



Members

James Tillotson, Chair
Fred Krampits, Vice Chair
Frank Laflamme
Gary Labrie
Jerry Roy

MINUTES
February 23, 2021

The following are the minutes of a public hearing held Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 6:30 PM in the City Council Chambers, Fourth Floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013 and via Teleconference.

Members Present: Tillotson, Krampits, Laflamme, Labrie, Roy

Also Present: Dan Garvey (Associate City Solicitor), John Beaulieu (Assistant DPW Superintendent) Councilor Walczak (zoom), Marie Laflamme (Treasurer), Councilor Balakier, Victor Anop (Assessor), Stanley Iwanicki (City Collector), Benjamin Strepka (Interim Superintendent Parks)(zoom), Brian Suchy (Assessor), Laura McCarthy (Assessor), Councilor Zygarowski, Councilor Courchesne, Janina Surdyka (Registrar), Paul Winspeare (HR Generalist), John Vieau (Mayor), Keith Rattell (City Clerk), Mike Pise (Chief of Staff), Jack St. Clair (Associate City Solicitor), Jim Deni (Superintendent of Water), Jack St.Clair (Associate City Solicitor)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

ITEM #1

BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED THAT CHAPTER 7 OF THE ORDINANCES FOR THE CITY OF CHICOPEE IS HEREBY AMENDED BY INSERTING THE FOLLOWING ANNUAL SALRIES AND BENEFITS AS DETAILED BELOW:

CHAPTER 7

Group 1

A. Mayor	\$	122,000.00
B. President of the City Council		15,000.00
C. City Councilors (12)		14,000.00 (each)
D. Vice Chairman of School Committee		6,500.00
E. School Committee Members		6,000.00 (each)
F. Assessors (3)		66,500.00
G. Treasurer		92,000.00
H. Collector		84,500.00

Dan Garvey stated that all the salaries of the elected officials have to begin after the expiration this municipal year when the new update which will be January 4th, when the new Council and Mayor are sworn in. He stated that the law states if you're an elected official and your salary is to be raised, it can't be raised the municipal year in which it was passed.

Dan Garvey stated that the conflict of interest laws spring into action those raises that you would consider for yourselves and the Mayor would have to be effective in 2024. He stated that the Mayor and the City Council have to abide by 39 6 A and the conflict of interest laws. He stated what pertains to the other municipal elected officials is just 39 6A which means; raises, increases and decreases in the salaries for municipal employees cannot take into effect in which the year they were passed. If we are enacting them they could be available in 2022, 2023, 2024 or anytime thereafter. He stated that if the Council and Mayor this year have to be effective in 2022 no earlier and same thing for other elected officials.

Mayor Vieau stated that the elected officials haven't had a salary adjustment in a very long time and I was asked to look into that. He stated that we took a look at the region of Western Mass to see how Chicopee compares with other Elected Officials or in communities of this size.

Mayor Vieau stated that Paul Winspeare did an independent study and he's here today to give you a brief overview.

Paul Winspeare stated that there should be something done where we stand financially in terms of the value of individuals that work for the city. With respect to this study as it applies to group one of the ordinances, He stated that we looked at comparable positions in other cities and towns we were able to identify a number or a suggested salary that creates a talking point for this conversation today. He stated that any business whether it's public or private has an obligation to be competitive, equitable and fair.

Mayor Vieau stated that people here take pride in their work.

Councilor Laflamme stated that this is a bad time for raises. Some of these raises are large. He stated he wants to see the job description of what each Department Head does in; Chicopee, Springfield, and Holyoke.

Councilor Tillotson stated that there is no way to get an exact comparison. He stated that Human Resources did a good job trying to come up with some fair figures. I think now we have to decide what we want to do. He stated that we can come up with an amount of money for each of these positions for January 4, 2022. He stated that we can split the raise and give them half and the other half a year later so it won't be so expensive. He stated then we can look at the cost of living and other adjustments. He stated that you are not going to get more information than we have; each community has a little something different.

Councilor Courchesne stated he did a study with twenty nine cities and towns that are smaller than us, the other communities with fewer abilities to pay for these positions are paying more. They have less per capita and they're paying more. He stated that the Mayor's position is severely underpaid. He stated that this is the time to fix the problem.

Councilor Courchesne stated the problem is not the salaries it's the mechanism of getting the raises.

Councilor Laflamme stated that the Human Recourse just looked at a comparison of the cities and size of the; Collector, Treasurer etc.

Rich Merchant stated that there are statements inside the report that say they are not all built the same. The Treasurers get a greater degree of help with financial planning or the Assessors in one town hire out and they have the people do the assessments, the Collectors have all the envelopes come into their departments versus

other cities that have the mail go to a mail house to get processed. He stated that there are any number of variances amongst all of those cities. He stated the responsibilities of the Treasurer's office are largely determined within statutes what their responsibilities are. The cores are all the same but the size of the workload, whether they have assistants or not, how much they have outside services or consultants, those are the types of things that vary.

