

GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, October 27, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.
REMOTE MEETING
-Minutes-

Present: Council President, Councilor Steve LeBlanc; Council Vice President, Councilor Val Gilman; Councilor Melissa Cox; Councilor Jen Holmgren; Councilor John McCarthy; Councilor Scott Memhard; Councilor James O’Hara; Councilor Barry Pett

Also Present: Mayor, Sefatia Romeo Theken; Acting CAO, Vanessa Krawczyk; City Clerk, Joanne M. Senos; Fire Chief, Eric Smith; Community Development Director, Jill Cahill; Public Health Director, Karin Carroll; CFO, John Dunn; Auditor, Kenny Costa

Absent: Councilor Sean Nolan

This meeting was conducted remotely through Zoom. All votes were by ROLL CALL.

Meeting called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Council President LeBlanc announced, “This meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law. Consistent with the Governor’s orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and banning gatherings of more than 25 people, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation. Additionally, all votes taken by the City Council during this and future remote meetings will be by roll call vote. If you are calling in on a phone you can press Star 9 (*9) to request to speak. If you are watching on a computer or device there is a “raise hand” button that you can tap or press to request to speak. Please use either of these options during oral communications to be recognized to speak.”

Councilor Cox joined the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

Council President LeBlanc shared that there were currently 14 panelists and 4 attendees present at the meeting.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PRESENTATIONS/COMMENDATIONS:

Karin Carroll, Public Health Director re: COVID-19 Update and other related matters

Summary of Discussion: Ms. Carroll stated that after a summer of relatively low case numbers and very little transmission, there has been quite a bit of activity in the past few weeks.

She explained that virus levels in wastewater analysis reflected the fact that Gloucester had remained consistently around the minimal level of detection. The test positivity rate and number of new cases per 14 day average has been well below 1% and the state average.

The Gloucester Health Department worked closely with the City’s public schools this fall to get them open. She shared that a tremendous effort has been made to create student and staff support to address questions and concerns so that everyone feels safe navigating the schools. Consistent communication is exchanged with the schools and school nurses, and contact tracing is done as needed.

Around the Columbus Day long weekend, an uptick was detected, and some positive test results were confirmed, with the record highest caseload resulting in 17 positive cases confirmed in one day. This caused

understandable concern, and the need for immediate analysis and action. **Mayor Romeo Theken's** office acted quickly and requested support from the Baker-Polito administration in the form of some low-barrier testing. In this case, testing was free, no insurance and limited identification was required, and it was performed for anyone interested in receiving it regardless of where the tester lived or worked.

At the peak of this outbreak, 79 active cases were found in the community, about 20 of which were from the first round of testing. This uptick resulted in no hospitalizations, no cases of staff or residents in long-term care facilities or senior housing testing positive (these two high-risk populations are monitored daily), and no 911 calls that reported COVID-related symptoms. There were also no new deaths caused by this. **Ms. Carroll** attributed this particular spike to the largest source of clusters, the households of younger working people between the ages of 30-40, which has been recognized as a state-wide trend. For obvious reasons, it is very difficult when someone in your house has an infectious disease to not get it. Also, most people that age work and/or attend school, and most of them have some type of caregiving responsibilities for children or parents, which can result in rapid transmission throughout the community. The tracing team immediately contacted and traced all those involved in the outbreak, and received very good compliance with them being tested, quarantined, and isolated.

She stated that the nurse team is doing a tremendous job keeping families educated about how they can safely isolate and quarantine. She also explained the difference between quarantine and isolation. When you are actively sick (an index case diagnosed with COVID), you are asked to remain isolated. If you are identified as a contact, you are asked to quarantine. Both populations should remain in their homes for at least 14 days. She acknowledged that there has been a lot of confusion that the travel order has contributed to since it states that if you return to Massachusetts, and get a negative test result, then you do not have to quarantine. If you are identified as a close contact of someone who has recovered, you are automatically at a higher risk than the category of travelers, so it is a different scenario in which different rules are applied. It can be very hard to make sense of and stay updated on the constantly-changed rules.

She explained that quarantine sometimes needs to last longer than 14 days. There are cases where quarantine needs to be extended until 14 days after it is determined that the household index case is no longer infectious. She acknowledged that this poses a lot of challenges to families, schools, and businesses if a child or adult needs to quarantine for 20 or 24 days: maintaining activities of daily life, making sure they do not fall behind in school or work, and dealing with the staffing shortages created by this situation. Due to this, the Gloucester Health Department holds calls every Thursday with the **Mayor Romeo Theken's** team, the Community Development team, and community partners such as Pathways for Children, Open Door, and Action Inc., to mobilize and provide as many resources to families as possible to assist them.

