

MINUTES OF SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL

59 COURT STREET

MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

JUNE 22, 2023 AT 6:30 PM

The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chamber, Municipal Building, 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA at 6:30 PM by President Beltrandi.

The City Clerk called the roll. All thirteen Councilors were present.

Under "Public Participation" the Councilors were addressed by Mark Jachym. He informed the Council that he was a certified recovery coach, advocate, and community outreach coordinator in Springfield. He stated that although the former CORE of Greater Westfield (Coalition for Outreach Recovery and Education) has had some good conversations with City officials about plans for spending opioid settlement money, there is not a lot of support for substance abuse and overdose deaths. He questioned what the money is being spent on. He provided copies of the Mass State Subdivision Agreement for the statewide opioid settlement to the Councilors, noting that he had been in touch with the Attorney General's Office and BSAS (Bureau of Substance Addiction Services). He informed the Council that in the agreement it states that the Commonwealth and municipalities have a commitment to ensure that the spending of the funds reflects input of the community or people who have had experience with the opioid crisis. He stated that CORE has tried to reach out to the Public Health Director and not received a response. The community feels stigmatized and marginalized. He believed that during the year there could have been trainings, prevention, education, access to treatment and grief groups. He gave a shout out to the Westfield Tech Academy and High School guidance counselors who held assemblies throughout the past year. He questioned why the salary proposed for the new outreach coordinator would be coming out of opioid settlement money.

Under "Public Participation" the Councilors were addressed by City Auditor Vicki Moro, to follow up on funds received from the Opioid Settlement. She informed the Council that the City received \$289,111.24 in FY23. She stated that in accordance with State Regulations, the City is unable to use the money until after the books are closed and it is certified as opioid free cash at the end of the fiscal year. Once certified, it will be put into a separate account. The City is required to follow State guidelines on how the funds can be spent. She stated that there is a chart on the Attorney General's website with information on how much each community will receive over the years. Councilor Sullivan asked who the appropriating authority would be. Mrs. Moro stated that she believed the money would be in the Health Department budget but that the appropriations would come before the Council. Councilor Mello asked if the money in the FY24 budget needed to be cut or if there was a way that the money could remain untouched until there was some community engagement. Councilor Sullivan followed up stating that in the FY24 budget there was money for the coordinator position and \$5,000 between Purchase of Service and Supplies. He asked if the vote before the Council was for

General Fund Dollars and for conformation that the money from the opioid settlement would need Council approval to be spent. Mrs. Moro confirmed.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

1. Finance Committee

Councilor Matthews-Kane for the Finance Committee of the Whole offered a motion which was duly seconded, to approve the amended Fiscal Year 2024 budget as submitted. Councilor Harris made a motion which was duly seconded, to amend the motion to restore the \$200,000.00 in the Ambulance Fund. Councilor Mello stated if the budget needed to be cut to avoid a tax increase, cutting from an enterprise fund wasn't useful. Councilor O'Connell echoed Councilor Mello. Councilor Adams stated that the Fire Department could come back and get more money for overtime later in the year if it was needed. Councilor Sullivan stated that Councilor Mello's point was correct that it didn't impact the bottom line. He added that every other department was asked about their overtime budget, and this was the only one that had not been previously cut by the Mayor or level funded. He echoed Councilor Adams about reinstating the money if needed. Councilor Matthews-Kane stated she voted for the cut because so many Councilors agreed they would put it back in if needed. She further stated that the Council is asking for creativity and flexibility from departments in relation to overtime.

Upon motion of Councilor Harris, it was

VOTED: That the sum of \$200,000.00 be restored in the Ambulance Budget.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Brent Bean II	No
John Beltrandi III	No
Michael Burns	No
Ralph Figy	No
Cindy Harris	Yes
Bridget Matthews-Kane	No
Kristen Mello	Yes
Nicholas Morganelli, Jr.	No
Mary O'Connell	Yes
William Onyski	No
Richard Sullivan, Jr.	No
James Adams	No
Dan Allie	No

The President declared the motion lost.

Councilor Morganelli stated that he would be voting no on the budget. He would have liked to have made some cuts to the budget. He believed the School Department should have come in with at least 1% in cuts to prepare for the loss of ESSR funds next year. Councilor Mello informed that Council that a tax increase for 2.5% is roughly 2.1 million dollars. She suggested discussing what cuts they could make now instead of November, informing the Council that 47% of spending in the budget comes from school and 53% of spending comes

from the city. She further suggested choosing a set number to reduce the budget by and making 47% come from school and 53% come from the city to make it fair and equitable.

Upon motion of Councilor Matthews-Kane for the Finance Committee of the Whole, it was

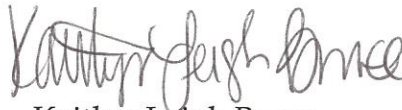
VOTED: That the amended Fiscal Year 2024 budget be approved.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Brent Bean II	Yes
John Beltrandi III	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
Ralph Figy	Yes
Cindy Harris	Yes
Bridget Matthews-Kane	Yes
Kristen Mello	No
Nicholas Morganelli, Jr.	No
Mary O'Connell	Yes
William Onyski	Yes
Richard Sullivan, Jr.	Yes
James Adams	Yes
Dan Allie	No

At 6:58PM, and upon motion of Councilor Harris, it was VOTED: To ADJOURN.

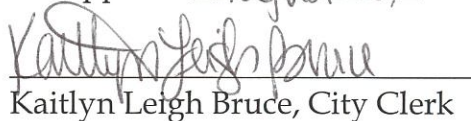
A true record, Attest:



Kaitlyn Leigh Bruce
City Clerk/Clerk of the Council

Presented to the Mayor

For approval August 18, 2023



Kaitlyn Leigh Bruce, City Clerk

Approved by the Mayor

8.21 2023



Michael A. McCabe, Mayor