



SPECIAL MEETING OF MAY 15, 2018

Special Meeting of the City Council was held in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall, on Tuesday evening, May 15, 2018.

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Scott J. Graves called the meeting to order at 6:30 o'clock p.m.

CALL OF THE ROLL

City Clerk Alan Agnelli called the Roll of Members. Eleven (11) Councillors were present including President Scott Graves and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Ronald Cormier, Edward Gravel, Karen Hardern, Christine Johnson, James Johnson, Elizabeth Kazinskas, and James Walsh.

RECESS

President Graves declared a recess in order to resume the Informal Meeting.

President Graves called the Special Meeting back to Order at 7:35 p.m.

#9921

Councillor Ronald Cormier moved to adopt the following Order:

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS
IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER: That the City of Gardner appropriates the sum of THREE MILLION NINE HUNDRED THIRTY FOUR THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS (\$3,934,750.00) to pay costs of renovating Watkin's Field, and paying costs incidental or related thereto; to meet said appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said sum under M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 7(1), or any other enabling authority. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

Councillor James Walsh seconded the motion.



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On the motion, Councillor James Boone expressed support for construction of the building and the bleachers, but not the track, the field, and the lighting, saying that fundraising would be easier for these items, but that “we’re not there yet.” He continued, saying that the [cost of a] synthetic field is “upwards of \$1M,” plus the additional cost to illuminate the field, concluding that he would support only one-half of the project.

Councillor Nathan Boudreau said that soccer, rugby, and lacrosse “are on the rise,” and that he would “be open to some cuts” and “there is room to raise finds during construction.” He added that the City needs to find “a person of means” to donate money.

Councillor James Walsh moved to reduce the Loan Order by \$437,370.00, representing \$250,000.00 for the Team Rooms and \$187,370.00 for the Contingency, for an amended Order of \$3,497,380.00.

Councillor Ronald Cormier seconded the motion.

On the motion, Councillor Walsh stated that the figures presented by the Mayor are estimates based on reports presented a few weeks ago, where the figures could possibly be higher, or lower. He added that the Council is exercising its judgment by reducing the Loan Order by \$437,370.00.

Councillor Nathan Boudreau stated that he “did not like the Amendment,” but suggested that there is an avenue to obtain additional funding through fundraising, so he would then support the Amendment.

Councillor Christine Johnson expressed support for the Amendment, saying that the [new] field would be good “for the Orange and Black,” as well as for the alumni, the football players, and the Band. She added that the City could fundraise to cover any shortfall.

Councillor James Boone questioned the purpose for the Contingency, asking “What if we do not spend the Contingency?”

In response, Councillor Walsh stated that since the project is funded through a loan authorization, the City would borrow only the amount necessary. If the contingency is cut and bids are filed that are greater than the loan amount, then the Mayor could seek additional funding from the City Council.

Councillor Boone questioned the need to cut the loan order by 10%, suggesting that if the project is worthy, then “why not go all the way.”



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Councillor Edward Gravel remarked that there has been a lot of e-mails concerning the Proposition 2½ override and “kicking the can down the road,” and suggested that “4 million dollars is mind blowing.” He added that the Council has been doing its due diligence over the past three weeks discussing the School budget and that “people are frustrated.”

Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas stated that “this meeting [to discuss the Watkins Field project] is separate from the Proposition 2½ override discussion.” She added that she is unsure if she could support the contingency cut, but would not want to see the project delayed.

Councillor Nathan Boudreau stated, “The difference is a basic budgeting concept,” and to “not use one-time money for operating costs.” He said that it has been a number of years since the City has made an investment in its schools, so “it is time to invest in a better Gardner and community.” He added that it is important to see the difference between the Watkins Field Project and the Proposition 2½ Override.

Councillor James Johnson concurred with Councillor Boudreau’s comments, noting that each requires a different funding method and questioned whether the project “should be fully-funded or be done piecemeal.” He said that the issue is the overall price tag and that “we have plenty of contingency looking over the individual line items in the Estimate.”

On the Amendment, on call of the roll, eight (8) yeas, President Graves and Councillors Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Ronald Cormier, Christine Johnson, James Johnson, Elizabeth Kazinskas, and James Walsh; three (3) nays, Councillors James Boone, Edward Gravel, and Karen Hardern, the motion carried and the Amendment was adopted.

On the motion, as amended, on call of the roll, seven (7) yeas, President Graves and Councillors Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Ronald Cormier, Christine Johnson, Elizabeth Kazinskas, and James Walsh; four (4) nays, Councillors James Boone, Edward Gravel, and Karen Hardern, and James Johnson, the Order did not pass for lack of the requisite two-thirds vote.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Nathan Boudreau and seconded by Councillor Edward Gravel, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Scott Graves and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Ronald Cormier, Edward Gravel, Karen Hardern, Christine Johnson, James Johnson, Elizabeth Kazinskas, and James Walsh, to adjourn at 7:57 o’clock p.m.

Accepted by the City Council: August 6, 2018