

**CITY OF WOBURN
CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
As a Committee of the Whole
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
WOBURN CITY HALL
THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2025, at 6 p.m.**

Voting Members present: Chair Charles Viola, Councilor Joanne Campbell, Councilor Joseph Demers, Councilor Robert Ferullo, Councilor Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Councilor Lou DiMambro, Councilor Robert Toro, and William Pappalardo, and President Jeffrey Dillon.

Also present: Mayor Michael Concannon and City Auditor Charles Doherty

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Discussion of the FY '26 municipal budget with the following departments:

Treasurer/Collector - Representing the Treasurer/Collector's Dept. was Treasurer/Collector Timothy Donovan. Treasurer/Collector Donovan said he would like to take a few moments to recognize the members of the office staff: Assistant to the Treasurer Sharon Lee, Deputy Treasurer/Collector Jennifer McKittrick, Accounts Payable Secretary Jo-Anne Varoutsos, Asst. Collector Kristen Poli and Head Clerk Karen Murphy. He said there were changes in positions due to the loss of one of the other members of the staff who moved to another position in the city. He said the office is one of the busiest at City Hall and his staff always acts professionally. He said as far as the budget goes, there are three accounts that were adjusted. He said the line item that increased the most was for postage and mailing fees. He said it appears the USPS is going to be increasing postage five cents more in July. He said this is a significant increase compared to prior years. He said the last time there was a five cents increase was in 2019. He said the USPS is increasing postage twice a year now. He said the postage and mailing line item was impacted by an increase of \$11,000. He said to offset that the equipment maintenance line item was reduced a little bit. He said some of the equipment in the office is getting old. He said there are a couple of printers that are over 15 years old that he would be looking to replace through the capital budget. He said on the lock box fees he was able to make an arrangement with another bank to provide those services, which has significantly reduced the cost to the city. He said that has helped offset the increase to the postage and mailings line item. He said everything else has pretty much been level funded. President Dillon said the Treasurer/Collector's office does great work. He said everyone is treated very well and professionally. **City Clerk** – Representing the City Clerk's office was City Clerk Lindsay Higgins. City Clerk Higgins said the City Clerk's accounts are on page 1 for the City Council, page 10 for the City Clerk's office, page 11 for Elections, page 12 for the License Commission, page 16 for the Board of Appeals and page 64 for the Traffic Commission. She said the office is finally coming up for air from last year's presidential election cycle. She said the turnout was 72 percent of the electorate for the presidential election. She said turnout was higher than municipal elections but not as high as some of the past presidential elections. She said the state reimbursed the costs of vote by mail and early voting, as well as the cost of the high speed tabulator that was approved by the council in FY '24. She said this year she has asked for a slight increase of \$210 in the line item for dues, on page 10. She said some money was added for the overtime account. She said she asked for increases to other line items

