



Acting Mayor Terence Murphy

City of Holyoke

Law Department

August 9, 2021

City Council
536 Dwight Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

Dear Councilors:

RECEIVED

AUG 18 2021

**Holyoke City Clerk's
Holyoke, MA**

You requested an opinion from our office seeking clarification on tabling an agenda item and whether not acting on that in a requisite period makes the item become "stale" and/or not actionable.

The simple answer is yes. According to Robert's Rules, "*A question that has been laid on the table remains there and can be taken from the table during the same session, or if the next regular business session will be held before a quarterly time interval has elapsed, also until the end of the next regular session. If not taken from the table within these time limits, the question dies, although it can be reintroduced later as a new question.*" (**Robert's Rules of Order "Motions that Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly" 34:3**). Robert's Rules goes on to further elaborate on what constitutes a quarterly time interval ("*...it is understood that no more than quarterly time interval intervenes between two sessions if the second session begins at any time during or before the third calendar month after the calendar month in which the first session ends*"). (**Roberts Rules of Order "Particular Types of Business Meetings 9:7**).

I think it is important to note that while Roberts rules is the authority when the City Ordinances and/or charter are silent, it does not consider the frequency at which this body meets. My understanding of the quarterly time interval is to make sure prolonged periods of time have not lapsed prior to taking the item up again. However, because this City Council meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month there wouldn't be an occasion where City Council met for a first session and then more than three (3) months have lapsed before they meet again for the second session.

My understanding is that the item was taken up by City Council on May 4th and tabled. The next time that City Council met for its next regularly scheduled session was on May 18th. According to Robert's rules, the item would have had to been addressed at the session from which it was tabled or by the end of the next regular session (i.e. May 18th). Therefore, based upon Robert's Rules it appears it will need to be refiled.



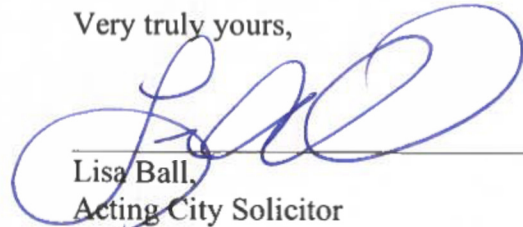
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I hope the above addresses your concerns. If you have any questions or need anything further, please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,



Lisa Ball,
Acting City Solicitor



Jenna Wellhoff,
Assistant City Solicitor