

CITY OF WORCESTER

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 2, 2026
Esther Howland (South) Chamber
Convened: 5:08 P.M.
Recessed: 6:30 P.M.
Reconvened: 9:22 P.M.
Adjourned: 11:34 P.M.

MAYOR

Joseph M. Petty

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson Joseph M Petty
Vice Chairperson Khrystian E King
Councilor Morris A Bergman
Councilor Robert A Bilotta
Councilor Tony Economou
Councilor John P Fresolo
Councilor Satya B Mitra
Councilor Luis A Ojeda
Councilor Jose A Rivera
Councilor Gary Rosen
Councilor Kathleen M Toomey



www.worcesterma.gov

CLERK OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Nikolin Vangjeli

City Hall - 455 Main Street Worcester, Massachusetts

Present Were:

All members present with Mayor Petty as the Chair.
Councilor King participated in the meeting remotely until
5:18 P.M.
City Manager Eric D. Batista
Assistant City Manager Hung Nguyen
Chief Financial Officer Timothy J. McGourthy
Budget Director Erin E. Taylor
City Auditor Robert V. Stearns
City Clerk Nikolin Vangjeli, clerk

Also:

Chief Sustainability Officer John W. Odell
Commissioner of Health and Human Services Seema Dixit
and Staff

1. Virtual Attendee Call-In Information

- a. Finance Committee Zoom Link: <https://worcesterma.zoomgov.com/j/1613631913>
Finance Committee Zoom Phone Number: +1 646 828 7666
Finance Committee Zoom Access Code: 161 363 1913

2. Approval of the Minutes

- a. Order - That the City Council Standing Committee of Finance hereby approves the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on May 26, 2026.

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to adopt the item. Order adopted

3. FY 2027 Budget Hearing - Sustainability and Resilience

- a.** Sustainability and Resilience - XIX-1, pg. 359

Mayor Petty read the item and recognized the Chief Financial Officer, who provided an overview of the funds allocated to the Department of Sustainability and Resilience.

Mayor Petty discussed updates related to the department's WooBin pilot program, including the location of the bins and snow removal, switching the vendor from Casella to Strong and Reliable, and the positive public response regarding the WooBins with the Chief Sustainability Officer.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Rosen, who discussed the recycling protocols of WooBins, whether household trash would be appropriate in WooBins and education efforts regarding recycling with the Chief Sustainability Officer.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Rivera, who discussed the Strong and Reliable contract, as well as the implementation of advertising and artwork on WooBins with the Chief Sustainability Officer.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Ojeda, who discussed the use of WooBins in the Pleasant St. area, the Strong and Reliable contract and pickup schedule, utilizing WooBins for sharing City information, the department's Smart Energy Advice Program and the planting of trees in the Green Island Neighborhood with the Chief Sustainability Officer.

Vice Chairperson Councilor King recognized Councilor Economou, who discussed illegal dumping occurring in the Erie Ave. and White Ave. area, the Keep Worcester Clean initiative, camera surveillance for illegal dumping and additional WooBins in the Chino Ave. area with the Chief Sustainability Officer.

Vice Chairperson Councilor King recognized Councilor Mitra, who discussed the staffing levels and pay grades within the department, the department's use of revolving funds, the Carbon Mitigation Fund, the illegal dumping of dog waste into the sewer system and responsiveness to resident concerns with the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Sustainability Officer.

Vice Chairperson Councilor King recognized Councilor Bergman, who discussed the use of WooBins in parks and the general locations where WooBins are located with the Chief Sustainability Officer.

Councilor Bergman then moved to, "Request City Manager request Chief Sustainability Officer provide City Council with a report detailing the locations of WooBins throughout the city. (Bergman)".

Vice Chairperson Councilor King recognized Councilor Bilotta, who discussed potential grant opportunities available to the department, illegal dumping concerns, the use of WooBins throughout the city, residential cleanups and additional opportunities for community partners to sell yellow trash bags with the Chief Sustainability Officer.

Vice Chairperson Councilor King discussed the use of WooBins, the contract with Strong and Reliable, the department's oversight of the Specialized Stretch Code, the department's oversight of the Stretch Code as it relates to the building of new schools, open positions within the department, blue spaces, the department's collaborations with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office, efforts to identify and address heat islands, and cool pockets with the Chief Sustainability Officer.

