



REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 20, 2026

Regular Meeting of the City Council was held in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall, on Tuesday evening, January 20, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

President George Tyros called the meeting to order at 7:30 o'clock p.m.

CALL OF THE ROLL

City Clerk Titi Siriphan called the Roll of Members. Eleven (11) Councillors were present including President George Tyros and Councillors Calvin Brooks, Craig Cormier, Aleksander Dernalowicz, Karen Hardern, Dana Heath, Brad Heglin, Elizabeth Kazinskas, (Councillor Elect) Judy Mack, Paul Tassone, and David Thibault-Muñoz.

ADMINISTRATIVE OF OATH OF OFFICE TO THOSE NOT PRESENT ON JANUARY 5, 2026, AT 10:00 AM

Clerk Siriphan administered the oath of office to Councillor-elect Judy Mack.

OPENING PRAYER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Tyros led the Council in reciting the "Pledge of Allegiance".

OPEN MEETING RECORDING & PUBLIC RECORDS ANNOUNCEMENT

President Tyros announced to the assembly that the Open Meeting Recording and Public Records Announcement. Any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting or may transmit the meeting through any medium subject to reasonable requirements of the chair as to the number placement and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Any person intending to make such recordings shall notify the Chair forthwith. All documents and exhibits used or referenced at the meeting must be submitted in duplicate to the chair as they become part of the meeting minutes pursuant to General Law Chapter 38 Section 20.

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READING & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas and seconded by Councillor Paul Tassone, it was voted, eleven (11) yeas, President George Tyros and Councillors Calvin Brooks, Craig Cormier, Aleksander Dernalowicz, Karen Hardern, Dana Heath, Brad Heglin, Elizabeth Kazinskas, Judy Mack, Paul Tassone, and David Thibault-Muñoz to waive the reading and accept the minutes of September 15, 2025, Regular Meeting, October 6, 2025, Regular Meeting, and October 20, 2025, Regular Meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR**#11761**

On a motion made by Councilor Dana Heath and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas, it was voted to place on file, *Notice of Appointment of Rachel J. Roberts, to the position of Executive Secretary, for term expiring January 1, 2027.*

11 yeas, motion passes.

#11762

On a motion made by Councilor Dana Heath and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas, it was voted to place on file, *Notice of Appointment of Vincent Pusateri II, Esq., to the position of City Solicitor, for term expiring January 5, 2029.*

11 yeas, motion passes.

PETITIONS, APPLICATIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.**#11754**

On a motion made by Councillor Judy Mack and seconded by Councillor Paul Tassone, it was voted to refer to Service Committee for further study and report and schedule a public hearing, *High Street – National Grid to Relocate 2 Jointly Owned Poles on High Street beginning at a point approximately 10’ feet south of the centerline of the intersection of High Street and Newton Street and continuing approximately 120’ feet in an east direction. Relocating P30 and P31 on High Street to alleviate clearance issues to new construction being built on Newton Street.*

11 yeas, motion passes.

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REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE
FINANCE COMMITTEE**#11685**

Councillor Brad Heglin addressed the Council regarding *A Measure Declaring the Land located at 13-17 West Lynde Street, as Defined in the Attached Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan, as Surplus for the Purpose of Disposition*. He stated that the Finance Committee had met on the matter several times. During those meetings, it was explained that the Mayor had brought the item forward because he believed it made sense to declare the parcel surplus and dispose of it. Councillor Heglin noted that special permits attached to the property date back to the early 2000s, when the Planning Board granted special permits requiring that the municipal lot located behind 13–17 West Lynde Street be utilized as parking for the residents of that address. The permits further require that the City continue to maintain the lot, including repairs, paving, plowing, and related upkeep. As a result, the Mayor’s position was that since the City is responsible for the expense of maintaining a lot that is primarily used by tenants of a privately owned building, the parcel should be disposed of. Councillor Heglin explained that the Finance Committee disagreed on two points. First, given the growing downtown and Rear Main Street development underway, the Committee felt the municipal lot was too valuable and that it would be risky to dispose of it. Second, the Committee was not fully satisfied with the response concerning the special permit issue related to the property. He concluded by reporting that the Finance Committee recommends that no action be taken on the item.

The item has been removed from the calendar.

#11764

Councillor Aleksander Dernalowicz informed the Council that the Finance Committee met on the item, with the Council President attending as an ex officio member to discuss the proposed changes. Councillor Dernalowicz noted that significant updates to the Council Rules had been made approximately a year ago under former President Kazinskis, and that the current proposal was largely a cleanup and refinement of those changes.

He explained that the proposed amendments primarily affect Rule 13, including adjustments to the responsibilities assigned to certain subcommittees. Specifically, changes were made to the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Appointments, and the Committee on Economic and Community Development. Vacancies were moved from the Finance Committee to the Appointments Committee. Additionally, several items such as zoning, industrial development, Zoning Board of Appeals matters, and Planning Board matters were reassigned to the Committee on Economic and Community Development. Councillor Dernalowicz stated that the Committee discussed these adjustments and agreed they would better align with the work currently being handled by those committees. He further noted a proposed amendment to Rule 14, requiring that committee reports be submitted to the City



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Clerk by noon on Wednesday preceding a regular meeting. This change is intended to provide the Clerk's Office with additional time to prepare agendas and ensure readiness for the following week's meeting. Councillor Dernalowicz concluded by stating that the Finance Committee was in favor of the proposed changes and made a motion to pass the amended rules as presented in the Council's packet.

