

## Finance Committee

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Video of meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/xckJc0LrHcw?feature=shared>

Members present: Chair Patricia Devine, Vice Chair Kocayne Givner, Kevin Jourdain, Michael Sullivan, Carmen Ocasio,

Other councilors present: Linda Vacon, Israel Rivera, Tessa Murphy-Romboletti

Chair Devine called the meeting to order at 6:39 PM

Item 1: Minutes of March 4, 2024 and March 20, 2024 meetings

---> Approved 5-0.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to remove item 2 from the table.

Item 2: 2-6-24 Devine - Ordered, Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2024, EIGHT HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$850,000.00) as follows:

FROM:

3000-10400 SCHOOL ROOF PROJECTS \$9,718.40  
3010-10400 DPW HIGHWAY RECONSTRUCTION \$2,269.50  
3040-10400 DESIGN OF CONNECTOR ROAD \$10,113.55  
3100-10400 POLICE STATION \$29,859.85  
3130-10400 PROPERTY DEMOLITION PROJECT \$2,080.25  
3150-10400 FIRE STATION \$3,453.54  
3170-10400 MOSHER STREET CSO \$96,784.01  
3250-10400 COMMUNITY FIELD \$44,721.97  
3270-10400 APPLETON STREE SEWER SEPARATION \$1,568.25  
3290-10400 FLOOD CONTROL LEVEE CERTIFICATION \$614.63  
3320-10400 PARKING GARAGES RECONSTRUCTION \$16,602.59  
3330-10400 DEAN voe SCIENCE LAB \$156,211.90  
3340-10400 FIRE TRUCKS \$20,692.14  
6040-10400 SEWER PLANT IMPROVEMENTS \$7,309.42  
0430-10400 SALE OF REAL ESTATE \$303,000.00  
8811-10400 CAPITAL STABILIZATION \$145,000.00

TO:

13003-58200 CAPITAL OUTLAY-SCHOOL BUILDINGS \$850,000.00  
\*Tabled 3-4-24

---> Laid on the table 5-0

Item 3: 2-20-24 Chair Devine - Ordered that the City Council consider approving the purchase by the City of 225 High Street, Holyoke by a consensual order of taking. This order is a companion order to a previous order requesting a transfer in FY 2024 of \$850,000.00 from several accounts to Capital outlay-school buildings.

\*Tabled 3-4-24

---> Laid on the table 5-0

#### DISCUSSION:

Chair Devine recognized Mayor Garcia to speak on this discussion.

Mayor Garcia thanked the committee for their due diligence in discussing this process. He then recalled that additional analysis was requested at the last Finance meeting when this was discussed, adding that they planned to compare and contrast using 225 High Street versus 57 Suffolk Street. He then recognized Margaret Wood from Anser Advisory.

M. Wood recalled that some data points were requested at the last meeting. She also noted that they had been comparing the potential purchase of 225-217 High Street, 57 Suffolk Street, as well as potentially using Metcalf School. She then explained that the last sales price of 57 Suffolk was \$695,000 on August 24, 2022. She then asked City Treasurer, Rory Casey, for the value of 225 High Street.

R. Casey stated that the value was \$850,000.

M. Wood emphasized that 57 Suffolk was a much bigger footprint, roughly double that of 217-225 High. She then explained they looked to compare renovation and utility costs for the two properties. She then stated that for the last year 225 was fully occupied, the utility costs totaled around \$455 a square foot. She then estimated costs for 57 Suffolk to be around \$220,000 in annual utility costs and those of 225 High would be around \$135,000. She then laid out details of 217-225 High, including its build date of 1898, square footage of 31,339, had a new roof, a fair new fire protection system, but needed a mechanical upgrade. She added that the 217 section of the building was built as a banking hall about 20 years after the original building. She noted the intent would be that the Transitions Program would go into that two story section. She then explained that 57 Suffolk was built in 1905, was 51,540 square feet, was 100% occupied by office space, but noted their plan was only to occupy the two floors the district office currently occupied. She added that 60 parking spaces came with the lease. She also stated that it had a fire protection system but was more antiquated than at the High Street property.

