

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING****Tuesday, May 3, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.****REMOTE MEETING****-Minutes-**

**Present: Council President, Councilor Val Gilman; Council Vice President, Councilor Sean Nolan; Councilor Tony Gross; Councilor Jason Grow; Councilor Frank Margiotta; Councilor Scott Memhard; Councilor Jamie O’Hara; Councilor Tracy O’Neil; Councilor Jeff Worthley**

**Also Present: Mayor Greg Verga; CAO, Jill Cahill; City Clerk, Joanne Senos; CFO, John Dunn; Auditor, Kenny Costa; Director of Communications and Constituent Services, Pam Tobey**

*This meeting was conducted remotely through Zoom  
All votes were ROLL CALL votes*

**Meeting called to order at 6:01 p.m.**

**Councilor Gilman** announced: “In the interest of government transparency with regards to deliberations and decisions made by the City Council and according to open meeting law, since this meeting was posted as a Zoom meeting, this meeting is recorded by video and audio and will be conducted by remote participation. Additionally, all votes taken by the City Council during this and future remote meetings will be by roll call vote. If you are calling in on a phone, you can press Star 9 (\*9) to request to speak. If you are watching on a computer or device, there is a “raised hand” button that you can tap or press to request to speak. Please use either of these options during oral communications to be recognized to speak.”

**Councilor Gilman** introduced the **Members of the City Council** and City staff present.

***1. Mayor’s Proposed FY23 Budget Presentation to Council***

**Summary of Discussion:** **Councilor Gilman** thanked the Mayor and his team for their hard work on the FY23 budget. She stated that as a new Mayor he came onboard and did a masterful job aligning the department heads to pull together the budget.

**The City Council meeting was paused at 6:03 p.m. as there were technical difficulties with the Zoom link posted on the City’s website. It was determined that the Zoom link originally advertised was working; the meeting resumed at 6:14 p.m.**

**Councilor Gilman** re-announced: “In the interest of government transparency with regards to deliberations and decisions made by the City Council and according to open meeting law, since this meeting was posted as a Zoom meeting, this meeting is recorded by video and audio and will be conducted by remote participation. Additionally, all votes taken by the City Council during this and future remote meetings will be by roll call vote. If you are calling in on a phone, you can press Star 9 (\*9) to request to speak. If you are watching on a computer or device, there is a “raised hand” button that you can tap or press to request to speak. Please use either of these options during oral communications to be recognized to speak.”

**Councilor Gilman** re-introduced the **Members of the City Council** and City staff present.

**Councilor Gilman** restated appreciation for the Mayor and the rest of the Administration, as well as the department heads, for their work on the FY23 budget.

**Mayor Verga** thanked **Council President Gilman**, as well as the **Members of the City Council**. He also thanked the **CAO, Jill Cahill**, and **CFO, John Dunn**, as well as his team, for compiling the budget. **Mayor Verga** also thanked all of the department heads and their staff for submitting their budgets.

**Mayor Verga** stated that since the start of this Administration he has been committed to transparency and efficiency and stated that he believed that both were reflected in the proposed FY23 budget. He stated that the past several years have been filled with uncertainty and hardship and that it was his hope that this budget would safeguard the City against potential disruption, while improving government services and infrastructure. He stated that the past several years had offered consistent revenue growth, which has allowed the City to invest in the City's reserve accounts to remain prepared for potential short or long-term uncertainties. He stated that the City's economic security relied on several factors, including the overall success of the State's economy.

**Mayor Verga** stated that one key highlight was the State's changes to Ch. 70, as it has allowed the City to increase its investment in the schools and better meet the needs of the City's students. He explained that it was also important to prioritize other existing City infrastructure, including the condition of the City's roadways in which there is a proposed increase to the road repair maintenance line item. He further stated that while it was important to invest in the existing infrastructure that it was also important to look towards the future for possible opportunities to improve and secure the community. He stated that as the City is a coastal community the City needed to be proactive in the City's response to environmental changes and explained that there was a new Sustainability Coordinator position within the Community Development team who will work with City departments, boards and community members to evaluate projects and initiatives through a sustainability and resiliency lens. He also stated that a Project Manager position within the Public Works Department has been in the budget, but had yet to be filled and that he planned to fill this role to help distribute the workload and increase efficiency within the department to better serve the public.

**Mayor Verga** stated that the City's 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was approaching and that the Administration was dedicated to supporting the meaningful work of the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee.

**Mayor Verga** stated that he has also actively engaged the City's boards, commissions and committees by appointing/reappointing nearly one hundred volunteers since the beginning of his Administration. He stated that he was grateful for the participation of each volunteer, as the City relied heavily on community participation and volunteers.

**Mayor Verga** stated that the City Council recently voted to accept the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program, a part of the American Rescue Plan Act. He explained that the City was awarded approximately \$23 million and that he has formed a listening group of volunteers to host public sessions throughout the City to solicit feedback from the community about potential projects and priorities. He explained that the group consisted of the CIAB, EDIC and the City Council, who will work to synthesize their findings to put together recommendations to share with the Administration.

