# GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL MEETING Tuesday, January 11, 2022 – 6:00 p.m. REMOTE MEETING -Minutes-

Present: Council President, Councilor Val Gilman; Council Vice President, Councilor Sean Nolan; Councilor Tony Gross; Councilor Jason Grow; Councilor Frank Margiotta; Councilor Scott Memhard; Councilor Jamie O'Hara; Councilor Tracy O'Neil; Councilor Jeff Worthley

Also Present: Mayor Greg Verga; CAO, Jill Cahill; City Clerk, Joanne Senos; Auditor, Kenny Costa

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

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Councilor Gilman announced in the interest of government transparency with regards to deliberations and decisions made by the City Council and according to open meeting law, since this meeting was posted as a Zoom meeting, this meeting is recorded by video and audio and 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 "raised hand" button that you can tap or press to request to speak. Please use either of these options during oral communications and the public hearing to be recognized to speak.

**Councilor Gilman** asked each councilor to introduce themselves and to state which subcommittee each sat on. **Councilor Gilman** introduced City staff present at the meeting.

Councilor O'Neil joined the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

#### **Moment of Silence: Jodi Wall**

Councilor Gilman read the following statement in honor of Ms. Wall: Jodi was a long-time employee of the Gloucester Housing Authority. She was kind, approachable, resourceful and a diligent human-being who helped others wherever she went. Her love for children and our Gloucester Public School students was always apparent when she partnered with Don Riley, and myself, and Linda O'Maley in the Moose Youth Awareness Program for so many years. One of our participants, Mark, did not have a ride to the airport when he was going to the International Scholarship Finals; she jumped in her car and rushed him there and then picked him up as well. She always assisted for years with the distribution of holiday meals. Her influence in the lives of many cannot be overstated. From teaching youth basketball skills to helping provide Christmas gifts to those less fortunate, she will long be remembered for her kindness and compassion for others. Our hearts go out to her family and friends, of which she had so many. Rest in peace, Jodi, and I'd like to offer a moment of silence.

A Moment of Silence was held to honor Jodi Wall.

# Welcoming Remarks from Council President to New Councilors

Councilor Gilman read the following statement: Councilors, welcome. There are five new councilors joining our 2022-2023 City Council, joining Councilors Nolan, Memhard, O'Hara and me. Welcome Councilors Gross, Grow, Worthley, Margiotta and O'Neil.

I want to lead off our first full City Council meeting with a brief message of governance priorities as we begin our new term. First, City Council transparency and accountability to our City taxpayers is a must. Our City

Charter outlines our Legislative and Executive Branch checks and balances and our three Standing Committees will follow our Charter routinely. When we do this right, we will afford mutual respect and success between our branches of government.

Second, meeting preparedness, community engagement, civil discourse and active listening will be a top priority. What a great start at last week's P&D meeting led by Jason Grow. We had 120+ attendees on the call and they were allowed to ask thoughtful and detailed questions on the proposed zoning in front of us.

Third, when we are successful, let's celebrate, and when we are confronted with a hurdle to overcome, let's focus on the issue at hand and not the person. Self-assessment, best practices and constructive feedback will be the key to our successful career as City Councilors. So, let's get on with our business tonight.

# Welcoming remarks from Mayor to City Council

Councilor Gilman welcomed Mayor Verga to the meeting. Mayor Verga stated the slate had been wiped clean as of January 1st and that moving forward he wished to focus on teamwork. He stated not everyone would agree all the time, but was looking forward to healthy debates and teamwork once the vote was taken. He stated that the City Council could count on him for full transparency and that he was looking to make the City as efficient as possible. He stated the Administration would be meeting regularly with the City Council President and Vice President, as well as the School Committee Chair and Vice Chair.

Mayor Verga stated some upcoming projects would be determining the best strategic use of the ARPA [American Rescue Plan Act] funds that had been allocated to the City (\$23 million dollars), as well as possible funds from the Infrastructure Bill and the Build Back Better Plan. He stated determining the status and future of the secondary water treatment plan was also a top priority. He explained the budget process would be starting up soon and that the Administration would help to make sure that all tax dollars were being used as wisely as possible.

**Mayor Verga** explained that there would be a main City Facebook page in which all of the City's Facebook pages would be linked as a way of disseminating information to residents. He further explained that the hub for distributing information would be the City's webpage.

