

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.  
GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Chair Marsan called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present: Clr. MacLaren, Clr. Pesce, Clr. Santos, Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, Clr. Soto, and Chair Marsan.

Acceptance of the Agenda

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Valley to accept the agenda.  
UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation/Moment of Silence

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and remained standing for the Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence for: Mike Condon, Kathleen Mulligan, Santo Finocchiaro, Tim Sheehy, and Dominga Romano.

Organizational Business

Election of Council Chair - Councilor Pesce nominated Councilor Soto

Councilor MacLaren clarified why she will abstain from this vote. Councilor Soto did not reach out to her at any point although it is her understanding that she was in communication with other members of the Council. She wants to set the precedent that her vote should not be taken for granted. That said, she also wants to be clear that she is not abstaining to raise any questions about her character or her qualifications whatsoever. She simply wants to ensure that whoever our Chair is prioritizes unity within this body and communicates fairly with all its members. She has no doubt that she is capable of those things. She does not know her well enough to make an assertion one way or another. Therefore, she does not feel comfortable voting yes or no. She will abstain.

Vice-Chair Soto: thanked Councilor McLaren for that clarification. The day they spoke was the day of the training. Councilor Soto noted she was supposed to schedule a coffee with Councilor MacLaren. She did not get to do that unfortunately and wanted to publicly apologize. She did lobby her position with other members and appreciates Councilor MacLaren's courage in speaking up.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 1 abstention (Clr. MacLaren) 1 no (Clr. Simard)

Election of Council Vice-Chair – Councilor Valley nominated Councilor Pesce for Vice-Chair.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 yes, 1 abstention (Clr. MacLaren)

Election/appointment of Acting Mayor – Councilor Santos, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to nominate Councilor Marsan

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

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Adoption of City Council Rules and Procedures – MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to adopt.

MOTION BY: Councilor Santos, seconded by Councilor Valley to amend page 2, Section a) to add language All Council meetings shall be concluded by 11:00 p.m. “unless extended by the majority vote of the Council”

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 yes, 4 no (Clr. Pesce, Clr. Marsan, Clr. Simard, Clr. Drew)

Councilor Drew questioned why the following language was added on page 3, number 8, “The City Council may enter into executive session for any of the ten reasons identified under Open Meeting Law, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 3-2©, Section 21 (a)(1) “through 21 (a)(10)”

Solicitor O’Neill noted the previous Solicitor included this to comply with state law.

Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Marsan: Rule I, Section d), under the notice for special meetings. She would like to strike after three or more members, strike by written notice delivered to the place of residence or business of each and insert that it may be emailed. However, such printed material shall be available to Councilors as requested. If Councilors has a special meeting, they can then have the packet, or the information emailed. But if Councilors wanted printed material, they could pick it up from the Clerk’s office. This is only for special meetings.

Solicitor O’Neill pointed out that the last amendment failed as it requires a 2/3 vote to change the rules. To pass this, it needs six votes.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANMOUS

Councilor Pesce: Under Rule XI, Public Participation and this amendment is in the spirit of the confusion, the mass confusion that has been recently been surrounding email submission for public participation. In reading this, there is really no protocol. Rather than have it been discretionary and having that narrative out there that we are not applying equally the rules of saving email submission, she drafted something that may make it clearer. One question to the Solicitor first. In reading this it begins “the citizens of the City of Methuen” and it continues to reference throughout that paragraph “as citizens”. She asked if this rule says that the only people who should be participating in public participation need to be citizens of the City of Methuen. She knows that’s not standard protocol but.

Solicitor O’Neill said public participation is open. It does not have to be the citizens of Methuen.

Councilor Pesce noted under this rule this whole paragraph references “the citizens of Methuen” if we understand that it is open to the public, just wanted to make sure.

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Drew to amend the language midway through that paragraph by striking “All citizens wishing to speak, to the end of that paragraph strike all of that and replace it with: “Citizens wishing to speak in person may sign up at the scheduled meeting by providing their name and full address on the sheet provided at said

meeting. Speakers shall be heard in the order in which they are listed on the signup sheet. A citizen may also be recognized by the Council Chair or any member of the City Council, through the Chair. Additionally, a citizen wishing to have a statement read into record at a City Council meeting may do so by submitting their statement along with the request for the same and their full name and address to the Council Clerk's office by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the City Council meeting for which they would like the statement read. Such statements shall be limited to two single sided pages, double spaced, and at least 12-point font for easier reading. Any statements that do not comply with these requirements may not be admissible at the meeting. Clerk shall make reasonable efforts to notify the sender of corrections needed. However, such corrections will not extend the submission deadline.

Councilor Simard noted individuals may not want to speak right away but after public participation they may want to add something.

Councilor Pesce said "a citizen may be recognized by the Council Chair or any member of the City Council through the Chair." That is already in the rules. If they do not sign up on the sheet, we will open it for anybody else and they will still have that right.

Councilor Marsan commented the main portion of what she is trying to amend is someone could send in a letter that is going to be read into the minutes not just people who are recognized after the signup sheet.

Councilor Pesce if this does pass, she would request that it be posted on the website with clear instructions, so the people know exactly the criteria they need to have it read correctly into the record.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, Rule VII, Section e) page 8, to strike the entire section which says "all resolutions shall be read in full after the reading of the title further reading is waived by a unanimous consent of the City Council members". And start with after "after reading the title on all resolutions and ordinances a vote to require reading the full measure unless further the reading is waived." Sometimes there are some lengthy resolutions.

Councilor Pesce asked if there would a protocol of what would be read in its place. She asked if it would just be the number.

Councilor Valley responded just the title of the resolutions and the ordinances. Council would take a vote.

Councilor Pesce asked if it is at the discretion of the Chair.

Chair Soto clarified this Council and Councils prior to that were not reading the entire resolution. Their rules and regulations say you must read the whole document. They have been reading just the title. Councilor Pesce but not complying with the rules.

Motion seconded by Councilor Marsan

Councilor Simard asked if Council is doing that moving forward or on a case by case basis.

Councilor Valley responded moving forward. That is what we have been doing in the past two years just reading the title.

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Chair Soto clarified we are just reading the title, not the entire ordinance.

Councilor Drew expressed concern about the people watching at home that may not have this packet that may not what every one of these are. They may want to know what TR-00 whatever it is so they have a full understanding of it. It might hinder the ability for people to understand what we are voting on.

Councilor DiZoglio agreed with Councilor Drew. We should be as transparent as possible, and it is our job. He knows it takes up time, but we are elected officials and our time is to the people of Methuen. If he must read a resolution or ordinance, he is happy to do so. But it is to keep transparency. He cannot support just reading a title.

Solicitor O'Neill noted if you look at the website every agenda has a link to each resolution and ordinances that are there. He has no opinion whether Council wants to read them into the record or not. They are available as soon as the agenda is posted there. A link is there for people to download.

Councilor DiZoglio said he knows plenty of 80-year-old senior citizens that do not know how to work a cellphone let alone look at a computer. He does not think just reading an ordinance is a big deal.

Councilor Marsan said he likes the amendment of reading just what is on their agenda, that is the title of it. Most all the people that tune in, that are here, they have a copy of the agenda. It is online like the Solicitor said. They have the full article in front of them so for us to just reiterate it, it is not necessary. He does not believe it is necessary for Council to do that. Everyone has this agenda in front of them.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew)

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, page 9, Rule VIII, Section d), "All committees of the City Council shall consist of an odd number of three or more" amend to strike "or more" because the next number would be five. That would be a quorum for the City Council and the norm is three.

Councilor Pesce asked if there is ever a situation where they have an alternate. Would that have been written for that sort of thing. Two would be equally detrimental. You could be at a standstill with two. If you did not have the full committee, the committee would not meet.

Chair Soto indicated that is correct. Motion seconded by Councilor DiZoglio.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Pesce to amend page 9, Rule IX (a) to strike Fiscal Analyst position. That because that position does not exist anymore.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. Marsan, Councilor Drew)

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Pesce, to amend page 9, Rule IX, Section (b) add to language "or the Assistant Clerk", a Clerk Pro tempore shall be elected.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

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Chair Soto passed the gavel. Two Councilor Pesce's amendment and clarification from the Solicitor where we got clarified where it states, "citizens of Methuen". Now that we're clear that all public participation is open to all, she'd like to add, page 11, Rule XI, Section c) third line down where it says "shall state his/her name and address", she would like to add the word "full" that way we can distinguish if they are a citizen of the City of Methuen or not. Seconded by Councilor Valley.

Councilor Valley asked if it makes any difference if they are a Methuen resident or not.

Councilor Soto said the only distinction is when we have public participation, if you are going to say 123 Main Street, she would like to know if it is in Methuen, Andover, etc. You could be a business owner. That way we have contacts of where they are.