Vice Chairperson Councilor King then moved to, “Request City Manager request Chief Sustainability Officer provide City Council with a report detailing the enhancement or augmentation of training for builders relative to the Specialized Stretch Code. (King)”.

Vice Chairperson Councilor King recognized Councilor Toomey, who discussed the potential for misting stations throughout the city’s heat islands with the Chief Sustainability Officer.

Vice Chairperson Councilor King then moved to, “Request City Manager request Chief Sustainability Officer provide City Council with a report detailing the costs associated with cool pockets, heat islands, and misting locations throughout the City. Further, said report include information regarding any potential grant opportunities available for such a purpose. (King)”.

Vice Chairperson Councilor King moved for a roll call vote to collectively adopt all motions associated with the item. Chairman’s Orders adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Petty absent).

Vice Chairperson Councilor King moved for a roll call vote to approve the budget. Budget approved on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Petty absent).

Chairman's Orders

Request City Manager request Chief Sustainability Officer provide City Council with a report detailing the locations of WooBins throughout the city. (Bergman)

Request City Manager request Chief Sustainability Officer provide City Council with a report detailing the enhancement or augmentation of training for builders relative to the Specialized Stretch Code. (King)

Request City Manager request Chief Sustainability Officer provide City Council with a report detailing the costs associated with cool pockets, heat islands, and misting locations throughout the City. Further, said report include information regarding any potential grant opportunities available for such a purpose. (King)

4. FY 2027 Budget Hearings - City Manager's Office

a. City Manager's Office - XVII-1, pg. 329

Vice Chairperson Councilor King read the item and moved to take up the item collectively with items #4b and #4c.

Vice Chairperson Councilor King recognized the Chief Financial Officer, who provided an overview of the funds allocated to the City Manager's Office.

Vice Chairperson Councilor King recognized Councilor Mitra, who discussed timelines associated with standard municipal processes, as well as the processes the department uses relative to competing requests with the City Manager.

Councilor Mitra then moved to, "Request City Manager establish improved best practices for working with the City Council to evaluate municipal processes, in an effort to expedite said processes effectively and efficiently. (Mitra)".

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Rivera, who discussed efforts being made to improve the city's infrastructure associated with street repairs/resurfacing, including providing increased funding for selections by District Councilors, with the City Manager.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Rosen, who discussed contract negotiations with Charter Spectrum, including challenges around receiving refunds for senior residents who qualified for the Senior Citizen Discount program but did not receive said discount, as well as ensuring the administration advocates for improved Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreements with the city's colleges and universities with the City Manager.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Fresolo, who discussed the feasibility of increasing street and sidewalk resurfacing allocations to accelerate resurfacing across the city similarly to the processes used historically with the City Manager and Chief Financial Officer.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor King, who discussed improving performance evaluations of the city's cabinet members, the functions of the Senior Web Support Specialist and Web Support Specialist roles, Cable Services' responsibility for maintaining the city's social media live streaming, budget allocations associated with communications operations, and new growth does not directly impact City Manager's Contingency fund with the City Manager and Chief Financial Officer.

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote to approve the budgets associated with items #4a through #4c. Budget approved on a roll call vote of 9 Yeas and 0 Nays (King abstained) (Bilotta absent)

Chairman's Orders

Request City Manager establish improved best practices for working with the City Council to evaluate municipal processes, in an effort to expedite said processes effectively and efficiently. (Mitra)

- b. City Manager's Contingency - XVII-2, pg. 341

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 9 Yeas and 0 Nays (King abstained) (Bilotta absent) (See Item #4a)

- c. Cable Services - XVII-3, pg. 343

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 9 Yeas and 0 Nays (King abstained) (Bilotta absent) (See Item #4a)

5. FY 2027 Budget Hearings - Legislative Offices

a. City Council - XVI-1, pg. 313

Mayor Petty read the item and recognized Councilor Rosen, who discussed the cost of living (COLA) adjustment for the City Council staff positions with the Chief Financial Officer.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor King, who discussed whether all non-represented employees in the city will receive a two (2) percent COLA adjustment in Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27), how the City Council interacts with the administration to determine appropriate funding allocations for the City Council budget and the salary allocations provided to the management level positions within the City Clerk's Office with the Chief Financial Officer and City Clerk.

Councilor King then moved to, "Request City Clerk provide City Council with an updated report related to the process required to provide City Council the authority to hire and oversee its own staff, similar to the authority provided to the Mayor regarding the Mayor's Office staff. (King)".

