

CITY OF WORCESTER

JOURNAL OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Esther Howland (South) Chamber

Convened: 6:31 P.M.

Recessed: 8:10 P.M.

Reconvened: 8:18 P.M.

Adjourned: 9:43 P.M.

MAYOR

Joseph M. Petty

AT-LARGE COUNCILORS

Morris A. Bergman

Donna M. Colorio

Khrystian E. King

Thu Nguyen

Kathleen M. Toomey



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DISTRICT COUNCILORS

Jenny Pacillo - District 1

Candy Mero-Carlson - District 2

George J. Russell - District 3

Luis A. Ojeda - District 4

Etel Haxhijaj - District 5

CITY CLERK

Nikolin Vangjeli

CITY MANAGER

Eric D. Batista

CITY AUDITOR

Robert V. Stearns

City Hall - 455 Main Street Worcester, Massachusetts

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. STAR SPANGLED BANNER

3. ROLL CALL - All present with the Mayor as the Chair, except for Councilor Nguyen. Councilor Toomey participated in the meeting remotely.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4a. Mayor Petty read the item and recognized the following speakers:

1. Fred Nathan, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to items #6a CC through #6c CC
2. William Gardner, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
3. Idella Hazard, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
4. David Webb, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
5. Gary Hunter, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
6. John Edward Keough, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
7. Janet Davis, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
8. Sue Mailman, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
9. Todd Phillips, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
10. Keith Linhares, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
11. Ashley Spring, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
12. Thomas P Duffy II, Worcester resident, spoke in support of item #6b CC and spoke in opposition of item #6a CC and #6c CC
13. Noah Rose, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
14. Kevin Ksen, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
15. Terri Kelly, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of item #6a CC
16. Tom Marino, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
17. Grace Ross, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
18. Jessica (no last name given), Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
19. Fred Taylor, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC
20. Sarah Bertrand, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
21. Ollie (no last name given), Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
22. Atticus (no last name given), Worcester resident, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC

23. Derrick Kiser, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to items #6a CC through #6c CC
24. Ariel Tamar Alvarez Amasifuen, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
25. Sam Asbeck, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to items #6a CC through #6c CC
26. Sadie Lombardi, Worcester resident, spoke in opposition to item #6b CC and spoke in favor of item #6c CC
27. Renee St Louis, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
28. Margot Barnet, Worcester resident, spoke in support of items #6a CC and #6c CC and spoke in opposition of item #6b CC
29. Kevin (no last name given), Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to items #6a CC through #6c CC

5. ORDER

- 5a. That the City Council of the City of Worcester does hereby amend its meeting schedule to make its April 1, 2025, City Council meeting to a Joint City Council and City Manager agenda. (Petty)

Mayor Petty read the item and moved for a roll call vote to adopt the item. Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent)

6. TABLED ITEMS

- 6a.** COMMUNICATION of the City Manager transmitting informational communication relative to a report detailing a United States Department of Justice Investigation of the Worcester Police Department and the City of Worcester. (Tabled - Petty December 17, 2024)

Mayor Petty read the item and moved for a roll call vote to take items #6a CC through #6c CC off the Table. Taken Off the Table on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent).

Mayor Petty moved to take up items #6a CC through #6c CC collectively.

Mayor Petty recognized the City Manager, who spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote, “That the City Council does hereby suspend its rules so no councilor shall speak for more than ten (10) minutes at a time nor more than twenty (20) minutes total on any agenda item, or a group of calendar items taken collectively.” (See Item #8a CC).

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Toomey and Councilor Haxhiaj, who spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty recognized the Police Chief and City Manager, who responded to questions raised by Councilor Haxhiaj.

Councilor Haxhiaj then moved to, “Request City Manager provide City Council with a schedule detailing when and how often the City Council will receive updates relative to the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD). Said report should include information relative to the type of updates City Council and the public will receive, as well as how feedback received from the DOJ on the city’s progress is being reviewed.” (See Item #8b CC).

Councilor Haxhiaj then moved to, “Request City Manager consider hiring an impartial party to conduct an independent review of all the cases mentioned in the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD) that identifies each case. Further, request City Manager consider providing City Council and the public with a report of the findings of said review.” (See Item #8c CC).

Councilor Haxhiaj then moved to, “That the City Council of the City of Worcester does hereby enter into the record of the City Council meeting on March 25, 2025, the Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2020-2024 (see attached).” (See Item #8d CC).

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Pacillo, who spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty recognized the City Manager and Chief Equity Officer, who responded to questions raised by Councilor Pacillo.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Colorio, who moved to recess the meeting. Meeting recessed at 8:10 p.m. on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent).

Mayor Petty reconvened the meeting at 8:18 p.m. on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent).

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Mero-Carlson, who spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty recognized the Police Chief and City Manager, who responded to questions raised by Councilor Mero-Carlson.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Ojeda, who spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty recognized the Chief Equity Officer, who responded to questions raised by Councilor Ojeda.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Russell, who spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty recognized the Police Chief and City Manager, who responded to questions raised by Mayor Petty.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor King, who spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty recognized the City Solicitor, Police Chief, and City Manager, who responded to questions raised by Councilor King.

Councilor King then moved to, “Request City Manager provide City Council with a report reviewing the commonalities found between the memos and recommendations for policing from the Human Rights Commission (HRC), the Community Dialogues on Race from 2015, the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD), and the equity audit of the Worcester Police Department (WPD).” (See Item #8e CC).

