

Chair Zeigler called the City Council Special Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Members present: Councilor DiZoglio, Councilor Faretra, Councilor Finocchiaro, Councilor McCarty, Councilor Saba, Councilor Saffie, Councilor Simard, Councilor Beauregard, and Chair Zeigler.

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to accept the agenda.

MOITON BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Saffie to move the Methuen School Department as the first item. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

GENERAL FUND 01

Methuen Schools	\$ 99,974,180
TOTAL METHUEN SCHOOLS	\$ 99,974,180

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.
UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 no, 3 yes (Clr. Beauregard, Clr. McCarty, Clr. Zeigler)

Greater Lawrence Technical School	\$ 4,899,186
TOTAL GREATER LAWRENCE TECHNICAL SCHOOLS	\$ 4,899,186

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School	\$ 475,000
ESSEX NORTH SHORE AGRICULTURAL & TECHNICAL SCHOOL	\$ 475,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.
UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

CAFO Duprey asked what happens now.

Councilor Saba indicated a new budget would have to be submitted to Council as soon as possible to pass it by the end of the fiscal year.

Mayor Perry indicated the Council did not recommend any cuts. Council voted no. Councilor Saba – Point of Interest – Council must vote the bottom line only. He suggested the School Committee go and try to save some money in that budget.

Assistant Solicitor McQuillan stated the Council, according to Municipal Finance Act, the statute that provides the authority of this Council to either reject or reduce a figure in the appropriation order. The result is there is going to have to be a resubmission of the amended or revised budget for consideration by the Council prior to the second read. This Council is well within their authority to reject all figures presented by the Mayor contained in the appropriation order.

Mayor Perry indicated he is not suggesting otherwise. There is no target for the School Committee to go.

In response to the CAFO for clarification, the Assistant Solicitor explained Council can reject, reduce, or accept the budget.

Councilor Saba stated that the Solicitor sent Council an email they could either approve or reject. Council does not have the ability to reduce the school department budget. All Council can do is approve it or reject it. The Solicitor sent Council an email two days ago.

Assistant Solicitor McQuillan echoed the opinion of the Solicitor as well as the Division of Local services that specifically under the statute the City Council has the right to “reduce or reject”

Chair Zeigler said there appears to be some confusion as to how Council moves forward.

MOTION BY: Councilor McCarty, seconded by Councilor Saba to recess. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. Finocchiaro)

Chair Zeigler called the meeting back to order. Members present: Councilor DiZoglio, Councilor Faretra, Councilor Finocchiaro, Councilor McCarty, Councilor Saba, Councilor Saffie, Councilor Simard, Councilor Beauregard, and Chair Zeigler.

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to reconsider the Methuen Schools Budget vote so Council can give some guidance to School Committee members for revisions on second read.

At the request of Councilor Saba, Assistant Solicitor McQuillan said given the fact that the original figure that was contained in the appropriation order was outrightly rejected, this Council if they care to give any guidance or any indication of the direction, Council can reconsider that vote. The motion must be made by a member of the City Council voting on the prevailing side, meaning a “no” vote and a second. That would essentially remove and rescind the vote to reject altogether and this Council could again engage in discussion for the purposes of suggesting or giving guidance toward the school department for the purposes of any modifications or revisions that they may think be appropriate for the purposes of Council consideration on second read.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Councilor DiZoglio said he is not okay with the administrators getting 50% increase in salary and 6% for principals and people on the same team getting 0% or a 2% to 3% bump. If they are just trying to level set, he understands. But you don’t do that in a year that we are seeing positions be told across the board that they cannot have in other departments because we have to be frugal and spend less because we don’t know what inflation rates are going to look like, what the tax rate is going to be. He is all about education, but if you are telling him a principal needs a 6% increase because he or she is going to do a better job, then he is not sure if he wants that principal here. An Assistant Superintendent position is going from \$153,000 to \$170,000 and going to an internal candidate who is making \$60,000 less. His comment has nothing to do with the person. It has to do with the job. He has never seen that in his career. Unless you are going from a director to a bonused position and this is education. The Mayor is taking pay cuts. There are departments doing overtime and increasing their overtime budgets because they cannot get a third rig on the road. And the city bought a school this year. Thirty

million dollars has gone to the school department to make it better. If we think 3% and 6% to principals in certain positions is necessary to keep good people, he's sorry, they will understand that the average income of this city is \$50,000 with a minimum and the average increase in pay across the city is 2%. There are a lot of contracts up next year, too. Maybe that is when we discuss the CBAs and additional increases, once we get through this rough patch in financial matters. This should not impact students. Any additional grant money or state money we get is extra and should not be going to salaries. In a year or two when it is less money, we must adopt that funding. Grant positions that are no longer funded, we adopt those positions. He was on the School Committee and knows how it worked. He appreciates the hard work that the Superintendent and Business Manager has done. He appreciates the hard work the School Committee has done. But we are in a different time and giving thirty million dollars to a department in two years is a lot more than we've given some other departments that truly need new buildings, new facilities, and we've got to think about the taxpayer too when we are going to move forward with those projects. This has nothing to do with who the people are in these positions. They are all great advocates in Methuen but to take a 6% increase when the average person took 2%.

Superintendent Kwong said she has been at past several City Council meetings. Some things have been lost in the comments Councilman DiZoglio has made tonight. She heard especially in the last few weeks about reclassification of salaries in the city. There are other ways these things are done. Every department that she heard over the past budget hearings have all said how much they are all struggling to keep staff. She is struggling just as much as everybody else to educate the children of Methuen Public Schools. She has worked with the School Committee. They are the elected body that runs and oversees the school department at every step of the way. She had an Assistant Superintendent who resigned. They agreed to repost to make it competitive. She heard those words last night as well. You want to post and want to get competitive in an urban setting. It must be a competitive salary. The school department is no different. If she cannot get administrators, cannot get support staff, a lot of these positions are collective bargaining positions. To focus on two specific salaries, singling two people out when you are saying that, is problematic for her because the positions that she has are not the comparable salaries which she has heard the Mayor say here, which a lot of our city, school department and whatever departments we are talking about are not comparable salaries for a middle size urban districts. The school department is no different, top to bottom. She does not know how they want her to run the school department with the elected committee that oversees the running of that department without allow them to make those decisions of what is in the best interest of the school department. It is unfortunate that comments are being made about the individual who went from a job in the city and is actually in a completely different job in the city who has earned the right to be in that job that the School Committee set the salary range for, keeps getting repeated by Councilman DiZoglio. They are totally different jobs. One is a ten-month job. One is a twelve-month job, different responsibilities, not employees. It is completely unfair to have that on the floor as a reason why a 100 million-dollar budget with 1100 employees of which many live in this community. Their children have gone through the Methuen public schools. She feels strongly about this. She would be remiss if she did not comment that the sixteen million dollars did not come from the City of Methuen. It came from the state, the

Chapter 70 state aid that this district has been so desperate to have to make the schools better. We are finally seeing a time where we can make things right in education. They are not asking the taxpayers of Methuen for thirty million dollars. The money from both sides that bought the building came from the government/state aid/federal aid for COVID related purposes. This is an opportunity to celebrate not an opportunity to be on separate sides. She noted the School Committee, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the School Committee are present to discuss anything that needs to be discussed.

