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Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

MAR 12 2026

February 24, 2026

WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

The meeting was called to order by Chair Knapik at 5:30 PM. In attendance were Finance Committee members Councilor Daniel Knapik, Councilor Cindy Harris and Councilor Brent Bean. Also in attendance were Mayor Michael McCabe, Director of Public Works Randy Brown, Dispatch Director Nina Barszcz and scribe of the Finance Committee Karisa Zerbato.

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 Harris to take items #8, #9 and #16 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 for 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 Harris.

Prior to the vote, Mayor McCabe stated invoices that came in on May 12, 2025 and July 9, 2025 were not handled due to a disconnect caused by a retirement from the person responsible for Medicare. Currently, Emily Gelinis from the Mayor's office is handling Medicare. Mayor McCabe stated the Quarter 1 invoice was not received until May 2025 and the Quarter 2 bill arrived in July of this fiscal year. Mayor McCabe stated the current status of funding is underfunded. Mayor McCabe stated previously the annual receipts were approximately \$250,000.00-\$260,000.00. Currently the numbers are between \$171,000.00-\$188,000.00 a quarter. Mayor McCabe stated the number that was budgeted was based on the earlier numbers. This is well under what the new budget will be. More money will be needed however more money is coming in than previously. Councilor Knapik asked if this is all coming from the school side. Mayor McCabe stated yes. Medicare reimbursements come back in the form of receipts into the city's general fund. There was a previous person who worked for the School Department before Emily handing the payments however in order to cut approximately \$35,000.00-\$40,000.00 from the school budget the position was moved under the mayor's office. The motion was passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Bean and Councilor Harris voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for 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 Harris.

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 the appropriation in the amount of \$250,000.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Construction Account (68004500-589200) to replace the GAC filters at the Shaker Road Water Treatment Plant. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Mayor McCabe stated PFAS has been a problem since 2016. The city has received settlement money that has been deposited into a special revenue account. Mayor McCabe stated originally this request was from water enterprise funds however after talking with Randy Brown it was discussed that this request should come from settlement money. Mayor McCabe stated GAC filters process PFAS. In addition, Mayor McCabe stated in November of 2025, money was spent to replace GAC filters. Mayor McCabe stated he would like to convert that spending from the water enterprise funds to the settlement fund as well. This will free up \$500,000.00 in the water resources enterprise fund. Mayor McCabe stated the settlement money came from 3M and DuPont. In addition, more settlement money will be coming. Randy Brown stated four filters were replaced in the fall and four more need to be replaced at the same facility on Shaker Road. Mr. Brown stated there are other facilities that will need replacements as well and he isn't sure how often they will need to be replaced. Councilor Knapik asked if PFAS was found in the raw water at Shaker Road. Mr. Brown stated yes. Councilor Knapik asked what the annual filter changeover will be going forward. Mr. Brown stated approximately \$500,000.00 a year. Mr. Brown stated it cost \$230,000.00 to replace four filters in November 2025. 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 \$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.

Prior to the vote, Nina Barszcz stated once this is paid the department will get reimbursed from the grant. Ms. Barszcz stated the money is coming out of full-time salaries because that has already been replenished with grant reimbursements. Ms. Barszcz stated this will upgrade Southwick's radio systems to connect to dispatch more effectively. Ms. Barszcz stated once the new equipment is in place the old equipment will be torn down. The new equipment should last between 10-15 years. Councilor Knapik asked if this covers both police and fire. Ms. Barszcz confirmed. 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 appropriation in the amount of \$131,400.00 from Free Cash (1000-359000) to the Parks and Recreation Bullens Improvements Account (45703138-45663010) for renovations to the dugouts at Bullens Field. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bean.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated Annalise Eak reached out to the Parks and Recreation Commission in regard to this project. Mr. Brown stated Annalise is working with Rob Levesque from R Levesque Associates. Councilor Knapik asked if there are any plans and if Rob Levesque is being paid. Mrs. Eak stated no, however an estimate of approximately \$130,000.00

