

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

---

The Finance Committee meeting was called to order by Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz at 4:00 PM in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall.

Finance Committee Members Brad Heglin and Judy Mack were also present. Councillor Mack was not able to physically present, but was able to call into the meeting.

Also participating, Mayor Michael Nicholson; Auditor John Richard; Treasurer Jen Dymek; and Assistant City Clerk Jayen Kumar.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minute(s)**

Councillor Dernalowicz informed the Committee that there were no prior meeting minutes.

**Department Updates**

**City Treasurer/Collector:**

TREASURER/COLLECTOR  
DEPARTMENT UPDATE  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

In July, we mailed 7,143 preliminary real estate bills for a total of \$17,402,827.30. As of September 9, 2025, we collected \$8,963,849.91. This represents about 52% of the overall billing. The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter installment is due on November 3. We also mailed 313 personal property bills for a total of \$783,134.54. As of September 9, 2025, we collected \$431,565.33, which is about 55% of the overall billing.

For Motor Vehicle Excise, the RMV has issued 4 commitments for 2025. The first, and largest, was commitment #1 on January 17 for \$1,938,992.62. The other 3 commitments totaled \$606,077.65, for a total of billed of \$2,545,070.27. As of September 9, 2025, we have collected \$2,261,802.96. We've also issued \$26,236.55 in refunds and \$57,139.04 in abatements.

Parking Meter collection has been steady. Since July 1, we have collected \$10,483.50 from coin and from the mobile app (ParkMobile). Since July 1, 88 meter violation tickets have been issued for a total cost of \$1,320.00. Only 46% of the tickets issued have been paid.

Two weeks ago, a new check scanner was purchased from Fidelity Bank. All of the checks received are deposited directly to the bank through the scanner. This scanner replaced a unit that was about 5 years old. Checks had been jamming and not reading properly.

We continue to have issues with the check printer. For two weeks, back in August, the payroll checks would not print and needed to be hand written. We have resolved that issue, however, the alignment is slightly off. The IT department, working with Munis, has adjusted the settings as best as they can. We've also had issues with my signature printing on the checks (both payroll and AP), but that may be resolved if we switch to Munis Forms for check printing.

The Water Department, IT, and Munis have been working on upgrading the water billing module. I'm hopeful that once the upgrade is complete, we'll be able to generate a file to upload to Unibank so that residents will be able to see their bills and set up auto pay for their utility bills. Currently, we are unable to download a format compatible with Unibank. Paying through the City website is still an option, but a resident must know the amount of their bill and enter it manually.

I am currently balanced with the Auditor through July 31, 2025. I have just started reconciling August.

At the beginning of the fiscal year, we switched our liability insurance to HUB International. We had a rocky start with filing claims, but I think, as of this week, we have resolved the issue. We're still working with MIIA on some open claims. Overall, it has been an easy transition.

As you likely know, I have been working with Community Development and Planning, during their transition period, to get their accounts sorted out. The most challenging has been reconciling their grant software to Munis and getting both to match the bank account figure. There are a few entries, in the grant books, that need to be completed and then I'll be ready to go over everything with Director Stevens and his staff to be sure that moving forward, all accounts are balanced monthly.

And my staff is awesome!!

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

---

**#11683 – A Measure Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into an Intermunicipal Agreement for Veterans Services with the Town of Hubbardston from the period beginning on January 1, 2026 through June 30, 2028**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that The City was recently approached by the Town of Hubbardston, asking to join our Veterans Service District once their current Veterans Service Office deploys into service on January 1, 2026. In speaking with our current Veterans Service Director, Cory Hasselman, and our newly starting Veterans Service Director, Christopher Davis, they have both confirmed that the workload in Hubbardston is small enough to not have a large impact on the services being provided by the office, even with the staff transitions currently occurring. As done in the past, the assessment for the community is based on a formula of \$2.00 per population of the Town based on the 2020 census with a 3% increase per fiscal year.

Councillor Dernalowicz inquired about the staffing of the Veterans Department, and if the new Director, Christopher Davis, had officially started.

Mayor Nicholson replied, informing the Committee that the office is fully staffed, and that Director Davis' first day for his probation period was the previous day, September 9<sup>th</sup>.

Councillor Dernalowicz voiced that he would like to give Director Davis a chance to “get his feet wet” and would like to meet with him as well.

Councillor Dernalowicz requests more time and that this item remains on the Finance Committee agenda.

There were no objections, more time was granted.

**#11684 – A Measure Declaring a portion of the Land located at 25 Main Street, identified as Parcel B on the attached plot plan, as surplus for the purpose of Leasing for Commercial Use for a minimum value of \$10 per year**

Mayor Nicholson informed the committee that as the development work in the downtown area continues, the Administration is requesting authorization to lease the small seating area in front of 25 Main Street, commonly referred to as the Bull Nose Building, for commercial use to allow for outdoor space for a business in the area who bids on the property. While the Administration is seeking to lease the property, rather than sell it – making it so that the City maintains the fee interest in the land – a lease for commercial enterprise would make this land subject to property tax payments by the tenant. Speaking with the City Assessor, based on the value of the location, the annual property taxes for this site would be \$990.00 per year. To reiterate, the General Laws of the Commonwealth require any lease for land to be through an open public process conducted as a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the same manner as when the City sells land. As such, anyone who is interested is able to submit a proposal in response to the solicitation, and all proposals will be reviewed by an independent

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

---

panel of 3 to 5 individuals who will make their final recommendation to my office as to who they believe should receive the award.

Councillor Dernalowicz inquired about the length of a lease.