Councilor DiZoglio said he talked about several principals not one. Most of the principals are between 3% to 6%. There is an internal candidate going from \$153,000 to \$170,000. He did not bring up a name of the individual with \$60,000 pay increase. The city has never seen that. ARPA funding was state regulated. Council voted to give School Department ten million dollars that could have gone to the new DPW department, a Fire Station, or a brand-new public safety building. Every year we get Chapter 70 money that number changes. We might have seen increases. We could also see decreases and then we inherit that cost in the future.

Councilor Faretra said Methuen is 46.4 million dollars into the school budget. The number he had in mind is 1% of the budget. He suggested the schools cutting \$500,000 out of the 99.5 million dollars. He is also looking at other cuts in the municipal budget. The number is 46,415,649 contributed by the city to the schools. One half percent of 1% would be \$500,000 cut. The budget is 1.798 million over net school spending. The target number would be \$99,474,180.

Councilor Saba said the state cut 3 million dollars from the school department. He led a group that came to the city council and said we must make them whole. We cannot just let the school department take this hit. The Council gave them more money. In 2017 this same Council voted to underfund the school department again which was part of the cause but not the full cause of school department going over by 3.7 million dollars. For the first five budgets, the city gave the school department what they need. He was 100% supportive. At this point, he is very concerned as this is surpassing the 50% mark of the total city budget. He is concerned about this is not supposed to be a situation where the School Committee says, "here's our budget, we want the money" and everyone flips out if Council gives some push back. That is not the way it is supposed to work. He is concerned with the overall performance of our schools. We are consistently spending more dollars on administration costs and not supporting the pupil facing employees, the teachers, and the PAs enough. The job of teachers is very different now. His reasoning for voting "no" on this is to make a statement to get future School Committees to be more accountable with the budget. He would change his vote over a smaller cut \$200,000 to \$250,000. A lot of the policies and things going on, Methuen is not producing quality students. We are losing a lot of the top students to other schools which concerns him. This sends a message "all educators progress is based by assessing themselves and students". He would like to see a marginal cut of \$200,000 to \$250,000.

Councilor Finocchiaro said the schools are vital to the City of Methuen's future. She thanked the School Committee and staff for attending. We have strengthened our relationship. There are economic challenges this next year that will impact Methuen Schools significantly. If you consider the economic challenges, some individuals cannot afford to stay without a second

job. Methuen is going to see what other communities have, we are going to see a drop in staff, people getting out of education field. If we are adding to the budget in some of the areas that are positive and can help things, that is great. The areas that are going to have the impact of providing that stability is going to be a lot of those individuals, paraprofessionals. She would like to see some built-in excess to say: “we are planning increases”. Those are the areas if we have to pick and choose, it is very concerning to her because we see a lot of those individuals either on the brink of not being able to do it anymore or not be able to do it. there has been some progress made on that over the years because of the additional funding. She has asked from 2018 through 2023 that Methuen build out a grant staff. A lot of the grants are done by schools but adding a grant writer could add millions to the budget. She would like to see the investment pushed down to the lower salaried staff members. They are vital in the way we expect the school to continue.

Superintendent Kwong said she heard everyone and is very aware of challenges. Schools have eight department contracts. There may be one or two more on the city side. Next year is a negotiating year for contracts. Those are not numbers that she can change. Some of the things said, they have CBAs they have to adhere to. For the unaffiliated, the School Committee gave her the authority to give raises. She will be working with Maggie and the city. It is not her decision to add money. It is part of the CBAs with large amount of staff under the collective bargaining agreements.

Councilor Simard – Point of Inquiry – the Council recommendation – Is the Council going to know where the \$500,000 recommendation or \$250,000 is coming from?

CAFO Duprey said the Council may cut the bottom line but it is up to school committee where it is taken from.

Councilor Simard said he is in favor of Councilor Faretra’s number.

Councilor Finocchiaro said she is aware of the collective bargaining process in conjunction with the Mayor and CAFO. We need to focus on where we are going to be. She would rather see increases to para-professional staff. It is more important than some of the other areas are considered. She could live with a higher number if it reflected those values.

Superintendent Kwong explained the principals wrote the narrative of their requests, reducing class sizes and increasing staff. This is requested by the principals and part of the budget.

Councilor Beauregard said talking about auditing each department is something Council can look at. At the end of the day they are accountable to the taxpayers. These numbers are produced by another elected body. He is concerned if Council is going too far beyond their scope.

Councilor Saba indicated Council did discuss an audit at the last meeting. He does not believe Council got an answer whether it would be done. He is looking for a nominal decrease in the budget. He would like to see a commitment for a full audit done of the department that is comprehensive financial and operational right down to the level of teaching in the classrooms to the lunch and custodians and up through the administration to understand if the schools are operating efficiently or not. He has always been supportive.

Mayor Perry said he appreciates the feedback. Salaries are subject to CBAs, all things agreed to by the city and by the school committee. He cautioned about redistribution of salaries.

The audit is going to cost money too. To audit something as large as Methuen Public Schools is going to be a lot more than it cost to audit police or DPW. He respects the feedback. It will not be easy. He thought they had a workable budget coming in, but he is willing to take Council's comments under advisement. He is caught in the \$200,000 to \$500,000 range. Some of the direction appears a little conflicting at times.

Councilor Saba said doing an audit, to him, is enough without giving up any money.