was given to do just the dugouts. Mr. Brown stated in January the Parks and Recreation Commission voted to endorse the project. Councilor Knapik asked if there is an agreement with Rob Levesque and Babe Ruth. Mr. Brown stated no. Mr. Brown stated he can come up with a sketch and a plan. Councilor Knapik asked what happens if the estimate comes back more than the \$131,400.00. Mr. Brown stated the estimate includes a contingency of 20%. Chris Thompson from the Westfield Starfire's stated he fully endorses this. Mr. Thompson asked if there are specifications in regard to how much higher the dugouts need to go in regard to not blocking additional seating. In addition, is it ADA compliant? Is a ramp needed from both entrances going down? Mrs. Eak voiced her concern with the dugouts going down and the need for ADA accessibility and the grandstands viewing area. Councilor Knapik asked about drainage. In addition, Councilor Knapik asked if any preliminary reviews have been done. Councilor Knapik stated he would like to see a design, see it go to bid, get the stakeholders involved and then once real estimates are available it can be determined what can be feasibly done. Councilor Knapik stated he doesn't want to lose more viewing from the stands. Mr. Thompson stated he is interested in having a discussion about having a walkway behind the first base dugout so fans can get to the far-right field area where there is another concession stand. Mr. Thompson stated the Westfield Starfire's have invested in multiple programming events down there but it is not accessible. In addition, it is not ADA compliant from the press box. Councilor Knapik stated this project needs to be done the right way. Mr. Thompson asked if Mr. Blascak has any feedback. Mr. Brown stated he has talked to him and everyone agrees that work needs to be done. Councilor Knapik stated he doesn't know what a solution looks like but it starts with engineering and what can be feasibly done. Councilor Bean stated this has been complained about for years however he has a real concern with the equity issue. Councilor Bean stated there is a significant issue with the maintenance of the soccer/football field. Councilor Bean stated maintenance needs to be prioritized. Councilor Bean stated there needs to be a real plan for the project. Councilor Bean stated the softball team from the Westfield Vocational Highschool had to walk to the dike. Councilor Bean stated the process for this project should have been different. It needs to be vetted out and talked about. Councilor Harris stated she agrees with Councilor Knapik and Councilor Bean. Councilor Harris stated the project needs a plan. Councilor Knapik stated once there is a plan with numbers you can come back to the committee to address each item in priority order. Councilor Knapik stated more than \$100,000.00 was spent on fields at North Middle School and they were never taken care of. Councilor Bean voiced his concern about equity again. Mrs. Eak stated the dugouts are unsafe. Councilor Knapik stated the Council's interest is on behalf of all the taxpayers. Mr. Brown stated everyone can reconvene and he will work on coming up with a concept plan. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to leave 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 Bean.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated there is a sewer elderly rate mechanism based on income that is in place currently. 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 \$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 Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated this was a new position that was created in the budget and the employee needs a vehicle. Councilor Knapik asked if this is just for sewer related work. Mr. Brown stated he is paid out of the sewer department however he will be crossing over for some water work. Councilor Knapik asked how much was spent on prior SCADA services. Mr. Brown stated approximately \$30,000.00-\$40,000.00. Mr. Brown stated the individual is also an electrician so work will be able to be completed in house. Mr. Brown stated this will be a cost savings to the city. Councilor Bean asked about the balance in the undesignated fund. Mr. Brown stated there is a little over \$3,000,000.00. 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 \$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 Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated this is for the SCADA technician. The trailer will be built out with shelving for tools, parts and conduit. Councilor Knapik asked if the position will do rewiring work and new wiring work for all sorts of electrical equipment. Mr. Brown confirmed. 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 \$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 Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated the forklift was at the Wastewater Facility and was approximately 30-40 years old. Mr. Brown stated the item was already purchased from the Purchase of Service Account and this would replace the funds used. Councilor Knapik asked about the balance in the undesignated account. Mr. Brown stated approximately \$1,000,000.00. Mr. Brown stated the sewer revenue is pretty steady due to the fixed rate for residential use. Councilor Knapik asked if there is a backlog of projects. Mr. Brown stated the administration building at the Wastewater Facility is almost complete. In addition, there are plans to do HVAC upgrades and a new roof on the sludge control building. 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 \$707.71 from the Department of Public Works Waste Collection FY26 Supplies Account (14330000-540000) to the FY22 Supplies Account (14330000-540000) to pay a prior year bill owed to Westfield Auto Parts. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy stated prior year bills have been an issue with the department over the past few years. Mr. Brown stated he has developed new policies to locate and identify prior year bills. One policy that was implemented was to reach out to vendors to see if there are overdue balances. Mr. Brown stated it has been confirmed these are all legitimate bills. Councilor Bean asking about adding language to invoices about past due bills in regard to a certain period of time. Mr. Brown stated he would look into it. 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 \$12.24 from the Department of Public Works Highway Division FY26 Supplies Account (14210000-540000) to the FY23 Supplies Account (14210000-540000) to pay a prior year bill owed to Westfield Auto Parts. 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 a transfer in the amount of \$202.37 from the Department of Public Works Sewer Wastewater Division FY26 Supplies Account (67004400-540000) to the FY25 Supplies Account (67004400-540000) to pay a prior year bill owed to Grainger. 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 a transfer in the amount of \$162.83 from the Department of Public Works Highway Division FY26 Supplies Account (14210000-540000) to the FY22 Supplies Account (14210000-540000) to pay a prior year bill owed to Westfield Auto Parts. 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 \$33,587.24 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Account (6800-359000) to the Capital Equipment Account (68004500-585000) to purchase a new generator for the administration office at 28 Sackett Street. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated items #17-29 are Water Division items. Mr. Brown stated last year a spending freeze was put in place in November of 2024 and a rate increase went into effect in 2025. The spending freeze continued through the end of the fiscal year in June. During that time the department was developing the FY26 budget. Mr. Brown stated projects were set aside with the expectation that revenue would rebound with the rate increase and at the end of the fiscal year it would be put towards projects that weren't in the budget. Councilor Knapik asked how much money came back. Mr. Brown stated \$1,346,000.00. Mr. Brown stated the expenses are going to match the budget of \$8,800,000.00. Councilor Knapik asked if there is a water rate study. Mr. Brown stated that is something that is going to be worked on. The study would go out 3-5 years. Mr. Brown stated there will be two big projects that need to go forward

