

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE,
SITTING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
JUNE 7, 2017 AT 6:00 PM
COMMITTEE ROOM
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Voting Members:

Attending: Chair Michael Concannon, Alderman Michael Anderson,
Alderman Joanne Campbell, Alderman Mark Gaffney
Alderman Richard Gately, Alderman Lindsay Higgins,
Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Alderman Edward Tedesco,
President Richard Haggerty

Absent: None

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School Department – Alderman Concannon stated that he has family members who work for the School Department, that he can debate the general budget but will abstain from voting on pages with such employee salaries, and that he is acting on advice of the Ethics Commission and the City Solicitor. Alderman Tedesco stated that he has family members who work for the School Department, and that he can debate the general budget but will abstain from voting on pages with such employee salaries. Alderman Higgins stated that she has family members who work for the School Department, and that she can debate the general budget but will abstain from voting on pages with such employee salaries. Appearing was School Committee Chair Ellen Crowley and she stated that Woburn Memorial High School was selected as one of eight schools from around the country as a model school, that the school will be honored at a ceremony for the turnaround in such a short period, that this was the result of the city’s investment in the schools, that the city prioritizes education, that the intention of Woburn is to become a data driven school system, that the department will need more personnel specialized in analyzing data and coordinating curriculum around data, that department staff are noticing social and emotional needs of students that need to be addressed in addition to their academic needs, that the department will strengthen the special education programs, and that this is an expensive process but will allow students to remain in their home district. Superintendent of Schools Mark Donovan stated that there are no changes in the budget, that the department is under some specific rules, that in December schools prepare budgets including new initiatives, that the Superintendent’s budget has a 7% increase, that the School Committee reviews the budget and proposals, that the budget is then submitted to the Mayor, and that this is the same budget as the FY2017 budget. Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations stated that the department paid \$700,000.00 for substitute teachers. Superintendent Donovan stated that student absenteeism remains stable, that attendance is always at 95% and above, that there have been improvements in tardiness at the high school, that 306 students graduated this year, that there are no new positions other than a special education nurse for a new student, and that they are looking to hire an in-house plumber rather than contract out the work. Director of Building Facilities David Dunkley stated that there are no issues with school roofs. Superintendent Donovan stated that academic support at the elementary school level works with students based on data, that they act as interventionists with issues the students may have in the early grades, that additional guidance counselors have been addressing

an explosion of issues students are facing at home or emotionally which impacts their ability to learn, that a multilingual guidance counselor has helped the school system, that the Joyce Middle School road replacement is planned, and that the department is looking at security improvements. Assistant Superintendent Elia stated that the department will be improving Wi-Fi service in the schools over three years. Director Dunkley stated that the Joyce Middle School roof project begins June 26, 2017, that camera systems will be installed in four schools, that intercom systems are being replaced in two schools, that a new clock system will be installed in four schools, that there will be HVAC improvements in several schools, that the turf field at the high school will have to be replaced in two summers, and that the department will work with a turf vendor to determine the costs. Superintendent Donovan stated that the field rental funds will not cover the cost of the field replacement and possibly about half the cost, that there is approximately \$300,000.00 in the field rental account, that there is a plan to revamp the department heads at the high school, that the department heads teach one less class than other teachers but also have duties at the middle school which leave them with little time, that the department needs someone to keep track of curriculum, that the interventionists are helpers working at the direction of teachers, that the curriculum analysts will be more supervisors working with observing teachers, that he is not aware of outside consultants doing this type of work, and that he will be retiring on December 31, 2017. Chair Crowley stated that the salary of the superintendent is subject to negotiation. Alderman Concannon stated that this is a level budget year, that he wants to know when the pre-engineering track will be improved in the public schools, that that program could end up in the public schools or the vocational school, and that a pre-engineering track on the college track may be more appropriate at the high school and non-college pre-engineering tracked could be handled at the vocational school where students go into the workforce as many of the vocational school students do. Superintendent Donovan stated that there are space issues with a pre-engineering program, and that this issue is being studied. Alderman Concannon stated that as the public schools prepare students for college the students may be best served by preparing at the public school rather than at the vocational school.