She added that this came with an opportunity to collect rent as the district would not need to use the entire space. She added that Transitions would occupy the ground floor. She then offered a comparison of potential renovation costs using \$400 a square foot as a conservative number. She then explained that 57 Suffolk would have a cost of \$17,640,000 as well as needing a new roof and elevator, as well as needing additional staff or property management. She added that 217-225 High Street would have a cost of \$10,771,600, with a \$50,000 cost to relocate, and that renovation work could be phased as it was vacant space.

Chair Devine asked if 57 Suffolk always had an elevator.

Anthony Soto, HPS Receiver/Superintendent, stated that it did. He then explained that it hadn't been operating for around 10 months but has since been fixed.

M. Wood stated that she had not looked into whether the elevator met the code for dimensions, but knew the one on High Street did not. She explained that the code required one that could fit a stretcher in it.

Councilor Givner asked if the plan for Suffolk would be to purchase it or continuing to rent it.

M. Wood recalled that the question about purchasing it came up at the last meeting, leading to that comparison being explained for this meeting. She reiterated that the High Street building would be easier to renovate because it was not occupied. She then noted there was a difference with real estate taxes.

R. Casey explained that 57 was a much bigger building but was valued less, leading to an annual tax payment of around \$43,000 while the High Street building had a \$64,195 tax annual payment.

Councilor Jourdain asked if there was information on the rental income.

M. Wood stated there was more information coming.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the total spaces for 57 Suffolk was 60 or was that just what the lease included.

A. Soto stated that there were more than 60 spaces, but that the lease agreement was currently for 55 spaces. He added that the agreement capped them at 60 if they needed to add more.

Councilor Jourdain emphasized that acquiring the building would mean the city getting the whole parking lot.

M. Wood provided a comparison of the renovations specific to the Transitions portion of each building, with each coming in at just over \$900,000. She noted that she made the assumption they would use a similar amount of space in each building. She also

highlighted potential rental income of \$294,000 at the Suffolk Street building while 225 High Street would not have capacity for rental income. She noted that used an estimate of \$20 a square foot to make the calculation. She also compared estimates of utility costs using \$5 a square foot, with Suffolk Street estimated at \$220,500 and High Street estimated at \$134,645. She also highlighted an estimated \$80,000 management cost at 57 Suffolk Street. She reiterated the potential \$50,000 cost to move district staff from 57 Suffolk to 225 High.

Councilor Jourdain asked why the district would want another floor to expand if they purchased 57 Suffolk.

M. Wood stated that the district was packed very tight on the third floor. She then explained that Transitions was occupying the ground floor but did not need the entire thing, which would allow some pupil services to be pulled to the ground floor, allowing the district officers to be unpacked a little more.

Councilor Jourdain asked how many square feet Transitions used and what their current rent was.

M. Wood stated that their rent was \$54,000 a year and their lease would end in December.

A. Soto stated they would then have to make a decision. He noted the program had been growing.

Councilor Jourdain asked how many kids were in it.

A. Soto stated there were 36.

M. Wood stated there were also 16 staff.

A. Soto stated the program had expressed desire to expand into a bigger space next to them, noting that Girls Inc used to be there. He then explained he asked them to hold off on that until the district could see what was going to happen.

M. Wood stated that their net square footage was 1,400 for what they were occupying, which did not include circulation space, support space, or the lobby, which would add about 50%. She then stated that the roughly 2,000 of gross space was too small for them.

Councilor Jourdain, noting that renovation costs would be just under \$1 million in either scenario, asked why they would want to pay \$1 million as well to avoid a rent of \$54,000.

A. Soto stated that part of the proposal to purchase the building was to solve the space problem. He noted that one option was to do nothing.

Councilor Jourdain stated that in trying to make the best financial decision, one option was paying renovation costs and paying for the purchase while the other was paying \$54,000 in rent. He then asked if that included utilities.

A. Soto stated that it currently did. He then expressed an expectation that the rent would be increasing at the end of the lease.

M. Wood stated that the main focus was that there was inadequate space, reiterating the need for around 4,000 square feet, making the 225 High Street floor plan a good fit.

Councilor Jourdain stated that his goal would be to not spend \$1 million just to avoid tiny costs. He added that there would also be operational expenses. He also emphasized that they could also get another \$150,000 to \$200,000 in rental income off of 57 Suffolk Street.

Chair Devine asked to confirm they were on a month to month lease at 57 Suffolk Street.

A. Soto stated that was correct.

Chair Devine asked if they had a rental agreement.