She shared that there was one day where the Gloucester Health Department exceeded its capacity, and required the assistance of the Department of Public Health for some of its contact tracing. She felt that it provided an opportunity to utilize the state resources, and that they had done a good job. She stated that while it did not occur as quickly as they would have liked, the City was able to access resources in the languages needed, as well as translators and translation services.

Ms. Carroll felt that Fallon Ambulance Service did an excellent job when they provided the free testing, and stated that after the first couple of days, approximately 600 people a day were tested. The Gloucester Health Department's Emergency Management Director Joe Aiello and Assistant Director Carol McMann partnered with the City's Public Safety Team to mobilize and promote this endeavor. She praised the remarkable team in place in the city under the direction of **Mayor Romeo Theken**.

After the first two days of testing, all test results were received and analyzed. It was determined that about 96% of the testing site participants were from Gloucester. There was a little below a 2% positivity rate located in the community, and over the next few weeks, the cases steadily declined to the point that more than half of

the residents who were part of the original 79 confirmed cases were cleared from isolation and quarantine. This left 32 active cases that remained from that spike. She mentioned that the City's contact tracing team is available seven days a week, and the case numbers are closely monitored.

Wastewater monitoring has also continued, and the Gloucester Health Department is provided a report once a week that mirrors the diagnosed case levels. It is a relatively quick and inexpensive tool used to measure the entire asymptomatic population and ensure that there are no virus level spikes in the community since most people do not receive testing if they do not exhibit symptoms. The graphs for this monitoring are available on the city website.

The business liaison position has been re-established. Kelly Tibbert, a nurse from the contact tracing team has been appointed to work in conjunction with the inspection team (mainly Food Inspector Brian Meuleman). She will be available to assist businesses with troubleshooting if they have concerns about how to keep their business safe: such as maintaining social distance between staff and patrons, effectively managing an exposure, and any other support they may need will also be provided. The Community Development team organized a call to be held on October 28, 2020 with many local businesses, mainly food establishments, to share updated information, provide tools including checklists, and multi-lingual materials to assist with safe business operation.

Ms. Carroll stated the use of the incident rate colored map is an important indicator that averages the number of new cases over a two week-period from Saturday through Sunday before the map color is released on Wednesday. It is important to keep in mind that it does not show the total prevalence or pinpoint the exact location of cases, how sick people are, or how much it affects schools, nursing homes, or long-term care facilities. Gloucester did go into the red, which indicated that there were an average of 8 new cases daily per 100,000 people over the past two-week period. She acknowledged that a robo-call or Reverse 911 had been issued on October 26, 2020 that alarmed many residents. She explained that if a city or town remained in the red zone for 3 consecutive weeks, they are required to regress from Phase 3, Step 2 back to Step 1. She mentioned that people and businesses in Gloucester would not be hugely impacted, small changes would be implemented such as gyms, museums, and libraries being reverted from 50 % capacity to 40 %. While significant to that business, it would not be as drastic as a full closure. Outdoor public gatherings would also be reduced from the current 100 people back to 50 people in an outdoor venue or a public space.

In that case, schools and sports would need to be revisited by the School Committee. The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association has revised their rules so that if a city is in the red for even one week, they do not need to stop sports. This has resulted in none of the City's sports or schools currently needing to pivot to reduce or eliminate activities, and school learning models have not needed to be changed.

Guidelines can be found on the City website as to how to conduct safer Halloween festivities, including the Halloween Walk-Through being held on Main Street on Thursday, October 29, 2020 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Thanksgiving guidelines will be released shortly, however, Governor Baker advised today that holiday gatherings be reduced. Assistance will be provided by the Gloucester Health Department to help people arrange holiday plans during this tough time.

She praised the tracing team, a dedicated group of mostly nurses, some health care workers, and a couple of administrators who have gone above and beyond working behind the scenes to schedule and reschedule, ensure the team gets paid, and have taken calls all hours of the day, night, and weekends to try to stay on top of the situation in Gloucester and to support every single business and resident in need. They have asked **Mayor Romeo Theken** to advocate for grief counselors, sent sympathy cards, and delivered food. She said that Gloucester would not be in the place it is without this team. In addition to being the Visitor Center Executive Director, Carol Mondello has also been the Contact Tracing team administrator who keeps everybody on task and organized in conjunction with Carol McMahon. She introduced the nurse team of

Bridget Nelligan, Kim Carolyn, Leora Ulrich, Diana Edgar-Moloney, Eileen Matz, Sally Rich, Cindy Juncker, Karen Huie, Cindy Johnson, Mary Höss, Jeffrey Parco, Kelly Tilburg, Salam Madi, Vanessa Doucette, Szilvia Vanderberg, and Kelly Hyland. She specifically thanked Szilvia Vanderberg, Cindy Juncker, and Kelly Tillburg who have stepped up, led this team, trained new people, answered questions, and been available to the health department, the administration, and the citizens of Gloucester throughout this entire process. They have constantly reminded everyone of the human faces behind this pandemic. She shared that every morning at 8:45 a.m., feedback is provided by them as to what is needed, how things can be improved, and what needs to be requested from **Mayor Romeo Theken** and Governor Baker. She stated that they are an amazing group of professionals, and it has been a pleasure working with them.

