

**COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC LANDS  
WOBURN CITY HALL  
COMMITTEE ROOM  
MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023, at 6 p.m.**

Voting Members present: Chairman pro tem Lou DiMambro, Councilor Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Councilor Charles Viola and Councilor Jeffrey Dillon. Absent: Chairman Richard Gately

Non-Voting Members present: President Michael Concannon, Councilor Joseph Demers, Councilor Joanne Campbell, and Councilor Robert Ferullo

Also present: Mayor Scott Galvin and Fire Chief Donald Kenton

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**MOTION** made by Councilor Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Councilor Viola to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the meeting of October 24, 2022, and to approve; all in favor, 4-0.

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**Order to dispose of Fire Station #2, 907 Main Street, and Fire Station #3, 654 Main Street, and to authorize Mayor to convey the properties in accordance with G.L. c.30B:** Motion made by Councilor Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Councilor Viola to allow the mayor to address the order; approved, 4-0. Mayor Galvin said three or four years ago city officials initiated the transition of the fire station system in the city. He said one of the first things that was done was the establishment of a proliferation committee. He said one of the models called for three stations – in West Woburn, East Woburn, and Central Square. He said there was another model that indicated four stations would be better. He said Chief Kenton and former Chief Stephen Adgate were instrumental in the planning process. He said ultimately the city came up with a plan to spend \$30 million - \$23 million on a new station and \$7 million in renovations to existing stations. He said there were also discussions about disposing of the Central Square and North Woburn stations by putting them out to bid. Chair pro tem DiMambro asked if anyone on the committee has any questions for the mayor. There were no respondents. Motion made and seconded by Councilor Demers and seconded by Councilor Mercer-Bruen to receive and place on file an email from Woburn Fire Inspector John Nee dated Tuesday, May 2, 2023, with the subject line “Mayor’s order to dispose of Fire Station 2 and Fire Station 3;” approved, 4-0. Motion made by Councilor Dillon and seconded by Councilor Mercer-Bruen to allow any member of the council not on the committee to address the order; approved, 4-0. Councilor Demers said one of the concerns is the order of procedure. He said he wants to ensure that the renovations of the stations are completed. Mayor Galvin said the sale of station 2 and station 3 will go a long way toward financing the renovation of the other stations. He said there is still a punch list for the new station, and completing the items on the list is going to take time. He said the city has committed to moving forward with the renovations of the stations in the South End, East Woburn, and West Woburn. He said funding from the sale of these two stations will help. Councilor Demers asked if there was a commitment to finish the renovations before

the disposition of the two stations. Mayor Galvin said the new station still has some issues that need to be worked out. Councilor Dillon said the city has a once in a lifetime chance to clean up the intersection near the Woburn Boys & Girls Club and make that a better situation. Mayor Galvin said he heard nothing about that until the Boys & Girls Club's board of directors sent a letter to President Concannon on May 1. He said that was the first time he heard there was an issue with access. He said the Boys & Girls Club has an easement. Councilor Dillon said there is a painted box at the intersection, but people still drive into the middle of the box and it creates traffic issues. He said he would like to talk about this problem. Mayor Galvin said as far as he knows there has never been an issue there. He said Mr. Tocci of the Tocci Building Corp., is one of the proponents of putting a light at the top of the street. Councilor Dillon said he knows the painted lines on both sides of the traffic light are not in good shape. He said he is not sure what type of tolerance the neighbors will have if the intersection is not improved and something else goes where the Central Square fire station is now. Mayor Galvin said the City Council has control over what goes in there. He said his thought is to get the ball rolling. He said it is important to get these two properties out of the city's control. President Concannon said he has concerns about the process. He said what is in front of the council is an order that will allow the mayor to put these two fire stations out to bid. He said interested parties will bid at their own risk. He said he sees two different situations. He said the North Woburn station is a lot simpler to dispose of in terms of development. He said he would not be opposed to separating the order to address both stations separately. He said this is the council's bite at the apple. He said, to Councilor Demers' point, he recalls discussion about an improvement plan to build the new headquarters and then upgrade the other stations. He said he hopes it is not a long, drawn-out process. He said \$7 million is a significant amount of money. He said his hope would be the other three stations would be rehabbed quickly. He said he thought stations 2 and 3 would remain available in case the renovation of the other three stations is a little bit more involved than expected. Councilor Ferullo arrived. Mayor Galvin said he thinks the new headquarters has enough capacity. He said he is definitely comfortable moving forward with the plan based on four stations. President Concannon said station 3 is unique. He said the new traffic configuration is a pain in the neck. He said there may be an opportunity to fix the problem. Mayor Galvin said the plan for the traffic pattern came from the city engineer. President Concannon asked - given the small footprint of the station 3 building - if there is a lot of value to the property. He said he is not sure the value of the building outweighs the opportunity to alleviate a traffic problem. He again suggested separating stations 2 and 3. He said he has no issue disposing with station 2 as long as the city doesn't need the space. Councilor Dillon asked if the committee needs to open the discussion to the public. Chair pro tem DiMambro said he would accept a motion to open the discussion to the public. Councilor Mercer-Bruen asked how much the cost of a traffic light would be. President Concannon said if the committee separates the order it could dig deeper into the finances. Chair pro tem DiMambro asked if the fire station renovations are being done by city of Woburn employees. Mayor Galvin said the work is not being done by city of Woburn employees. Motion made by Councilor Dillon and seconded by Councilor Mercer-Bruen to open the meeting to accept comments from the audience; approved, 4-0. Chair pro tem DiMambro asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the committee in regard to the order. Woburn Fire Inspector John Nee said he sent a communication to the members of the City Council about the disposition of fire stations 2 and 3. He said he wants to make sure the three stations that are supposed to be renovated can be satisfactorily rehabilitated before stations 2 and 3 are disposed. Mayor Galvin said one station at a time will be renovated. Inspector Nee said he wants to make

