

GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, May 28, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.

Kyrouz Auditorium – City Hall

-MINUTES-

Present: Chair, Councilor Paul Lundberg; Vice Chair, Councilor Steven LeBlanc, Jr.; Councilor Valerie Gilman; Councilor Kenneth Hecht; Councilor Jennifer Holmgren; Councilor Scott Memhard; Councilor Sean Nolan; Councilor James O’Hara

Absent: Councilor Cox

Also Present: Mayor Theken; Joanne Senos; Jim Destino; Kenny Costa; Chip Payson; John Dunn; Dr. Richard Safier; Fire Chief Eric Smith; Police Chief Edward Conley, III; Harbormaster T.J. Ciarametaro; Jonathan Pope; Jill Cahill; Joel Favazza; Kathy Clancy; Vanessa Krawczyk

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The Council President announced that this meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law.

Flag Salute led by Gloucester High School Student Government Day participants and the National Anthem sung by GHS Senior, Sadie Cook

Student Government Day Presentation:

Council President Lundberg announced that today was Student Government Day in the City of Gloucester, and read City Charter Sec. 2-7: “Annually, a day known as “Student Government Day” in the city shall be designated by the city clerk and by the school department who shall cooperate with each other in the programming and planning thereof.” Noting that it had been a while since the last Student Government Day, he thanked the participants -- students and mentors alike. He highlighted that the day was organized by Councilors Gilman and Holmgren; Rich Francis, GHS History Teacher; James Cook, GHS Principal; Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent of Schools; and City Clerk, Joanne Senos.

Mayor Sefatia Theken conveyed her thanks for reinvigorated Student Government Day, noting she had two students with her for the morning and two more students in the afternoon. She mentioned the Managers Meeting that took place in the morning which many student participants attended with their department head mentors. She noted other activities her students participated in, highlighting a tourism group visit to the city and a trip to the Visitor’s Center at Stage Fort Park. She recounted how she and CAO, Jim Destino who had two students of his own sat down together in her office for a round-table discussion. She offered several suggestions for next year’s Student Government Day and expressed appreciation for the students’ civic engagement and their knowledge base. **Council President Lundberg** thanked the Mayor for her commitment to Student Government Day and to the Cape Ann League of Women Voters of Gloucester, naming Nan Andrew, Christy Park, Cynthia Bjorlie, June Michaels and Jan Bell for their participation as partners and their assistance.

Dr. Richard Safier added his “special” thanks to the participating students, the mentors and Councilors Gilman and Holmgren for their guidance of the program and to GHS Principal Cook and GHS History Teacher, Rich Francis. He mentioned that since June 2018 the development of a state framework for civic participation programming for students Pre-K through 12 is underway, pointing out how that educational programming would sync well with Student Government Day. He conveyed that the city’s Student Government Day could be a cumulative project for this new forthcoming mandated civics education framework.

James Cook, GHS Principal, mentioned his thanks to the Council for the reconstituted Student Government Day, especially thanking Councilors Gilman and Holmgren for their efforts. He highlighted that in Gloucester it’s always been important to look to the past as a foundation, and that organizing this day gained from those experiences as well as looking forward to needs of students today. This day enabled the exposure for students to have wide range of experiences -- from the Fire Department to the Mayor’s Office, seeing what makes a city works thereby giving the students a broad view of the city’s civic life. He mentioned partnerships and the challenges of logistics to make something like Student Government Day work. He noted this is just the beginning, with many ideas to expand the day in order to reach out to more students, but also bringing that learning experience to all GHS students studying government.

Rich Francis, GHS History Teacher and lead faculty member organizer, touched on certain amendments to the U.S. Constitution, pointing out that there are a lot people who don’t know about how their government works. By bringing back Student Government Day they’re showing their future voting citizens how their government works by showing transparency. This is the start of what they can do with civics in the schools’ classroom, he exclaimed.