Councilor O'Hara thanked **Ms. Carroll** and her team for their efforts to keep the city safe, and said that it is appreciated.

Councilor Memhard thanked **Ms. Carroll**, and said that it is really helpful to have her input on all the hard work provided by she and her team.

Councilor Questions

Q1 (O'Hara) Can you get into more detail pertaining to how the wastewater reflects in the numbers since constituents have been inquiring?

Q2 (Memhard) Can you also specify whether it is localized or city-wide?

A1 (Carroll) The wastewater data is pulled from the Gloucester treatment plant, so it reflects all Essex and Gloucester households that are on wastewater, private septic systems are excluded.

It is drawn automatically from a pump. A sample is pulled once a week in a 24-hour period proportionate to peak loads of activity. A large collection begins around 6:00-7:00 a.m., and it is continued throughout the day at a moderate level, and then a large collection is taken in the evening. It is then sent to the Biobot lab to be analyzed. Every Friday or Saturday, a report is received by the health department. Wastewater virus particles are measured, and anything below 4,000 particles cannot be detected. She explained that over the first few months of the pandemic, sometimes detection was received, and other times it was not. No cases were detected the first few weeks of summer. The health department anticipated a spike may have been detected in August with tourists visiting the city, but that did not happen.

During the last outbreak that occurred a few weeks ago, the virus in one week jumped from the level of detection to 68,000 particles. In perspective, 79 people out of a population of 30,000+ is a small percentage.

While it is unclear as to exactly why the case numbers increased so fast, the onset of symptoms occurred fast, testing was received, and then the wastewater numbers began to decline. If the case numbers, 911 calls, prevalence, hospitalizations, and all other data are ever in conflict, and more asymptomatic virus is detected or transmitted, the reason would need to be determined, but that has not been seen up to this point. **Ms. Carroll** expressed feeling reassured that the City does not have massive amounts of virus in the community, or it would be detected in the wastewater.

Q3 (Cox) A friend of mine got tested at Stage Fort Park, and he said that he has not received any notification yet. He does not have a way to contact them since there was no information given to the test recipients. If he has not heard by know, is there a way to contact them?

A1 (Carroll) Yes. The state runs the testing through Fallon Ambulance Services, and the results are emailed. There is also a result hotline that can be called. The first couple of days that testing was performed, they were not giving out their contact information, so some people received an email from an unknown address that

went to spam. The health department then re-created a flier for them that was given out in the last few days of testing.

Assistant Fire Chief Joe Aiello made sure that it was distributed. He coordinated the effort, and we put it up on Facebook. I will email you the information if your friend still has not found his results. **Acting CAO Vanessa Krawczyk** has also helped us distribute that information. So if he has any problems, let us know and we will help find the results.

A2 (Krawczyk) We will get you that number, but it also is listed on the City's website for the weekly COVID update that we posted last week. It gives you the phone number that you call, the hours that they are open, and the email address that you should look for if you are going to get the email results, along with what you should expect, because there are a few access codes. You have to pre-register, and then register your account to get your results. So it is a little complicated, we tried to streamline it for people.

Q4 (Memhard) You mentioned the results of the first two days of the testing at Stage Fort Park. I was curious if you had available to share with us the subsequent days of additional testing.

A1 (Carroll) We did just get the testing information today from the last three days. I was really hoping I would have had a chance to analyze it a little bit more, and we can roughly see a couple of things. We maintained that 500-600 people a day that we tested each day. It felt quieter this last week, but I think maybe everybody got good at it. We tested 2,800 people total in the five days. From the first glimpse, our positivity rate has not gone up much from the original two days. I have not calculated it yet, but it looks like roughly the same percentage of positive, under 2%.

Q5 (Gilman) I'm intrigued to find out how we stay connected to the other Board of Health directors in Essex County. How is it that you work collaboratively with them to find out what is happening in their communities, and how do you incorporate that into protecting us as well as you have?

