

**COMMITTEE ON LIAISON  
JANUARY 28, 2019 at 5:32 p.m.  
COMMITTEE ROOM  
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Voting Members present: President Michael Anderson, Alderman Michael Concannon, Alderman Mark Gaffney, Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Alderman Edward Tedesco, Alderman Lindsay Higgins, Alderman Joanne Campbell and Alderman Richard Gately

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**Interviews of candidates for vacant Alderman at large seat on the City Council:** President Anderson said he has compiled a list of three questions that will be asked of each candidate. Three shall be the number of questions, and the number of the questions shall be three. President Anderson said if there is still time within the 10 minutes allotted for the interview, any alderman may ask follow-up questions. President Anderson said he would try to be vigilant about keeping the interviews to 10 minutes. He said the City Charter doesn't require the council to conduct interviews. He asked if the committee wants to send all 13 names out for consideration or winnow the field after the interviews are completed. He said it is almost impossible to winnow the field. He suggested conducting all the interviews and then choosing the new alderman at the council's meeting on February 5. Alderman Gately asked if the aldermen will be asked to list their top candidates by order of preference or if there will be a roll call vote. President Anderson said each alderman will pick his or her preferred candidate and the first candidate who garners five votes will be the appointee. Alderman Campbell said she thought the committee would winnow the field so every candidate does not have to attend the meeting on February 5. Alderman Concannon said winnowing the field would be difficult. He acknowledged it would be a bit inconvenient for all 13 people to come to the meeting next week, but said it is an important position. He said winnowing may take some time. Alderman Concannon asked if a candidate can withdraw. President Anderson said he supposes a candidate could withdraw. He said there has to be 1-week notice. Alderman Campbell asked if the last time this happened, the winner was chosen in the 16<sup>th</sup> round. President Anderson said he believes that is what happened. Alderman Gately asked if a candidate's nomination isn't seconded, would the council just move on. President Anderson that is not how the City Clerk described the process. He said the council will keep going until a candidate gets five votes. Motion made by Alderman Concannon and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to accept the questions authored by President Anderson as follows: 1. What do you see as the role of an Alderman and why do you want to be appointed to the City Council?; 2. What in your background, education and/or life experience will help serve you as an Alderman, and how?; 3. What is your position on taxes, public safety, public services, commercial growth and education?, and; 4. Follow up questions by individual members of the City Council; approved, 8-0. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Higgins to accept the applications for Alderman at-large as submitted to the City Clerk; approved, 8-0. The candidates for Alderman at-large were interviewed as follows: **MaryAnn Chorlton** – In response to question #1, Ms. Chorlton said she wants to help and serve the community. She said as an alderman she would be approachable and respond to questions efficiently. In response to question #2, she said she has two deaf children and she is very familiar with special education. She said she has worked on a number of school study committees since

the era of former Mayor John Rabbitt and took an active role in special education affairs. She said she is retired now but worked for 40-plus years, starting out at Massachusetts General Hospital, where she worked as an x-ray technician and then as a mammographer. She said after her husband died she took an active role at Boston Medical Center, where she supervised 30 people. She said she helped design the breast care center at BMC. She said she has been an active member of the Woburn community not just as a team member but also as an organizer. She said she was twice president of the Woburn Middlesex Lions and had the idea for the organization's Horn Pond day. She said she has done a lot of things on the international side of the Lions Club. In response to question #3, Ms. Chorlton said she is very concerned about taxes. She said she fears her property tax assessment is going to go sky high because of all the growth around her home. She said she has lived across from Shannon Farm for 41 years, and as long as it looks nice, she's OK with it, but since she is retired and living on a limited income, she is worried about increased taxes. She said she is concerned about taxes for other people who no longer work. She said she has no allegiance to anyone in the city. She said she worked at Mass. General for 10 years and was always concerned about public safety. She said she is concerned about the Four Corners area and growth in East Woburn. She said the public service entities in the city do a really good job. Ms. Chorlton said she wants to see commercial growth handled properly. She said she has always been interested in education, and she has six grandchildren. She said the city needs to have programs for kids. She said the city does a really good job with programming. She said she likes to help people and she wants to be a part of what the council does. Alderman Gately said he wants to thank Ms. Chorlton for all the community services she takes on, especially her work with special education. He said the city is a hell of a lot better because she became involved. Ms. Chorlton said she gives everything she does 100 percent effort. She said she has always worked 24/7. She said she has always been accessible. She said to be an effective alderman, you need to be accessible. Alderman Gately said being a member of the City Council is a very difficult job. Alderman Higgins said Ms. Chorlton provides her with feedback about Ward 7. She said one of the candidates has indicated that if he is appointed he will not run for re-election in 2019, and asked Ms. Chorlton if she anticipates running in 2019. Ms. Chorlton said she would certainly entertain the possibility of running for re-election, if she thinks she is doing a good job. She said she felt it was her civic duty to put her name in for alderman. **Robert Ferullo Jr.** – In response to question #1, Mr. Ferullo said he sees the role of an alderman as being an advocate for his constituents and their needs. He said joining the City Council will allow him to continue from a different perspective his mission for 30 years of public service. He said he is either 100 percent in, or not in at all. He said joining the council will give him an opportunity to pick up where he left off when he retired as chief of police. He said there are a lot of challenges facing the city ahead. He said his intimate knowledge of the city will help the City Council. In response to question #2, Mr. Ferullo said he has diligently served the city for his entire adult life. He said after his retirement from the Woburn Police force he has continued his career in law enforcement with the state Executive Office of Public Safety as a consultant, with the police academy in Reading. He said the city's public safety entities are doing a great job working in concert with the School Dept. He said he became a lawyer at the behest of his wife and though he remained in the law enforcement realm his status as an attorney will help him when he is on the council. In response to question #3, Mr. Ferullo said there is great stuff happening in the city in terms of education. He said the city needs to be cognizant of growth and he thinks the city is growing way too fast for the existing infrastructure. He said he is concerned about the growth in the Commerce Way area. He said he would like to see future development