in election-related accounts but they were not given. She said she thinks the office can skate by with some reimbursement money, but next year those accounts definitely need to be increased. She said there may be a city-wide preliminary election in August. She said the city pays for ballots, census postage and mailings every year, so a city-wide preliminary election would be a big hit to the budget. She said last year the office did get some administrative support costs for the License Commission and the Board of Appeals, which really helped even though they were small amounts. She said she did advise Mayor Concannon and City Auditor Doherty that next year she will be asking for a part-time employee in the office. She said office staff is busy all the time and if someone is out, it really throws the office staff off. She said the City Clerk's office is one of the busiest offices in City Hall, especially for the public. She said as far as capital budget requests are concerned she appreciates the mayor, the former mayor and the council for their help with all the election equipment. She said the poll pads that were approved last year have been ordered. She said the poll pads will be operational for the August election and going further. She said she asked in the capital budget for election reporting software for end-of-night election reporting. She said her predecessor Bill Campbell asked for this equipment for numerous years but he never quite got it. She said this equipment will help the staff tremendously at the end of the night. She said the office staff had to tabulate over 90 precincts during the primary election last year with the results manually entered into an Excel spreadsheet. She said she thinks she and the Clerk of Committees were here until 3 a.m. tabulating results one night. She said they will also get the election results from the polls right away. She said she wants to thank the staff. She said last year was a very hard year. She said she wants to thank Asst. City Clerk Diane Stiffler, Clerk of Committees Gordon Vincent, Administrative Assistant Colleen McBride and Head Clerk Jennifer O'Doherty for stepping up to the plate. President Dillon said City Clerk Higgins does a great job. He said he has cast many votes over the past six years and the one he never doubts is the one to appoint her City Clerk. He said it was the right vote then and she proves it was the right vote every day. He said City Clerk Higgins gives the council great direction and guidance. He said he is in the City Clerk's office quite a bit and he sees how the staff interacts with the public. He said it really is a well-run office and he appreciates everything City Clerk Higgins does for the City Council and for the city. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she wants to echo what President Dillon said about the City Clerk. She said the only thing she misses is having City Clerk Higgins on the council. She said former City Clerk Campbell was a tough act to follow and City Clerk Higgins didn't miss a beat. She said she hears it from the public all the time how wonderful it is to go in there. She said the council couldn't do what it does without City Clerk Higgins and her team. She said she is glad to hear the office is getting that software. Councilor DiMambro said City Clerk Higgins does a great job. He said her team is second to none. He said the City Clerk's office is extremely busy and she and the staff give so much support to the council and it is appreciated. He said he wants to thank City Clerk Higgins and her team. He said the city is lucky to have them. Chair Viola said he wants to thank City Clerk Higgins for everything she and her department do. He said he wants to thank her for all the times she has fielded phone calls from him about issues with Ward 7. **Purchasing** – Representing the Purchasing Dept. was Purchasing Agent Orazio DeLuca. Agent DeLuca said his office is a 2-person show, with him and Secretary Mary Stuart. He said his proposed budget for FY '26 is straightforward and level funded. He said it does not take much to operate the department. He said there is an increase in the line item for postage because the U.S. Postal Service is increasing the cost of stamps. He said everything else in the budget is pretty straightforward. Councilor DiMambro thanked Agent DeLuca for sharpening his pencils on costs. He said he has sat in on

numerous department head meetings and Agent DeLuca's processes are amazing. He said Agent DeLuca does a great job and thanked him for all the work he does saving the city as much money as he can. President Dillon said he really wasn't aware of what Agent DeLuca does until he started attending department head meetings. He said it is another example of the teamwork there is in City Hall. He said Agent DeLuca does a great job and thanked him for his efforts. Agent DeLuca said he has the best job in the city. Chair Viola thanked Agent DeLuca for everything he does.

Assessors Dept. – Representing the Assessors Dept. was Chief Appraiser John Connolly. Chief Appraiser Connolly said he would like to recognize Board of Assessors Chairman Robert Maguire and Board of Assessors member Lori Medeiros in the audience. Chief Appraiser Connolly thanked his staff. He said if his staff does not get things right the information he provides to the council at the tax classification hearing won't be accurate. He said he would like to thank the staff and finally introduce a new employee, Adam Clark, to the Assessors Dept. He said Mr. Clark is a residential appraiser. He said he would also like to recognize Senior Residential Appraiser Jane Ventresca. He said Mr. Clark's arrival is very important because the office is required by the DOR to conduct cyclical inspections within the city. He said Ms. Ventresca was out there doing residential appraisals by herself while the office was short-staffed. He said the addition of Mr. Clark will put the office at the forefront of the cyclical inspection process and meeting DOR requirements. He said he would also like to recognize Administrative Assistant Patti Doyle and Analyst Rita Nye. He said Ms. Doyle and Ms. Nye are on the front lines at the counter and their customer service is unparalleled. He said there are a lot of seniors and veterans who come in. He said there are 298 exemptions this year. He said there are other people who come to the office and inquire about those exemptions. He said Ms. Doyle and Ms. Nye are doing abutters lists, dealing with the public, excise taxes and other things. He said there is a lot going on in the office. He said outside of the contractual raises for salaries there is not a lot of change to the departmental budget. He said there is \$2,950 increase due to some of the services that the department utilizes. He said the line items for GIS mapping and data services went up. He said the big thing he wants the committee to realize is the use of modern technology is not only making the department more cost-effective to the taxpayer but it increases the efficiency in the office. He said they utilize a mobile assessor which is an iPad the appraisers take into the field during their cyclical inspections. He said the devices are tied into the Vision camera system. He said he tries to run the department on a tight budget and he tries to make sure the money is well-spent. President Dillon thanked Chief Appraiser Connolly for everything he and his staff do. He said with the changes coming from government like the ADUs, Chief Appraiser Connolly is one of the guys who can deal with it before it gets to the council. He said it is so hard to keep up with the changes. Chief Appraiser Connolly said ADU is a hot button issue. He said the DOR has not yet recognized how it wants to classify those properties yet. He said what they are doing in-house is making sure the Vision camera system recognizes those parcels. He said if a switch does turn and the state indicates how it wants the ADUs to be valued, they will be ready. He said there has to be a uniformity and conformity to how the state wants to do this. He said when the Assessors Dept. is doing in the meantime is making sure ADUs are recognized in the system so if there is a new class code the department will be ready to switch over. Councilor Pappalardo said the Assessors Dept. does an extremely professional job. He said every time he has been in the office the staff has been awesome. He said he has a question about a TBD line item for a commercial appraiser level one. Chief Appraiser Connolly said they have been unsuccessful in their attempts to hire someone for the commercial appraiser's position. He said it is still very difficult to hire on the private side. He said he does not think they will be able to hire a