Councilor Drew you are just asking for them to identify their city, not zip code and all that. Chair Soto replied, "full address".

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 yes, 3 no (Clr. Simard, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew)

Solicitor O'Neill reminded Council these will not take effect tonight. Council needs to vote on them at the next meeting.

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor Pesce to adopt, as amended.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Chair Soto thanked Councilors for entrusting her as the Chair for 2026. She is honored to serve. She welcomed back Councilors that served alongside her and welcomed the newly elected Councilors. She said she looks forward to a new year for us to serve our citizens in unison alongside with the Mayor and our CAFO. *"Tonight, I wanted to provide you with some context of housekeeping. I sat where you are today as a new Councilor with no context, no guidance, and just trying to figure it out as I go and very nervous in that chair. With that, I want you to feel comfortable in your seats tonight and want to give you some context. If Councilors or the Mayor wish to email her, please be sure to include, and this is so we can make sure what you are requesting of me as the Chair and the Vice is also added to that email, our Clerk and our Assistant Clerk are also on there. As you work on this body, you will have a request that may have from the Mayor or her. Therefore, we make sure that we document what you need, and we get it on the agenda. If that could be the chain of emails, she would truly appreciate it and we can get back to you in a timely manner. Second, when placing the item on the agenda she would ask that they involve the CAFO and the City Solicitor. Some of your items are going to include asking questions if there is funding available. She is a great resource, and this last Council did not take enough advantage of what she can offer to the group. So, if you could please include her on your research when you are looking to do an ordinance or resolution. Great asset, same thing with our City Solicitor. Once the City Solicitor speaks to you in regards to the item that you're putting on the table whether it's an order, resolution, or ordinance, and its approved by his legal department that's when it will hit the agenda. Please make sure that the Solicitor has done that review. Once that is done, please send it to the Chair, include the Vice-Chair and both of our clerks. The title you can but it will not get onto the agenda until you have the additional*

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*material that is needed for that agenda item. If I ask the Mayor to do that by a certain hour and that is something that Council and previous Chairman was very adamant about. Things had to be on time by a certain hour. If she is going to hold the Mayor to that, she needs to hold the Council to that. She wants to make sure that we are equal. Council Committees – she knows that some attended the training, and you can let me know the committees that you are interested in serving on prior to the next meeting she would greatly appreciate it. It would make her life easier. She wants to accommodate and support Councilors. She will be appointing Councilors to those committees for the next meeting. Councilors can email or text her. She is readily available, and we will get that done for you for the next meeting. At the Mayor's request and her full support, he requests that Councilors email department heads but also CC him. In conversation he has requested that we CC his Chief of Staff. They are very good at getting back to you. As a courtesy, the Mayor would like to know what is happening in this building. We should extend that courtesy to him. That way everyone is informed, and we know what is happening. I want to also point something out when you are emailing your CAFO on certain monetary items or the Solicitor, those emails, the Mayor could be excluded from those emails because they are independent people. You may be researching something; they could be independent. You do not have to add the Mayor. Public participation – as Council members and members of the community know, residents are welcome to speak at every meeting that we have at that is including special meetings, public hearings. She would like the public to refrain from personally attacking this body or you are attacking the constituency or anybody who comes to public participation. Decorum is very important for us to do business. The public is expected to refrain from outbursts, shouting, and disruptive behavior while you are speaking as a Councilor, just like you are giving them the courtesy when they come into this room and you're listening because you'll sit here for hours at a time and listen to someone complain, someone speak out about how they adamantly feel about things that are happening in the city. Of course, we should listen to them and just like you are giving them that decorum, she expects them to give Councilors the same decorum. She will hold them accountable on this floor. She hopes that Council could partake with her on that. She also pointed out she believes there should be something that we read at every meeting. She will assign it to the Vice-Chair to read a decorum statement at every meeting from now on. "Why? Because if you are told what I expect of you, then at that point you know how to act." She read the following: "During public participation, residents shall address the Chair with their concerns when they speak on any issue or concern to them. If a speaker/member of the audience becomes disruptive through yelling, screaming, or unruly behavior I will direct the Sgt. At Arms, who will be the Police Chief or their designee to intervene. It will then be in the responsibility of the Sgt. At Arms to restore order and ensure decorum is maintained". Same thing with us. I expect you, the Councilor, to maintain decorum.*

### Public Participation

Linda Soucy, 10 Kirk Street, spoke about the snow emergency. She is in favor of the snow emergency parking ban option #2. After speaking with other residents and the Chief, there seems to be a general agreement that option #1 should not be implemented. There is not enough time to properly educate residents about the new policy and it could be confusing. Option #2 maintains the current winter parking ban but increases enforcement measures. Fines would increase from \$25 to \$100 for the first violation and \$200 for subsequent violations. Vehicles would also be subject to towing and the ban would be enforced during every declared snow emergency. The increase to \$100 would be more of a deterrent to people leaving their vehicles on the street. She also supports the enhanced notification systems that could be used, specifically the use of a flashing blue light during snow emergency to alert residents to move their vehicles. Other communities have adopted this system and it appears to be working. She likes that option #2 includes accommodations in municipal lots for those who may not have access to off street parking, particularly when landlords do not permit tenants to use driveways, even if they have a driveway. For example, Broadway has several mixed-use buildings and there is no parking for people who live above the businesses. It makes sense to continue with the current ban while increasing the fines and enforcement measures. If after this winter, these changes prove ineffective, then a reassessment can be made in March or April to consider moving forward with Option #1. She spoke personally that this is a public safety issue. She experienced an ambulance not being able to get down their street after a snowstorm several years ago because people left their cars on the street. The EMTs had to leave their ambulances down the street as they could not get the ambulance down, so they had to carry the stretcher down street and their equipment. This would not have been necessary if cars were removed during the snow emergency. We all know that sometimes just moments can make the decision between life and death. She is in favor of option #2 personally and from the Methuen Arlington Neighborhood, we have spoken about it at several meetings and they are in favor of it. She agrees that we need decorum, and we all need everybody to get along. It is very important that we change the appearance of Methuen right now because it is not good.

Mike Welch, 8 Nelson Avenue, welcomed the new Council and congratulated the newly elected Council members. This is his third city council since he started working on the roadways in Methuen. In the Spring of 2023 when he was informed that Nelson Avenue was an unaccepted road, he said “what are you talking about?” “What’s an unaccepted road?” he started digging in and began with the city’s comprehensive accepted street listing, not accepted street listing, private way list dated July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (comprehensive) and labeled “draft for reference purposes only”. He took that list and compiled it. That list contained 940 accepted streets. It contained 363 unaccepted streets, 27 private streets, for a total of 1334 streets listed. In the beginning City Councilor Saffie said her street was unaccepted but that the state had accepted her street. It got him curious, so he pulled the Mass DOT roadway records for Methuen,

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compared that to this spreadsheet, and found numerous discrepancies. He carried on and went to our Assessor's office, the Patriot Property, pulled all the properties that we are collecting taxes off, compared that and found numerous discrepancies. He just kept working down, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, my map on city's webpage, compared. He kept finding discrepancies between all these places. He also compared the city recycled list and plow routes and finding discrepancies on all of these. Since November 2024 he has been working with Mass DOT and addressing a lot of the discrepancies between the state and the city's listing. To date, he is very comfortable saying that a total of 923 accepted, unaccepted, and private roads in Methuen not counting state roads and paper streets. There are 53 state roads which include 12 are both city and state accepted, such as Broadway, it is both a city portion of it and a state portion and another 73 paper streets in the city. A paper street is paper, there is no road there. And of those 73. 40 of them do not have any taxpayer properties so why do we even have those listed? These streets are all in the original listing. There is still more work to be done with Mass DOT. We have things that are submitted that are still waiting to be passed. He missed the November 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. There is seven left to be done. There is another submission waiting to be sent in for the Town Forest Road and there are 49 streets that are accepted by the state but not accepted by the city, but we are working on that now with Pat Bowers. And the 17 roads that are partially accepted by the state, partially accepted and partially unaccepted. Those need to be addressed. If any City Councilor would like to meet with him and go over these, he is more than happy to do that with anyone. His number is 978-618-2279 and his email is [MikeWelch2@icloud.com](mailto:MikeWelch2@icloud.com). He welcomes sharing this with anybody who is interested.

Reading and Acceptance of Minutes from Previous Meetings:

December 8, 2025 Tax Classification Public Hearing

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 yes, 4 present (Clr. MacLaren, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, Clr. Santos, not Councilors at the time)

December 8, 2025 Special Meeting, and December 15, 2025 regular meeting

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 yes, 4 present (Clr. MacLaren, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, Clr. Santos)

December 15, 2025 Regular Meeting

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 yes, 4 present (Clr. MacLaren, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, Clr. Santos)

Proclamations/Correspondence: None

Consideration of Appointments: None

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Presentations/Projects/Department Updates: Superintendent John N. Lavoie Ref: Greater Lawrence Technical School (GLTS) to sell its existing hangar at Lawrence Municipal Airport and to purchase the adjacent hangar.

