



City Council

General Government Sub-Committee

36 Court Street
Springfield, MA 01103
<http://www.springfieldcityhall.com>

~ Minutes ~

Tasheena Davis
4137876589

Thursday, March 5, 2020

3:00 PM

City Hall -- Room 200

I. Call to Order

3:00 PM Meeting called to order on March 5, 2020 at City Hall -- Room 200, 36 Court Street, Springfield, MA.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Adam Gomez	Ward 1 Councilor	Excused	
Tracye Whitfield	Councilwoman	Excused	
Victor Davila	Councilman	Excused	
Michael A. Fenton	Ward 2 Councilor	Excused	
Sean Curran	Councilman	Excused	
Orlando Ramos	Vice President - Ward 8 Councilor	Excused	
Kateri B. Walsh	At-Large Councilor	Excused	
Marcus J Williams	Vice-President	Excused	
Timothy C. Allen	Ward 7 Councilor	Present	
Jesse Lederman		Present	
Melvin A. Edwards	Ward 3 Councilor	Present	
Malo Brown	Councilman	Excused	
Justin Hurst	President	Excused	

II. Public Portion

III. Orders

1. Order (ID # 5396)

Local Acceptance of G.L.C. 33 Section 59 Benefits for Military Leave

HISTORY:

10/21/19

City Council

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

Next: 11/18/19

Councilor Whitfield requested this item be taken out of order. With no objection, it was taken first on the agenda.

Councilor Walsh explained she is the lead sponsor on this order. She stated the acceptance of the statute would allow deployed military service men and women stability and security for themselves and their families. She introduced Juan Barrera of the local Firefighters Union #648.

Juan Barrera of the local 648 spoke in favor of the order. He explained the Brave Act was amended at the push of Governor Baker. He explained it was to assist veterans and military personnel and their families by increasing the number of days from 17 to 40 for paid leave. He explained that the 40 days covers one weekend a month plus two weeks a year of training that is required of military members. He stated those performing military duties would not lose employment benefits and as it stands now, those in Springfield must take

unpaid days from their civilian jobs to serve. Holyoke, Ludlow and Chicopee have already accepted the statute.

Councilor Fenton asked what the financial implications to the City would be by accepting this statute. He asked what would this cost be and can the City afford it.

Mr. Barrera explained that some of the money can be reimbursed by the state and smaller cities with less resources than Springfield have accepted the statute.

TJ Plante, Chief Administrative and Financial Officer, explained the Finance Department is currently working on an analysis to show what the costs would be. He explained there are at least 60 Springfield Police Officers and 30 Firefighters that would fall under the statute. He would like the Springfield Fire and Police Commissioners to have input also. He stated the Commissioners have to backfill when an employee is out.

Councilor Gomez asked how long it would take to get the analysis.

Mr. Plante explained a week or two as he wanted the Fire and Police Departments involved also.

Councilor Gomez stated he fully supports our military but wants to ensure the City can afford this. He stated that we also need to know how many military service men and women this will impact outside of SPD and SFD.

Mr. Barrera stated that with SFD, there is no gap in overtime.

Councilor Shea explained he fully supports this as he is a veteran, however the Council has an obligation to figure out what this will cost the City. With such a large increase in expenditures, the City has to know where that money will come from. The Departments also need to have enough man power to cover positions.

Councilor Shea made a motion to send the item to committee, seconded by Councilor Whitfield.

Councilor Walsh expressed discontent that the Council is nickel and diming on such an important issue. She explained that freedom is not free.

Councilor Shea explained that this is an emotional issue but there is an obligation for the Council to have the facts first.

Councilor Whitfield stated it will cost the City over a half million dollars to implement the change and she would like to know if there are other costs associated with the mandate. She explained that sending it to committee doesn't mean the Council doesn't support it, but they are performing due diligence.

