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City Council Standing Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 15, 2026
6:00 p.m.
Bartlett Community Room - 1 Market Street, Amesbury, MA 01913

Councilor Gilday called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Roll Call was taken and present were: Councilor Pamela Gilday, Councilor Amanda Haggstrom, Councilor Michael Hogg, Councilor Maryann Welch, Councilor Kelly Sullivan, Councilor Steven Stanganelli, and Councilor Jessica Redfern.

Absent: Chair Scott Mandeville.

Also Present: Mayor Kassandra Gove, Chief of Staff Pam Tobey, City Clerk Jennifer Smith, Director of DPW Joe Buckley, Interim Director of Business Operations for Amesbury Public Schools Daniel Grayton, Assistant City Clerk Allie Connolly, and Administrative Assistant for the Clerk's Office Tommi Thavisouk

Minutes for Approval: July 21, 2026.

- **Councilor Welch made a motion to approve the July 21, 2026 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Sullivan and passed unanimously, 7-0.**

Public Comment

- Alec Flickinger, 10 Wells Ave spoke about his concerns over the City's recent spending and his frustration over high taxes and user fees.

Council Response to Public Comment

- Councilor Welch stated that the Shay School is at max capacity and would have served the students better if it were to have been bigger.
- Councilor Stanganelli stated when the Shay School was being built, he remembers the Mayor having to plead the case for more capacity at the time

Topics for Discussion

2026-128 City Clerk Salary Ordinance. - **Councilor Redfern, Councilor Haggstrom, and Councilor Sullivan Sponsors**

- Councilor Redfern gave a background of 2026-128 and stated that her hope is for the Council to support the Clerk's Office. She stated the desire for establishing an evaluation process. She also stated that they may need additional guidance from KP Law and to possibly continue 2026-128.
- Councilor Haggstrom gave a background of 2026-128. She stated there is a gap between the how the charter outlines the management of the Clerk's Office and how it is managed currently. She stated this ordinance will help not only the Clerk but the City Council as well.
- Councilor Stanganelli made a motion to suspend the rules regarding the speaking time limit. The motion was seconded by Councilor Hogg and passed unanimously, 7-0.
- Councilor Haggstrom gave an overview of the Clerk salary study.
- Councilor Sullivan stated she is concerned there is not a formal evaluation process in place for the Clerk's position. She stated how beneficial reviews can be for the employees themselves.
- City Clerk Jennifer Smith gave a background of 2026-128. She spoke about her time in this role and how she has requested two raises in her time here that have been previously denied.
- Chief of Staff Pam Tobey spoke about the concerns KP Law has with 20-26-128. She stated KP believes this should be addressed not as an ordinance but within the Council rules. She also stated they have concerns with the exact dollar amount of the salary being listed.
- Councilor Stanganelli made a motion to suspend the rules regarding the speaking time limit for the remainder of the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Haggstrom and passed 6-1 with Councilor Sullivan in opposition.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked various questions regarding 2026-128, he stated these questions were sent to the sponsors and the Mayor's Office.
- Councilor Hogg stated he was not in favor of passing 2026-128. He stated his concern over where the funds would come from as well as his concern over this being passed as an ordinance. He agreed that a formal review process should be established.
- Councilor Redfern spoke about a potential new formal review process involving a subcommittee of 3 members.
- Councilor Welch stated she believed this issue would be better if it fell within the Council rules as opposed to an ordinance.
- Councilor Gilday stated she also was in favor of establishing a formal review process.
- The Councilors continued discussion around 2026-128 and agreed that more time was going to be needed to ask questions and receive answers. They also agreed they wanted to hear further from KP regarding 2026-128.

Councilor Stanganelli offered a motion to continue 2026-128 to the next scheduled Standing Committee of the Whole Meeting. Councilor Sullivan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

2026-129 An Order to accept the provisions of M.G.L. c. 140 sec. 139. - **Councilor Haggstrom and Councilor Redfern Sponsors**

- Councilor Haggstrom shared that this order was created to provide financial relief where we can. It does not eliminate the license requirement and does not impose a significant loss of revenue.
- Councilor Haggstrom also shared that there are currently 1085 dogs registered.
- Councilor Redfern shared that she appreciates the opportunity to sponsor this order and that it provides some relief while still maintaining public safety.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked clarifying questions about the current dog licensing requirement and the City Clerk Jennifer Smith was present to answer.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked if this would make any changes to the Census and Councilor Haggstrom stated that every year the Clerk's office works with a vendor to create the census form, a check box for over 70 could easily be added to the form.
- Councilor Hogg asked if there were any thoughts to expand this order to other groups and Councilor Haggstrom said potentially one day but this ordinance pertains specific to the M.G.L. exception for seniors. She also stated there is no charge for service dogs.
- Councilor Welch stated the language on the online platform UNIPAY was confusing when it comes to registering a dog.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked about where this would be filed in e-code. City Clerk Jennifer Smith answered there is a separate section for these acceptances.

