

CITY OF WORCESTER

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 24, 2026
Esther Howland (South) Chamber
Convened: 5:02 P.M.
Adjourned: 6:15 P.M.

MAYOR

Joseph M. Petty

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson Tony Economou
Vice Chairperson Satya B Mitra
Councilor John P Fresolo



CLERK OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Nikolin Vangjeli

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City Hall - 455 Main Street Worcester, Massachusetts

Present Were:

Chairperson Councilor Tony Economou
Councilor Satya B. Mitra
Councilor John P. Fresolo, who arrived at 5:03 p.m.

Also:

Commissioner of Public Works John K. Westerling
Assistant Commissioner of Public Works Jay Mello
Deputy City Clerk Stephen AJ Pottle, clerk

1. Virtual Attendee Call-In Information

- a. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 and in order to ensure active, public engagement, the City of Worcester currently allows for both in-person and remote participation at all City Council and Standing Committee meetings. To partake in the meeting, you may attend the meeting in-person within the meeting location, follow the below link to join via Zoom or dial the direct line as indicated. If you join a Zoom meeting by dialing in with a phone number, you can raise your hand by dialing *9.

Public Works Committee Zoom Link: <https://worcesterma.zoomgov.com/j/1615992759>

Public Works Committee Zoom Phone Number: +1 646 828 7666

Public Works Committee Zoom Access Code: 161 599 2759

2. Approval of the Minutes

- a. Order - That the City Council Standing Committee on Public Works hereby approves the minutes of the Public Works Committee meeting on January 27, 2026.

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and moved to adopt the item. Order adopted

3. Install Sewer Item

- a. Report of the Planning Board Upon the Petition of Curtis Alexander request installation of sewer drains on Nixon Ave., in the vicinity of 11 Nixon Ave.
13b CC December 16, 2025

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, who provided an overview relative to the Department of Public Works' (DPW) recommendation to grant Leave to Withdraw, as Nixon Ave. was previously approved for private street conversion and is budgeted in the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27).

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the item be granted Leave to Withdraw.

Recommend Leave to Withdraw

4. Fire Hydrant Petition

- a. Curtis Alexander request the fire hydrant at 11 Nixon Ave. be moved further away from the driveway of the property.

9h CC November 18, 2025

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, who provided an overview relative to the Department of Public Works' (DPW) recommendation to grant Leave to Withdraw as the waterline on Nixon Ave. is a dead end where the existing fire hydrant is connected to the end of the watermain in order to flush the line to prevent a buildup of carcinogens.

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the item be granted Leave to Withdraw.

Recommend Leave to Withdraw

5. ADA Mat and Ramp Petition

- a. Councilor Etel Haxhiaj on behalf of Jeffery Mack request installation of an ADA compliant curb ramp on Heard St. across from its intersection with Waterman St.

9d CC November 18, 2025

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, who provided an overview relative to the Department of Public Works' (DPW) recommendation to refer the item to Traffic and Parking Committee.

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the item be referred to Traffic and Parking Committee.

Recommend Refer to Traffic and Parking Committee

6. Guardrail and Protective Barrier Petitions

- a. Franco Girardi and Giuseppe Girardi request installation of a 100' guardrail at the dead end section of Pilgrim Ave., with no gaps where the guardrail is installed to ensure vehicles cannot drive through the barrier.

9b CC November 18, 2025

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and recognized the following Speaker:

1. Franco Girardi, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of the item

Chairperson Councilor Economou recognized Councilor Fresolo, who spoke concerning the dead end of Pilgrim Ave. abutting Our Lady of Loreto Parish, located at 37 Massasoit Rd., and issues relative to motorists using Pilgrim Ave. as a cut through to the church's parking lot.

Chairperson Councilor Economou recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, who discussed how installation of guardrails are preventative measures for accidents not preventing road access, and acknowledged Speaker #1's concerns relative to two (2) wheel vehicles bypassing the existing guardrails and fence at the dead end of Pilgrim Ave.

Chairperson Councilor Economou discussed motorist not immediately recognizing Pilgrim Ave. as a dead end when approaching the guardrails and the lack of "Dead End" signage and/or reflectors with Speaker #1.

Chairperson Councilor Economou discussed installing "Not a Thru Street" signage at the intersection of Pilgrim Ave. and Grafton St. and installing additional signage at the dead end of Pilgrim Ave. with the Commissioner of Public Works.

Chairperson Councilor Economou discussed issues relative to dirtbikes and motorcycles speeding up and down Pilgrim Ave. with Speaker #1.

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the item be held until the April 2026 Public Works Committee meeting.

Recommend Hold

- b. Megan Young request the installation of guardrails in front of 19 Westminster St.