commercial appraiser in the near future, so the line item is there but they are having difficulty finding someone. Councilor Pappalardo said what jumped out at him was the \$97,000 salary and the mayor's recommendation for half of it. Chief Appraiser Connolly said the position has been fully funded for three years, but they can't find a person to fill it. He said he is hopeful, but it's tough. He said there are getting to be fewer commercial appraisers. He said the line item is there but they've agreed to reduce it by half and see if they can find someone later in the year.

Councilor DiMambro said he appreciates everything Chief Appraiser Connolly and his staff do, especially for the senior citizens and the veterans in the city. He asked how the city is looking as far as receipts for commercial businesses are concerned. Chief Appraiser Connolly said the department is still in the data gathering mode. He said there is not a lot going on with the commercial market. He said there are bright spots for the city in that there are projects that are shovel ready. He said the opening of the New Boston Street bridge is another opportunity. He said once the commercial market is such that once things get settled there will be a quick turnaround. Councilor DiMambro said the retail and the restaurant businesses seem to be going pretty good. Chief Appraiser Connolly said there isn't a lot of retail in Woburn, but the market that is in the city is strong and there are not a lot of storefront vacancies. He said one of the things they are seeing with restaurants is the national franchises for fast casual dining seem to be struggling and they are starting to see a lot more niche restaurants looking to come into the city. He said that's also a positive trend with restaurants like the new barbecue place in North Woburn and Surf at Woburn Village. He said people tend to like the next level up from fast casual dining. He said Applebee's is gone and Bertucci's is gone. He said that is not just a trend in Woburn but all over New England.

Law – Representing the Law Dept. was City Solicitor Mark Salvati. City Solicitor Salvati said the Law Dept. is a 2-person office with him and Secretary Theresa Borelli. He said Ms. Borelli does a phenomenal job. He said Mr. Borelli has handled about 90 contracts this year. He said he is glad to see Ms. Borelli was promoted to Administrative Assistant and paid as such. He said he is requesting a level funded budget and he is ahead of the game as far as legal assistance is concerned. He said everything else went down except for salaries. He said he got rid of Westlaw this year so there will be a savings there. He said there is not a lot of money spent in that office. President Dillon said City Solicitor Salvati and Ms. Borelli do great work. He said the City Council relies on City Solicitor Salvati for advice. He said if City Solicitor Salvati does not have the answer he does research and gets right back to him. Chair Viola thanked City Solicitor Salvati for always being there to answer the council's questions.

