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Michael S. McGonagle
Daniel R. Diodati
Devan Ferreira
Ralph T. Basiliere



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CITY OF HAVERHILL

HAVERHILL, MASSACHUSETTS 01830-5843

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING Wednesday July 29, 2026

A Public Safety Committee Meeting was held on Wednesday, July 29, 2026 at 6:00 PM in the City Council Chambers, Room 202.

Committee Members: Chairperson McGonagle, Councilor LePage and Councilor Basiliere (absent)

Also in Attendance: Council President Jordan, Councilors Sullivan, Michitson, Ferreira, Lewandowski, Lt. Lynch (remote), Officer Jason Pearl, Chief Wayne Tracy, Deputy Chief Pare, Mayor Barrett, City Solicitor Lisa Mead, Superintendent Margaret Marotta

RE: Doc. 33-F: Motion by Councilor Lewandowski to refer the matter of e-bike safety to committee for further review and discussion

Councilor Lewandowski explained that the agenda item was prompted by recent accidents involving e-bikes and scooters and the need to improve local safety regulations. She noted that pending state legislation would establish statewide standards but asked the City Solicitor to review what measures Haverhill could adopt locally while awaiting state action.

Councilor Sullivan encouraged the City to move forward with local regulations immediately rather than waiting for the Legislature. Councilor Lewandowski agreed, suggesting the City adopt measures now and amend the ordinance later if state law changes.

Chair McGonagle read a statement from Councilor Ralph Basiliere, who was absent due to a family illness. In his statement, Councilor Basiliere said the City should pursue the strongest safety measures allowed by law without delaying action.

Council President Jordan supported directing the City Solicitor to prepare a local ordinance to strengthen enforcement authority, and Councilor Devan Ferreira supported moving quickly, including prohibiting e-bikes on school property before the start of the school year.

Sara Joffrie (207 Kenoza Street) described unsafe e-bike activity during school arrival and dismissal and urged the City to prohibit e-bikes on school property.

Debra Chambers (39 Vine Street) described reckless riding in her neighborhood and suggested registration or licensing requirements, a curfew, and greater parental accountability.

Al Pereira (39 Smith Street) stated that increased enforcement would be essential and called for additional traffic enforcement officers on the streets.

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Michael Katsulis (118 South Elm Street) raised concerns about e-bikes and scooters operating on sidewalks and pedestrian walkways, citing speeding, wheelies, and riders failing to wear helmets.

Beth LaLiberty (31 Whitney Street) emphasized that any licensing requirement should include education or a basic safety course so young operators understand the rules of the road.

William LaLiberty (31 Whitney Street) recommended requiring lights on e-bikes and similar devices when operating before sunrise or after sunset.

Mayor Barrett supported implementing local restrictions where permitted, particularly around schools, while continuing to pursue broader legislation.

Lt. Kevin Lynch recommended strengthening enforcement and requiring operators to obey all traffic laws. He outlined the following proposed measures.

- Prohibiting impaired operation and tampering with devices.
- Banning use in parks, playgrounds, schools, conservation areas, and other designated locations.
- Authorizing police to impound vehicles for violations.
- Establishing meaningful fines and impound fees.
- Requiring operators under age 16 to possess at least a learner's permit.
- Reviewing the proposed ordinance with the City Solicitor before adoption.

City Solicitor Lisa Mead explained that the City has authority under current law to adopt a local ordinance addressing operating restrictions, fines of up to \$300, and other enforcement measures while remaining consistent with state law. She noted additional research was needed regarding vehicle impoundment and helmet requirements and advised that parental liability could present constitutional concerns. She invited councilors to submit additional suggestions for inclusion in the draft ordinance.

Councilor Lewandowski asked whether the proposed ordinance would conflict with pending state legislation. Attorney Mead confirmed it would remain within existing legal authority and could be amended if state law changes.

Vice President Michitson asked that the draft ordinance clearly identify the City's legal authority and limitations. Attorney Mead confirmed it would include those guardrails.

Council President Jordan asked what additional provisions could be included. Attorney Mead summarized that the ordinance could regulate where e-bikes may operate, establish non-criminal fines, and strengthen enforcement while reserving broader provisions for future amendments.

Al Pereira reiterated that effective enforcement would require additional police presence.

Mayor Barrett responded that multiple officers, not just traffic officers, can enforce traffic laws and noted that the Police Department has conducted coordinated enforcement efforts throughout the City.

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Councilor Sullivan suggested reviewing the City of Boston's ordinance and other municipal regulations as models.

Councilor Ferreira asked about the Police Department's outreach efforts. Officer Pearl stated that the department, with assistance from Riverside Church to hand out gift cards to people we see operating properly on the roads, we have conducted bicycle safety education in local schools.

Motion: Committee Member LePage motioned that the City Solicitor, in conjunction with Lt. Kevin Lynch, update Chapter 222, Article XI with the suggestions discussed here along with other recommendations and present the amended ordinance to the City Council in an expedited timeline for review, discussion and possible vote. Seconded by Chair McGonagle.

2 Yeas, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Basiliere).

Motion Passed.

Committee Member LePage moved to adjourn. Seconded by Chair McGonagle.

2 Yeas, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Basiliere).

Motion Passed. Adjournment: 19:00

Respectfully submitted,
Michael S. McGonagle
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Chair Public and Safety Committee