Councilor Hogg offered a motion to return 2026-129 to the full City Council with a positive recommendation. Councilor Stanganelli seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

2026-130 An Order to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend a grant of $25,000.00 through the FY27 Field Demonstration Project. - **Mayor Sponsor**

- Chief of Staff Pam Tobey shared that the grant will be used to replace and update commercial appliances and went into detail about where the supplemental funds for this grant would come from

- Councilor Haggstrom asked if the City owns the Costello Transportation Center and Chief of Staff Pam Tobey shared that the City has a lease with about 10 years left.
- Councilor Redfern asked if the lease mentions something about the landlord maintaining the property and other clarifying questions and Chief of Staff Pam Tobey said there is some language about property maintenance but emphasized the great need for this equipment to be upgraded.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked what will be done to ensure The Council on Aging programs are not interrupted during the process and Chief of Staff Pam Tobey stated that she did not have answer but will follow up with Courtney Hutchinson before next Tuesday's meeting.

Councilor Stanganelli offered a motion to return 2026-130 to the full City Council with a positive recommendation pending the answer to the question about the continuance of programming during construction. Councilor Haggstrom seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

2026-131 An Order to approve payment from the FY27 general fund operating budget for the below listed prior year invoices. - **Mayor Sponsor**

- Councilor Gilday states that they were discussing a revised version of 2026-131-time stamped September 14, 2026
- Councilor Stanganelli made a motion to accept the revised version of 2026-131. The motion was seconded by Councilor Welch.
- Councilor Redfern asked if we needed to technically accept this revised version at the sub-committee meeting.
- Assistant City Clerk Allie Connolly clarified they did not need to accept the revised version.
- Chair Gilday asked who was in favor of the motion on the table, the motion failed 0-7.
- Councilor Welch clarified that FY27 funds were being used for FY26 bills.
- Chief of Staff Pam Tobey shared information regarding the outstanding invoices and mentioned that they were received late.
- Interim Director of Business Operations for Amesbury Public Schools Daniel Grayton was present to answer any questions. He stated all the invoices were from services completed in FY26
- Director of Public Works Joe Buckley shared that DPW does not spend money unless a purchase order is in hand. Purchase orders roll over to FY27 if a bill is not received and is necessary so that the funds reflect accurately.
- Councilor Pamela Gilday asked why so many meters were purchased.
- Director of Public Works Joe Buckley shared that meters cost anywhere from $200 to $300 a piece and the city has approximately 5,000 accounts.
- Councilor Hogg asked if the city gets reimbursed and Director of Public Works Joe Buckley answered yes; DPW charges for the meters.

- Councilor Stanganelli asked Director of DPW Joe Buckley what the outstanding invoice for the Conservation Commission was for. He stated he did not know but would find out before the next meeting.

Councilor Stanganelli offered a motion to return the revised version of 2026-131 to the full City Council with a positive recommendation pending the answer to his question about the Conservation Commission invoice. Councilor Welch seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

**** Mayor Gove arrived at 8:14 PM. ****

2026-133 An Order to appropriate $30,000 from the Smart Growth Stabilization Fund to fund traffic calming methods in densely populate residential neighborhoods. - **Mayor and Councilor Gilday Sponsors**

- Councilor Gilday shared that she has had several conversations with residents about traffic concerns. She also stated that 2026-133 calls for several temporary solutions which will be great in the meantime before permanent solutions can be established. She stated these issues are not specific to District 1, she hopes to use District 1 as a pilot program for these traffic calming measures.
- Chief of Staff Pam Tobey spoke about the background of 2026-133.
- Councilor Welch asked if all the traffic calming tools were temporary and moveable. Director of DPW said a process was in the works for how the temporary speed humps would be installed.
- Councilor Hogg stated he hopes some of these tools can be installed near the schools.
- Councilor Redfern stated it would be hard for her to vote on 2026-133 not knowing where everything would be installed.
- Councilor Stanganelli clarified the 2/3 majority stipulation given the vacant District 2 seat would be based on a full Council, 6 votes needed.
- Councilor Gilday stated she would not want to delay this from being passed given that come winter a lot of these tools will have to be removed for plowing.
- Councilor Stanganelli offered a motion to return 2026-133 to the full City Council with a positive recommendation. Councilor Hogg seconded, and the motion.
- Councilor Redfern made a motion to amend the motion on the table to request additional information about where the temporary and permanent traffic calming tools were to be installed. Councilor Haggstrom seconded the motion, and the motion failed with Councilor Welch, Councilor Gilday,

Councilor Hogg, Councilor Sullivan, and Councilor Stanganelli in opposition.

Councilor Stanganelli offered a motion to return 2026-133 to the full City Council with a positive recommendation. Councilor Hogg seconded, and the motion passed 5-2, with Councilor Redfern and Councilor Haggstrom in opposition.

Adjourn

Councilor Stanganelli made a motion to adjourn at 8:28 PM. The motion was seconded by Councilor Welch and passed unanimously, 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Allie Connolly