Conservation – Representing the Conservation Dept. was Conservation Administrator Theresa Murphy. Administrator Murphy thanked the City Council for being supportive of the Conservation Commission. She said last year at this time she requested that the budget be passed as is with a line item for a head clerk. She said she is so grateful and since that time she has been able to hire a head clerk, who she said is fabulous. She said the head clerk is a great asset to the city, and a great asset to the Conservation Dept. She said the head clerk is highly intelligent, motivated and a quick learner. She said the head clerk is fantastic with the public and just a really personable and wonderful person. She said she is also really fortunate to have Samantha Langone as the Community Gardens Coordinator. She said Ms. Langone is doing a fantastic job. She said the department has had a great year with different programs including Conservation Day, which she said was attended by many members of the City Council. She said the tree program was very successful and all the trees sold out. She said things are really great and she is grateful for all the support she gets not only from the City Council but also from her co-workers and other department heads. President Dillon said Administrator Murphy and her

team are doing great work. He said he is glad the department offices are moving out from under a staircase and into a proper office. He said he and Administrator Murphy spoke during Conservation Day and it was nice to get to learn how much the department does. He said it broadened his horizons about how busy that office is and the scope of the work. He said he has attended a few Conservation Commission meetings and it is very complicated and technical. Councilor Campbell said she is so happy the Conservation Dept. was able to hire a head clerk. She said she is thrilled that it's going well. She said there were city officials who fought for years to fund that position and to finally hire someone must be a relief. She said the amount of work Administrator Murphy did over the years by herself was incredible. Administrator Murphy said the office is still very, very busy but that's a good thing. Councilor Campbell thanked Administrator Murphy for everything she and the department do for the city. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she is happy for Administrator Murphy and proud of the work the Conservation Dept. does on behalf of the city. She said Administrator Murphy has worked with her and in Ward 5 for many, many years. She told Administrator Murphy to keep up the good work. Councilor DiMambro thanked Administrator Murphy for everything she does. He said he does not know how she was doing it all by herself. He said everyone is so supportive of the Community Gardens. He said he has heard more and more compliments to the point people are clamoring to get more spots. He said it is a huge success down there. He said he wants to thank Administrator Murphy and Ms. Langone for the nice job they do there. Chair Viola said he wants to thank Administrator Murphy and her staff. He said he always enjoys going to Conservation Commission meetings. He said he learns something new every time he goes. He said the Community Gardens is a beautiful thing for the city. He said he was just recently there and it is amazing what is accomplished. **Council on Aging** – Representing the Council on Aging was Council on Aging Director Marie Lingblom. Director Lingblom said she wants to thank the City Council and the Mayor for their support, especially in the capital improvements area. She said the COA got one new van last year and they are on line to get another new van. She said she wants to compliment state representatives Richard Haggerty and Michelle Ciccolo for assisting with the acquisition of \$75,000 in funding from the state. She said departmental salaries are paid by the city, but a lot of it is offset by a state formula grant by the Office of Aging Independence, which she said is a new term for the Executive Officer of Elder Affairs. She said her entire salary and a portion of the transportation coordinator comes out of the grant fund. She said it is \$152,000. She said it seems like the formula is steady right now. She said about \$79,000 is salaries and the rest is for supplies, programs, software, education fees, and the community garden, which is also managed by the transportation coordinator. She said it pays for a lot of different things. She said the COA is grateful for that funding. She said she tries to make sure the department is self-sustaining. She said Woburn seniors are raising money to help pay and make sure that the COA remains efficient. She said the Senior Center is serving about 250 people per day. She said that figure includes phone calls and people walking in. She said in the annual report for the last fiscal year there were 6,509 unique individuals that were served by the Council on Aging. She said it's getting busier. She said Baby Boomers are using the center more frequently. She said the increased demand for services is off the charts. She said over the last year there have been 1,200 service hours. She said people are in a panic partly because of what is going on at the federal level. She said her staff has stepped up. She said there are three Shine counselors who have served over 700 people. She said they wrote a note to the mayor to express that clients are frail and getting frailer, suffer from memory loss, are easily overwhelmed with planning, and are frightened by the news. She said this program is on the chopping block. She