Councillor Brad Heglin offered an additional amendment to the proposed Council Rules. He moved to amend by adding a new rule, to be numbered as the next subsequent rule in the Council's Rules. The proposed rule states that no standing committee, subcommittee of a standing committee, or committee of the Council as a whole shall vote to refer any item to the Council that has not previously appeared on that committee's agenda at a prior meeting. He further specified that this rule may only be suspended by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Council and the Council President.

He stated that the amendment is intended to prevent conditional votes and situations where documents are received immediately prior to a meeting, resulting in committee action on items that may contain errors. He explained that having an item appear on a committee agenda at a prior meeting allows time to review materials, ensure accuracy, and confirm that everything is in order before a vote is taken. Councillor Heglin further noted that the process would encourage the Mayor and department heads to submit items to the Council earlier and bring potential issues to the Council's attention in advance. He expressed concern that the Council is not always kept fully informed when problems arise and that, too often, items are presented late with limited time for proper review, requiring the Council to address complex matters in a compressed timeframe.

Councillor Judy Mack spoke in response to the proposed amendment. She stated that she agreed with the concerns raised, noting that over the past year there has been an increasing number of items brought before standing committees and the full Council that were incomplete, containing multiple errors, or appeared to have been rushed through the process. She added that, in some instances, it was later discovered that matters had not been handled appropriately. Councillor Mack described the proposed amendment as a necessary stopgap measure to ensure that those submitting or preparing items take greater care to do so correctly. She emphasized that when items come before a standing committee or the full Council in Council Chambers, members must have the most accurate and complete information available. She concluded by stating that this standard has not consistently been met and that significant improvement is needed.

A brief recess was taken to allow the City Council to review the new rules.

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On a motion made by Councillor Brad Heglin and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas, it was voted to amend the proposed rules submitted by Councillor Brad Heglin.

10 yeas, 1 nay, Councillor Calvin Brooks, motion passes for an amendment.

On a motion made by Councillor Brad Heglin and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas, it was voted to pass the City Council Rules as amended.

11 yeas, motion passes.

NEW BUSINESS**#11765**

On a motion made by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas and seconded by Councillor Aleksander Dernalwicz, it was voted to adopt the resolution:

A RESOLUTION TO FILE AND ACCEPT GRANTS WITH AND FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS FOR THE PARKLAND ACQUISITIONS AND RENOVATIONS FOR COMMUNITIES (PARC) PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT OF OVILA CASE PLAYGROUND

WHEREAS: The land is dedicated to park and recreation purposes under M.G.L. Chapter 45, Section 3; and

WHEREAS: The City of Gardner is committed to improving the quality of life and recreational opportunities for all residents, and recognizes the importance of safe, accessible, and inclusive park facilities; and

WHEREAS: The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts offers reimbursable grants to municipalities through the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program (301 CMR 5.00) to support the acquisition and development of parkland; and

WHEREAS: The City of Gardner seeks to file an application for grant funding under said PARC Program for the development and renovation of Ovila Case Playground, located on City-owned land, to replace outdated play structures and install new accessible and educational equipment designed for children ages 2 to 12, consistent with the City's goals for equitable access and ADA compliance; and

WHEREAS: The equipment, removal of existing loam, installation of a 3-inch deep sub-base stone, 6 inches of rubber mulch, and installation will cost a total of three hundred and sixty

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thousand and 00/100 dollars (\$360,000) of which two hundred fifty two thousand nine hundred seventy two and 00/100 (\$252,972) has been requested and, if awarded, will be reimbursable through the PARC Grant Program, an additional one hundred eight thousand and 00/100 dollars (\$108,000) has been appropriated through Gardner's City Council to serve as the grant's required match for this request; and *WHEREAS:* The Mayor of the City of Gardner will accept grant funds under the PARC Grant Program (301 CMR 5.00) and the City of Gardner will borrow, appropriate, and expend up to three hundred and sixty thousand and 00/100 dollars (\$360,000) for the development of Ovila Case Playground to be managed by the City Public Works Department, as open space parkland under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, under their duty and responsibility to the care and custody of City parks and playgrounds.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

1. That the Mayor, as the Chief Executive Officer of the City, be and is hereby authorized to file, on behalf of the City of Gardner, any and all applications deemed necessary for participation in the PARC Grant Program for the development of Ovila Case Playground; and
2. That the Mayor, as the Chief Executive Officer of the City, be and is hereby authorized to expend said funds, and to execute any and all contracts, agreements, and documents deemed necessary to carry out the purposes of this grant; and
3. That the City will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and grant requirements associated with the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program; and
4. That this resolution shall take effect upon passage.

11 yeas, motion passes.

COUNCIL COMMENTS AND REMARKS

Councillor Brad Heglin would like to congratulate the students who were inducted into NHS tonight.

President George Tyros announced that he has held the requisite discussions with Councillors and non-Councillors regarding the various committees and boards for which the Council appoints representatives. He further announced that he will be sending a communication to the Council and the Mayor the following day identifying the individuals selected for those appointments.



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ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Paul Tassone and seconded by Councillor Craig Cormier, it was voted to adjourn at 8:08 p.m.

Accepted by the City Council: March 16, 2026