatures. I'm sure Councilor Drew can get into that.” Clr. Drew said, “As for the standardization of e-mails, it sounds petty, but as I get e-mails from a whole lot of people across the city, I mean, we're a \$250 million a year organization, and there's not a single person in this city that has the exact same e-mail signature. My company, we're similar in size. I hired a guy on Monday. He had an e-mail signature that matched every other person in my organization. It just seemed like something that HR and IT could get together and put something quickly together and make us look like a professional organization. So, this is just a cleanup item that I'd love to see cleaned up across the city.” **KEEP ON LIST**
- **Fire Department fees update (lift fees and ambulance rate adjustment) (Req. of Clr. Drew)** – Mayor Beauregard said, “Fire department fees update. The plan is during the July meeting to bring forward the increases in the fee structure relative to the Fire Department, namely surrounding the ambulance rates, which are quite low compared to other comparable municipalities in the region, and also the lift assist fees, which we discussed during the budget, so those will come to you in July.” **KEEP ON LIST**

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- **Update on Tyler financial on MUNIS implementation plan date (discussed during FY2027 Budget Workshop) (Req. of Clr. Drew)** - CAFO Duprey said, "As far as the MUNIS update goes, we are in conversations with IT and Tyler Technologies. We're looking at whether we can go with October or wait until January and what the two different timings would mean. It's cleaner to do it in January, but if we're ready in October. So, we're having those conversations right now. We are scheduling another follow-up meeting in the next week or so to decide so that we can move forward, but that's where we're at right now, either October or January. We're just trying to figure out the logistics." Clr. Drew said, "Thank you, Madam Chair. So, we'll just touch on that quickly. So, October versus January, I mean, are we seeing cost savings, assumably?" CAFO Duprey said, "From the Harper's standpoint, so yes, it would be a little bit of a savings there. It's cleaner to do it in January because of W-2s for our employees, so that's the draw there, especially going to a new system, so that's driving that. Also, my department is losing a payroll person as of July 1, so that is also critical. This person is the person who's been doing this MUNIS project, so that's a critical loss for us, and so trying to figure out how we can manage that and still pull off October. So, we're just working on that right now." Clr. Drew said, "Okay. If you could update us at the next meeting what that cost would be, savings, if you go in October versus January, so we're just out there and open on it." **KEEP ON LIST**
- **HHSI permit fees review and update status (discussed during FY2027 Budget Workshop) (Req. of Clr. Drew)** – Mayor Beauregard said, "The Board of Health, this is regarding an item on the agenda under Request of Councilors. The Board of Health will be reviewing and voting on a fee schedule for changes for all health permits at their meeting this Thursday. In the meantime, HHSI is reviewing all building-related permit fees and comparing them to similar communities in preparation for changes to be proposed to the Council." **KEEP ON LIST**

12. Public Service:

Grants: None

Licenses: None

Contract(s):

C-26-94 – Tread Milling Co. Inc., 18 Ayers Village Road, Suite 10, Methuen, MA 01844 – Cold Planing and Profiling of Bituminous Surfaces (Loading Contractors Trucks and Disposing Outside Methuen) Funded Through Chapter 90 for the City's Paving Season FY2026 Through the Department of Public Works - **\$28,800.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Valley, "Thank you, Madam Chair. Deputy Garcia, I just have a question for you. How many streets will this contract cover?" Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "So, for this contract, it's not just for specific streets. It's more for locations where we had sewer main break, water main break, where we have patches. So, this contract is going to go mill this localized location, so like that we have smooth transitions between what was worked on and what hasn't been touched." – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-95 – Murray Paving & Reclamation, Inc., 55 Whitney Street, Holliston, MA 01746 – Bituminous Concrete Pavement Reclamation Funded Through Chapter 90 for the City's Paving Season FY2026 Through the Department of Public Works - **\$648,071.00 – Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. MacLaren – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "So quick question. So, I've been reading up on streets, and on some of these streets that have sidewalks, and I could be wrong, but some of these streets that might be getting paved with sidewalks, they're supposed to be ADA compliant as well. So, when you're going over a street that's brand new, aren't

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they supposed to, even if it's like half of a sidewalk going down a side street, technically, isn't that true that they have to be ADA compliant? You have to make them ADA compliant?" Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "That is correct. So, we have another contract that's on call sidewalk repairs. So, what we're going to be doing with that other contract is, before we do any paving, if there's a particular street that needs sidewalk work, or there's no ADA accessibility for folks, so we'll let the sidewalk contractor say 'we need to fix these locations in order to provide accessibility.' And then once we are done doing sidewalk work, then we'll do the reclamation and paving." Clr. DiZoglio said, "I ask that because there's been streets that you could call it a sidewalk, or was a sidewalk at one point, that gets their paving done, but there seems to be no ADA compliant over there. So, I'm just wondering, I'm just curious, is it because the sidewalk was completely ruined that it's not considered a sidewalk? Or I'm just making sure that we're not setting this up for possibly being in trouble with lawsuits, because we're not doing ADA compliance on paved streets." Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "Yes. So, in the past, the streets that we tried to pave were the streets that didn't have sidewalks. And, we haven't had that issue because we haven't had a sidewalk contract. Now that we're proposing a contract to do sidewalk work, our priority will be fixing the sidewalks on those particular streets that we want to pave. We've also been getting a lot of requests from See-Click Fix, so we also want to address those concerns from constituents. And then regarding these locations where it looks like it was paved, it might have been Eversource, and maybe they trenched and then they had to come back the following year. They're just going to be doing the paving. They don't have any responsibilities in improving ADA; that will be done by the city itself." Clr. DiZoglio said, "So, you're saying Eversource, when they do streets and tear them up, they're not obligated to follow ADA compliance to the sidewalk?" Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "That's my understanding of it, because they're only doing the trench work, and they're only fixing what they disturbed. So, then we will have to probably come in and provide accessibility to the city." Clr. DiZoglio said, "Unless they mess up the sidewalk as well." Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "Yes, if anything that they disturb or mess up, then they will have to fix it." Chair Soto said, "Felix, I have a question for you. There isn't a specific list of streets. Is that because you guys changed them as you go?" Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "I've been getting a lot of requests, so I just kept adding them to the list." Chair Soto said, "Yes, that's the reason. All right, just because I didn't see a specific list." Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "We posted it earlier today. If you just go on the City of Methuen's website and search 'paving,' you'll see a link to it, and you can see the list of streets." Clr. Drew said, "Mr. Garcia, just that e-mail you sent me earlier today, those list of 15 streets or so, those are the current ones, some of these, the central and the west?" Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "Correct. So, we're doing 17. I sent you one incorrect street. I think it was Riverview Avenue, but that was already done, I think, two years ago. So just scratch that one out. But for this contract, the reclamation contract, we have 17 streets that we want to reclaim, and that's just because it's just really beat up, and that's the proper treatment for it. We don't want to mill. If you go to other towns, if it's really bad, and they, let's say, mill and pave, the asphalt base has cracks, and they will propagate within a couple of years. So, the correct solution is to remove the asphalt, blend it with the sub-base, and have a proper asphalt base and top course, so that the cracks don't propagate upwards." Clr. Drew said, "So as you stated in the e-mail that you sent me today, 18 streets is roughly three miles of roadway. That's what this is going to cover?" Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "Correct. So, it's approximately three miles of street, and it's 17 streets." Clr. Drew said, "Okay. And you said that there's another one coming down the road that we're hoping to get through, and we'll do another nine miles or something." Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "Correct. So, on the website, you'll see the balance of the other streets that we are proposing. That's going to be just milling and paving, and those are streets that are not too bad, but it must get paved."

– UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)

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C-26-96 – EJ Prescott, Inc., 162 North Main Street, Middleton, MA 01949 – Manhole Frames & Covers, Catch Basin Manhole Frames & Covers, Gate Boxes and Service Boxes Funded Through Chapter 90 for the City's Paving Season FY'2026 Through the Department of Public Works - **\$191,850.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-97 – McGovern MHQ, Inc., 401 Elm Street, Marlborough, MA 01752 – (1) 2026 Ford Super Duty F350 SRW (W38) XLT 4WD Crew Cab 6.75' Box with Service Body & 2,000 lb. Crane REV1 Purchased through MAPC-GBPC 2025 Vehicles (state contract) for the Water Treatment Plant through the Department of Public Works - **\$136,307.33 - Motion to approve by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Garcia again. I should have mentioned this one in the email that we corresponded with earlier. Are you replacing an existing vehicle that you have in your fleet?" Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "That is correct. So, the existing vehicle right now can't pass inspection, so this is to replace the necessary vehicle that we need." Clr. Drew said, "Okay, and then we're going to surplus that vehicle? And that's all? I don't know the surplus process." CAFO Duprey said, "So normally once we go through and gather our surplus, usually about once a year or once every other year, we'll bring forward a list to Council. You will approve or not, but once the list is surplus, we then go out to auction and auction off the vehicles, and then we take the funds into General Fund." Clr. Drew said, "Okay. I know in the last six months that we've been, as a Council, we've approved some new vehicles that were supposed to be supplementing other vehicles. I know there's some more coming down the contract line tonight from the Police Department. Are we planning to do a surplus list this year?" CAFO Duprey said, "Not before July 1st but yes, in the next few months we will be doing that." Clr. Drew said, "I'm in the calendar year, not the FY year." CAFO Duprey said, "We did two years in a row of big lists because it hadn't been done for a while. So, the list hasn't been as long, but, yeah, it's due." Clr. Drew said, "I'd like to see us surplus a bunch of stuff and get it off our rolls and maybe generate something out of it." CAFO Duprey said, "Yeah, it does, surprisingly." – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-98 – Torromeo Industries, Inc., 3 Old Ferry Road, P.O. Box 2308, Methuen, MA 01844 – The Purchase of Sand, Stone & Gravel for the City's Paving Season FY2026 Through the Department of Public Works - **\$85,603.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. MacLaren – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-99 – Safeware, Inc., 4403 Forbes Boulevard, Lanham, MD 20706-432 – The Purchase of one (1) Sky DR4ATTSWNAIR Skydio Night Sense Drone, purchased through COMMBUYS State Contract HLS06 - **\$24,999.82 - Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. Drew – Discussion** – Chair Soto said, "Point of information, this is under the threshold. Why is it on my agenda?" Mayor Beauregard said, "So that was exactly what I was going to mention. So technically I was not required to put this on the agenda. However, it is precisely \$0.18 below the threshold. And so just coming from the standpoint of being on the Council, if there were expenditures being made that were \$0.18 below the threshold, sometimes that can seem huge. If that makes sense. So even though it's under the threshold, it was close enough that for the sake of transparency, given the closeness to the threshold, and given the fact that I had the hebegeebies not bringing it to you, I'm putting it before you even though I don't have to. I don't know if that makes any sense." Chair Soto said, "I appreciate that, Mr. Mayor. Now that sets the President that if you're \$0.50 below, you might have to do that as well. So just putting that out there. But, Councilors, this is an item that he could buy without our vote. So, it's in front of you." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "First, I'd like to say thank you to the Mayor for putting this on our agenda because it is a hot button item. I did

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have some people call me on this one because there are people who are concerned about drone surveillance. So, Chief, I don't know if you can come up and just speak a little bit about it. I know I had given you a couple of questions earlier. And do you, just to help alleviate some of the community's worries and things like that, is there currently a written drone policy in the PD?" Chief McNamara said, "Yeah, we sure do. First thing I want to mention is that we've been successfully operating drones in the City of Methuen since 2017, so this is not something new. This is not new technology. These are still the line-of-sight drones that we deploy 24-7. We currently have eight certified drone pilots --- police officers, that have gone out and got their FAA training to safely operate drones in our city. We operate them for a variety of reasons, search and rescue operations, for example. When we have a structure fire, we'll deploy a drone because the thermal imaging can really help the Fire Department in determining where that hotspot is located. You may have mentioned the Searles Estate has been a hot-button topic tonight. Roughly about a year ago, around the time we first acquired it, we did have an attempted break-in at the Searles. One of our officers witnessed it happening as we were doing checks on the property. The two suspects fled to Grey Court Park. They initially evaded capture. However, we deployed one of our drones, and the drone successfully helped us locate these two suspects hiding in a wooded area. So, we use drones for a number of different reasons in the city. We probably deploy them two or three times a month on average, and we've had no issues in terms of privacy or violations of our policy for as long as we've deployed them, and it's been about a decade now." Clr. Drew said, "Thank you very much. And just on the privacy part of it, how is the data retained? How long do you hold it? Who has access to it, that kind of stuff? I know a lot of people have concerns about privacy." Chief McNamara said, "Sure. Well, it will depend on why we're deploying it. So, if it has evidentiary value, for example, it will be stored just like any other data-related evidence. It's uploaded to our platform called evidence.com, where it's safely secured, and we would hold on to that data as long as there was an active court case, and once that court case ran its final disposition, it would be destroyed at that point. Other things, we would simply hold them for 30 days. Like, for example, you'll see our drone deployed at some of the events that are coming up that the mayor mentioned during his presentation, during the fireworks, during the 300th celebration and what have you. It just gives us another perspective to see what's going on to help us identify if there's any emerging problem that the police officers need to address. Those we'll hold for 30 days and then destroy if there's no need to hold them any longer than that." Clr. Drew said, "Thank you. And these are not autonomous drones. There is always a point of sign. There's an officer who can see it at all times." Chief McNamara said, "Yes. So, there has been a relaxation in the FAA standards, and I think you probably know that I'm very excited about moving on to the autonomous drones in the future. I think that they are very much the future of policing. But this is not that. This is simply an extension of the ongoing program that we've had for 10 years. This is, again, a line-of-sight drone. The way that we deploy drones in our city is to have drone pilots on each of our three patrol platoons. The pilot will store that drone in the trunk of the police cruiser, and they're out there pre-deployed in the field. And if they're needed, they're launched from the trunk of that vehicle, and the officer will have what you've probably seen before, that joystick-like device with the viewfinder on there. And they have to maintain the line of sight with that drone. They're not the type of drones that you launch from behind a laptop, for example. They have to be line-of-sight. So, we haven't evolved to that autonomous drone program. Maybe that's something that we'll do in the future, but this is not that." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Simard, "Thank you, Madam Chair. I probably should have called you to ask you this. I just didn't have the time. But how many drones do we have, and is this drone going to just have new technology to replace those drones or one of those drones?" Chief McNamara said, "Yes. We like to have two, one that will typically -- we use the older one for training, the newer one in the field. We lost one about 18 months ago during a tragic search and rescue event. We had a child that was lost up in the Merrimack River in the Lowell area. I think you're all familiar how that