said the counselors work through Minuteman, which she said is called an aging services access point. She said Minuteman runs the Meals on Wheels program, which is stable right now, but some of the other funding is not. Social Capital Inc., which runs a leaf-raking program, has had the funding cut through the AmeriCorps program. She said they have depended upon the Minuteman program which is now overwhelmed. She said she cannot say enough about her staff. She said you can feel the demand getting worse. She said an 89-year-old senior was abandoned by her adult child. She said the COA worked with a services agency and got her to a hospital and got her the care she needed. She said she is aware of four other instances in the last two weeks that have taken all of her time. She said it is heartbreaking stuff. She said in some instances, people just don't know where to go. She said these are complex matters. She said people are frantic. She said people know there are budget cuts coming at the federal level. She said at some point next year she would like to have a discussion about another staff member. She said there are a lot of things going on at the Senior Center. She said it's a drop-in community center. She said they are working with the mayor on a new walking path around the building. She said there are about 200 pickleball players. She said this year there is a \$25 registration fee, which will help defray costs for equipment. She said people who are members get first dibs on pickleball court reservations. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she would love to come and watch a tournament if the COA sponsors one. Director Lingblom said the Senior Center is losing custodian Paul Medeiros, and she wants to acknowledge his efforts. She said she has known Mr. Medeiros for a long time and he had a tremendous work ethic. President Dillon said Director Lingblom does a great job. He said it truly saddens him when he hears about some of these seniors upon whom hard times have fallen. He said he looks at these seniors the same way he looks at veterans. He said the seniors worked very hard to hand over the city of Woburn to a younger generation and they should not have to be falling upon hard times. He said whatever he can do goes without saying. He said it is a sad situation. He said government at the state and federal levels needs to smarten the heck up and do the right thing and take care of people who really need to be taken care of. Director Lingblom said there is a saying at the COA that getting old isn't for sissies. She said their other saying is never give up. President Dillon said the Senior Center is clean and everyone is happy. He said he recently retired and came in as a client to get help with Social Security. He said he and his wife had one meeting there and they clearly understood what was happening. He asked Director Lingblom and her staff to keep up the good work. Councilor Pappalardo said he truly hopes Director Lingblom can get the staff position she needs filled. He said he has been to the Senior Center a lot and there is a lot of activity happening. He said when you walk into that building, there is a certain vibe that's in there, and it's pretty cool. She said that's a reflection on Director Lingblom and her staff who are there to support the seniors. He said it is a pleasure to be there and Director Lingblom is doing a great job. Councilor DiMambro said Director Lingblom and her staff do a phenomenal job. He said he sees their work every single day. He said the Senior Center is a huge success, not only for all the events there and the social gatherings, but also for the informational aspect of it. He said senior citizens come in not knowing where to go for information and the staff guides them in the right direction. He said he is extremely horrified to hear that there are 90-year-old people who are struggling and being basically abandoned. He said the state legislature had better start rethinking where they distribute money. He said seniors and veterans should be taken care of. He said he is in support of the Council on Aging's budget. He said he hopes Director Lingblom can find an outreach coordinator. He said he knows it's hard these days to find qualified people. Chair Viola thanked Director Lingblom and her staff for their support. He said he has never heard anything negative

