

CITY OF WORCESTER

JOURNAL OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Tuesday, May 6, 2025

Esther Howland (South) Chamber

Convened: 6:35 P.M.

Adjourned: 7:43 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.

4. PROCLAMATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, MOMENTS OF SILENCE

- 4a. Mayor Petty provided a CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT to multiple members of the Working for Worcester (W4W) Group for their contributions to the city through infrastructure builds to improve spaces throughout the community.

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- 5a. Order - That the City Council of the City of Worcester hereby approves the minutes of the City Council Meeting of April 15, 2025.

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to adopt the item. Order adopted

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

6a. Mayor Petty read the item and recognized the following speakers:

1. Fred Nathan, Worcester resident, spoke in opposition to items #11c CC and #14b CC and spoke neither in favor of nor opposed to item #12b CC
2. Gary Hunter, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of items #12b CC and #15h CC and spoke neither in favor of nor opposed to item #14b CC
3. John Edward Keough, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of item #12b CC
4. Tracy Novick, Worcester resident, spoke in opposition to item #11a CC
5. Robert Bilotta, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of item #10c CC
6. Nayari Veras, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of items #16n CC and #16o CC
7. Nathalie Gibson, Worcester resident, spoke in opposition to item #12b CC and spoke in favor of item #16n CC and #16o CC
8. Sarah Moore, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of item #10b CC
9. Tom Marino, Worcester resident, spoke in opposition to item #14b CC
10. David Webb, Worcester resident, spoke in opposition to items #9a CC, #11a CC through #11c CC, and #14b CC and spoke in favor of items #8i CC, #10b CC, #10c CC, and #12b CC
11. Yenni Desroches, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of items #10b CC, #10c CC, and #12b CC and spoke concerning an item not listed on the agenda
12. Kendra Bruce, Worcester resident, spoke in opposition to item #12b CC
13. Feanna Jattan-Singh, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of items #12b CC and #15d CC
14. Joseph Mangiameli, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of item #12b CC

7. HEARINGS AND ORDERS

7a. Hearing: NATIONAL GRID for a conduit location at: OXFORD ST.

Granting permission to NATIONAL GRID for a conduit location at: OXFORD ST.

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to open hearings for items #7a CC and #7b CC. Mayor Petty's motion was approved on a voice vote.

Mayor Petty asked if any abutters wished to be heard on the items. Hearing no speakers, Mayor Petty moved to close the hearings. Mayor Petty's motion was approved on a voice vote.

Mayor Petty moved to adopt the items. Hearing held and Order adopted

7b. Hearing: NATIONAL GRID and VERIZON NEW ENGLAND, INC. for a pole location at: SUNDERLAND RD.

Granting permission to NATIONAL GRID and VERIZON NEW ENGLAND, INC. for a pole location at: SUNDERLAND RD.

Hearing held and Order adopted (See Item #7a CC)

8. PETITIONS

- 8a. Kevin Shea request the entire length of Willard Ave. be resurfaced.

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to refer items #8a CC through #8c CC to Public Works Committee. Referred to Public Works Committee

- 8b. Kevin Shea request sidewalk resurfacing on Willard Ave.

Referred to Public Works Committee (See Item #8a CC)

- 8c. Stephen Petro request installation of streetlight at the midway point of Brookman St. between Orlando Ave. and Florida Ave.

Referred to Public Works Committee (See Item #8a CC)

- 8d. Councilor Luis A. Ojeda request installation of resident permit parking on the entire length of Lodi St., on both sides, at all times.

Mayor Petty read the item and recognized Councilor Ojeda, who moved to amend the item to reflect the odd side.

Referred to Traffic and Parking Committee as amended

- 8e. Lynn A Westerlind request installation of a handicap parking space in front of 26A Marjorie St.

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to refer items #8e CC through #8h CC to Traffic and Parking Committee. Referred to Traffic and Parking Committee

- 8f. Barry Stephen Sullivan request installation of speed humps on Fiske St.

Referred to Traffic and Parking Committee (See Item #8e CC)

- 8g. Ashley Caldwell request installation of handicap parking space in front of 16 Elizabeth St.