A. Soto stated that they had a month to month agreement from when the building was purchased from Appleton.

Chair Devine asked what would happen if the owner asked them to leave.

A. Soto stated that would be a bad situation, but he would work with the mayor to figure that out.

Mayor Garcia stated that could happen, but he did not believe that was on the table.

Councilor Givner asked if the city would be able to control more of the costs with ownership, and would those costs go down over time.

A. Soto stated that from a financial standpoint, the School Department budget had allowable costs. He noted that 88% of their budget was coming from the state's Chapter 70 funding and not from local tax dollars. He added that one of their restrictions was that the schools could not pay for leases that were greater than 3 years old. He then explained that if they owned the facilities, they would be able to fit it within their budget, and they would not need to ask the city for funding that went above the lease restriction. He recalled that Councilor Jourdain made the point at the last meeting that all of this should have been done 30 years ago, adding that he would not want to see those in control in 30 years saying the same. He added that there would also be a benefit in keeping the central office downtown as well as being in control of the renovations rather than needing to get a landlord to make updates. He noted that in a survey of staff, only 17% of office staff responded that it was a productive space to work in. He also emphasized that he could not justify using School Department money to add value to someone else's property.

Councilor Sullivan asked if Suffolk Street was fully occupied.

A. Soto stated that they were currently on the first and third floors, noting they used to be on four floors until they consolidated in 2017. He added there was a law firm on the second floor, and one of the state's departments was fourth floor. He added that the fifth and sixth floors were vacant.

Councilor Sullivan noted that the \$294,000 in rental income figure would be based on 100% occupancy,

A. Soto stated that was true.

Councilor Sullivan suggested that the figure should be thrown out.

A. Soto explained that they were fulfilling the information request about rental opportunity from the last meeting.

Councilor Sullivan stated that it was based on finding customers that don't exist.

A. Soto stated that they did not know how much the other tenants were paying.

Mayor Garcia agreed that it was based on the ability to attract tenants.

Councilor Sullivan emphasized that the district moved out of the some of the floors in 2017 and they had not yet been able to fill the space. He then questioned if the district would be able to fill the space. He then suggested the number would drop by two-thirds.

M. Wood stated that she would not be surprised but did not have access to that information.

Councilor Sullivan emphasized that there were tens of thousands of empty office space up and down High Street.

Councilor Jourdain asked if the inspection reports for the buildings could be provided. He added that he would want to be able to review that information if the Council was going to approve buying one of the buildings so that he could really understand the costs of renovations. He also noted that there were issues at the City Hall annex, potentially providing an opportunity to use some of the other floors at the Suffolk Street building.

A. Soto stated that had been part of the initial proposal in 2017 and agreed that would be a great discussion to have. He then reiterated that while they were making do with what they have, they would still be seeking to unpack some of the space they were currently using.

Councilor Jourdain asked if ESSER funds could be a part of the equation.

A. Soto stated that it couldn't be a part of the purchase price but noted there were other needs such as windows or HVAC work. He then emphasized that their window to use ESSER funds was closing, noting they needed to spend it by September.

Councilor Jourdain agreed that it appeared there were already a lot of plans for the \$13 million in ESSER money.

R. Casey stated that one factor that was hard to figure out was understanding how long the process would take. He emphasizing that the High Street property had a willing owner for a friendly taking that the department would be ready to move forward with if the Council approved it.

Councilor Jourdain asked why the term "friendly taking" was being used when the building was for sale. He added that it was clear that New England Farmworkers was divesting of all of their real estate everywhere.

Mayor Garcia stated that there were other interested parties, and implementing a taking gave the city a priority in the line of trying to acquire the property.

Councilor Jourdain asked if there were other offers.

Mayor Garcia stated that there was other interest, one in particular that had been moving to make investments.

Chair Devine shared an interest in getting the inspection reports. She then asked what that would entail.

A. Soto stated there should be fire inspection certificates for the building. He then explained that they hired Fuss & O'Neill in 2017 to go into 57 Suffolk to do a facilities condition assessment to do a thorough analysis, which listed the age of the roof, the age of the elevator, as well as providing a schedule of funding needs for the next 7 years. He added that they didn't have something like that for 225 High Street, or anything more current for 57 Suffolk Street.