**Mayor Verga** stated that Massachusetts Department of Revenue had confirmed the City's free cash at \$5,555,801. He explained that free cash was the balance of the revenues taken in after all City obligations had been paid. He explained that once the funds were certified by the State, then the City could then make appropriations for use of the funds. He stated the Administration would stand by the commitment made by the previous Administration to allocate 40% of the free cash in the Capital Stabilization Fund, 20% in the Building Maintenance Stabilization Fund, 10% in the General Stabilization Fund, and the 30% remaining would be unreserved free cash.

**Mayor Verga** stated keeping the lines of communication open between the Administration and City Council would be key and that he looked forward to the next two years. **Councilor Gilman** informed **Mayor Verga** that he was always welcome to attend the City Council meetings.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**PRESENTATIONS/COMMENDATIONS:** None.

**CONFIRMATION OF NEW APPOINTMENTS:** None.

## **CONSENT AGENDA:**

- CONFIRMATION OF REAPPOINTMENTS
- MAYOR'S REPORT

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1. Appointments

Chief Administrative Officer Jill Cahill 2/14/24 (Refer O&A)

Reappointments

Chief Financial Officer John Dunn 2/14/24 (Refer O&A)
Assessor Nancy Papows 2/14/25 (Refer O&A)
Harbormaster T.J. Ciarametaro 2/14/25 (Refer O&A)

2. Memorandum from Fire Chief requesting approval of a FY21 FEMA AFT program application

FY21 FEMA AFT program application (Refer B&F)

• COMMUNICATIONS/INVITATIONS

City Council Civility Resolution
 City Council Code of Conduct
 (FCV 1/25/22)
 (FCV 1/25/22)

3. Memo from City Council President re: City Council liaisons to School Committee and Boards, Committees & Commissions

(Info Only)

- INFORMATION ONLY
- APPLICATIONS/PETITIONS
- COUNCILLORS ORDERS
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. City Council Meeting: 12/14/2021 (Approve/File)

2. Special City Council Meeting: 1/1/2022 (Approve/File)

Standing Committee Meetings: B&F 1/6/2022 (under separate cover), O&A 1/3/2022 (no meeting),
 P&D 1/5/2022 (under separate cover)
 (Approve/File)

#### ITEMS TO BE ADDED/REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA: None.

**Councilor Gross** read the language of bullet #9 on the Code of Conduct and stated he was unsure of some of the wording used. **Councilor Gilman** informed **Councilor Gross** that this matter was being referred for council vote at the next City Council meeting and that the language could be amended after discussion at that meeting. **Councilor Gross** was in agreement.

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

### ITEMS TO BE ADDED/REMOVED FROM THE UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA: None.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Gross, seconded by Councilor O'Hara, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept the Unanimous Consent Agenda.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

• Budget & Finance – January 6, 2022

<u>Summary of Discussion:</u> Councilor Memhard thanked Councilors Gross and Worthley for a successful first Budget & Finance meeting of 2022.

Councilor Memhard shared that the City received a number of grants and gifts including the Fire Chief receiving approval for acceptance of a SAFE/Senior Safe Grant in the amount of \$6,100, as well as the Police Chief receiving approval for acceptance of a 911 training grant in the amount of \$91,791.11. He stated the DPW received a donation in the amount of \$500 in support of the Langsford Cemetery from Carroll K. Steele Insurance. He further explained that requests were received and approved for acceptance of donations from the Veterans Services Director and the Director of Elder Services to their donation accounts. Councilor Memhard stated the City was grateful for those donations. He also stated that a loan authorization regarding water and sewer meters was discussed with the Assistant DPW Director, Joe Lucido, and stated that that matter would come before the full City Council for Public Hearing on January 25, 2022.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Worthley, seconded by Councilor O'Hara, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept the Budget and Finance Unanimous Consent Agenda.

# 1. Memorandum and Grant Application from Fire Chief for a SAFE/Senior SAFE Grant in the amount of \$6,100

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Gross, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept a state grant under MGL c. 44, §53A, a FY2022 School-based Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) grant from the Mass. Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Department of Fire Services in the amount of \$4,100 for the purpose of providing fire and life safety education to school-aged children. There is no local match for this grant.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Worthley, seconded by Councilor O'Hara, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept a state grant under MGL c. 44, §53A, a FY2022 Schoolbased Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) grant from the Mass. Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Department of Fire Services in the amount of \$4,100 for the purpose of providing fire and life safety education to school-aged children. There is no local match for this grant.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Gross, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept a state grant under MGL c. 44, §53A, a FY2022 Senior Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) grant from the Mass. Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Department of Fire Services in the amount of \$2,000 for the purpose of providing fire and life safety education to seniors. There is no local match for this grant.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Worthley, seconded by Councilor O'Hara, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept a state grant under MGL c. 44, §53A, a FY2022 Senior Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) grant from the Mass. Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Department of Fire Services in the amount of \$2,000 for the purpose of providing fire and life safety education to seniors. There is no local match for this grant.