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Office of the Mayor – Alderman Tedesco stated that the two largest increases in the budget are retirements and health insurance, and that the increase in debt was due to work at the Leland Park field. Appearing was Mayor Scott Galvin and he stated that there are no major changes in the capital plan, that the Department of Public Works may have different ideas in the vehicles for the department, that there is some concern about repairs needed at the Joyce Middle School ice rink, that an engineer may need to be hired to look at the issues at the Joyce Middle School rink, that this is a small issues but could be a large issue pending an engineering review, that a police department arbitration decision is due by late August 2017, that a hearing was already held, that the fire department arbitration hearing is scheduled for September 7, 2017, that he is willing to discuss those issues in executive session, that the MS4 consultants were to be in the Engineering Department budget, that there are new regulations, that the Superintendent of Public Works and City Engineer determined that it was better for the account to be in the Mayor’s department budget, that there should be an ad hoc committee to review stormwater issues, that a special permit will be sought for the new parking lot at the former Strand Theater site, that when the special permit is approved the project will go out to bid with a plan to break ground in August 2017 or September 2017 for the new parking lot, that position upgrades were through contract negotiations, that the positions are moving up one grade in most cases which is approximately

\$3,500.00, that some money will be carried over from the capital appropriation, that the Hurld-Wyman School project is moving forward as is the Woburn Public Library project, that the library annex will be razed to accommodate parking, that the contractors are working on utility connections now, that funds were carried over sufficient to meet union contractual obligations, and that he will provide invoices for all community services being paid out of the budget of the Mayor's office. Alderman Concannon stated that there are four private organizations receiving funds from the city, and that there have to be invoices from the organizations which justify these costs.

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Motion made and 2nd to take the next department out of order, all in favor, 9-0.

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Board of Cemetery Commissioners – Appearing was Chair John Sawyer and he stated that the work at the First Burial Ground is nearly complete, that outstanding small items should be completed within two weeks, that the department will be seeking an appropriation to fund operations, that the department has 2007 and 2008 dump trucks that have low mileage but are heavily used, that the Department of Public Works assists with a backhoe when needed, that the repair costs for the vehicles indicates that the vehicles need to be replaced, that the aging equipment needs to be replaced soon, that there is approximately 15 to 20 years of capacity in the Woodbrook Cemetery, that a lot of burials have been in pre-purchased plots however the option to pre-buy lots ended ten years ago, that soon there will be a move to new purchases for burials rather than pre-purchased plot burials, and that old plots that are not used can be sold back to the city for what was paid for the plot. President Haggerty stated that he wants to know now the city can deal with cemetery plots when the plots are not being used and likely will not be used, and that he wants to continue the discussion on possible future burial grounds.

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Motion made and 2nd to return to the regular order of business, all in favor, 9-0.

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City Auditor – Appearing was City Auditor Charles Doherty and he stated that the department has a level funded budget, that the assistant auditor will start on June 26, 2017, that there has been an adjustment of the staff, that one staff member moved to the Planning Department and a new staff member replaced her, that there have been significant changes in OPEB, that the city is moving \$750,000.00 a year to the OPEB account, that the obligation will continue to go up but this process helps the bond rating because it shows the city is addressing the issue, that very few communities do not have an issue with OPEB, that the city has \$18,900,000.00 in free cash, that union contracts have been resolved in the payroll system except for the police department and fire department, that \$1,100,000.00 will be carried over for salary adjustments, that the city is working on short-term borrowing to get to August 2017 and then will shift to long-term borrowing which keep options open to achieve the lowest borrowing costs, that the department will be fully staffed for the new fiscal year which will allow more time for preparing reports, that the city bonded \$7,900,000.00 and may go out to \$9,000,000.00 each year for two additional years with respect to the Hurld-Wyman School and Woburn Public Library building projects which will minimize a spike in borrowing although there will be a spike with the two projects,

