



City of Haverhill  
City Council Minutes  
Tuesday, May 5, 2020  
Virtual Meeting

---

Present – President Barrett, Councillors LePage, Bevilacqua, Michitson, Sullivan, Jordan, McGonagle, Daly O’Brien and Macek.  
City Clerk – Linda L. Koutoulas

President Barrett, Vice President LePage and City Clerk Koutoulas participated from the City Council office.

President Barrett read the following statement: This meeting of the Haverhill City Council is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker’s Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the “COVID-19 Virus”.

In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor’s Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

The Order, which you can find posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.

Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will feature public comment for the special permit hearing for 367-369 Hilldale Avenue.

**Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, Governor Baker issued an Emergency Order temporarily suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20. Public bodies otherwise governed by the OML are temporarily relieved from the requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public, so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means."**

1. Opening Prayer
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of minutes of prior meeting  
The minutes were approved. Yeas 8, Nays 0, Absent 1(Daly O’Brien)
4. Assignment of the minutes review for the next Meeting  
Councillor Michitson was assigned the minutes.
5. Communications from the Mayor:  
Communication from Mayor Fiorentini requesting to address the City Council to give an update on Haverhill’s efforts regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.  
Mayor Fiorentini informed that there are 27 new cases. Haverhill has 670 cases with 20 deaths. He is planning to reopen City Hall on May 18. Reopening will follow state guidelines and implementation. The city is working on contact tracing. The State is ramping up testing. The Mayor urged people to be aware of scammers and thanked all for abiding by social distancing measures, wearing masks and washing hands. The State numbers are down. Opening will be slow and gradual. State rules regarding wearing of face masks go into effect tomorrow.
6. Communications from Councillors to introduce an individual(s) to address the Council:
7. Public Participation - Requests under Council Rule 28
8. Communications and Reports from City Officers and Employees:  
Communication from Michael Pffifferling, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations submitting the Massachusetts School Building Authority’s (MSBA) Statement of Interest (SOI) for the *John G. Whittier School* and the Russo Barr HVAC, Plumbing and Structural Assessment Report. The SOI requires the approval of the School Committee and approval of the Order that is also submitted is required from the City Council  
MR. PFIFFERLING INFORMED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL MUST VOTE ON THE SUBMISSION OF THE STATEMENT OF INTEREST.  
PLACED ON FILE

61

CITY CLERK KOUTOULAS READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT OF INTEREST INTO THE RECORD:

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on May 5 2020, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the City Council of Haverhill, MA, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize

the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 29, 2020 for the John Greenleaf Whittier School located at 256 Concord Street, Haverhill, MA 01830 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future regarding replacement or renovation, eliminate existing severe overcrowding and allow district to provide for a full range of programs consistent with the state/local requirements; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

ON MOTION OF COUNCILLOR LEPAGE WITH SECOND FROM COUNCILLOR BEVILACQUA TO APPROVE THE SOI.

STATEMENT OF INTEREST PASSED Yeas 8, Nays 0, Absent 1(Daly O'Brien) 61B

**9. Utility Hearing(s) and Related Order(s)**

**10. Hearings and Related Orders:**

Document 37 - Petition from Attorney Robert Harb requesting for owner/applicant Lynn Garceau a Special Permit to convert a 3-family dwelling to a 4-family at 367-369 Hilldale av in the RH zone;  
*Favorable recommendation from Planning Board and Planning Director*

PRESIDENT BARRETT OPENED THE HEARING

ATTORNEY HARB REPRESENTED THE APPLICANT, MR. LYNN GARCEAU. HE INFORMED THE REASON THEY WERE BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL IS BECAUSE THE APPLICANT PROPOSES TO CONVERT THE EXISTING BARN TO A 4TH UNIT AND THEN CONNECT IT TO THE EXISTING 3-FAMILY HOUSE. A SPECIAL PERMIT IS REQUIRED BECAUSE OF THE ADDITION AND WALKWAY. HE WANTS TO MAKE THE BARN HABITABLE AND HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE. POSSIBLY IN THE FUTURE HIS PARENTS MAY LIVE THERE. WHEN HE WENT BEFORE THE BOARD OF APPEALS NO ONE OBJECTED AND THERE WAS ONE NEIGHBOR IN FAVOR. THIS IS AN ALLOWED USE IN THIS DISTRICT. THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WANTS THE BARN TO BE SPRINKLED, AND THERE WILL BE A NEW WATER CONNECTION. THERE WAS NO ONE IN FAVOR OR OPPOSED.