about the Senior Center. He said he is aware of seniors who enjoy the woodworking and woodcarving programs. He said it does weigh heavily on the council at this time of year that any budget cuts could affect senior citizens. **Woburn Public Library** – Representing the Woburn Public Library was WPL Director Hermayne Gordon. Director Gordon said it is always a pleasure to be here because she gets to hear what is happening in other departments. She said she gives a lot of presentations but this one means a lot to her because it gives her a chance to let the City Council know about all the great stuff that is happening at the library. She said the library has won awards from the American Institute of Architects. She said there are grants that the library has won and are really making a difference. She said the state of the art building is really unique. She said people are very excited about just being in the space. She said the library's mission is to connect the community to resources, services and experiences that educate, enrich and entertain. She said the library's vision is to provide services to everyone in the community. She said this year instead of the usual graphs and charts that show how things are going she wanted to give her presentation a personal touch. She said she wants members of the council to see the impact of the library. She said she asked her team to relay anecdotes and experiences with the people that they serve. She displayed notes that were forwarded by the Teen Librarian. She said there is a note from a parent who moved to Woburn two years ago and the parent stressed how important the library has become to her two daughters. She said the library has had a real impact on people's lives. She said Teen Librarian Erin is doing a terrific job. She showed another slide with more testimonials from the staff. She said the staff decided to do a different theme and dressed up every day for National Library Week. She said there has been a lot of positive feedback. She showed another slide with more testimonials from the "Love Mass. Libraries" Woburn page. She said these are notes from students that are displayed in the library. She said she wants to read one in particular: "I love this place!! All the library workers are very polite and all the spaces put me in a zone to work on my assignments. Thanks for this space! I can get my work done. I don't have a space at home." She showed another slide indicating the many ways the WPL serves the community, including programs across all ages and demographics, meeting space for community groups and city departments, free Wi-Fi and computer equipment, space for those experiencing homelessness, a repository for Woburn's history, guided tours, a collection of non-traditional materials and deliveries to homebound residents. She said the library has developed relationships with the Boys & Girls Club on teen programming, the elementary and middle schools to provide tours and opportunities to sign up for library cards, the high school to provide popup library events to promote library service and the Rotary Club to provide meetings space and network opportunities. She said the library also partners with SCI AmeriCorps, which she said has already been mentioned as being cut. She said the library had a really great relationship with teen programming. She said that program is going to be eliminated. She said this was the third year the library was involved with that program. She said another thing the library provides is food security. She said staff noticed there were a lot of teens coming in who were starving at the end of the school day. She said the library partnered with Food Link to provide food not just for students but for anyone in the community. She said when they put food out it is gone. She said this is AmeriCorps capstone program. She said this program is going to continue. Director Gordon showed a graphic that indicates the percentage increases from 2023 to 2024: visitors – 25%; programs – 28.9%; attendance – 54.7%; cardholders – 13%; items checked out – 6%; website visits – 21.6%; Facebook followers – 35%. She said this information is published every month on the library's website. She said like the Senior Center they are serving a lot more people. She said this is very encouraging. She said for some people as you'll see this

is the only place they can come to get Wi-Fi or to use a computer or a lap top, or to get tech help. She said one of her major goals is to ensure adequate staffing. She said this is a matter of safety, with 50,000 square feet of storage needing to be monitored. She said the library averaged 14,731 visitors per month in 2024. She said the library is open 65 hours a week. She said it is important to avoid staff burnout, as many of the current staff are overextended. She said since she became the director there are things for which she has asked for support from the city. She said in FY '23 there were three departments in the library which did not have any leadership. She said those departments were short-staffed and she requested a substitute pool so regular staff could take earned time off. She said in FY '24 a substitute pool was added. She said there were also negotiations internally to promote a staff member to head the circulation team. She said the library still needed two more department heads, another youth services librarian and another non-professional position. She said in FY '25 a professional position to head the reference department was added. She said they were still in need of a department head for technical services, another youth services librarian and a non-professional position. She said for FY '26 there were no new positions added and there is still a need for a department head for technical services, another youth services librarian and another non-professional position. She said requests for minor increases in the maintenance budget were all granted, as was an 8.64 percent increase in the hourly wage for part-time custodians. She said an increase in the substitute pool was granted. She said she wants to make the committee aware of how Woburn compares to other towns in terms of library usage and staff. She said the Woburn Public Library is offering more programs with similar or fewer staff than libraries in similar nearby communities. She said looking ahead the library will continue to offer excellent programs the community expects. She said she wants to thank the city for supporting the library's work. She said she also wants to thank the Board of Library Trustees, the Woburn Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Woburn Public Library for their support. She said last but not least she wants to thank the creative and hardworking team at the library. She said these are true professionals with whom she is blessed to work. She said every year she asks for everyone in the community to sign up for a library card if they don't already have one. President Dillon said he appreciates the presentation. He said it speaks volumes about the work Director Gordon and her staff do. He said one of his favorite things is when someone tells him they are new to the city he tells them to go to the library. He said the library and Horn Pond are the two most visible venues in the city. He said the library truly is a special place. He said he has grandchildren now and he loves the programming for children. He said the library does full service for senior citizens to toddlers. He said the library is a great place to visit since Director Gordon took her current position. He said there is a great vibe at the library. He said he does appreciate the availability of the library when a meeting place is needed for a neighborhood meeting. He said the library staff is always willing to accommodate members of the council. He said he wants to support the library as much as he can. Councilor Ferullo said there was a neighborhood meeting with President Dillon and he walked in around 6 p.m., and the children's room was packed. He said they were making these little hand puppets. He said after the meeting was over he was walking back to his car and a little girl ran up to him and said "Hey mister, look at this." He said it made him feel so good that people are engaged with the library programs like that on a weeknight. He said it is great to see all the enthusiasm. Councilor DiMambro said a lot of people from 3-years-old and up go to the library. He said he appreciates everything Director Gordon and her staff do. He said he still has his blue library card. Councilor Demers said he had a meeting to discuss the fate of the old Wyman School at the library and there was a very, very unanticipated high turnout. He said Director Gordon and her