Laura McCarthy stated that we pay fifty thousand for a consultant to help us reevaluate the property every year in terms of market value, statistical evaluations and appraisal work. She stated that we have significantly reduced the cost of our office by making changes with computers and people doing the work.

Councilor Tillotson stated it will be split over a period of two years.

Councilor Krampits stated that we agree that they should get raises but the timing is bad. He stated that this pushes it off to January 2022 and then splits it up so it's not a big hit for those two years.

Laura McCarthy stated that she urges the Council to take the higher number for the raises. She stated the formula that was used was maximum salary on the scale minus the median divided by three equaled a number and that number was added to the current salary. She stated that the seventy seven thousand two hundred and twenty seven dollars is slightly less than what the salary would have been if cost of living increases had been given throughout the thirteen years.

Councilor Laflamme stated that every department works hard and deserves a raise. He stated he would like to keep the talent we have. He stated he would like more information on the salaries with other cities

Mayor:

Councilor Labrie motion to recommend the following increases

January 4, 2022 \$103,500.00

January 1, 2023 \$122,000.00

Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

President of the City Council:

Councilor Laflamme motion for no raises – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

Committee vote 4 favorable 1 not favorable

Laflamme Roy
Labrie
Krampits
Tillotson

City Councilors:

Councilor Laflamme motion for no raises – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

Committee vote 4 favorable 1 not favorable

Tillotson Roy
Laflamme
Labrie
Krampits

Assessors:

Councilor Krampits motion to recommend the following increases

January 4, 2022 \$68,613.50
January 1, 2023 \$77,227.00
Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed
Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

Treasurer:

Councilor Laflamme motion to excuse himself from this item of the meeting

Councilor Tillotson stated that she's the third lowest paid Treasurer.

Councilor Krampits motion to recommend the following increases

January 4, 2022 \$83,500.00
January 1, 2023 \$92,000.00
Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed
Committee vote 4 – 0 favorable

Collector:

Councilor Krampits motion to recommend the following increases

January 4, 2022 \$74,750.00
January 1, 2023 \$84,500.00
Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed
Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

City Clerk

Keith Rattell stated that he gets a stipend of fifteen hundred dollars per year which it doesn't even meet minimum wage. He stated he thinks it's something that needs to be considered. He stated that the stipend has not changed since the nineteen nineties.

Councilor Tillotson stated he will call the Mayor and have him look into it.

Councilor Krampits motion that the Mayor review the stipend part of the City Clerks salary

Councilor Krampits motion to recommend the following increases

January 4, 2022 \$71,250.00
January 1, 2023 \$77,500.00
Councilor 2nd the motion – motion passed
Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

Vice Chair of School Committee \$6,500.00
School Committee member \$6,000.00

Councilor Tillotson stated that there are no changes or increases.

Dan Garvey stated that the appropriation is done by the School Committee.

Dan Garvey stated an option would be to postpone to the call of the chair until we get a communication that they want us to consider a raise.

Councilor Krampits motion to postpone to the call of the chair – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #2

CHAPTER 7

S. **Council on Aging**

a. P.T. Office Receptionist \$ 13,013.10

Group 4

Z. **Library Department**

a. Part Time Page \$ 13.50 per hour
b. Circulation Clerk (On-call) 13.50 per hour

AA. **Engineering Department**

a. Seasonal Jr. Engineer \$ 13.50 per hour

BB. **Highway Department**

a. Temporary Laborer \$ 13.50 per hour

CC. **Sanitation Department**

a. Temporary Laborer \$ 13.50 per hour
b. Waste Reduction Enforcement Officer 19.00 per hour

DD. **Parks Department**

a. Temporary Laborer \$ 13.50 per hour

EE. **Flood Control Department**

a. Temporary Laborer \$ 13.50 per hour

FF. **Golf Department**

a. Seasonal Golf Assistants \$ 13.50 per hour
b. Pro-Shop Assistant 13.50 per hour
c. Cashiers 14.00 per hour