HEARING CLOSED.

COUNCILLORS INQUIRED ABOUT PARKING. ATTORNEY HARB INFORMED THERE ARE 5 EXISTING PARKING SPACES FOR THE 3 FAMILY UNIT, THEY WILL BE ADDING 3 SPACES FOR ONE UNIT WITH ACCESS FROM ST. BOTOLPH ST.

ON MOTION OF COUNCILLOR MACEK WITH SECOND FROM COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL PERMIT WITH THE CONDITIONS FROM THE PLANNING DIRECTOR AND LETTERS FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEADS. ALSO, TO ENSURE THAT THE PROPERTY IS HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE.

PASSED WITH CONDITIONS Yeas 8, Nays 0, Absent 1(Daly O'Brien) 37

**11. Appointments:**

Confirming Appointments

No Schedule

Non-Confirming Appointments

**12. Petitions:**

No Schedule

**13. Motions and Orders:**

ORDERED: That in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 64, authorize the payment of bills of the previous years and to further authorize payment from current year departmental appropriations as listed:

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Account</u>
Blatman, Bobrowski & Harvey, LLC	\$150.00	Law Department
Music Theatre International	5.00	School Department
School Electrician-reimb	79.83	School Department
J W Pepper (9)	220.93	School Department

PASSED Yeas 8, Nays 0, Absent 1(Daly O'Brien) 25C

ORDERED: That the City Council of the City of Haverhill hereby recognizes and accepts the provisions of M.G.L. c.110G regarding electronic signatures and that its members will henceforth execute documents either with electronic signatures and that its members will henceforth execute documents either with electronic signatures or with wet ink signatures and both will carry the same legal weight and effect

PASSED Yeas 8, Nays 0, Absent 1(Daly O'Brien) 62

**14. Ordinances (File 10 days)**

**15. Communications from Councillors:**

Communication from Councillor Colin LePage requesting a discussion regarding the communities' general mental health coping strategies and supports during the COVID-19 Pandemic  
POSTPONED TO MAY 12 2020

Yeas 8, Nays 0, Absent 1(Daly O'Brien)

63

#### **Councillor Daly O'Brien joined the meeting**

Communication from Councillor Joseph Bevilacqua proposing to establish a Reopening Haverhill Review Committee

COUNCILLOR BEVILACQUA STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF CONVEYING TO BUSINESSES WHAT THE REQUIREMENTS WILL BE TO REOPEN LETTER TO MAYOR TO ESTABLISH BACK TO BUSINESS REOPENING TASK FORCE. ALSO, SMALL BUSINESS REOPENING GRANT FUND TO BE FUNDED BY CDBG FEDERAL FUNDS NOT LOCAL TAX DOLLARS

Yeas 9, Nays 0

63B

Communication from Councillors Michitson and Jordan requesting to address the issue of many students in the Haverhill School System without Wi-Fi and stop-gap measures the City must take now  
(This item was discussed earlier.)

COUNCILLOR MICHITSON INFORMED THAT HE DID AN ONLINE SURVEY OVER THE WEEKEND AND FOUND OUT THE SOME PARENTS HAD THEIR WI-FI CUT OFF BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T PAY THEIR BILL; SOME STRUGGLE TO KEEP WI-FI WORKING; THERE IS A DIVIDE BETWEEN THOSE WITH MEANS. REP. VARGAS INFORMED THAT HE WAS IN TOUCH WITH COMCAST AND SHARED THAT PAST DUE PAYMENTS WILL BE WAIVED UNTIL JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup>. CONTACT GREG FRANKS AT COMCAST 1-855-846-8376. SUPT. MAROTTA INFORMED THAT THEY DID SURVEY TO SEE WHO HAD/DIDN'T HAVE DEVICES & INTERNET. 3,725 RESPONDED OUT OF 8,000. 2700 CHROMEBOOKS HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED. 115 HAVE NO INTERNET ACCESS.THEY ARE WORKING ON TRACKING DOWN STUDENTS. THEY ARE PURCHASING 1500 CHROMEBOOKS. 85% ATTEND CLASSES. APPLICATIONS FOR WORK PERMITS HAVE INCREASED.