Referred to Traffic and Parking Committee (See Item #8e CC)

- 8h. Edna Tibo request installation of handicap parking space in front of 75 Norfolk St.

Referred to Traffic and Parking Committee (See Item #8e CC)

- 8i. David Webb filing an Open Meeting Law Complaint Form.

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to refer the item to Law Department to prepare an answer and respond. Referred to the Law Department to Prepare an Answer and Respond

9. CHAIRMAN'S ORDER

- 9a. FROM THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' MEMORIALS, PARKS AND RECREATION - Request City Manager work with the Superintendent of Public Schools to provide City Council with a report concerning the feasibility of using Forest Grove Middle School, Sullivan Middle School and South High School for pickleball activities, including construction costs and maintenance.

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to adopt the item. Order adopted

10. ORDERS

- 10a. Request City Manager provide City Council with an updating concerning the closing of the Frances Perkins Library that includes the timeline for reopening the library. (Pacillo)

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

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

Mayor Petty moved to adopt the item. Order adopted

- 10b. Request Standing Committee on Municipal and Legislative Operations hold a meeting to review the previously approved City Manager Evaluation Form, for the purpose of updating said form prior to the City Manager Evaluation in 2025. (Bergman)

Mayor Petty read the item and moved to refer the item to Municipal and Legislative Operations Committee. Referred to Municipal and Legislative Operations Committee

- 10c. Request City Manager provide City Council with a report that details an accounting of the CSX Neighborhood Improvement Fund. Said report should include information concerning: 1) How much is currently in the CSX Neighborhood Improvement Fund?; 2) What is the total amount of funds that have come into said fund?; 3) How were said funds disbursed in previous years?; 4) What/who have the funds been disbursed to?; 5) Who decides where said funds go?; 6) Are there any committees or community members who help decide where said funds go?; and 7) How much revenue is generated from the annual container fee donation and is there tracking mechanism in place to know where these funds go? (King)

Mayor Petty read the item and recognized Councilor Mero-Carlson, who moved to hold the item under privilege.

Held Under Privilege - Mero-Carlson

11. COMMUNICATIONS

- 11a. Eric D. Batista, City Manager, recommend approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Operating Budget.

Mayor Petty read the item moved to take items #11a CC through #11c CC collectively.

Mayor Petty recognized the City Manager, who provided City Council with a presentation concerning the city's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Proposal.

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

Mayor Petty recognized the Chief Financial Officer, who responded to questions raised by Councilor King.

Mayor Petty moved to refer the items to Finance Committee. Referred to Finance Committee

11b. Eric Batista, City Manager, recommend approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Capital Budget.

Referred to Finance Committee (See Item #11a CC)

11c. Eric Batista, City Manager, recommend the adoption of a Loan Order in the amount of One Hundred Fifty Eight Million Nine Hundred Thirty Eight Thousand Four Hundred Twelve Dollars And No Cents (\$158,938,412.00) to pay for costs associated with projects and equipment, as approved in the Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget.

Referred to Finance Committee (See Item #11a CC)

12. REPORTS OF THE PLANNING BOARD

12a. REPORT OF THE PLANNING BOARD Upon the Communication of the City Manager Requesting adoption of amendment to Zoning Ordinance relative to the Floodplain Overlay District.

Voted to advertise proposed Ordinance on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent) (See Item #13a CC)

12b. REPORT OF THE PLANNING BOARD Upon the Petition of Joseph Mangiameli request residents be allowed to raise chickens for the sole purpose of laying eggs.

Mayor Petty read the item and recognized Councilor Colorio, who spoke concerning the item.

Mayor Petty recognized the City Clerk, who responded to questions raised by Councilor Colorio.

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

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

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

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

Mayor Petty moved to refer the item to Economic Development Committee. Referred to Economic Development Committee

12c. REPORT OF THE PLANNING BOARD Upon the Petition of Alex Corrales, Chief Executive Officer of the Worcester Housing Authority, request the discontinuance of certain portions of Joseph P. Carlson Way, Service Rd. and Great Brook Valley Ave. and order the alteration and layout of a new portion of Great Brook Valley Ave., the alteration of a portion of Great Brook Valley Ave., portions of Service Rd. and portions of James P. Carlson Way, all as depicted on the attached plans (see attached).

