

AGENDA FOR THE CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 3, 2026

[IGNORE_INDENT]

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC COMMENT

REGULAR AND PENDING EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

1. -- June 11, 2024, September 4, 2024, and April 15, 2025 Executive Session Minutes - Reviewed and ready for partial release as of September 17, 2025
2. -- December 9, 2024 Finance Committee Executive Session Minutes - Reviewed and withheld in entirety as of September 17, 2025
3. From City Clerk Brenna Murphy Leary and Admin. Assistant Jeffery Anderson-Burgos, meeting minutes from January 20, 2026.

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4. From City Clerk Brenna Murphy Leary and Admin. Assistant Jeffery Anderson-Burgos - October 7, 2025 meeting minutes

COMMUNICATIONS

5. From Mayor Joshua Garcia, letter appointing Kate Caligaris of 14 Shepard Dr. to serve as a Commissioner of the Board of Health. Ms. Caligaris will replace Nicole Arnold and will serve a three-year term, expiring February 1, 2029.
6. From Mayor Joshua Garcia, letter reappointing Dr. John Perdrizet of 210 Linden St. to serve as a member of the Conservation Commission. Dr. Perdrizet will serve a three-year term expiring February 1, 2029.
7. From Rory Casey, City Treasurer, municipal buildings assessment materials
8. From Holyoke Mall- 2025 Community Impact Report- Holyoke
9. From HEDIC-meeting minutes from November 20, 2025
10. From Conservation Commission- Meeting Minutes December 11, 2025
11. From Board of Fire Commission-meeting minutes December 17, 2025
12. FY2026 GF EXPENSE YTD 1/29/26
13. FY2026 SEWER ENTERPRISE EXPENSE YTD 1/29/26

PETITIONS

14. Petition of Dario Tara-Ramones-zone change at 131 Westfield Rd. Holyoke

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

15. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order that the necessary changes in Ordinance be made in order to establish a Finance Department and the roles and responsibilities of its members.
Recommended that the order be adopted.
16. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order that the Council holistically review minimum qualifications for all job descriptions for an established Finance Department based on the long-time DLS guidance to ensure internal controls, clear lines of accountability, and appropriate education and skill-level.
Recommended that the order be adopted.
17. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order that a procedure for tracking updates in Municode be created for Ordinances similar to the grant reporting procedure established by Councilor Bartley.
Recommended that the order be given a leave to withdraw.
18. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order that the DPW install a Handicap Sign at 182 Lyman St. for Ricardo Qquendo
Recommended that the order be adopted.
19. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order that the DPW install Handicap parking sign for Oscar Rios of 12 Grover St. Placard #PL6350569
Recommended that the order be adopted.
20. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order Request that a Handicap Parking space be designated at 5 Clinton Ave. for Andres Martinez. Copy to the Ordinance Committee, Handicap Parking Commission.
Recommended that the order be adopted.
21. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order the DPW install a handicap sign at 330 Maple St. Apt 19 for Jose A. Reyes. Handicap Placard #PL9380041
Recommended that the order be adopted.
22. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order that the two handicap parking spots on the west side of Ivy Ave be removed. The residents where they are located have stated nobody in their building uses them and the spots limit on street parking. There is also no record of a resident with a handicap placard applying for them.
Recommended that the order be adopted.
23. The Committee on Finance to whom was referred an order An assessor attend a finance meeting to explain the home values & how they are determined. Homeowners are questioning the consistency & fairness of assessed values & resulting tax increases throughout the city.
Recommended that the order has been complied with.
24. The Committee on Finance to whom was referred an order that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44 Sec. 53A, the City Council hereby accepts the provisions of

the **"SFY26 SHANNON COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVE (CSI), \$415,951.56, NO MATCH"** grant and authorizes the establishment of a Fund or other method appropriate for the accounting of the receipts and expenditures of all resources associated with the administration of said grant.

Sec 2-509 - Grant Reporting

Any city department, of which has received grant funding by approval of the city council pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, or any other authorizing criteria, shall within a reasonable period of time, but no later than 60 days from the conclusion of said grant, generate a detailed report which outlines the planned outcomes with the documented actual results. Said report shall be submitted to the city clerk for addition to the city council's next agenda.

Recommended that the order be adopted.