that the city has a good working relationship with the MSBA to ensure correct reimbursement for the school projects, that the library project will receive five grant payments equaling approximately \$9,700,000.00, that three grant payments will have been received by July 2017 but the last two grant payments will come at the end of the project, that the city has not has to borrow at this point for the library project due to receiving the grant payments, that encumbered costs are automatically carried forward to the next fiscal year, that an open purchase order would carry over to the next fiscal year, and that if the funds are not encumbered by the end of the fiscal year the funds will be returned to the city budget. Alderman Mercer-Bruen stated that expertise in the department as to MSBA reimbursements is beneficial to the city, and that she wants to see a recap of the mitigation accounts. Alderman Anderson stated that he wants to see the current balance of amounts borrowed. City Auditor Doherty stated that the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund indirect costs are reasonable. Alderman Tedesco stated ha the City Council should meet with the independent auditors, that the city has a good balance sheet, and that the enterprise fund is self-sustaining. President Haggerty stated that he is concerned with increases in the retirement contribution. City Auditor Doherty stated that the trend will be for the retirement contribution to go up each year due to the volatility in the market and based on actuary analysis, that the city uses an outside consultant to manage approximately 62% of the fund and PRIM is the state program, that there are fees to have a consultant, that the Mayor has an agreement with the schools that any money the city generates from the solar systems will be turned back to the schools as credit to the utility accounts, that the costs to the school should go down due to the credit, and that the utilities should be budgeted to full need by the school and if there is a surplus due to the credit then the school has autonomy and can use the funds for other school purposes. City Auditor Doherty offered documents to the City Council for review. Motion made and 2nd that the documents be received and made part of the record, all in favor, 9-0. City Auditor Doherty stated that the city is conservative financially, that based on revenues and the size of the community financial professionals stated that the city should take on more debt, and that the free cash amount provides the city with flexibility and stability for unexpected costs.

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City Treasurer/Collector – City Treasurer/Collector Timothy Donovan stated that this is the first time since 2012 that the department has had a full and consistent staff, that the department has had turnovers due to openings in other departments, that the department has had the opportunity to catch up on work, that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has created considerable burdens on the office, that if the city does not follow the ACA guidelines there are significant penalties, that the department has been reclassifying some lockbox fees which has been beneficial, that the tax title outstanding in 2012 was approximately \$6,000,000.00 and the balance is now approximately \$3,000,000.00, that \$6,000,000.00 has been collected since 2012, that the tax collection program assists with the city’s cash flow and prevents taxpayers from falling too far behind on their payments, that the check folding machine will have to be replaced and the cost is approximately \$5,000.00 to \$6,000.00, that the printers and shredders also need updating, the equipment in the office is older, that the city is seeing a significant decrease in past due accounts, that two vacant positions in the department have been vacant for some time, that the positions were not filled after becoming vacant, that the two offices of the treasurer and the collector were moved into one office and there are space limitations, that bringing the payroll into the office has created more burdens as has the ACA, that \$4,200,000.00 has been put towards OPEB, that the city has \$22,000,000.00 in investments between the stabilization fund, general revenue and the cemetery

accounts, that the city is looking to increase its equity holdings, that general investments are limited as to investment opportunities but OPEB investments are prudent investor strategy, that the investing guidelines are safety, liquidity and yield, and that he will provide the Committee on Finance a report after June 30, 2017 of the investment accounts status.