They need to give the students tools to become informed voters, he highlighted; they need for students to be interested in government to be able to become active citizens. He pointed out that they want a well-rounded activist citizenry to be able to know how to watch and what to watch for in their government. This day gets the ball rolling, he noted, saying that civics is very important. "An educated citizenry is a vital requisite for our survival as a free people" he quoted.

Council President Lundberg noted the presence of **State Sen. Bruce Tarr** who came to the podium and spoke to the enthusiasm of GHS teacher, Rich Francis. He expressed thanks to Dr. Richard Safier, and Principal Cook, as well as the Council, especially Councilors Gilman and Holmgren, for organizing today's events. He mentioned his brother, Brian Tarr, was a former participant of Student Government Day as "Mayor" and went on to have a long, rewarding career with the city. He reported the Senate FY2020 budget created a Trust Fund to provide the financial resources for civics education that will be mandated statewide. Gloucester, he pointed out, is once again on the cutting edge, leading the way.

Student Participants:

Kennedy Rounds, reported she was a student participant with Mayor Theken. **Graci O'Toole** and **Willow Phoenix**, reported their shadowing experience with the Mayor recounting speaking to her about her job; learning about government officials' roles, and offered thanks for the opportunity to participate.

Police Chief Ed Conley, III, reported he was a participant in the late 1980's in Chelsea's Student Government Day, and, he, too, shadowed a Mayor. He advised that was how he began to learn about the meaning of government. He touched on his students' experiences at the Police Station and the District Court. He expressed his gratitude that he had two young women (**Serena Ferrara** and **Vanessa Linquata**) who joined him at the station, saying that it was a great opportunity to talk about what it is to really be a policeman. He mentioned that both young women expressed an interest in entering the profession.

Fire Chief Eric Smith recounted his experiences with **Kiley Jackson** and **Brittney Anderson** which started with Roll Call, and then delved into in-house procedures and on to giving them a full view of how a fire service operates as well understanding the goals of the organization.

Emmett Caldwell, was paired with **Karin Carroll**, Public Health Director, **Councilor Gilman** noted.

Jill Cahill, Community Development Director, conveyed that the most interesting fact of her student participant was her expressing she was "very nosy and wanted to know about everything that was going on" saying that was why she chose the Community Development Department. She mentioned taking her student through all the ways the department is involved in public community processes at different levels of government.

Cara Buchannan was partnered with **Deborah Kelsey**, Library Director, **Councilor Gilman** reported.

Andrew Topouzoglou and **Jordan Perrine** were partnered with **Harbormaster T.J. Ciarametaro**, who recounted his experiences with the two students, one of whom liked being on the water, and the other who was interested in becoming a member of the Environmental Police and joining the U.S. Coast Guard. He noted he introduced his two students to the Shellfish Constable and then had an in-depth discussion on the work of the Harbormaster's Department and how they work in conjunction with the rest of city departments and other governmental entities.

Ky O'Neil, was partnered with City Auditor, **Kenny Costa**. **Mr. Costa** recounted his experience with his student who was in City Hall for the very first time saying he reviewed some of his reporting responsibilities and how bills are paid for the city. She gained an appreciation for the checks and balances of the city's finances, he added.

Cassidy Briere, **Makayla Cruz** and **Megan Gallo** were paired with Cynthia Bjorlie of the League of Women Voters and Melissa Teixeira Prince of the Gloucester District Court, also a School Committee Member. **Ms. Cole**, recounted her experiences briefly for the Council. **Ms. Prince** expressed her full support for Student Government Day mentioning how impactful the day was for the students, hers in particular. She expressed how pleased she was that one of her student participants wants to be a teacher one day.

Council President Lundberg acknowledged the presence of members of the School Committee: Chair, **Jonathan Pope**; **Melissa Teixeira Prince**; **Kathy Clancy**; and **Joel Favazza**.