GG. **Water Department**

a. Seasonal Employees \$ 13.50 per hour
b. Intern 13.50 per hour

HH. **Waste Water Treatment Plant**

- a. Temporary Laborer \$ 13.50 per hour
- b. Intern 13.50 per hour

II. **Parks & Recreation Department**

- a. Ranger \$ 13.50 per hour
- b. Special Care Taker 13.50 per hour
- c. Lifeguard 13.50 per hour
- d. Head Lifeguard 18.00 per hour
- e. Leader of Recreation/Art 17.00 per hour
- f. Assistant Recreation Leaders 14.25 per hour
- g. Youth Basketball Scorekeeper 1/game (Age 9-10) 13.50 per game
- h. Youth Basketball Scorekeeper 1/game (Age 11-12) 14.50 per game
- i. Youth Basketball Scorekeeper 1/game (Age 13-14) 16.00 per game
- j. Youth Basketball Referee 2/game (Age 9-10) 14.50 per game
- k. Youth Basketball Referee 2/game (Age 11-12) 18.00 per game
- l. Youth Basketball Referee 2/game (Age 13-14) 21.50 per game
- m. Youth Soccer Referee 2/game (Age 9-10) 13.50 per game
- n. Youth Soccer Referee 2/game (Age 11-12) 14.50 per game
- o. Youth Soccer Referee 2/game (Age 13-14) 16.00 per game
- p. Youth Baseball Umpire 1/game (Age 8-10) or 3rd-4th grade 28.00 per game
- q. Youth Baseball Umpire 1/game (Age 11-12) or 5th-6th grade 34.00 per game
- r. Youth Baseball Umpire 1/game (Age 13-14) or 7th-8th grade 39.50 per game
- s. Youth Softball Umpire 1/game (Age 8-10) or 3rd-4th grade 28.00 per game
- t. Youth Softball Umpire 1/game (Age 11-12) or 5th-6th grade 34.00 per game
- u. Youth Softball Umpire 1/game (Age 13-14) or 7th-8th grade 39.50 per game
- v. Camp Director 19.50 per hour
- w. Assistant Director 18.00 per hour
- x. Specialist 17.00 per hour
- y. Senior Counselors 15.25 per hour
- z. Junior Counselors 14.25 per hour
- aa. Aquatics Director 19.50 per hour
- bb. Lifeguard Instructor 17.00 per hour
- cc. Intern 13.50 per hour

OO. **Human Resources**

- a. Temporary Clerk \$ 13.50 per hour

QQ. **Registrars**

- a. Election Recount Workers 20.00 per hour

Any person hired to assist with an Election Recount should be compensated \$20 per hour. Any current employees of the City assisting with a Recount should be excluded from this ordinance and paid at their current wage rate.

Benjamin Strepka stated that a lot of his positions here are based on age groups and grade levels.

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed
Committee vote 4 – 0 favorable

ITEM #3

GROUP 2

P. Human Resources

STRIKE OUT

a. Generalist (1)	\$45,664.56	Grade 5	40 hrs/wk
b. Benefits Coordinator	\$47,042.64	Grade 6	40 hrs/wk
c. Senior Generalist	\$50,926.32	Grade 7	40 hrs/wk
d. Administrative Assistant	\$36,352.08	Grade 4	40 hrs/wk

INSERT IN PLACE THEREOF

a. Assistant Director	\$58,881.60	Grade85	40 hrs/wk
b. Benefits Coordinator	\$47,042.64	Grade 6	40 hrs/wk
c. Senior Generalist	\$50,926.32	Grade 7	40 hrs/wk
d. Administrative Assistant	\$36,352.08	Grade 4	40 hrs/wk

SAID ORDINANCE TO BE OPERATIVE MARCH 1, 2021

Rich Merchant stated that he wants to speak on recreating the position of HR Director. It's a department that's servicing almost three thousand employees. He stated that we need some kind of a career ladder for people. We need some continuity and supervision when a directors not around. He stated that the money can be transferred around within our salary accounts so it doesn't cost anything this year but obviously it will be a little bit high for the next fiscal year.

Councilor Laflamme stated that he agrees with the position. We need someone we can go to as well as oversee the office when he's not there.

Councilor Tillotson stated that right now Human Recourse employees are hard to find. He stated that if we can use someone from within that has experience I think we'll be much better off.

Councilor Laflamme motion made to approve the position– Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – Motion passed

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #4

GROUP 1

J. LAW DEPARTMENT

STRIKE OUT

a. City Solicitor	\$45,011.87
b. Assistant City Solicitor	\$45,011.87
c. Chief of Litigation	\$48,071.25
d. Associate City Solicitor (3)	\$45,011.87 (each)
e. Council – Legal Counsel	\$45,011.87

INSERT IN PLACE THEREOF

a. City Solicitor	\$67,500.00
b. Assistant City Solicitor	\$61,000.00
c. Chief of Litigation	\$64,000.00
d. Associate City Solicitor (3)	\$55,000.00 (each)
e. Council – Legal Counsel	\$55,000.00

SAID ORDINANCE TO BE OPERATIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2021

Mayor Vieau stated that Jack St. Clair is here to talk about the salary adjustment. He stated what we are doing is consolidation. We are trying to do more work in-house instead of relying on fee Solicitors or Attorneys. He stated the goal is to give our Attorneys more responsibilities. He stated that we have one Attorney that will be retiring at the end of February. He stated that our goal is not to increase the budget. Attorneys cost two to three hundred dollars an hour depending on the complexity of the case.