Superintendent Lavoie congratulated Councilors on their election. He stated that he does not need a vote today as there are some last-minute changes received from their attorney today at 4:00 p.m. That must go back to their School Committee, but it is important to present this to you today so that Council could possibly vote on it at their next meeting. The reason for that is the hangar that the owner is selling is in a rush to sell. He gave them until Friday. He spoke to the owner today and he said he would give them a little more time given some of the complications they are finding. He will not need a vote tonight. It will give Council a chance to review it and ask questions. He not only needs a motion for approval of purchasing the hangar but also there is going to be a need to change the Regional Charter Agreement because we are going to be leasing land and that is a change in their Charter. They need approval for that as well. The same language and procedure they used for the first hangar. He has a document with some different language on the Charter itself for Council to review. If they have any questions, he would be happy to answer them.

Chair Soto asked if he brought the information for Council this evening or will it be emailed.

Superintendent Lavoie said he has the language for the sub-lease that would need to happen possibly at the next Council meeting. He submitted that document to Council. In terms of purchasing the hangar there would be no cost to the city. They will be using different funds that they have from the school. The first thing would be selling the original hangar that they have and using those funds to put towards the purchase of the new hangar. In talking to a gentleman who brokers hangars out of Lawrence Airport, he anticipates that the value could be \$300,000/\$350,000. To upgrade their existing hangar they had allocated \$450,000 because they had to put, in order to get it approved by the state, for a school space, they have to put a bathroom in there, air conditioning and heat, better lighting and all the changes and upgrades cost them about \$400,000, which has already been allocated through one of our budgets. Taking that money and putting it towards the new hangar, that is another \$400,000. They have approximately \$750,000 between those two items to purchase a new hangar which is selling for \$795,000 and the remainder of the money they're looking to use a little bit of the E & D (excess and deficiency) account and possible some of their rental money that they take in so a very minimal amount of money would come out of their E & D account in order to purchase that hangar. In the end, it would be at no cost to our communities. But they are still looking for Council approval to purchase it. that would be one vote they would need, and the other vote would be to make that change in their Regional Agreement. The language the Council has before them in the Regional Agreement is the same exact language that we utilize. The difference is the cost, monthly cost for the lease is about just under \$200 more for this lease than the other one because it is a larger space and there is more land with it. The reason to the advantage of this hangar is not only that it has a bathroom, it already has air conditioning and heating system in it. It also has a larger space that they can put all their three aircrafts in it, and it gives them more space for their classrooms and more space. It has a small loft now and so we would expand that a little bit for our

classroom space and then having the bathroom. They would add one more bathroom to it is a huge factor. The biggest cost to upgrading our existing hangar is putting in a new bathroom. They'd have to put a new store line which is about a 300' to go from the hangar up to Sutton Road and Sutton Street in North Andover which is a huge cost plus a lot of approval they'd be going through. They bought this hangar originally because it was the only hangar that they could purchase. They had to have a hangar to get the program approved. They anticipated improving it. but this option is a much better option for us and its part of the same west side hangar association. The west side hangar association has three hangars, ours and one that was attached to ours and this one which is an individual hangar. It is also part of that association. They will still be in the part of the same location. It is right next door to the hangar they have right now. He had submitted some possible motions that the Council could consider. He also has a motion that the clerk of the City of Methuen might have put together which would suffice as well in terms of purchasing.

Councilor Valley: you said you have a broker to sell the hangar. She asked if he had a market analysis or an appraisal that you can provide a copy to Council.

Superintendent Lavoie said they have not gotten a final appraisal, but they have spoken to a gentleman at Falcon Air who sells hangars out at the airport. He valued it at \$300,000 to \$350,000. He has just sold two or three of his own hangars out there that are similar in size. He believes that is the market price for it. he says the market price for hangar we are purchasing is 1.2 million and the school is paying \$975,000. They will get an official appraisal for it but this time the speed of trying to get this done and the holidays they have not been able to get someone out there.

Councilor Valley asked if there is a potential buyer.

Superintendent Lavoie said they do not have a buyer at this time. Although they know the hangars, in talking to this gentleman, he was saying that hangars are in high demand in terms of you just cannot find a hangar in any airport. People are desperate to find them. The hangar the school is purchasing has two other buyers that are even willing to pay what the school is paying. But the seller wants to sell it to the school because he wants to help the school. That is one of the main reasons, but he does not want to lose a sale. He is willing to extend his time a little bit to make this happen. They still must meet with the City of Lawrence this to talk about them purchasing. The school feels good about that. They must purchase the hangar for the school again or any one of the municipalities because based on our Charter, the law of 1960, which the school was built under they can only purchase from a municipality. That is why they would have to purchase it first and the school would purchase it back from them, which they did on the last hangar. They would be holding onto it for a few months before they could get all the paperwork done and all the votes done.

Councilor Santos thanked Superintendent Lavoie for the package of information and how the school is working. She congratulated the Superintendent and thanked him for the work he is doing with our youth.

Councilor Drew said he is a graduate of Greater Lawrence Tech in 2006 and is supportive of GLTS. Anything we are going to do to expand programs there, he is happy to see that we are doing that. He was reading the amendment. He is confused with this amendment and what we are amending. It is not really outlined where in your agreement that we are amending anything. Also, the resolve portion of this amendment does not

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read well and does not seem to make a whole lot of sense to him. There is going to be operational impacts to getting a bigger facility. He asked if there will be a larger impact to the City of Methuen when it comes to the amount of money, we give to Greater Lawrence Tech, what our portion will be to the school to help with these operating costs.

Superintendent Lavoie said the operational costs will come out of their operational budget which is part of their Chapter 70 funds. In terms of the leasing, the heat, the air conditioning that will take place. They also pay for plowing. They are part of the three paying consortium and they all chip in a certain amount of money for the plowing and for the lease. They all chip in based on their square footage and what their percentage is going to be for the lease. It is all going to come out of their operational so there would be no impact from changes for what they would assess Methuen because that assessment comes from the state and the school doesn't set that assessment so there will be no changes because of this change. This new hangar is very minimal in change in cost because it is going to be about 20% more than they paid in the past. He gave the figures on what the amendments monthly cost is and what the yearly cost is for the lease. The biggest cost is what they pay for the lease yearly and its under \$10,000, \$7,291 per year toward the lease and then a little bit towards the plowing and the taxes to the Town of North Andover.

Councilor Drew said it is not called out what line we are putting this to on the amendment if this is going at the end of the agreement.

Superintendent Lavoie said the amendment is the document he distributed. That is the change in the Regional Agreement. If you look at the language there, the real change is only in the square footage and the cost. The reason it must be changed is it is a different location and a different in terms of the plot plan within the airport. It is different than the one we have. That means we must change the language that is in our existing agreement to reflect this exact hangar.

Councilor Drew you are going to resubmit. When you resubmit could you just put the line in the actual agreement, which one we are going to be amending and where this is going to end up. That way it is clear for everybody.

Superintendent Lavoie said he will forward the existing agreement they have now and then they will be able to see the change highlighted. He will make sure it is clear.

Councilor Drew to Solicitor: The resolve ending of that reads funny to me. It almost seems like we are buying it, but we are not buying it. the district is correct?

Solicitor O'Neill said when the Superintendent sends it, he will review it and try to explain.

Chair Soto asked Mr. Lavoie to please send it to the Council Clerk and she will distribute it to the entire Council.

CAFO Duprey explained there are going to be three votes in total. This is going to completely change what was presented in this agenda. Her suggestion would be to table that one and then we will have to add two additional. In total there will be three. We can work with the Superintendent and legal to get that written correctly.

Chair Soto passed the gavel. She stated she called the airport and spoke to Mr. Franciso Urena who runs the airport. He explained to her that the new hangar would be about 5,000 square feet. He did also say that if you could not sell your hangar, but it seems like you could right away, it could be leased for a period. Superintendent Lavoie yes

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Chair Soto said you have not gone in front of them, but they did say they were in favor. She wanted to find out if they were in favor of this transition where it is an educational program to go to that one hangar. But in essence you are on their agenda. Before you go to them do you need the agreement of all communities or no or you can go to them and then get approval.

Superintendent Lavoie said they can go to the airport commission for a vote to purchase. They must approve the purchase. We can still go to our cities and towns. We cannot finalize and sign on the dotted line until they say yes to it. He has spoken to a few on the commission already and they have been very supportive of everything they have tried to do. He does not suspect that they are going to have an issue, until you do it you do not know. That is another reason for us to wait until the next Council meeting because he is going to their next meeting the second week of January for that vote. He should have the vote by then by the time he brings it back to Council.

