



# CITY OF FITCHBURG

**REVISED**

2:55 pm, Jun 27, 2023

## PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Public Works Committee was held on Tuesday, May 30, 2023, in person at the Legislative Building, 700 Main Street at 5:00 PM.

Committee Members Present: Councilors Marisa Fleming (Chair), Paul Beauchemin, Sally Cragin, Bernie Schultz, and Sam Squailia;  
DPW Commissioner Nick Erickson;  
Superintendent Gary Withington.

Other Participants: City Solicitor Vincent Pusateri and Attorney Jeffrey Aveni.

- 1) Vote to approve minutes from previous meeting (4/25/23): Minutes were approved unanimously 5/0.
- 2) DPW Updates:

Commissioner Erickson stated that we are entering construction season of 2023 and that they have finished street sweeping Citywide and are nearly complete with painting the center lines and fog lines. He mentioned that in-house they are working on painting all of the crosswalks, arrows and legends, and are continuing regular pothole patching. He explained that paving has begun on the lower section of Ashburnham Hill Road near the town line with Westminster. In addition, they have put out a paving bid for Industrial Road and Kimball Street which has been awarded to Lazaro Paving.

Commissioner Erickson mentioned that the Wastewater Department is beginning their combined sewer separation project (CSO) in the northwest Main Street area which is contracted to J.A. Polito and Sons. He noted this is the same contractor we had for the last CSO project and they are excited to have them back to work on this project based on the quality of work they previously provided. Commissioner Erickson further explained this year's CSO project will encompass Ashburnham Hill Road east to Prospect Street, not including Prospect Street. He explained that there is a push to get this work done in and around the River Street area ahead of Mass DOT's work on the River Street Bridge. He mentioned that next year's project will be the largest CSO project they have undertaken and will encompass Prospect Street east to Blossom Street. A question was raised whether or not the roundabout would stay. Commissioner Erickson stated that once the CSO project is done the restoration work is going to use some of our leftover granite cobblestones from various streets in the City to finish both the roundabout and islands which will fit better with the historic nature of the City.

Commissioner Erickson also mentioned that the Water Department is undertaking a few projects as well. One is replacing the Oak Hill water storage tank which is currently underway. Another is a supervisory control and data acquisition system upgrade project which will begin after the low-flow season starts which will be at the end of the summer. This project replaces all of the controls and telemetry systems at the two water treatment plants and various remote sites throughout the water supply system. He explained the project has been many years in the making due to delays with equipment supplies. Once they are ready to install the parts, the Fallulah plant will be taken offline for the installation. Whereas the regional plant can't be taken offline completely, they are waiting for the low-flow period so they can take it offline for a few hours at a time to complete this work.

Commissioner Erickson also thanked the Cemetery Department for the hard work they did ahead of Memorial Day getting our cemeteries in great shape.

A question was asked whether Clarendon Street was going to be paved this year. Commissioner Erickson explained that they were wrapping up the contract documents to get the project out to bid. In the next few months they need to have some water services done ahead of paving, but the plan was to have the project done before the end of the year. Clarification was requested about whether the sidewalks on Kimball Street would be repaired. Commissioner Erickson stated the work is limited to milling and overlay. He explained there is outstanding CSS and gas main work which is a few years out and that this work had to be completed in the meantime due the current condition of the road.

3) NEW petitions for review:

- a) **124-24. City Councilor Bernie Schultz and Shawn Tisdale of 476 Milk Street to repair fence next to the Tisdale home at 476 Milk Street.**  
(Referred from City Council on May 2, 2023)

**Discussion:** Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and the work needs to be done. Councilor Schultz noted that now that the leaves are in it makes the site dangerous. Superintendent Withington stated that they would have to cut the brush back before they could repair the fence.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- b) **125-23. Councilors Marcus DiNatale and Andrew Couture, on behalf of Clint Godin, to install a berm at 11 Stickney Road.**  
(Referred from City Council on May 2, 2023)