Mayor Nicholson stated that on average, they are 20 year leases.

On a motion made by Councillor Heglin and seconded by Councillor Mack, it was voted to recommend to the full Council to authorize the measure:

DECLARING SURPLUS FOR PURPOSE OF DISPOSAL 25 MAIN STREET.

*VOTED: To declare 25 Main Street, identified as Parcel B on the attached plot plan, further identified on the City of Gardner Assessor's Map as M22/5/44, as surplus for the purpose of leasing for commercial use for a minimum value of \$10 per year, in accordance with prevailing General Laws, and upon such other terms as the mayor shall consider proper in accordance with this Vote.*

3 yeas, motion passes.

**#11685 – A Measure Declaring the Land located at 13-17 West Lynde Street, as Defined in the Attached Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan, as Surplus for the Purpose of Disposition**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that as development efforts in the Downtown area continue, the Administration is looking for authorization to sell the land located at 13-17 West Lynde Street, commonly referred to as the West Lynde Street Parking Lot. With the construction of the Rear Main Street Parking lot in progress, and the ways in which this lot has certain restrictions on it due to past decisions of the Planning Board, the Administration believes that it is in the City's best interest to place the lot for sale for private commercial use. This would leave all requirements to repair the parking lot and bring it back up to standard, as well as any future maintenance and plowing to be the cost of the private purchaser in the end. To reiterate, the General Laws of the Commonwealth require any sale of land to be through an open public process conducted as a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the same manner as has been done in the past. As such, anyone who is interested is able to submit a proposal in response to the solicitation, and all proposals will be reviewed by an independent panel of 3 to 5 individuals who will make their final recommendation to my office as to who they believe should receive the award.

Councillor Mack voiced some concern over losing access to the parking lot.

Mayor Nicholson stated that there would be additional parking once the Rear Main Street construction is completed, which should be by the end of the year. There is also a minimum 30-day advertising period if this measure were to be authorized.

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

---

The Committee voiced other general concerns with giving up the right to this property.

Councillor Dernalowicz requests more time and that this item remains on the Finance Committee agenda.

There were no objections, more time was granted.

**#11689 – An Order Appropriating An Additional Sum of Money From Available Enterprise Funds Various Receipts Reserved To Various Accounts For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2025 To June 30, 2026**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that all anticipated revenues must be appropriated by the City Council into the General Fund and Enterprise Fund budgets before October 1st in a year in order to meet the requirements for the Tax Recapitulation and Tax Rate Setting processes to occur. The appropriation to place the unappropriated Enterprise Fund anticipated revenues into a reserve accounts in the various enterprise accounts has been attached in the packet. This makes it so that these funds can later be transferred into other accounts later in the fiscal year, while allowing them to still meet the minimum appropriation requirements under the General Laws.

On a motion made by Councillor Heglin and seconded by Councillor Mack, it was voted to recommend to the full Council to adopt the order:

AN ORDER APPROPRIATING AN ADDITIONAL SUM OF MONEY FROM AVAILABLE ENTERPRISE FUNDS-VARIOUS RECEIPTS RESERVED TO VARIOUS ACCOUNTS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025 TO JUNE 30, 2026

*ORDERED: That there be and is hereby appropriated for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 the additional sum of ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FOUR THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED FIFTY-ONE DOLLARS 6/100 CENTS (\$154,951.06) from Available Enterprise Funds-Receipts Reserved to the following accounts:*

Sewer Dept	Enterprise Fund	\$40,608.33
Water Dept	Enterprise Fund	\$40,608.33
Golf Course	Enterprise Fund	\$58,756.30
Solid Waste	Enterprise Fund	\$14,978.10

**Any unused funds will revert back to the original Enterprise Fund at year end.**

3 years, motion passes.

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

---

**#11690 – An Order To Raise And Appropriate An Additional Sum of Money For Various Expense Expenditure Budget For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026**

Mayor Nicholson informed the Committee that all anticipated revenues must be appropriated by the City Council into the General Fund and Enterprise Fund budgets before October 1st in a year in order to meet the requirements for the Tax Recapitulation and Tax Rate Setting processes to occur. The appropriation to place the unappropriated General Fund anticipated revenues into a reserve account in the Mayors Unclassified Account has been attached in the packet. This makes it so that these funds can later be transferred into other accounts later in the fiscal year, while allowing them to still meet the minimum appropriation requirements under the General Laws.

On a motion made by Councillor Heglin and seconded by Councillor Mack, it was voted to recommend to the full Council to adopt the order:

AN ORDER TO RAISE AND APPROPRIATE AN ADDITIONAL SUM OF MONEY FOR VARIOUS EXPENSE EXPENDITURE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025 TO JUNE 30, 2026.

*ORDERED: To raise and appropriate for the expense of the City of Gardner for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 an additional sum as designated below for the expenditures of the various department, Expense Expenditure budget, in the amount of TWO HUNDRED, FIVE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED EIGHTY-NINE DOLLARS 23/100 (\$205,589.23):*

Mayors Unclassified Reserve Account	\$205,589.23
-------------------------------------	--------------

3 yeas, motion passes.

**#11691 – Discussions Related to Non-Union Salaries for Employees of the Golf Course and Library**

Councillor Dernalowicz stated that these positions were not being addressed at previous discussions with the full Council. He wanted this item to be addressed with the Committee so that they are aware. This is currently a “placeholder”.

Councillor Dernalowicz requests more time and that this item remains on the Finance Committee agenda.

There were no objections, more time was granted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Councillor Heglin and seconded by Councillor Dernalowicz, it was voted to adjourn at 4:35 PM.