resemble Third Avenue in Burlington rather than another place in Woburn to get a hamburger. He said he is concerned about traffic on Washington Street and that it takes him 20 minutes to drive from Kohl's to the Woburn Elks. He said the city needs to encourage smarter growth. He said he has the time, commitment and energy to become an alderman. He said the Woburn Fire Dept. is doing a great job handling the opioid crisis. He said the firefighters are literally saving lives. He said the city needs to build infrastructure to support the new growth in other areas of the city. He said the city's property taxes may end up creating a glut of rental properties in the city, which put a burden on public safety and the schools. He said it is good to keep the city affordable but the tax rate does create some absentee landlordism. He said he is exciting about all the things that are happening with the Recreation Dept.. He said there a lot of things going on in Woburn. He said he would like to see Woburn do what Burlington is doing in terms of commercial growth. He said the city needs to get away from Civil Service and make the city more representative of the community; less white and Irish Catholic and more diverse. He said the city is not keeping up with the community. He said the community is changing. Alderman Tedesco asked if there is anything in particular he would like to accomplish if he is chosen to fill the remainder of the term. Mr. Ferullo said he has no particular agenda or mission, and he would like to stay in his lane. Alderman Tedesco said he knows the lieutenant governor always speaks highly of Mr. Ferullo. Mr. Ferullo said he has been honored to be a civilian appointee to Executive Office of Public Safety. Alderman Gately said the new development in the city will put an additional strain on the police department. Mr. Ferullo said he would suggest the developers bring in private security to augment public safety. **Joanna Gonsalves** – In response to question #1, Dr. Gonsalves said she will bring experience to the position. She said she will not be coming in with an agenda. She said she has an open mind. She said it is getting really expensive to live north of Boston. She said there needs to be a balance between property taxes and the provision of services. In response to question #2, Dr. Gonsalves said being a mother is probably her most important role. She said when she was thinking about putting in her name for the vacant seat on the council, her daughter encouraged her to do so. She said she hopes she can help young people to become civically-engaged. She said Woburn is a model for non-partisan politics. She said Woburn's municipal government conducts itself in a professional manner. She said she is a good candidate because she has had the job before and she knows the responsibilities. In response to question #3, Dr. Gonsalves said tax classification has been beneficial to the residents of the city. She said the city is taking a little bit of a different approach to the Woburn Mall than Burlington did with its commercial areas. She said the city has incredible potential for growth, and she said she likes the approach of studying and understanding the impact of that kind of projects that will be coming to the city in the near future. She said she would like to look at enhancing recycling during the next trash contract. She said the city should take a closer look at increasing the frequency of recycling collection from every other week. She said the city needs to be mindful of its natural resources. She said the development of the city needs to be considered from a public safety perspective because there may be different types of crime involved. She said she is proud of the Woburn Public School system. She said the city should look toward broadening programs for students whose first language is not English. Alderman Gately said when he was first elected to the City Council, Dr. Gonsalves became his mentor and he learned a lot from her. He said she is a brilliant young woman and it was a pleasure to work with her. Alderman Gately said he was fond of Dr. Gonsalves' father and her entire family. He thanked her for her past service on the City Council. Dr. Gonsalves said she served eight years on the council, that is was a different board back then