**Discussion:** Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and a berm does need to be installed. Councilor Schultz asked how far behind we are with berm repairs and installations. Commissioner Erickson stated that based on approved petitions it would take the berm crew approximately six months working every day of the week. He estimated that the list they have will span several construction seasons. He stated that if there's a major concern about erosion that is an imminent danger to someone's property that they need to know about these so they can prioritize accordingly. Councilor Beauchemin requested to know how much it costs to replace a berm. Commissioner Erickson noted that he could provide an average per linear foot, but explained that it's dependent on what needs to be restored behind the berm, if they need to bring in loam and seed, and whether any excavation would be necessary. With regards to the damages caused by plow drivers, he stated that it's next to impossible to avoid unless they mark them with orange stakes and to undertake a project of that magnitude is unfathomable. It was suggested that Councilors could help push the message out before winter and ask residents to install stakes to mark out the berms on their property.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- c) **127-23. City Councilor Bernie Schultz and Police Sgt. Dan Boudreau request that the Department of Public Works and the School Department work collaboratively to ensure the widening of Munroe Street to accommodate increased vehicular traffic from South Street School.**  
(Referred from City Council on May 2, 2023)

**Discussion:** Councilor Schultz thanked the Public Works Department for installing the chevron signs and noted that he is hopeful they can facilitate the widening of the road with the School Department. Commissioner Erickson mentioned that they would be able to get in to do their piece once the School Department has removed the fence and cleared the brush. It was suggested that they hold the petition until Sgt. Boudreau informs them of his conversation with Mr. Roche.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be HELD.

- d) **128.23. City Solicitor Vincent Pusateri to layout and accept as gift or donation, as a public way, a certain parcel of land known as Either Street Extension also known as Either Street as described in the attached plan.**  
(Referred from City Council on May 2, 2023)

**Discussion:** Councilor Fleming read a letter of opposition from Fitchburg resident Jacquelyn Wehtje into the record. Commissioner Erickson stated that when the development was permitted it was discussed that the City would accept the roadway provided that the developer meet all of the street acceptance criteria. After reviewing the work that has been done against the street acceptance plans, they have found that everything seems to have been completed to their satisfaction. He mentioned there were a couple conditions of the special permit decision that were just brought to his attention that needed clarification,

specifically, the collection of the \$500 per property maintenance fee and the 2 to 1 inflow and infiltration (I&I) mitigation. Attorney Aveni, representing the developer, stated that there were never any \$500 fees collected that he knows of and that he was unaware of the mitigation issue. Commissioner Erickson explained it was brought to his attention that during the Public Works meeting of February 25, 2020 these items were brought up as outstanding issues. Councilor Squailia also noted that the meeting of the Planning Board from June 8, 2011 outlined these conditions. Solicitor Pusateri explained that in January of 2020 he received an email from Commissioner Bosonetto regarding the specifications that were needed to complete the project. He mentioned the developer wants to supply evidence that they made the payment towards the \$500 contribution and that they have funds to make this payment from the \$25,000 that is being held for performance. Regarding the second issued with I&I, a discussion was had regarding the rationale for this condition, how the cost was calculated and how to determine if this amount had already been paid. Solicitor Pusateri noted that the Planning Board is going to be reviewing this in a few weeks so they have some time to determine whether these conditions have been satisfied.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be HELD.

- e) **162-23. Councilor Beauchemin, 102 St. Joseph Ave, replace asphalt from sidewalk to road.**  
(Referred from City Council on May 16, 2023)

**Discussion:** Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and the work needs to be completed.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- f) **163-23. Councilor Beauchemin, 112 Columbus Street to fix/replace apron in front of sidewalk and remove broken concrete slabs.**  
(Referred from City Council on May 16, 2023)

**Discussion:** Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and the apron does need to be repaired.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- g) **164-23. Councilor Beauchemin, across the street from 122 Leighton Street, remove existing wooden fence and replace with an eight foot fence to the already existing chain link fence.**  
(Referred from City Council on May 16, 2023)

**Discussion:** Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and the work needs to be done. He noted that Councilor Beauchemin requested the eight foot height to avoid people throwing stuff over the fence. Councilor Squailia asked if there was any concern with the height of the fence and whether it would be cost prohibitive. Superintendent Withington stated no.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- h) **165-23. Councilor Beauchemin, 433 Westminster Hill Road, install asphalt berm going down Westminster Hill Road, to protect property from storm water runoff.**  
(Referred from City Council on May 16, 2023)

**Discussion:** The petition was amended to read Councilor Beauchemin, 433 Westminster Hill Road, install asphalt berm going down Westminster Hill Road to 435 Westminster Hill Road, to protect property from storm water runoff by a vote of 5-0. Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and a berm does need to be installed.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the amended petition be APPROVED.