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ended. While we had our drone deployed, unfortunately we had a bird strike over the river, and we lost that particular drone. But, yeah, we typically will have two, one that we use for training and one that we'll deploy in the field. Thank you." – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-100 – Island Tech Services, 14 Industrial Way, Atkinson, NH 03811 – Outfitting of (5) Police Vehicles (2-Ford Interceptor Policy Utility, 1- Patrol Slick Top, 1-Admin Tahoe and 1 Parking Enforcement Hyundai) Purchased Through CIP Funds for the Police Department - **\$60,546.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Valley, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-101 - McGovern MHQ, Inc., 401 Elm Street, Marlborough, MA 01752 – One (1) 2026 Ford K8D Explorer and One (1) Chevy Equinox for the Police Department - **\$82,747.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Valley, "Through you to the CAFO, Madam CAFO. I see the accounts here on the bottom, like two accounts from FY26. Can you please clarify that? \$44,727 and \$34,667." CAFO Duprey said, "So, yes, we budgeted for these two vehicles on two different lines. And so my financial impact statement, I tried to show them separately so that you could see what the original amount that was approved was versus what we're using against it. So, there is enough funds in there, but we purchased it in one lump, but we budgeted for it in two separate lines." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Just to the Chief again really quick. Chief, just for clarification, these were replacement vehicles for vehicles that are in your fleet?" Chief McNamara said, "That's correct." Clr. Drew said, "And we're going to surplus those vehicles also?" Chief McNamara said, "That is also correct, yes." – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-102 – Energy Source, LLC, 37 Thurber Boulevard, Suite 101, Smithfield, RI 02917 – Energy Conservation Project through National Grid for replacing the oil burner at North Station Fire Department - **\$56,151.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Valley, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Thank you. I didn't know who to ask this question to. It was the DPW or the Mayor. No. It's really, we're going to replace an oil burner. Is it working currently? And if we are replacing it, what's going to be our return on investment on this in the long term?" Mayor Beauregard said, "So, regarding this contract, it's being, just so you know, right out of the gate, it's being funded, at least in part, by the Green Communities Grant to the tune of \$56,151. The total cost of the project is \$110,539. So Green Communities is covering \$56,151. The balance is being funded to the tune of roughly \$16,000 in utility incentives and \$38,000 in National Grid on bill payment. And then when it comes to the actual savings, it's estimated at, follow this, 71.6 million British thermal units. And the annual cost savings anticipated is \$2,089. And with the elimination of the oil-fueled boiler, only two municipal facilities will be heated by oil. That would be Nicholson Stadium and the DPW Highway Garage Building, just to share a 30,000-foot view." Clr. Drew said, "So roughly \$2,000 that I'm hearing. That was a lot of numbers." Mayor Beauregard said, "Roughly \$2,000 in annual savings anticipated by making the switch." Clr. Drew said, "So it takes about 20 years to see a ROI. But it's grant funded. It's grant-funded for most of it. I just wanted to check on it. Thank you." – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-103 - Energy Source, LLC, 37 Thurber Boulevard, Suite 101, Smithfield, RI 02917 – MHS Installing Building Management System – Efficiently Control HVAC Systems at the Facility - **\$122,581.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

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C-26-104 - Energy Source, LLC, 37 Thurber Boulevard, Suite 101, Smithfield, RI 02917 – MHS Energy Efficient LED Lighting - **\$43,227.00** - **Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, “I’ll ask the same question. What’s the ROI on this one? Because that’s a lot of money to change some labels.” Mayor Beauregard said, “All right I’ll drive you through the rundown. In essence This is part of a project that has been ongoing for the past three years in terms of LED conversion of classrooms at the High School. The total cost of the project is in the ballpark of \$262,000. Green Communities is funding \$43,227 so in essence, this is putting \$43,000 to the project in Green Communities money. It’s supplemented by National Grid incentives \$29,029 and on bill financing of \$189,773 dollars energy savings from the project. Estimated the result in annual cost savings of estimated \$9,000 per year as a result of this. It is relatively time sensitive simply because the utility incentive program for lighting ends on October 31st. So, this will allow us to accomplish this within that time frame and it’s using the Green Communities Grant.” Clr. Drew said, “So five years ROI, got it.” – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-105 – TASCOC Construction, Inc., 19 Farm Road, West Bridgewater, MA 02379 – Manhole Casting Adjustments for the City’s Paving Season FY2026 through the Department of Public Works - **\$112,550.00** - **Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. Valley – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-106 – Black Earth Composting, LLC, 201 Pine Street, Manchester, NH 01944 – Program for Curbside Collection of Organic Food Scrap Material - **\$39,500.00** - **Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, “Thank you, Madam Chair. So, this is a new amenity provided to environmentally conscious residents. There is some degree of cost ultimately for people who want to subscribe to the program. But the gist of it is that food waste accounts for roughly 25 percent of trash composition --- that’s per DEP. We applied for and received a grant from DEP for the purchase of 13-gallon food waste collection carts. The goal is to roll this out and have 1,000 households participate ultimately. And it’s something that’s been quite successful in other municipalities --- Andover, Arlington & Newburyport. They have a robust program, and it helps municipalities in terms of implementing a more efficient waste management program, diverting food scraps from the solid waste tonnage. So, in essence, subscribers would pay a reduced fee for Compost Collection by Black Earth, and they receive a free bag of compost in return for it. So, there’s a whole, I guess, rhyme and reason to the program. Grant funds from the DEP carts grant and the recycling dividends program will pay the \$39,500 cost for the cart starter kits and compostable liners to participate in subscribers. So, in essence this equips residents who want to sign up and subscribe to the program to have the startup elements taken care of by way of getting a cart, getting a liner and being able to initiate participation. But, keep in mind, it’s ultimately a subscriber-based program similar to that found in Newburyport and other places.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, “Again I mean this is a Pilot Program, correct? We’re going to roll it out --- thousand people get to choose if they want to do it. To see us break even with the cost of tonnage breakdown. We’re hoping to see a loss of what? 200 tons? How much are we hoping to see reduced here?” Mayor Beauregard said, “We don’t have that quantified but considering the fact that the state their information indicates that food waste consists of roughly a quarter the food waste represents roughly a quarter of trash output. So, this could very well be assuming that people are interested in participating. This could be a helpful way for us to reduce our tonnage simply by diverting food scraps out of our tonnage. So, I think creative idea to try to reduce that.” Clr. Drew said, “This is just a one-year contract with this group?” Mayor Beauregard said, “Well, if it’s successful, we certainly want it to be ongoing. Newburyport has had theirs in place for I don’t know how many years, but it’s been a couple of years. Arlington and Andover are other

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examples.” Clr. Drew said, “When you give us our monthly trash (report).” Mayor Beauregard said, “Yes, we can add this to it so we can watch and track this and make sure that it's being a successful program and if we want to continue to implement.”– **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-107 – Richard F. D’Ambrodis, Inc., 166 White Street, Weymouth, MA 02190 – On Call Sidewalk Repairs throughout the City – the City’s Paving Season FY2026 through the Department of Public Works - **\$1,142,843.50 - Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, “Quick question. There's a part in it that says hot mix asphalt sidewalk or driveway. That is just repairing old asphalt sidewalk and not adding new asphalt on page 31?” Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, “So when we went out to bid, I included different types of materials --- asphalt and concrete. But we also have to remove if there's any old materials through unclassified excavation. So, it's just depending on what we find. If the sidewalk is all concrete, then we'll remove all the deteriorated concrete and we'll put back the concrete. If it was asphalt, we'll just remove the asphalt putting in asphalt.” Clr. DiZoglio, “The quick question is and again, I'm big up on it. Concrete lasts longer. It's just a given fact. Director Bower said that when it comes to salting, concrete can deteriorate, but at the same time asphalt breaks over time quickly especially when water gets in there and it breaks up. The concrete on Pleasant View, that gets salted all the time. (Mayor) Neil Perry put that in along Pleasant View and Pleasant Valley Street. I've walked over there --- it's still in perfect condition. You go further off on the asphalt that they put in roughly around the same time. It's already breaking apart. So that's why I'm concerned about again when replacing, finding a cheap way. And we placed it when we put concrete down and it lasts longer. I think I did it the right way. Concrete life expectancy is 25 years and asphalt is 15 years.” Deputy DPW Director Garcia agreed. Clr. DiZoglio said, “OK, so that's my problem with this contract where again we might put a little small amount, but again, we're finding a cheap way. If we can't afford money down the road, I'd rather pay more now because concrete's going to go up in the next few years as well where what we're paying for asphalt now, we could have paid for concrete that we're going to be paying for asphalt in a few years. So, do you generally think that way too?” Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, “I definitely see the short term. And I try to see also the long term. When it comes to any project that we do here in the city. But for this particular contract, is more for on call. So, the streets that we're going to be paving, if what was mentioned earlier --- if there's any accessibility issue, of course, all those are going to be concrete ramps. But, once we get that all taken care of, then we're going to look at all these See Click Fix complaints and then if we go to Street ABC, and it is one localized sidewalk, that's messed up, but it's concrete then of course we're going to rip out the old concrete put in new concrete. But if the balance of the streets is asphalt, I don't want to put concrete --- then everything is asphalt. It looks kind of weird. Do you know what I'm trying to say? It's more like an on-call service now for future projects. If it's near the schools or heavily trafficked sidewalks, we could definitely make a project just for that and we could replace it with concrete.” Clr. DiZoglio said, “So, I get that you're replacing asphalt with asphalt. The question I'm asking is saying I might replace it with the asphalt for \$197,500. How much would it cost us to say to the people, say we're replacing the asphalt with concrete? Just help you guys and just make it concrete so it lasts as long. Because, again, the road might be repaired in the next 10 to 15 years. But if it's concrete, now it's going to last 25 years, so if it's paying an extra to say and again I'm throwing numbers out there --- next to a hundred thousand dollars, and it'll last us 25 years, well, why don't we pay the extra hundred thousand to make it two hundred ninety seven thousand for concrete? For those roads that were already asphalt?” Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, “Yeah, so there's different materials and of course there are pros and cons for different types of materials. When it comes to asphalt, is always slightly cheaper compared to concrete. The life expectancy of asphalt is a lot less compared to concrete. But you know just that

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is all about money, so it depends on the money. But I mean if it was in a perfect world, we would have all concrete paving but that's very expensive, so we go with asphalt paving and we try to prolong it with cracks. – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. DiZoglio) – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-108 – Waste Management of Londonderry, Inc., 26 Liberty Drive, Londonderry, NH 02053 – Hauling & Disposal Transfer Station Construction & Demolition (C&D) Related Material – FY2027 - \$227.90/ton = \$710,810.00 + container fee - \$4320.00 = \$706,490.00 – FY2028 – \$239.30/ton = \$741,830.00 + container fee - \$4320.00 = \$746,150.00 – FY2029 – 251.26/ton + container fee - \$4320.00 = \$783,226.00 – **Three (3) year total - \$2,240,186.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, “How much are we actually charging for demolition?” CAFO Duprey said, “I want to say we're charging 250.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Valley, “Thank you. Through you to the CAFO. What was the total revenue generated by the transfer station during the last three years. Do you have that number by any chance?” CAFO Duprey said, “I don't have it right in front of me, but I'll get it for you.” Clr. Valley said, “Mr. Mayor, do you think that's something that can be added to the report that Clr. Drew and Clr. DiZoglio requested from the Sanitation Coordinator?” Mayor Beauregard said, “Absolutely, that would be fine.” Clr. Valley said, “Okay, I'm sorry. I am requesting the revenue generated from the Transfer Station per month to be added to the report that request that Clr. Drew and Clr. DiZoglio asked for. Please and thank you.” – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

C-26-109 – Cambire Consulting, LLC, 152 Homestead Street, Boston, MA 02121 – Professional Grant Writing & Consulting Services - **\$75,000.00 - Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Santos, “Through you, Madam Chair to the Mayor. I just want to know do we have an expected return on the investment for the city?” Mayor Beauregard said, “So this contract is for a not to exceed annual minimum of \$75,000 and so for that my expectation is outlined in the RFP --- is to generate in between three and four million dollars in capital and or operational grants not counting foundation or entitlement grants that we automatically get to an extent from the feds or any other sources. On top of that, the goal would be to establish our first-ever grants dashboard citywide and to build the schools into it. I think it needs to be an all-encompassing program. And so, once we onboard them hypothetically assuming the Council supports going out with this grant program. Then we would, of course, have those initial meetings to establish the program. But what my anticipation is, and my expectation is, we need to be seeing that annual return for an investment like that and that's something that I don't think is out of the ordinary considering the size of our city.” Clr. Santos said, “So, another question I have is are they obviously you already said they were going to be working with different departments in the city, but can we get something in writing of the expectations that we will be receiving per department? Like how much the Police Department will be receiving, the Fire or DPW based on grants just so we have an idea?” Mayor Beauregard said, “Yeah, my thinking is to share that dashboard with the Council so you can see on a monthly basis the grants in the pipeline. And then my expectation would also be not only to have this firm in touch with Department Heads and meet the needs that every Department has. But certainly, if there were questions from the Council --- Let's say Clr. DiZoglio finds an opportunity for a Rail Trail Grant --- something like that. I would like there to be a degree of communication between the Council and these folks as well. I do it as an all-hands-on-deck effort to double down on what Departments are doing. It's siloed right now and so I think this will be a great opportunity for us to break down the walls --- break down the silos --- and have everybody on the same page and have a dashboard for us all to take a look at.” Clr. Santos said, “My main point is I'm referring of how much revenue will be

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we will be getting from this company for each department?" Mayor Beauregard said, "So, without a crystal ball in front of me determining what an exact prediction would be an expectation." Clr. Santos said, "That's what I'm asking for." Mayor Beauregard said, "Well as outlined in the RFP, I've established an expectation of trying to get in that ballpark of three to four million." Clr. Santos said, "Maybe an idea for a department?" Mayor Beauregard said, "I don't I don't have that. But certainly, once we put that dashboard, getting that in place getting a sense of what types of grants are in the pipeline, I think then it would probably be much easier to have a breakdown by department. Especially once we see exactly what's in the works in terms of grant applications." Clr Valley said, "Mayor, I'm so happy to see this contract in front of this body." – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

13. Other Officers and Committee Reports – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Simard, "Madam chair, thank you. I learned today that we have six candidates for the VSO position and I was going to advise you today during the meeting which I'm doing now. They were advised about the possible furlough days, should they take the position. Five agreed to move forward. So, we start the process on Wednesday afternoon. Francisco Urena agreed to be part of the Committee to guide us. We'll start that --- and I'm going to have the HR director if she okays it --- I'm going to have her send all the applications to the whole Council. If you have any information to share that you think is pertinent with the Committee, myself, Clr. Drew or Clr. DiZoglio, please do that. Any helpful information will help us and then we'll go from there."

14. Unfinished 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 and Councilor Valley*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. Valley, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

Ordinance(s):

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*) – **REMAINS ON THE TABLE**

~~**TO-26-14 AS AMENDED** – 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*)~~ **Removed from the agenda by Clr. DiZoglio**

14. New Business:

Resolutions:

TR-26-52 – A Resolution Amending the City of Methuen's Traffic Rules and Regulations to Require that Parking be Allowed on Short Street on Only One Side of the Street (*Sponsored by Councilors Jana Zanni Pesce and Patricia Valley*) (*EPA Requested*) – **Motion to approve by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Valley, "Thank you, Madam Chair. As you can see in the pictures attached in the report from the traffic unit, Short Street is not wide enough to accommodate parking on both sides of the street. This creates a public safety concern and may delay emergency response. Fire, Police and EMS vehicles, as you can see in the

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picture, see cars parked on both sides and the fire truck is barely able to pass by. So, I'm asking my fellow Councilors for the support for this resolution tonight." Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "Thank you, Madam Chair. So, I'm in favor of this but one of the things I think the (CC) Public Safety Committee should do. And maybe with the help of the Chief is to look at all these streets that are small and have studies done and see if we can limit parking on one side of them. Because I've seen multiple streets where both sides of the road are being taken up and I can barely fit my car through there. I think that's something the (CC) Public Safety Committee could take on and hopefully, with the support of everybody on the Council, we could do it. Maybe three or four streets at a time and then move it through us and then move it up to the Council moving forward." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Just a simple question for you, Madam Chair. To Clr. DiZoglio's point and this may be a completely off subject. You may have no idea what the answer to this. How many streets are roughly this exact size in Methuen?" Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "I don't know but I could find out. We have Beta Group. They did an assessment of all the streets here in the city and in that assessment, they could determine the average width. What we could do is export that in Excel and just see what streets are narrow." Clr. Drew said, "So you have the data to tell us streets like this --- so Clr. DiZoglio and I aren't going to have to go out and measure all these streets. So, you already have this data is really what I was trying to get to. I think this is a great idea. This is a safety item. I just wanted to make sure that I know that Chairwoman can attest that trying to get things done with all the roads at a certain time and be cumbersome. So, if you have the data, that's great. That'll be good for that Committee." Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "And it's good that we have the data, but we still have to go and observe the streets is because there might be one side that is, let's say, there might be more houses on this side and less on this side, which makes more sense." Clr. Drew said, "Yes, completely understand and yeah, that would go to the Public Safety. I think that would be on them, like he's alluded to doing three or four streets at a time. I think that's probably the most helpful because you also may get into certain neighborhoods, like I know we were down on a street Mr. Mayor and I, yesterday, but they don't want signs on their neighborhood. They're pretty good. So, we may have to just take that street by street. So, you have the data. I think it's great. That was just my question. Thank you." Clr. DiZoglio said, "So, Mr. Felix, quick question. If I have a meeting at the end of July of the Public Safety Committee, can you give me at least five to six streets?" Deputy DPW Director Garcia said, "We could work together. We could come up with some streets and we could do that." – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE - 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Simard) 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-53 – A Resolution Requesting that the Mayor & Chief Administrative & Financial Officer Conduct an Insurance Review & Obtain Competitive Quotes & Options for City Insurance Coverage to Promote Transparency, Fiscal Responsibility & Accountability (*Sponsored by Councilor Yanilda Santos*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion –** Chair Soto recognized Clr. Santos, "I just I submitted this so that we can get an idea a better quote since we are trying to save money. So maybe this is one path of many to come." Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, "Thank you, Clr. Santos for bringing this forward. So, we're in the process now of moving on going out to bid for insurance, especially in light of all the issues that we've had with simply maintaining status quo in the context of health insurance. For instance, the city's been with I believe Hub International going back to 2005. I was 16 years of age in 2005. It's been quite a bit of time since then without having any changes and so this is yet another great idea, I think, to help get the city on the right track in terms of making sure that we're saving as much money as we can in as many areas as possible. So, I'm fully in support of the sentiment." – **UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

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TR-26-54 – A Resolution Accepting the Gift of a Black Ornamental Fence with a 12-Foot Double Arched Gate at Methuen’s Historic Meeting House Hill Cemetery from the Methuen Festival of Trees in Honor of Methuen’s Tricentennial Celebration (*Sponsored by Mayor David P. Beauregard, Jr. and Methuen Festival of Trees*) – **Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. MacLaren – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to suspend Council Rules for EPA by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Valley – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-55 - Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$1,075,569 of Free Cash to Methuen Public School Budget Line to cover one-time FY26 special education costs (*EPA Requested*) – **Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, “Thank you, Madam Chair. So, this is something that we discussed during the budget process. Similar to last year, we have an opportunity to use these one-time funds to open up space for Circuit Breaker money to roll over in FY’2027 by covering various costs associated with one-time special ed expenditures that we can free money up for. And this will, of course, help with preserving jobs in the schools and doing the things that we want to do in the context of the budget. So, this is to cover FY’2026 and then the plan will be to come back in FY’2027 once Free Cash is certified in FY’2027 to complete the roughly 2-million-dollar commitment that’s factored into the budget for this year. So, this is part one of two and we would come back to you for part two probably early 2027 so that we can provide for the schools. Thank you.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, “This is one we’ve talked about. This is a one-time expenditure, and we did talk about this to help with the budget. I am onboard with this one. Thank you.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, “So through you, Madam Chair to the Mayor. Quick question. One of the things that I suggested to you is that if we do get extra money from the state that exceeds the amount that we’re looking for. One of the things that we might want to suggest is the money that we are putting towards Free Cash on that. We might want to consider putting it back to the other Departments based off the proportion of their budget like 10% 10% 10%. We’ve had this conversation. That’s if we over exceed a miracle. That’s something I would like to consider, but I’m on board with this right now.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, “So Mr. Mayor, you’re saying you’re coming back for another million dollars in early FY’2027.” Mayor Beauregard said, “Yes. And that’ll be for FY’2027 and then the CAFO can elaborate.” CAFO Duprey said, “I just wanted to be clear. It won’t be early FY’2027 because Free Cash won’t be certified. It will be in the 2027 calendar year.” – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Valley, seconded by Clr. Drew – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-56 - Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$850,000 of Free Cash to Compensated Absences Reserve to fund the payment of paid time off to employees (*EPA Requested*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-57 - Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$500,000 of Free Cash to the Unemployment Reserve to fund employee benefit-related expenses (*EPA Requested*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, “Thank you, Madam Chair, through you to the CAFO. You sent a bunch of information over to today, and I appreciate everything you sent. How many people are being laid off? The schools were taking on some of their burden. The \$500,000 --- how many employees is that covering the cost of layoffs? I mean, are we anticipating 100 layoffs? I’m just trying to figure what this number is.” CAFO Duprey

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said, "We were anticipating the 10 on the city side and then I'm blanking on the number on the school side. You know what the number was?" Mayor Beauregard said, "The issue that we have is that will depend on the Senate number, which we don't have yet, so it's difficult to precisely quantify, but this would presumably cover the amount that I think district have given us in terms of their expectation. So, this is in line with what the schools are factoring in, given they're talking about the difference between a 118 budget or 122 number. So, this is based on the request from the schools to cover their side factoring in we have on the city side for the roughly 10 layoffs." Clr. Drew said, "So, we have 10 people on the city side. My understanding on the school side with that 18 to 24 number, it was about 40 or people 50 total on the school side." CAFO Duprey said, "I have the number 50 in my head, but I don't know if that's accurate." Chair Soto said, "50 total?" CAFO Duprey said, "That's just on the school side." Chair Soto said, "Okay, so we're 60 total." CAFO Duprey said, "That's what we're looking at." Mayor Beauregard said, "And there's a likelihood that not all of this will come to pass considering that we're awaiting final numbers from the state. But, at the very least, this will ensure that we're able to have this aspect of city's finances." Clr. Drew said, "This is covering us in case the state doesn't give us the money we need, and we have to go to the 114." CAFO Duprey agreed. Clr. Drew said, "So, that anticipated number was more like 75 80 so this will encumber about a hundred employees total. We only need to have 300 and 200 expenditures to the end of the year." CAFO Duprey agreed. – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Valley, seconded by Clr. Drew – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-58 - Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$500,000 of Free Cash to Worker's Compensation Reserve to fund employee benefit-related expenses (*EPA Requested*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Valley – UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Simard, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-59 - Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$150,000 of Free Cash to the Injured in the Line of Duty (ILD) Reserve to fund employee benefit-related expenses (*EPA Requested*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-60 - Resolution Authorizing Transfer \$2,470,150 from Free Cash, to be transferred to DPW Other Expenses to fund necessary Snow & Ice expenditures (*EPA Requested*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion –** Chair Soto said, "I have a question for the CAFO or the Mayor. How much was it last year?" CAFO Duprey said, "So we transferred just under \$960,000 in excess that needed to be transferred." Chair Soto said, "So the total number was what?" CAFO Duprey said, "We spent just about \$1.4 million." CAFO Duprey said, "So, we're going up about a million." CAFO Duprey agreed. Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Is that is it true? Because I mean \$1.4 Million. This is to whatever plus the money that we had allocated in this budget. So, in reality, we're going up almost a million and a half." CAFO Duprey said, "So, correct. I'm sorry I misspoke because we're comparing a million to two and a half million almost so it's \$1.4 million more." – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Santos) – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Valley, seconded by Clr. Drew – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-61 - Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$5,000,000 of Free Cash to supplement funding to the Health Insurance Trust for Fiscal Year 2026 (*EPA Requested*) - **Motion to approve by**

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Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – Discussion – Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, “The next two I have a hard time with but just like the trash we heard the alternative. Right? The state's just going to take it from us, or we can't just levy the people with their taxes. We can't just say we're going to override the two and a half and just do it to you. We can't do that. So, we're just trapped again, right? I just don't know. We just got to get to them. We got to get to the end of the \$19 million. That's all and then we got to deal with things. So, we just have to do it and once the \$19 million is gone, it's gone and we'll have to start tightening our belts.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Valley, “Thank you Madam Chair. Through you to the CAFO. Madam CAFO, I'm just really concerned and I want to know how these Free Cash transfers will impact the bond rating for the city.” CAFO Duprey said, “So, it definitely won't --- Let me back up. \$7 million is still a good balance of Free Cash. However, spending as much as we are in one year. It's not a good look for sure. We just got recertified as a AA Bond rating with a stable outlook. I was very candid with them that this is what we're looking at that We do have areas of concern with health trust and all of that. So, they did still look favorably upon us and keep it at a stable outlook. It does concern me though. Anytime you use --- reserves are a huge asset, right? So anytime we use our reserves, it's going to look less than whether having them so it's definitely a concern.” Clr. Valley said, “We're using more than 50%.” Mayor Beauregard said, “Thank You Madam Chair. Just to echo what the CAFO said. After this, we're at roughly \$7.5 million in terms of Free Cash. When all is said and done, assuming these pass, but what I'll say is this and I'm just going out on a limb with this one. In terms of just sharing commentary. So, when we were given that look-see by S&P, what they saw and as the CAFO just referenced, the city with roughly \$19 million in Free Cash. But think of this as well where we have these significant uncapped liabilities and structural issues that have just gone for a very long time without being addressed. And so, sure, you know that looks good to have \$19 million in Free Cash, but at the same time with all these other structural issues. That in and of itself is a major risk. But given the fact that it's not like we are simply saying hey, you know, let's take \$5 million out for this and then \$1.5 million for the true up and we're doing nothing really to try to fix it on a long-term basis. Coupling this with the fact that we are engaging in I think very productive conversations with the unions about the GIC opportunity which would take the prospect of future deficits off the table given the structure of that program. You know, I think we're coupling this cleanup effort with these structural reforms. And so, at the end of the day between this and then in July with your support of the investment in Constellations. We're going to be talking about in the span of one calendar year, reforming potentially our health insurance system and our special ed system --- two of the biggest drivers of cost. And still at the end of the day, hypothetically, if this all comes to fruition, still having over \$10 million in reserves, if I'm a credit agency. Now granted, I'm not qualified and certainly wouldn't pretend like I would assume what they would be looking at. But having a municipality with \$10 million plus in reserves. At the end of the day, and two significant reforms of the biggest cost drivers, and source of ongoing issues. I think that puts us still in a favorable position to rebuild over time. So, I just wanted to share that thought.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, “Thank you, Madam Chair. I Just have to kind of echo Clr. Marsan. I mean this is a tough nut to swallow here. This is a \$5 million like we didn't see this train coming down and I mean we're dancing on the head of a pin right now when it comes to this budget. Next year if we slip up at all, we have another snowstorm like we did this year. That's \$3 million gone next year. You're saying there's going to be \$7.1 million at the end of all these Free Cash drawdowns tonight. And you're telling us that in calendar year 2027. We're coming back for another \$1 million. I mean I we got to take the rose-colored glasses off here, and I've been pounding this drum as loud as I possibly can. We need to be responsible and go find every source of revenue that's humanly possible because if we have another year like we did this year, we're going to draw down 12 million dollars. We won't have that we will have half of that next year. I understand the GIC and we're trying to do all these different things, and I get it. And we must be responsible in that sense. But, to sit here and

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say that we didn't see six and a half million dollars because we didn't do our due diligence looking at our insurance problems --- like that's, to me, that's just gross negligence." Mayor Beauregard said, "Councilor, the reason why we're here is because we did look under the hood and do our due diligence. Just imagine if we didn't bring in NFP. We would have a 6.5% increase. We would have a 6.5 % rate increase on July 1 of this year and then we would have an even bigger issue next year. So, thank Heavens that I follow through with that commitment to look under the hood. Just imagine if we didn't." Clr. Drew said, "I'm not putting this on you. I'm saying as a municipality, as a city, we didn't see this. And now we're seeing it because you finally did do you due diligence and somebody did do the due diligence to go find this amount of an issue. But this is not a oh whoops. This is a huge problem. Taking a huge chunk out of it. We're going to have to rescue payment and do this thing and pay it; we have to do it. But at the end of the day, we're going to hold --- I think this body understands. We have to hold everybody accountable to every ounce of revenue ---everything that we've said during your budget and all your funding. We have to keep pounding on you, and I hope everybody will continue to do that." Mayor Beauregard said, "Absolutely. I just to share this was as recently as last week on Monday, the former broker gave us a six-point five percent instructions of the city recommendation to raise rates. It's a tough pill to swallow." Clr. Drew said, "I get it. That's a recommendation from a vendor. We have to do our due diligence check. I get my insurance every single year. I look at it and I'm going to go check out having somebody else. I do that myself. I don't know why the city wouldn't when we're talking about millions." Mayor Beauregard said, "The broker had a fiduciary obligation to the city, number one. But number two --- we did exactly that level of due diligence where we're arriving at a 19.3 rate increase versus 6.5 % and we're correcting an issue right now between this and the structural reforms that were talking about with unions. Again, the Solicitor found a resolution from April that dealt with the same type of issue and so here we are 36 years later actually doing something about it, and I think that that is something that we need to acknowledge." Clr. Drew said, "Clearly, I'm not attacking your administration for it. I'm just saying everybody has to kind of row in the same direction and go figure out how to drive revenue in the city." Mayor Beauregard said, "Absolutely." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, "So we're at seven million dollars, but we're still going to take a \$ 1 million for the schools, and then we're looking at in 2027." Mayor Beauregard said, "Well the other thing to just keep in mind, is we're on track to end the current fiscal year in the black and so there will be additional money that will fall into Free Cash once 2026 ends." Clr. Marsan said, "But then two million more for Consolation." Mayor Beauregard said, "Well certainly once we've got that but well the thing is that that would be in July and Free Cash is frozen in July so that's something that I would look to come to the Council with an ask for funds out of stabilization for one time expense." Chair Soto said, "Question from me to either the CAFO or the Mayor. The gentleman earlier, Mr. Ken, spoke about the deficit every year and how when we didn't cover the deficit, this was what I understood that the state would take it. How did it get taken care of because what he said is the state takes the deficit?" Mayor Beauregard said, "Let's say we get to June 30th and we still have a deficit. The state will hold that against our Free Cash, and they'll take it, but in years past, between accounts ending the year with the surplus, being able to make some transfers. And then last year, we came to the Council with an ask to use available funds to cover the rest of it. We have been in a position where we haven't had that type of substantial issue where the state would hold that against us. And, so, this, in effect, allows us to do exactly that same thing and the year on June 30th and take this action ourselves rather than having the state do it for us." Chair Soto said, "OK, so from my understanding is --- lack of words --- don't take this personal. We've been tricking the system to not have to pay that deficit. I need clarity on that explanation." CAFO Duprey said, "So, last year was the first year that we had a substantial deficit." Chair Soto said, "How much last year, just numbers." CAFO Duprey said, "\$4.4 million." Chair Soto said, "How did we pay for that? CAFO Duprey said, "So, last year we paid for in two different pieces. One was a transfer --- we transferred money from the budget that

