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Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

February 11, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chair Knapik at 5:15 PM. In attendance were Finance Committee members Councilor Daniel Knapik, Councilor Cindy Harris and Councilor Brent Bean. Also in attendance were Director of Public Health Debra Mulvenna, City Clerk Kaitlyn Bruce, First Assistant City Solicitor Shanna Reed, Animal Control Operation's Manager Margaret Terkelsen, City Treasurer/Collector Matthew Barnes, Personnel Director Anne Larkham, Director of Purchasing Tammy Tefft, Chief of Police Jerome Pitoniak, Superintendent of Schools Stefan Czaporowski, Business Administrator Shannon Berry, Airport Manager Daniel Shearer and scribe of the Finance Committee Karisa Zerbato. Councilor Figy was also in attendance.

Councilor Knapik asked if anyone from the public would like to speak during public participation. There was no one present for public participation.

A motion was made by Councilor Knapik to move the approval of the minutes from January 27, 2026 to the end of the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of the funds required to fulfill year one of the ratified Successor Agreement for the International Brotherhood of Police Officers Local S574. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Shanna Reed stated an appropriation is not required as the police budget can absorb the cost for year one of the contract. Mrs. Reed stated the contract includes a step reduction proposal of 2.8% in year one, less than 1% in year two and .4% in year. In addition, the top step will be reached at 24 years instead of 28 years. The contract includes an economic provision of 1% each year for POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) and a base wage increase of 2% each year. Councilor Knapik asked what the status is with patrol's contract. Mrs. Reed stated the contract ratified on February 10, 2026 and will be before the Finance Committee soon. Councilor Bean expressed his concerns with sustainability. Councilor Knapik asked what the total number of supervisors covered under this is. Chief Pitoniak stated nine sergeants and five lieutenants. Councilor Knapik asked when the captains contracts are up. Chief Pitoniak stated Captain Hall's PSA and his are up next year. Councilor Bean stated he is concerned about entry salaries for officers. Councilor Bean stated he hopes this is being looked at increasing to attract more officers. Councilor Knapik asked if the department is having trouble attracting officers and if the department is utilizing hybrid hiring. Chief Pitoniak stated yes. He added there are four individuals starting the academy in March. Chief Pitoniak stated the department does hire individuals from the Cadet Program however the individuals have to be at least 21 years old during the academy. Councilor Knapik asked what the maximum age is. Chief Pitoniak stated 39 years old. Chief Pitoniak stated the department may be losing three individuals to the State Police. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$11,900.00 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the Health Department Purchase of Service Account (15100000-520000) for costs associated with repairs to the landfill groundwater monitoring well. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Deb Mulvenna stated the landfill has been capped for approximately 25 years. Erosion, animal burrows and vegetative growth have disrupted the cap. The city is required by DEP to monitor what comes out of the landfill as it settles. Councilor Knapik asked if there are any well heads within the zone of the solar panel field. Jeff Thelen from Tighe & Bond stated the groundwater monitoring wells are around the landfill and there are gas extraction wells throughout the main body of the landfill. Mr. Thelen stated the groundwater monitoring wells are within the landfill footprint due to differential settlement causing the casings at the top to shift and buckle the pipes. The repairs will help correct this and allow for samples to be taken. Councilor Knapik asked how many wells there are. Mr. Thelen stated seven. Mr. Thelen stated the surface completions will be repaired, top soil will be added and the pipes will be extended to allow for sampling. Councilor Knapik asked if the wells are able to be sampled currently. Mr. Thelen stated yes with some difficulty. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$44,500.00 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the Health Department Purchase of Service (15100000-520000) for engineering costs associated with landfill cap repairs. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Deb Mulvenna stated an engineering consultant will be needed to supervise the construction of the cap repair. Mrs. Mulvenna stated this was last completed in 2022 and cost \$250,000.00. Councilor Knapik asked if it is in the same area. Mrs. Mulvenna stated she is trying to keep runoff from pooling and keep it flowing in the right direction. This varies depending on erosion, animals and vegetation growth. Councilor Knapik asked if it is within the zone of the solar field. Christopher Bone from Tighe & Bond stated some of the repairs are adjacent to the solar field. Mr. Bone stated no solar panels would have to be moved to complete the repairs. Mrs. Mulvenna stated DPW helped move tree debris and patch a spillway that DEP wanted corrected. Councilor Knapik asked if the work needing to be completed is in the same area as five years ago. Mr. Bone stated it is in different locations. One of the areas is adjacent to a downslope shoot that was constructed for stormwater management. Councilor Knapik asked what the timeline of the project is. Mrs. Mulvenna stated the design and permitting work was completed during the last fiscal year. Mrs. Mulvenna stated the construction phase will start as soon as the ground is ready. The project has gone out to bid. Councilor Knapik asked what company will be used. Mrs. Mulvenna stated John Bates. Mr. Bone stated it will be a two-week construction period. A civil engineer will be on site as required by DEP. In addition, close out reports will need be sent to DEP. Councilor Knapik asked if there has been a request to hold the price for a certain amount of time. Tammy Tefft stated yes and it was agreed to hold till construction season in the spring. Mrs. Tefft stated she would like to get the award out as soon as possible. Councilor Knapik asked if the company has done work for the city before. Mrs. Mulvenna stated not for the city, but they have done work for other landfills. Councilor Harris asked why the waste management fee doesn't go towards fixing this. Councilor Harris stated she