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Bergman, who discussed the salary allocations provided to the Chief of Staff to City Council position compared to the Secretary to the Mayor position with the Chief Financial Officer.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Fresolo, who discussed whether individuals from the legislative offices are allowed to file for mileage reimbursement when travelling on city business with the Chief Financial Officer.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor King for a second time, who discussed filing a future item related to creating a survey that would assess the work that has been done and will be done by the City Council support staff, as well as whether the Mayor's Office and/or City Council Office has access to a city vehicle, with the City Manager.

Councilor King then moved to, "Request City Manager provide City Council with a report concerning the process required to ensure the staff of the City Council Office have access to a city vehicle for the purpose of conducting city business. (King)".

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Mitra, who discussed the feasibility of ensuring the allocations for the Secretary to the Mayor and Chief of Staff to City Council salaries are the same moving forward.

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote to approve the budgets associated with items #5a through #5d. Budget approved on a roll call vote of 8 Yeas and 0 Nays (Bilotta, Economou, King abstained)

Chairman's Orders

Request City Clerk provide City Council with an updated report related to the process required to provide City Council the authority to hire and oversee its own staff, similar to the authority provided to the Mayor regarding the Mayor's Office staff. (King)

Request City Manager provide City Council with a report concerning the process required to ensure the staff of the City Council Office have access to a city vehicle for the purpose of conducting city business. (King)

- b. Mayor's Office - XVI-2, pg. 317

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 8 Yeas and 0 Nays (Bilotta, Economou, King abstained) (See Item #5a)

- c. City Clerk's Office - XVI-3, pg. 321

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 8 Yeas and 0 Nays (Bilotta, Economou, King abstained) (See Item #5a)

- d. Election Commission - XVI-4, pg. 325

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 8 Yeas and 0 Nays (Bilotta, Economou, King abstained) (See Item #5a)

6. FY 2027 Budget Hearings - Health and Human Services

- a. Health and Human Services - X-1, pg. 231

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to take up items #6a through #6c collectively.

Mayor Petty recognized the Chief Financial Officer, who provided an overview of the funds allocated to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Rosen, who discussed the line item related to consultant services for the Worcester Senior Center, as well as the newly proposed regulations concerning smoking lounges/bars with the Commissioner of Health and Human Services and City Manager.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor King, who discussed efforts being undertaken to educate community members and the city's youth concerning vaping, whether the department is at full capacity, the fiscal impact of the department's vacancy factor, data collection and data retention work done by the department, tax levy and grant funding allocations for positions and budget increases for the department with the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, Chief Financial Officer and City Manager.

Councilor King then moved to, "Request City Manager provide City Council with a report outlining each of the grant-funded positions within the Department of Health and Human Services. (King)".

Councilor King then moved to, "Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing the increased funding associated with the Department of Health and Human Services budget, including the different funding sources for the department, such as grants and tax levies. (King)".

Councilor King then moved to, "Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing the different funding resources for each department in the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Budget. (King)".

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Bilotta, who discussed efforts being made to ensure young people with disabilities are provided inclusive opportunities with Regional Environmental Council (REC) Worcester, positive youth development curriculum and the city's Youth Mentorship Leader programs with the Commissioner of Health and Human Services.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Bergman, who discussed increases in the unhoused population, as well as the department's partnership with the Police Department to provide programs to the community with the Commissioner of Health and Human Services.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Ojeda, who discussed overdose numbers, collaboration effort the department oversees with community partners, mobile response and direct healthcare services to individuals in need, the Knock and Talk program and the H.O.P.E. training program for Worcester Public Schools (WPS) staff members with the Commissioner of Health and Human Services.

Councilor Ojeda then moved to, "Request City Manager request Commissioner of Health and Human Services provide City Council with a report concerning the number of overdoses that have occurred in the city. (Ojeda)".

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Toomey, who moved to, "Request City Manager provide City Council with a report regarding the steps the city needs to take to initiate a Central Massachusetts

substance use disorder and mental health fund. Such fund should be a pooled, intermunicipal fund requiring proportional financial contributions from Worcester and surrounding cities and towns in Central Massachusetts to support coordinated, long-term solutions to the crisis (e.g., housing, treatment, mobile outreach, public health infrastructure), in the city of Worcester and surrounding areas. Further, request City Manager request City Solicitor provide City Council with a report concerning whether any legal or legislative pathways such as a home rule petition or state enabling legislation is necessary to implement the fund. (Toomey)”.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Mitra, who discussed the background and work experience of the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, strategic plans to address the needs of the unhoused population and workforce development plans of the department with the Commissioner of Health and Human Services.