Councilor Jen Holmgren, and student **Kyle Watts** recounted that they toured the Archives Department and discussed Council processes. **Councilor Holmgren** noted how smart and patient her student was, and expressed her appreciation to Councilor Gilman for reviving Student Government Day.

Keelyn Anne Chandler was paired with **Council President Lundberg** who mentioned he and his student did the same activities as Councilor Holmgren.

Lilly Marshall was paired with **Councilor Jamie O'Hara**. She touched on highlights of her tour of the DPW and speaking with Mike Hale, Public Works Director and his staff, learning about the issues they face. She expressed thanks for her experience with Student Government Day.

Danielle Denman and **Lauren Alves** were partnered with **Jim Destino**, CAO. **Mr. Destino** expressed that he enjoyed his time with his two students and described how he conveyed information about city government and all its processes. He noted they listened intently, and asked some great questions, expressing their concern about climate change in particular. He recounted for his students the initiatives the city is undertaking now and how they're working to plan for climate change and sea rise. He expressed that this was a great day, thanking everyone involved.

Ethan Uhlig was paired with School Committee Chair, **Kathy Clancy** who took her student to an MSBA Building Committee meeting and on a tour of the new West Parish Elementary School.

Marissa Neves was noted as partnered with **Mike Hale**, DPW Director.

Lawrence Scola was paired with **Councilor Gilman**. **Mr. Scola** recounted his tour with Councilor Gilman of City Hall capped by a visit to the top of the bell tower; and learned how the City Council meetings work as well as how ordinances are created.

Councilor Gilman expressed her thanks for the support of the Administration, particularly Mayor Theken and the City Council.

Joanne Senos, City Clerk, one of the organizers of the 2019 Student Government Day, recounted that while her department had no student participants, mentioned that the City Clerk's office would welcome student participation during the 2019 fall preliminary and municipal election as volunteers in order to experience civics in action, truly government in action.

Councilor Gilman concluded the presentation on Student Government day by showing a brief video collage of photographs from Student Government Day 2019.

By a unanimous vote of the Council, Student Government Day 2019 was declared an unqualified success.

Oral Communications: None.

Confirmation of New Appointments: None.

Consent Agenda:

- **CONFIRMATION OF REAPPOINTMENTS**
- 1. Gloucester Housing Authority Dorothy Martins TTE 05/28/24
- **MAYOR'S REPORT**
- 1. New Appointments:
 - Clean City Commission Dimitra Lavrakas (to an fill unexpired term) TTE 02/14/2020 (Refer O&A)
- 2. Memorandum from Shellfish Constable re: request amendment to GCO Ch. 20 "Shellfish, Seaworms and Eels" Sec. 4 "Areas set aside for noncommercial taking of shellfish (Refer B&F)
- 3. Memorandum from Veterans Services Director re: request acceptance of donations totaling \$210 (Refer B&F)
- 4. Memorandum, Grant Application & Checklist from the Director of Public re: request acceptance of a MDS Foundation Grant in the amount of \$1,980 (Refer B&F)
- 5. Memorandum from CFO re: requesting creation of a new General Capital Project fund from remaining cash balances for school building interior/exterior door replacement (Refer B&F)
- 6. Memorandum from CFO re: loan authorization request in the amount of \$1,800,000 for funding to replace 6,000 feet of water main Along Englewood Road and abutting streets in Magnolia (Refer B&F)
- **COMMUNICATIONS/INVITATIONS**
- 1. Invitation from the Gloucester Fire Department Relief Association to the Firefighters' Memorial Service on June 9, 2019 (Info Only)
- **INFORMATION ONLY**
- **APPLICATIONS/PETITIONS**
- **COUNCILORS ORDERS**
- 1. CC2019-022 (Memhard): Amend GCO Ch. 22 "Traffic and Motor Vehicles", Sec. 22-270 "Parking prohibited at all times" and Sec. 22-291 "Tow-away zones" re: Rackliffe Street (Refer O&A & TC)
- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
- 1. City Council Meeting: 05/14/2019 (Approve/File)
- 2. Standing Committee Meetings: B&F 05/23/2019, O&A 05/20/2019, P&D 05/22/2019 (Approve/File)