sure there is enough funding. He said all the stations need a lot of work. Councilor Dillon said the city has committed \$7 million plus whatever money comes from the sale of the old stations to the renovations. Mayor Galvin said free cash can also be made available. He said the bond authorization puts free cash in play. Chair pro tem DiMambro asked Inspector Nee how much it will cost to rehab the three stations. Inspector Nee said he is not a construction guy. He said the stations need a complete overhaul. He said this is the way it's been for a number of years. Mayor Galvin said DiNisco Design, Inc., went through the fire stations and identified what needed to be done. Councilor Demers asked when the DiNisco study was done. Mayor Galvin said the study was done in 2020. Councilor Demers said there was an agreement in writing to renovate the fire stations. Mayor Galvin said the new headquarters was the priority. Inspector Nee said the city has been talking about renovating the stations forever. He asked when the study that determined station 3 should be torn down was done. Mayor Galvin said city officials have been talking about a new headquarters since 1970. He said there have been discussions about renovating the existing stations but the priority has always been the headquarters. He said it is time to move forward and get stations 2 and 3 sold. Inspector Nee said he does not think the city is going to get a lot of money from selling those two stations. President Concannon said his understanding is the city was going to undertake the complete package – new headquarters, station rehab and disposition of superfluous stations. He said the council did not expect that to take 10 years. Mayor Galvin said the conceptual plan is every two years. He said he does not know if it will take that long. He said the goal is to keep moving forward and to keep minimizing costs. Councilor Dillon asked Chief Kenton if station 3 could be of any further use to the fire department. Chief Kenton said station 3 is of no further use to the fire department. Councilor Dillon asked Chief Kenton if \$7 million is in the ballpark for renovations. Chief Kenton said he hopes so, but he won't know until construction starts. Inspector Nee said he wants to make sure all the stations are done properly and quickly. He said there was a study done 15 years ago that indicated station 3 should be closed immediately, and it's taken this long. Cynthia Tocci, 16 Lowell St., said she uses the driveway next to the fire station. She said not every driver respects the stop line, and others do not realize there is a box outside of which they are supposed to stop. She said a better idea would be to extend Clinton Street. She said the traffic situation has gotten to be a 3-ring circus. She said it is too much to have two traffic lights. She said she does not think the city is going to get a lot of money for station 3. John Tocci, Tocci Building Corp., 660 Main St., said he approached the city about putting in a traffic light for his company. He said the traffic light improved life for them. He said prior to the installation of the light there were several accidents. He said the traffic light has improved the situation. He said there are people who don't understand the box. He said people are anxious to get through the intersection. He said there is no clear line of sight onto Clinton Street. He said if the box is blocked then cars coming out of their driveway miss a light cycle entirely. He said if you get through the light at Clinton Street you have a gauntlet starting at the Boys & Girls Club. He said he does not think the fire station property is worth much because it is landlocked. He said Tocci Building Corp. owns all the property behind the fire station. He said the property has been on the market for 24 years but there has been no response. He said the only way to access is through the middle of the intersection. He said there is a chance to fix this. He said he would contribute his property behind the station. He asked the committee to study this issue a little bit longer. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she is hearing a couple of different things. She said on one hand she is hearing the committee should slow down and take a look at the traffic situation. She said that involves a process that takes a long time. She said on the other hand she is hearing the committee should

