



CITY OF HAVERHILL

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Theodore A. Pelosi, Jr. Council Chambers, 4 Summer St., Room 202

In-Person/Remote Meeting

Present – President Jordan, Councilors Barrett, Sullivan, Michitson, Lewandowski, McGonagle, and Toohey

Absent – Councilors Bevilacqua and Rogers

City Clerk – Kaitlin M. Wright

1. OPENING PRAYER

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING

Motion by Councilor Toohey, second Councilor McGonagle

PASSED

All in Favor

4. ASSIGNMENT OF THE MINUTES REVIEW FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Councilor Barrett assigned the meeting minutes.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR:

- 5.1. Mayor Fiorentini requests to honor and thank Alison Colby-Campbell for the instrumental role she has played for many years in promoting all the great things happening in Haverhill through her *Heartbeat of Haverhill* blog. 9-Y

Mayor Fiorentini appeared before the Council stating he met Alison Colby-Campbell seventeen years ago and she has had the most amazing blog promoting Haverhill called “Heartbeat of Haverhill” and wanted to recognize her for all she has done for Haverhill.

Alison Colby-Campbell thanked everyone for the honor and thanked the Mayor and the Council for all the hard work they do for the city and she loves capturing how charming and progressive the city can be and how much value there is in the community in Haverhill.

- 5.2. Mayor Fiorentini submits Home-Rule Petition regarding Election changes in the election law for City of Haverhill *Related communication from William Cox, City Solicitor* 9-Z

- 5.2.1. Home Rule Petition – An Act Providing for the Election of Candidates in the City of Haverhill – No person should be a candidate for more than one office at any preliminary election and no person should hold more than one elected or appointed office for the City

Mayor Fiorentini stated he personally didn’t have a problem with people running for more than one office, but the people have spoken and were clear they think people should only be able to run and serve for one office at a time. Sending this home rule to the legislator for approval.

Motion by Councilor Sullivan, second Councilor Toohey

PASSED

Yeas 7, Nays 0, Absent 2

91-D



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6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS TO INTRODUCE AN INDIVIDUAL(S) TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL:
7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION- REQUESTS UNDER COUNCIL RULE 28
8. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM CITY OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES:
9. UTILITY HEARING(S) AND RELATED ORDER(S):
10. HEARINGS AND RELATED ORDERS:

President Jordan opened the hearing.

Christine Webb, City Assessor, addressed the Council stated tonight is the annual tax classification hearing for FY2024. She was joined by her board assessors, Stephen Gullo and Roy Wright, and thanked them for continuing to share their valuation opinions and knowledge concerning Haverhill's real estate and personal property. She also took the opportunity to thank her hard-working assessor's team for all that they do for her and the customers on a daily basis, Assistant Assessor Sue Powell, Daniella Cederman and Laurie Crevatis, I am very grateful for your dedication to the office.

We have submitted our work to the DOR for this interim valuation year and they have thoroughly reviewed and approved our new values and our new growth and given us the go ahead to conduct tonight's public hearing in conformance with the requirements of Chapter 369 of the acts of 1982. This evening you will be asked to vote on six separate items. A minimum residential factor, a small commercial exemption, a residential exemption, an open space discount, permanent CPI index, and annual CPI.

Mayor Fiorentini addressed the Council. He explained there was a spike in residential property values this year. If the Council leaves classification as is tonight, increase of \$200 for residential but decrease for commercial and industrial. Two things Council can do to remedy what he feels is an injustice, (1) use reserve to lower taxes, but do not recommend, (2) recommend change classification rate to 170 so all various categories will be about even, 3% residential, 2% commercial and got to 175 next year.

Jeff Linehan, representing the Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Council stating he has lived and worked in Haverhill for many years. A goal not able to reach is convince how important balance is, need jobs and housing. The commercial rate makes people nervous, a penalty for companies is not going over well 88% is residential. Large projects for housing have been approved in Haverhill. Needs more business. Requesting drop commercial to 160.

Shaw Rozen, past Chair of the Chamber and now member of the Lupoli Team, stating most members are small businesses. They face many challenges. Small businesses contribute to the vibrancy and life of a city leading to a better quality of life for everyone. Make it possible for small businesses too, not only to open but to thrive.

Alison Dolan-Wilson, Chair Haverhill Chamber. The chamber works every day to help create a balanced community. Haverhill is at forefront of housing growth in the state and with growth we need to work on balance promoting Haverhill's affordability and economic drivers such as entrepreneurship, small



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businesses, owners, and expanders. Flat rate communities are also fighting to fill open store spaces. Economic drive is community development, let's not set Haverhill up as just a place to live.

Jonathan Campbell, Farrwood Drive. Did some quick calculations stating in last 10 years 40% increase in our taxes. Now at an age where an increase in income isn't going to happen. Would like to encourage the Council to find a balance. Example, Maine doesn't increase property taxes on seniors who have owned their home for 10 years.