Chair Soto the objective is to sell the hangar that we did buy.

Superintendent Lavoie said they paid \$300,000

Chair Soto and you did say “no cost to the community” at purchase.

Superintendent Lavoie responded exactly. There will not be a penny of cost to the community.

Chair Soto asked if we get to charge the school a fee for giving them the money.

Superintendent Lavoie responded no

Chair Soto 975,000 is what you are paying for the hangar that is 1.2 million and it is an upgrade of 5,000 square feet. Superintendent Lavoie responded yes. Chair Soto said the other one is 3,000 and you do not have to do the upgrade for this one. It is all ready to go.

Superintendent Lavoie said this hangar is not as beautiful or designed as well but it is very close. We spent five million building that one. This one is \$975,000. It is not bricks and mortar, but the inside is nice and set up perfectly for what they need it for. They do not have to invest any money or into it once they own it.

#### Mayor’s Report

Mayor Beauregard congratulated Chair Soto on her historic election as the first Hispanic Chair of the Methuen City Council, notably the first person of Dominican decent to wheel the gavel and lead Methuen’s Legislative Branch of Government. This is a major milestone in the history of our city. He recognizes the special significance it holds for Methuen’s Hispanic residents and the pride that must be theirs tonight. Congratulations.

Chair Soto thanked the Mayor for his kind words.

Mayor Beauregard said he has arranged for the CBIZ auditors to set aside time for a follow up meeting with the City Council and School Committee on Wednesday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m. That meeting will take place in the Great Hall and the auditors will be joining us again as they did last time to continue the discussion and provide more time for Q & A now that we have newly seated Council and School Committee.

Today he authorized the reposting of the RFP for the financial audit of the school district which he plans to fund using Free Cash once Free Cash is certified by the Commonwealth in the next few weeks.

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His next meeting of the finance subcommittee is happening this week as they continue their push to get an early start on the budget planning process for Fiscal Year 27.

The next meeting of the School, Health, and Safety Task Force is scheduled for next Thursday.

On tonight's agenda we have a contract in front of Council to continue the next phase of the carpet replacement project at the Timony. As he has noted before the Timony is the school that has had the most extensive needs in terms of carpet replacements. This will go a long way toward helping us wrap up the work there and then begin moving on to address the same issues in the other buildings. He gave a shout out to the school custodians who have been working to improve the cleanliness of each buildings, adding new door sweeps and DPW's push to improve the vegetation management coupled with the exclusion work the custodians have been doing have all resulted in significant improvements on the school facilities and helped us keep a lid on the rodent issue. The inspector continues to do his walk throughs. The Mayor indicated he would do a better job of sharing school related updates during his Mayor's report moving forward.

Regarding the trash and recycling RFP the draft RFP was put together by Director Bower and the procurement team. The Solicitor, the CAFO and he received it today. The next step is to complete a legal review of the draft before it is posted. Once the draft has been vetted and the final version of the RFP is ready to post, he will circulate a copy to the Council.

Regarding the online unaccepted ways map, the content for the website is developed. It is GIS based and they expect it to be ready to publish in the coming days.

Regarding some coming attractions toward the next meeting, he is going to be asking Council to form a creation of the new Economic Development Coordinator and Sanitation Coordinator positions that were included FY 26 now that the hiring freeze is behind us. These roles will allow us to double down on our Economic Development efforts with the goal of expanding our commercial tax base providing new in-house support services for businesses and creating a one-stop shop for the small business community that will make easier for them to start and maintain businesses in the city. In terms of the Sanitation Coordinator role is there to improve our trash and recycling program and partnership with the next vendor and also implement waste production measures to help reduce our tonnage costs which are frankly a budget buster to say the least. So those will be moving at the next meeting with your consent.

Also note we are in the process of producing the city and school payroll reports for the 2025 calendar year. Our goal will be to finish that project and have all the information posted on the website by the end of February at the absolute latest.

This is unrelated but he is also aiming to bring formal plans to rezone 180 Pleasant Valley Street and 36 Bolyston Street. Those are the former Pleasant Valley and Currier School buildings to pave the way for the development of new housing for low income Methuen seniors and Veterans. That is something he is coordinating with legal.

Regarding some upcoming events Methuen restaurant week is happening during the week of January 25<sup>th</sup> with the help of a new Methuen business alliance and Chair Soto, Representative Hamilton, and others. If you are trying to figure out what to do with your Christmas tree, St. Monica School and Scout Troup 60 are providing free pickup

services for Methuen residents. You can find information about that on Methuen Life Facebook page. Also keep in mind you can dispose of your tree for no charge by dropping it off at the Nicolson stadium parking lot or the Transfer Station.

The Methuen Recreation Department is hosting indoor tennis sessions and basketball clinics. In the coming weeks you can learn more and sign up at Methuenrec.com.

Councilor Drew asked if the CBIZ auditors would be here in person on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Mayor Beauregard said they would join remotely as they did last time. He is not inclined to cover the cost of their hotel stay, their flight, perhaps any other travel costs when we do have the ability to engage with them remotely. His plan is to stick with that due to the cost of having them here in person.

Councilor Drew expressed concern that he was not on this Council when they did this original one and it honestly seemed like they were being talked at. They were just reading through a slide show. He asked: “What is that cost that you don’t want to incur to the city for having them fly out and stay for a day or two?”

Mayor said he would have to look at what the specifics would be relative to lodging, transportation costs. However, something that might be helpful is perhaps, and this is something he didn’t do last time and apologized, rather than having the presentation done in the manner in which he thought it was best, It might be helpful if the Council and members of the School Committee have any thoughts, specifically about how they would like the presentation to occur this time, any specific questions they would like to have addressed we can provide that to the auditors and they can be prepared to answer them the night of so that we’re not wasting anyone’s time. Perhaps, there is a better way to handle it.

Councilor Drew asked when the trash RFP draft is expected to go before Council. End of March, end of February? Can you give us a solid date?

Mayor Beauregard said at this point the next step would be legal reviews. The Solicitor is going to look at the draft and for the most part it is something that DPW and procurement have been working on for the past several weeks. It is at a good place right now. He would anticipate trying to get that in front of the Council. His hope is to get it to Council by the end of February certainly because of challenges surrounded with the concept of standing up potentially with a completely new trash program, potentially with a new vendor that takes time. That is something that we would want to tackle and have approve well in advance of the July 1st start date.

Councilor Drew said Council can anticipate before the end of February Council should see something in front of them.

Mayor Beauregard said that is his goal.

Chair Soto passed the gavel – Mr. Mayor, you mentioned rezoning the Pleasant Valley and Currier school. They were declared surplus by the School Committee. Those come to Council for Council to declare it surplus. “Are you rezoning post that or prior?”

Mayor Beauregard said this is the discussion he is having with legal regarding the exact process that entails. There were certain stipulations that were attached to the surplus declaration by the school committee. There are some legal questions about how many of them can stand. Nevertheless, his goal is to get it to a point where we are at that place where the Council is considering the rezone. We are working on the specifics of

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that process identifying internally so that we can get it to you in an expeditious manner but also an appropriate manner.

#### CAFO Report

CAFO Duprey welcomed the newly elected Councilors and introduced herself as the Chief Administrative Financial Officer. She is available to answer any questions at any time for any of the Councilors on any information provided to them or if they are trying to put together something to come in front of Council, she will provide any information she can. She has an open-door policy, please feel free to contact her with whatever they need.

#### Requests of Councilors

Update regarding the status of the RFPs for garbage and recycling services (Req. of Clr. Soto)

Request to DPW – Update on Unaccepted Roads Map – Request that DPW provide an update on the unaccepted roads map, including the expected completion date and what information will be published on the City website (Req. of Clr. Valley)

#### Public Service:

Grants: P.S. Grant #31121099 SO Pole on Berkley Street, Methuen, MA

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve. UPON  
ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Licenses: Vehicle for Hire Company License Application: (Renewal) M & M & I  
Transportation, LLC, 34 Sugar Pine Lane, Methuen, MA 01844

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Simard to approve.

Councilor DiZoglio questioned the registration which is expired. He asked if there is an updated registration for the vehicle. It is concerning to him that he does not have an updated registration. He cannot vote on this right now unless he receives one.

Mayor Beauregard said this is something that would make sense one thing that he would recommend is the prospect of tabling it because that did come up as a question. The question might be the individual provided outdate supporting documentation, etc. A table would give us the opportunity to clarify that. That is a question that would satisfy a lot of folks to be able to have that answer definitively.

Councilor DiZoglio asked if the individual is working and operating this vehicle.