9m CC August 19, 2025

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, who provided an overview relative to the Department of Public Works' (DPW) recommendation to grant Leave to Withdraw as the request has been previously resolved by installing bollards at the location.

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the item be granted Leave to Withdraw.

Recommend Leave to Withdraw

- c. Councilor Jose A. Rivera on behalf of N. Paul TonThat request installation of a protective road barrier, such as concrete bollard posts, in front of 149 Belmont St. to protect the property from motorized vehicle collisions.

9c CC March 10, 2026

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, who provided an overview relative to the Department of Public Works' (DPW) recommendation to grant Leave to Withdraw as installation of a protective barrier at the location would decrease the assessable way to pedestrians and the installation of a bollard or guardrail at the location would need to be based off crash history to satisfy the warrant for such installation which it currently does not qualify.

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the item be granted Leave to Withdraw.

Recommend Leave to Withdraw

7. Streetlight Petitions

- a. Patrick Grady request streetlight on pole 17 be repaired on West Boylston St.

9a CC November 25, 2025

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, who provided an overview relative to the Department of Public Works' (DPW) recommendation to grant Leave to Withdraw as the item was previously submitted as a 311 request and is currently queued for repair.

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the item be granted Leave to Withdraw.

Recommend Leave to Withdraw

- b. Patricia Bourassa request installation of a streetlight at the intersection of Arbella Dr. and Salisbury St.

8x CC October 21, 2025

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, who provided an overview relative to the Department of Public Works' (DPW) recommendation to grant Leave to Withdraw as the item was previously submitted as a 311 request and is currently queued for repair.

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the item be granted Leave to Withdraw.

Recommend Leave to Withdraw

- c. Cora Butler-Jones request installation of streetlight at the end of Stockholm St.

9j CC August 19, 2025

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and moved to take the item up collectively with item #7d.

Chairperson Councilor Economou then recognized the following Speaker:

1. Dr. Cora Butler-Jones, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of items #7c and #7d

Chairperson Councilor Economou recognized Councilor Fresolo, who spoke concerning the feasibility of installing a portable spotlight in the area.

Chairperson Councilor Economou recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, who provided an overview relative to the Department of Public Works' (DPW) recommendation to approve streetlight installation on Stockholm St. at existing pole #8 and Tatman St. at existing pole #16.

Chairperson Councilor Economou discussed an estimated timeline associated with installing streetlights at both locations with the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works.

Chairperson Councilor Economou recognized Councilor Mitra, who discussed itemized costs associated with installing a streetlight to an existing pole and the locations of the recommended streetlight installations in proximity to the petitioner's property with the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works.

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the items be approved.

Recommend Approval

- d. Cora Butler-Jones request installation of streetlight on Tatman St.
9i CC August 19, 2025

Recommend Approval (See Item #7c)

- e. Altagracia Abreu request installation of a streetlight in front of 32 Stoneland Rd.
8h CC July 15, 2025

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, who provided an overview relative to the Department of Public Works' (DPW) recommendation to grant Leave to Withdraw due to the location not meeting the warrants to install additional lighting as there are eight (8) streetlights spaced one hundred fifty (150) feet apart that provide adequate lighting to Stoneland Rd.

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the item be granted Leave to Withdraw.

Recommend Leave to Withdraw

8. Miscellaneous Items

- a. Order of Councilor George J. Russell - Request Standing Committee on Public Works conduct a meeting with representatives from the utility companies servicing the city and the Commissioner of Public Works and Parks regarding damages done to city streets that are not repaired in a way to hold up over time.

12h CC June 7, 2022

In Committee September 7, 2022 - Held

In Committee September 13, 2023 - Held

In Committee December 6, 2023 - Held

In Committee April 24, 2024 - Held

Chairperson Councilor Economou read the item and moved to take the item up collectively with item #8b.

Chairperson Councilor Economou then discussed the standard and emergency processes relative for utility companies to receive approval and permits from the city prior to starting any work, the responsible role that manages the methods used to backfill trenches, the process relative to restore roadways, the materials used during restoration, the standards relative to finalized roadways after restoration, the process relative for the Department of Public Works' (DPW) Engineering Division to work with utility companies to complete trench restorations, DPW Engineering Permit Division as one of the responsible entities to ensure the work granted by said permits are completely restored in a timely manner, and the feasibility of using flowable backfill during trench restoration with the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works.

Chairperson Councilor Economou discussed increasing the current warranty period of two (2) years relative to trench restoration to five (5) years and the timeline associated with finalizing the warranty increase with the Commissioner of Public Works and Assistant Commissioner of Public Works.

