



MINUTES OF LEGISLATIVE AND ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
WESTFIELD, MA
TELECONFERENCE
MARCH 2, 2021 at 5:00 PM

RECEIVED

By City Clerk's Office at 5:52 pm, 3/18/21

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the City of Westfield **Legislative and Ordinance Committee** will be conducted via remote participation. Specific information can be found on the City of Westfield website at www.cityofwestfield.org. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting may do so by tuning into Channel 15 or online at westfieldtv.org. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the City's website an audio recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Access information for the meeting is as follows:

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://cityofwestfield-org.zoom.us/j/82324719312?pwd=WjNtaUFkU05lUmx2N3lkVWRtIdndz09>

Meeting ID: 823 2471 9312

Passcode: 2EgZSK=Q

Phone dial in: 1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 823 2471 9312

Passcode: 43811196

1. The meeting was called to order by Councilor Onyski at 5:00 PM.
2. Councilor Onyski called the Roll. The following committee members were present: Chair, William Onyski, James Adams and Michael Burns.
3. Councilor Onyski opened the meeting for public participation. There was no one present to speak.
4. Upon Motion of Councilor Burns, it was
VOTED: That the L&O Minutes of January 19, 2021 meeting be accepted.
Motion seconded by Councilor Adams.
Approved by Roll Call 3-0
5. Upon motion of Councilor Burns, it was
VOTED: To increase the rate of compensation for the members of the Westfield School Committee as follows;
\$8,100 annually, effective July 1, 2021 (60% of City Council Salary)

\$8,680 annually, effective January 1, 2022 (62% of City Council Salary)
\$9,425 annually, effective January 1, 2024 (64% of City Council Salary)
\$10,050 annually, effective January 1, 2026 (67% of City Council Salary)

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
William Onyski	Yes

Prior to the vote, Councilor Onyski informed the committee members that after a vote held by the School Committee on March 2nd 2020, Council had received a letter from School Committee Vice Chair Tim O'Connor requesting a stipend increase to 67% of the City Council stipend. The same vote was ratified at a school committee meeting two weeks ago. There have been no salary increases to the School Committee since 2002. They have been receiving an annual \$5,000.00 stipend for over twenty years. By Law, their salary must be written into an Ordinance. Councilor Onyski commended the school committee on how diligently they work and stated he believed the School Committee was deserving of the increase. Councilor Burns noted the letter was dated July 2020. Councilor Onyski said the letter was initially brought forward to the Council in 2020 but was put into committee and voted on again, two weeks ago at a School Committee meeting.

School Committee Vice Chair Tim O'Connor addressed L&O. He informed them that the increase to the stipend came up in October 2019 and they gave it a lot of thought before voting to move forward with their proposal 6 months later. O'Connor has served three terms on the School Committee. It has been 18+ years since the School Committee Salary has been increased. They thought the best option was to tie the stipend into the preexisting City Council Salary Ordinance and came up with an increase to of $\frac{2}{3}$ or 67 percent of the City Council's salary.

He shared some insight on how unique a year 2020 was for the School Committee with 'on the fly' decisions, getting students into classrooms, and decisions regarding athletics. O'Connor is serving his 12th year as a school committee member and notes this as his most difficult. The School Committee met 59 times during 2020 for School Committee meetings, including Executive Session and Special Meetings. Beginning early in 2020, they stopped meeting as sub committees and began having Special Meetings to have as much participation as possible. All but 2 instances, they had full participation from School Committee members. In addition, they attended an array of 57 other meetings, including building and safety meetings (once a week starting in Sept), Negotiation Meetings and interviews for principals and other administrators. They also had graduations, NHS inductions, Science Fairs and Teacher Award Events which they look forward to. In the last 8 years, the School Committee has enacted 382 policies; a little over 40 a year. They have worked on large projects such as Juniper and Russell closings, Redistricting grades and most recently, building of the new school. They have had to answer to a lot of students and parents this year. O'Connor respectfully requested the review of the stipend increase. He noted their current stipend is 35-37% of City Council's. At the last vote, the School Committee discussed the increase to 67%. They wanted to be fair to the School Department so at this time they are requesting only a 55% increase to \$7,500.00 annually with some type of yearly increase similar to City Council.