Unanimous Consent Calendar:

- 1. Addendum to the Mayor's Report: Request approval for the Recreational Trails Program Grant in the amount of \$49,000 for the Gloucester Watershed & Open Space Public Access Upgrades (Refer B&F)

Items to be added/deleted from the Consent Agenda & Unanimous Consent Calendar:

By unanimous consent of the Council, the Consent Agenda and Unanimous Consent Calendar was accepted as presented.

Committee Reports:

Budget & Finance: May 23

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to recommend that the City Council accept under MGL c. 44, §53A, a private grant for \$20,000 for FY19 Beth Israel-Lahey Health Beverly & Addison Gilbert 2019 Community Collaborative Grant Regional Senior Transportation Program for the purpose of a regional senior transportation program for the communities of Gloucester, Rockport, Essex and Manchester-by-the-Sea. The purpose for this grant is to expand existing transportation systems to include trips to grocery stores, the Farmer's Market and the Food Pantry as well as to Gloucester's Stacy Boulevard and trails/recreation areas throughout Cape Ann. Grant funds must be expended by December 31, 2019. There is no local match for this grant.

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Memhard reported this is a pilot program motion that the Public Health Director is pleased to present for the city, and is looking forward to working through Beth Israel-Lahey Health through Beverly and Addison Gilbert Hospitals.

MOTION: On motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Hecht, the City Council voted 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to accept under MGL c. 44, §53A, a private grant for \$20,000 for FY19 Beth Israel-Lahey Health Beverly & Addison Gilbert 2019 Community Collaborative Grant Regional Senior Transportation Program for the purpose of a regional senior transportation program for the communities of Gloucester, Rockport, Essex and Manchester-by-the-Sea. The purpose for this grant is to expand existing transportation systems to include trips to grocery stores, the Farmer's Market and the Food Pantry as well as to Gloucester's Stacy Boulevard and trails/recreation areas throughout Cape Ann. Grant funds must be expended by December 31, 2019. There is no local match for this grant.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to recommend that the City Council accept under MGL c. 44, §53A, a cash donation in the amount of \$2,000 from the Minogue Family Foundation to be used to benefit the on-going efforts of the Harbormaster's Department.

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Memhard noted that this is a generous donation the Council was pleased to accept on behalf of the city, and that the Harbormaster has duly recognized the contribution

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Hecht, the City Council voted 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to accept under MGL c. 44, §53A, a cash donation in the amount of \$2,000 from the Minogue Family Foundation to be used to benefit the on-going efforts of the Harbormaster's Department.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to recommend that the City Council approve Special Budgetary Transfer 2019-SBT-10 in the amount of \$20,000 from Account #600052-558000, Water OM Other Supplies to Account #600051-513002, Water PS Overtime - Labor, for the purpose of funding overtime costs for Water Department personnel to work at Wallace, Haskell and Goose Cove Reservoirs to put in place the Dam Vegetation.

DISCUSSION: None.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard seconded by Councilor Hecht, the City Council voted 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to approve Special Budgetary Transfer 2019-SBT-10 in the amount of \$20,000 from Account #600052-558000, Water OM Other Supplies to Account #600051-513002, Water PS Overtime - Labor, for the purpose of funding overtime costs for Water Department personnel to work at Wallace, Haskell and Goose Cove Reservoirs to put in place the Dam Vegetation.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to recommend that the City Council approve Supplemental Appropriation 2019-SA-35 in the amount of \$10,000 (Ten Thousand Dollars) from the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund-Undesignated Fund Balance, Account #7600-359000, to Sail GHS Float Repairs CP Stabilization – Site Improvements, Account #760024-584000 for the purpose of funding repairs to the Sail GHS float system located in the inner harbor.