A1 (Carroll) There are a lot of ways. We spend a lot of time on different calls and things, many of which involve the state. The state conducts two administrative calls a week, and another two weekly calls focused on local health from Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN). Research and rules are constantly evolving, so they go over that with health departments and we can ask questions and share in that forum. Then we have a local health department meeting once a week where the North Shore health directors get together and share ideas, brainstorm, and learn from what other health directors are doing, what they are seeing, how it all plays out in communities, and what kind of public messaging and outreach needs to be done. Then our actual health departments, and specifically the tracing team, also communicates at a level through MAVEN on a patient case information basis. While it is not something the health directors are involved in, the Gloucester contact tracing team collaborates with other cities in cases where a person lives, works, or goes to school in Gloucester, and also lives or conducts business in the other city or town as well. The public health nurses need to communicate, and MAVEN allows cases to be linked between cities and information to be shared so that the full picture is understood between the two communities. There are many levels in which the Essex County Health directors communicate, and our shared goal has been to maintain as much consistency as possible. It has also been easier since Governor Baker has implemented phases.

Summary of Discussion: Councilor Holmgren thanked Ms. Carroll for her patient and detailed explanation. She stated that Ms. Carroll having recognized the contact tracing team by name underscored the point that we are definitely all in this together, and our friends and neighbors are the ones who are looking out for us. She expressed personal thanks to the team as well, because while at times their work can be thankless, their dedication and compassion does not go unnoticed. Ms. Carroll thanked Councilor Holmgren for her kind words, and expressed agreement for the statement she had made.

Councilor Pett thanked **Ms. Carroll** and the entire health department team for all their work. He expressed appreciation for the members of the contact tracing team who were named, as well as the administration, first responders, and DPW for their many months of hard work since the pandemic began for keeping us all in this together.

Community Development Director Jill Cahill corrected **Ms. Carroll**, who had stated earlier in the meeting that the health department participated in the business COVID update calls on Wednesday mornings. The meetings are conducted on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. **Ms. Cahill** explained that invitations had been issued from the Economic Development department, DiscoverGloucester, as well as the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce. She also shared that Community Development had partnered with the Health Department on this meeting, and that the information will be available on the City website. She said that they looked forward to the meeting since people will be informed of the available resources in the event that an employee reports a positive COVID case, as well as employee and business resources that are available as a result of the Governor's new economic stimulus efforts. She encouraged any interested businesses to join, as it will be focused specifically on restaurants and service industries.

Council President LeBlanc thanked **Ms. Carroll** for doing such a great job, along with the **Mayor** and **Acting CAO Vanessa Krawczyk** for communicating important updates directly to the City Council and online on social media when it is received by the health department to provide the community with as much beneficial information as possible. He extended kudos to the entire administration and health department teams for doing an amazing job. He encouraged everyone to take care of themselves, wear a mask, and wash their hands.

CONFIRMATION OF NEW APPOINTMENTS: None

CONSENT AGENDA:

ACTION

• CONFIRMATION OF REAPPOINTMENTS

• MAYOR'S REPORT

1. New Appointment:

Ryan Knowles TTE 2/14/21 IT Director (fulfilling an unexpired term)

(Refer O&A)

2. Memorandum from Community Development Director requesting extension of temporary zoning relief to businesses during COVID-19 through December 30, 2021

(Refer P&D)

3. Memorandum from Veterans Services Director requesting acceptance of donations totaling \$350

(Refer B&F)

4. Memorandum from Archives Committee requesting acceptance of donations in the amount of \$100

(Refer B&F)

5. Memorandum, Grant Application, & Checklist from Police Chief requesting acceptance of the FY20 Bullet Proof Vest Grant in the amount of \$13,524

(Refer B&F)

6. Memorandum from Community Development Director requesting acceptance of Round 3 CARES Act CDBG-CV funding in the amount of \$291,230

(Refer B&F)

7. Supplemental Appropriation Budgetary Request (#2021-SA-1) from the CFO

(Refer B&F)

8. Health Department Flyer about quarantining

(Info Only)

• ADDENDUM TO MAYOR'S REPORT

1. Memorandum from Principal Assessor re. FY21 Tax Classification

(Refer B&F)

• COMMUNICATIONS/INVITATIONS

• INFORMATION ONLY

• APPLICATIONS/PETITIONS

1. PP2020-008: Application by Comcast to install new underground conduit on Elm Street starting at Utility Pole #4977 excavating to Place (1) 3" PVC Conduit 75' +/- to 206 Main Street

(Refer P&D)

• COUNCILLORS ORDERS

1. CC#2020-013 (Nolan): Amendments to GCO Ch. 10 "Waterways Administration", Article V "Other Waterways Regulations", Sec. 10-87 "Harbormaster Patrol Details"

(Refer O&A)

2. CC#2020-014 (Nolan): Request that the State Legislators file a Home Rule Petition regarding raising parking fines pursuant to Sec. 20A ½ of Chapter 90 of the General Laws

(Refer O&A)