25. The Committee on Finance to whom was referred an order that the amount of three million and five hundred-thousand dollars (\$3,500,000) is appropriated for the purpose of financing the demolition, remodeling, reconstruction, engineering, construction, equipping or re-equipping of various city facilities, roads, and sidewalks, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto. To meet this appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 7 or any other enabling authority.
FURTHER ORDERED: That the Mayor is authorized to contract for and expend any state aid available for the project; and that the Mayor is authorized to take any other action necessary or convenient to carry out these projects.
FURTHER ORDERED: That the Treasurer is authorized to file an application to qualify under Chapter 44A of the General Laws any and all of the bonds or notes authorized to be issued pursuant to this Order, and to provide such information and execute such documents as may be required for such purposes.
FURTHER ORDERED: That there shall be no change in the purpose of this bond authorization without prior vote of approval by the Holyoke City Council.
Recommended that the order be adopted.
26. The Committee on Development and Governmental Relations to whom was referred an order that Council review and approve the sale of the property located at Easthampton Road, Parcel No.144-00-057, to the interested abutter.
Recommended that the order be adopted.
27. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order that the City of Holyoke shall create an Administrative and Finance Department. Said acceptance shall be subject to implementation by city ordinance and any necessary amendments to the City Charter. This order shall be referred concurrently to Charter and Rules and Ordinance to be considered jointly, with recommendations regarding implementation to be reported back to the City Council jointly.
Recommended that the order, specific to changes in section 27 of the charter, be adopted.
28. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order The City of Holyoke amends any charter, ordinance and any other regulations relative to its Tax Collector and combines the office with its City Treasurer so long as a charter change to

appoint rather than elect Holyoke's City Treasurer is approved by the legislature and Holyoke voters.

Recommended that the order be given a leave to withdraw.

29. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order that best practices concerning filing orders be discussed and consensus sought.

Recommended that the order has been complied with.

30. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order that Council Rule 8K be amended to provide that except where otherwise required by the Charter or state law, any enactment, amendment, or repeal of an ordinance shall be by majority vote of all members of the City Council. This change is needed to restore consistency with the city charter and with the code of ordinances.

Recommended that the order be adopted.

MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS

31. Magrath-Smith, Ordered - that DPW and Engineering develop a draft policy to present to Council around which public ways should be returned to gravel and maintained as class 4 roads versus paved/kept private and non-accepted versus paved/taken over as a public way.

32. Magrath-Smith, Ordered - at Pearl and Allyn that a WRONG WAY sign can be added on the existing post upon the advice of DPW/Engineering. One would think cars parked facing the same way on both sides would be a clear indicator of a one way street, but that is not always the case.

33. Magrath-Smith, Ordered - that the DPW Director, Parks Director, and Conservation Director come into a sub-committee meeting to discuss the management strategies currently being used to encourage pollinators. Are we regularly using pesticides on city parks or city land? If so, which ones? Do we have any "no mow" areas put aside on city land as native plant/pollinator spaces? Are we currently planting native plants in city parks and medians?

34. Magrath-Smith, Ordered - that we amend our zoning ordinances in order to require a certain percentage of native plantings in new construction or major rehabilitation projects and to bring ourselves into alignment with Massachusetts' Prohibited Plant List in banning their use.

35. Magrath-Smith, Ordered - that the No Parking sign outside of 127 Pearl Street be removed. 27 Pearl Street used to be a group home run by Western MA Training Consortium and housed folks who were wheelchair bound. They would be picked up by a van in the morning and brought home in the afternoon. It is no longer needed and parking on the one way side of Pearl is limited, especially in the winter.

36. Magrath-Smith, Ordered - that DPW advises if the street sign and one way sign on Pearl at Lincoln Street should be moved back to the East side of the corner. It had been there for years and was moved to the opposite corner. If you are traveling on Lincoln towards Stop and Shop, the street sign and one way sign are not visible, as it is

blocked by a beautiful, huge tree. Google street view of this corner shows the original placement of the sign (2015) vs the current placement. If it is moved back to the original location, it will be visible from both directions of travel on Lincoln.

