

**City of Gardner, Massachusetts
City Council Public Welfare Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of June 19, 2019**

Councillor Christine Johnson, Chairperson of the Public Welfare Committee, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference, Room 128. Committee members present were Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas and Council President Scott Joseph Graves.

Other officials present and/or participating were Claude Leger, Director, Senior Citizens Center; Kathleen Leslie, Director, Levi Heywood Memorial Library; Phil Buso, Director, Veterans' Services; Ken Bonk, Chairman, Airport Commission; Debra Pond, Administrator, Greenwood Memorial Pool and Member of the Disability Commission; Bill Frank, Superintendent, Gardner Municipal Golf Course; and, City Clerk Alan Agnelli.

I. Minutes of Prior Meetings

On a motion by President Scott Graves and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas, it was voted to approve the Minutes of the 2019 Minutes, as amended.

II. FY2020 Budget Hearings

Claude Leger, Director, Senior Citizens Center

- COA Meal Site Manager – MOC approved a 5% wage increase.
- Information Technology – Modest increase due to FY19 shortfall.

Kathleen Leslie, Director, Levi Heywood Memorial Library

- Books & Periodicals - Increased as Budget is driven by annual certification for State Aid to Library program – grant award is contingent on the number of hours that the Library is open to the public and the amount that the City spends on library materials.
- Office Supplies and Postage – Increased to \$10,000 to meet needs.

Ken Bonk, Chairman, Airport Commission

- All amounts requested by the Airport Commission were granted by the Mayor.
- Airport usually breaks even – department receipts to operating expenses.
- T-Hangar Project being re-bid as initial bids far exceeded the budget.
- Hangar rental collections have been better. 1 chronic later-payer has been maintaining rental payments.

Phil Buso, Director, Veterans' Services

- Office Supplies - Increased by \$100 for aging copier supplies and maintenance.
- Veterans' Benefits – On target to expend \$825,000 this fiscal year. Approximately \$830k expended in FY2018.
- Burials now cost \$4,000 each – 3 burials in the past 6 weeks. Feds pay only if Veteran dies in a VA hospital. Increased in October, 2018 from \$2K to \$4k.
- The State reimburses the City 75% of total Veterans' Benefits expended. Reimbursements are paid in the following Fiscal Year.

Debra Pond, Administrator, Greenwood Memorial Pool

- Budget request similar to current FY. Salary increase reflects minimum wage increases and COLA.

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- Diving board scheduled to be replaced – flange pedestal broken.
- Soliciting quotes to re-side and paint the outdoor building.
- Nothing budgeted for maintaining the shuttered indoor pool building.

Debra Pond, Disability Commission

- Professional Development & Travel – Access monitor training.

Bill Frank, Superintendent, Gardner Municipal Golf Course

- Golf Course operates under an Enterprise Fund – expenses paid from revenues. Very conservative budget.
- Surplus is used as “a rainy day fund.”
- No capital projects planned for the coming FY.
- Decreasing memberships, particularly those under age 50, due to many other leisure activities. Trying to attract youner golfers through lower rates.

III. #10090–An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Gardner, Chapter 675 Thereof, Entitled “Zoning,” to Change Section 675-1070, Marijuana Establishments (In City Council and Referred to Public Welfare, 4/16/2019).

President Graves noted that there are so many non-conforming residential lots in the City and expressed concern that by adopting the Ordinance amendment, then many residences could be affected. He added that G.L. Chapter 40A provides protection to non-conforming residential lots.

Councillor Kazinskas suggested that the proposed amendment provides marijuana establishments with site selection, but are still required to seek approval from the Planning Board, so that there is no guarantee.

The Committee questioned locations within the City where such establishment would be allowed.

On a motion President Graves and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas, it was voted to request that the Planning Board provide the Committee with detailed maps of residential and other areas of the City that could be affected in the event that the City Council adopts the Board’s proposed amendments to Section 675-1070 Marijuana Establishments, C (3)(a) and C (9)(c) of the Code of the City of Gardner.

Adjournment.

On a motion Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas and seconded by President Graves, it was voted to adjourn at 6:56 p.m.