that are mandated by Mass DEP. One project is an underground vault and the second project is wells #5 and #6 need a permanent chemical feed system structure. Councilor Bean asked if the rate increase included these projects. Mr. Brown stated the rate increase did not include any capital projects. Councilor Harris stated another rate increase for the citizens is too much. Councilor Knapnik asked if there is a generator in the building. Mr. Brown stated there was a generator that had to be taken off line. Mr. Brown stated a trailer mount generator was brought in to be used. The new generator will be diesel operated. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapnik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the appropriation in the amount of \$15,000.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Account (6800-359000) to the Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) to create a database within the GIS to collect data for the lead service project. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated data was collected and the findings were reported to DEP. Mr. Brown stated information could be collected on an application either on a phone or tablet. Tighe and Bond would develop the application. This is a one-time cost with no reoccurring fees. DEP requires a replacement plan for lines that have lead. No lead has been identified however there are 25-26 galvanized lines that require replacement. Starting in 2027, each year 10% of all unknown or galvanized lines have to be replaced. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapnik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the appropriation in the amount of \$11,125.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Account (6800-359000) to the Replacement Equipment Account (68004500-587000) to replace the variable frequency drive at Well 7. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated this was not expected. Well #7 is currently offline. This will be installed in house saving the city money. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapnik, Councilor Bean and Councilor Harris voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$20,000.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Fund Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) for backflow and crossconnection inspection services required by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated this an annual program that was implemented. In the last couple of years, East National Water Systems has been hired to complete the services. Mr. Brown stated he is hoping next year that all the backflow inspections and hydrant flushings will be able to be done in house. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapnik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Bean for the approval of an appropriation in the amount of \$10,000.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Fund Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) to clean

the water storage tanks at Sackett Road and Northwest Road. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated the tanks should be cleaned every five years. Mr. Brown stated a remote operated vehicle unit is sent into the tank with a camera and a light to look at the joints, walls, floor and to measure how much sediment is in the tank. 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 \$10,000.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Fund Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) for a turbine motor oil change at the Reservoir Road Water Treatment Plant. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated the oil for the turbines needs to be changed out. This should be done annually. 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 \$2,350.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Fund Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) for filter influent meter calibration at the Reservoir Road Water Treatment Plant. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated this should be an annual service. This was deferred due to the budget. 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 \$10,000.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Fund Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) to repair valves at the Reservoir Road Water Treatment Plant. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated this is for valve maintenance that should be completed every 1-2 years. 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 the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Fund Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) for Poly-Aluminum Chloride (PAC) tank cleaning at the Reservoir Road Water Treatment Plant. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated there are two tanks at the facility that should be cleaned every 2-3 years. The tanks are overdue for the cleaning. 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 \$19,000.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Fund Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) for HVAC and plumbing repairs at the Owen District Water Treatment Plant. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated there are temperature fluctuations in the chemical room that need to be controlled. 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 \$25,000.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Fund Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) to increase various purchase orders for regular maintenance services for the remainder of FY26. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated this will be used for vehicle maintenance, police details, generator maintenance and outside work that needs to be completed. 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 \$5,000.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Fund Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) for repairs to the City View Road vault valve actuator. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated this is for repairs to the vault valve actuator. 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 \$130,000.00 from the Department of Public Works Water Division Undesignated Fund Account (6800-359000) to the FY26 Purchase of Service Account (68004500-520000) to increase the on-call construction purchase order for JL Raymakers for the remainder of FY26. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris.

Prior to the vote, Randy Brown stated this is for general construction that includes water main breaks, service repairs and hydrant replacements. Councilor Knapik asked if a certain number of hydrants are changed every year. Mr. Brown stated there are hydrants that are changed as well as hydrants that are flushed. Mr. Brown stated the department is working on developing a hydrant flushing plan. The motion passed 3-0 with Councilor Knapik, Councilor Harris and Councilor Bean voting YES.

A motion was made by Councilor Harris to keep in committee MGL Chapter 59, Section 5, Clauses 22I and 22J as requested by Director of Veterans Services Julie Barnes. 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 adjourn at 7:28 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,

Handwritten signature of Karisa Zerbato in cursive script.

Karisa Zerbato, Finance Committee Scribe