M. Wood stated that a summary of 57 Suffolk was done to list what needed to be repaired but was different than what would be done if buying the building. She then explained that the building code required additional things to be done with certain thresholds of expenditure were reached, and that report did not address that. She emphasized that meant that if a third of the Suffolk Street building's value was spent on repairs such as for the roof, it would then require bringing the entire building up to code.

Councilor Givner asked why 217-225 was now being discussed if 57 Suffolk had previously been considered for purchase.

Mayor Garcia explained that one factor was that they had been talking for a couple decades about getting rid of the Suffolk Street lease. He added that they also wanted to keep the

department downtown. He then explained that in evaluating all of the spaces, including several others in the past, they found it to be the right fit for right now as the best case scenario.

Councilor Givner asked how important current availability was. She noted that 57 Suffolk may or may not be empty anytime soon to do renovations. She recalled the statement earlier that an occupied building could not be worked on.

M. Wood stated that it could be, but it would be more expensive because it would take longer to do pieces at a time. She then stated she understood the interest of having more city control over the cost of housing the district, adding that some may just look at what is the least expensive in the current moment while others may look at the benefits of investment over time. She then stated that this had come up now because there was an opportunity.

Mayor Garcia stated that he was not sure the city wanted to be in the business of renting out real estate as a potential liability.

Councilor Sullivan stated that it appeared the \$850,000 would be coming from unused bonding money, noting that some had been on the books for 20 years. He then asked if they had impacted the city's bond rating and why they were just sitting there and not closed out.

Tanya Wdowiak, City Auditor, stated that the bonds were closer to \$402,000 and were old bonds that were authorized. She then stated that she was unsure why they were never closed out but believed they probably should have been reappropriated at some point. She noted some had been paid off already, and they were left as undesignated cash. She added that there was also a sale of real estate fund of \$303,000 from when city real estate was sold. She explained the city was allowed to appropriate that on capital projects and anything that could be bonded for. She added that \$145,000 was being taken from capital stabilization.

Councilor Sullivan asked how this had affected the city's ability to bond for other projects.

T. Wdowiak stated that it had not affected that ability because it was cash just sitting there.

Mayor Garcia stated that there were bonds still being paid.

T. Wdowiak stated that most of them had been paid off, some transactions from 2010 and earlier. She added that it did not affect the city's ability to bond for other projects but it did tie up the cash that could have been reappropriated into other capital projects.

Councilor Sullivan suggested it was encumbered all of these years.

T. Wdowiak clarified that it wasn't encumbered because that would imply there were expenses attached to those funds.



Mayor Garcia emphasized that it was not necessarily best practice, but it allowed them to have it available for this opportunity.

T. Wdowiak stated that she was unsure what happened but suggested that projects may have come in short, and they liquidated the purchase order, leading to the rest of the cash being freed up.

Mayor Garcia stated that in a healthier community, those things would be addressed when they happened.

T. Wdowiak stated that they were doing it now, but recalled that when she first was hired, you could not tell a debt fund from a grant fund from a special revenue fund, but they had all since been labeled so they could be tracked.

Mayor Garcia stated that the ideal would be to take action and appropriate when projects complete.

Councilor Sullivan noted there was \$96,000 in leftover funds from a CSO project 20 years earlier. He added that the funds could have been used for other worthwhile projects over the years.

Chair Devine expressed an assumption that the school district's team had toured the properties. She then asked if it would be possible for councilors to tour them.

Mayor Garcia stated that they could look to schedule it.

A. Soto stated that he could walk people through 57 Suffolk to see how they use the space.

R. Casey added that Transitions would be good to look at as well.

Mayor Garcia reiterated that if there was an interest in taking advantage of ESSER funding, there was a short window.

Councilor Sullivan asked if Whitney Anderson, HPS Maintenance Administrator, had looked at the High Street property.

A. Soto stated that he had, as well as Sean Sheedy and technology technicians had also looked at it.

R. Casey stated that the former City Engineer, Kris Baker, also looked before he left. He added that Mount Vernon Group also did a walkthrough. He also stated that those on the educational side of things also looked at it to look at the Transitions space and peoples services. He then offered to share a Google Drive folder that had a collection of various documents related to this.

Councilor Sullivan expressed his confidence in a summary from Whitney Anderson.