Councilor DiZoglio agreed with the Mayor regarding the CBAs. He struggles with 2% and 6%. Their current staff is not getting 6% to 20% increases. Internal staff grow in their positions, step by step, just like teachers. That is the CBAs. Janitorial – CBAs. We have certain positions that are contract required to individuals that were agreeing to certain numbers that we should really discuss. If anyone thinks an internal candidate in a time like today, should get 6% increases, to 10 to 20%, etc. he will vote “no” all day long. If Council is okay with cutting something, what we are getting at is we commit to a certain numbers, we are stuck on that number for life. There is no going back on some of these numbers. When we get a person and we look at the step increases, there is a gatekeeper, the individual could be at the max. “What are we doing here with some of these salaries?” If we are looking at internal candidates, never has he ever in any company he has ever worked for given the dedicated salary of what it was posted at to an internal candidate.

Councilor Faretra expressed concern with positions that are added. One position that is there and broken in multiple positions. He is not sure this is the year to do that. The Cares Committee recommended bringing back custodial help, with the grounds crew and that was not added. Yet, when you drive by the CGS, the grass is cut, but no one weed whacks. The grass is two and a half feet high along the fence. He asked if the added staff is allocated at the right places. School department is top heavy and the position for people with the boots on the ground are not the positions that will be added. We must lessen the burden on the taxpayers. The \$200,000 to \$500,000 is just a number to lessen the burden on the taxpayers. When this budget comes up, we are looking at a \$4,000,000 tax increase to the taxpayers at the end of the day if the budget passes as is. Council's job is to try to lessen that burden how they see fit. To him, this is how he sees fit, a cut here, a cut amongst other departments. Maybe the \$500,000 number is not, maybe it is less. There are some positions that are not student facing that could be cut and put on hold. To him, there is a lot of splitting of positions. One position made into two or three different positions that could be held off.

Councilor Finocchiaro Councilors have varying opinions. Having a full commitment for an audit that would include all the questions being discussed, full scale. If Council had a commitment for a full audit, she would be a “yes” vote. If that is something everyone could get on board with, that could potentially mean no cuts. t make some

Councilor Saffie said in a year or two this budget is going to be massive if we do not make minimal cuts. She does not have a number in mind and would be okay with \$250,000 to \$500,000 reduction. She would also be okay with an audit instead. She agrees with what Councilor Faretra said about the added positions. Maybe this is not the right time for them or maybe some could be part-time. She does not know what a Director of Safety and Transportation is, but \$80,000 sounds like a lot of money for a new position. She does not know

what they would do to constitute a full-time job. To her it might be more appropriate to be a part-time job. We could cut a little of this, nothing major.

Assistant Solicitor McQuillan said the reconsideration cancels out the original vote of rejection so there is no vote. A motion to table would constitute a first read affording the School department to bring in a revised budget before this Council for second read.

Councilor Faretra asked what that would do to the remainder of the budget.

Assistant Solicitor McQuillan explained it would not prevent Council from continuing. Council can act on the remainder of the budget. He would defer to discretion of the Council.

Councilor McCarty disagreed with a motion to table. It does not give any direction to the schools, who would need to report back for second read for whatever action deems appropriate. He would prefer to see a motion for the School Committee to meet tomorrow and report back to Council for the second read.

Councilor DiZoglio said their meeting is less than 24 hours away. He asked how they could work on a budget, through an Emergency Session or would it be an open meeting violation.

Assistant Solicitor McQuillan said 48-hour notice is required. Councilor DiZoglio said they cannot discuss this at the meeting they have to post it.

Mayor Perry indicated there is a meeting coming up in 24 hours, but the School Committee cannot add to the agenda. They would have to call for a meeting on Friday.

CAFO Duprey said the city will commit and support a full audit of the school department.

Councilor Finocchiaro said the budget is ahead of schedule, if it is reasonable and something that the Mayor and the CAFO would be interested in, Council could delay the second read vote, taking an addition week to give school committee additional time to decide what they want to do.

Chair Zeigler said the budget meetings were posted two months in advance and required legal advertising which would delay the entire process by two weeks.

Councilor Finocchiaro said it is worth additional discussion.

CAFO Duprey indicated the School Committee will meet on Friday and make it work. There is no need to change the schedule.

Councilor Saba asked if the city is committing to a full detailed audit.

Mayor Perry said he is, but he is only one vote on the committee. That would be something he would discuss with the School Committee on Friday. He will do his utmost to convince them that this is the path. If they come back and say they will do the audit, respectfully Council will say they will pass the budget.

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to table school department budget. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 yes, 3 no (Clr. Faretra, Clr. McCarty, Clr. Beaugard)

TOTAL EDUCATION SUBTOTAL \$ 105,624,486

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to table Total Education UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 yes, 3 no (Clr. Faretra, Clr. McCarty, Clr. Beaugard)

City Council

Total Personal Services \$ 208,850

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

MOTION BY: Councilor McCarty, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to reduce Personal Services Clerk and strike \$34,728 to be attributed to the Assistant Council Clerk.

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Faretra to reduce by \$34,727, leaving one dollar in the line item. This going to go to a committee.

Councilor Saba said he is not in favor of this cut. The most important thing that Council needs moving forward is to bring in an Assistant Clerk. He is not committed to the Financial Analyst because Council has a great working relationship with the CAFO who will answer any questions or concerns. He is not concerned with the Fiscal Analyst, but he is concerned about an Assistant Clerk. The reason why the last candidate failed was because the last candidate was not prepared for the job. Immediately after being hired, did not want to come to meetings, did not want to do certain things. And then just quit. That person was not committed to the job. It does not mean Council abandons the responsibility for future Councils to bring in an Assistant Clerk. He does not want to abandon the position. This is a big mistake.

Councilor Simard said he agrees with Councilor Saba. "What happens when the clerk retires? Council needs to start grooming someone. The clerk is overworked and needs someone to help. The next selection should include the clerk and Council needs to pick someone more suitable.