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IT Department – IT Director David Mastronardi stated that he is working with the departments to review systems in place and exploring what technology based needs the city may have, that he wants to digitize workflows to reduce paper use, that the department is improving security systems, that the city website will be upgraded as of July 2017, that the website will have more features and services, that department budget has additional line items based on the consolidation of services from other departments to the IT Department, that MUNIS is one of the few systems available for the financial system used by the city, that moving to another financial system is extremely expensive, that MUIS is used by many communities, and that cell phones are managed at the department level. President Haggerty stated that he wants to know which employees have cell phones, that the city should look at the need for landlines if there are many departments relying on cell phones, that he wants to know the City Council recommendations have been incorporated into the revised website, that the department has new line items that have been transferred from the Engineering Department, and that the SeeClickFix program will be phased out of use in July 2017 and QAlert will be the new notification system, that QAlert has more useful features, that the department will be rolling out new computer equipment when some fiber lines are installed connecting the buildings, that the city has a five year computer rotation plan, that he works with the Chief Appraiser of the Board of Assessors office as a source of system knowledge and to deal with emergencies when he is offsite, that projects to upgrade the projector in the Council Chamber and installing a projector in the Committee Room are in process, and that he does not have information on the MSM Suite and Complete Street software that has been transferred from the Engineering Department. Alderman Mercer-Bruen stated that she will speak to the City Engineer regarding those software systems. Director Mastronardi stated that he has two servers on order ready for replacement, that SeeClickFix was initially free to the city, that QAlert will cost \$10,000.00 per year, and that QAlert will take refinement to get the work flows operational. Alderman Campbell stated that she found SeeClickFix easy to use as did the residents, and that she hopes QAlert will work as well. Director Mastronardi stated that the new city website will be useable on mobile phones.

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President Haggerty left the Council Chamber.

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Planning Department – Appearing was Planning Director Tina Cassidy and she stated that the department is staff to the Planning Department and the Woburn Redevelopment Authority (WRA), that the department is working on forms to track projects, that the board rules and regulations are being updated, that the fee schedule may be amended, that the WRA expanded the sign grant program to include façade improvements, that the WRA is working on downtown parking issues, that there are a number of pending grant applications including green communities, a dog park and a park at the former Clapp School site, that the department completed a downtown signage and wayfinding plan, that the department is looking at a parking

meter program for the downtown area, that the department is looking at establishing M.G.L. Ch. 40R districts, and that the department can look at the Commerce Way Corridor Overlay District for additional housing opportunities or smart growth in that area including housing and employment opportunities. Alderman Gately stated that if the parking meter program is going forward this will have an impact on a proposed zoning amendment relative to downtown parking. Director Cassidy stated that parking meters are a key in good enforcement of parking, and that without parking enforcement the current parking conditions will persist. Alderman Gately stated that the parking space striping on Main Street has helped with parking issues. Director Cassidy stated that the department has been working on a M.G.L. Ch. 40R proposal for the last month and a half, that a Ch. 40R zoning ordinance must be a complete ordinance without reference to other sections under the regulations, that the city will meet with New Boston Street businesses about infrastructure improvements in that area such as a pedestrian walkway over the railroad tracks from Anderson Station to New Boston Street, and that the department is looking at parking meters along the street and a pay station at the parking lot or pay stations in both areas. Alderman Higgins stated that it would be productive for the City Council and the WAR to meet jointly on the issue of parking meters, and that she has seen people crossing the tracks at New Boston Street and cutting through the fence. Alderman Anderson stated that he is opposed to parking meters, that the new parking lot at the former Strand Theater site will create 65 parking spaces, that businesses that has been located on the lot and used the street parking has been eliminated, that the city does not need three new employees to manage the parking meters, and that there can be enforcement now of parking regulations and there is no enforcement. Alderman Mercer-Bruen stated that the revenue projections and cost of maintenance of the parking meters will be an issue. Alderman Tedesco stated that the city can look at an exemption from paying the parking meter fees for business owners. Alderman Concannon stated that he wants to see a survey of the current use of parking to determine who parks in the parking lot and how long the vehicles park there, that he is looking at the parking meters in terms of parking turnover as opposed to revenue, and that if downtown becomes an area where it is too difficult to park then people will stop coming downtown. Director Cassidy stated that there is a 2012 study on these issues which may be out of date.

