

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

**Tuesday, June 7, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.
Sawyer Free Library, 2 Dale Avenue
-Minutes-**

Present (in person): Council President, Councilor Val Gilman; Councilor Tony Gross; Councilor Jason Grow; Councilor Frank Margiotta; Councilor Scott Memhard; Councilor Jamie O’Hara; Councilor Tracy O’Neil

Absent: Council Vice President, Councilor Sean Nolan; Councilor Jeff Worthley

Present (remote): CAO, Jill Cahill; CFO, John Dunn; Auditor, Kenny Costa; Director of Communications and Constituent Services, Pam Tobey; Director, Sawyer Free Library, Jenny Benedict; Public Health Director, Max Schenk; Principal Assessor, Nancy Papows; School Superintendent, Ben Lummis; School Committee Chair, Kathy Clancy

Also Present (in person): IT Director, Ryan Knowles; Assistant City Clerk, Grace Poirier

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

Meeting called to order at 7:03 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 to be recognized to speak.”

Councilor Gilman introduced the **Members of the City Council** and City staff present.

Flag Salute and Moment of Silence: The City Council observed a moment of silence and flag salute, led by **Councilor O’Hara**, who wished for peace throughout the world.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. FY23 Budget Review Meetings: 5/18/2022, 5/25/2022, 5/26/2022

Summary of Discussion: **Councilor Gilman** stated that the City Council is voting on the approval of three sets of minutes from the FY23 Budget Review Meetings of May 18, 2022; May 25, 2022; and May 26, 2022.

MOTION: On a motion by **Councilor Grow**, seconded by **Councilor Memhard**, the City Council voted by **ROLL CALL 7** in favor, **0** opposed, **2** (Nolan, Worthley) absent, to approve the FY23 Budget Review Meeting minutes of May 18, 2022; May 25, 2022; and May 26, 2022.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **PH2022-017: Public Hearing on FY23 Proposed Budget (FY23 Mayor’s Recommended Budget: <https://www.gloucetser-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8399/FY23-Budget>)**

The Public hearing opened at 7:09 p.m.

Those speaking in favor: The **CAO, Jill Cahill**, thanked the **CFO, John Dunn**, and **Fiscal Analyst, Grace Macan**, for their assistance and support in working on the FY23 budget. She also thanked all of the department heads for delivering a level-service budget with a few strategic investments.

The **CAO** stated that there is some small, healthy growth within the budget, as there is growth within revenues as well. She reiterated that some strategic investments have been introduced as well as some of the priorities that the Mayor has raised, including the Sustainability Coordinator and increasing the budget for potholes and road maintenance. She stated that it is the responsibility of the Administration to deliver a forward-thinking balanced budget. She asked the City Council for their support in supporting the FY23 budget.

Lisa Smith, 44 Haven Terrace

Stated that she is a member of the Cape Ann Climate Coalition; thanked the Administration and City Council for the addition of a Sustainability Coordinator.

Val Nelson, 7 Sunset Point Road

Stated that last summer the Climate Coalition advanced the concept of the importance of the Sustainability Coordinator position. Stated that climate issues interrelate with many departments, including the DPW, Health Department and Housing, and explained that it is important to have someone whose job it is to be tracking and making sure that all of these different departments in the City are talking to each other and reflecting and understanding what the climate agenda is. Thanked the Administration and the City Council for their support on this issue.

Ellen Leaman, 16 Great Hill Road

Thanked the Administration and City Council for their consideration of the Sustainability Coordinator position as, she stated, the position is crucial in moving the City forward to achieving the mandates of the State.

Susan Hoague, 2 Leverett Lane

Congratulated and thanked the Administration and City Council for the creation of the Sustainability Coordinator position.

Kathy Clancy, School Committee Chair, 78 High Popples Road

Stated that there is many important initiatives contained within the budget that will help make progress in many areas of education. Stated that the budget process has been undertaken with a collaborative approach between the Mayor and the City and asked for the City Council to support the budget as presented.

Those speaking in opposition: None.

Written communications: The **Assistant City Clerk, Grace Poirier**, stated that the City Council is in receipt of an email from Cecilia Coraza who expressed concern regarding the 6.3% increase in the budget stating that the increase may be well-meaning, but it is inconsistent with the reality of economic conditions.

The **Assistant City Clerk** stated that the Council also received a communication from Pauline Bresnahan who linked an article from the newspaper and stated that Ms. Bresnahan expressed her disagreement with the School Department increase, particularly due to decreasing enrollment.

The **Assistant City Clerk** also stated that the Council also received an email from David Grace past the deadline to be part of the official record, and stated that the email has been distributed to the all of the councilors.

Questions from Councilors:

Q1. (Grow): Asked the CAO if the Community Development Department has enough staff to perform the work that needs to be done in that department, recognizing that four positions need to be filled.

A1. (Cahill): Stated that several positions are currently posted and with this round of posting there is an entirely new group of candidates. Thanked the work of the **Human Resources Director** in being creative in finding different ways to recruit candidates. To speak to the work of the department, she stated that the City could do more with additional staff.

Q2. (Grow): Asked if there has been any thought to adding additional staff to the Community Development Department over time.

A2. (Cahill): Stated adding staff strategically is the plan.

Q3. (Grow): Asked the **Principal Assessor, Nancy Papows**, if there is an effort in the Assessor's Department to review the rapid increase in costs in properties and commercial spaces within the City and reviewing how those are being reassessed.

A3. (Papows): Was unavailable to respond.

A3. (Cahill): Stated that she would reach out to **Ms. Papows** for an answer.

Councilor Memhard thanked the **CAO** for her efforts to strengthen the City's Conservation Department. The **CAO** stated that there would be some recommendations regarding land management coming forward as the work on the Open Space Plan concludes.

Q4. (O'Hara): Stated that there is recording-breaking inflation and asked the **CAO** how she sees the City trying to keep or reduce costs on future budgets so that the taxpayers are not overburdened. Stated that councilors consistently get questions and concerns from constituents regarding the rising tax bills and water and sewer increases.

A4. (Cahill): Stated that there was an opportunity in the FY23 budget to increase departmental budgets across the board and stated that the Mayor is financially conservative and is pacing any growth due to inflation. Stated that measured growth in spending is the most important way to help decrease the burden. Stated that the City is working hard to move forward with the wastewater project in a way that limits the burden on the repairs as much as possible.

A4. (Dunn): Stated that residential values increase faster than commercial/industrial and stated that is where the shift will be to the taxpayers.

Councilor O'Hara further stated that he believed it is important for the City to tighten up spending (including salaries) as constituents are bearing the burden of the cost increases.

Q5. (O'Neil): Asked if the budget line item concerning the greenhead boxes on the marsh received the support of the Gloucester Conservation Commission.

A5. (Cahill): Stated she did not know and that she would find out that information.

Q6. (O'Neil): Referenced an invoice from the New England Mosquito Control District dated April 11 stating that payment is due within thirty days. Asked if the invoice has been paid.

A6. (Cahill): Stated that the signed agreement has been sent to the New England Mosquito Control District along with a note that said "pending Council approval of the FY23 budget."

Councilor O'Neil expressed concern regarding the active ingredient contained within the pesticide.

Q7. (Gilman): Stated that she had received a letter from a constituent, David Grace, after the public hearing deadline regarding the \$1.4 million loan order for the water and sewer meters. Stated that it was noted that at a January 2022 City Council meeting that the water and sewer meters would pay for themselves in 18 months.

Asked the **CFO** to elaborate as to why the FY23 budget does not include an increase in consumption or a corresponding decrease in the rates charged to the users of the two enterprise funds.

A7. (Dunn): Stated consumption would not be received until all of the equipment is installed, which would take time. Stated the equipment was purchased April 2022 and that there are approximately 7,000 meters that need to be maintained. Stated that revenue should not be brought in as part of the budget until the City actually realizes what the revenue will be.

The Rules of the Procedure were suspended, without objection, to allow a member of the public to speak.

Lisa Rigsby, address not learned

Asked for a status update regarding the upgrades for Green Street Park that were presented last year. The **CFO** stated that upgrades to Green Street Park are part of the \$4.2 million that is ascribable to the elementary school project that is outside of the MSBA funding and stated that it would not be contained within the current operational budget, but that it would be in the capital budget. Stated he could not speak to the execution and/or timeline of the upgrades.

Q8. (O'Neil): Asked how much of the \$4.2 million that is part of the school project that is not MSBA-funded would be allocated to the upgrades at Green Street Park.

A8. (Dunn): Stated the \$4.2 million budget consists of development of a ballfield, the demolition of East Gloucester School, as well as development of the East Gloucester School site once it is demolished. Stated he could not speak to the exact costs of each piece.

The public hearing closed at 7:47 p.m.

Councilor Gilman conveyed that the vote on the budget would take place at the City Council meeting of June 14, 2022. She encouraged all councilors to review the approved minutes in order to be prepared for discussion.

Councilor Gilman invited all attendees to participate in a Zoom Attendee Poll and that the results will be included in the meeting minutes.

Councilor Gross asked who the councilors could call with any questions on the budget. It was determined that the **Auditor, Kenny Costa**, should be called with any questions.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Grow, seconded by Councilor Gross, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 (Nolan, Worthley) to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Submitted by: Sherry Karvelas, Clerk of Committees

Items submitted at the meeting: None.

Results of poll taken during June 7, 2022, Special City Council meeting:

Poll Report						
Report Generated:	Jun 08, 2022 11:18 AM					
Topic	Special City Council Remote Meeting					
Webinar ID	895 9892 8796					
Actual Start Time	Jun 07, 2022 6:41 PM					
Actual Duration (minutes)	71					
Poll Details						
#	User Name	User Email	1 Did you have any difficulty HEARING any portion of the meeting?	2 Did you have any difficulty SEEING any of the panelists?	3 Did you have any difficulty VIEWING any of the presentations?	4 Compared to previous public Zoom meetings, would you say the technical quality of this meeting was:
1	Anonymous	Anonymous	Yes	No	No	About the Same
1	Anonymous	Anonymous	No	No	No	Better
1	Anonymous	Anonymous	No	No	No	About the Same
1	Anonymous	Anonymous	No	No	No	Better
1	Anonymous	Anonymous	No	No	No	Better
1	Anonymous	Anonymous	No	No	No	About the Same
1	Anonymous	Anonymous	No	No	No	Better
		Yes	1	0	0	Worse
		No	6	7	7	Same
						Better
						4