understands this is a requirement by DEP. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$170,720.00 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the Health Department Purchase of Service (15100000-520000) for construction costs associated with landfill cap repairs. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$18,000.00 (original request was \$27,321,25) from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the Animal Control Purchase of Services Account (12920000-520000-9900) for the replacement of the heating and cooling systems at the Animal Shelter. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Margaret Terkelsen stated herself and Tammy Tefft were able to speak with the property owner, Bill Lawry who agreed to cover what it would cost to replace the heating unit that failed. This amounts to \$9,321,25. Ms. Terkelsen stated she is now asking for \$18,000.00 instead of \$27,321,25. Ms. Terkelsen stated Mr. Lawry has already sent the check to the city for his covered portion. In addition, going forward the lease will address HVAC responsibility. Ms. Terkelsen stated the work has already been completed due to the heater failing at the beginning of fall and the heater being the only source of heat for the shelter. Councilor Knapik asked who completed the work. Ms. Terkelsen stated Corcoran. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$9,500.00 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the City Council Purchase of Service Account (11110000-520000) to reframe historic portraits of City Council in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Kaitlyn Bruce stated Council portraits have been unable to be hung since 2017 due to the lack of wall space. Mrs. Bruce stated J H Miller Picture Framing Company is putting the finishing touches on the 2024/2025 portraits. A local person will add calligraphy. These portraits will hang outside of the City Clerk's office for now. Mrs. Bruce stated she reached out to the CPC administrator and this project is not eligible for funds. In addition, the project does not qualify for a grant from the Massachusetts's Historical Commission. Councilor Knapik asked if there has been any discussion of moving the picture display down onto the panel side as the pictures are hard to see. Mrs. Bruce stated there was discussion that if the pictures were reframed smaller it would allow enough room for the next 30 years. Councilor Knapik suggested taking the photos down, having them professionally photographed and then have them digitally displayed on the website. This could be done as a community service project by students or by the Westfield Technical Academy. Mrs. Bruce stated she reached out to the Westfield Technical Academy in 2024 and would reach out again. Councilor Figy stated there should be an in lieu of payment for the service. Councilor Knapik agreed. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris for the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the Field Improvement Athletic Field Capital Construction Account (45138730- 589200-3215) for costs associated with the construction of the Athletic fields. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

Prior to the vote, Matthew Barnes stated the city has used current city money and borrowed against the stabilization balance. Mr. Barnes stated the plan is sell the bond in May and close in June. The internal borrow has to be paid by the end of the fiscal year otherwise it will reduce free cash going into next fiscal year. Mr. Barnes stated it is estimated to spend 9.7 million by the end of the fiscal year. Councilor Knapik asked what the schedule of completion is. Tammy Tefft stated August. Mr. Barnes stated the money that came in from Westfield Gas and Electric is sitting in free cash and needs to be taken out and applied to reducing the debt. Councilor Knapik asked how long after the project is complete would the balance sell. Mr. Barnes stated if the project finished in August and no further expenses came in the city would sell the following May. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris for the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$637,791.00 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the School Department FY26 Land and Building Capital Projects Account (54082710- 580000) to replace and repair four restrooms at Westfield Technical Academy. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