Councilor Lederman thanked the sponsors of the order. He explained the military men and women will need to be deployed either way so the City needs to figure out how to pay for this. He'd like an analysis for the next Council meeting and would like to be added as a co-sponsor.

Councilor Ryan made a motion to amend the motion to committee to add that the item come back onto the agenda for November 18th, seconded by Councilor Whitfield.

Councilor Ramos expressed that he is not certain that motion is necessary, but would like assurance from the committee chair that there would be a committee meeting held prior to November 18th.

Councilor Edwards, chair of the General Government committee, stated he would have a subcommittee meeting prior to that date. He explained his grandchildren's grandfather died in Afghanistan, so this issue is near and dear to him. The General Govt. committee will get this prepared.

The item was sent to the General Government subcommittee by motion of Councilor Shea, seconded by Councilor Whitfield.

11/14/19 City Council

TJ spoke on behalf of the city advising that this would cost the city lots of money and would like to do more research in reference to this and get back to the committee. Juan Barrera who has been affected by this would like to see something changed to help out future firefighters that are veterans in the military. More research will be done and will remain in committee.

11/18/19 City Council REPORT

Councilor Walsh asked that the item remain in committee. She wants to continue to discuss the financial impacts before passage.

12/16/19 City Council REPORT

Councilor Edwards stated he has asked the CAFO's office to crunch numbers and provide some information. He explained he is in support of veterans but they are not prepared to move forward this evening.

Councilor Edwards asked that the item remain in committee.

01/13/20 City Council RECEIVE REPORT

No action was taken on the item.

02/03/20 City Council REFERRED TO COMMITTEE
Next: 03/09/20

Read and Councilor Walsh stated that the appropriate thing is to have a meeting.

Councilor Edward state he want to this to remain in General Government committee.

Order remained in committee.

2. Order (ID # 5536)

Order Accepting MGL Ch. 64G, Sec. 3A - Local Excise Tax on Short Term Rentals

HISTORY:

02/03/20 City Council REFERRED TO COMMITTEE
Next: 03/09/20

Read and Councilor Lederman stated the three (3) items before the Council are relatively to Short Term rental. The reason it's presented in three (3) separate orders is two (2) of the order are relatively to adoptions of the State statue that would eventually allows the City to impose local options taxes and community impact fees, if they so choose. Before they could ever adopt a tax rate relatively to short term rental or community impact fees, they must first pass these orders, meaning they intent to at some point in the future to leave that door open, then the next vote would be if they actually going to set those. The actual ordinance governing the operation of short term rental in the City of Springfield. There are concerns raised by the residents across the City relatively to gray area that exist for the regulations. They are seeking within this ordinance, essential to provide a path way to operators who want to operates respectfully within the confined of the laws. He not oppose to sending the ordinance to committee, he thinks they should consider passing the two (2) orders adopting the local statues.

Councilor Walsh made a motion to send #39,40 and 41 committee, seconded by Councilor Curran.

Councilor Lederman stated he not opposed to sending all three (3) orders to the General Government committee. He stated the orders have to pass by the Council

and sign by the Mayor before they can adopt the taxes essential before the final piece of the orders pass.

3. Order (ID # 5537)

Order Accepting MGL Ch. 64G, Sec. 3D -Short Term Rentals-Community Impact Fee

HISTORY:

02/03/20 City Council REFERRED TO COMMITTEE
Next: 03/09/20

Read and Councilor Walsh made a motion to send #39,40 and 41 committee, seconded by Councilor Curran.

IV. Ordinances

1. Ordinance (ID # 5522)

Ordinance Chapter 238 - Short-Term Rentals

HISTORY:

02/03/20 City Council REFERRED TO COMMITTEE
Next: 03/09/20

Read and Councilor Walsh made a motion to send #39,40 and 41 committee, seconded by Councilor Curran.

COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

General discussion with regards to rules and regulations with short term rentals. City Councilors are working on legislation to present to the full city council for a vote.