ON MOTION OF COUNCILLOR MICHITSON TO SEND LETTER TO MAYOR TO WORK WITH COMCAST TO ENSURE THAT EVERY STUDENT HAS ACCESS TO INTERNET

Yeas 8, Nays 0, Absent 1(Daly O'Brien)

63C

Communication from Councillor Jordan requesting to give an update on the Sacred Hearts food pantry and the need for additional donations

COUNCILLOR JORDAN WANTED TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE NEED FOR FOOD AND MONETARY DONATIONS FOR THE SACRED HEARTS FOOD PANTRY. LAST WEEK THEY SERVED 300 PERSONS IN ONE DAY. FOOD/MONETARY DONATIONS CAN BE DROPPED OFF MONDAY THRU FRIDAY 8-11AM ON THE CARLETON AVE SIDE. COUNCILLORS ADDED THERE ARE OTHER FOOD PANTRIES IN THE CITY THAT ALSO NEED ASSISTANCE  
PLACED ON FILE

63D

#### **16. Unfinished Business of Preceding Meeting:**

Document 58-F; Communication from Councillors Jordan, McGonagle and Daly O'Brien requesting a discussion regarding the need to move forward now with the new animal shelter

SHAWN REGAN OF THE MAYOR'S OFFICE INFORMED THAT AS A TEMPORARY SOLUTION THEY WILL LEASE A TRAILER FOR THE OFFICERS (36X10) SIMILAR TO WHAT THE DPW IS USING AND THAT IT SHOULD ARRIVE WITHIN THE WEEK. MR. REGAN GAVE A SUMMARY OF MEASURES TAKEN TO ADDRESS PROBLEMS. ALL RECOGNIZED THIS IS A TEMPORARY SOLUTION

PLACED ON FILE

58F

Document 58-N; Communication from Councillor Colin LePage to discuss City's preparation for in-person and mail-in voting participation in Haverhill

COUNCILLOR LEPAGE INFORMED THAT HE HAD PROVIDED COUNCILLORS ELECTRONIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSED BILLS REGARDING MAIL IN VOTING. HE ADVOCATED FOR A PLAN MOVING FORWARD WITH MAIL IN VOTING. THERE ARE 30 STATES THAT ALLOW VOTERS TO REQUEST A MAIL IN BALLOT WITHOUT ABSENCE/NO EXCUSE; 15 STATES REQUIRE A REASON. COUNCILLORS AGREED WITH THE PREMISE OF ALLOWING MAIL IN VOTING AND TO CHANGE REQUIREMENT TO NO EXCUSE. COUNCILLORS STATED THAT CITIZENS REQUESTING ABSENTEE BALLOTS IS THE BEST APPROACH.

ON MOTION OF COUNCILLOR LEPAGE TO SEND LETTER TO SECRETARY OF STATE AND LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

Yeas 9, Nays 0

58N

Document 58-W; Communication from Councillors LePage and Daly O'Brien requesting a discussion on City adoption of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act concerning first responders and healthcare workers

COUNCILLORS RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT EXCLUDING CITY OF HAVERHILL EMPLOYEES WHO ARE FIRST RESPONDERS. MAYOR FIORENTINI EXPLAINED EVERYONE IS COVERED. THE ACT PROVIDES FOR 12 ADDITIONAL WEEKS OF PAID LEAVE FOR THOSE IMPACTED BY CORONAVIRUS. IT COVERS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EMPLOYEES (FEWER THAN 500

EMPLOYEES) AND THAT THE CITY IS ALLOWED TO OPT OUT BUT THAT HE DOES NOT INTEND TO DO SO UNLESS THERE IS AN EMERGENCY.

ON MOTION OF COUNCILLOR JORDAN TO SEND LETTER TO MAYOR CONFIRMING THAT WE DO NOT WANT TO OPT OUT AND THAT IF THE MAYOR DECIDES TO, HE WILL NOTIFY THE COUNCIL

Yeas 9, Nays 0 58W

**17. RESOLUTIONS and PROCLAMATIONS:**

PROCLAMATION - *Mental Health Matters Month, May*

ADOPTED Yeas 9, Nays 0 33D

PROCLAMATION - *Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, May 7th*

ADOPTED Yeas 9, Nays 0 33E

PROCLAMATION - *National Teacher Day, May 5th*

ADOPTED Yeas 9, Nays 0 33F

**18. Council Committee Reports and Announcements:**

Councillor Daly O'Brien informed that it is National Hospital Week and tomorrow, May 6, is National Nurses Day and wanted to make the public aware of the importance of hospitals and their staffs.

**19. Documents referred to committee study**

**20. Long term matters study list**

Meeting adjourned 9:31 o'clock P.M.

Yeas 9, Nays 0

Attest: Linda Koutoulas  
City Clerk