staff assisted him greatly on the fly when they were looking for microphones and seats. He said he appreciates the library being that other outlet after hours for community meetings. He said it is a helpful tool to have. **Health** – Representing the Health Dept. was Board of Health Agent Jack Fralick. Agent Fralick said this is essentially the same budget he has submitted for the past 35 years, with a couple of additions. He said there is an increase to the rodent and mosquito control line item. He said he has always managed rodent and mosquito control but when he departs there will be no one on staff to respond to those complaints. He said that is why that line item needs a little extra money. He said there have been major changes to rubbish collection. He said the city has entered into a new contract with Waste Management. He said the city got a good deal and there is potential to save a lot of money. He said so far the roll out has been pretty good. He said he will be around for the first part of the transition to the new method of trash pickup. He said he does not foresee too many problems. He said one of the questions is how people will get rid of items that don't fit in their barrel. He said we will see how it goes. He said the other issue after he retires is who will perform the engineering work at the landfill. He said there is an active gas collection system he put in there to control any potential odors. He said there has been a gas collection system there for the past 15-16 years and it is rotting out. He said the landfill was closed in early 2000. He said it costs about \$25,000-\$30,000 every year to take samples from the landfill. He said the landfill does not generate as much methane as it used to. He said he petitioned DEP to eliminate the gas collection system but they want more data to prove no methane is escaping before they allow him to decommission it. He said in order to that he has to install a few wells in the area. He said he would have preferred to passively vent it. He said he does not understand the rationale of not letting him vent it and then test. He said he asked for \$60,000 for engineering and well installation and testing that he believes will be in the capital budget. President Dillon said there is a lot going on in the Health Dept. Agent Fralick said he likes his job. He said he is trying to discuss with the mayor about continuing rodent and mosquito control after he retires. He said he is also the animal inspector for the city. He said that involves rabies control; quarantining dogs that bite. He said he would like to see a little more money for him to be the rat czar and the mosquito czar for the city on a part-time basis. He said he can do it cheaper than Middlesex County mosquito control. He said you can't just hire an exterminator to get rid of rodents. He said he does not try to kill; he tries to assess. He said he has always been able to treat city property or easements and he said he has been very successful at it. He said he has developed good techniques. President Dillon said he appreciates that. He said he agrees that the city has to do something. He said Woburn is not the only community with rodents. He said the city has to look at different methods. Agent Fralick said he believes birth control may not be the best option. He said he has talked with the manufacturer of that pesticide and he believes it is more poisonous to pets than anti-coagulant types of pesticides. President Dillon thanked Agent Fralick for everything he and his staff do. He said they do a great job, especially Code Enforcement Officer Meghan Doherty and Administrative Assistant Patricia Bergeron-George. He said the council appreciates their efforts. Councilor Pappalardo said there have been two times he has asked Agent Fralick to get involved with rodent issues in Ward 2 and he is two-for-two. He said he thanks Agent Fralick and the neighbors thank Agent Fralick. Agent Fralick asked how many rodents people are actually seeing. He said he has seen maybe five. He said he usually does not see them unless they are dead. Councilor Pappalardo said he thinks what really helped was the letterhead coming out of the Health Dept. telling people what to do and what not to do. Agent Fralick said it is usually a \$400 bill if someone has to hire an exterminator. He said you can give people a lot of peace of mind. Councilor Pappalardo said in the rodent and