2. Memorandum from Police Chief requesting approval of a FY22 State 911 Training Grant in the amount of \$91,791.11

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Gross, 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 state grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, a FY2022 State 911 Department Training Grant Program for \$91,791.11. The grant period is from November 17, 2021 through June 30, 2022 and there is no local match for this grant.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Worthley, seconded by Councilor O'Hara, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept under MGL c. 44, §53A, a state grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, a FY2022 State 911 Department Training Grant Program for \$91,791.11. The grant period is from November 17, 2021 through June 30, 2022 and there is no local match for this grant.

3. Memorandum from DPW Director requesting acceptance of a donation for Langsford Street Cemetery in the amount of \$500

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Gross, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept a cash donation, under MGL c. 44, §53A, to support the Department of Public Works/Cemetery

Commission for the maintenance of the Langsford Street Cemetery in the amount of \$500 from the following business partner within our community:

Carroll K. Steele Insurance \$500

Total: \$500.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Worthley, seconded by Councilor O'Hara, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept a cash donation, under MGL c. 44, §53A, to support the Department of Public Works/Cemetery Commission for the maintenance of the Langsford Street Cemetery in the amount of \$500 from the following business partner within our community:

Carroll K. Steele Insurance \$500 Total: \$500.

4. Memorandum from Veterans Services Director requesting the acceptance of donations in the amount of \$500

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Gross, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept a cash donation, under MGL c. 44, §53A, to support Cape Ann Veterans Services in the amount of \$500 from the following member within our community:

Trinity Cong. Church UCC \$500

Total: \$500.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Worthley, seconded by Councilor O'Hara, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept a cash donation, under MGL c. 44, §53A, to support Cape Ann Veterans Services in the amount of \$500 from the following member within our community:

Trinity Cong. Church UCC \$500

Total: \$500.

5. Memorandum from the Director of Elder Services requesting acceptance of donations in the amount of \$3,148

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Gross, the Budget & Finance Committee voted by ROLL CALL 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council accept cash donations, under MGL c. 44, §53A, to support the Council on Aging in the amount of \$3,148 from the following members and business partners within our community:

Gaspar A. Giacalone/Marion Greige	\$ 25
Marilynn Grant	\$ 10
Maureen Surrette	\$ 40
Jose Maligno	\$ 35
Lahey Health Shared Services	\$600
Kathryn Asaro	\$ 25
Barbara Melanson	\$ 20

Phyllis M. Reardon	\$ 5
Judith D. Melanson	\$ 25
Bank Gloucester	\$500
Bingo Deposit	\$663
Bingo Deposit	\$260
Bingo Deposit	\$260
Bingo Deposit	\$680

Total: \$3,148.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Worthley, seconded by Councilor O'Hara, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept cash donations, under MGL c. 44, §53A, to support the Council on Aging in the amount of \$3,148 from the following members and business partners within our community:

Gaspar A. Giacalone/Marion Greige	\$ 25
Marilynn Grant	<b>\$ 10</b>
Maureen Surrette	<b>\$ 40</b>
Jose Maligno	\$ 35
Lahey Health Shared Services	<b>\$600</b>
Kathryn Asaro	\$ 25
Barbara Melanson	\$ 20
Phyllis M. Reardon	\$ 5
Judith D. Melanson	\$ 25
Bank Gloucester	\$500
Bingo Deposit	\$663
Bingo Deposit	<b>\$260</b>
Bingo Deposit	<b>\$260</b>
Bingo Deposit	\$680

Total: \$3,148.

- Ordinances & Administration January 3, 2022 (no meeting)
- Planning & Development January 5, 2021

<u>Summary of Discussion:</u> Councilor Grow stated that two matters were discussed, including the zoning for #44 and #44R Concord Street, in which a site visit was scheduled on Thursday, January 13, 2022, at 3:30 p.m. He stated that masks would be required.