**Mayor Verga** reiterated that creating efficiencies is a major priority for the Administration. He stated that the IT Department has been a key partner in this endeavor and that the City was fortunate to have an innovative and motivated IT Department that wants to work with the existing structure, as well as find modern solutions to improve services, including public access to the new online nonresident beach reservation system. **Mayor Verga** explained two initiatives from the Human Resources Department, including a classification and compensation study of all positions within the GMAA Union and an evaluation of safety and emergency preparedness across all departments to ensure a safe and secure workplace.

**Mayor Verga** reiterated that he appreciated the collaboration with City staff, volunteers, new members of the City Council, as well as the School Committee, and restated his commitment to collaboration to achieve the goals of the City. He stated that the proposed FY23 budget represents a strong commitment to the citizens and

that he was committed to strengthen the community and that he proudly recommended adoption of the proposed budget. He stated that copies of the budget would be available on May 4, 2022, at the City Clerk's office, as well as each councilor was emailed a PDF copy. He stated that by 9:00 a.m. on May 4, 2022, the proposed FY23 would be posted on the Mayor's section of the City's website, as well as a link would be placed on the City's main Facebook page. **Councilor Gilman** added that hard copies of the proposed FY23 budget would be available to view at the Sawyer Free Library, as well as the City Clerk's office.

**Councilor Memhard** stated that as Budget & Finance Chair it was his honor to offer a motion to accept receipt of the Mayor's FY23 budget.

**MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Worthley, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, that in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 32 and pursuant to the Gloucester City Charter Part 1, Section 6-1, that the City Council accepts receipt of the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2023 Proposed Budget and becomes the budget of the City Council and to refer this budget to the Budget & Finance City Council Standing Committee for further review.**

**Councilor Gilman** summarized the FY23 budget schedule.

- Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. for core departments and revolving funds
- Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. for Emergency Services, DPW, Community Development, Debt Service and Revenues
- Thursday, May 26, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. for the School Department
- Tuesday, June 7, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. for the Public Hearing on the entire budget [later in the meeting voted to change to 7:00 p.m.]
- Tuesday, June 8, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. for Revisits
- Tuesday, June 14, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. for adjustments and final motions, if needed
- Tuesday, June 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. for the passage of the FY23 budget [later in the meeting voted to change to 7:00 p.m.].

The **City Clerk, Joanne Senos**, reminded **Councilor Gilman** that on tonight's agenda the Council would be discussing resuming the 7:00 p.m. start time beginning at the May 24, 2022 City Council hybrid meeting. **Councilor Memhard** wished to remind the public that all are welcome to participate by attending and listening the meetings and that the public could ask questions or offer comment at the Public Hearing on June 7, 2022. He added that any councilor and the City Clerk's office would be happy to entertain any questions or concerns regarding departmental budget issues as proposed by the Mayor's office. **Councilor Gilman** wished to inform the members of the public that all could watch the B&F meeting from April 21, 2022, via Zoom to get an overview of the budget process.

**2. City Council discussion and vote on resuming the 7:00 p.m. start time beginning at the May 24, 2022, City Council hybrid meeting in accordance with City Council Rules of Procedure #1: Meetings, Sec. A**

**Summary of Discussion:** **Councilor Gilman** explained that the Council recently reviewed the Rules of Procedure and had voted to add language to change the meeting start time to 7:00 p.m. upon the resumption of in-person meetings and stated that the May 24, 2022, City Council would be a hybrid meeting.

**Councilor Gilman** offered a motion, seconded by **Councilor Nolan**, to resume the 7:00 p.m. start time beginning at the May 24, 2022, City Council hybrid meeting in accordance with City Council Rules of Procedure Rule #11: Meetings, Sec. A.

**Councilor Grow** asked if the Standing Committees would continue as-is or if those meetings would be via the hybrid model as well. **Councilor Gilman** explained that as of now the Standing Committees would remain the

same and stated that the hybrid model would be used for the full City Council meetings only starting May 24, 2022, with the councilors in person and the public participating via Zoom. There was a brief discussion regarding the rationale of previously moving the start time of the City Council meeting from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Gilman, seconded by Councilor Nolan, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to resume the 7:00 p.m. start time beginning at the May 24, 2022, City Council hybrid meeting in accordance with City Council Rules of Procedure Rule #11: Meetings, Sec. A.**

**Councilor Gilman** stated that the three initial Budget & Finance meetings for reviewing the FY23 budget are also meetings of the Committee of the Whole to allow all councilors to ask questions regarding, for instance, individual line items within the budget. **Councilor Gilman**, on behalf of the Council, thanked the **CFO, John Dunn**; the **Auditor, Kenny Costa**; the **CAO, Jill Cahill**; as well as the **Mayor** for their leadership.

**MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Worthley, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 p.m.**

**Submitted by: Sherry Karvelas, Clerk of Committees**

**Items submitted at the meeting:** None.