- i) **166-23. Councilor Fleming, on behalf of Roberta Lafluer at 119 Will Thompson Way to repair about 12 feet of berm damaged over the last several years.**  
(Referred from City Council on May 16, 2023)

**Discussion:** Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and the berm does need to be repaired.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- j) **167-23. Councilors Marcus DiNatale and Bernie Schultz, on behalf of Molly Parisi, to install a new berm at 28 Drury Lane.**

*(Referred from City Council on May 16, 2023)*

**Discussion:** Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and a berm does need to be installed.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- k) **168-23. Councilor Andrew Couture, on behalf of Timothy McNamara, to repair the berm and sidewalk at the corner of Roosevelt and Warner.**

*(Referred from City Council on May 16, 2023)*

**Discussion:** Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and the berm and sidewalk are in need of repair.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- l) **169-23. Councilors Marcus DiNatale and Bernie Schultz, on behalf of James and Carrie Arciprete, to install a new berm at 8 Drury Lane.**

*(Referred from City Council on May 16, 2023)*

**Discussion:** Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and a berm does need to be installed.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- m) **170-23. Councilor Andrew Couture, on behalf of Lily Suarez, to repair manhole cover and road on Crescent Heights.**

*(Referred from City Council on May 16, 2023)*

**Discussion:** Superintendent Withington stated he visited the site and the road is in need of repair. Councilor Squailia noted that it's their practice to not submit petitions for road repair. Superintendent Withington mentioned that in this area they would patch for pothole and that the current CSS project may cover this road.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

5) HELD petitions for review:

- a) **093-22. Councilor Sam Squailia on behalf of resident Nick Hains, to add a 4-way controlled stop at the intersection of Victoria Lane, Industrial Drive and Game-On Way. During times of heavy traffic flow in or out of the Game-On facility, residents of Victoria Lane do not have the right of way to cross, and thus must wait for long periods while the traffic lines go through. If a 4-way stop sign is not feasible, an alternate solution shall be investigated by the City. (HELD at the 5/31/22, 7/26/22, 9/27/22, 10/25/22, and 1/31/23 meetings).**

**Discussion:** Commissioner Erickson referred to the traffic study that was conducted by our consultant and outlined the options that were suggested in the report. The strongest recommendation seemed to be to reconfigure Industrial Road onto Game On Way as a straight through and realign Victoria Lane and Roper Road as T-intersections on the main entrance. He explained that they could potentially do this since they are planning on paving Game-On in the near future, but noted he was unsure of where the funds would come from to do this work. He mentioned that Game-On has committed to paving Game

On Way and that they committed to providing a sum of money through the Planning Board approval to the City but the use of these funds still needs to be determined.

Councilor Squailia mentioned their discussion at the last meeting relating to a potential temporary solution that Sgt. Daniel Boudreau presented regarding installing cones during high traffic events to control traffic. Commissioner Erickson agreed this may be a good intermediary solution as it will allow them to see if the reconfiguration would work before they make the major investment to realign the roadways. Councilor Squailia also mentioned that after discussion with the neighbors, it was noted that the online map platforms often send drivers by way of Roper Road and suggested that whomever has access in the City to manage these platforms reroute the traffic accordingly. Commissioner Erickson explained that Sgt. Boudreau has reached out to Google and Waze but with the number of apps that offer similar services, it would be difficult to get them all on the same page. He also mentioned that Sgt. Boudreau recommended to Westminster to install a “Local Traffic Only” sign on their end to discourage Game On traffic. Councilor Squailia also mentioned a few options that the residents had suggested to her. It was noted by the Chair that it would be helpful if the residents attend these meetings to express their concerns and possible solutions.

**Recommendation:** The committee voted 5-0 that the petition be HELD.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Beauchemin and seconded by Councilor Schultz.