He also stated that the zoning amendments proposed by the Planning Board were discussed. He stated that the discussion on this matter was continued to the next P&D meeting. He stated that the Public Hearing was scheduled for January 25, 2022 (continued from December 2021) but added that the expectation was that the hearing would be continued again. He stated during the P&D meetings it was suggested that ward councilors hold community meetings to allow the public to weigh in and better understand the amendments in greater depth.

**SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None.

FOR COUNCIL VOTE: None.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. Discussion Only: City Council discussion regarding resuming in-person meetings (Cont. from 11/23/21)

Councilor Gilman stated that the Director of Information Services, Ryan Knowles had made a presentation regarding this matter at the November 23, 2021, City Council meeting and that a copy of the presentation would be provided to the new councilors. Councilor Gilman asked the Members of the City Council for their opinions on in-person/hybrid meetings and added that the Mayor requested that the City's Boards, Committees and Commissions hold only remote meetings due to the spikes in COVID. She stated that the governance meeting on January 24, 2022, had been scheduled to be held in Kyrouz Auditorium and stated that meeting would now be held via Zoom.

Councilor Grow stated he did not see any reason to rush into in-person meetings and that in-person meetings should only be considered once the COVID numbers decreased; he stated with Zoom technology there had been greater public participation in meetings. Councilor Memhard stated he agreed with Councilor Grow. He stated hybrid meetings with both in-person and remote options was the ultimate goal. Councilor Nolan stated using remote technology was the best option for the health and safety of all and did not want to rush into in-person meetings until it was safe to do so. Councilor O'Hara agreed that the City Council meetings should continue in a remote format. He stated public participation had been tremendous in the remote status. Councilors Gross and Margiotta stated they agreed with the comments of the previous councilors.

**Councilor Gilman** stated that the **IT Director** had estimated in his previous presentation that the cost of updating the Kyrouz Auditorium to be able to host hybrid meetings was approximately \$80,000. **Councilor Gilman** suggested that the City Council consider ways to finance the upgrades possibly including free cash or a budgetary line item as, she stated, she believed that hybrid meetings was the will of the public and that Zoom technology was valuable in terms of transparency.

## **COUNCILORS' REQUESTS TO THE MAYOR:**

- **Councilor Grow** requested through the Mayor to IT a modernization of the City Hall communication system for added remote access.
- **Councilor Grow** requested through the Mayor to IT that a 'button' be added to the landing page of the City's website that would directly link all upcoming Zoom meetings.
- Councilor O'Neil requested through the Mayor to the DPW that the crosswalk on Taylor Street (in front of Our Lady of Good Voyage Church) be moved 40 to 45 feet up Taylor Street from the corner of Prospect Street, and to extend the crosswalk to the other side of Taylor Street to be in line with the Church's handicap ramp. She also requested that both sides of the crosswalk be handicap-accessible.
- Councilors O'Neil, Gilman and Worthley requested through the Mayor to the DPW that the sidewalk on the right side of Taylor coming up from Prospect Street be repaired with hot top to be more conducive to wheelchairs and handicapped citizens.
- Councilor O'Neil requested through the Mayor to the DPW that the flashing speed limit/school zone lights be shut off on Eastern Avenue near Webster Street as they flash 20 m.p.h. for a school zone and stated that it was no longer a school zone.
- Councilor Worthley requested through the Mayor to the DPW that a drain that the City installed many years ago on Hawthorne Road be inspected, as a puddle (known by the area's residents as "Lake Hawthorne") is created by the water from the drain that made the street impassable. He added that the residents in that area had been dealing with this issue for many years now.
- Councilor Worthley requested through the Mayor to the DPW that a drain at the beginning of East Main Street at Bass Avenue be cleared as the drain had backed up creating icy conditions.
- Councilors Worthley and O'Neil requested through the Mayor to the DPW that a pathway be plowed through Burnham's Field as a lot of students walk from the Warner Street area to Veterans School at St. Ann's.

- Councilor Worthley requested through the Mayor that the Conservation Commission meeting minutes be posted online.
- **Councilor Gilman** requested through the Mayor that the Public Health Director provide an update at a City Council meeting regarding COVID in the City.
- Councilor Gilman requested through the Mayor that the Public Works Director provide an overview of private road repair. She reminded all councilors that there was a detailed link on the Public Works webpage called "Public Road Repair" in which there was a user-friendly guide to public road repair.