Mayor Petty read the item and recognized Councilor Mero-Carlson, who moved to recuse herself from the item and left the room.

Mayor Petty moved to refer the item to Public Works Committee. Referred to Public Works Committee

- 12d.** REPORT OF THE PLANNING BOARD Upon the Petition of Timothy Bateman request Wildwood Ave. from Apricot St. to 301 Wildwood Ave. be made public.
Mayor Petty read the item and moved to refer the item to Public Works Committee. Referred to Public Works Committee

13. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 13a.** REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Upon the Communication of the City Manager requesting adoption of amendment to Zoning Ordinance relative to the Floodplain Overlay District: recommend passage of the accompanying proposed Ordinance.
Mayor Petty read the item and moved to take the item collectively with item #12a CC.

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote to advertise the proposed Ordinance. Voted to advertise proposed Ordinance on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent)

- 13b.** REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Upon the Order of Councilor Candy Mero-Carlson - Request City Manager provide City Council with a report concerning the process the Community Preservation Committee is using to select recipients for grants in the first round of funding in the categorical areas of Historical Preservation, Parks, Open Space & Housing. Included in said report should be whether the CPC is using any third-party groups as part of the grant funding distribution process: recommend Order be placed on file.
Mayor Petty read the item and moved to accept items #13b CC through #13e CC. Accepted

- 13c.** REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Upon the Communication of the City Manager transmitting informational communication relative to an update on the Community Preservation Program: recommend Communication be placed on file.
Accepted (See Item #13a CC)

- 13d.** REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Upon the Communication of the City Manager transmitting informational communication relative to the municipality's Housing Production Plan: recommend Communication be placed on file.
Accepted (See Item #13a CC)

- 13e.** REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Upon the Communication of the City Manager transmitting informational communication relative to an update on the Ballpark District Improvement Financing Plan (DIF): recommend Communication be placed on file.
Accepted (See Item #13a CC)

14. HELD UNDER PRIVILEGE

- 14a.** ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King - Request Standing Committee on Education hold a discussion relative to whether 51 and 61 Sever St. may be appropriate to use for school purposes. (Held Under Privilege - Petty April 29, 2025)

Mayor Petty read the item and recognized Councilor Russell, who moved to place the item on file.

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

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

Mayor Petty recognized the City Solicitor, who responded to questions raised by Councilor Ojeda.

Councilor Ojeda then moved to recuse himself from the item and left the room.

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote to place the item on file. Placed on file on a roll call vote of 7 Yeas and 2 Nays (Yeas – Bergman, Colorio, Mero-Carlson, Pacillo, Russell, Toomey, Petty) (Nays – Haxhiaj, King) (Nguyen absent) (Ojeda recused)

Mayor Petty recognized Councilor King, who moved to reconsider the item. Reconsideration denied on a roll call vote of 0 Yeas and 9 Nays (Nguyen absent) (Ojeda recused)

- 14b.** COMMUNICATION of the City Manager transmitting informational communication relative to how the U.S. Department of Justice's report on the Worcester Police Department differs from the account of the municipality. (Held Under Privilege - King April 29, 2025)

Mayor Petty read the item and recognized Councilor King, who moved to hold the item under privilege for a second time. Held Under Privilege on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent).

Held Under Privilege - King

15. TABLED ITEMS

- 15a.** ORDER of Councilor Konstantina B. Lukes - Request City Manager request City Solicitor provide City Council with a legal opinion regarding the process of instituting a residential rent control program and the resulting impact of implementing such a program. (Held Under Privilege - Lukes September 17, 2019 and September 24, 2019 and Tabled - Lukes October 15, 2019)

No action taken

- 15b.** RESOLUTION of Councilor Khrystian E. King - That the City Council of the City of Worcester does hereby support Representative Rebecca Rauch and Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz's SD 699 HD 1283, An Act effectuating equity in COVID-19 Vaccination Bill. (Held Under Privilege - Bergman February 9, 2021 and Tabled - Bergman February 23, 2021)