and it was fun. Alderman Gately said this is his 14<sup>th</sup> year on the council. Dr. Gonsalves said that means the city likes him. **James Healey** – Mr. Healey said he is recently retired and he will have plenty of time to devote to the City Council. He said he thinks he would be a good representative. He said he would like to get involved in legislation like Section 30 of the Zoning Ordinance that the council just adopted. In response to question #2, Mr. Healey said his background is in accounting and that he has two certifications as a chief fraud examiner and a certified protection professional. He said he comes from Newburyport, where he worked under two mayors. He said he worked for the redevelopment authority in Newburyport. He said he can see himself working on budgets and zoning ordinances. He said he is a firm believer in following the rules. He said he has been a co-chairman of a parish council. He said he has the ability to reach out to people and listen to their concerns. Mr. Healey said the city has been doing a good job keeping taxes reasonable. He said he would be interested in considering tax breaks for senior citizens. He said commercial growth is something the city needs. He said public safety is an area of concern. He said he thinks the new Supt. of Schools is steering the School Dept. in the right direction. Alderman Gately thanked Mr. Healey for his interest in the alderman at-large position.

**Michael Maher** – In response to question #1, Mr. Maher said he sees the City Council as the conduit between government and the citizens of the city. He said he has been involved in a lot of things over the years and he thinks he has a lot to offer. He said he likes the community. He said Woburn is a great community. In response to question #2, Mr. Maher said his background is in accounting. He said he is a graduate of Bentley College, now Bentley University. He said he has spent most of his professional career in health care finance and has worked with a lot of insurance companies, as a director and a managing director. He said he has a background in finance and accounting, and he has been involved in contract negotiations. In response to question #3, Mr. Maher said he is happy with the tax rate. He said the city is in the final stage of being built out and that concerns him. He said the city needs to pay attention to municipal services and how they are offered. Alderman Gately asked Mr. Maher how long he served on the Planning Board. Mr. Maher said he was a member of the Planning Board for 3-4 years. He said he was appointed by former Mayor Robert Dever and he filled John Curran's seat. He said there was a lot of development going on when he was a member of the Planning Board. He said that experience was helpful.

**Kevin Meaney** – Mr. Meaney said the primary role of an alderman is to be a leader in the city. He said being on the council is an opportunity to steer the direction of the city. He said he wants to be involved. He said he and his wife decided to raise their children in Woburn and the future of the city is important to him. In response to question #2, Mr. Meaney said he has been involved in public service for 25 years, including 23 in Woburn and the last two in the Framingham/Natick court. He said the Framingham/Natick court covers eight communities. He said he is aware of the trials and tragedies of substance abuse. He said he has been on the front lines of the substance abuse issue and he likes to be proactive. In response to question #3, he said public safety and public service are high on his list of priorities. He said everyone wants to keep taxes low, but there needs to be a balance with quality of life. He said Winchester, Reading and Lexington are great places to live, but the cost of living is so high they end up being one generation towns. He said Woburn needs to be kept affordable for ensuing generations. He said the city needs a new fire station to replace the aged one in Central Square. He said he would like to do more in regard to substance abuse. Alderman Gately said Mr. Meaney's late father was a great man and he is missed. Alderman Mercer-Bruen asked Mr. Meaney if he has any ideas about how to keep Woburn affordable. Mr. Meaney said Woburn will always be a desirable community because of its location. He said the focus ought to be on smart