not slow things down and dispose of the two fire stations. She asked what the ultimate goal is. She said she does not know. She said if the property is worth so little, then people could step up to buy it. She said she wants to understand the problems the city is trying to solve. She said she has never heard of any problems with the intersection. She said the first time she heard of any problems is when the Boys & Girls Club sent its letter. President Concannon said the ultimate goal is to finish the job in as timely a manner as possible. He said the three phases of the plan were: 1.) the new headquarters; 2.) upgrade the remaining three stations, with \$7 million for immediate improvements; and 3.) dispose of the other buildings when the city did not need them. He said it was alluded to that the city would not get rid of any existing buildings until it was determined the city did not need them. Councilor Mercer-Brien said she does not remember that. President Concannon said it was DiNisco's plan. He said part of the discussion was not disposing of the stations 2 and 3 until it was determined that they would not be needed for swing space. He said he is suggesting a possible alternative: put station 2 out to bid and retain station 3 to look at options. Mayor Galvin said in that case the city would be bidding against itself. President Concannon said he would like to look at it. He said he would like to talk to the city engineer about the intersection. Mayor Galvin said the plan to change the intersection came from an abutter, not the city. He said President Concannon is asking the city to come up with a plan to tear down a building. He said President Concannon is turning this into a negative. President Concannon said it's a negative only if the building is shut down. Mayor Galvin said if the council wants to hold onto the building, it can hold onto the building, but if it does, it is bidding against the city. Councilor Dillon said station 3 is functionally obsolete. He said if it is put out to bid, the city will have to disclose that. Mayor Galvin said bidders also have to do their due diligence. Councilor Dillon said the city has an obligation to keep its residents safe. Mayor Galvin said bids will determine the market. He said he had no idea the disposition of station 3 would be a problem. Councilor Dillon said it is always good to get money for the city, but the health and safety of the residents is paramount. Mayor Galvin said there have been no complaints about that intersection. President Concannon said, as a resident of the area, it's a pain in the neck and the city should look at it. Mayor Galvin said knocking down a building and putting in an intersection would be revenue negative. President Concannon said all he is suggesting at this point is to take a look at it and then make a determination. He said once the council decides to yield its authority, any decisions are up to the mayor. Mayor Galvin said all he can do is put the property out to bid. President Concannon said he does not want to make any future renovations contingent upon getting money from the sale of these two fire stations. Mayor Galvin said the money from the sale of the two stations will be used to defray costs. He said the goal is to not borrow money. He said if the city can find money without borrowing, it will be in better shape. Motion made by Councilor Dillon and seconded by Councilor Mercer-Bruen to return to the regular order of business; approved, 4-0. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she imagines the renovation costs have increased beyond \$7 million since the study was done. She said she would hate for the city to miss out on an opportunity. She said she would hate to see the council slow down the process. She asked if the two parcels could be sold separately. Motion made by Councilor Dillon and seconded by Councilor Viola to put station 2 up for sale and undertake a feasibility study at station 3. Councilor Mercer-Bruen asked who will pay for the study. Mr. Tocci said he will pay for the study. Motion made by Councilor Dillon to give the mayor the authority to dispose of station 2 and table discussion of the disposition of station 3 until the next committee meeting. Councilor Viola suggested reaching out to the city's Engineering Dept. to determine if there are any issues. Motion approved, 4-0. Motion made by Councilor Mercer-

Bruen and seconded by Councilor Viola to accept all emails associated with the disposition of fire stations 2 and 3; approved, 4-0.

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**MOTION** made by Councilor Mercer-Bruen and seconded Councilor Viola to adjourn, 4-0. Chairman pro tem DiMambro adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST

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Gordon Vincent  
Clerk of Committees