M. Wood stated that she believed Mr. Anderson was a fan.

R. Casey stated that both Mr. Anderson and Mr. Sheedy were asked about it and both saw it as a winner.

Councilor Jourdain stated that he would welcome a report from them comparing the two buildings. He then asked how maintenance was being handled at 57 Suffolk Street.

A. Soto stated that it had been part of the operating expenses of the old lease and now it was part of the rent that trash and common areas were cleaned by the landlord, but they don't go into their spaces and clean other than to empty trash. He then stated they had a mail courier who had the responsibility of opening the building and doing a cleaning once a week. He then stated that in a new space, they would likely have someone there full time.

Councilor Jourdain stated that the cost would have to be considered if the city was to acquire one of these buildings.

A. Soto stated that they did not anticipate having to add anyone as they would be taking two school buildings and merging them into one.

Councilor Jourdain stated that he would like to see the materials from 2016-17 as well as a structural report for both buildings for comparison of the pros and cons for each building. He then asked what the plan on funding the \$10+ million in costs.

Mayor Garcia stated that a lot of the investments were capital costs, some immediate and some requiring a capital plan over the next 10-15 years.

Councilor Jourdain asked for an explanation of how those costs would be compared on a yearly basis over the course of that timeline so that the Council would be able to gauge the city's ability to afford those costs. He emphasized that voting for this sale would open the door to signing up for \$1 million in costs a year for the next several years.

Councilor Givner asked for an explanation of the window to use some of the funding available for this.

A. Soto stated that any use of the ESER dollars required them to be spent by September 30th, so allocating money to support improvements with the building would require them to go through a process of getting approved by the state and going through a procurement process.

Councilor Givner expressed an assumption that the owners of 217-225 High Street weren't going to sit on it forever, but then asked if they had to hold it because the city was doing a friendly taking.

Mayor Garcia stated that would be a legal question.

Councilor Givner stated it would be good to know how much time the Council was working with, emphasizing that the committee could continue to ask for more reports and presentations because new questions will always come up.

Mayor Garcia stated that if none of this happened, the most feasible option as a fallback would be to move the office to Metcalf, but that would move it out of the downtown area. He added that it would also not address the needs of the Transitions Academy.

Chair Devine noted that Metcalf was also a polling place, which would also need to be considered. She then suggested having Mr. Sheedy in next time, noting that Mr. Anderson had retired.

Councilor Jourdain stated that he was also interested in examining if \$10-\$18 million needed to be spent. He emphasized that things were already planned to be staggered over 10-15 years.

Mayor Garcia stated that amount was a number that was estimated per square foot. He then emphasized that the building was in good condition so it may not require that much, but that would not be known for sure until someone could be hired to do a real report.

Councilor Jourdain stated that it may be worth the \$10-\$15,000 to get that information.

R. Casey suggested it could be closer to \$50,000, noting that the 2016 analysis cost \$15,000 and it had flaws in it. He then asked Ms. Wood if it would be around 12 weeks to get that kind of analysis from a qualified engineer.

Councilor Jourdain stated that it could be anyone who was qualified, but it may not need to be an engineer. He then emphasized that the point was to understand what really needed to be done to meet the needs of the department, potentially learning that millions could be saved.

M. Wood stated that the most important first step would be to have a code consultant look at both buildings to avoid having another report that didn't also take into account the impact of code enforcement requirements.

Chair Devine stated that she would like to have a code inspector take a look before the next meeting. She then asked about the price of additional building insurance if one of the buildings was owned by the city.

R. Casey stated that information could be found out easily.

M. Wood stated that the code analysis may take a month, but reiterated its importance in understanding what work may need to be done.

Councilor Jourdain stated that could mean everything hitting right away rather than spread out over years.

M. Wood explained that the way the code worked, it assumes the cost of improvements done to the building over 3 years if the number hit one third of the assessed value.

Mayor Garcia asked for one of the attorneys from the Law Department were on to answer the question about timeline on how soon the city would have to respond with the friendly taking.

Atty Bissonnette stated that with an imminent domain taking, the city could declare its need for the property and record the taking as long as it provided two recent appraisals to determine the amount to be paid to the owner. He added that the owner had the right to contest the cost through appeal but could not prevent the taking. He then explained that there was some concern of the city getting involved in a taking if there were transactions underway between private parties. He then explained that if an offer was accepted, if a deal is consummated within 90-120 days after a deal is accepted, there would be no need for appraisals. He added that if the deadline was not met, the seller could put the property back on the market.

