

**CITY OF WORCESTER**  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

**Monday, August 24, 2026**  
**Esther Howland (South) Chamber**  
**Convened: 5:17 P.M.**  
**Adjourned: 6:58 P.M.**

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**MAYOR**

Joseph M. Petty

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Chairperson Gary Rosen

Vice Chairperson Khrystian E King

Councilor Kathleen M Toomey



**CLERK OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Nikolin Vangjeli

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**City Hall - 455 Main Street Worcester, Massachusetts**

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**Present Were:**

Chairperson Councilor Gary Rosen

Vice Chairperson Councilor Khrystian E King

Councilor Kathleen M Toomey

**Also:**

Assistant Commissioner of Health and Human Services

Alex Arriaga

Interim Director of Public Health Nikki Nixon

Director of Youth Opportunities Raquel Castro-Corazzini

Worcester Public Schools Administrative Director of Student

Support and Engagement Tom Toney

Board of Health Chairperson Frances Anthes

Board of Health member Patrick Lowe

Worcester Medical Director Jennifer Bradford

Deputy City Clerk I 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 Health and Human Services Committee Zoom Link:  
<https://worcesterma.zoomgov.com/j/1610140100>

Public Health and Human Services Committee Zoom Phone Number: +1 646 828 7666

Public Health and Human Services Committee Zoom Access Code: 161 014 0100

## 2. Approval of the Minutes

- a. Order - That the City Council Standing Committee of Public Health and Human Services hereby approves the minutes of the Public Health and Human Services Committee meeting on June 8, 2026.

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

## 3. Miscellaneous Item

- a. Order of Councilor Gary Rosen, Councilor Morris A. Bergman, Councilor Tony Economou, Councilor John P. Fresolo, Councilor Khrystian E. King, Councilor Satya B. Mitra, Councilor Luis A. Ojeda, Councilor Jose A. Rivera, Councilor Kathleen M. Toomey and Mayor Joseph M. Petty - Request Standing Committee on Public Health and Human Services hold a meeting with representatives from the Board of Health, selected medical professionals, youth advocacy agencies and appropriate representatives from the Worcester Public Schools to discuss youth exposure and addiction to tobacco, nicotine and vaping, among others.

# 12v CC July 21, 2026

Chairperson Councilor Rosen read the item and discussed public concerns relative to the Board of Health's modifications to tobacco business siting rules, increased risks of youth exposure and addiction to tobacco, nicotine and vaping products, current advertisement practices targeting youths used by companies selling such products and the needs to increase education and reduce access to such products for the youths.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized the Board of Health Chairperson, who discussed regulations prohibiting selling smoking and vaping products to youth and the needs for community-wide response, including education and creation of an enforcement process.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized the Board of Health member, who discussed the addictiveness of vaping and e-cigarettes and how they affect the lungs, including E-cigarette or Vaping Use-Associated Lung Injury (EVALI) and new regulations relative to sales of smoking and vaping products.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized the Assistant Commissioner of Health and Human Services, who discussed the collaboration between the Board of Health and the Department of Health and Human Services related to tobacco sales and issues related youths using vapes.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized Councilor Toomey, who discussed concerns related to increase of THC in vapes and keeping parents informed.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized Speaker #1, who discussed misinformation concerning vapes, how tobacco companies are targeting youths with flavored products, the prevalence of vaping among middle school and high school students and the programs by Worcester Anti-Vaping Task Force to teach youths how to manage stress and anxiety.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen brought forth the following Chairman's Order: Request City Manager provide City Council with a report concerning the amount of money the city receives from sales and/or settlements associated with tobacco, vapes and nicotine products, as well as how much of those monies are spent on tobacco cessation and prevention purposes.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized Speaker #2, who discussed health issues related to vaping and results from community survey relative to youth vaping,

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized the Interim Director of Public Health, who discussed results from the Youth Health Survey conducted by the Division of Public Health.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized the Director of Youth Opportunities, who discussed the work done by the Division of Youth Opportunities to address vaping addiction in youths.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized the Worcester Medical Director, who discussed modifications to the tobacco regulations done by the Board of Health, solutions to address issues related to youths vaping and resources to help youths quit vaping.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized the WPS Administrative Director of Student Support and Engagement, who discussed WPS strategies to address youth vaping through prevention and education.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized the following speakers:

1. Echo Loussaint-Collins, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
2. Anne Bureau, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
3. Sean Gichohi, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
4. Natalie Rodriguez, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
5. Jessie Rivera, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
6. Wairimu Macharia, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
7. Tasia Cerezo, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
8. Amy Coleman, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
9. Karina Wallace, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
10. Mary Viano, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
11. Jazmine Collins, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item
12. Dianne Langford James, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized Councilor Toomey, who discussed broader issues related to mental health causing youths to begin vaping, the importance of peer mentorship, school and parent engagement and public education, the usage of social media to educate the public about vaping.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized Speaker #1, who discussed the importance of funding community organizations to expand prevention programs.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized the Board of Health member, who discussed the feasibility of having in-school resources to educate the school nurses and providing students with referrals to addiction therapy.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized Councilor Toomey, who discussed recovery schools for students with addictions.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen recognized Councilor King, who discussed the needs for city-wide public service education campaign, the importance of addressing root causes of youth vaping related to mental health issues and the feasibility related to installation of vaping-detection technology in WPS and educational efforts related to vaping in elementary schools with the Worcester Public Schools Administrative Director of Student Support and Engagement.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen brought forth the following two (2) Chairman's Orders: 1) Request City Clerk provide the minutes and recording of the Standing Committee on Public Health and Human Services meeting on August 24, 2026 to the Worcester Public Schools administration; and 2) Request City Manager create a public service campaign related to preventing the city's youth from using tobacco, nicotine and vaping products.

Chairperson Councilor Rosen moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be held.

Recommend Hold on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

**Chairman's Orders**

Request City Manager provide City Council with a report concerning the amount of money the city receives from sales and/or settlements associated with tobacco, vapes and nicotine products, as well as how much of those monies are spent on tobacco cessation and prevention purposes.

Request City Clerk provide the minutes and recording of the Standing Committee on Public Health and Human Services meeting on August 24, 2026 to the Worcester Public Schools administration.

Request City Manager create a public service campaign related to preventing the city's youth from using tobacco, nicotine and vaping products.