Councilor King then moved to, “Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing any instances where the account within the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD) differs from the account of the city. Further, request said report include instances when the accounts of the DOJ have been confirmed by the city.” (See Item #8f CC).

Councilor King then moved to, “Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing the process followed by the Worcester Police Department’s (WPD) Bureau of Professional Standards (BOPS) during internal investigations. Further, request City Manager conduct an audit of the Worcester Police Department’s (WPD) Bureau of Professional Standards (BOPS) internal investigation process, with respect to any settlements that the city has entered over the past ten (10) to fifteen (15) years. Said report should also include any findings BOPS made in each instance and/or whether each instance was elevated to a WPD supervisor.” (See Item #8g CC).

Councilor King then moved to, “Request City Manager execute an Internal review and exploratory inquiry with regards to the matters at hand in the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD).” (See Item #8h CC).

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Ojeda for a second time, who spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty recognized the Police Chief, who responded to questions raised by Councilor Ojeda.

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor Haxhiaj and Councilor Toomey for second times, who spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote to refer items #6a CC and #6c CC to Public Safety

Committee. Referred to Public Safety Committee on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent).

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor King for a second time, who moved to place item #6b CC on file. Motion denied on a roll call vote of 4 Yeas and 6 Nays (Yeas – Haxhiaj, King, Ojeda, Pacillo) (Nays – Bergman, Colorio, Mero-Carlson, Russell, Toomey, Petty) (Nguyen absent).

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote to refer item #6b CC to Public Safety Committee. Referred to Public Safety Committee on a roll call vote of 6 Yeas and 4 Nays (Yeas – Bergman, Colorio, Mero-Carlson, Russell, Toomey, Petty) (Nays – Haxhiaj, King, Ojeda, Pacillo) (Nguyen absent)

- 6b. PETITION of Richard Cipro, Anthony Petrone and Thomas Duffy on behalf of the International Brotherhood of Police Officials Local 504 and New England Police Benevolent Association Local 911 request City Council request City Manager request the Department of Justice release and present in a public forum the full investigatory report, specifically to what the DOJ states are "creditable allegations" of criminal sexual misconduct alleged to be committed by members of the Worcester Police Department. Further, request City Council request City Manager request the Department of Justice include the dates, times and names of all individuals alleged to have committed the stated misconduct and/or potential criminal activity. (Tabled Under Privilege - King December 17, 2024 and Tabled Under Privilege - Nguyen January 7, 2025 and Tabled - Russell January 14, 2025)

Referred to Public Safety Committee on a roll call vote of 6 Yeas and 4 Nays (Yeas – Bergman, Colorio, Mero-Carlson, Russell, Toomey, Petty) (Nays – Haxhiaj, King, Ojeda, Pacillo) (Nguyen absent) (See Item #6a CC)

- 6c. COMMUNICATION of the City Manager transmitting informational communication relative to an update on the U.S. Department of Justice's pattern-or-practice report on the municipality and Worcester Police Department. (Tabled - Petty March 4, 2025)

Referred to Public Safety Committee on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent) (See Item #6a CC)

7. ADJOURN

8. NEW BUSINESS UNDER SUSPENSION OF RULES - Items brought forth under suspension at the March 25, 2025 City Council meeting.

- 8a. Motion Petty @ #6a CC – That the City Council does hereby suspend its rules so no councilor shall speak for more than ten (10) minutes at a time nor more than twenty (20) minutes total on any agenda item, or a group of calendar items taken collectively.

Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent) (See Item #6a CC)

- 8b.** Motion Haxhiaj @ #6a CC – Request City Manager provide City Council with a schedule detailing when and how often the City Council will receive updates relative to the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD). Said report should also include information relative to the type of updates City Council and the public will receive, as well as how feedback received from the DOJ on the city’s progress is being reviewed.

Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent) (See Item #6a CC)

- 8c.** Motion Haxhiaj @ #6a CC – Request City Manager consider hiring an impartial party to conduct an independent review of all the cases mentioned in the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD) that identifies each case. Further, request City Manager consider providing City Council and the public with a report of the findings of said review.

Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent) (See Item #6a CC)

- 8d.** Motion Haxhiaj @ #6a CC – That the City Council of the City of Worcester does hereby enter into the record of the City Council meeting on March 25, 2025, the Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2020-2024 (see attached).

Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent) (See Item #6a CC)

- 8e.** Motion King @ #6a CC – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report reviewing the commonalities found between the memos and recommendations for policing from the Human Rights Commission (HRC), the Community Dialogues on Race from 2015, the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD), and the equity audit of the Worcester Police Department (WPD).

Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent) (See Item #6a CC)

- 8f.** Motion King @ #6a CC – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing any instances where the account within the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD) differs from the account of the city. Further, request said report include instances when the accounts of the DOJ have been confirmed by the city.

Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent) (See Item #6a CC)

- 8g.** Motion King @ #6a CC – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing the process followed by the Worcester Police Department’s (WPD) Bureau of Professional Standards (BOPS) during internal investigations. Further, request City Manager conduct an audit of the Worcester Police Department’s (WPD) Bureau of Professional Standards (BOPS) internal investigation process, with respect to any settlements that the city has entered over the past ten (10) to fifteen (15) years. Said report should also include any findings BOPS made in each instance and/or whether each instance was elevated to a WPD supervisor.

Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent) (See Item #6a CC)

- 8h.** Motion King @ #6a CC – Request City Manager execute an Internal review and exploratory inquiry with regards to the matters at hand in the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD).

Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent) (See Item #6a CC)