mosquito line item he sees there is \$10,000 for the current year and none of it has been spent, and there is a \$30,000 request for next year. Agent Fralick said he will spend \$10,000 a year on bait and insecticide. He said the other \$20,000 will be for the additional services that will be required when he leaves. He said he does not believe the city will find another Health Director like him again. Councilor DiMambro thanked Agent Fralick for all his efforts at the landfill. He said he appreciates Agent Fralick keeping an eye on the methane. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said it has been a lot of fun working with Agent Fralick and she hopes he will come back to help with rats and mosquitoes. She said there was a terrible rat problem about seven years ago in East Woburn and Agent Fralick was instrumental in resolving it. She said he has done an amazing job. She said she is disappointed about the new trash contract, but maybe this will work out. Agent Fralick said he is a big level of service guy. He said back in the day he would literally get 100 calls a day about trash. He said they made the changes that stopped the complaints. Chair Viola thanked Agent Fralick and his staff for everything he and his department do. He said the only thing he asks is for him to keep an open mind with the use of the second generation anti-coagulants. Agent Fralick said the problem is not knowing whether the vermin is dead. **Auditor** – Representing the Auditor Dept. was City Auditor Charles Doherty. Auditor Doherty said his departmental budget is level funded except for contractual salary raises. He said he wants to praise the staff in the Auditor Dept. He said they do tens of thousands of invoices every year. He said the volume is very high. He said all the bills come through their office. He said theirs is not a public-facing office but internally they have to deal with every other department's issues. He said they spend all day scrutinizing numbers. He said the last couple of years have been challenging because of the budget itself. President Dillon said Auditor Doherty and his staff do a great job. He said he knows he is not the only member of the City Council who calls the Auditors office every day. He said a week and a half ago he asked Auditor Doherty if he would be available for a meeting at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting lasted until 8:30 p.m. He said that shows the commitment the City Auditor has. Auditor Doherty said he has been a member of the City Council so he knows the demands of the office. He said he tries to bring what knowledge he has and he tries to help out any way he can. He said they are all on the same team. Councilor Ferullo said he wants to thank Auditor Doherty for his responsiveness not only for the past five years as a member of the City Council but also for the previous 15-20 years. Councilor Demers thanked Auditor Doherty for everything he does. He said the turnaround time for information from the Auditor Dept. has been terrific. He said he appreciates the department's willingness to spitball ideas and he thinks that goes a long way. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she and Auditor Doherty were elected to the council at the same time. She said he can remember a lot of nights when the council was here until 2 a.m. She said she is grateful that he is on the other side of the podium. She said whenever she calls she always gets an answer she can trust. Councilor DiMambro asked about the salary line item for a budget analyst. Auditor Doherty said it is a position that has been desperately needed in the office. He said there are two challenges, the first being space in the office. He said with three departments moving to the City Hall annex there will be room. He said he would like to have someone in the office by August. He said a budget analyst will provide for another level of oversight. Councilor DiMambro said he has sat in on a lot of budget meetings and anytime someone asks for a number, he is Charlie on the spot. He said he appreciates everything Auditor Doherty and his staff do. Chair Viola thanked Auditor Doherty and his staff for always being there to answer questions. He asked what the tax increase will be if the budget is passed as presented. Auditor Doherty said his office is still in the process of putting the

numbers together but the expected increase would be between \$565-\$570. He said there are factors like new residential growth and local receipts that could make it lower.

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MOTION made by Councilor Demers and seconded by Councilor Ferullo to adjourn; all in favor, 9-0. Chair Viola adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST

Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees