

**CITY OF WOBURN
DECEMBER 1, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WOBURN CITY HALL**

Roll Call

Campbell	Ferullo
Demers	Gately
Dillon	Mercer-Bruen - Absent
DiMambro	Viola
Concannon	

The City Council then had a moment of silence for former Mayor Thomas McLaughlin who passed away on November 28, 2022. Before the moment of silence, Councilor Viola read into the record the following: On November 28, the City of Woburn lost a good and admirable man, former Mayor Tom McLaughlin. Tom earned many titles throughout his life: Air Force Veteran, Lieutenant Colonel of the Massachusetts State Police, Ward 7 City Councilor and Mayor of Woburn. Tom served his country, state and community with honor and distinction. After graduating high school, Tom enlisted in the Air Force during the Vietnam War. After coming home, he applied and was accepted into the Massachusetts State Police. During Tom's career at the State Police, he worked many high-profile cases and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of the State Police until his retirement in 2001. Tom, like his father, brother Jack, and cousin Henry, was an elected official in the City of Woburn. From 2004-2006 Tom served as Ward 7 City Councilor then from 2006-2010 Tom served as Mayor for two terms. Since leaving politics, Tom moved to Bourne and was active and enjoying retirement. Tom leaves behind his loving wife Sheryl of 32 years, daughters Sherri Tola and her husband Steve of Louisville, Kentucky, Sharon McLaughlin of Fitchburg and stepson Michael Lowthers who predeceased him. Tom was also the proud grandfather of Dane Clin of Dover, NH and Colin Martin of Lynn. I ask that we take a moment of silence in memory of Former Mayor Tom McLaughlin.

Pursuant to Title III, Section 12 of the Charter of the City of Woburn, His Honor the Mayor has called a SPECIAL MEETING of the City Council to be held in the City Council Chambers.

VOTED to dispense with the reading of the previous meeting's Journal and to APPROVE, all in favor, 8-0-1 (Mercer-Bruen Absent).

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

On the matter relative to Tax Classification for the City of Woburn. PUBLIC HEARING OPENED: A communication was received from His Honor Mayor Galvin dated November 11, 2022 that was received by the City Council at its November 15, 2022 meeting.

Further, a communication was received from the Woburn Board of Assessors dated December 1, 2022 as follows:

Dear President Concannon and Council Members:

The Board of Assessors is pleased to report that the valuation roll for fiscal 2023 has been finalized after a reappraisal of all taxable properties was conducted by this office. The assessments and the valuation methodologies employed have been approved by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue through their five-year onsite certification review. The total assessed valuation for all real and personal property in the City effective January 1, 2022 is \$10.447 billion. This represents an increase from the prior fiscal year's total of \$9.436 billion. This increase in taxable valuation is attributable to the appreciation experienced by all classes of property.

The City Council must now determine the relative tax burden to be borne by each class of property by selecting a "residential factor". To assist the Council in its deliberations, several charts have been prepared and are attached to this correspondence. These charts illustrate relevant valuation and tax levy data and the impact of your vote this evening.

By selecting a residential factor of "1" a single tax rate of \$12.08 results. Choosing a factor less than "1" results in a portion of the tax levy shifting from residential properties to commercial, industrial and personal property taxpayers. For example, adopting a residential factor of ".71" means that the residential class of property would pay 71% of the levy they would pay if there were no classification. Under this scenario, the levy increases for the other classes of property by a factor of 175 percent. The chart entitled "Classification Options" best illustrates the various scenarios available to you.

Woburn Board of Assessors, s/ Robert E. Maguire, Chairman, Lori S. Medeiros, David J. Rufo

Motion made and 2nd that any and all communication be received and made part of the permanent record, all in favor, 8-0-1 (Mercer-Bruen Absent). His Honor the Mayor Galvin stated that the council would be voting on the residential factor and is shifting the residential taxes onto commercial property, which John Connolly, Chief Appraiser, will explain. Mayor Galvin recognized John Connolly, Charlie Doherty, and Timothy Donovan for their work year round leading up to tonight. John Connolly then spoke and recognized the Board of Assessors, Robert Maguire, Lori Medeiros, and David Rufo, who all were in attendance. Mr. Connolly stated he wanted to recognize and compliment outstanding work and customer service throughout the year: Jane Ventresca, Rita McBride, and Rita Nye. Mr. Connolly then read into the record the communication dated December 1, 2022 from the Board of Assessors (please see above). Mr. Connolly then explained the handout of information and that the Table of Contents: 1. Analysis of Levy Limit; 2. Analysis of Levy Limit Increase; 3. Fiscal

2023 New Growth; 4. Valuation by Class of Property; 5. Classification Options; and 6. City of Woburn Tax Rate History. Further, Mr. Connolly stated that the Analysis of Competitive Communities was added as the final page, which has many 2022 figures as communities are still going through the 2023 process. Mr. Connolly stated that on Slide 2, the 2023 Limit was 156,729,966, and last year the limit was 148,430,828, \$3,710,771 was the 2.5 percent increase, and there was \$4,588,367 of new growth. Mr. Connolly stated on Slide 3, the total increase was \$8,299,138, \$3,710,771 was the 2.5 percent increase, and there was \$4,588,367 of new growth. Mr. Connolly stated on Slide 4, stated the new growth a good portion had to do with new utility work, and that 76% of new growth was for personal property, residential was 15%, and industrial/commercial was 9%. Mr. Connolly stated on Slide 5, that the residential property is outperforming last years, and that the residential increase in value has to the with higher demand which in turn the value in the city increases. On Slide 6, Mr. Connolly stated on the slide you can see if the city chose a factor of 1 and there was no shift, residential rate would be \$12.08, and the descending scale is outlined. Councilor Mercer-Bruen entered the Council Chamber. Mr. Connolly stated that last year there was a residential factor of 0.717901 which is a 175% shift. On Slide 7, Mr. Connolly stated the residential rate went from \$9.34 in 2022 to \$8.70 in 2023. Mr. Connolly stated that the commercial/industrial rate went from \$22.77 in 2022 to \$21.14 in 2023. Mr. Connolly stated on the last exhibit, Analysis of Competitive Communities, Burlington just set its FY23 rate at \$9.40 for residential and \$26.15 for commercial/industrial, with a 167% shift with the average tax bill increasing to \$6,197. Mr. Connolly stated for Woburn the average tax bill in FY22 was \$5,160, and for FY23 will be \$5,320, which is only an increase of \$160 to the average single family. Mr. Connolly stated that this is an outstanding job by the Mayor and City Council and the increased value of the city. Councilor Mercer-Bruen thanked Mr. Connolly for having the materials to the council in advance. Upon inquiry from Councilor DiMambro, Mr. Connolly stated the average single family home was \$611,539, which accounted for 10.6%, Condos 9%, Two-Families 11%, Apartments 10%, Commercial/Industrial 5.4%, and Industrial 11%. Mr. Connolly stated the industrial market has been going crazy due to the location of the city and the ease of storing and moving product in Middlesex County. Upon inquiry from Councilor DiMambro, Mr. Connolly stated the commercial includes everything that is going on in Cummings property and new commercial as well. Councilor Gately stated Mr. Connolly did a great job, this is outstanding, and the people really needed this. Councilor Gately stated people are fighting to pay for popsicles. Councilor Gately stated the new growth is encouraging and other cities and towns are not so encouraging. Mr. Connolly stated that the new growth is attributed to the \$4,000 for additional consulting fees that allowed the city to go to a 50/50 model that increased values, which has been tested in courts. Councilor Gately stated the residents need this which gives them hope. Councilor Dillon thanked Mr. Connolly and his staff, and that he did an excellent job with the breakdown. Councilor Dillon stated \$165 is not a lot of money unless you do not have the \$165. Councilor Dillon stated he would like to use COVID-19 money and free cash to offset the increase for the taxpayers. Mayor Galvin stated that is a good idea, but if you start using one time funding to offset you end up in the hole the following year. Mayor Galvin stated that this is a very good increase, particular to what is coming around in the US. Mayor Galvin stated look at Burlington, look at what the departments budges are, and that the silver lining is Woburn is a real bang for your buck. Councilor Dillon stated that he does not want to borrow, but that heating, fuel, and grocery bills are going up, and would like to use the COVID money or free cash. Mayor

Galvin stated that is frowned on, as there are a lot of capital expenditures coming up on city and school side, with feasibility studies attached. Mayor Galvin stated at minimum there will be a new school in North Woburn, PFAS Filtration, and looking at other liabilities. Councilor Viola thanked the department for its work. Mr. Connolly stated the residential factor will be 0.719878. President Concannon thanked the team. Mayor Galvin stated that apartments impact tax rates, and appreciates single families, but that more apartments mean a greater residential valuation. Mayor Galvin stated that the uses on Commerce Way would like good commercial allowed. President Concannon stated that this is the max allowable shift is 175%, which is reasonable, and is reasonable for the commercial properties, there is a good balance. President Concannon stated that the Burlington shift is 165 to 167% and is not the full 175% shift. Mayor Galvin stated Burlington is probably looking to Woburn, as Burlington is not immune to the issues. Mayor Galvin stated that values have gone up, and tax rates took a good drop. Councilor Mercer-Bruen thanked everyone. Councilor Mercer-Bruen stated she echoed Mayor Galvin's concerns for Commerce Way and that when the Commerce Way Overlay District came about, they did not imagine 100% apartments. Councilor Mercer-Bruen stated Woburn has done its part for all the housing and has reached the plateau and the council has to keep an eye out down there. Councilor Mercer-Bruen stated she is thrilled the tax rate went down, as last year it went up a penny. Councilor Mercer-Bruen stated she was grateful to the Mayor for her constituents, and her family. Motion made and 2nd that the public hearing be opened for public comments, all in favor, 9-0. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chris Kisiel, 54 Hinston Road, Executive Director of the Woburn Business Association, read the following statement into the record: "On behalf of the Woburn Chamber of Commerce, I'd like to read the following statement. We are aware that you will be voting tonight to reclassify the tax rate, shifting a bit more to the local businesses as normal practice every year based on the increases in property values. with an increase from \$9.4 billion to approx. \$10.4 billion, Woburn is seeing a nice growth in value, and we understand that comes with an increase in infrastructure usage. Woburn's rates for Businesses and Residents have been held low over the years compared to other communities due to smart fiscal planning by all involved and we appreciate that. And as the Executive Director for the Woburn Chamber, a business owner and a resident, I want to as on behalf of the Chamber's BODs and the local business community that you please keep in mind what businesses have gone through over the past few years, with COVID and other hardships and hope you stay cognizant to those facts and think hard before any other increases happen through other revenue streams. Thank you for all you do and please keep the businesses in mind, so we don't start to lose them." Motion made and 2nd that the communication be received and made part of the permanent record, all in favor, 9-0. Motion made and 2nd that the PUBLIC HEARING BE CLOSED, all in favor, 9-0. Motion made and 2nd that a RESIDENTIAL FACTOR OF 0.719878 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 be ADOPTED, ROLL CALL: Campbell - Yes; Demers - Yes; Dillon - Yes; DiMambro - Yes; Ferullo - Yes; Gately - Yes; Mercer-Bruen - Yes; Viola - Yes; Concannon - Yes; MOTION PASSES. Motion made by Councilor Demers to reconsider his vote and 2nd, all in favor, 9-0. Motion made and 2nd that a RESIDENTIAL FACTOR OF 0.719878 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 be ADOPTED, ROLL CALL: Campbell - Yes; Demers - Yes; Dillon - Yes; DiMambro - Yes; Ferullo - Yes; Gately - Yes; Mercer-Bruen - Yes; Viola - Yes; Concannon - Yes; MOTION PASSES.

Any other matter that may legally come before the City Council. – None.

Motion made and 2nd to ADJOURN, all in favor, 9-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Lindsay E. Higgins
City Clerk and Clerk of the City Council