growth and that having a plan is important. He said he sees a lot of houses getting knocked down and being re-built. He said one of the things the city could address is lot size. He said he has never been a big fan of the Chapter 40B formula because it does not take into account Section 8 federal housing. He said he is open to ideas and suggestions. Mr. Meaney said he appreciates the council giving him time to be interviewed. He said there are 13 qualified people and any choice the council makes will be a good choice. He said the only interest he has in seeking the position is making the city a better place for his family. He said he does not have an agenda. He said he does not know if he would run for re-election if he is appointed. He said it would be an honor and a privilege to serve on the council. **Bryan Melanson** – Mr. Melanson said the role of the council is to do the right thing for the city. He said he can step in for the remainder of the term and know what he's doing right away. He said he left the council 16 or 17 years ago, but he's still been active in the community. He said he has been involved in politics in some form or fashion for the past three decades. He said he served four terms as an alderman and ran twice for mayor. He said politics has been a part of his life. He said when the alderman at-large position opened up, he wanted to participate and help out. In response to question #2, Mr. Melanson said he has been on both sides of the aisle as an alderman and then as a developer, with special permits and ordinances. He said he has been through the process with Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions. In response to question #3, Mr. Melanson said commercial growth is necessary but it has to be balanced with what is best for the community. He said the pending projects at the Woburn Mall, Commerce Way and the Atlantic Gelatin site will provide the community with tremendous revenue. He said new growth during his first year on the council was about \$450,000 and now it's around \$3.5 million. He said Mayor Rabbitt was the type of mayor who made the trains run on time and Mayor Dever spent money in order to bring the city into the new millennium. He said education is hugely important. He said the city has been able to build new elementary schools and a new high school which have been of great benefit to the city. He said the city should put more of an emphasis on maintaining open space and enhancing recreation programs, perhaps by setting up an account. Alderman Gately said Mr. Melanson has been a good resident of the city for his entire life and he was a great alderman. He said he appreciated that when Mr. Melanson ran for mayor he ran a campaign that wasn't full of garbage. Mr. Melanson said running for mayor was one of the highlights of his life. He said he has met a lot of good people and made friends through politics. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she knows Mr. Melanson is qualified for the position. **Justin O'Connor** – Mr. O'Connor said he has been active in community affairs for as long as he can remember. He said he was elected the youngest town meeting member in Winchester's history at the age of 16. He said he has worked mostly in the private sector and he moved around but he always remained active no matter where he lived. He said he has worked with the Pan-Mass Challenge event for the past 28 years, on a board similar to the City Council. He said he worked on a \$195 million deal in Toronto. He said his resume indicates he has been working for the past 45 years. He said he was the first EMT in the Winchester Fire Dept. He said he worked as a call firefighter in Rochester, N.H. He said his diverse background will make him a big asset to the city. He said he likes everything but taxes. He said cops have a tough job. He said one of his roles with the PMC is public safety. He said Woburn does a great job with public safety. He said Woburn does a good job with commercial growth but there are still opportunities in the city. He said the city has the money to work on education. He said he got a great education in Winchester. He said the council needs to pay attention to educational expenditures because that is the biggest part of the budget. Alderman Gately asked Mr. O'Connor how long he has lived in Woburn. Mr. O'Connor said he has lived in

Woburn for about 30 months, but he lived close by for a number of years and he is attuned to Woburn and its history because of his connections to the local fire department. Alderman Gaffney asked if Mr. O'Connor remembers the Beggs & Cobb fire. Mr. O'Connor said he was young when that fire happened. Alderman Gately said Woburn is a unique community and that this City Council has done a tremendous job and financially it is one of the most stable communities in the area. Mr. O'Connor said someone with his background and diversity of experience would enhance the council. **Michael Raymond** – Mr. Raymond said there is a distinction between a ward alderman and an alderman at-large because an alderman at-large has the entire city to consider. He said his experience for the alderman at-large position is unique. He said he served four full terms after serving one partial term on the council. He said he bowls on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. and he is often unable to find a parking place in the Walnut Street lot, and that is a problem. He said he does not know where all those people come from at that time of day. He said the census is coming up in 2020 and the city has to be mindful because there were significant mistakes in 2010. He said Inwood Park wasn't counted and there were ramifications to that. He said he would like to look at business valuations. He said the city typically takes the Assessors at their word. He said the most important thing he can offer the council is his experience in environmental procedure. He said it was 20 years ago when he started his first company. He said he would like to take a look at the rat problem in the city, which he said never should have happened. He said a lot of work was put into the dumpster ordinance. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said the rat problem is not unique to Woburn. In response to question #3, Mr. Raymond said when he fought the battle against the North Woburn landfill, he did so not as an environmentalist but as an activist. He said he wasn't looking for rewards but Parade magazine published a story that went to 2.3 million people back when people still read newspapers. He said Vermont Sen. Patrick Leahy read it into the Congressional Record. He said the story is posted on the Woburn Neighborhood Association's website. Alderman Gately thanked Mr. Raymond for his service on the City Council and said they collaborated on a lot of good stuff. He thanked Mr. Raymond for what he is now doing in North Woburn and Wilmington with the Olin Chemical situation. Mr. Raymond said the Olin Chemical situation is going to be the next nightmare. He said there will be a warehouse with trains coming through Woburn. He said the Surface Transportation Board has met for years and years and there is a group that has filed to take the trains out of the equation but it will require monitoring. He said the issue is the water quality in Halls Brook and the possibility of contamination. He said he is on a first name basis with the administrators of the Olin and Industri-Plex projects and he will continue to be active. **David Ryan** – Responding to question #1, Mr. Ryan said the primary role of an alderman is to represent the people. He said he is very concerned that the council tends to send a lot of things to committee and they disappear. He said he would like to address several issues including crosswalks and parking in the downtown area. He said he has lived in Woburn for 55 of his 57 years and his family has been here longer than that. He said the majority of his family still lives in Woburn. He said he had had a lot of positive experiences and met a lot of good people. He said he has been involved in the Boys & Girls Club and the Kiwanis Club. He said the Boys & Girls Club has never been as good as it is now because of the City Council's decision to allow the use of the Clapp School while the club was being renovated. As a member of the Woburn Redevelopment Authority, he said his focus has been on the downtown and there have been a lot of positive things going on. He said he fears that if there is too much development in East Woburn, people might abandon the downtown. He said the WRA's sign program has worked well, as has the façade program. He said he would like to see the City Council come up with