3. CC#2020-015 (Nolan): Amend GCO Ch. 22 "Traffic and Motor Vehicles", Article VI "Traffic Schedules", Sec. 22-270.1 "Resident Parking Only" by ADDING Fenley Road and Cedarwood Road

(Refer O&A)

• APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. City Council Meeting: 10/13/2020 (Approve/File)
2. Standing Committee Meetings: B&F 10/22/20 (under separate cover), O&A 10/19/2020 (no meeting), P&D 10/21/2020 (under separate cover) (Approve/File)

Items to be added/removed from the Consent Agenda:

Under Approval of Minutes from previous City Council and Standing Committee meetings, **Councilor Gilman** requested that the October 13, 2020 City Council meeting be removed since some of the Council's amendments to amendments were unclear in the minutes. She clarified that while that was the case, the discussion had been on point, as had the final vote taken for the Special Council Permit public hearing on **PH2020-011: SCP2020-003: Atlantic Road # 163** which resulted in a vote of 8 in favor, 0 opposed, one absent (Memhard).

She also explained that the minutes from the October 21, 2020 Planning & Development Committee meeting contained a small scrivener's error in which it was stated that there was a quorum of the City Council at 5:33 p.m., and that had not been the case since no other councilors were present besides the subcommittee members.

Council President LeBlanc thanked **Councilor Gilman**, and agreed to correct those items. He then entertained a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as amended.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Holmgren, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan), to accept the Consent Agenda.

The **City Clerk** asked **Council President LeBlanc** if there was a motion to amend the Planning & Development meeting minutes by striking the erroneous statement. He had believed that both items were covered in the motion to accept the Consent Agenda, however, it was agreed that a separate motion would be created to accept the amended Planning & Development Committee minutes.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Holmgren, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan), to correct a scrivener's error by striking the erroneous statement "There was a quorum of the City Council at 5:33 p.m" and accept the Planning and Development meeting minutes of October 21, 2020 as amended.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Holmgren, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan), to accept the amended Planning & Development Committee meeting minutes of October 21, 2020.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:**• Budget & Finance – October 22, 2020**

The October 22, 2020 Budget & Finance Committee Report was voted by Unanimous Consent.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan) to accept the October 22, 2020 Budget & Finance Unanimous Consent Agenda.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council appropriate up to \$200,000 (Two Hundred Thousand Dollars) for an affordable housing project as recommended by the Affordable Housing Trust Committee for a YMCA of the North Shore-owned affordable housing development project, located at 71 Middle Street in Gloucester from Fund #8217 Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The appropriation will support the full renovation of affordable housing units for seniors. The units shall continue to carry a state affordable housing restriction in perpetuity and giving preference to the fullest extent allowed by law to residents of Gloucester.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan), to appropriate up to \$200,000 (Two Hundred Thousand Dollars) for an affordable housing project as recommended by the Affordable Housing Trust Committee for a YMCA of the North Shore-owned affordable housing development project, located at 71 Middle Street in Gloucester from Fund #8217 Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The appropriation will support the full renovation of affordable housing units for seniors. The units shall continue to carry a state affordable housing restriction in perpetuity and giving preference to the fullest extent allowed by law to residents of Gloucester.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept various cash donations under MGL c.44, §53A, to support Cape Ann Veterans' Services in the amount of \$2,100 from the following members and business partners within our community:

Jon and Madith Curley	\$ 100.00
Sgt. David J. Coullard Memorial Fund	<u>2,000.00</u>
	\$2,100.00

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COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept under MGL c. 44, §53A, a federal grant of an overdose data to action grant from Massachusetts Department of Public Health passed through the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention an amendment of \$75,000 (Seventy-Five Thousand) dollars for the total of \$200,000 (Two Hundred Thousand) dollars in FY21 to amend existing Substance Abuse Prevention Program Grant contract for a new grant award total of \$900,000 (Nine Hundred Thousand) for the purpose of the Gloucester Health Department, partnering with the Gloucester Police Department, to enhance the Community Impact Policing Unit through financial support for a dedicated one full-time equivalent Community Health Navigator to serve as a liaison between health, social services, and the community to facilitate access to services and improve quality and culturally competent service delivery. The grant period is through June 30, 2022. There is no local match for this grant.

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COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept under MGL c. 44, §53A, a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration passed through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, a Massachusetts Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative Service Grant, an amendment of \$75,000 (Seventy-five Thousand) for a total of \$100,000 (One Hundred Thousand) in FY21 for a new grant award total of \$1,018,000 (One Million Eighteen Thousand). The purpose of this grant is to address the opioid crisis through a strategic regional approach with the town of Danvers and city of Beverly. The grant period is from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. The local match requirements are in-kind staffing materials and equipment only.