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had surplus lines and we moved some money in and then we took the remaining --- I think it was \$2.9 million that we took from stabilization and that was done through the Council. The total of those two things added up to the surplus so at the end of the year we were even.” Chair Soto said, “How did it read when it came to that Council --- was it two different resolutions?” CAFO Duprey said, “It would have been two different actions one was a transfer --- so it would have been a transfer from XY and Z in the General Fund and I believe out of Water Enterprise as well to fund the Health Trust and then a separate one to transfer money from the stabilization fund to the Health Trust. I’m going to get you those actual numbers.” Chair Soto said, “I personally don’t recall --- I was trying to figure out how did this bypass us? That was my kind of thought, but if you’re saying that we still were covering it anyways. How did we have that conversation of --- I know you said \$26 million in savings. If we would have done this, but every year they were paying all those dollars.” CAFO Duprey said, “So, we didn’t have a deficit every year. There’s two pieces. The deficit last year and this year... what he’s talking about is he came in 2019 and provided a similar presentation about the GIC specifically.” Chair Soto said, “I came to every meeting in 2019 and Mayor, I couldn’t find this guy anywhere.” Mayor Beauregard said, “I remember that meeting. I was newly elected. It was in December of that year, and I remember because I was actually newly elected. I was sitting in the back of the room, at the time, and he came and made a presentation.” Chair Soto said, “Because I couldn’t find him on there. And then you said he communicated to someone.” Mayor Beauregard said, “It was back in December of 2019, and they did this presentation at the behest of Sean Cronin. I can get the date for you. And then I have the letter that had been sent by Ken and Kevin from NFP to, at the time, it was Mayor Jajuga, outlining the GIC anticipated savings and the like and so this is all public record. I believe, at one point, this may have been on the agenda. Even perhaps I’d have to go back and look, but this is all readily available from December of 2019.” Chair Soto said, “I’m at 10:57 PM. I need a motion to extend the meeting.” **Motion to extend the City Council meeting to go after 11:00 PM by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – 5 yes, 3 no (Clr. Marsan, Clr. Santos & Clr. Valley) –** Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, “Yes, so quick. When it comes to the calculation of the \$27.9 million, roughly \$28 million. So, if you go to page two of the presentation that was handed out tonight, you can see compared to let’s say hypothetical switch to the GIC back in fiscal year 2020, what the annual cost would be and then up here at the top it shows what the city’s paid out in terms of our Blue Cross. It’s also built into this column and then not to mention this is another thing that is different with the GIC --- this calculated IV and our number at the very top for the next fiscal year. If the Council is interested, I can share the letter that was sent to the Jajuga administration in 2019 if anyone is interested. – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Simard – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-62 - Resolution Authorizing Transfer of \$1,500,000 of Free Cash to supplement funding to the Health Insurance Trust for Fiscal Year 2027 (*EPA Requested*) - Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion – Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, “Again just for the sake of clarity. This is to cover the true difference between the 6.5 % rate increase and the 19 %.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, “So, we’re taking the whole 19% the city’s take or is that our portion of the 19 %?” Mayor Beauregard said, “So, it’d be our portion. So, each plan --- let’s say it’s the HMO --- the city base pays 64% and the employee pays 36% -- the 75% -25% - the 70% - 30 % for the retirees and so this would cover the employer contribution to account for the increase from 6.5 % to 19 %. And we told the employees what their portion is that 19%. They know what that number is. So, open enrollment for fiscal year 2027 opened today. And so, we sent out the rates last week. So employees have seen what the rate is.” – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – 7 yes – 2**

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absent (Clr. Pesce & Clr. Soto) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)

TR-26-63 - Resolution Authorizing Expenditure of \$22,500 from the Castle Fund to the Methuen Youth and Community Center (*EPA Requested*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Simard) – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-64 - Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of a Fiscal Year 2027 Commonwealth of Massachusetts State 911 Department Support and Incentive Grant of \$180,964 (*EPA Requested*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-65 - Resolution Authorizing Transfer \$371,000 between various FY26 General Fund Personal Services and other expenses budgets (*EPA Requested*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. Simard, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. MacLaren – UPON VOTE – unanimously approved – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TR-26-66 - Resolution to Temporarily Rescind the adoption of the fourth paragraph of MGL Chapter 40, Section 5B to allow a dedicated stabilization fund for the Methuen restaurant meals tax revenues (*EPA requested*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. DiZoglio, seconded by Clr. Santos – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, “Thank you, Madam Chair. This is one of the revenue assumptions that was built into the FY’2027 budget and I’ve had some conversations with the Chair about this and some concerns about it. Just to share this --- the aim is to have this be for one more year and try to do all that we can to revert back to the original mechanism that was designed for this and so we can rebuild this Stabilization Fund. So, just wanted to share my commitment for that.” Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, “But it doesn't state it's only for one year, right? This is changing it. Why do we have to vote every year anyway, right?” But we're changing it now, and we would have to vote to do something different.” Mayor Beauregard said, “So, it sunsets unless there's a vote which is what this would do. Without this vote, we just automatically go back.” Chair Soto said, “Unless you wanted to make an amendment, right? Or make a change to it. That's possible. I want to be very transparent. I spoke with the Mayor about this. There are very few votes that I regret on this floor, and this was one of them. The Stabilization Fund are the only dollars that we receive that are not tax dollars from our constituents. They are generated from the meals tax. So, for your projects, Councilor, like some of the RFPs you have out for parks and recreation, Rail Trail or Unaccepted Ways. Those are potentially funds that we could request from the Mayor. Obviously, it has to go through the Mayor. So that we can potentially fund some of our own initiatives and projects. And so, with that being said, when we're deploying the reason why that came to fruition is so that obviously there's another kind of reserve nest egg like we're going to be tapping into that for the school eventually in July. What I'm saying is those dollars can be allocated for other items, and they don't have the restrictions that we deal with and so when I spoke with the Mayor, I expressed to him that I would really like to see this go to what was originally intended instead of it going directly to the General Fund. With that caveat, that's the only way I would support this. Obviously, there's nothing in there that's saying that you're going to do that and next year if I'm here --- if I'm not --- we don't know, but I hope you do that, right? That's just what I wanted to tell the newer councilors.” Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, “Just to share in terms of any amendments that the

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Council wants to make, I'm comfortable with whatever the Council wants to do. I just want to make sure that we're cognizant of the fact that this is one of the revenue assumptions built into the FY2027 Budget. If there's any thoughts of making an amendment, as long as it reflects that, it would still be in place for at least this one more year, I'm fine with that." Solicitor O'Neill said, "Just for your information, if there is no stabilization fund, then this revenue will automatically fall to the General Fund – the Meals Tax revenue will go to the General Fund. What you're doing here is you created a Stabilization Fund with Meals Tax revenue, some time ago, and directed a certain portion in there, so you're only suspending it for one year. It'll go back to what it was before on June 30th, 2027." Chair Soto said, "So, I guess that's the clarification I need. What was it before?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "It was a 25 - 75 split." CAFO Duprey said, "So, originally it was 100%. It was originally established at 100% so all meal tax revenue went into the Stabilization Fund. After we did it for a few years, and we built that up and we amended it to be 75 – 25." Chair Soto said, "I am amicable to that – that's OK, the 75 – 25 split. But you see I differ in that opinion and again I'm not the attorney, but what I'm saying is if we're reverting to its original use --- the original was 100%." CAFO Duprey said, "The way that it's written is that it will defer back to what it was which is 75 – 25." Chair Soto said, "I'm fine with that because you're getting some but we're keeping most because we need those dollars in there to be able to tap into." Solicitor O'Neill said, "But I would also just say that while you may use the stabilization fund for other purposes, the Mayor can appropriate General Fund revenue for pretty much anything." Chair Soto said, "But we still can't use it for Unaccepted Ways and we've tried several times." Solicitor O'Neill said, "Well, that's still an open question as to whether you're repairing them or redoing them entirely. But, in general, you can ask the Mayor to appropriate General Fund revenue for any purpose. That is legal." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Marsan, "The second last paragraph says that 100% of it is going to go back into this Stabilization Fund as June 30th, 2027." Chair Soto recognized Clr. Drew, "Just for clarification the 75% goes to the General Fund and we were only putting 25% in Stabilization. CAFO Duprey said, "That's right." Clr. Drew said, "OK, so, we were only putting \$350,000 of the anticipated revenues into Stabilization which we currently have \$5.9 million." CAFO Duprey agreed. Mayor Beauregard said, "So, just to provide some clarity. If you read the text of the resolution, it's referencing the change that was made on June 18, 2024. Where it's saying that is simply citing the history where at the time the Council approved TR-24-43, modifying the funding percentage from 100% to 25% so I think, in part, of the resolution simply providing some historical context. If I'm not mistaken, and then if you read the actual body of the resolution, it indicates 100%. I just want to be clear for everybody's sake." Chair Soto said, "So it's 100% okay, so maybe should have kept that a secret." – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – 6 yes, 2 no (Clr. Valley & Clr. Santos) - 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. Santos – UPON VOTE – 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Valley) – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

15. Ordinances:

TO-26-15 – An Ordinance Amending "Section 9-92 Prohibiting Operation of Dirt Bikes in the City of Methuen" by adding "E. Penalties/Enforcement/Impoundment" to the Municipal Code of the City of Methuen (*Sponsored by Councilor Ryan DiZoglio, Councilor Yanilda Santos, Councilor Neily Soto, Councilor Patricia Valley and Chief Scott McNamara*) (*EPA Requested*) – **Motion to approve by Clr. Marsan, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "So, after the last time we talked about this the gas stations and people felt like that wasn't the right direction. I went to the Assistant City Solicitor, Haleigh Reisman, for help. I want to thank her for everything that she did – we were literally working on a Google Doc and making notes of what's happening in different cities. We looked at Fitchburg, Springfield, all these different cities and put these fines in. I want to thank Councilor Santos. She thought just one \$500 fine was not good enough. She wanted to add a second and third offense to the ordinance. So, I appreciate her input and that's what this is.