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote to collectively adopt all motions associated with the item. Chairman’s Orders adopted on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays.

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote to approve the budgets associated with items #6a through #6c. Budget approved on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (King abstained)

Chairman's Orders

Request City Manager provide City Council with a report outlining each of the grant-funded positions within the Department of Health and Human Services. (King)

Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing the increased funding associated with the Department of Health and Human Services budget, including the different funding sources for the department, such as grants and tax levies. (King)

Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing the different funding resources for each department in the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Budget. (King)

Request City Manager request Commissioner of Health and Human Services provide City Council with a report concerning the number of overdoses that have occurred in the city. (Ojeda)

Request City Manager provide City Council with a report regarding the steps the city needs to take to initiate a Central Massachusetts substance use disorder and mental health fund. Such fund should be a pooled, intermunicipal fund requiring proportional financial contributions from Worcester and surrounding cities and towns in Central Massachusetts to support coordinated, long-term solutions to the crisis (e.g., housing, treatment, mobile outreach, public health infrastructure), in the city of Worcester and surrounding areas. Further, request City Manager request City Solicitor provide City Council with a report concerning whether any legal or legislative pathways such as a home rule petition or state enabling legislation is necessary to implement the fund. (Toomey)

- b. Public Health - X-1, pg. 244

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (King abstained) (See Item #6a)

- c. Elder Affairs - X-1, pg. 256

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (King abstained) (See Item #6a)

7. FY 2027 Budget Hearings - Administration and Finance

- a. Administration and Finance - XXI-1, pg. 379

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to take up items #7a through #7f collectively.

Mayor Petty recognized the Chief Financial Officer, who provided an overview of the funds allocated to Administration and Finance Departments.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor King, who discussed the increase in funding necessary to fill positions within the Purchasing Division, the Purchasing Division's intersection with the Auditing Department, the procurement process used by the city, the budget process as a whole, the city's bond rating, securing bonds for the Worcester Police Department (WPD) Headquarters' infrastructure improvements and rescinding unnecessary loan authorizations and capital projects with the Chief Financial Officer.

Mayor moved for a roll call vote to approve the budgets associated with the items. Budget approved on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays.

- b. Assessing - XXI-1, pg. 387

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays (See Item #7a)

- c. Treasurer and Collector - XXI-1, pg. 391

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays (See Item #7a)

- d. Purchasing - XXI-1, pg. 396

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays (See Item #7a)

- e. Debt Service Principal and Interest - XXI-2, pg. 401

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays (See Item #7a)

- f. Pension Obligation Bond - XXI-3, pg. 409

Budget approved on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays (See Item #7a)

8. FY 2026 Budget Hearing - Line Item Budget

- a. Line Item Budget - XXIII-1, pg. 419

Mayor read the item and moved for a roll call vote to approve the budget. Budget approved on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays

9. Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

- a. Communication of the City Manager recommend approval of the Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget.

9.39A CM May 5, 2026

In Committee May 12, 2026 - Held

In Committee May 19, 2026 - Held

In Committee May 26, 2026 - Held

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to take the item up collectively with items #9b CC and #10a CC.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor King, who discussed his approval that the budget be discharged from Finance Committee to the City Council.

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be approved.

Recommend Approval on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays

- b. Communication of the City Manager recommend approval of the Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget.

9.39B CM May 5, 2026

In Committee May 12, 2026 - Held

In Committee May 19, 2026 - Held

In Committee May 26, 2026 - Held

Recommend Approval on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays (See Item #9a CC)

10. Communication of the City Manager

- a. Recommend the adoption of a Loan Order in the amount of Forty Three Million Four Hundred Sixty Eight Thousand Four Hundred Sixteen Dollars and No Cents (\$43,468,416.00) to pay for costs associated with projects and equipment, as approved in the Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget.

9.38A CM May 5, 2026

In Committee May 12, 2026 - Held

In Committee May 19, 2026 - Held

In Committee May 26, 2026 - Held

Recommend Approval on a roll call vote of 11 Yeas and 0 Nays (See Item #9a CC)