Chairperson Councilor Economou then moved for the following Chairman's Order: "Request City Manager request Commissioner of Public Works provide City Council with a report outlining the city's processes relative to trench restoration by the April 28, 2026 City Council meeting. Said report should include the following: 1) current standards and methods used for restoration and whether the work is being completed within ninety (90) days; 2) the process relative to DPW issuing permits; 3) an analysis relative to the number of permits issued by the DPW; 4) the amount of permits issued on a standard permitting process compared to an emergency process 5) the process relative to inspecting restorations once completed; 6) the process relative to backfilling and final finishing; 7) timelines associated with trench restorations; 8) the responsible role relative to inspecting the permitted work and the capacity needed to fulfill said inspections; 9) the number of inspector and restoration specialist positions in DPW; and 10) a recommendation relative to adequate staffing levels needed to ensure the city can maintain appropriate inspections of the utility work being completed."

Chairperson Councilor Economou discussed the role of DPW's Restoration Specialist position, staffing challenges, and the approximate 3,500 to 3,600 permits annually with the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works.

Chairperson Councilor Economou then moved for the following Chairman's Order: "Request City Manager request Commissioner of Public Works provide City Council by the April 28, 2026 City Council meeting a draft ordinance to increase the current two (2) year warranty period relative to trench restorations to five (5) years."

Chairperson Councilor Economou discussed the responsible entity relative to the inadequate work done on Beverly Rd. and Ararat St. with the Commissioner of Public Works.

Chairperson Councilor Economou then moved for the following Chairman's Order: "Request City Manager request Commissioner of Public Works provide City Council by the April 28, 2026 City Council meeting a report detailing the entity responsible for the trench restoration work on Beverly Rd. and Ararat St., when the work was completed, if the work is within the warranty period, and any relevant inspection reports for the locations."

Chairperson Councilor Economou recognized Councilor Mitra and Councilor Fresolo, who spoke concerning the item.

Chairperson Councilor Economou recognized the following Speakers:

1. Mike Kane, Holyoke resident, Eversource Community Relations Specialist, spoke concerning the working relationship between Eversource and DPW, addressed concerns relative to failing trench restorations on Ararat St., Beverly Rd., and Fairhaven Rd., and discussed working with the city to address restoration repairs
2. Bobby Yarnie, Worcester resident, National Grid Lead Community Engagement Manager, spoke concerning the working relationship between National Grid and the city, highlighted the importance relative to producing quality work to maintain such a relationship, and discussed the will to work with the city relative to any potential policy changes to be implemented

Chairperson Councilor Economou discussed the importance of proactive action from the utility companies to address their own restoration work instead of waiting for the city to address failing restorations with Speaker #1.

Chairperson Councilor Economou recognized Councilor Mitra, who spoke concerning the importance of taking pride and ownership relative to the quality of road work being done in the city to elevate and maintain the quality of life for residents.

Chairperson Councilor Economou recognized Councilor Fresolo, who discussed issues relative to housing development plans that are delayed due to slow response to supply needs from the utility companies and methods to use to improve service with Speaker #2.

Chairperson Councilor Economou moved to recommend the items be held.

Recommend Hold

Chairman's Orders

Request City Manager request Commissioner of Public Works provide City Council with a report outlining the city's processes relative to trench restoration by the April 28, 2026 City Council meeting. Said report should include the following: 1) current standards and methods used for restoration and whether the work is being completed within ninety (90) days; 2) the process relative to DPW issuing permits; 3) an analysis relative to the number of permits issued by the DPW; 4) the amount of permits issued on a standard permitting process compared to an emergency process 5) the process relative to inspecting restorations once completed; 6) the process relative to backfilling and final finishing; 7) timelines associated with trench restorations; 8) the responsible role relative to inspecting the permitted work and the capacity needed to fulfill said inspections; 9) the number of inspector and restoration specialist positions in DPW; and 10) a recommendation relative to adequate staffing levels needed to ensure the city can maintain appropriate inspections of the utility work being completed.

Request City Manager request Commissioner of Public Works provide City Council by the April 28, 2026 City Council meeting a draft ordinance to increase the current two (2) year warranty period relative to trench restorations to five (5) years.

Request City Manager request Commissioner of Public Works provide City Council by the April 28, 2026 City Council meeting a report detailing the entity responsible for the trench restoration work on Beverly Rd. and Ararat St., when the work was completed, if the work is within the warranty period, and any relevant inspection reports for the locations.

- b. Order of Councilor George J. Russell - Request Standing Committee on Public Works conduct a meeting with the Commissioner of Public Works and Parks to discuss what policy, if any, exists in writing, which mandates any construction work completed by utility companies on city streets does not deteriorate.

12g CC June 7, 2022

In Committee September 7, 2022 - Held

In Committee December 6, 2023 - Held

In Committee April 24, 2024 - Held

In Committee May 7, 2024 - Held

Recommend Hold (See Item #8a)