Mayor Beauregard said he is not directly familiar with the specifics of his current business operations, whether that is something that is running today. That is something that we can confirm with the applicant and can work with the clerk on doing that.

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor Valley to table. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 yes, 2 no (Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew)

**Contract(s):**

**C-26-63** J.J. Phalen & Sons Co., Inc., 120 Lumbar Lane, Tewksbury, MA 01876 for Softball Dugouts & Installation at Francis Morse Park (Burnham Road) in the Amount of \$84,000.00

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve.

Councilor Drew referred to the front page, item #2, he noticed it says “they have the lights we requested” under the above company is the lowest qualified bidder. When he looks at the scope of work that is outlined in this contract, there is no reference to lights. His concern is “Are we getting lights?” “No lights? what’s our requirement here?” If we could have that clarified. He also does not want to have this open to any change orders. The other item is Section 3 of this agreement has liquidated damages, which require substantial completion by April 3rd with final punch list done by April 17th. He wants to make sure the contractor is prepared for substantial completion and not incur these costs for liquidated damages. He wants to make sure this is a realistic timeline.

Mayor Beauregard clarified the scope of work does not involve lights specifically. He is unsure how that was noted on the front page but regarding liquidated damages aspect, he would refer that to legal for further clarification.

Solicitor O’Neill I have no opinion on that. The contractor bid on the project and said he could meet those deadlines and we take them at their word. the liquidated clause is to protect the city for the inability to complete the project and if they do not complete it on the terms that they bid; they will have to pay the damages. Simple as that. It is a standard part of most of our contracts.

Councilor Drew said he wanted to make sure we are fully prepared to hit them with liquidated damages had they not meet completion of this.

Solicitor O’Neill said we would have the right to do that under that clause whether we invoke that, typically in projects like this if there is a minor over then it would be extend the performance terms. We have ability to do that. Depending on the scope of the project that would be at the discretion of recreation.

CAFO Duprey said based on conversations with the vendor and Superintendent Angelo who is here, they are onboard with that timeline. We obviously would follow through with it if they do not meet that timeline. Those discussions have already been had.

Councilor DiZoglio asked who would check on the quality of work.

Superintendent Angelo said he has been in constant conversation with the contractor over the last three weeks just to make sure that the timeline is staying on point. There is some manufacturing time that goes into it and that is why you are approving the contract tonight, so we have time to go into the spring season.

Councilor Marsan noted we did not have enough money in the original CIP to approve the roofs. There was an amendment to it at \$108,000 at the time when it was approved before.

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There was going to be an amendment if we had the number. Now we are only paying \$84,000. It is less than what was originally allotted at the beginning. It seems like a lot of money for two roofs, but he was able to obtain a picture of what they are doing, and it is imperative that the kids have the roofs on the dugouts. They need them there.

Councilor Valley noted she did not see anything in the contract regarding ADA compliance. She concerned about that because that is one of the biggest concerns in the city.

Superintendent Angelo explained this is just for the roof structure itself. It is not actually the installation of the concrete pad. When they did the budget itself with the original scope of the project everything was under ADA compliance.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

**C-26-64** Talty Floors, Inc., 86 Billerica Ave., Suite 2, N. Billerica, MA 01862 for Timony – Removal of Carpets & Cove Base and Installation of VCT Tile & Cove Base in the Amount of \$64,804.00

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.

Councilor Drew referred to the specifications that says addendum, no addendum, but then the bid packet clearly shows addendum 1 and 2. He would like clarification to avoid any major issues. It looks like there is an insurance gap with this when it comes to the work being completed. The actual start date, it auto ends at the end of January. He understands the insurance compliance will need to be updated. Then the workmen's comp is also ending at the end of May. This project runs into June. He wants to make sure that is captured. The other part of this that is very concerning to him is the questions that were asked was "Is there a specific brand of cold base in this carpet? Are we free to provide what we see fit for commercial option? Yes, we can see fit for the commercial option, but the school may want to see a sample. This is very open and ambiguous language. And as a subcontractor in his professional life this is very open ended. That will allow massive change orders if they just want to provide you with more one kind of a crappy option for them to come and say "Nope, this is what we saw fit. If you want something else, there is going to be an upcharge". There was a significant swing in the people who bid this. There were twelve bidders and we have them from almost \$200,000 to \$64,000. He is very concerned to this contract in general.

Ian Gosselin came to the podium. He said he is not an expert on cold base. We are not going to approve an inferior product. When they went out to bid, they requested, when you go out to bid you cannot tell them the brand you want. But you can say "of similar quality". They did put in Armstrong tiles or similar quality, color to be chosen by the school department as well as one room of the 24 that will be carpet squares. It must be a commercial grade, industrial grade carpet. We gave it name brand or similar quality.

Councilor Drew said in Chapter 149 when you are doing those things you can give them three options. You are required to give them at least three. You can't not spec something. You did not give them a make/model. You just gave them this is the brand we are going to use.

Ian Gosselin said, "or similar quality".

Councilor Drew said he is concerned with he questions that were submitted during the bid process that allows it to be open ended. Yes, they can pick the color but, in all reality,, they can say this is a commercial option and it could be the lowest grade that Samsonite or Armstrong may have that we don't have the ability to approve it.

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Solicitor O'Neill said they will present it to the school department before they install it, and they will be able to inspect and approve. Yes, it would make sense for someone at the school department to make sure they are getting the quality that they expect. But they do have the opportunity to review and approve if they are providing a similar product. Agreed, it would be better to provide more details in the specs. He did not see this RFP and does not know what was in it. It was from the school department. Typically, that would be more detailed.

Councilor DiZoglio coming from the school side where he has dealt with a lot of issues on the school side and how it was done the last twenty years, Methuen seemed to do the cheap way of getting things done, which cost us more money down the road. When he looked at the contract and asked his fellow Councilor that is an expert in this, again, this is his feeling that Methuen – he is not asking for the Cadillac of tile but he is asking maybe in the middle. Again, Methuen always seems to give the lowest thing just to put it in and then in twenty years or ten years we will be sitting right back here and replace the tile again or replacing something else. My concerns are taxes keep going up because things down the road keep popping up and its costing the taxpayers. This is what is happening today but what happened ten years ago when Councilors voted on things that was the cheap way of getting things done when they should have been going for the midgrade or the bigger grade? And we would not be in these issues. That is his opinion and that is what he experienced on the school side and that is why he really does not like this contract.

Councilor Santos said she feels the same way. Her biggest concern is the quality of the job. She questioned paragraph 3. The work is going to be done during the school vacation.

Ian Gosselin agreed.

Councilor Santos asked once you remove the current carpet will it be exposed when the kids go back to school?

Ian Gosselin explained they would do probably half the rooms in February. They will empty the rooms, tear out the carpet, install the new tile and put the furniture back in half of the rooms. And then April vacation they would do the other half of the rooms. There would be no times the kids would be in there while it is a construction zone.

Councilor Santos asked why the music room is getting the carpet instead of doing the same material through the whole school. Three years down the road we are going to be sitting here talking about the same thing again.

Ian Gosselin said it has something to do with the acoustics, the instruments and the singing and the sound reverberating off the hard floor. They are replacing it with carpet tiles so that should there be a case where one tile tears or gets stained, they can pull out that one tile and replace that or we could pull out several tiles and replace those so that down the road we're not dealing with exactly what you said.

Mayor Beauregard said what they are doing with this effort is they are trying to replace carpeting that has been in that school building for north of probably twenty-five years.

Ian Gosselin said between twenty-five and thirty years during the renovation in the late 90's.

Mayor Beauregard further explained we are talking about carpeting that has been in place for many years. This is long overdue. Some aspects of the Timony project has required some abatement relative to asbestos. There has been indication of asbestos glue under some of the prior carpeting that has been in place here.

Ian Gosselin said they came to Council last year in the Spring for a similar contract, but it also included a contract for abatement. They did half the rooms, the rooms that required

abatement, they did over the summer. This is the half that do not require the abatement, that did not have the asbestos adhesive.

Mayor Beauregard said this is not something that we do every three years. This is an effort to try to correct an issue that has gone unaddressed for about thirty-years. This is a long overdue improvement.

Councilor Valley said she noticed on addendum 1 questions and answers. It stated the contractor must post all the materials. She does not see that anywhere in the agreement. She asked if it was better to have a clean revised agreement instead of addendum 1, addendum 2, etc.

Solicitor O'Neill said typically when we do these contracts, we certainly could do it that way. But they typically incorporate both the RFP and the response to the RFP as part of the contract. He knows it is not attached here but you would see that all the representations that the contractor made in their response, they would be held to under the contract and that would include the obligation to remove and dispose of what they take out. Yes, it could be done that way but we typically include them as addendums, include the RFP documents as well as the response documents incorporated into the contract and that is what the contractor is held to because the RFP generally has a lot more information and responses to that. He does agree that it would be better in the scope of work to specify what the winning bidder said they would provide because they obviously know what they are going to provide.