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Memhard advised that the Harbormaster’s Department did a careful study of the situation, and reported that this expenditure to rehabilitate the sailing center floats, that have a value of over \$100,000, in the city’s inner harbor take a “beating.” The repairs will extend the useful life of the floats, with offsetting funds from other private donations, he added.

Councilor Gilman offered her support for the Supplemental Appropriation, saying that her son benefitted from participating in the Sail GHS program when he was a student at the O’Maley Innovation Middle School, saying that this appropriation helps to support this great school program. She extended her thanks to the Administration.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Hecht, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to approve Supplemental Appropriation 2019-SA-35 in the amount of \$10,000 (Ten Thousand Dollars) from the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund-Undesignated Fund Balance, Account #7600-359000, to Sail GHS Float Repairs CP Stabilization – Site Improvements, Account #760024-584000 for the purpose of funding repairs to the Sail GHS float system located in the inner harbor.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) to recommend that the City Council approve Supplemental Appropriation 2019-SA-36 in the amount of \$37,000.00 (Thirty Seven Thousand Dollars) from Capital Projects Stabilization Fund-Undesignated Fund Balance, Account #7600-359000, to Nissan Leaf Purchase CP Stabilization, Vehicles Account #760015-585001 for the purpose of funding the purchase of three 2016 Nissan Leaf vehicles per the purchase option included in the underlying lease agreements with Nissan Motors.

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Memhard remarked that at this time the three 2016 Nissan Leafs that are at the end of their lease term, and the city has the option to purchase them. The total cost for the city is about 40% of the sticker price with each vehicle having relatively low mileage. He recounted that last year the city had purchased three 2015 Nissan Leafs that were coming off their three-year lease term. These vehicles are electric, cost efficient and economical for in-city staff travel.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Hecht, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to approve Supplemental Appropriation 2019-SA-36 in the amount of \$37,000.00 (Thirty Seven Thousand Dollars) from Capital Projects Stabilization Fund-Undesignated Fund Balance, Account #7600-359000, to Nissan Leaf Purchase CP Stabilization, Vehicles Account #760015-585001 for the purpose of funding the purchase of three 2016 Nissan Leaf vehicles per the purchase option included in the underlying lease agreements with Nissan Motors.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to recommend that the City Council in accordance with GCO Sec. 16-1 permit the Planning Division of Community Development to apply for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant (MVP) through the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for a grant total of \$2,000,000 to build out a Gloucester High School Flood Barrier in order for the protection of the GHS campus. The grant requires a minimum local cash match of 25% that will be identified through a loan authorization request.

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Memhard advised that the Planning Division is moving aggressively on this matter, saying it is hoped the city will be awarded the grant they've applied for. This is an after-the-fact request to permit a grant application with a match due to time sequencing to the grantor and the FY20 budget review schedule. At the next City Council meeting, the grant match, a \$2 million loan authorization will come forward. Mr. Destino had indicated that if the grant is not forthcoming, and notice is expected in June, that the city wouldn't move ahead with the project. If the grant funding of \$2 million is awarded, it would be put against the final total amount that the city would put out to long-term debt, which would bring the city's portion to \$1.15 million rather than the full \$3.15 million.