Councilor Finocchiaro said Council should not be talking about individuals on this item. She said this person was incredibly intelligent and had a history of being a Town Manager. She saw it more as City Council having an issue with managing during COVID which is understandable. That is how she saw it, having asked questions, and seeing what the skill level was. Council did not make adequate use of that resource. Council has learned the lesson and would do better in the future. The purpose of that position was vital. On this cut that is proposed, her concern is she thinks they need the money for some of the other things that Council said they wanted to do. Her concern would be if Council were to do a reduction with the intent that seat might be filled in the future, that is one thing, but if we do not get that option, we are doing a straight cut. Council needs to take this time to have that conversation with the Mayor and the CAFO now because if Council just straight cut this, it is cut and its gone. That is not what Council should do. Some parts of this budget are already slimmer in some areas than she would have thought. For example, in this position, one of the things Council and clerk discussed in an email that was sent out to Council were some suggested alternatives. In this specific line item they are discussing, people that are working towards the tax abatement programs that the city has and add to the bottom line through that line item, Council could utilize that money towards stipends for and increase that number, but have it be through the City Council, managed jointly with the City Council and the Mayor's office. That would increase the number of seniors who are able to get those stipends to do the work and it would increase the Council office's ability to get that work done, mainly the meeting minutes, taking the bulk of the meeting minutes off of Linda, would really go a long way and be able to focus on the things that Council really needs the clerk to do. She would like to see that line fit that purpose or with a part-time, hourly,

non-benefited position for twenty or thirty hours each week. It is better to do it through the process of the seniors. They have shown that they do a great job. Councilor Finocchiaro said she is voting “no” but not because she doesn’t agree with Councilor McCarty’s sense that Council hasn’t figured out what they are doing with this job or it is not being spent the right way because she does agree with that. She would be a “no” because she wants the money to go towards those things. Maybe the title of that line item evolving might make sense. Change it to either part-time assistant council clerk or stipend towards tax abatements. That would be her request. It would be helpful to hear some feedback from the Mayor as to whether he would be amenable to something like that.

Mayor Perry responded, absolutely. It is the will of the Council. He reminded the Council they are not taxing to the legal limit. We are under by \$340,000. They are open to whatever the Council would like to do.

Councilor DiZoglio said Council discussed at the workshop that Council was potentially sending this item to a committee and review it. More than likely Council is going to have to reclassify this position and salary when Council goes back to looking for this person. These salaries are low and more than likely this salary would fall into that category. He is fine with appropriating one dollar. It is saving the position. Council could come back and to re-appropriate funds responsibly.

Chair Zeigler passed the gavel to the Vice-Chair. She is a “no” vote on this cut. It is irresponsible for Council to cut at this time. Council needs to think of the future of the department and how the department is going to be supported. Council is not sure when the Council Clerk will retire, but there are a lot of moving pieces to the Council Clerk role. It will take some time to create a succession plan and to train someone so that they fully know the full scope of the job and additionally this Council has upped the bar than any other Council. No other Council has had as many committees as this Council, that pushes for as many projects, and community engagement activities as this Council has. That comes with a lot more work for the department to handle. It is a heavier load, and they want to make sure they are setting future Councils up for success. She encouraged Council to keep the funding in the budget so Council can send it to committee, try to find support for our Council Clerk. That process does take time.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 no, 3 yes (Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Faretra, Clr. McCarty)

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Faretra to cut \$4,728 from Personal Services.

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to cut \$9,728 from Personal Service, leaving the Assistant Clerk position at \$25,000. By the time a committee meets, there will be enough money to fund the position.

Councilor Beauregard spoke to the idea of bringing on residents in the community who were looking for those abatement opportunities. This type of a role is ideal for an arrangement like that. He is thinking it is good to leave that where it is to accomplish that purpose.

Councilor DiZoglio said he did not mention a line item. He is saying “personal services”. That means anything could be cut from any of those seven lines based from the Council Chair.

Assistant McQuillan said Council cannot vote on any particularized item as delineated in the department breakdown. The vote must be on the full number that is contained in the appropriation order.

Councilor DiZoglio wanted to be clear in his intention. Council can discuss where the number comes from and then leaving the departments to their own options as well. He is not mentioning any positions.

Chair Zeigler said either personal services or other expenses. Councilors are in their right to make recommendations.

Councilor Saffie asked if Councilors' salary reflects total salaries. She does not take a stipend and that could be allocated to something else.

CAFO Duprey said it is fully funded.

Councilor Saffie said she could allocate her share for the first six months.

Councilor Saba commented that would total \$4500. There is talk about cutting it out of the Assistant Clerk. It is a problem when we know we must hire and do not fund the position. It is necessary to fund it. He does not agree with using Free Cash to fund against any cuts to Personal Services. He is against any cuts on the personal services line.

Councilor Finocchiaro said she is not in favor to defund the fiscal analyst position. That is something that would be vital to the next Council with audits and additional work. There should be a dollar there as this is something that the Council could decide to re-allocate. Meeting minutes are something that needs to be done in a timely manner. The money is important in keeping the separation between the branches and the confirmation of the finances is vital to Methuen. Not all communities do it. Given what has happened in the past, it is something that really makes sense. As we build up more trust in Methuen's finances and continue through all the audits over the next few years with the new Council that will be here, having that expertise will be important.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 no, 4 yes (Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Faretra, Clr. McCarty, Clr. Saffie) Motion failed.

Councilor Finocchiaro said she feels the increase that Council made to Councilors' salaries for next year were high. She is going to put forward a motion to cut. It should be re-adjusted and looked at in the future. It is not funded at the full level because it does not take place until the next Council comes in. A Councilor who does not have a leadership role would receive \$916.67, annual stipend of \$11,000, Vice-Chair would receive \$12,000 and the Chair would receive \$13,000. Half of the Council is going to be replaced and she does not know what their thoughts are going to be on this.

MOTION BY: Councilor Finocchiaro, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to reduce Councilors' salaries by \$28,500.

Councilor DiZoglio making a motion to cut \$28,500 with the intention of cutting the Councilors' line item.

Councilor DiZoglio said Council had \$34,000 on the cutting block to personal services and now we are cutting \$28,000. Council could make a motion to cut \$28,000 with the mindset of going to the line item, but that does not mean it is going to that line item. What is going to

end up happening is it is going to impact what Council has been trying to limit right now. Stating the intent of cutting a line item does not mean anything.

Assistant Solicitor McQuillan reiterated that Councilors want to deduct from the appropriation order. They are not voting on a singular line item. Council has a certain figure that they either deduct that you want to deduct from the figure contained on the appropriation order (budget submitted by the Mayor)

Councilor DiZoglio said that decision comes from the Mayor as to where it comes from.

Assistant McQuillan responded, yes, that is the Mayor's recommended budget.

Councilor DiZoglio said if he said \$34,000, the Mayor could have taken it out of the City Councilors' line item anyway.

Assistant McQuillan responded "prior to submission".

Councilor McCarty explained Councilors' salary and Mayor's salary are set by ordinance. The Mayor and the CAFO are not going to want to go against local ordinances. In essence, it is breaking the law. If Council wishes to address the salaries, he recommended doing it through ordinance rather than in the budget. If Council cuts \$28,000 right now, it is probably going to come out of everywhere but the Council line item because that is set by ordinance. He is in a tough spot because he was on board with the \$30,000 cut before and the Councilor made it clear her intent is to cut it from Councilors' services. If he votes "yes" he does not anticipate it is going to come out of the Council line item because it is violating the law.