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COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council approve Special Budgetary Transfer 2021-SBT-1 in the amount of \$30,000 (Thirty Thousand) from the Fire Salaries Account #0122051-511000 to Fire Department Rentals Account# 0122052-527001, for the purpose of funding rent expenses for a leased repair facility for the Gloucester Fire Department.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan), to approve Special Budgetary Transfer 2021-SBT-1 in the amount of \$30,000 (Thirty Thousand) from the Fire Salaries Account #0122051-511000 to Fire Department Rentals Account# 0122052-527001, for the purpose of funding rent expenses for a leased repair facility for the Gloucester Fire Department.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee by ROLL CALL voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council approve Special Budgetary Transfer 2021-SBT-2 in the amount of \$20,000 from Mayor Salaries Account #0112151-511000 to Mayor Purchase of Services Account #0112152-520000, for the purpose of funding Public Relation services.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the City Council by ROLL CALL voted 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan) to approve Special Budgetary Transfer 2021-SBT-2 in the amount of \$20,000 from Mayor Salaries Account #0112151-511000 to Mayor Purchase of Services Account #0112152-520000, for the purpose of funding Public Relation services.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the Budget & Finance Committee by ROLL CALL voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept under MGL c. 44, §53A, a state grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, an FY21 State 911 Department Support & Incentive grant in the amount of \$102,983. The grant period is from October 6, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the City Council by ROLL CALL voted 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan) to accept under MGL c. 44, §53A, a state grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, an FY21 State 911 Department Support & Incentive grant in the amount of \$102,983. The grant period is from October 6, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Summary of Discussion: Councilor Cox commended **City Auditor Kenny Costa** and **CFO John Dunn** for the award Gloucester has received from the government's Finance Office Officers Association for the third year in a row. She expressed appreciation for the Budget and Finance Team staff. **Council President LeBlanc** extended kudos to **Mr. Costa** and **Mr. Dunn** for doing an excellent job. **Councilor Pett** expressed hope that information about winning the award could be released to the general public so that it could be understood that the City is in the hands of financial professionals.

Ordinances & Administration-October 19, 2020 (no meeting)

Planning & Development-October 21, 2020 (no items under this heading)

Summary of Discussion: Councilor Gilman stated that she had no matters to report with the exception that she reminded the City Councilors that a special council permit socially-distanced site visit was scheduled for **Thursday, October 29, 2020** at 37 Rocky Neck Avenue at 4:45 p.m. Abutters had been notified that their session was being held at 5:15 p.m. She asked the Councilors to let her know if they were able to attend and if so, which session they would be able to attend. She shared that the Planning and Development Committee members and **Councilor McCarthy** would be present at the 4:45 p.m. session. Masks and hand sanitizer would be provided, and she explained that she would be present at both sessions to document any questions asked so that they can all be answered by Attorney Joel Favazza at the next Planning and Development Committee meeting on **Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.**

Council President LeBlanc announced that due to the election on **Tuesday, November 3, 2020**, there would be no Ordinances and Administration Committee meeting held on **Monday, November 2nd**. The next committee meeting will be held on **Monday, November 16, 2020**.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARING

1. PH2020-010: SCP2020-002: Essex Avenue #99A, Map 216, Lot 126, GZO Sec. 1.8.3 "Standard to be applied," Sec. 3.1.6(b) "Building Heights in Excess of 35 Feet," Sec. 2.3.4(13) "Marine related service, storage or repair, limited primarily in the MI District to commercial fishing vessels," Sec. 5.5 "Lowland Requirements," Sec. 5.5.2 and Sec. 5.5.3 in the EB District (Cont. from 10/13/20)

This matter has been continued until **Tuesday, November 10, 2020**.

2. PH2020-029: Amend GCO Ch. 8 “Fire Prevention and Protection,” Art. II, Sec. 21 “Qualifications and appointment of firefighters, subsection (d) regarding training and certification requirements

The public hearing opened at 6:56 p.m.

Those Speaking in Favor: Fire Chief Eric Smith

Summary of Discussion: Chief Smith explained that this has been put forward with assistance from the City’s Legal Department to revise the ordinance language and update it to what should be current practice in light of where things stand, and for economic reasons. New firefighters being onboarded are hired possessing all of the required training provided by the Department of Fire Service Mass Fire Academy, so it is redundant to send them back for training they had just received. Instead of being able to get acquainted with their new firehouse and co-workers, and get to work right away, the current ordinance requires them to attend a 10-week training Monday through Friday, and some Saturdays in Stow. He cited risk management that showed that it was dangerous to have people driving such a distance on the highway for no reason other than to obtain training they have already received. The number of seats that the fire academy has available is also extremely limited. He expressed hope that the state would begin to act proactively regarding this matter and change the rules so that firefighters are not admitted to these programs if they already have the credentials. He mentioned that a lot of fire departments and cities experience the same language issue in either bargaining agreements with their fire department or in ordinances like we do. He shared that he currently had two new staff members who were in this situation, and expressed hope that the City Council agreed and would adopt this amendment.