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Historical Commission – Appearing was Chair Carol Seitz and she offered documents to the City Council for review. Motion made and 2nd that the documents be received and made part of the record, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Haggerty absent). Chair Seitz stated that Historical Commission has allowed twelve properties to be removed within a year of a demolition delay petition, that property on Bow Street and Burlington Street were of great concern, that the property owners allowed the city to document the properties before demolition, that 3,000 properties in Woburn are over 75 years old, that the demolition delay procedure takes up a significant amount of Historical Commission time, that there is a rigid timeline that must be followed, that the Commission has started a historical plaque program and sold eight plaques, that over 2,000 properties of the 3,000 properties over 75 years old have not been inventoried, that house inventories take a long time to complete, that the Historical Commission researches the properties and a consultant writes the inventory forms, that the Commission has requested funding for a consultant as the Historical Commission cannot do the necessary work, that the Commission has to review cell tower applications to the impact on historical significance in the area, that the Commission has been assisting with the 375th city celebrations, and that the

Commission maintains the Battle Road. Alderman Higgins stated that she appreciates the work on Battle Road as it is beneficial to the city. Alderman Anderson stated that he wants a copy of the inventory for research purposes. Chair Seitz stated that a lot of historical items in the Woburn Public Library were donated to the Historical Society. Alderman Concannon stated that he wants information on the budget for the Historical Commission in comparable communities. Chair Seitz stated that most area communities completed their inventories some years ago.

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City Clerk – Appearing was City Clerk William Campbell and he stated that the department is one office with many divisions, that the Traffic Commission is working on a sign inventory which is delaying work on other issues and well as a truck route study, that the General Court is considering legislation that would allow the Traffic Commission to post new regulations on the city website rather than publish, that the Traffic Code has not yet been published because to do so would cost \$12,000.00 and the funds have not been made available, that the License Commission is the largest revenue source in the department, that there are 39 restaurant licenses, 6 beer and wine licenses, 8 package store licenses, 9 club licenses, 2 veterans club licenses, 4 hotel licenses, 11 innholder licenses, 16 automatic amusement device licenses and 15 entertainment licenses, that the Board of Appeals has been working on two M.G.L. Ch. 40B petitions which have taken a considerable amount of review, that in addition the Board of Appeals has reviewed thirty additional petitions since July 216, that early voting impacted the budget and operations of the department, that early voting was declared by the State Auditor to be a local mandate but not funding has been provided, that there was no statistically significant change in voter turnout due to early voting, that a special election to fill the vacant State Senate seat had an impact on the budget as it was not planned and occurred at the end of the fiscal year, that three voting precincts are located in Hurd School and Wyman School and will have to be relocated, that the voting machines were purchased in 2001, that the voting machines will need to be replaced soon as the vendor will only provide three more years of support, that the new voting machines have a higher level of security and additional audit trails, that the voting booths should be replaced due to age, that a new copy machine and scanner is needed for the department, that all department revenue goes to the General Fund, that no department requests went into the Capital Plan, that the city needs to work on a records management system that all departments work with, that there are records stored at the Plympton School by several departments, that some of the records could be eliminated under the records retention schedule but this requires an effort to review the records, that digitizing the work flow must comply with the public records law, that he had conversations with the Mayor about the Plympton School being used as an archives and \$60,000.00 was allocated to that purpose but the Mayor has decided to go in a different direction, that the city could renovate the gymnasium at the Plympton School to be used as an archives and raze the remainder of the building as well as remove pavement except for one driveway, that the Mayor has talked about offsite storage of records with a vendor which is not yet allowed and comes with continuance service charges for as long as the vendor holds the records, and that the ability to retrieve records is an important part of a records management system.

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Motion made and 2nd that the FY2018 Municipal Budget be returned to the City Council with the recommendation “back for action”, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Haggerty absent).

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Motion made and 2nd that the meeting be ADJOURNED, all in favor, 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Attest: _____
William C. Campbell
Clerk of Committees, Pro Tem