Councilor Drew said on this it calls for all furniture and items in the room to be moved by the custodial staff. He asked if there would be a labor impact cost that the school is going to incur whether it comes from having people on overtime or anything like that because this is outside of their normal scope of work. They are typically doing their day to day work. Will they need to work longer hours during vacation time or anything like that?

Ian Gosselin said it should be minimal if anything, probably the Friday before vacation they could take extra custodial from other buildings to empty the rooms that are being addressed on straight time. The only time that it might be overtime is getting the room set up on that back weekend before the kids come back. But it should be very minimal.

Councilor Drew asked if the cost would be incurred on the school. Ian Gosselin responded yes it would come out of the school budget not the city side.

Councilor Marsan said on question 8 on the bidders had asked if the VCT tile and the carpet are being replaced and the answer is "as the bid states the VCT tile and rug in the schools must be removed and replaced with new". That was the answer that was given.

Ian Gosselin said if you look further on it clarifies that one.

Councilor Marsan said the addendum says differently than that.

Ian Gosselin said that is correct. He explained that in each of the rooms there is a little strip of tile by the sink and they were asking if they wanted to rip out the carpet as well as that strip of tile or if we just want to butt up against those tiles. The answer is they just want the carpet replaced and butt up against the other tiles, so we are not incurring the cost ripping out that 3' wide strip near the sink.

Councilor DiZoglio asked if someone from the purchasing department could be at the next meeting to give more clarification about the contract in that sense. Ian works with them, but the purchasing department did this contract. Correct?

Ian Gosselin indicated that is correct.

Chair Soto asked, for clarification, if the school's purchasing department is the city's purchasing department.

Ian Gosselin agreed that it is. Everything goes through the city's purchasing department.

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Chair Soto said she would make the request to the Mayor.

Mayor Beauregard said it would be very helpful if Councilors have specific questions to prepare them in writing so that we can have those answers provided rather than bring a member here without any knowledge of specific questions they are going to be asked. That way they can provide clearer answers.

Solicitor O'Neill clarified that the purchasing department does not do the specs for the job. The school department would do the specs for what work is being done. When it comes to purchasing, they are just making sure that the legal process is being followed and then it comes to the Solicitor's office for further legal review just to make sure. We have a contract ordinance that you will become familiar with. It requires several clauses in the contract. That was passed by the City Council and they review it for other things as well. The specs themselves is something Ian can speak to.

Ian Gosselin said in this case he did give Laurie the specs. She prepared the RFP, sent the RFP out. She set up the walk throughs. We joined her with the walk throughs as well as we came here for the bid opening while Laurie and Jess did the bid opening and prepare the contract. He gave them the specs, how many rooms, what they were looking for tile, etc. Then they prepared the paperwork and went out to bid.

Councilor Pesce said her larger concern is the specificity of the materials to be used. For her, it makes her a little uncomfortable especially hearing from the Solicitor that going forward we should probably get that reduced to writing. It would behoove us to table this. It sounds like and it looks like we have used them in the past, Methuen Housing has used them so I'm not insinuating they are not a reputable company or they are not going to give us what they promised. I'm suggesting that perhaps we table this and then maybe we could add an addendum or something that reduces those verbal conversations that it sounds like you already had into writing so that we have that going forward before we formerly vote on it. For her, personally, while everything might be fine, she agrees that if we need a certain quality rather than just going with the least expensive bid, we need to make sure its an apples to apples. Right? You suggested and the word "or similar" always makes her nervous.

Ian Gosselin said if Council would like they could reach out and solidify exactly what colors, what product they plan to use and have all that information for you hopefully at your next meeting so that they can start in February. "Does that suffice?"

Councilor Pesce said that would make her more comfortable. With that she would like to make a motion to table.

Solicitor O'Neill said Council is free to do that. He would let the Council know they have other options. The RFP response is incorporated into this contract. They will specify or tell us what they are using. The Council does have the authority through the contract that has a 36-hour period to undo that contract if three or more members decide that they did not want it approved. I just throw that out there for you given the time sensitivity of this contract.

Councilor Pesce 36 hours from when?

O'Neill from when it is approved. Council can rescind it within three days and the Mayor cannot sign it. It is a safety provision because contracts only require a one read. Council could do it either way. Its up to Council. It would not have to wait until the next meeting if you were satisfied with the response that you got from Ian and the purchasing director. It is certainly at Council's discretion.

Councilor Pesce almost like a conditional approval if we would get supplemented material 36 hours from this vote.

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Solicitor O'Neill explained Council has that right to do on every contract.

Councilor Pesce asked if a table would impair the timeline for February. It looks as if they are doing it during February vacation.

Ian Gosselin said they would have to purchase the supplies, etc., get the materials. It could. He is not going to say going to. He could reach out to them tomorrow and find out exactly. He has his ideas on what he wants and get back to Council on the quality and if it is comparable to what we asked for in the first place, he can get that done tomorrow as long as they can get him the product.

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to table. UPON ROLL CALLVOTE: 5 yes, 4 no (Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. Drew, Clr. Soto)

**C-26-65** McGovern MHQ Inc., 401 Elm Street, Marlborough, MA 01752 for (2) 2026 Ford Super Duty F550 DRW XL 4WD Reg. Cab in the Amount of \$211,906.40

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve.

Councilor Valley (to CAFO) said she couldn't find this line item in FY'26 CIP.

CAFO Duprey said it is a FY'25 CIP not FY'26 and the expense line is DPW trucks. The total approved amount was \$350,000. If you are looking at the detail from the original plan, that is the line that we would be looking at. \$350,000 was the total amount allocated for DPW.

Chair Soto passed the gavel. This is a special order that has to do with the next budget cycle, but we need time, she thought she read FY'27 on the impact statement. That might have been the generator. She asked if the Fords are taken home or just worked in the city.

CAFO Duprey responded they are worked in the city.

Vice Chair passed the gavel back to the Chair.

UPON ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS

**C-26-66** Dagle Electrical Construction Corp., 68 Industrial Way, Wilmington, MA 01887 for Police and Fire Department Replacement Generators-Furnish and Install 2 New Generators in the Amount of \$188,477.00

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve.

Councilor Valley (to CAFO) I see here five different accounts, but they do not specify which one belongs to the fire department or the police department. She noticed the amount of \$121,492.85. That is 65% of the total for the generator. She asked who is paying for who.

CAFO Duprey explained there are two lines for FY'24 and two lines for FY'23. Each one of those one's fire, one's police, one's fire, one's police. They are splitting those evenly. The last portion because the project came in higher than we had anticipated we have a FY'26 project for municipal property improvements and so we are taking the remaining amount needed, the \$121,000. That is the amount that it is coming out of. It is a general municipal improvement line, and the Mayor has approved that be the line that we take it out of.

Councilor Valley asked why this is a joint contract.

CAFO Duprey responded that they both departments needed the generators. It was cheaper to have the project be in totality with both needing the work vs. two separate projects.

Councilor Marsan asked when the city removes the generators if they going to be deemed surplus because they are both operable generators. They are in disrepair, but they still run. There might be some value there. They have got to be worth something for someone.

CAFO Duprey liked the idea and noted anything we can get.

Mayor Beauregard clarified one generator is for the Quinn Building. The other is for the Central Fire Station. That is why we are taking advantage of the opportunity to work with one contractor. That explains why we are having this split between police and fire.

Councilor DiZoglio asked how old the previous generators were. He did a quick lookup on commercial generator to a sizable building is twenty to thirty years old. Did these generators pass that lifetime? He asked if we are getting the same quality generators or better quality.

Mayor Beauregard said he does not have the exact age. However, what he will say is like many other equipment issues in Methuen these surpassed their useful life.

Chief Toto said he cannot speak for the exact age of the generator at Central, but it was there long before he got there. He is guessing forty/fifty years. It is a diesel generator. That generator needs some patch work to get it to run. Considering the 911 system goes through the Quinn Building as well as Central fire, it is imperative to get these replaced. This diesel generator they have at their Central station is being replaced with a natural gas-powered generator. That was part of the project that has already been done. Eversource ran a high-pressure gas line to buy the gas for that generator. As the CAFO had said the contractor GPI firm worked to combine as a cost saving measure to do all the specs for both buildings in order to get the generator specked out for exactly what each building needed and the install. They oversee overseeing all that.

Mayor Beauregard said a generator is a factor in departmental accreditation. That speaks to the importance of a project like this.

Chair Soto asked about the need of the generator in the department and what their use is.

