

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

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Committee Chairman Councillor Craig Cormier called the Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 4:00 P.m. in the City Council Chambers. Committee member Councillor Karen Hardern and George Tyros were present.

Also present were Fire Chief Greg Lagoy and, City Clerk Titi Siriphan.

**I. Review and Approval of the Minutes Meeting.**

On a motion by Councillor Karen Hardern and seconded by Councillor George Tyros, on call of the roll, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the August 2, 2021 Public Safety Committee Meeting, as printed.

**II. Department Updates**

**Building Department**

Building Commissioner Roland Jean was not able to attend the Public Safety Committee Meeting but did submit an update letter.

**Public Health**

Public Health Director Lauren Saunders was not able to attend the Public Safety Committee Meeting but did submit an update letter.

**Fire Department**

**PERSONNEL**

- Lieutenant Kenneth Chase's promotional paperwork has been completed and processed by Civil Service.
- One Lieutenant has announced his intention to retire this December.
- One Firefighter continues to be out on Injury Leave, due to an on-the-job injury that occurred this spring.
- Three of the four new Firefighter recruits hired earlier this summer began work on August 9, 2021. The fourth candidate unfortunately had to resign due to personal reasons. At this time, recruits are undergoing in-house training. Two of the recruits, Christopher Dauphinais and Jamie Henderson, are scheduled to begin the Mass Fire Academy Recruit Training Program in Springfield on October 12<sup>th</sup> with graduation on December 17<sup>th</sup>. The third recruit, Patrick Swensen, will begin the Recruit program on December 20<sup>th</sup> and graduate on March 2<sup>nd</sup> also in Springfield. We were able to select one more candidate from this Civil Service list who will start work on Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, his name is Stenio Pereira. He has also been assigned to the Recruit Program class scheduled to begin on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Time lines for these recruits completing training is good, better than anticipated.
- Another Firefighter resigned from the Gardner Fire Department effective August 22, 2021. He is leaving the fire service and moving out of state. This currently

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leaves us with two vacant positions. We are in the beginning stages of the process of filling these vacancies.

- Overtime costs continue to be high, again mainly due to vacant positions. I respectfully request the Committee give consideration to the re-establishment of a “Group Floater” Firefighter position in the Fire Department. This would be a 41<sup>st</sup> employee, who would be assigned to any shift that is short-handed due to retirement, resignation, extended sick or injury leave, etc. Staffing and filling vacant positions continues to be a problem, this additional position would help to control overtime costs, and help to keep one position “ahead of the curve” of the goal of full staffing. The “Floater” position had been established by Mayor Hawke years back, and was eventually absorbed into the total number of funded positions at the time the Fire Department ambulance service was established.

#### VEHICLES

- Engine 2 (2011 International/Rosenbaur 4X4 Pumper) continues to plague us with mechanical issues. The has been out of service since shortly after major pump repairs were completed earlier this summer, this time due to a failure in the pump/road transmission shift controls. While not as expensive a repair as previous issues, difficulty in locating correct parts due to the manufacturer having poor production records, as well as supply-chain issues, has resulted in a lengthy delay completing the repair. At this point, I believe the City should consider the future of this vehicle. It has proved over and over to be an unreliable and impractical piece of apparatus.

#### GRANTS UPDATE

- The FY21 MA Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant has been completed, all equipment ordered has been received and is in service.
- The FY20 FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) award for a new Fire and Carbon Monoxide Alarm system for Fire Headquarters has been accepted by the City. Paperwork is being completed, including the FEMA required Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Screening Review. Following approval of the EHP submission, quotes will be solicited through the Purchasing Department. In the near future, I will be requesting funding from the Mayor for the 10% matching funds required from the City.

#### SOUTH GARDNER FIRE STATION BOILER UPDATE

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- Working with City Engineer Chis Coughlin, a funding request for \$22,000 is anticipated to be submitted to the Mayor for the engineering contract (Abatement and MEP Design) for this project.

#### HEADQUARTERS ROOF REPAIR

- On Tuesday, an air quality test was conducted at Fire Headquarters by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Environmental Health, the concern is that the roof has been leaking for an extended period of time, and remediation may be needed.

#### COVID-19 PANDEMIC UPDATE

- The number of EMS calls involving patients with either confirmed or suspected COVID-19 has increased marginally along with the current case surge in the area. Personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies continue to be sufficient at this time. Pfizer COVID-19 booster shots have been approved for first responders.

#### SECOND QUARTER 2021 FIRE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

- The Fire Department responded to 1228 emergency calls during the months of April, May, and June of 2021. This represents a 7.2% increase in calls from the same time period in 2020 (1145). Motor vehicle accidents were up 125% (49 [2021] vs. 22 [2020]) and EMS calls up 5.6%. Fire Prevention Officers conducted 126 inspections, versus only 29 during the second quarter of 2020 when inspections were basically stopped due to the pandemic.
- The Fire Department ambulance responded to 818 emergency calls during the months of April, May, and June of 2021. The ambulance transported 538 patients during that time period.