incentives for the downtown area. He said taxes go hand-in-hand with services. He said he thinks sometimes the city is too conservative with its finances. He said the proposed garage in the downtown section went to committee and was never heard from again. He said it is things like that the City Council should be behind. Alderman Gately said the grant for the garage was ready to go but the Planning Director at the time didn't support it. Mr. Ryan said the council needs to focus on the downtown. He said there is a need for more crosswalks. He said it is difficult to walk from his store at the Woburn Mall to Dunkin' Donuts on Mishawum Road. He said the city has a beautiful common but people can't get to it. He said he thinks public services are great. He said commercial growth seems to be robust. He said he would like to have a better understanding of the school system but added people seem to be staying in Woburn because of the new high school. He said school population is an important issue and one of the questions will be whether the Hurl School opens again. **William Sullivan** – Mr. Sullivan said the primary role of the City Council is legislative. He said he represents the entire city and when an issue arises he would collaborate with the ward alderman. He said he is a life-long resident of Woburn, and when the opportunity to become an alderman came up, he decided he had to go for it. He said he thinks everyone in the city knows him. He said he thinks he can make a difference. He said he served 24 years in the Air Force Reserves and for the past 10 years he has worked as a financial adviser. He said being a part of the Woburn Rotary Club has been a big part of his commitment to the city. He said the Rotary Club is back on track partly because of his efforts. He said he is fiscally conservative but at the same time recognizes the city does have to provide services. He said he wants city services to be cutting edge. He said he understands services cost money. He said that while there may be commercial growth, he is concerned that the city may be growing too fast. Alderman Higgins said she always sees Mr. Sullivan at different events in the city, usually with his daughter. **Kathryn Thifault** – Ms. Thifault said the role of an alderman is about helping the community. She said service has always been a part of her life. She said service is her mission. She said she wants to take on a role in public service. She said she sees public service as a vehicle for change. She said she grew up in a house where community service was always an option. She said she has been involved with the Woburn Public Library. She said she works at Northeastern, where she has gotten to see how important public policy is on the local level. She said it is important for Woburn to have low taxes, but taxes are there for a reason. She said education played a big role in her life. Alderman Gately said Ms. Thifault's family has always been involved with the library. Ms. Thifault said there is a meeting next week to plan the opening day festivities. She said the library has been a part of her life forever. She said she hasn't been in the new addition yet, but she is excited to see it. President Anderson said the addition is amazing. **Charles Viola** – Mr. Viola said the role of the City Council is to enact rules and law and control funding and spending within the city. He said he is seeking the alderman at-large position to give back to the community. He said he works in the Middlesex Sheriff's office and his life's role is helping people in general. He said he was chairman of the city's Water Advisory Committee from 2006-10 and the committee did a lot of great work for the city, including the cleaning and relining of the water pipes in the South End and the augmentation of the Dix Road and Shaker Glen pumping stations. He said he earned an Associate's degree in criminal justice from Middlesex Community College. He said his job involves rehabilitation of inmates on a daily basis. He said there needs to be a balance between taxes and commercial development. He said he is 100-percent pro-public safety. He said all public safety employees deserve to be paid their fair share and there needs to be parity with facilities. He said the schools and the senior center offer great programs and he would like to see more of those types of programs

implemented. He said Woburn's education system is doing a good job with parity. Alderman Gately said Mr. Viola has been involved with municipal affairs of a long time and he is committed to public service. He said Mr. Viola did a great job on the Water Advisory Committee. He said the council is in a tight spot because there are a lot of good candidates and that Mr. Viola deserves a shot. President Anderson thanked Mr. Viola for his interest in the position. He praised Mr. Viola for putting himself out there. He said there are 13 good candidates and a good case could be made for each one of them. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to send all 13 candidates "back for action" at the council's meeting on February 5, 2019; approved, 8-0.

**Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to adjourn;** approved, 8-0. President Anderson adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gordon Vincent  
Clerk of Committees