Mike Morales would recommend considering the Mayor's recommendation. There are few proposals that create a balance. We are still competitive and attractive to commercial. If looking for fair balance, 170 would fit that model.

President Jordan asked Ms. Webb about senior and other tax discounts.

Christine Webb stated there are several real estate exemptions including elderly, widow/widower, blind, and veteran disabled. Application is online and must file application with all documentation to assessor's office, online, email at assessors@cityofhaverhill.com, or call office at 978-374-2316.

Mayor Fiorentini rebutted what the Chamber stated about driving businesses out saying it hasn't happened yet and easy permitting brings businesses.

President Jordan closed the hearing.

Motion by Councilor McGonagle residential factor of 165, second Councilor Michitson

Councilor McGonagle: Businesses already take the residential burden and think 165 is fair.

Councilor Sullivan: Should provide as much relief as possible to residents with inflations, Consentino School debt, Whittier Tech, JG Whittier, etc.

Councilor Michitson: Ms. Webb can you explain the FY24 value increase.

Christine Webb: The value increased over the last year not tax dollar.

Councilor Michitson: 2 to 1 residential has gone up, small business has not gone up and they have been hit their investment have decreased. Would like to stay at 165. Tie with small business and residential.

Councilor Lewandowski: Echo what Councilor Michitson said. When ownership becomes less profitability with high tax, less attractive to commercial investors. With commercial down, less to collect, will shift to homeowner. Keep steady and can build a commercial base.

Councilor Toohey: In line with Councilor Sullivan. Will not support 160 or 165. Simple what heard from seniors is to keep Haverhill affordable. Speaking as a business owner, cost of living and inflation why leaning towards lower shift, 175 is recommendation.



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Councilor Barrett: Ultimate goal is to increase commercial/industrial business to carry the load. Understand staying at 165. Could go to 168. Have to explore raising the threshold for assets for seniors that are exempt or reduce their tax burden. Fear is if we go to 170 this year, where do we go from there. We want to maintain our flexibility in the future.

Councilor McGonagle: Not adverse to thinking about the homeowners but all same pressures are on business as well. These pressures will be passed on to the customers. Taxes are going up, talking \$41 for residential but a much more significant number for business.

Councilor Lewandowski: Ms. Webb can you give estimate of cost for 167 and 168.

Christine Webb:

167 – average increase residential is \$173, single family \$164, commercial \$62, industrial \$24.

168 - average increase residential is \$163, single family \$153, commercial \$163, industrial \$184

President Jordan read the letter from Councilor Bevilacqua into the record.

President Jordan: In response to his letter, there are two corrections (1) the final valuations were certified on November 10th, so meeting options were tonight or next week. We knew two council would be out and same goes if a meeting was added next week, so there was no benefit to that, (2) in part where he states “not move as told last year” is completely not true, I never told anyone to move. What I did state is everything is relative; you pay more than you did years ago. If you are looking relative to other neighboring cities and town, we pay the second lowest taxes pointing out if looking for lower taxes, there isn't other options. People, couples, and small businesses are hurting. Forgotten if both are valued at \$1M, business pay 65% more. Businesses do not use services. Services are for residents (school, police, fire). If residential values don't increase, the maximum shift drops to 150 which would be a significant increase. Healthy communities' rates are 70% residential, 30% business. The goal is to shift to business. Don't feel 170 is fair and sends the wrong message. Need to do everything can to bring business here. Will support 165.

10.1.**Document 94:** Tax Assessor, Christine Webb, announces the *FY 2024 Tax Classification Hearing* and submits related Tax Orders

10.2.**Document 94-B:** Order-that residential factor for fiscal year 2024 be adopted as:

Motion by Councilor McGonagle factor 165, second Councilor Michitson

PASSED Yeas 5 (Michitson, Barrett, Lewandowski, McGonagle, Jordan), Nays 2 (Sullivan, Toohey), Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers)

****Christine Webb stated to President Jordan the factor has to be voted on as .9074**

Motion by Councilor McGonagle for .9074, second Councilor Michitson

PASSED Yeas 5 (Michitson, Barrett, Lewandowski, McGonagle, Jordan), Nays 2 (Sullivan, Toohey), Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers)



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10.3.Document 94-C: Order – that City shall adopt a commercial exemption

Motion by Councilor Sullivan, second Councilor McGonagle

FAILED Yeas 0, Nays 7, Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers)

10.4.Document 94-D: Order-that the City shall adopt a residential exemption

Motion by Councilor McGonagle, second Councilor Barrett

FAILED Yeas 0, Nays 7, Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers)

10.5.Document 94-E: Order – That the City shall adopt an open space discount factor

Motion by Councilor McGonagle, second Councilor Toohey

FAILED Yeas 0, Nays 7, Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers)

10.6.Document 94-F: Order – That the City Council of the City of Haverhill hereby accepts the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5, Clauses 17D and 41 C with respect to Permanent acceptance of the annual C.P.I. index increase to the tax exemptions for the elderly.