Councilor Gilman asked how this project would work in terms of its structure. **Mr. Destino** pointed out there has been discussion about sea level rise and climate change and how to best use city resources. Through Community Development and the Planning Division a lot of work has been done on Municipal Preparedness Program; work to lift sewer pumping stations. He pointed out that one of the biggest concerns is the protection of the High School property and its facilities. He noted it is a very valuable asset, that to replace it would be hundreds of millions of dollars. He announced that the time is right by leveraging this grant funding to build a flood barrier which will start at the building's science wing on the canal. The barrier will be about as high as the fencing of the softball field in certain spots and go all the way to the Blynman Bridge and taper down as it goes along. It will be a steel structure with landscaping for aesthetics. From the fence to the granite seawall there will be a walking path. There will be a flood barrier causing some visual disruption of views but it is the best way to keep the life of the high school going for another 50 years without loss of this valuable asset because of storm events. This will also protect the stadium facility as well. This is but one step, he indicated, saying that they'll "pick their spots" where they think they can add the most value with tax dollars. They'll know by June 30th about the grant funding. Councilor LeBlanc will be hosting a meeting at the High School Auditorium on June 3 for constituents who will be affected by this project, getting their input, and anticipate having better visuals by the time of the meeting for the public to view. It is a flood barrier, not a "wall." **Councilor Memhard** raised the issue of ground water and rising tides which in turn raises ground water levels, he noted, and as such, they're having their engineer investigate that possibility and possible remedies if necessary. He assured that further information will be available at the public hearing for a loan order.

Councilor LeBlanc announced the public meeting about the flood barrier for the GHS campus is taking place on Monday, June 3rd at 6:00 p.m. in the High School Auditorium. He mentioned working with the Mayor and Community Development's Planning Division on this meeting. An electronic sign at the high school will advertise the meeting also, he noted.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Hecht, the City Council voted 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, in accordance with GCO Sec. 16-1 to permit the Planning Division of Community Development to apply for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant (MVP) through the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for a grant total of \$2,000,000 to build out a Gloucester High School Flood Barrier in order for the protection of the GHS campus. The grant requires a minimum local cash match of 25% that will be identified through a loan authorization request.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to recommend that the City Council in accordance with MGL c. 44, §64 to approve payment of a prior year invoice for the city's landfill monitoring at Magnolia Woods, Tighe & Bond, Invoice #061897210 dated 6/15/2018 for a total of \$13,225 from FY2018 and the invoice to be paid with FY2019 General Fund, DPW-Public Services budgeted funds.

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Memhard advised this payment with FY19 funds is for the contractor who does the landfill testing and monitoring for the city. The DPW received a late bill and the purchase order was already closed, and that this is a bookkeeping matter.

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COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to recommend that the City Council approve Special Budgetary Transfer 2019-SBT-11 in the amount of \$22,500 from Police–Uniform, Accreditation Incentive, Account #0121151-519031, to Police-Uniform, Repairs & Maintenance-Communication Equipment, Account #0121152-524006, for the purpose of funding repairs and maintenance on Police Department radio infrastructure in order to provide reliable communications amongst public safety officials.

DISCUSSION:

Chief Conley reported to B&F that this transfer of funds is in addition to \$75,000 in state earmark funding will fully renovate the department’s radio infrastructure in order to prevent outages and dead spots and build in redundancies which will have a big impact for his department.

Councilor O’Hara asked about dead areas and how many there are. **Chief Conley** advised they don’t know for sure because radio wave propagation is a difficult thing to pinpoint. The noted two ways of approaching the issue -- anecdotal evidence – officers in the lower parts of West Gloucester and Lanesville have difficulty under certain atmospheric conditions in transmitting from their portable radios which are less powerful than the radios in the cruisers. He noted the “Christmas Tree lights” effect – if one light goes out, the whole string goes down which is the way their system currently works -- if one site goes down they’d all go down. Now, with a new configuration, another site will take over immediately for repeater transmission purpose for receiver transmitters.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Hecht, the City Council voted 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to approve Special Budgetary Transfer 2019-SBT-11 in the amount of \$22,500 from Police–Uniform, Accreditation Incentive, Account #0121151-519031, to Police-Uniform, Repairs & Maintenance-Communication Equipment, Account #0121152-524006, for the purpose of funding repairs and maintenance on Police Department radio infrastructure in order to provide reliable communications amongst public safety officials.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to recommend that the City Council approve the Gloucester Fire Department Billing and Collection Policy as presented by the EMS Coordinator and approved by the Mayor dated April 30, 2019 and further to approve the proposed fee schedule attached to and incorporated into the policy effective July 1, 2019.

