



MINUTES OF LEGISLATIVE AND ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
59 COURT ST, WESTFIELD, MA
ROOM 201
JUNE 28, 2022 at 6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Figy at 6:00 PM.

Councilor Figy called the Roll. The following committee members were present: Chair, Ralph Figy, James Adams and Michael Burns. Also in attendance was Kaitlyn Bruce, Councilors Harris, City Assessor Ashlie Brown. PJ Miller had also been in attendance.

Upon Motion of Councilor Adams, it was
VOTED: That the L&O Minutes of the May 16th, 2022 meeting be accepted.
Motion seconded by Councilor Burns.
Approved by Roll Call 3-0

Councilor Figy opened the meeting for public participation. There was none.

5. Upon motion of Councilor Adams, it was
VOTED: SUBMIT a change to the City Charter with a clarification of what a defeated candidate is with a POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION.

Prior to the vote, Councilor Figy informed the committee that this would be combined with item #6. This will align the City Council process with how the Westfield Gas and Electric and School Departments fill vacancies and create continuity throughout the Charter. If there is a candidate on the ballot or a write-in who receives 30% or more of the vote, they will fill the vacancy. If no one receives at least 30% of the vote, interested parties may submit applications to the City Council. The Council will select someone to fill the vacancy until the next election. The Resolution defines what a defeated candidate is and defines the procedure of how that vacancy is filled.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
Ralph Figy	Yes

6. Upon motion of Councilor Adams, it was
VOTED: to SUBMIT a change to the City Charter with a way to fill a City Council Vacancy with a POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
Ralph Figy	Yes

7. Upon motion of Councilor Adams, it was VOTED: to SUBMIT amendments to Chapter 16 Section 16-135 of the City Ordinance regarding the use of bicycles on sidewalks be reviewed to add the words unless prohibited by proper signage POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
Ralph Figy	Yes

Prior to the vote, Councilor Figy explained that this allows bicycle use on sidewalks, unless posted. Bicyclists shall comply with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 85, sections 11B and shall yield right of way to pedestrians and give an audible signal before overtaking and passing a pedestrian. Councilor Adams questioned what would be done on streets like South Maple. Councilor Figy stated that he believed there would be signage similar to No Parking signs. Councilor Burns asked if there would be signs downtown. The Councilors agreed that this would modernize the Ordinance and adjustments could be made if necessary.

8. Upon motion of Councilor Adams, it was VOTED: to SUBMIT acceptance of MGL Chapter 59, Section 5 Clause 41C - Local options and Clause 41D relative to specific real estate tax exemptions for low income senior citizens with a POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
Ralph Figy	Yes

Prior to the vote, Councilor Figy introduced City Assessor Ashlie Brown. She informed the Committee that the Income and Asset Limits the Assessor's Office had been using, were never accepted. The only Local Option that has been voted on by Council was to raise the amount from \$500.00 to \$750.00. Ms. Brown reviewed the chart on the Informational Sheet (Appendix A) and informed the Council that last year, the City was using \$24,911.00 as a limit. The Mass General Laws Standard Income Limit is \$13,000 for singles and the City can vote to increase that up to \$20,000. To be in compliance, there needs to be an increase to the max allowable limit and then the City has to accept the State's COLA every year. She noted that the City is not taking a hit, but there are some seniors that will no longer be in the allowable amount. There are no reimbursements for 41Cs. Councilor Adams asked how much of a discount we provide. Ms. Brown informed the committee that the first Resolution will change the Income Limits from Standard Limits to Allowable Limits; Westfield has an Exemption Amount of \$750.00 for seniors 70 and over. Council Adams questioned if any changes were being made to the Age and Exemption amount. Ms. Brown stated at this time, only Income and Assets are being looked at. The second Resolution is to accept a local increase to the Annual

Cost of Living (COLA). That is set by the state each year. Councilor Burns asked how many seniors qualify. Ms. Brown stated last year there were roughly 95 seniors who qualified which is why they were pushing to make sure this was done. Councilor Burns asked if seniors could have both this exemption and participate in the Senior Work Off program. Ms. Brown said these Exemptions had a specific criteria but that it was possible to combine both programs.

10. Upon motion of Councilor Adams, it was VOTED: to SUBMIT a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign the Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Westfield and Plymouth County for the processing of parking tickets POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION.

Prior to the vote, Councilor Figy informed the committee that the company the City has used for the last 12 years is not renewing the contract because the City doesn't generate enough business for them. The Plymouth County Treasurer's Office won the bid to take over processing the parking tickets. The processing rate will be \$2.00 a ticket, with a \$0.25 cent increase per ticket. The total annual increase will be \$475.00 based on the issuance of 1,700 tickets per year.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
Ralph Figy	Yes

At 6:15 PM, and upon motion of Councilor Burns, it was VOTED to ADJOURN.

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

APPENDIX A

	<u>Mass General Laws Standard Limits</u>	<u>Mass General Laws Allowable Limits</u>	<u>Westfield Current Limits</u>	<u>Suggested New Limits</u>
Eligible Age	70	65	70	no change *
Income Limits	13,000 single 15,000 married	up to \$20,000 single up to \$30,000 married	\$13,000 single \$15,000 married	\$20,000 single \$30,000 married
Asset Limits	\$28,000 single \$30,000 married	up to \$40,000 single up to \$55,000 married	\$28,000 single \$30,000 married	\$40,000 \$55,000
Exemption Amount	\$500.00 per year	up to \$1,000	\$750.00	no change*