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It's to go after these guys. Once we get them, we're taking their bikes away and hitting them with fines that possibly could keep them off the roads for a significant amount of time. And I think that's the best solution. Chief McNamara also agreed with me on that. He's not here but I think this is a step in the right direction and because we went through this. These dirt bike riders are terrorizing our streets, and we need to take care of them and get them off the streets. So, hopefully you guys will support this ordinance so our offices can at least start moving in the right direction on them. Any other discussion comments Counselor you removed me and counselor Valley because we didn't add to it. I also want to thank Clr. Valley and Chair Soto for all they do on the Public Safety Committee." – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved - 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – UPON VOTE – 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Simard) – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

TO-26-16 - An Ordinance Amending "Section 9-52. Trash and Recyclables Collection" of the Methuen Municipal Code (*Sponsored by Councilor Ryan DiZoglio*) (*EPA Requested*) - **Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion** – Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "This was the big one with me and (Asst. City Solicitor) Haleigh (Reisman.) We went through multiple cities, but we also thought because of the original Ordinance that was done and put through. We thought of creative ways to streamline the framework. I talked to a representative at Harvey. So, in the first part that we are going to talk about, he approved that Harvey could do this so we're going through them for the bins. The first thing that we noticed was when we went through it, there were a lot of issues regarding who was in charge of getting the ordinance. At one point, Economic and Community Development was it getting it, which they have no jurisdiction of enforcement. So, we got rid of that and added Conservation Division to the ordinance. I also added the Police Department. We looked at the City of Peabody. They have a mechanism in their ordinance to use the Police Department to enforce these ordinances, if necessary, by the Mayor or Town Manager, so we added that. If you go further down on section F, additional barrel fees and fines have never been put in the ordinance. This is brand new. We sat down and thought of creative ways of putting it in. So, moving forward, the yearly fee --- which is \$100 at the beginning of June. Right after we do our budget, we will sit here and we will discuss the barrel fee as a Council, and we will vote on it. Second, we will also start sending out (notification) of additional barrel fees. They will be paid on July 1st at the beginning of the fiscal year. So, we will have one due date instead of having those fees staggered. It starts June 1st, so they will have a full month of getting reminders to pay their fees. Right now, it's my understanding and I could be wrong but right now only 40% are paying their barrel fees and 60% are not. So that's a major issue. They will have three reminders. I talked to Harvey. Like you said, they could do robo calls, emails and any other forms of communication that's available. But I also set this up and me and Haleigh both agreed to this. If we were to go back to the city, at some point, to take control of it, we at least have a framework. CIO Luis (Santiago) said they could do a lot of this if they had to. Also, we put in a proportional rate throughout the year. So, if people want to buy a barrel throughout the year, they have that right. July 1st --- September 30th is 100% ---October 1st through December 31st is 75% --- January 1st through March 31st is 50 % and April 1st through June 30th will be 25%. We are going to enforce late fees. I've talked to Councilors. There they have concerns and I'm willing to file an amendment. After July 1st, you have 30 days to pay your barrel fee or you're getting hit with \$100 fine which will add up to \$200. Then it goes for six months and then what we will do after the six months, it will then be attached to your property taxes." Clr. Valley asked, "Question. What if it's a tenant?" Clr. DiZoglio said, "The property owner will be assessed and then probably pass it on to the tenants. Also, regarding cancellation. I realized when we went through the original ordinance, there was no cancellation mechanism. If you no longer want your extra barrel, there's no mechanism to cancel. When I asked who to call, I was told the DPW. So, we put the cancellation on Harvey. I'm putting a

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lot on Harvey right now that they are going to put in their email and accept or cancel. So, if they cancel it, it will go to Harvey or DPW so they can send out a truck and get those barrels back. If it goes back to the city at any point, we will have that framework in place and (CIO) Luis (Santiago) said we could possibly do that --- put a cancellation option in the email. They could cancel it and it will go directly to DPW to send out a truck to get that barrel back. Like I said, upon cancellation DPW or the trash collector will retrieve the additional barrel. That is the brand-new section of our trash ordinance. This was never put in, and I think this will be a good start and of course, it's not going to be perfect. I wish it was, but I think this was better than the original. We fixed the fines as well as enforcement. The enforcement --- so we combined Health and Inspectional Service Divisions because they're now together. Public works --- we included because Conservation received this ordinance, but they had no enforcement. We're now adding that Conservation does enforce it, especially down at the Rail Trail. We have residents that are literally dumping stuff onto the Rail Trail. They should be fined --- that is their stuff. And, like I said, Peabody had this provision, shall not be construed to limit Methuen Police Department's authority to enforce this article or any General Law', so we have the Police Department in there. The violations are on the next page. This is where people might have some concerns. First violation will be \$50 per overflow or contaminated barrel. So, there are multiple people that I have seen that have four or five barrels literally filled to the top with trash in the recycling bins and trash all over the place." **Councilor Santos, seconded by Clr. Valley made a motion to Move the Question – UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Drew) - 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve – UPON ROLL CALL VOTE - 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Drew) - 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – Motion to approve EPA by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. Valley – Discussion –** Chair Soto recognized Mayor Beauregard, "I strongly believe in the separation of powers, and I'm not your Dad but I would strongly recommend against passing it with an EPA and waving the second read tonight. I think this is something that we could discuss in further detail at our next meeting. I have one concern. I appreciate tightening everything up, and I don't want to get beyond the EPA, and I apologize, but just briefly, we should have a conversation about completely getting rid of the warning. I don't want to cause any issues with going beyond the EPA, but just one reason why this may be worth one more meeting of discussion before we adopt it -- just a thought." - **UPON VOTE – 8 no (Clr. MacLaren, Clr. Marsan, Clr. Santos, Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew and Chair Soto) – 1 absent (Clr. Pesce) – MOTION TO APPROVE EPA FAILED**

TO-26-17 – An Ordinance Amending "Section 8-7. Municipal Charges Lien" of the Methuen Municipal Code (*Sponsored by Councilor Ryan DiZoglio*) – **Motion to approve by Clr. Santos, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio – Discussion –** Chair Soto recognized Clr. DiZoglio, "This is basically to put fees on people's property taxes. A lot of us Councilors have been talking about it. I think this is the first step. I didn't get to talk to (Assistant Solicitor) Haleigh (Reisman) but one of the things I think I'm going to bring forward in July is to do it on all fines and fees that aren't paid just put it on their property taxes and go from there on." Chair Soto confirmed that this ordinance is relative to trash collection fines. – **UPON ROLL CALL VOTE – unanimously approved - 1 absent (Clr. Pesce)**

16. For the good and welfare of the community: Chair Soto said, "I wanted to make an announcement to the Council. We have Farrah Kannan with us this evening. She's working with our Solicitors office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays doing research for the Legal Department. I had the pleasure of sending her something on Tuesday and on Wednesday. I want to say she's a resource for all of you. There are protocols that she must follow. This is a FREE internship. She's at the Massachusetts School of Law and therefore through her studies and authorization to the Solicitor's office and the Council working together where she's able to

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complete a class or get credits. We're happy to have you. You're a ray of sunshine in their office and I truly appreciate all you're pouring into the City Council office. Thank you so much.

17. Adjourn – Motion to adjourn by Clr. Drew, seconded by Clr. DiZoglio at 11:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Yarid Ferry
Assistant Council Clerk

I do hereby certify the foregoing minutes were approved by the City Council by an 8 to 1 vote on July 6, 2026.

Linda Gagnon
COUNCIL CLERK