No action taken

- 15c.** ORDER of Councilor Sarai Rivera - Request City Manager consider prioritizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for REC Worcester's capital project involving the development of the new REC Worcester headquarters and Center for Food Justice and Urban Agriculture (for Worcester and Central Massachusetts), in an effort to support community food security, as well as youth development and employment. (Held Under Privilege - Mero-Carlson October 26, 2021 and Held Under Privilege - Petty November 9, 2021 and Tabled - Rivera November 16, 2021)

No action taken

- 15d.** CHAIRMAN'S ORDER FROM THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION - Request City Council work to ensure City Council and School Committee districts are parallel, so as to ensure public clarity. (Held Under Privilege - Mero-Carlson May 24, 2022 and June 7, 2022 and Tabled - Petty June 14, 2022)

Mayor Petty read the item and recognized Councilor Russell, who moved to take the item off the Table. Taken off the Table on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays (Nguyen absent).

Councilor Russell then moved to place the item on file.

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

Mayor Petty recognized the City Clerk, who responded to questions raised by Councilor Pacillo.

Mayor Petty moved for a roll call vote on Councilor Russell's motion to place the item file. Placed on file on a roll call vote of 9 Yeas and 1 Nay (Nay – King) (Nguyen absent)

- 15e.** REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICE AND TRANSPORTATION Upon the Order of Councilor Morris A. Bergman and Councilor Candy Mero-Carlson - Request Standing Committee on Public Service and Transportation Committee hold a public discussion with the WRTA Administrator relative to the removal of a bus route that passes the EcoTarium, 222 Harrington Way: recommend Communication be placed on file. (Held Under Privilege - Bergman January 17, 2023 and Held Under Privilege - Mero-Carlson January 24, 2023 and Tabled - Mero-Carlson January 31, 2023)

No action taken

- 15f.** REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICE AND TRANSPORTATION Upon the Order of Councilor Sarai Rivera and Councilor Khrystian E. King - Request Standing Committee on Public Service and Transportation meet with the WRTA Administrator to provide City Council with a report concerning the WRTA's winter weather plan, especially including information as to how snow will be removed at each of the bus stops: recommend Order be placed on file. (Held Under Privilege - Bergman January 17, 2023 and Held Under Privilege - Mero-Carlson January 24, 2023 and Tabled - Mero-Carlson January 31, 2023)

No action taken

15g. ORDER of Councilor Etel Haxhij and Councilor Thu Nguyen - Request City Manager work with appropriate departments and stakeholders to establish an Office of Housing Stability in an effort to prevent the involuntary displacement of city residents who are in the process of being evicted or at the risk of losing their housing, as well as to enact policies to combat displacement, homelessness and enhance tenants' rights. (Held Under Privilege - Haxhij July 18, 2023 and Tabled - Haxhij August 22, 2023)

No action taken

15h. PETITION of Gordon Davis request City Council request Standing Committee on Public Safety investigate the issue of systemic racism and public safety with public hearings included. (Tabled - Toomey May 14, 2024)

No action taken

15i. ORDER of Councilor George J. Russell and Councilor Morris A. Bergman - Request City Manager install metal detector safety equipment at City Hall whenever open, similar to the equipment used at Polar Park, the Worcester District Court and other public places, on or before December 31, 2024. (Held Under Privilege - Russell September 24, 2024 and October 1, 2024 and Tabled - Russell October 8, 2024)

No action taken

15j. ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King - Request City Manager conduct an equity audit of all city departments every five (5) years. (Held Under Privilege - Mero-Carlson December 10, 2024 and Held Under Privilege - Toomey December 17, 2024 and Tabled - Nguyen January 7, 2025)

No action taken

16. BUSINESS UNDER SUSPENSION OF RULES - Items brought forth under suspension at the April 29, 2025 City Council meeting.

