

Committee of the Whole

Minutes of the Meeting

March 15, 2021

1. Vice-President McMenimen called the meeting to Order at 8:00pm in the City Council Chamber.
2. Vice-President McMenimen requested that a roll call be taken to record the attendance for the meeting. The COW Clerk called the roll – President Brasco, Councillors Darcy, Dunn, Durkee, Harris, LaCava, LaFauci, LeBlanc, McLaughlin, O'Brien, Paz, Vidal, and Vice-President McMenimen were all present in-person. Councillors Mackin and Stanley were present remotely.
3. President Brasco moved to approve the minutes of the COW meeting held on March 1, 2021. The motion was adopted on a voice vote and the minutes of the March 1, 2021 meeting were approved.
4. Councillor McLaughlin moved to table the agenda item of the FY2022 City Council budget request until the next COW meeting. The motion was adopted on a voice vote.
5. Councillor Dunn moved to take the matter of the electricity aggregation program (2/11/2019) off the table and to discuss it with the agenda item of the request to allow Good Energy to address the COW on the Waltham Community Electricity Program. The motion was adopted on a voice vote. Councillor Dunn moved to hear from the following individuals – Assistant City Solicitor Patricia Azadi, Good Energy representative Daria Mark and Green Energy representative Larry Chretien. The motion was adopted on a voice vote. Ms. Mark gave a power point presentation describing the program and its benefits to Waltham residents. Ms. Mark described the default program of 10% renewable energy and the optional 50% and 100% renewable energy. Ms. Mark explained the opt in and opt out choices for residents. Ms. Mark stated that additional information about the program could be accessed on the website Waltham-CEA.com. Mr. Chretien explained the various sources of renewable energy, their availability and how consumers can buy renewable energy. Ms. Mark explained how the rates under this program compare with Eversource. Councillor O'Brien asked several questions about the opt out/opt in choices and the experience of this program in other Massachusetts communities. Councillor LeBlanc asked how to respond to questions from residents about the program. Councillor Mackin asked about the impact of the program on residents who currently have solar energy and the impact of the program upon the sale of the property to a new homeowner. Councillor Harris asked Ms. Mark to explain the program procedures, including the outreach to residents and the future sustainability of the program. Councillor Harris also asked how residents could quantify the potential savings to their energy costs. Councillor Vidal asked if this should be considered a savings program or an environmental choice. Councillor McLaughlin raised concerns about the outreach method to residents and the requirement of residents to opt out and not opt in. Councillor Paz asked questions about the selection process of the chosen energy supplier and if there are other energy programs

available to residents. Councillor LaFauci asked if the calculation of the savings could change, since the Eversource rate changes every six months and the rate for this program was locked in for 31 months. Ms. Mark repeatedly stated the current Eversource rate was higher than the default Waltham 10 rate, but there was no way to ensure that would continue for the 31-month program duration. Councillor LaCava asked if the rate was impacted if a resident opted out then opted in, to which the response was no. Councillor O'Brien asked several follow up questions and expressed concern about the limited outreach to residents. Councillor O'Brien moved to request that an FAQ document be prepared by Good Energy and be available for review by the COW at its next meeting on April 5, 2021. The motion was adopted on a voice vote. Councillor Vidal moved to combine this matter with the 2/11/2019 electricity aggregation matter and then to table the matter. The motion was adopted on a voice vote and the combined matter was tabled.

6. Two separate communications were received from the Mayor, one concerning the property located at 1273 Main Street and the other concerning the property located at 1335 Main Street. Councillor LaFauci moved to discuss both of the Mayor's communications concerning the property located at 1273 Main Street and 1335 Main Street in Executive Session, to invite the Mayor and Assistant City Solicitor Patricia Azadi, Paul Centofanti to be the Clerk of the Executive Session, Joe Vizard to administer the ZOOM call and to reconvene in Open Session at the conclusion of Executive Session. The motion was adopted on a roll call vote of 14 in favor (Brasco, Darcy, Dunn, Durkee, Harris, LaCava, LaFauci, LeBlanc, Mackin, McLaughlin, O'Brien, Paz, Stanley and Vidal) and McMenimen presiding at 9:52pm.
7. Open Session reconvened at 11:10pm.
8. A request was received from the Mayor to approve the appropriation of \$75,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance for the acquisition of a portion of the property at 1273 Main Street. Councillor LaFauci moved to approve the appropriation request. The motion was adopted on a roll call vote of 14 in favor (Brasco, Darcy, Dunn, Durkee, Harris, LaCava, LaFauci, LeBlanc, Mackin, McLaughlin, O'Brien, Paz, Stanley and Vidal) and McMenimen presiding. Councillor LaFauci moved to table the agenda item of the Mayor's communication on 1273 Main Street. The motion was adopted on a voice vote with no audible objection and the matter was tabled.
9. A request was received from the Mayor to approve the appropriation of \$104,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance for the acquisition of a portion of the property at 1335 Main Street. Councillor LaFauci moved to approve the appropriation request. The motion was adopted on a roll call vote of 14 in favor (Brasco, Darcy, Dunn, Durkee, Harris, LaCava, LaFauci, LeBlanc, Mackin, McLaughlin, O'Brien, Paz, Stanley and Vidal) and McMenimen presiding. Councillor LaFauci moved to table the agenda item of the Mayor's communication on 1335 Main Street. The motion was adopted on a voice vote with no audible objection and the matter was tabled.
10. A motion by Councillor LaFauci to adjourn was adopted on a voice vote, and the Chair declared the Committee adjourned at 11:15pm.

Paul G. Centofanti – Clerk to the Committee of the Whole