Chief Toto said if they lose power from National Grid, they go on battery backup for their 911 system, not to mention all their radio systems and the alerting system to alert all the other stations is all powered through that. Without power at the Central station, all that shuts down until the batteries run out. The batteries only support the 911 system. The generator automatically fires. They are always crossing their fingers that the current one is going to fire. Right now, they have an issue with the transfer switch. When the generator once the power in the street comes back, the generator must shut down. They cannot shut the generator down until the town electrician comes to manually switch over from the generator to the Eversource power source. That is a safety issue.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Other Officers and Committee Reports – None

Chair Soto explained when Councilors have their committee meetings this is where the Chair of the committee alert that they will be reporting on their committee. They can do a verbal report or submit written minutes if they would like. It is not mandatory.

Unfinished Business

**Resolutions:** None

**Ordinance(s):**

**TO-25-21** An Ordinance Amending the Winter Parking Ban (Req. of Chief McNamara)  
*(remove from the table)*

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MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to remove from the table. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve TO-25-1.

Councilor Simard said he had a concern earlier about the Arlington District and where they would park. In fact, Linda Soucy got up here again to speak on behalf of Option 2. He is all for it. He is glad that she was here.

Councilor Marsan because we need this done, Council removed it from the table. Linda Soucy and the Chief are lobbying for it. At the next meeting, could we get the clarity we need on some of our questions to make sure we get things addressed?

Chief McNamara said he has already taken the liberty to draft an amendment that Councilor Pesce had suggested earlier. He is already working in that regard.

The Clerk asked if Council is voting on Option 1 or Option 2.

Chair Soto clarified Council is voting Option 2. The motion is to vote on Option 2.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

New Business:

Resolutions:

**TR-26-1** Resolution ref: Amendment to the Agreement with Respect to the Establishment of a Vocational Regional School District (EPA REQUESTED)

Chair Soto said they would be coming back and asked for guidance from the Solicitor for it to be taken off the agenda or have the Council table the item.

Solicitor O'Neill said Council could do either. They could delay the vote for the next meeting or leave on the table. Councilor Marsan just skip it and leave it as is.

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Valley to delay the vote until the next meeting.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: (Delay to next meeting) UNANIMOUS

**TR-26-2** Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of Funds from the Edwin J. Castle Fund to Methuen Senior Center (Request from Commission on Trust Funds)

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve.

Councilor Santos (to CAFO) asked if we shopped around for this item.

CAFO Duprey explained this is approving the funding of a purchase that the Senior Center will make with these funds. We are not making it currently. This is just to approve the money to come from the Castle Fund to do so. She was looking for the guidelines for the Edwin Castle Fund and could not find it.

CAFO Duprey said there is a super old document. She could share that with the Council about what is an appropriate use of those funds and what is not. This would be an appropriate use of those funds, but she can provide the actual document so that Councilors have that background. In response to Councilor Santos the CAFO stated there is \$414,000 available in the account. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

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Ordinances:

**TO-26-1** An Ordinance Amending the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of the City of Methuen – 262 Howe Street (Request of Petitioners)

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor Valley to table to a Joint Public Hearing with Community Development and Planning. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

**TO-26-2** An Ordinance Amending the Wage and Salary Classification Plan of the position of “Assistant Council Clerk” (Request of Councilor Soto)

MOTION BY: Councilor Santos, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve.

Councilor Simard said he appreciates the fact that our hardworking Council Clerk has a qualified assistant, Ms. Ferry. He asked how long she has worked in that capacity.

Chair Soto said her resume was distributed to Council when she was hired.

Ms. Ferry came to the podium and stated she provided her resume. She started in this position in May of 2024.

Councilor Simard said obviously this increase in the Wage and Salary will put us over budget. He is guessing that come April/May it will transfer from Free Cash. He asked: “Is that what we anticipate?”

Chair Soto said she also did some research on the other clerk positions in the building for referencing. You are correct. On the impact statement, the CAFO did state that we would have to make a transfer. Before putting this on the floor she did look at our budget and the legal department where they have some personnel dollars available for that to happen if this vote does pass.

Councilor Valley said she would like to clarify something. She received a text message from one of my constituents on the west stating that this position was created by ordinance. She has in front of her a Home Rule Petition passed by the State Legislature and it was signed by the Governor on November 1<sup>st</sup> of 2022. Chapter 252 An Act Establishing an Assistant Clerk of the City Council in the City of Methuen. It was approved by the Governor November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. The position was not created by ordinance. By the Charter like we have here that we have in front of us. I just wanted to clarify.

Chair Soto deferred to the Solicitor to confirm that.

Solicitor O’Neill said it is a Charter position created by the last Council. The Council obviously requested the amendment to the Charter which was approved by the Legislature and then signed by the Governor.

Councilor Drew said his question goes to the schedule of pay scale. He asked where we came up with this pay scale? Just for clarification?

Chair Soto deferred to CAFO Duprey.

CAFO Duprey explained we have a document called the Wage and Salary Classification and in that document there’s multiple different sections based on CBAs or in some cases its

Council employees who are unaffiliated, department heads, etc. and it maps out exactly how much each person makes and on what step. For those that are dictated by CBAs they match up with the CBAs etc. This is that all encompassing document. She can provide that to all the Councilors, so they know what the current one looks like. Its an inherited document that we have spent multiple years trying get inline and kind of smooth out some of the things that are in there that may be spiked and there or were out wires to what they should be. Any time a new position comes forward we must do an ordinance to put that position on the Wage and Salary Classification. Any time a position comes forward that you want to do a change in their salary classification outside of a CBA/COLA etc., we must bring forward a Wage and Salary Classification ordinance. That is what you see here tonight specific to this position. But that is a very standard language that you would see along with the schedule. She's going to reference her financial impact statement, what she has done is provided what the current Wage and Salary Classification says for this position and then also included is what is being proposed so you can see those differences. What this ordinance is doing as well, currently the employee in the position is at maximum what this does also is it pushes her back on that salary schedule. She will not be going from maximum to maximum. She will go back to Step 1 and start stepping again.

Councilor Drew said it satisfied the question on where we got that scale. That snowballs into another question as well, why we went to Step 1 vs. the minimum step and brings that to that table.

Chair Soto said the question you are asking me currently is why am we starting over?

Councilor Drew said this table shows a minimum step, step 1, step 2, step 3, and 4. He asked: "Is the minimum not a step that we are allowed to start at?"

Chair Soto said the one you have in front of you where the weekly and minimal annual step, is that the one you are talking about? Or the old?

Councilor Drew I am looking at the actual ordinance that you put in there. TO-26-2

Chair Soto are you asking where she starts.

Councilor Drew asked why we are starting her at Step 1 vs. the minimum. If you look at what she is currently employed at is roughly \$58,000. We are looking at a \$16,000 a year increase to the salary of this position. That is a significant increase to a position.

Chair Soto that is the reason – the classifications when you look at the research she provided earlier today, when you look at the clerks in this building they are all over the place and that is a pet peeve. She has had this conversation with HR, conversation with the Solicitor, and with the CAFO. You basically have people in clerk positions that you have someone in a beginner clerk position and there is a lot of disparity in the building. What this ordinance does is it brings it into unison because right now she is below what her role is supposed to be making when you look at the research provided. Those are actual jobs budgeted in the building that are clerk positions from one to three. She does not want to call out any clerk.

Councilor Drew said he is not looking at individuals. He is looking at the position of this in more of our current Council budget. We are forecasting to go over as it stands because there

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will be an increase to our budget. Do we know where our actual budget is? What was the dollar value?

Chair Soto said she would ask the CAFO to answer that. Meanwhile, the statement she made earlier that we looked at the legal services and the surplus because we have an additional surplus under legal services. That is where that would come from in 2026. You are correct. We would have to appropriate for it in 2027.

Councilor Drew our budget in 2027 will increase about \$20,000 based on this.

CAFO Duprey said it would be a little less than that. It would probably be more like \$16,000 or \$17,000.

Councilor Drew said the step would increase if we keep it at step 1, increase to step 2 as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

CAFO Duprey explained if this is approved the way it is written now it would go into effect the end of January after second read. A year from then is when she would step again.

Councilor Drew said the step goes on the anniversary of the passage.

CAFO Duprey said the anniversary of the effectiveness.

Councilor DiZoglio asked if this is going to be the permanent steps when Lisa leaves this individual. He does not know the qualifications of an assistant clerk but if "*I am just out of college and I'm 25 years old and I get an assistant clerk's job, he'll be making \$68,000*". That is more than a Lawrence teacher makes when they start off. The question is "What are the current qualifications?" Maybe he should have done more research, but he is going off of Lisa's resume and the way he looked at it as we are doing it towards the individual and not what this position will be in the future. That is what he is concerned about too. He said he would investigate the qualifications of an assistant clerk. But he is looking at it as a 25-year-old, 28-year-old that just gets out of college and looks for a job and gets it. They will be making more than a Lawrence public school teacher when they first start.