Those Speaking in Opposition: None

Communications Received: None

The public hearing closed at 6:58 p.m.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Nolan, seconded by Councilor O’Hara, the Ordinances & Administration Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend to the City Council that the GCO Chapter 8, Article II, Sec. 21 “Qualifications and appointment of firefighters” subsection (d) be amended as follows:

(d) All newly hired city firefighters shall either attend and successfully complete the recruit training program at the state firefighting academy with satisfactory completion of the recruit training program or submit satisfactory documentation that the newly hired firefighter has completed an equivalent training program with the same certifications as the state firefighting academy as---be a condition of employment. Completion of the program shall be, whenever possible, with the employees' probationary period prescribed by M.G.L. c. 31, § 61. If a firefighter begins the recruit training program during the probationary period, the probationary period shall be suspended until the firefighter completes the program. If the probationary period would expire prior to the firefighter entering the academy, the mayor will make a written request to the personnel administrator to extend the probationary period until the program is completed.

Summary of Discussion: Councilor Holmgren stated that this amendment was fiscally prudent, will shave time off of everybody’s busy schedules. She thanked **Chief Smith** for being proactive, and shared that she would be voting in favor.

Councilor Pett thanked **Chief Smith** for getting this straightened away administratively. He shared that he has had the privilege of being able to attend trainings at the firefighting academy many times over the years, and mentioned that it is a great community asset. He expressed happiness to be able to amend this matter so that firefighters can get to work right away.

Councilor McCarthy praised the great move by Chief Smith to get firefighters to work in the fire stations 10 weeks sooner so they can begin assisting right away.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor O'Hara, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan) to recommend that the GCO Chapter 8, Article II, Sec. 21 "Qualifications and appointment of firefighters" subsection (d) be amended as follows: (d) All newly hired city firefighters shall either attend and successfully complete the recruit training program at the state firefighting academy with satisfactory completion of the recruit training program or submit satisfactory documentation that the newly hired firefighter has completed an equivalent training program with the same certifications as the state firefighting academy as---be a condition of employment. Completion of the program shall be, whenever possible, with the employees' probationary period prescribed by M.G.L. c. 31, § 61. If a firefighter begins the recruit training program during the probationary period, the probationary period shall be suspended until the firefighter completes the program. If the probationary period would expire prior to the firefighter entering the academy, the mayor will make a written request to the personnel administrator to extend the probationary period until the program is completed.

Summary of Discussion: Council President LeBlanc expressed appreciation for **Chief Smith** always making sure the fire department was always up-to-date and run as efficiently as possible.

Although it was not on this evening's agenda, **Council President LeBlanc** requested a discussion on the email that he had sent to the City Councilors that afternoon about remote participation protocol in the event of technical difficulties during Zoom meetings. These were the provided guidelines:

1. If the President is lost from the meeting, the Vice President will continue the meeting until if or when the President returns.
2. If the President and Vice President are both lost from the meeting, the chair of Budget & Finance, Ordinances & Administration, or Planning & Development will continue the meeting until if or when the President or Vice President returns as long as there is a quorum.
3. If multiple Councilors drop out of the meeting, it will continue as long as there is a quorum. If there is no quorum, it will be paused for 5-10 minutes to see if Councilors are able to rejoin the meeting.
4. It also needs to be decided on what is done if the City Clerk or Assistant City Clerk is lost from the meeting.

Council President LeBlanc requested that the matter be referred to the Ordinances and Administration Committee to be reviewed before it is brought before the Council.

Councilor Cox asked the **City Clerk** if a co-host is assigned to a meeting, would the meeting still record? The **City Clerk** stated that the assigned co-host was able to start and stop meetings.

Councilor Holmgren asked **Council President LeBlanc** if the rules of procedure should be amended to reflect the pandemic. He stated that he thought it should be done, and that he would put the order in with the City Clerk's office tomorrow to have the matter referred to Ordinances and Administration at the committee's next meeting. He also cited the example of how a power outage in the City would affect the Councilor's internet connection during a meeting depending on the section they live in, and wanted rules of procedure put into place that the public was also made aware of.

Councilor Cox requested to move a motion that evening so that the matter could be referred to the Ordinances and Administration Committee so that it can be taken up at the next meeting instead of needing to wait two more weeks while the order be put in. **Council President LeBlanc** agreed.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Cox, seconded by Councilor Memhard, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan) for the amended rules of procedure to be placed on the agenda for the next Ordinances and Administration Committee meeting to be held on Monday, November 16, 2020.