III. **#10471 – A Communication from the Traffic Commission relative to An Ordinance to Amend Code of th City of Gardner, Chapter 600, Section 24, Thereof, Entitled “Parking Prohibited on Certain Streets.”**

The City Clerk updated the Committee regarding the letter that the committee voted to send to residents of Summer Street at the last Safety meeting. A letter was not sent out because she did not have information for the next meeting to allow residents to attend. Instead the Clerk will send a letter to residents to send their testimony via email, phone or mail to be placed on file for review.

The committee request more time.

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**IV. An Order Authorizing \$69,258.95 Payment of Prior Year Operating Expenditure**

Chairman Cormier informed the Committee that they did receive a letter from the legal department. It was confirmed that it was a legit bill that the city has to pay.

On a motion by Councillor George Tyros and seconded by Councillor Karen Hardern, on a call of the roll, it was voted to recommend to the City Council to Authorize \$69,258.95 Payment of Prior Year Operating Expenditure

**V. An Application by Henry Heywood Memorial Hospital for a Flammable License located at 242 Green Street**

Matt Wzorek and David Horowitz of Tighe & Bond were present to speak in support of the license.

- They were the ones who submitted the application and have been working with Fire Chief Lagoy and the State Fire Marshall regarding the application.
- They would like to install a 30,000 gallon UST tank located at 242 Green Street, The Henry Heywood Memorial Hospital
- This license needs to be approved by the City Council before they can start construction

Fire Chief Lagoy stated that this is one of the largest UST in the city. He is working very closely with the State Fire Prevention Engineers, the requirements by law and Tighe & Bond. He has no issues with the application

On a motion by Councillor George Tyros and seconded by Councillor Karen Hardern, on a call of the roll, it was voted to recommend to the City Council to Approve An Application by Henry Heywood Memorial Hospital for a Flammable License located at 242 Green Street.

**VI. New Business**

There was no new business to report.

**Adjournment.**

On a motion Councillor Karen Hardern and seconded by Councillor George Tyros, on call of the roll, it was voted to adjourn at 4:56 p.m.



**City of Gardner**  
**Department of Inspectional Services**  
115 Pleasant Street, Room 101  
Gardner, MA 01440  
Tel. (978) 630-4007 Fax: (978) 632-3313

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Sept. 28,2021

To: The Public Safety Committee

RE: Building Dept. Report

Dear Public Safety Committee,

My apologies for not being able to make today's meeting. We have received approximately 800 permit applications in the Building Department so far in contrast in 2020 we didn't hit the 800 mark until mid December. We are very busy with inspections, violations, and safety checks. Our Zoning Department is very busy with new construction requests, as well as use variances. We're very close to completing the council chambers project and are now looking at installing mini splits for air conditioning as well as a secondary heat source. We recently received demolition permits four 264 Pine St. as well as 262 Park St. both of which were buildings with red X's on them and soon will be new homes. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Roland Jean  
Building Commissioner/Zoning Enforcement Officer  
City Hall Annex  
115 Pleasant St. RM 101  
Gardner, MA 01440  
(978) 630 4007  
rjean@gardner-ma.gov

**Mission Statement**

To promote the safe and compatible development of the community through fair and consistent enforcement of building codes and zoning ordinances

## **Public Safety Health Department Updates – September 29, 2021**

EL Harvey transition is going well. No major issues.

EL Harvey has also assisted in collecting waste after a clean-up even hosted by Seaman Paper, sponsored by our office and Keep Gardner Beautiful. The event was on 9/17, seventeen volunteers collected about 2 truckloads of litter from about 5 miles of Gardner Streets (see our Facebook page for pics of the event).

Keep Gardner Beautiful “Nip Hunt” and litter clean up event that was originally scheduled for 10/2 has been moved to 10/9. The event will begin at 9am and last until 12, meeting spot is in the Staples parking lot for anyone who is interested in participating.

Our part time licensing person recently resigned so our full time administrative coordinator is taking on the responsibility of licensing commission for now until someone is hired.

Housing calls have increased, lots of inspections are being requested for housing complaints.

The Prevention coordinator, Veronika, has been very busy in the community. National Night out was held on August 3 and was extremely well attended. She assisted with International Overdose Awareness Night at Monument Park on 8/31 and there was also a Recovery Month kickoff event was held in front of City Hall on 9/8.

It is licensing season. Our office is working on getting out renewal notices to all current permit/license holders in the City. 134 notices are going out under licensing commission (alcohol, common victualler licenses and auto amusement devices), and 206 renewal notices are being sent out for food licensing. All permitting and licensing is now being done online using our OpenGov software.

### **COVID**

Steady increase in cases in Gardner and statewide. We also continue to see quite a few breakthrough cases (positive cases among vaccinated individuals). According to data reviewed on 9/20, there have been 68 breakthrough cases among Gardner residents.

Last time we met in August Gardner was at a .71% positivity as of 7/28, state average .88%. Currently Gardner is a 3.67% positivity rate and the state average is 2.24% (as of 9/24).

Contacting tracing is still being done through CTC with some help from local tracers. We have been getting lots of calls from daycares, businesses, etc. in regards to close contacts and positive cases.

In regard agenda item #10526—An Order Authorizing \$69,258.95 Payment of Prior Year Operating Expenditure, it is our office’s stance that the bill from Waste Management is accurate and should be paid.