Solicitor O'Neill said while the Council has chosen to do this by salary schedule, it is not required to do that. They can do it by contract, every time you appoint these positions. The Council appoints the City Solicitor, the Council Clerk, and the Assistant Council Clerk. Each time you do that Council is free to change their salary to whatever is your pleasure. Typically, there is a raise involved but it is at Council's discretion under the Charter. These are not positions controlled by the Mayor. They do not have to be part of the salary administration plan. The Charter makes it clear that Council can set the salary. Council has chosen in the past to put them on a salary schedule. Some positions are on a salary schedule. Some positions are not on a salary schedule which is not uncommon for non-union type positions. It is totally at Council discretion. If you decide that the position is vacant, and Council wants to make changes to it later Council is free to do that. It's totally within the Council's discretion.

Councilor DiZoglio said when you were doing the research, he saw that she did through the building. He asked if we have ever done other municipalities and compare them to us.

Councilor Valley said she did. She checked Lowell, Haverhill, Lawrence, Fitchburg, Springfield, and they are between \$60,000 to \$75,000.

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Councilor DiZoglio asked if they have the same population as us.

Councilor Valley said Fitchburg and Springfield are closer to the City of Methuen.

Councilor DiZoglio said one the things he would recommend looking at Peabody which is a closer municipality to us and see what they are doing as city clerks and see what the bracket is. That will not just help with this position but will help with all the positions and if we could fix that as a Council, they could do that down the road.

Councilor MacLaren asked if this would put the clerk's salary closer to other clerks in the building. It would be more like similar positions.

Chair Soto responded, yes.

Councilor Santos asked if the City Council Clerk decides to retire or leave her position can the assistant clerk apply this position if she decides to

Chair Soto said they would open the position and interview. One of the things that happens in that office is the institutional knowledge. She had a conversation with Linda, and she has been her 35 years. The moment Linda decides to retire, we lose that institutional knowledge. Chair Soto said when she came on the Council the previous Council that was here had educated at that point Councilor Faretra and herself that they did try to hire an assistant clerk that last two weeks/two months. It was not long. The individual just left. It is not a position easy to fill because of late nights. There is also a lot of note taking. You must document a lot. You must deal with all these personalities in the room. But not only that the institutional knowledge must be carried on to that person. Unless there is an applicant from another municipality and that is rare to happen in the clerk's office. It happens a lot in the Solicitor's office, with the CAFO and other departments.

Solicitor O'Neill said he only had one viable applicant. It is hard to recruit from other communities.

Chair Soto said in her opinion it is a tedious job. She would hope that the assistant council clerk would apply for that position. The process for hiring has a protocol and a process. This body would assign a committee. The HR Director would probably be a part of that.

Councilor Simard said he is on the fence and after hearing some of his fellow Councilors he is not sure this is going to pass. He thinks we need more deliberation, some more homework on the Council's part since they just received this last week. There was a holidays and Council had not been able to price shop. He would entertain a table to do that, so we do not end up with a no vote and insult our assistant clerk.

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Valley to table.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 yes, 3 no (Clr. Marsan, Clr. Santos, Clr. Soto)

**TO-26-3** An Ordinance Amending Section 7-A of the City of Methuen's Municipal Code  
*Requested by Mayor Beauregard*

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Santos to approve.

Councilor Santos asked how much it is now.

Mayor Beauregard explained the reason he is proposing this especially at the outset of the new year and a new transition in our government, we all have a shared collective goal to do

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whatever we can to make the government more efficient first of all. But also, to do a better job when it comes to ensuring that we provide more timely delivery of municipal services to our residents. That is what he is aiming for with this. Currently any contract valued at \$25,000 or above comes to the Council for a vote. But that means with any contract with services attached to it over \$25,000, it put on hold until the Council takes a vote on it. For many years, as recently as 2021, the contract threshold was \$50,000. There are some cities in the Commonwealth that do not have a threshold at all. He is not asking for that. He is asking the Council to consider the prospect of reestablishing the \$50,000 threshold so we can help move the provision of municipal services along a little more efficiently while maintaining the fiscal strength and protections that we established with this original ordinance back in 2021. There was a time in our ordinances there was not a formal definition of what a contract was. The logic in properly defining that in the original ordinance stands. His only ask is for the Council's consideration of an adjustment to the threshold level so we can move things along a little better.

Councilor Santos said right now it is \$25,000. There are several things that I feel about all this. The city just purchased a castle about a year and a half ago that has put us in a financial hardship right now. She does not feel comfortable about increasing the threshold.

Mayor Beauregard said the estate was a lot higher than \$50,000.

Councilor Santos said right now we need to safeguard everything, and she feels that this is Council's first meeting with new Councilors. Being her first meeting and having this proposal in front of Council she does not feel comfortable about it, not currently.

MOTION BY: Councilor Santos to table. No second

Councilor Pesce said she understands the request to be able to expedite certain things. Recently, she became extremely illuminated to the residents really disgruntled about their tax dollars. She feels like, as a committee, this is the time for more scrutiny where things are going and less autonomy not more. She understands where he is coming from. She must agree with Councilor Santos. In her opinion, this is not the time for more autonomy.

Councilor Drew said Mr. Mayor you are asking for an increase of \$25,000 to \$50,000 you are saying we are trying to expedite some things. He asked how many contracts we are talking about annually that we are going to be affected from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Are we talking 25 contracts per year or hundreds per year?

Mayor Beauregard certainly not hundreds. In calendar year 2025 there was a total of 97 vendor contracts that came before the Council, 73 of them were above \$50,000 and 24 of them were below \$50,000. This would impact roughly a quarter of the number of contracts and paperwork that he would send through the Council.

Councilor Drew you are saying basically Council is seeing on average three items per meeting for things the Mayor is approving. Mayor Beauregard agreed.

Councilor Simard provided some history on why Council voted from \$50,000 to \$25,000. The previous Mayor Jajuga hired a consultant at \$49,999 to DPW. That did not go over very well with the Council. It did not go over too well with the employees that person affected when he came in as a consultant. But he really ran the show. That was the reason Council changed it from \$50,000 to \$25,000.

Councilor Valley said she will support efficient government, but this ordinance is shifting too much authority away from the City Council. For that reason, she will not support it.

Councilor Santos another thing I forgot to add. I was doing my research she noticed the vendor list has not been updated for the last year since 2024. She was looking into it because of the increase and the threshold is to be paying to our vendors. She just wanted to see the activity.

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Mayor Beauregard explained the city has a brand-new financial transparency dashboard that we launched in the past year. That now includes all our vendor information about various expenditures. But its now in real time and its in our active data base. He looked back at the past couple of fiscal years. That information is now housed in the dashboard.

Councilor DiZoglio said if there was a need for a special meeting the Mayor could call for it for the contracts. Mayor Beauregard agreed. Councilor DiZoglio said the Mayor has that ability. If the Mayor needs to call a special meeting, he would be happy to attend to make sure our contracts are passed. He believes in trusting in the Mayor's ability. He was elected twice by the people in Methuen. He understands peoples' concern about keeping power as he was on the school side and they left power to one individual. He could see both sides of those issues. If the Mayor really needs a special meeting to be called, please call.

Chair Soto passed the gavel. She asked if we have paid out \$50,000 or more.

Mayor Beauregard said anything over \$25,000 would have to come before Council.

Chair Soto said in essence she also sees, not that we are doing this, you could see for example in an acquisition like the Searles Estate, you could end up in bid splitting. Right? Because if you do not have that threshold and we are not supposed to do that. Right? That is not allowed. But over the summer half of this Council saw some invoicing that was past due to a vendor and it was 22 here 23 there and so she wants to remind those that were here those that weren't please go back to that meeting in July. She could see how maybe to alleviate and avoid certain things we are trying to bring this to par. She also sees the point where a Mayor did something and it was brought back for security understanding that the Councilor made 7A a priority is here too, not in the room. She looked at the videos just for content of that previous Council. To that point, to this body, she understands the reservations of the new Councilors' saying hey, I'm new, the Councilors that have put in positions of overspending or being frivolous or whatever how the discretion maybe later on of bringing this back to the table. Those are her thoughts.

Mayor Beauregard said he is trying to find ways of making our government more efficient in terms of what we are doing. Nevertheless, there are going to be some ideas that we have, that he has that we agree to, others that we do not. he understands that and appreciates the discussion.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 no, 2 yes (Simard, DiZoglio)

Any Other Business for the Good and Welfare of the Community – None

Adjourn

MOTION BY: Councilor Marsan, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned

*At a meeting where a quorum was present, the foregoing minutes were approved by the Methuen City Council on February 2, 2026 by a vote of 8 yes, 1 absent (Clr. Maclaren)*