Councilor Saba said it is not going to come out of Councilors' services. He asked the CAFO what the new salaries are for Councilors.

CAFO Duprey explained 2024 is split because it is effective January 2024. As of January, the new amount is, \$11,000 for members, \$12,000 for the Vice-Chair, and \$13,000 for the Chair. The budget reflects the numbers are already split. Right now, the number considers half a year at the current rate and half a year at the new rate. Anything Council cuts on this is going to end up coming from all the things Council voted "no" on.

Councilor Finocchiaro commented the number she received from the CAFO is removed the increase from the second half of the fiscal year. It is bringing salaries back to where they are at now. If Council has this commitment to filling these roles within the Council department and are asking everybody else to take difficult cuts. The Mayor took cuts in his salary which is highly commendable. Maybe this is not the right time. Council could change the ordinance. They created it and could change it at any time. The Mayor is being flexible and respectful about the budget. The continuity of the Council clerk is vital particularly when there could be a quorum of new Councilors.

Councilor Finocchiaro withdrew her motion to reduce by \$28,500.

Councilor Simard commented that Council deliberated and passed an ordinance knowing a lot of them would not be here.

Councilor Faretra said whoever sits in 2024 can decide if they want to take the raise. Cutting the salary could put them in a bad situation.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. McCarty)

Total Other Expenses \$ 2,500

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

Councilor Finocchiaro expressed concern that \$10,000 was removed from Professional Services. For example, if the Council wanted to reach out to a CPA firm regarding a contract, they would have the funds to do that. They would be able to do the same for an attorney on a case by case basis not a revolving basis. If Council needed to react, that would require something be in the professional services line item.

CAFO Duprey explained \$10,000 was moved to legal to record on the appropriate line item. Council could still do those things. If profession services were need for an audit, the City Council could come forward to the rest of the body and ask for a transfer between personal services and other expenses.

Councilor Finocchiaro said they have dramatically reduced legal services. She said the CAFO would be comfortable with the next Council having only \$2500 in Other Expenses for legal advertising, office supplies, and equipment repair. There is no other line item Council could legally expend funds. "How does Council accomplish what she is trying to say?"

CAFO Duprey indicated a request could be made to transfer from Personal Service to Other Expenses or use Free Cash depending on the dollar amount.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL CITY COUNCIL \$ 211,350

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio to cut \$4,728 from City Council grand total. No second. Motion failed.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 yes, 4 no (Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Faretra, Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. McCarty)

Mayor

Total Professional Services \$ 326,478

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

Councilor Finocchiaro said it is commendable that the Mayor has reduced his salary by approximately \$30,000. She appreciates him taking this cut.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Total Other Expenses \$ 32,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

TOTAL MAYOR \$ 358,478

MOTION BY: Councilor Saffie, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Legal Services

Total Professional Services \$ 415,364

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

Councilor DiZoglio commented adding the additional position is necessary and our legal department's strength in numbers is going to cut back on our outside legal services.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Total Other Expenses \$ 143,500

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saffie to cut \$25,000 from Other Expenses based on a report received from the CAFO where these accounts currently stand. Bringing a third member to this team means money to be saved in "other expenses".

Councilor Finocchiaro suggested a reduction of \$10,000. Councilor DiZoglio did not agree with the amendment.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 no, 4 yes (Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Faretra, Clr. McCarty, Clr. Saffie) Failed

UPON VOTE (\$143,500): 6 yes, 3 no (Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Faretra, Clr. Finocchiaro)

TOTAL LEGAL SERVICES \$ 558,864

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. Faretra)

City Clerk

Total Professional Services \$ 364,925

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Total Other Expenses \$ 115,783

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

TOTAL CITY CLERK \$ 480,708

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Reserve Fund

Other Expenses \$ 50,000

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

MOTION BY: Councilor McCarty, seconded by Councilor Faretra to cut \$25,000 from Other Expenses.

CAFO Duprey explained this is backup in case there is a need for insurance deductibles. \$25,000 would give them one full deductible. Anything beyond that, they would have to come back to Council and ask for Free Cash or a transfer from somewhere else.

Councilor Finocchiaro said she would like to see items like snow and ice and the reserve fund closer to the average of what they would be using.

In response to Councilor Faretra, the CAFO indicated this line item has not been used yet this year.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 no, 4 yes (Clr. Faretra, Clr. McCarty, Clr. Saffie, Clr. Zeigler)

UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. McCarty, Clr. Faretra)

Total Reserve Fund \$ 50,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.

UPON ROLL VOTE: 6 yes, 3 no (Clr. McCarty, Clr. Faretra, Clr. Saffie)

TOTAL LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE SUBTOTAL \$ 1,659,400

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 no, 4 yes (Clr. Saba, Clr. Simard, Clr. Beauregard, Clr. Zeigler)

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saba to reconsider.

Councilor Finocchiaro commented the Council should not be pressured into taking a vote as they were with the schools. Council has time to go through each item and the ability to have a special meeting if needed.

Councilor Simard said after the motion to reconsider, the Council could vote to table and give this a first read.

Councilor Faretra said he would prefer to give guidance to the Mayor vs. just a blanket “no”.

Councilor Saba commented he does not understand the “no” vote after voting “yes” in each department.

Mayor Perry said the budget would be sent back to him for cuts.

UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. McCarty)

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve total Legislative and Executive in the amount of \$1,659,400.

Councilor Beauregard said the time to cut is during the discussion of Other Expenses or Personal Services. The total of Legislative and Executive is basically math.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 yes, 3 no (Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. McCarty)

Chief Administrative and Executive Officer

Total Professional Services \$ 188,700

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Total Other Expenses \$ 13,115

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Methuen City Council Special Meeting
Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

TOTAL CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE AND
FINANCIAL OFFICER

\$ 201,815

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Accounting

Total Professional Services

\$ 632,682

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Total Other Expenses

\$ 138,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

TOTAL ACCOUNTING

\$ 770,682

MOTION BY: Councilor Beauregard, seconded by Councilor Saba.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Assessing

Total Professional Services

\$ 312,378

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Total Other Expenses

\$ 114,330

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

TOTAL ASSESSING

\$ 426,708

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Treasurer/Tax Collector

Total Personal Services

\$ 453,582

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Total Other Expenses

\$ 161,650

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor McCarty to reduce Other Expenses by \$10,000.

At the request of Councilor Finocchiaro regarding the type of foreclosure cost this is being used for, the CAFO explained the cost is about \$650 for the town to foreclose on property. Whatever is allowed on this line is the ability for how much Methuen to get after.

Councilor Finocchiaro commented none of us can tell the future, but with some of the thoughts about the economy, that number would eventually go up. We do not know the future for next year. Economist are expecting there will be an explosion in foreclosures since many of those foreclosures were held up in extensions of court and other things.

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to reduce Other Expenses by \$5,000.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. McCarty, Clr. Beauregard)

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve Total Other Expenses \$156,650. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL TREASURER/TAX COLLECTOR \$ 610,232

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Human Resources

Total Professional Services \$ 456,211

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.

MOTION BY: Councilor McCarty, seconded by Councilor Finocchiaro to cut Personal Services by \$122,400.

CAFO Duprey said an offer was made to candidate.

Councilor McCarty said the new range is \$122,000 to \$142,000 for the HR Director.

CAFO Duprey explained this is in line with the offer made to the candidate. This is for budgeting appropriately for brining on this candidate.

Councilor McCarty asked if this line item needs an additional \$7,000. He sees \$115,000 for the HR Director.

Councilor Saba noted Council received new sheets showing \$135,000.

The CAFO explained the sheets given out at the budget workshop last week is the sheet Council should be looking at, not the one that was originally put in the binder. The director's salary was \$135,000. The CAFO explained the salary ordinance is \$122,000 to \$142,000 and they are budgeting in the middle. She will reprint the budget with the amount of \$135,000. The candidate was offered step III.

Councilor McCarty noted the salary was increased twice for the last two hires in this position. This is a new hire from outside. We start them at the entry step on the ordinance, keeping in mind there is a 2% increase for department heads is going to be well on its way. He does not think Council needs to give it a head start towards the top end of the salary ordinance. The motion is to start the minimum step at \$122,000.

The CAFO indicated \$122,400 would be the figure.

Motion by Councilor McCarty seconded by Councilor Finocchiaro to set the minimum step at \$122,400. The CAFO clarified the reduction would be \$12,600.

Councilor Saba asked what step was offered.

The CAFO stated the job was offered at Step III.

Councilor Saba asked if this would it fulfill the step if Council cuts this.

The CAFO said they would discuss if they take it from another position that is not filled. Councilor Saba said there is a need for funding in the line item to pay the person that was hired. The CAFO agreed.

Councilor Saffie asked for clarification that an offer was made.

The CAFO explained to appoint someone, you make an offer. They must accept it before they bring it forward to the Council. This is an odd overlap of this process. They had to make an offer. She also went for her physical, her drug test, her CORI check. All of that must be in line before they bring it to Council which is happening Tuesday.

Councilor DiZoglio said Council is talking about a person that has not started and an offer that has been accepted, not yet to the Council. This may not impact her. It may impact the department. It is not directed, based off the Mayor, on where this goes. This was not an internal candidate. This was an external candidate from a city being paid a lot more. Sometimes individuals will take cuts to have a better environment to work. It is not always about the money. This rate puts an HR director in its right position. He knows many HR directors making a lot more than this in the private sector.

Councilor Finocchiaro asked what salary range was posted not what was later changed through the Council.

CAFO Duprey said the salary range was \$86,247 to \$103,496 which is the wage and salary classification of the original HR director.

Councilor Finocchiaro said if the city is going to post the salary range of \$86,247 to \$103,496, someone willing to take the position at \$135,000 to \$140,000 may not have applied. For that change to be made midstream is highly unusual. It is a major concern for her because if we are wanting to pay a large salary, we have got to remember that the average Methuen household makes much less than this salary, sometimes half that. It is a lot of money and for Council to change it after it is posted, all those people who looked at the posting before that change was made. That is a concern. For different reasons than Councilor McCarty expressed, she could support the cut but to her, it should be cut to \$103,496. They applied knowing that was the range.

Councilor Simard said he defers to his fellow Councilors. Councilor DiZoglio knows HR. He trusts Councilor Saba's with his decision on this candidate. It warrants the increase to keep that individual. We know all the issues that HR has garnered in the past and that continued somewhat with the previous Human Resource Director which is why she is not here anymore. We set ourselves up for failure when we do what we do, where we want a good candidate and then we say we should be at 102. \$135,00 is the going rate for a municipality with a 200-million-dollar budget with all these employees. He trusts his fellow Councilors, the Mayor, and Ms. Duprey's decision on this candidate.

Councilor Faretra said he thought the job was posted at a higher salary than \$86,000 to \$103,000. When the ordinance came to Council, between the first and second read, that 86 to 103 was not what was there before but not at the \$122,000 to \$142,000 where we are now.

CAFO Duprey explained when it was originally posted it was posted at what the original salary classification was at that time. After that time, they brought forward the first read which was at one level and when it was brought back for second read, they changed it to be more in line

with the CIO. Anything that was discussed as part of the ordinance change was not posted as part of this job.

Councilor DiZoglio said he appreciates Councilor Simard's comments. This was not an easy search. They did not receive a lot of candidates, but the candidates received were great candidates. He noted that he hired a new director for his HR department at \$188,000 (private sector). If we are going to talk about internal vs. external, when we go out to look for positions because we do not have them internally, that is when we are going to have to pay these big increases. If we can build internally people that can grow into roles, that is a cost savings to our organization. It is important to start at the lower level, grow our workers into a top tier, and that allows us to solve for these problems in the future.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 no, 2 yes (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. McCarty) Motion failed

UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. McCarty) \$ 456,611

Other Expenses: \$ 125,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL HUMAN RESOURCES \$ 581,611

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve amended total Human Resources amount of \$581,611. UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. Finocchiaro)

Information Technology

Total Professional Services \$ 491,720

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Total Other Expenses \$ 1,171,972

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

Councilor McCarty thanked the CAFO for providing more details on the maintenance contract. He saw well over a dozen maintenance contracts, probably closer to twenty on the breakdown. During the workshop he was led to believe that might be three or four different contracts. That's why he didn't see too much area to cut, but in that breakdown there was a catchall at the bottom where it said "all other anticipated contracts/potential contracts/ones that aren't named, which tells him that they are not yet there. There was about \$100,000 worth of those. We need to curb the growth slightly here. We built this department up and it is well on its way, but \$100,000 in the maintenance contracts based on the details that Council got, that is a doable cut. His intent is to have it come from the maintenance contracts which is \$854,000 line item.

MOTION BY: Councilor McCarty, seconded by Councilor Faretra to reduce Other Expenses by \$100,000.

Councilor DiZoglio said he noticed professional services decreased. On the 102 number, do we see the use of professional services either in contracts already or are we going to be outsourcing anything else under that line item.

The CAFO explained it would be just for support within the IT department. The city is not outsourcing part of IT.

Councilor DiZoglio asked what the 102 would be used for. He has seen the drastic cut continuously over the years. He also seeing the 854 might have some of the 102 potentially involved.

The CAFO explained the MVPC updated mapping for the GIS, any of the fiber. We must have a fiber company come out and fix the poles. This year we are going to have – the double poles that you see around the city, when a pole gets changed, they put another pole up. We must remove anything we have on the pole; we must pay to change the pole. That comes out of this item. The city has approximately thirty poles to do. They budgeted for that in here in addition to any professional services the city would need. A large part of that is to fix the poles.

Councilor Saba asked how much has been allocated from the \$854,000 at this point.

The CAFO indicated there is \$97,000 remaining.

Councilor Saba said we have allocated all but the \$97,000 to contracts moving forward. He asked what other contracts are lined up that we need to bring in. “Do we have anything specific?”

CAFO Duprey said she does not have specifics. That is our area as we change things, upgrade things, there is always something that comes up that we need to add. That is the bucket that would allow the city to do all those things.

Councilor Saba asked what makes up the budget for communications.

The CAFO explained that is all the fiber, all our internet, wireless, cellphones, desk phones.

Councilor Saba asked about professional services, if that is something that is there to use as issues come up.

The CAFO said that is the double pole projects she spoke about. It is going to get used.

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Faretra to reduce the amount of the cut to \$50,000.

Councilor Finocchiaro asked what the anticipated use is for the \$97,000 allocation.

CAFO that is based on conversations had on potential things, things they may want to investigate, things the city is currently looking into that we have not decided on or things of that nature. Also trying to add something in there in case any of these contracts come in higher than we are anticipating them to. There is a percentage of what that is just to make sure they have a little bit of space in case some of these come in higher or we must add licenses for new employees. This gives them space to buy more licenses.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Beauregard)

Councilor Finocchiaro said she would be open to changes by the Mayor and would like to hear more from the director.

MOTION BY: Councilor McCarty, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve as amended.
UPON VOTE: (\$1,121,972) UNANIMOUS.

Total Equipment Outlay \$ 80,000
MOTION BY: Councilor McCarty, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

TOTAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY \$ 1,743,692
MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve as amended.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

TOTAL ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE
DEPARTMENT SUBTOTAL \$ 4,284,740

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve Total Administration and Finance as amended.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Economic and Community Development
Total Personal Services \$ 642,934
MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Total Other Expenses \$ 142,643
MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT \$ 785,577
MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Health Inspection Services
Councilor McCarty left the room.
Total Personal Services \$ 1,104,304
MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.
UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 abstention (Clr. McCarty)

Total Other Expenses \$ 30,200
MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.
UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 abstention (Clr. McCarty)

TOTAL HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICES \$ 1,134,504
MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

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UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 abstention (Clr. McCarty)
Councilor McCarty returned to the room.

Police

Total Personal Services \$ 12,817,727

MOTION BY: Councilor Beauregard, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor McCarty to cut \$35,000 from personal services.

Councilor Finocchiaro expressed concern regarding unfilled position in the community engagement line that was already removed during the budget process. There have been discussions about the right place for that. Her concern would be if this cut would end up having an impact on that. There would not be any room for that in the health budget either. She asked what the Mayor's address what he thought that cut would be used for.

Mayor Perry said he would defer to the Chief. The Mayor said he fully supports eight additional police officers, just not now. The Chief wants the eight officers. We need them. this is not the right time. Regarding the cut, he would have to confer with the Chief. He does not think it would impact the community health engagement line. We are pursuing and we have hope for a favorable outcome for three separate grants that would help our mental health. He, the Chief, and the HSSI department are still talking about how that works out. Some of that would be working with uniformed officers and going to events. He would not make the \$35,000 cut without sitting down with the Chief and determine where the best place would be. The Mayor said he has already made some significant cuts here.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. DiZoglio, Councilor Beauregard.

MOTION BY: Councilor McCarty, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve personal services as amended. \$ 12,782,727

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. DiZoglio)

Total Other Expenses \$ 884,191

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Total Equipment Outlay \$ 40,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL POLICE \$ 13,741,918

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve as amended. \$ 13,706,918

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Fire

Total Personal Services \$ 12,088,351

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MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Total Other Expenses \$ 470,500

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL FIRE \$ 12,558,851

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY \$ 26,265,769

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve as amended.

Councilor Finocchiaro indicated she has not received the documentation she requested through the CAFO's office. The CAFO said she thought she responded to all of them and asked Councilor Finocchiaro to resend the request. Councilor Finocchiaro said she emailed a series of questions yesterday or day before.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. Finocchiaro)

Public Works

Total Personal Services \$ 5,479,889

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saffie to cut personal services in the amount of \$111,171.

Councilor Finocchiaro said the city needs all staff on hand particularly with the ARPA and Capital Improvement projects the city is going to be doing. This is not the right time to make this cut. She would like to see the total personal services increased. The cost to the engineering department is going to be monumental.

Councilor Faretra agreed with Councilor Finocchiaro. This department does need help. In the past this position was called a city engineer. If this were a city engineer, he would leave it in the budget.

Councilor Saba left the room.

Councilor Simard said he understands and knows as a city we want to move forward with qualifications and certifications. But he does not think there is a better person than this person. He is confident of the current person in that position and the job that he does. every time he calls, every time he has a problem, this individual has responded. At this point, he does not think anyone could do better. We would be cutting ourselves short. If the person were to leave, then make sure you would have that.

Councilor McCarty noted the intent might be for a certain position, what might end up happening is vacancies get unfunded and then we are unable to hire.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 no, 2 yes, (Clr. Faretra, Clr. Saffie) 1 present (Clr. McCarty), 1 out of the room (Clr. Saba) Amendment failed

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UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 yes, 2 no (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. Saffie), 1 present (Clr. McCarty), 1 out of the room (Clr. Saba)

Councilor Saba indicated he can vote at this point.

Total Other Expenses \$ 1,269,470

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Total Equipment Outlay \$ 0

Total Fuel Expenses \$ 715,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Total Snow & Ice \$ 625,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saffie to cut \$125,000 from Snow and Ice.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 yes, 4 no (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. Saba, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Chair Zeigler)

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve as amended.

