



MEMBERS

MaryBeth Pniak-Costello Chairman
Delmarina Lopez, Vice Chairman
James Tillotson
Robert J. Zygarowski
Bill Courchesne

APPROVE 12-22-2022

MINUTES
October 13, 2022

The following are the minutes of a public hearing held Thursday, October 13, 2022, at 6:30 PM in the Auditorium, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 17 Springfield Street, Chicopee, MA 01013.

Members Present Pniak-Costello, Zygarowski, Tillotson (zoom),

Members Absent Lopez, Courchesne

Also Present Councilor Laflamme, Dan Garvey (Associate City Solicitor), Patrick Major (Police Chief), Grace Shofield (Ward 5 Representative Schools), Samuel Shumsky (Ward 6 Representative Schools), Alvin Morton (Superintendent of Schools), Ann Kos (Director of Transportation Schools), Lieutenant Eric Laflamme (Police Department), Donald Lamothe (Ward 7 Representative Schools)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

In compliance with the Open Meeting Law the Chairman asked if anyone in the audience was recording the meeting. Hearing none the meeting continued.

Councilor Tillotson motion to return to Item #1 – Councilor Pniak-Costello 2nd the motion – motion passed

Pniak-Costello	Yes
Tillotson	Yes
Zygarowski	Yes

ITEM #1

BE IT ORDERED THAT the Education Subcommittee meet to discuss School Department issues.

Alvin Morton stated that we should be able to have the budget a little earlier this year. We had some unforeseen circumstances that pushed the budget back.

Councilor Laflamme asked if we are using ESSR funds requiring for the air-conditioning for all schools.

Alvin Morton stated that the process has already started, and we already had money allocated for air-conditioning for all schools. We most recently got a grant from the department of education that adds more money to the process, but we can sub-contract out. We are still in the process finishing up all the Airconditioning that was started pre-covid.

Councilor Pniak-Costello asked if the air quality and ventilation in the schools had been addressed.

Alvin Morton stated that was fully addressed under negotiations when we were re-opening schools.

Councilor Laflamme stated that Barry School needs to be negotiated also. He stated it has to come to the City Council for the schools to be able to use that property on Garrity Grove.

Alvin Morton stated that we would have to come to you about the twenty percent of the bonding. He stated if we take the park land, we have to reconstitute the parkland the equal amount back to what it was previously before.

Councilor Laflamme stated will the new parking be sufficient.

Alvin Morton stated we would have to look at changing the traffic pattern on how you enter and exit from the building.

Councilor Laflamme stated he will be leaving the meeting. He works for Mass Mutual and the State Ethics Commission request that he not be present for the next item.

Councilor Zygarowski stated that Front Street is a disaster when two schools get out at the same time. He was concerned for the safety of the children.

Councilor Tillotson stated that he thinks the speed bumps will help slow down the traffic.

Public Input

Lisa Bienvenue, 34 Everett Street, stated that the plan is to use eight million dollars of ESSR money. Based on the information available Expenditures on ESSR dollars must be covid related for the purpose of preventing and preparing and responding to the pandemic. The bigger vision for the Mass Mutual Center by expanding and moving things over from COMP and bringing in other programs do not meet what the definition of what the ESSR funds are supposed to be for. She

stated that she found under the grant section for the school department there are plans for all twenty-two million dollars. She stated that none of it is eight million dollars to purchase a property. She stated where is this money being taken from in this plan in order to do this. She stated which programs are going to lose that money.

Alvin Morton stated that no programs will lose the money. There is five million dollars allocated for school facilities within that ESSR III grant. He stated that we can also amend the ESSR III grant. He stated that we are doing all the programs with ESSR money or with other grant money to fulfill that particular obligation. We have a two million dollar grant from HVAC that was allocated pre-covid. He stated this is one time from federal money, but we are trying to have a lasting impact.

Councilor Zygarowski motion to accept – Councilor Pniak-Costello 2nd the motion – motion approved

Pniak-Costello	Yes
Tillotson	Yes
Zygarowski	Yes

Councilor Zygarowski motion to take Item #2 out of order – Councilor Pniak-Costello 2nd the motion – motion passed

Pniak-Costello	Yes
Tillotson	Yes
Zygarowski	Yes

ITEM # 2

BE IT ORDERED THAT the Education Committee meet to discuss drivers violating school bus law regarding not stopping when students get on or off the stopped school bus.

Ann Kos stated this happens every single day during the school drop offs. She stated that the eighty-nine routes' people reporting drivers are going through the bus stop signs. By the time the officers get there no one is going through the stop signs. She has been through many of the streets and locations that have been reported to them directly and does not see anything. All the major streets we have people going fifty miles per hour. She stated we have nine hundred stops on eleven hundred streets in Chicopee. She stated that we want our kids to get home safe and one of the ways we can insure that is by putting more busses on the road. She stated to have every single bus stop on the right side so we don't have any of our students crossing the streets. She suggested adding a few more busses and doing a

pilot project. This is what we can do on our end otherwise we are all very helpless with people out there speeding in Chicopee.