Prior to the vote, Stefan Czaporowski stated this is to replace and repair two restrooms near the auditorium which are used by the public for events and two restrooms near Tiger's Pride and the gym. Mr. Czaporowski stated in the fall he received a letter from NEASC that the accreditation for Westfield Technical Academy is now on warning due to the facilities in general. Mr. Czaporowski stated he hasn't seen the bid however his expectation is that the higher cost would be for the two bathrooms on the upper campus. Mr. Czaporowski stated he tried for a newer school last year however the MSBA application did not make it through City Council. Mr. Czaporowski stated an update must be provided to NEASC every year on what is being done to fix the building. Councilor Knapik asked if there is a list of items that are in disrepair that have been identified. Mr. Czaporowski stated they just identified the facility overall particularly the upper campus, more so than the lower campus. Mr. Czaporowski stated he is going to work with Mr. Rogers to improve the two restrooms near the main office. Mr. Czaporowski stated the estimate of the work caught him by surprise however the amount of work that needs to be done is extensive. Councilor Knapik asked who the architect is. Tammy Tefft stated Caolo and Bieniek. Councilor Knapik asked if the architects fees are covered. Shannon Barry state the school department paid for it out of last year's budget. Councilor Knapik asked what the cost of the engineering fee was. Ms. Barry stated \$50,500.00. Councilor Knapik asked if the bathrooms will be completely gutted. Mrs. Tefft stated yes and it also includes abatement. Councilor Knapik asked if there is asbestos. Mrs. Tefft and Mr. Czaporowski stated yes. Mrs. Tefft stated the work also includes making the restrooms handicap accessible. Mrs. Tefft stated seven bids were received and the bid spread was very close. Councilor Knapik asked what the highest bid received was. Mrs. Tefft stated \$703,000.00. Mrs. Tefft stated the timeframe to complete the repair is short. Mrs. Tefft stated she worked with the school department and the principal to allow access to the upper campus restrooms in June. Mrs. Tefft stated this gives about 2 ½ months to complete the work. Councilor Knapik asked who the contractor is. Mrs. Tefft stated

Baskin Builders. There was discussion about MSBA. Mr. Czaporowski stated if you are picked by MSBA and don't have funding in place and you have to turn them down he doesn't know when and if they pick you again. Councilor Bean stated the debt service can't handle this and that was the problem last year and this would need to go to the voters. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to hold in committee the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$131,400.00 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the Parks and Recreation Bullens Improvements Account (45663010-45663010) for renovations to the dugouts at Bullens Field. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

Prior to the vote, Tammy Tefft stated there is a cost estimate from R Levesque. Mrs. Tefft stated the estimate includes the structural frame, roof, modular walls, concrete floors, benches and demolition. It also includes a 20% contingency. Councilor Knapik asked if there is engineering fees. Mrs. Tefft stated she doesn't see engineering fees so she isn't sure what the discussion was. Councilor Figy asked how this bid compares to what was spent on Jachym Field. Councilor Bean stated a lot of money has been spent on Bullens Field. Councilor Bean stated there needs to be equity with male and female sports. Councilor Figy stated that is why a softball field was pushed for Westfield River instead of a baseball field. Councilor Knapik asked if softball from the Westfield Technical Academy will be playing at Westfield River. Tammy Tefft stated yes once the field is completed, more than likely next spring. The field will have the ability to livestream. Councilor Figy stated he would like to see more details on the breakdown as this is a lot of money. Councilor Harris commended Councilor Bean for his support of equity. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to hold in committee an appropriation in the amount of \$55,704.00 from the Department of Public Works, Sewer and Wastewater Division Undesignated Fund Account (6700- 359000) to the FY26 Vehicle Equipment Account (67004400-585001) to purchase a new truck for the SCADA Technician. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