\$ 500,000

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Finocchiaro) 1 present (Clr. McCarty)

TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve as amended.

\$ 7,964,359

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. Finocchiaro)

Solid Waste Disposal

Total Other Expenses \$ 5,212,500

MOTION BY: Councilor Saffie, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. Faretra)

TOTAL SOLID WAST DISPOSAL COSTS \$ 5,212,500

MOTION BY: Councilor Saffie, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

Councilor Faretra commented that the Council has been waiting three months for Harvey to show up at a meeting to have a discussion. His “no” vote is based on they will not come to a meeting to discuss the concerns Councilors have to deal with every day from constituents. He is still in favor of the contract. The system is good for the city. He is not happy with the contractor as this point.

UPON VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. Faretra)

Methuen City Council Special Meeting
Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve as amended.
\$ 13,176,859

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 1 no (Clr. Finocchiaro) 1 present (Clr. McCarty)

Elder Services

Total Personal Services \$ 292,661

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS.

Total Other Expenses \$ 81,344

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL ELDER SERVICES \$ 374,005

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Veterans Benefits

Total Personal Services \$ 135,952

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Total Other Expenses \$ 375,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL VETERANS BENEFITS \$ 510,952

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES \$ 884,957

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Nevins Memorial Library

Library Support Other Expense \$ 1,606,628

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL NEVINS LIBRARY \$ 1,606,628

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL CULTURE AND RECREATIONS SUBTOTAL \$ 1,606,628

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Bonds & Interest

Principal \$ 3,470,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Interest \$ 1,776,729

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL DEBT SERVICE SUBTOTAL \$ 5,246,729

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Risk Management

Insurance Premiums, Property \$ 850,000

MOTION BY: Councilor McCarty, seconded by Councilor Simard to cut \$50,000 from Insurance Premiums, Property.

The CAFO explained these are actual premiums for policies to cover public official liability insurance, general liability insurance, property insurance, cyber security, which are actual policies that we have. There is \$13,000 in there added because of the estimation of adding vehicles per our CIP plan. That is the only amount not based on what the city has going into the new year.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 no, 1 yes (Clr. McCarty)

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. McCarty)

Transfer to Unemployment \$ 10,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Transfer to 111F \$ 40,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Beauregard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Transfer to Workers Compensation \$ 300,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Methuen City Council Special Meeting
Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

TOTAL RISK MANAGEMENT SUBTOTAL \$ 1,200,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Employee Benefits

Group Health Insurance \$ 15,561,853

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Life Insurance \$ 70,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Medicare Tax \$ 1,985,048

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Transfer to Comp Absences Fund \$ 200,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS \$ 17,816,901

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Saffie to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Contributory Pensions

Pension Fund \$ 15,020,331

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.
Councilor Faretra commented he is voting “no” on this because he believes there was a way to go after the largest pension in the city.

UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. Faretra)
Total CONTRIBUTION PENSIONS \$ 15,020,331

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.
UPON VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. Faretra)

TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SUBTOTAL \$ 32,837,232

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Methuen City Council Special Meeting
Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

State Assessments

Total State Assessments \$ 4,658,801

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL STATE ASSESSMENTS SUBTOTAL \$ 4,658,801

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Other Amounts to be Raised

Overlay \$ 700,000

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Offsets \$ 132,600

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TOTAL OTHER AMOUNTS TO BE RAISED

SUBTOTAL \$ 832,600

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

GRAND TOTAL GENERAL FUND \$ 199,922,161

Councilor Saba noted the school department's budget was tabled.

Attorney McQuillan said the school department's budget has not been approved. It is the general fund as approved by the Council tonight contingent upon incorporating a final approved school budget.

Chair Zeigler said it would be this number minus the education department.

Attorney McQuillan agreed.

\$ 94,573,575

MOTION BY: Councilor Faretra, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.

Councilor DiZoglio said tabling would meet the criteria for a first read.

Attorney McQuillan said that is the discretion of the Council. This figure submitted by the CAFO is the money approved by the Council this evening. It is contingent upon incorporating the school budget. He does not see the legal significance of a tabling. There is a first read for items approved by Council. They are going to have a second read which will be incorporated with a school budget and have a second opportunity to vote on the total general fund at that time, as amended.

Councilor Finocchiaro commented it would be more understandable if this is tabled. It also sends a message to the Superintendent because there were some discussions about making concessions, adjusting, and potentially doing the audit, etc. A table sends a positive message Council accomplished some things today and are not trying to put a number on that because there

are going to be adjustments in other areas in order to accomplish some of the things asked the Mayor and the CAFO to do.

MOTION BY: Councilor Finocchiaro, seconded by Councilor McCarty
UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 no, 4 yes (Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. McCarty, Clr. Beauregard)

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to accept \$94,573,575
UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. McCarty)

WATER AND SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND 61

Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund

Total Personal Services \$ 3,487,328

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Saba to approve.

MOTION BY Councilor Saffie, seconded by Councilor Faretra to cut the “out of classification” to \$ 5,000 a reduction of \$10,000. This is specifically for the water department and would only affect a handful of employees.

The Mayor said the smaller the number of employees increases the need for “out of classification”. With other departments, the city is usually able to absorb it first before they turn to “out of classification” where in small departments like this with a small number of employees, if one of them is out, then you are in “out of classification” immediately. There is a new ordinance that says it cannot be done for longer than 90 days.

Councilor Saffie said they are fully staffed in all their supervisor positions. They would not really need to use it unless someone is injured or something.

Councilor Finocchiaro year-to-date and actuals as well as if there were a particular impact including how many people were out and how long.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 no 4 yes (Clr. Finocchiaro, Clr. Saffie, Clr. Faretra, Clr. McCarty)

Total Other Expenses \$ 2,984,250

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Greater Lawrence Sanitary District \$ 4,269,945

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Debt \$ 3,136,170

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Pension Fund \$ 817,582

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Methuen City Council Special Meeting
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Transfers Out – Indirect Costs \$ 2,649,754

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

GRAND TOTAL ENTERPRISE FUNDS \$ 17,344,990

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Faretra to approve.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Adjourn

MOTION BY: Councilor Saba, seconded by Councilor Faretra to adjourn.
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

I do hereby certify that the foregoing minutes were adopted by the Methuen City Council
by a 7-1-1 vote on July 10, 2023.

Linda Gagnon
COUNCIL CLERK