Councilor Adams commended the School Committee on all they do; highlighting how tough it has been and attending twice the amount of meetings while keeping everything as normal as possible in this climate. He asked to clarify whether the vote was on a 55% or 67% increase. O'Connor explained the School Committee feels as though an increase after 18 years is deserving but also wants to make increases reasonable for both the School Dept and City Council. Councilor Adams recommended a motion for a 60% increase, putting Westfield School Committee Salary above every town except Springfield. Most cities and towns receive 50% of their City Council's Salary. Westfield G&E is at 50% of the City Council Salary. Councilor Burns agreed with Councilor Adams.

Councilor Onyski called for discussion on the rates. He referred to a spreadsheet he created of consolidated information from area cities and towns (see Appendix A). He read aloud the salaries of both School Committee and City Council in each community. He reiterated that he believed the School Committee is deserving of this and supports raising the salary to $\frac{2}{3}$ or 67% of the City Council Salary. He emphasized the use of dollar amounts rather than fractions. In reality the amount of work the School Committee or any committee does isn't a percentage of what they do compared to city council. He suggested amending the ordinance to add an initial increase to 60% with a bi-yearly increase until it was at 67% of the City Council Salary, as follows:

- \$8,100 annually, effective July 1, 2021 (60% of City Council Salary)
- \$8,680 annually, effective January 1, 2022 (62% of City Council Salary)
- \$9,425 annually, effective January 1, 2024 (64% of City Council Salary)
- \$10,050 annually, effective January 1, 2026 (67% of City Council Salary)

Councilor Adams asked if they could include verbiage to make a set percentage of City Council's salary similar to the 50% stipend that Westfield Gas and Electric receives. Councilor Burns suggested keeping the stipend at 60% since O'Connor was okay with 55%. Councilor Onyski pointed out that the goal was to get them up to 67% of the salary. He thought it was appropriate for the School Committee to reevaluate in 2026. He noted that there hasn't been a rate increase since 2002 and it would be a big hit. He applauded Vice Chair O'Connor for being realistic for asking for 55% but still supported the 67% by 2026.

Councilor Adams removed the first motion with a Roll Call vote of 3-0. O'Connor thanked the Council on behalf of the School Committee for their thoughtfulness.

6. Upon motion of Councilor Burns, it was VOTED: That street acceptance petitions for Angelica Drive (Ward 4) and Day Lily Lane (Ward 1) submitted by City Planner Jay Vinskey REMAIN IN COMMITTEE.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
William Onyski	Yes

Prior to the vote, Councilor Onyski informed the subcommittee that these were brought forth at the last Council Meeting and on the Planning Board's agenda later today. City Planner, Jay Vinskey explained this step sometimes gets lost in the process because there is no

requirement for subdivisions to be accepted. He pursued the developers and initiated this petition. Councilor Onyski explained he recently had Devon Manor and a few other streets accepted, highlighting the 1.5 yr long process. In this case, the developer owns the street and can turn it over to the City rather than requiring signatures from all homes and having deed transfers processed. Councilor Burns said he would take on following up with Engineering, DPW and Legal. He questioned if there would be any fees associated with the street acceptance. Vinskey said there would be recording fees only. Councilor Onyski stated it was \$160.00 for each street. Councilor Adams asked Vinskey if an ordinance or procedure should be put into place to accept new streets within a year. Vinskey stated it's outside of Subdivision Control; a developer could want it to remain a private way which he recently ran into. It takes a developer or abutters to initiate the process. He could encourage it or make it sound like more of the process. He suggested continuing reaching out to the developer to get a Deed Offering when a subdivision is completed. Councilor Adams stated he was trying to make the process easier. Councilor Burns will take it on and report back to the Committee. The councilors thanked City Planner, Jay Vinskey; Councilor Onyski noted that if he hadn't followed up after the Bond was released and accepted by the Planning Board, we wouldn't have known about this for many years.

7. Upon motion of Councilor Burns, it was VOTED: That the petition for Street Acceptance for Sherman Street Ext be REMOVED WITHOUT ACTION.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
William Onyski	Yes

Prior to the vote, Councilor Onyski explained that Councilor Matthews Kane had submitted a Betterment Petition which would require that the street be brought up to City Standards so it could be accepted as a City Way. He then read the letter from Councilor Matthews Kane (see Appendix B) requesting that the petition be withdrawn.