16a. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS Upon the Petition of Donald J. O'Neil on behalf of Anthony Bianco request the public sanitary sewer main located in Elton St. be extended easterly approximately 80 feet from its current terminus to provide public sanitary sewer service to the property situated at 9 and 13 Elton St. (MBL 17-38-23+24+25+26): recommend adoption of the accompanying Order. – Item #19a CC Accepted and adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays

16b. ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report concerning the differential between the amount of money allocated to the city's employment opportunities for Summer 2025 and previous years. Further, request City Manager make efforts to fill any gaps in funding. – Item #19b CC Order adopted

16c. ORDER of Councilor Etel Haxhij – Request City Manager release to the City Council all the settled cases, investigative reports, depositions, and statements made under oath, by city employees relative to the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD). Further, request the inclusion of any related policy changes, operational amendments and training resulting from said documentation. – Item #19c CC Order adopted as amended on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays

- 16d.** ORDER of Mayor Joseph M. Petty – That the City Council of the City of Worcester does hereby suspend its rules to allow for an additional ten (10) minutes of speaking for Item #9.13A CM on the April 29, 2025, City Council agenda. – Item #19d CC Order adopted on a roll call vote of 8 Yeas and 2 Nays
- 16e.** ORDER of Councilor Etel Haxhiaj – Request City Manager request Police Chief consider implementing a policy to mandate annual crisis intervention and de-escalation training with a focus on environmental factors (e.g. medical conditions, disabilities, minor status, trauma, etc.) in the Police Department. – Item #19e CC Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays
- 16f.** ORDER of Councilor Etel Haxhiaj – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing the area of expertise held by the individuals who wrote the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD). – Item #19f CC Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays
- 16g.** ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report that details the changes that have been made in the Worcester Police Department (WPD) since the Police Department Equity Audit and the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report. Said report should provide timelines around any changes made and cross-reference recommendations made in both documents. – Item #19g CC Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays
- 16h.** ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King – Request City Manager request Police Chief provide City Council with a report concerning whether there are any communities who do not complete background checks with respect to complaints that are brought forward. – Item #19h CC Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays
- 16i.** ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing the Worcester Police Department (WPD) Co-response Model Pilot Program for alternative deployment options, where social workers from Community Healthlink (CHL) co-responded to high, acute, crisis related matters with WPD. – Item #19i CC Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays
- 16j.** ORDER of Mayor Joseph M. Petty – Request City Manager request Police Chief provide City Council with a report concerning the Worcester Police Department (WPD)’s application to begin the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Program. – Item #19j CC Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays
- 16k.** ORDER of Mayor Joseph M. Petty – Request City Manager request Police Chief provide City Council with a report concerning the status of the nineteen (19) recommendations laid out in the Department of Justice (DOJ) Report concerning the Worcester Police Department. – Item #19k CC Order adopted on a roll call vote of 10 Yeas and 0 Nays

- 16l. ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report detailing how the deployment of thirty (30) public dual-stream waste bins will be piloted, including information concerning the plans for advertising on those bins after a successful pilot program. – Item #19l CC Order adopted
- 16m. ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report concerning repairs to the basketball courts at Crompton Park and Cousy Court. – Item #19m CC Order adopted
- 16n. ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King – Request City Manager request Assistant Commissioner of Public Works and Parks look to the National Recreational and Parks Association, for referential purposes, to consider devising a comprehensive response to the substance use crisis. – Item #19n CC Order adopted
- 16o. ORDER of Mayor Joseph M. Petty – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report concerning ordinances and policies other communities have regarding needles stemming from substance use in their public parks. – Item #19o CC Order adopted
- 16p. ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King – Request City Manager provide City Council with a report concerning strategies used by Worcester Public Schools to ensure their facilities are properly maintained and assessed due to potential legality issues that could fall on the city. – Item #19p CC Order adopted
- 16q. ORDER of Councilor Khrystian E. King – Request City Manager provide City Council with an update relative to the school zone signage audit. – Item #19q CC Order adopted

17. NEW BUSINESS UNDER SUSPENSION OF RULES - Items brought forth under suspension at the May 6, 2025 City Council meeting.

- 17a. Motion Mero-Carlson – Suspension of Rules – That the City Council of the City of Worcester does hereby commend and honor Justin Hyland, Dickie Collins, Paul Snape and Eli Johnson of the Department of Public Works and Parks and Department of Transportation and Mobility for their roles in saving the life of a toddler who was found on Chilmark Street.

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

Councilor Mero-Carlson then moved to hold the item under privilege.

Held Under Privilege – Mero-Carlson