37. Magrath-Smith, Ordered - that we amend our ordinances to ban the use and local sale of anticoagulant rodenticides, specifically Second-Generation ARs (SGARs).
38. Magrath-Smith, Ordered - that we invite in members of the Holyoke Equity Collective **and Neighbor-to-Neighbor** to discuss their seedling distribution, Dwight Street Community Garden, and composting programs.
39. Murphy-Romboletti-Ordered, that the City Council approve the Resolution for the Certified Housing Development Incentive Program Project including a Local Tax Increment Exemption (TIE) Agreement with 103 Lyman LLC for the downtown market rate housing development at 103 - 105 Lyman Street (Assessors Map 037, Block 05, Parcel 007).
40. Panitch, Thalheimer:-Ordered: that the Council Rules be examined and revised as necessary to clarify the Rule 9 provisions relating to legal form and committee procedure. Refer to Charter & Rules.
41. Purcell - Ordered that the sale of Holyoke Assessors Parcel 006-08-012, 106 Pine Street, Holyoke, MA to Alan Schneider, or his nominee, for \$5,800.00 authorized by the City Council on September 17, 2025, be amended to reflect that the City will receive \$4,800.00 after payment of \$1,000.00 to the Buyer's broker.
42. Rivera, I.- ORDER That an Article III titled "Community Response Division" be added to Chapter 70 – Social Services of the Code of Ordinances.

The purpose of the Community Response Division shall be to develop, coordinate, and deliver holistic, community-centered services to residents most in need within the City of Holyoke. Working alongside the Holyoke Police Department, Holyoke Fire Department, and the Board of Health/Public Health Department, the Community Response Division will provide a collaborative, non-emergency response framework focused on prevention, stabilization, and support.

Said Article should outline:

- The mission and scope of the Community Response Division;
- Its coordination with Police, Fire, Public Health, and relevant community partners;
- Roles and responsibilities of staff or units within the division;
- Authorization to develop programs addressing behavioral health, homelessness, substance use, crisis intervention, and other community-identified needs;
- Reporting requirements, oversight mechanisms, and any necessary administrative provisions.

43. Rivera, I.- ORDER That the Kestrel Land Trust, the Conservation Department, and a representative from the Planning Board be invited to appear before the Development & Governmental Relations Committee (DGR) to provide a comprehensive walkthrough of the steps, requirements, and processes necessary to designate "Elmwood Forest" as conservation land.

Said presentation should include:

- Legal and regulatory requirements for conservation designation
- Any environmental assessments or studies needed
- Potential impacts on land use, zoning, and stewardship responsibilities
- Available conservation tools or partnerships
- Preliminary timelines and cost considerations

44. Rivera, I.- Order that the Department of Public Works provide an update on the status and timeline for the repaving of Race Street from Spring Street to Cabot Street. Businesses located along this corridor have been waiting for over two years for persistent potholes and roadway deterioration to be addressed.
45. Rivera, I.- Order that the appropriate department evaluate the street lighting conditions on Race Street between Spring Street and Cabot Street. A business owner in this area has reported repeated customer complaints regarding inadequate lighting and has raised concerns related to public safety for patrons entering and exiting the establishment.
46. Rivera, I.- Order that the Sound Permitting Ordinance be amended to designate the License Board as the granting authority for sound permits, rather than the Chief of Police. This change is intended to align the permitting process with the License Board's established role in reviewing, issuing, and regulating licenses, while ensuring a transparent, consistent, and civilian-led decision-making process. Transferring this authority would provide clearer standards, improved accountability, and greater procedural fairness for applicants, while allowing the Police Department to focus on enforcement and public safety responsibilities rather than administrative permitting functions.
47. Rivera, I.- Order that the School Department be requested to provide an overview of the district's current early literacy instructional model, including reasons for transitioning from phonics-based instruction to the use of sight words, and how student reading outcomes are being assessed.
48. Sullivan-Ordered that the City Council invite the Board of Health to a DGR meeting to discuss the vacant building fees and get an update.
49. Sullivan- Ordered, that the City Council amend its Rules to establish clearer and more stringent guidelines governing Public Comment, including, but not limited to, requiring that individuals participating remotely keep their cameras on while speaking during Public Comment.
50. Thalheimer, Panitch, Purcell, Anderson-Burgos, Rivera, J., Murphy-Romboletti- Ordered: That the Honorable City Council respectfully invites the Chief of the Holyoke Police Department, or their designee, to appear before the Committee on Public Safety to provide an update to the October 6, 2025 general overview of the Department's policies, procedures, and training regarding potential interactions with federal immigration authorities, in order to (1) support transparency, public understanding; and continued mutual trust between the community and the police department, while

maintaining public safety; (2) ensure that the Council has the information it needs to effectively support the Police Department in its mission to protect the community; and (3) review the impact of existing and proposed state law and practice regarding immigration law and enforcement. Refer to Public Safety, with a copy to the Chief of Police.