8. Upon motion of Councilor Adams, it was VOTED: to REPORT OUT OF COMMITTEE with update to full City Council on the use of scribes to produce subcommittee minutes for L&O and Finance Subcommittees.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
William Onyski	Yes

Prior to the vote, Councilor Onyski stated that a lot of discussion has taken place since this came up in September. The goal is to better serve the community with professionally written minutes and allow committee members to put full focus on the meeting. On Thursday, an

appropriation will be brought before the full Council to transfer money to the City Clerk's office for L&O and Finance scribes.

Councilor Onyski shared some notes on subcommittees that took place over a 10 month period from January 2020 through October 2020. L&O had 10 meetings and discussed 67 items. Finance had 12 meetings and discussed 79 items. They were the two busiest subcommittees. In that time, PAC had 4 meetings, License, Zoning Planning and Development, City Properties and Long Range Finance each met once. L&O and Finance will be used as the trial run for potentially adding scribes in the future. Councilor Burns asked if it would be retroactive to this meeting. Councilor Onyski stated they would be requesting an appropriation for an estimated amount to cover 5:00pm today until the end of the Fiscal Year. At that point we can review and decide. Councilor Figy was present and informed the subcommittee that they had a scribe in Finance and it made a big difference as far as being able to focus on the meeting. Councilor Onyski, Councilor Burns and Councilor Adams all agreed. Councilor Onyski will report out of committee with an update to the full City Council on Thursday. It was investigated and action was taken for the remainder of the year.

9. Upon motion of Councilor Burns, it was VOTED: that City Council Rule 38 - Majority Vote on Certain Financial Measures be REMOVED FROM L&O COMMITTEE without action.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
William Onyski	Yes

Prior to the Vote, Councilor Onyski stated this had gone to a vote of full Council and was put back into Committee. He spoke to Councilor Bean, and he agreed in the decision to remove from the committee without action.

At 5:50 PM, and upon motion of Councilor Adams, it was VOTED to ADJOURN.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
William Onyski	Yes

Respectfully submitted,
Kaitlyn Bruce, Scribe for the Legislative and Ordinance Subcommittee

APPENDIX A.

3/1/2021				
Town/City	School Comm	Council		Current %
Springfield	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 19,500.00		62%
Chicopee	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 12,000.00		50%
Westfield	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 13,500.00		37%
Agawam	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00		50%
Northampton	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 9,000.00		56%
Pittsfield	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 8,000.00		50%
West Springfield	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 8,000.00		50%
Greenfield	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		50%
Holyoke		\$ 10,000.00		0%
Amherst		\$ 5,000.00		0%
Proposed				
2020	\$ 9,045.00	\$ 13,500.00		67%
2022	\$ 9,380.00	\$ 14,000.00		67%
2024	\$ 9,715.00	\$ 14,500.00		67%
2026	\$ 10,050.00	\$ 15,000.00		67%

Last increase was 2002 when rate went from \$3K to \$5K

APPENDIX B

Sherman st extension - MDaemon Webmail - Google Chrome

mail.cityofwestfield.org/WorldClient.dll?Session=NHOKFW1AV50PQ&View=BlankMessage&External=Yes&Number=877...



Subject: Sherman st extension
To: "William Onyski" <william.onyski@cityofwestfield.org>
From: "Bridget Matthews-Kane" <bridget.matthews-kane@cityofwestfield.org>
Date: 02/15/2021 11:25 AM

Counselor Onyski,

I'm writing to you as the chair of L&O about one of your items in committee.

I had submitted a **petition for Street Acceptance for Sherman Street Ext.** It was a betterment petition submitted by the residential owners on the street. The Engineering Department estimated it would cost \$68,000 to bring the street up to city standards so it could be accepted as a public way. The Assessor's Office estimated that the cost for the six abutters would be roughly \$600 dollars of extra payments a year for 20 years. The person who had submitted the petition, Vincent Cremoti, conveyed this information to the other owners. Because of the costs and the paperwork issues that would ensue when selling the properties, they ask that the petition be withdrawn.

Please remove the item from committee without action.

Thank you.

Regards,

Bridget Matthews-Kane
Westfield City Council, Ward 3