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Memhard mentioned that Firefighter/Paramedic Jonathan Sanger is the Fire Department’s new EMS Coordinator, taking over from Sander Schultz. He reported Mr. Sanger is doing an “able job,” bringing fresh eyes and enthusiasm to the job. **Fire Chief Eric Smith** mentioned changes, to this year’s fee schedule are minimal, but now extends itself to services provided on scene patient care but with no transport to a hospital. There are several insurance companies that will pay for this fee, he pointed out, and others aren’t set up to do that yet. He noted that this is an area that is increasing in popularity, that of community paramedicine. He touched briefly on community paramedicine by highlighting this as becoming a trend that is a cost saving measure for insurance companies which he touched on briefly.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Hecht, the City Council voted 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to approve the Gloucester Fire Department Billing and Collection Policy as presented by the EMS Coordinator and approved by the Mayor dated April 30, 2019 and further to approve the proposed fee schedule attached to and incorporated into the policy effective July 1, 2019.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to recommend that the City Council authorize the write-off of \$319,857.58 in uncollectible, outstanding ambulance billing.

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Memhard conveyed this that this write-off for uncollectible ambulance fees which is lower than last year, and advised that the department is working with their billing company to gain more information to make finding and billing transported patients' insurance companies better accountable. The city is gaining on this issue, he pointed out. The department provides services but isn't always compensated, he pointed out.

Chief Smith expressed this situation is unfortunate, but it's part of medical billing overall. It is either bad information gained on the street, legal barriers to obtaining information; hospitals don't want to share information electronically and won't let their billing company interface electronically either. In many cases if the hospitals gain information later, the Fire Department doesn't obtain that information nor does the billing company -- it's just not shared. Some patients may be homeless or aren't available to answer any questions. They can't put social security numbers on patient information to do legitimate billing. He advised Mr. Sanger has made many improvements to have better accountability and put pressure on the billing company. He advised they're doing all that they can.

Councilor LeBlanc expressed his concern for having to write off uncollectible ambulance fees, recounting that when he first came onto the Council the write off was about \$600,000. **Chief Smith** noted they've attempted to use a collection agency to collect fees, which they don't like doing that because they are a public service agency. Even when they did hire a collection agency the department netted nothing. They look at the situation annually as does the City Auditor, he assured.

Councilor O'Hara asked about how Gloucester's write-off rates against other communities who have their own ambulance service. **Chief Smith** advised the city rates very well. The billing company makes their money on a percentage fee so the more money they bring in the more they're paid. There are areas of improvements that have been made, and Gloucester is far ahead of most communities, he reported, adding that there aren't a lot of fire-based ambulance services in the area to compare the city to. It is difficult to run emergency services as it has a red bottom line, especially in a demographic where most transports are covered by Medicare. **Councilor O'Hara** touched on the department's billing company with **Chief Smith** who mentioned that this is a top billing company and are one of the less expensive ones. He explained they charge 3% of whatever they bring in/collect. He mentioned using another billing company, in his experience in Michigan that charged 10% of collected fees, and touched on a net gain versus charges to the city for billing and being kept up with federal regulations. He mentioned "out clauses" in the billing company's contract if they determine they aren't getting the "biggest bang for their buck."

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Hecht, the City Council voted 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to authorize the write-off of \$319,857.58 in uncollectible, outstanding ambulance billing.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, to recommend that the City Council under MGL c. 44, §53A accept federal grants in the amount of \$662,525 for the Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for Program Year 2019/Fiscal Year 2020 and the HOME Grant from the North Shore HOME Consortium for Program Year 2019/Fiscal Year 2020 in the amount of \$87,110.