51. Thalheimer, Panitch, Anderson-Burgos- Ordered: that the City Solicitor advise the Council as to under what circumstances, if any, a person wishing to participate in public comment, or to speak at a public hearing, is obliged to give their name and address for the record, and what the legal basis for any such requirement would be. The question arises because contrary to the Council's general understanding, there appears to be no such requirement set forth in the Council's current Rules, and there has been contention over the issue that should be resolved.
52. Vacon- ORDER: that Mayor Garcia & Open Architects/TJ Plante provide an update on the status of 2023, 2024 & 2025 financial reconciliations & free cash.
53. Vacon- ORDER: the Mayor please provide the City Council with a copy of the contract for CAFO.
54. Vacon- ORDER: that our auditor/treasurer provide an updated summary & schedule of our bonds/debt & what percent of our budget this represents.
55. Vacon- ORDER: The city council requests City Councilor At-Large Israel Rivera to recuse himself on votes affecting the police department while on probation & ethics/conflicts of interest complaints are pending.
56. Vacon- ORDER: that the HPD, HFD & DPW provide a a quarterly summary (no individual information) report to the city council on employee injuries including; number of employees out injured, length of time out, & nature of injuries & any actions taken to reduce injuries, along with any other information the department wishes to include. Refer to Public Safety & copy to each department
57. Vacon- ORDER: that the city ordinance be amended to combine the historical commission and the local district commission into one commission as voted by both commissions.
58. Vacon- ORDER: That Councilor Israel Rivera be removed as Vice President of the City Council while OUI, other charges and ethics complaints are pending.
59. Devine- ORDERED: That Chapter 43, section 90, a,c,d of the Pension Law (regarding half-pay) be sent to the Finance Committee for discussion with the Retirement Board.
60. DEVINE - Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2026, **FIFTY FOUR THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$54,000.00)** as follows:

FROM

14101-51105 PAY-SR. CIVIL ENGINEER	\$54,000.00
	TOTAL \$54,000.00

TO:

14102-53010 PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING	\$54,000.00
	TOTAL \$54,000.00

61.

DEVINE - Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2026, **THREE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$350,000.00)** as follows:

FROM

12101-51107 PAY-PATROL OFFICERS	\$250,000.00
12101-51117 PAY-E911 DISPATCHERS	100,000.00
	TOTAL \$350,000.00

TO:

12101-51300 PAY-OVERTIME	\$350,000.00
	TOTAL \$350,000.00

62.

Devine-Ordered, that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44 Sec. 53A, the City Council hereby accepts the provisions of the **"EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (EOHED) ONE STOP, \$265,000.00, NO MATCH"** grant and authorizes the establishment of a Fund or other method appropriate for the accounting of the receipts and expenditures of all resources associated with the administration of said grant.

Sec 2-509 - Grant Reporting

Any city department, of which has received grant funding by approval of the city council pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, or any other authorizing criteria, shall within a reasonable period of time, but no later than 60 days from the conclusion of said grant, generate a detailed report which outlines the planned outcomes with the documented actual results. Said report shall be submitted to the city clerk for addition to the city council's next agenda.

63.

DEVINE - Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2026, **ONE THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$1,000.00)** as follows:

FROM

12101-51107 PAY-PATROL OFFICERS	\$1,000.00
	TOTAL \$1,000.00

TO:

12101-51910 PAY-STIPENDS	\$1,000.00
	TOTAL \$1,000.00

64.

DEVINE - Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2026, **THIRTEEN MILLION FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED THIRTY NINE AND 00/100 Dollars (\$13,421,739.00)** as follows:

FROM

10002-59754 TRANS TO HEALTH INS TRUST	\$13,421,739.00
	TOTAL \$13,421,739.00

TO:

10002-59790 TRANS TO HEALTH INS TRUST	\$13,421,739.00
	TOTAL \$13,421,739.00

65.

DEVINE - Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2026, **FIFTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$50,000.00)** as follows:

FROM

60402-53012 MANAGEMENT SERVICE CONTRACT	\$50,000.00
	TOTAL \$50,000.00

TO:

60402-53011 PROF SERVICES-OTHER	\$50,000.00
	TOTAL \$50,000.00

LATE FILED ORDERS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Addendum:

Per City Council rule 2B, meeting shall end by 10 PM unless an extension is approved by a two-thirds majority of those present. If any items remain, those items will be added to the beginning of the next regular meeting.

The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the chair which may be discussed at the meeting.

Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law

City Clerk

[IGNORE_INDENT]