#### COUNCILORS' THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

- Councilor Grow acknowledged that this was the first City Council meeting of the new term and thanked his fellow councilors.
- Councilor Memhard thanked the neighbors who are involved in the 116 East Main Street (Espresso's) project and who attended a public meeting held at the end of last year. He stated there was support from some of his fellow councilors and that the meeting had good attendance and that residents had had an opportunity to meet the new developer and added that the developer would not be using blasting in the area.
- **Councilor Nolan** recognized the Administration for their work in helping to keep the City as safe as possible during the pandemic.
- Councilors Nolan, O'Hara and O'Neil recognized the Department of Public Works for all their hard work and particularly their work during the first snowstorm of the year.
- Councilor O'Hara thanked the Police Department and Fire Department for their service to the City.
- Councilor O'Hara thanked all City staff and school staff for their hard work and also thanked the Administration for keeping the City's schools open.
- Councilor O'Hara thanked the City's students for participating in school and showing up for as many school days as possible as they navigate the pandemic.
- **Councilor O'Hara** thanked the public for their participation in meetings, and specifically mentioned the Planning & Development meeting of 1/5/2022, and stated public participation was tremendous. He encouraged the public to keep participating in each and every meeting.
- Councilor O'Neil thanked Council President Gilman for her help and guidance and also thanked all her fellow councilors for their help as a new city councilor.
- Councilor O'Neil thanked the residents in Ward 2 for pulling together during the recent snowstorm.
- Councilors O'Neil and Worthley thanked the City Clerk and her staff for their help and guidance.
- Councilor Gilman thanked Councilors O'Neil and Margiotta for their hard work in getting up to speed as new councilors.
- Councilor Worthley thanked his fellow councilors for providing a welcoming, thoughtful, kind and caring environment.
- Councilor Worthley thanked Council President Gilman for going above and beyond in preparing the new councilors for their term in public service.
- Councilor Worthley thanked Councilor Grow for his work in chairing the P&D meeting of 1/5/2022 and stated he previously chaired P&D many years ago and that it was a hard committee to run.
- Councilor Worthley thanked the IT Director for his hard work.
- Councilor Worthley requested that the use of abbreviations in terms of Boards, Committees or Commissions be limited (ex. B&F for Budget and Finance) as there might be confusion with the abbreviations.
- Councilor Gilman thanked the City Clerk and her staff and Mayor Verga and his team for hosting a safe, socially distanced Inauguration.

#### **COUNCILORS' WARD UPDATES AND COMMUNITY NEWS:**

- Councilor Memhard stated he was working on a list for the Mayor of Ward 1 and East Gloucester residents soliciting projects and concerns from constituents to submit as priorities for the DPW and Mayor's Office in terms of planning and funding and identifying important projects.
- Councilor Memhard stated that the City Council would be reviewing the Community Preservation Committee's recommendations for nine community projects to receive funding from the Community Preservation Act. He stated that the City Clerk would provide Zoom links to all councilors for the previous CPC meetings where nine presentations were given regarding each project. He asked that each councilor review the meetings before the Public Hearing on these matters at the next City Council meeting.
- Councilor Worthley asked Councilor Gilman to give a brief synopsis of the new regulations from the Board of Health regarding COVID. Councilor Gilman deferred to the Administration members on the call. The CAO, Jill Cahill stated she would ask the Public Health Director to send a link to the guidelines to the City Clerk to distribute to the councilors. She also stated the information had been publicized in the newspaper, posted on the Board of Health Facebook page, as well as the Board of Health's City webpage. Councilor Nolan asked everyone to wear their masks and be respectful. Councilor Gilman suggested visiting the top of the City's website landing page where there was a link to information regarding COVID.
- Councilor Grow extended an invitation to offer the attendance of a P&D Committee member to any ward meeting for assistance. Councilor Gilman thanked the City Clerk for offering a member of her staff as a partner to each ward councilor as a co-host for Zoom.
- **Councilors Gilman** and **Nolan** stated there would be a Special O&A meeting on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, for the Administration's appointments and reappointments.
- **Councilor Memhard** wished to inform everyone that the Farrington Avenue matter regarding reduced parking would be back before O&A on January 31, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor O'Hara, seconded by Councilor Nolan, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to adjourn the meeting 7:01 p.m.

Submitted by: Sherry Karvelas, Clerk of Committees

**Items submitted at the meeting:** None.