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Memhard noted that this is an annual acceptance of the CDBG funding used for public services, public facilities, economic development, fist time homebuyers and housing rehab as well as paying as some of the administrative costs for the grant. He advised that Ms. Cahill reported that since her tenure as Community Development Director they organize the program using the funds as intended for which he and Councilor Hecht applauded her for at the B&F meeting.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Hecht, the City Council voted 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (Cox) absent, under MGL c. 44, §53A accept federal grants in the amount of \$662,525 for the Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for Program Year 2019/Fiscal Year 2020 and the HOME Grant from the North Shore HOME Consortium for Program Year 2019/Fiscal Year 2020 in the amount of \$87,110.

Ordinances & Administration: May 20

There are no matters for Council action under this heading.

Planning & Development: May 22

There were no matters for Council action under this heading.

Scheduled Public Hearings:

1. **PH2019-025: SCP2019-004: Fuller Street #35, Map 168, Lot 14, GZO Secs. 1.9, 3.1.6, 3.2.2 and 1.7 for a special permit to exceed the maximum allowable building height, decrease the minimum lot area per dwelling unit and decrease the minimum open space per dwelling unit in the NB/R-20 district (Cont'd from 5/14/19 & TBC 06/11/19)**

This public hearing is opened at 8:33 p.m.

Council President Lundberg announced that at the request of the representing attorney for the Applicant, this matter is continued to June 11, 2019.

This public hearing is continued at 8:33 p.m. to June 11, 2019.

For Council Vote: None.

Individual Councilor's Discussion including Reports by Appointed Councilors to Committees:

Update on the Tourism Commission by City Council Representative, Councilor Ken Hecht, highlighted the Commission is recharged mentioning three new members with two new members in the pipeline. These are active people who are excited and hardworking. The two pillars of strength are the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce and Discover Gloucester. As a result, the Tourism Commission will look to seek changes in the Ordinance that governs their actions to better reflect their efforts on behalf of the city's tourism industry.

Unfinished Business:

Council President Lundberg led a discussion with the Council on the process of naming a recipient of the Ab Khambaty Extraordinary Performance/Service Award which hadn't been awarded since its inception and given posthumously to its namesake. It was determined that when the Councilors would identify one nominee amongst themselves and then through a Council Order put forward the name of a nominee for the Council's consideration under "For Council Vote."

Individual Councilor's Discussion including Reports by Appointed Councilors to Committees:
Councilors' Requests to the Mayor:

Councilor Hecht announced that Mosaic Gloucester will have a first part of the installation on the face of the Americold Building on Rogers Street set for Thursday at 5:30 p.m. The movie, "Lobster War" will be presented on Tuesday, June 4th at 7:00 p.m. at the Cape Ann Museum. **Council President Lundberg** mentioned he had viewed this documentary and recommended it as a great description of the issues facing the lobster industry.

Councilor Holmgren expressed her thanks to Councilor Gilman, Mayor Theken, Cape Ann Veterans Services; Sen. Bruce Tarr; Rep. Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Cong. Seth Moulton and Governor Baker and every single veteran, JROTC and Sea Cadet members and teachers for the "wonderful job" they did at the Memorial Day Ceremony.

Councilor Memhard announced that Rocky Neck had difficult parking challenges this past weekend with the start of the summer season. He mentioned that the Mayor reposted that Gloucester was recently in the national news again. Deborah Kramer, a recognized national history author, had an article published this month in the national edition of Audubon Magazine featuring the Good Harbor Beach Piping Plovers talking about last year's saga and the changes the city has made working with the Animal Advisory Committee, the Mayor's Office and the City Council to create a more hospitable environment for the plovers while balancing the needs of a popular urban beach..

Councilor LeBlanc recounted that tonight's Council meeting was a good example of such a great Council who can laugh together and get some serious business done. He mentioned that Councilor Memhard, B&F Committee's Vice Chair, sitting in for Chair, Melissa Cox, brought a refreshingly new take on the Committee's Report to the Council this evening.

A motion was made, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana C. Jorgenson
Clerk of Committees

DOCUMENTS/ITEMS SUBMITTED AT MEETING: None.