Councilor Sullivan asked if an owner could make a claim of lost income in an unfriendly taking.

Atty Bissonnette stated that was correct, and was usually the argument made by those who would disagree with a valuation. He added that court cases could lead to the valuation being more than what was being offered and sometimes less than what was being offered.

Councilor Sullivan suggested that if the city tried to take the 57 Suffolk property, they could make a claim for a loss of ten years' worth of revenue, adding up to \$2.2 million.

Atty Bissonnette stated that the city could argue that it would only be on the hook for one months' worth of rent.

Councilor Jourdain suggested that it would be a powerful argument to say that he paid just \$695,000 a year and a half ago if the city offered the same, and let the owner explain why he only paid that if it was worth wildly more. He emphasized that appraisals would have to be done in either scenario.

Chair Devine expressed her understanding that for the next meeting, they would invite Sean Sheedy from the DPW as well as would be asking for inspection reports.

Councilor Jourdain added that they would like to plan some tours.

Chair Devine stated that she was unsure if code inspection could be done that soon.

Councilor Jourdain recalled being told previously that the moving expenses would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars to move the School Department. He then asked for validation of the \$50,000 estimate.

M. Wood stated that she could do that. She then explained that she took a recent move they had managed that was bid out in Worcester for a charter school, and she prorated the scale of the move from that small renovation to this one, but also added a little more to reflect that had been a year earlier. She then explained that moving costs were based on how much time it would take.

Councilor Jourdain asked for a report from Transitions to talk about their space needs and why they might need 4,000 square feet.

A. Soto stated they could do that but suggested that it would be easier to explain in a tour of the space.

Councilor Vacon stated that it appeared the price that was being offered for the High Street building was higher than the appraised value. She then asked why that would be.

R. Casey stated that the city had the appraisal done, the owner had the listing price as much more than \$850,000, and they came to terms with that as the price. He then stated they would bring in a more thorough answer at the next meeting.

Chair Devine suggested inviting the entire Council when the tour got arranged. She then stated that a date would need to be set for the next meeting to discuss this and would plan to have this as the only thing on the agenda. She then suggested April 30th.

R. Casey stated that they could plan to tour the School Department space at 57 Suffolk but he was unsure if the other tenants would allow a tour of their space. He then explained that with the report done in 2016, the landlord at the time gave them unfettered access to the entire building. He then suggested that while he expected to get that same kind of access at 225 High, he was unsure about that kind of access at 57 Suffolk. He then stated that he could get requests provided by the 30th, but there may be an issue with getting a complete comparison without knowing if they could get that access.

Councilor Jourdain suggested having the conversation with the owner of 57 Suffolk, Eric Suher, to let him know the building was under consideration and see if he would entertain the idea. He added that at a minimum, he should be approached about having an inspection done in the interest of purchasing the building.

R. Casey stated that he could follow up with Mr. Suher on that.

Chair Devine suggested that he may be willing to renegotiate a lease based on that. She then stated that the next discussion of this would be on April 30th, and that meeting would include inviting Sean from the DPW, having inspection reports, try to get tours in before

then, have the moving costs validated, and understanding the space needs of Transitions Academy.

Councilor Jourdain offered a reminder to have the Fuss & O'Neill materials from 2016-17 be provided to the Council.

Councilor Jourdain made a motion to lay items 2 and 3 on the table. Councilor Givner seconded the motion. Motion adopted.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

### **LAID ON THE TABLE**

Discussion is not expected to take place

Item 4: 10-3-23 (referred back 10-17-23, referred back 3-6-24) VACON, JOURDAIN, PUELLO — Order: that the ballot question approved by the City Council be placed on the ballot on November 4, 2024 as referenced in the 9/26/23 decision by Judge Mulqueen.

Ballot Question

Shall the City of Holyoke amend the current Community Preservation Act real estate surcharge, as established in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of Chapter 44B of the Massachusetts General Laws, and which amendment of such surcharge is permissible pursuant to Section 16 of Chapter 44B of the Massachusetts General Laws, and approved by its legislative body, from 1.5% to 1.0%, a summary of which appears below?