Prior to the vote, Tammy Tefft stated this is for the new SCADA Technician. The truck will be outfitted the same as the electrician. Mrs. Tefft stated by hiring the SCADA Technician and having the technician complete the work inhouse will save the city money in the long run. Mrs. Tefft stated the work previously was outsourced to Aaron Associates. Mrs. Tefft stated she has looked at the quotes for items 13 and 14 and both are on state contract and she has verified the information. Councilor Knapik asked for the amount spent on SCADA services. Mrs. Tefft stated she believes her yearly contracts are not to exceed \$50,000.00 for one division. Councilor Figy asked what SCADA stands for. Councilor Knapik stated it is related to the electronic monitoring controls for all the sensitive and environmental conditions for the filter plants. Anne Larkham stated this was a position that was recommended from the study that was done at the DPW. Councilor Knapik asked if the technician is in place. Ms. Larkham stated yes and stated they started working within the past couple months. Councilor Figy asked what the technician is currently using for a vehicle. Ms. Larkham stated she wasn't sure. Councilor Knapik asked if they are able to function currently. Ms. Larkham stated yes. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to hold in committee an appropriation in the amount of \$15,865.00 from the Department of Public Works, Sewer and Wastewater Division Undesignated Fund Account (6700 359000) to the FY26 Capital Equipment Account (67004400-585000) for the purchase of a new enclosed trailer for the SCADA Technician. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to hold in committee an appropriation in the amount of \$47,132.52 from the Department of Public Works Sewer Wastewater Division Undesignated Account (6700-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (67004400-520000) to replenish funds used to replace a broken forklift. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$49,918.00 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the Personnel Department Purchase of Service Account (11520000-520000) to digitize payroll documents for retention in accordance with state laws. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Anne Larkham stated according to state retention laws the city must retain for 50 years after separation any information that is needed to calculate credible service time. Councilor Knapik asked where the records are stored. Ms. Larkham stated there were at St. Casimir's and were relocated to Abner Gibbs. Ms. Larkham stated there is not adequate space at City Hall to accommodate them. In addition, a conex box is not an option as the paper could become moldy and disintegrate. Ms. Larkham stated the only option is to have everything scanned and digitized. Councilor Knapik asked if this would include city and school. Ms. Larkham confirmed. Councilor Knapik asked if there is a company in mind. Ms. Larkham stated she has a few different bids in place. Ms. Larkham stated the company will take the records off site to scan and then destroy the records. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to hold in committee the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$6,211.30 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the FY25 Medicare/Medicaid Intergovernmental Account (19160000-560000) to pay a prior year bill that was received in FY26. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to hold in committee the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$4,730.04 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the FY25 Medicare/Medicaid Intergovernmental Account (19160000-560000) to pay an invoice that was misplaced when administration of this program was transferred from the School Department to the City. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to hold in committee the transfer in the amount of \$40,971.00 within the Westfield Regional Public Safety Communications Center (Dispatch) from the Full-Time Salaries Account (12250000-511000) to the Capital Project Account (12250000-580000) to cover costs associated with the installation of the Southwick Fire Department's Station Alerting System. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of a transfer in the amount of \$20,000.00 from the Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport Department Full-time Hourly Employees Account (11990000-511100) to the Purchase of Service Account (11990000-520000) for maintenance and repairs to the HVAC System. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Daniel Shearer stated the building is approximately 20 years old. Mr. Shearer stated there are some issues with tenants not being able to maintain heating and cooling. Mr. Shearer stated fans and sensors have failed along with the heating units in the ceiling. Mr. Shearer stated he has been able to use some money due to a vacancy of a clerk position however he will need additional funds to complete the repairs. Mr. Shearer stated a lot of work has been completed and progress is being made but there is additional work to be done. In addition, Siemens and Corcoran Plumbing and Heating have been on site reconfiguring, inspecting and updating. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to take item #24 out of order. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean to remove from the committee the transfer of \$18,876.00 from the Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport FT Hourly Employee Account (11990000-511100) to the Purchase of Service Account (11990000-520000) for airport signage improvements in compliance with Westfield Sign Ordinance requirements. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, there was discussion that this item has been in committee for some time. This was in regard to digital signage. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris for the approval of a transfer in the amount of \$1,201.20 within the Police Department from the FY26 Out of Grade Account (12100000-514200) to the FY25 Out of Grade Account (12100000-514200) to cover costs related to a shift change incurred between August 2024 through June 2025 that was not properly accounted for. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

Prior to the vote, Chief Pitoniak stated a supervisor was promoted in April of 2024. The officer was out for medical reasons and when he came back permanently the paperwork wasn't filled out for him to receive the shift differential. Councilor Knapik asked if this is for a FY25 payment. Chief Pitoniak confirmed. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean to hold in committee investigating potential avenues and mechanisms for sewer rate rebates or reductions for Westfield residents experiencing financial hardship. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

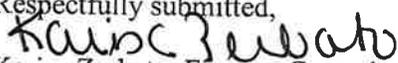
A motion was made by Councilor Bean to withdraw from committee discussing and receive clarification regarding the specific process and rights when ratifying city contracts. In particular, the Finance Committee ask for legal guidance about how City of Somerville v. Somerville Municipal Employees Association, 418 Mass. 21 (1994) and the Office of the Inspector General's December 2020 report entitled "Leadership Failures in Methuen Police Contracts" should impact their work. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of the minutes from January 27, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to adjourn at 6:36 PM. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Karisa Zerbato, Finance Committee Scribe