Jack St. Clair stated he was approved by the courts in 1990 at four hundred and fifty dollars an hour.

Mayor Vieau stated we have a talented Law Department and they are going to be much more readily available to you. This proposal makes a lot of sense, again it doesn't cost the taxpayers anything and it will save us money in the long run. He stated that you cannot predict what will happen with potential lawsuits in the future but our goal is to be able to do more work in house.

Jack St. Clair stated that a lot of City Solicitor offices don't handle their own federal or superior court litigation, they have a special service account. He stated that we have a number of new cases filed. He stated we have significant experience in the federal and superior courts and can provide as good representation. He stated that he has a graduate's degree in public relations; he handled Police, Fire, and DPW. Chrissy Pikula handles housing court litigation. He stated that when we have a federal court case where millions of dollars are being sought there is a lot of work and a lot of exposure. He stated that we are not replacing one of the Lawyers who are retiring and we ended one outside Council contract, so it's not costing anything.

Jack St. Clair stated that we expect to have a budget decrease of fifty nine thousand dollars on the next budget overall. He stated that we have the town willing to work much like a Law firm does. We can accomplish what we are accomplishing on a day to day basis with our own responsibilities and also take on federal trials. He

stated that this is very workable going forward. Whatever is necessary for any Departments that are sued, we have the ability to carry out that defense. He stated that the only time special services is needed is in a multi defendant case. He stated that we plan on reducing special services by one hundred thousand for the next budget.

Mayor Vieau stated that there are Lawyers out there billing by the hour and they're getting paid that way. He stated that this law team that's assembled here is probably second to none and he couldn't be more impressed by the amount of work they do and the things they do in-house. These Lawyers are available all the time. They will be available for the Council and for our City. He stated that they will save us money.

Councilor Laflamme stated he was always in favor of a fulltime Lawyer. He has heard from Department Heads and employees that they could never find anyone in the Law Department to talk to. He stated he would like to see someone in the Law Department from 8:00 am until 5:00 PM to assist any Department Head or any employees. He stated he would also like to see a Litigation Paralegal to assist you.

Councilor Tillotson stated that they are going to take on extra hours and be responsible as they're indicating. He stated we have a good group of Lawyers.

Councilor Tillotson stated that this is a reorganization of a department it's not costing the City any money, and in the long run it will save us money. He stated that the Law Department will be doing things they weren't doing before and giving more time. The hours have to be increased to keep someone in there every day.

Councilor Zygarowski agreed that we should have someone in the Law Department at all times.

Councilor Roy stated we are going to increase the Law Department by seventy five thousand.

Mayor Vieau said we are not increasing it; it is coming out of line items that are already there. He stated that we are eliminating one City Solicitor.

Jack St.Clair stated these are not raises we are restructuring the Law Department and we are taking on responsibilities.

Councilor Roy stated that the tax payers are not going to look at it that way.

Councilor Balakier stated that the coverage will be much better than what we had plus the projected savings and no cost to the taxpayer. He stated that it's a big win for the City.

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

Councilor Laflamme motion to take Items 5 – 13 out of order – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

ITEM #5

Striking From - CHERRYVALE STREET - From New Ludlow Road to a point 500' south - PARKING PROHIBITED BOTH SIDES

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #6

CHERRYVALE STREET - Odd side only from New Ludlow Road to a point 500' south - PARKING PROHIBITED

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion approved
Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #7

Striking From - MONROE STREET - North side – 70 feet in from Broadway - PARKING PROHIBITED HERE TO CORNER

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed
Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #8

MONROE STREET - North side – 70 feet in from Broadway - 30 MINUTE PARKING – MONDAY – SATURDAY 8 AM – 5 PM TIME LIMIT PARKING

Councilor Labrie stated that emergency vehicle could not make that corner.

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed
Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #9

NAOMI STREET - Southwest side - 25 feet from 3 Naomi Street - PARKING PROHIBITED

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed
Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #10

WARD STREET - Heading east 70 feet from the Grattan Street intersection - PARKING PROHIBITED HERE TO CORNER

Councilor Labrie stated that people were parking and going somewhere for the whole day. He stated there was a lot of traffic congestion and parking going on.

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #11

WARD STREET - Heading west 60 feet before the Grattan Street intersection - PARKING PROHIBITED HERE TO CORNER

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed
Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #12

TENNEY STREET – From driveway of 11 Tenney Street to the corner of Newell Street – PARKING PROHIBITED
HERE TO CORNER

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #13

CHARBONNEAU TERRACE – For a distance of 25 feet on both sides to the intersection of Chicopee Street –
PARKING PROHIBITED HERE TO CORNER

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the motion – motion passed

Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable

ITEM #14

Councilor Laflamme motion to approve the minutes of November 24, 2020 – Councilor Tillotson 2nd the
motion – motion passed

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.