Summary of Discussion: Councilor McCarthy suggested that General Counsel Chip Payson be asked to weigh in on the matter since while Roberts' Rules of Order addressed losing a quorum, it has not been determined how it should be handled during a Zoom meeting.

Councilor Cox thanked **Council President LeBlanc** for his foresight to bring the matter forward.

COUNCILORS' REQUESTS TO THE MAYOR **(GILMAN)**

1. Request that the Conservation Commission agent recommend a remediation plan to remove the phragmite invasives at Lane's Cove. Non-native phragmites, also known as common reed, is a perennial, aggressive wetland grass that outcompetes native plants and displaces native animals. With City oversight, a group of Lane's Cove volunteers are eager to work with the Conservation Commission or Department of Public Works to help remove. It was noted that Senator Tarr has helped organize similar invasive removal at salt marshes in Newburyport.
2. A second request that the DPW install an additional Do Not Enter sign to be placed on the left side of High Street at the intersection of Hickory and High Street.
3. Request that the City petition the state to place a guardrail in front of 695 Washington Street, the scene of more than three serious accidents, including a recent accident where a car tire went through the resident's window at 695 Washington Street.
4. At the same location, 695 Washington Street, request to seek input from the Gloucester Police Department based on accident frequency at the site that the DPW swap the 30-Mile-Per-Hour sign which is placed at this dangerous corner with a Slow, Dangerous Corner sign, and move the 30-Mile-Per-Hour sign up to the current spot where the Slow, Dangerous Corner sign is located.

(COX)

1. With the roadwork being done in Ward 2, National Grid has stopped working on their project in that area. She asked **DPW Director Mike Hale** earlier this week to consolidate the equipment in the Burnham's Field parking lot because with winter coming, as much of that space as possible will be needed for off-street parking. Mr. Hale agreed to do that, as well as remove the porta-potty since a neighbor had videotaped it being used to conduct inappropriate activities, so she stated that she was officially submitting that request. She explained that she had reached out to **Mr. Hale** directly since immediate action was necessary.
2. She explained that the bump-outs that had been placed in her neighborhood now require a lot of No Parking from Here to Corner signs. A curb bump-out is essentially an extension of the sidewalk into the street. They can be used to shorten crossing distances on streets, thus making it easier for pedestrians (particularly older pedestrians) to cross the street safely. She and Ward 2 **Councilor Pett** agreed to work together to make sure this is taken care of. She stated that it would be hard to hold a neighborhood meeting due to the pandemic,

however, she believed a walk-through is needed. **Councilor Pett** explained that No Parking within 20 feet of an intersection is by statute, so it is not a matter that needs to go before the Traffic Commission or any other commission, it can be remedied with a request to **Mayor Romeo Theken** that it be installed.

Councilor Cox shared that there are a lot of changes occurring in that neighborhood, and a lot of pushback has been received regarding restricting parking. She stated that she has determined exactly where the pinch points are, and they are not necessarily located on a corner. For example, drivers headed down Millett who want to go back up Sargent need to turn you have to turn wide, and if there is another car coming in, it is not on a corner with these bump-outs.

Councilor Pett recommended that **Mayor Romeo Theken's** office could arrange to have the **DPW Director** and a representative from the police and fire departments present to make sure that there is enough room to accommodate public safety vehicles.

Mayor Romeo Theken stated that the poles and the signs have been ordered. She requested that signs be placed at the entire corner of Pleasant Street before Shepherd Street to the other side of Pleasant Street. She explained that in addition to signs, enforcement is also needed.

Councilor Cox explained that the old crosswalks are still in place that are not going to be paved until the National Grid project is completed. This has led to people parking in the old crosswalks. She said that in fairness to the police department, complaints on this matter cannot be reported to and enforced by them since there are no signs yet.

COUNCILOR'S WARD UPDATES & COMMUNITY NEWS

Councilor O'Hara shared that on Wednesday, October 28th, a blood drive will be held at Magnolia Library from 2:00-7:00 p.m. He thanked **Councilor Cox**, who had already registered to participate. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 1-800-REDCROSS. The next blood drive will be held on **Monday, November 9th**.

COUNCILOR'S THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Councilor Memhard thanked **Mayor Romeo Theken** for the good work that she and her administration have done.

Councilor Holmgren thanked the **City Clerk's** office and all of its volunteers who have assisted with early voting. She expressed appreciation for their work, and wished them luck on election day **Tuesday, November 3, 2020**. She also wished everyone a safe and happy Halloween.

Councilor O'Hara also extended a sincere thank you to the **City Clerk's** office, and wished them the best of luck during the election.

MOTION: on a motion by Councilor Pett, seconded by Councilor Cox, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Nolan) to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Brianna Komi
Administrative Support
City Clerk's Office