Motion by Councilor McGonagle, second Councilor Barrett

FAILED Yeas 0, Nays 7, Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers)

10.7.Document 94-G: Order – That the City Council accept 100% of C.P.I. (Consumer Price Index) increase reported by the State for F.Y. 2024 Exemptions. The 2024 C.P.I. amount is 6.5%

Motion by Councilor McGonagle, second Councilor Barrett

PASSED Yeas 7, Nays 0, Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers)

11. APPOINTMENTS:

11.1.Confirming Appointments:

11.2.Non-Confirming:

11.2.1. *Conservation Commission*; Oliver Aguilo to expire December 31, 2026

Motion by Councilor Sullivan, second Councilor McGonagle

PASSED All in Favor

1-K

11.3.Resignations:

11.3.1. Ralph Basiliere from *Conservation Commission*

Motion by Councilor Sullivan, second Councilor Barrett

PASSED All in Favor

100-B



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11.4. PETITIONS:

- 11.4.1. Attorney Robert Harb requests to **Withdraw Without Prejudice**, CCSP 23-13 for owner/applicant 3-7 South Central st for property at 3-7 South Central st and 9 South Chestnut st; Haverhill Assessor's Map 704-645-3, 4 & 7; which is scheduled to be heard on City Council meeting of December 5, 2023

City Clerk Wright stated per Mass Law Chapter 40A Section 16 just need to vote to place on file.

Motion by Councilor Sullivan, second Councilor McGonagle

PASSED Placed on File

Yeas 7, Nays 0, Absent 2

93-B

- 11.4.2. Attorney Russell Channen for applicant 29 Washington st LLC, requesting approval for CCSP 23-15, for property located at 29 Washington st; located in the Downtown Smart Growth Overlay District, to renovate the property to create six residential units and two commercial units on the first floor. Hearing Dec 19, 2023

Motion by Councilor McGonagle, second Councilor Barrett

PASSED to be heard December 19, 2023

Yeas 7, Nays 0, Absent 2

101

11.5. Applications Handicap Parking Sign: with Police approval

11.6. Amusement/Event Application - with Police approval

11.7. Auctioneer License:

11.8. Tag Days: with Police approval

11.9. One Day Liquor License – with License Commission & Police approval

11.10. Annual License Renewals:

11.10.1. **Hawker Peddlers License- Fixed location** – w/Police approval

11.10.2. **Coin-Op License Renewals** – with Police approval

11.10.3. **Christmas Tree Vendor** – with Police approval

11.10.4. **Taxi Driver Licenses for 2023:** with Police approval

11.10.5. **Taxi/Limousine License** with Police approval:

11.10.6. **Junk Dealer /Collector License** with Police approval

11.10.7. **Sunday Pool**

11.10.8. **Bowling**

11.10.9. **Sunday Bowling**

11.10.10. **Buy & Sell Second Hand Articles** with Police approval

11.10.11. **Buy & Sell Second Hand Clothing**

11.10.12. **Pawnbroker license** - with police approval

11.10.13. **Fortune Teller** with - Police approval

11.10.14. **Buy & Sell Old Gold** – with Police approval



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| 11.10.15. | Roller Skating Rink |
| 11.10.16. | Sunday Skating |
| 11.10.17. | Exterior Vending Machines/Redbox Automated Retail, LLC |
| 11.10.18. | Limousine/Livery License/Chair Cars <i>with Police approval</i> |

12. MOTIONS AND ORDERS:

13. ORDINANCES (FILE 10 DAYS)

- 13.1. Ordinance re: Vehicles and Traffic; *Add* handicap parking at 40 Central st, 98 South Pleasant st and 34 Fountain st and *delete* handicap parking from 68 Temple st
File 10 days

Motion by Councilor Sullivan, second Councilor Barrett

PASSED Yeas 7, Nays 0, Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers) 15-L

- 13.2. Ordinance re: Vehicles and Traffic; Add Handicap parking at 151 River st
File 10 days

Motion by Councilor Sullivan, second Councilor Toohey

PASSED Yeas 7, Nays 0, Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers) 15-M

14. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS:

15. UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF PRECEEDING MEETING:

- 15.1. Document 15-K: Ordinance re: Vehicles and Traffic – Add Handicap parking, 21 Seventh av and South Warren st
Filed October 25th

Motion by Councilor Sullivan, second Councilor McGonagle

PASSED Yeas 7, Nays 0, Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers) 15-K

16. RESOLUTIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS:

17. COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Sullivan announced the 59th Santa Parade is Sunday, November 19th at 1PM.

Councilor Barrett announced the A&F Committee meeting to discuss zoning amendments is Monday, November 29th at 6PM in the Chambers.

President Jordan announced no meeting next week and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

18. DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE STUDY

19. LONG TERM MATTERS STUDY LIST

20. ADJOURN:

Motion by Councilor Sullivan, second Councilor Barrett

PASSED Yeas 7, Nays 0, Absent 2 (Bevilacqua, Rogers) Adjourned 20:28