Lieutenant Laflamme stated that there are so many stops, and we are limited on the amount of officers we have on the road. He stated we can't catch them when we get there. He stated it's a big city of six thousand people and cars. He stated one of the things that help is when the drivers report these incidents to FIVESTAR as far as location and the time to help us narrow down where to be because there are a lot of things going on. He stated that we are working on it, and it is something we are trying to prevent.

Ann Kos stated that our bus monitors and the public have taken videos of people going through the stop arms. You can use us as a resource because you can't do anything until the officer sees it in action. She stated we have a library of videos that you can access.

Councilor Zygarowski asked how more busses would help the people from going through the stop signs.

Ann Kos stated that we are under contract with FIVESTAR and the busses are timed. She stated if we were to change the routes and go up and down Sheridan and Chicopee Streets, all the stops are on the right hand side so they won't have to cross the road.

Councilor Laflamme stated that he has been in traffic behind a buss and there is no one coming out of the house.

Ann Kos stated that they are not supposed to do that, and we want to know this. She stated that if she sees this happen, she calls FIVESTAR while in her car. She stated that FIVESTAR would not want this to happen.

Councilor Laflamme stated that we have cameras inside every bus, maybe we should put one on the outside. Cameras work for everything today.

Alvin Morton stated that we do have cameras and they do pick up license plates but, until they change that particular law there is nothing we can do.

Donald Lamothe stated why can't we get ahold of the legislators and ask them to do something about it. He stated that when you get the license plate maybe you can go to the house if they are repeat offenders and issue them a ticket.

Alvin Morton stated that there are cameras to catch speeders, what is the difference of us utilizing it the same way.

Lieutenant Laflamme stated that he is not aware of any speed cameras in Massachusetts.

Councilor Tillotson was concerned about having more busses. He stated that it might not be practical in terms of the whole operation in the school system. He stated he will support anything that will make it safer for the students within reason. He stated he has no problem endorsing legislation that's going to provide safety for the students.

Samuel Shumsky asked if the law was rewritten, and we can put cameras on the outside of the busses is that something we can use extra money for.

Alvin Morton stated we would already have that in the contract with FIVESTAR. Some of the cameras we have in the bus are able to pickup license plates because of the cameras in the back.

Councilor Laflamme stated November 10th he put an order in with Representative Wagner and Senator Lesser to be at our meeting to speak to us and we will bring this up and discuss this with them.

Councilor Zygarowski asked if the schools have those pictures that were taken from the bus.

Ann Kos stated we have videos.

Councilor Zygarowski asked how many vehicles go through the bus stop sign.

Ann Kos stated fifty percent.

Alvin Morton stated when you're dealing with student records there has to be some type of exception to the law in order for us to furnish it to the Police Department.

Councilor Zygarowski stated he agrees that the law needs to be changed.

Alvin Morton stated he will start working with FIVESTAR and Mrs. Kos. If we are talking fifty percent, we can start tracking this. He stated we can continue a follow-up just incase the law changes. He stated if we get their addresses, we can send a letter to these individuals and at least they will be on notice that we are aware of what they are doing. He stated that this might be a deterrent that we have actual footage and evidence. He stated that this is something we can do on our end until if and when that law does change.

Public Input

Lisa Bienvenue, 34 Everett Street stated that if you need more busses and drivers there is money under ESSR III for transportation, there are provisions in the ESSR funds related to getting drivers. She stated that we have Chicopee tv and maybe we need to do more public awareness with things going out which is within our

control. It should be brought to the attention of the city and residents and not wait on the legislature to say, this is a problem.

Marisol Nazario, 196 Chicopee Street stated that she has two children, one is a walker and one takes the bus. She stated that my daughter's bus is supposed to stop on Chicopee Street so she can cross but the bus is stopping on Lorraine Street, which doesn't stop Chicopee Street traffic.

Ann Kos stated that all stops are authorized by the school department and are not supposed to make unauthorized stops.

Marisol Nazario stated that her son is a walker and there is a shortage of crossing guards. There are no crossing guards on Chicopee Street.

Ann Kos stated to the City Council that we are going to implement a "Walking School Bus" program at Stefanik School.

Councilor Tillotson stated that we have a lot of talent in the Auditorium tonight so hopefully we'll come up with a plan that makes sense.

Councilor Zygarowski motion to place #2 on file – Pniak-Costello 2nd the motion – motion passed

Pniak-Costello	Yes
Tillotson	Yes
Zygarowski	Yes

ITEM #3

Councilor Pniak-Costello motion to approve the minutes of February 28, 2022 – Councilor Zygarowski 2nd the motion – motion passed

Pniak-Costello	Yes
Tillotson	Yes
Zygarowski	Yes

Councilor Tillotson motion to adjourn the meeting -Councilor Pniak-Costello 2nd the motion – meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Pniak-Costello	Yes
Tillotson	Yes
Zygarowski	Yes