(with revised dates)

8

Community Preservation Act Ballot Question and Draft Summary

Ballot Question

Shall the City of Holyoke amend the current Community Preservation Act real estate surcharge, as established in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of Chapter 44B of

the Massachusetts General Laws, and which amendment of such surcharge is permissible pursuant to Section 16 of Chapter 44B of the Massachusetts General Laws, and approved by its legislative body, from 1.5% to 1.0%, a summary of which appears below?

Summary of Question

On October 3, 2023, the City Council voted, without taking a position, to place a question on the ballot which will allow voters to reduce the current Community Preservation Act real estate surcharge from 1.5% to 1.0%.. The question will be approved, and the real estate surcharge shall be so reduced, if a majority of the voters voting on the ballot question

vote "yes". The question will not be approved, and the real estate surcharge shall remain the same, if a majority of the voters voting on the ballot question vote "no"

On November 8, 2016, the voters of the City of Holyoke voted to accept Sections 3 to 7 of Chapter 44B, known as the Community Preservation Act (hereinafter referred to as the "Act"). By accepting the Act, a funding source was established to enable the City of Holyoke to: (1) acquire, create and preserve open space, which includes land for parks, playgrounds and athletic fields; (2) acquire, preserve and rehabilitate historic resources such as historic community buildings and artifacts; and (3) acquire, create, and preserve

and support community housing to help local families meet their housing needs. By accepting the Act, a surcharge of 1.5% was assessed on real estate on an annual basis beginning in Fiscal Year 2018. Exempted from the surcharge are: (1) property owned and occupied as a domicile by any person who would qualify for low income housing or low or moderate income senior housing in the City of Holyoke, as defined in Section 2 of the Act; (2) \$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of residential real property; and (3) \$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of class three, commercial property, and class four, industrial property as defined in section 2A of said chapter 59. A taxpayer receiving a regular property tax abatement or exemption will also receive a pro rata reduction in the surcharge. Any taxpayer seeking a low income or senior exemption shall apply for said exemption annually to the City of Holyoke.

Item 5: 5-2-23 MCGEE — Ordered, that the city engineer provide a list/layout of non-accepted roads and come in to discuss options to fixing the roads.

\*Tabled 5-10-23

Item 6: 6-21-22 JOURDAIN -- Acting DPW Superintendent please provide the City Council & Parking committee the following report: for the prior 5 years (need to consider pre/post pandemic usage changes), amount of meter revenue and amount of parking garage revenue. Please provide total usage % (used spaces divided total spaces) at both parking garages annually. Please also provide any analysis of cost to get all meters fully operational. Please provide the expected life cycle of the new meters if purchased. Please also provide us the current amortization schedule for the Mayor Taupier Suffolk Street Parking Garage

\*Tabled 6-7-23, 1-31-24

Item 7: 8-1-23 (copy) JOURDAIN -- Ordered, That Cook and Company be invited to a future finance subcommittee meeting to review their recent health insurance analysis for the city.

\*Tabled 1-17-24

Item 8: 8-2-22 JOURDAIN, ANDERSON-BURGOS, RIVERA\_I -- That the City Council conduct a comprehensive study of employee safety for the benefit of our Holyoke municipal employees and our taxpayers. The City Council should invite in the Personnel Director, our Workers' Comp representatives, Mayor, law department, department heads, union leadership, and others as needed to gather all of the information we need to study the root causes of employee injuries, how they are handled, how are they mitigated, how are we handling risk management to avoid future losses. Our goal should be to keep employees safe, reduce lost hours, productivity and overall cost to the city. We need to collect all relevant data including a prior 3 year report tracking injury claims, workers' comp claims, injured on duty claims, and related. Ideally, the City Council will produce a report within 6 months on its findings in conjunction with all key stakeholders.

\*Tabled 9-12-22

Item 9: 3-1-22 (copy) JOURDAIN, PUELLO — The Mayor's office please provide the City Council with a list of all current host community agreements from marijuana companies in our city. Please also provide us a list of how much revenue we are generating annually from each of these agreements.

\*Tabled 1-17-24

Item 10: 2-6-24 Rivera. I.- Order that the honorable city council ask the police department to provide us with an itemized budget breakdown of dollars received and expended over the last 5 years from the criminal seizure and forfeiture account.  
\*Tabled 3-4-24