

AGENDA FOR THE CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 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 February 17, 2026

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4. From City Clerk Brenna Murphy Leary and Admin. Assistant Jeffery Anderson-Burgos - October 7, 2025 meeting minutes
5. 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.

COMMUNICATIONS

6. From Mayor Joshua A. Garcia, Letter of appointment for Mr. Kevin A. Rice of 52 Fairfield Avenue to serve on the Local Historic District Commission. Mr. Rice will replace Mr. Stephen Fay and will finish the remainder of Mr. Fay's term expiring July 1, 2028.
7. From Mayor Joshua A. Garcia, Letter of appointment for Mr. Kevin A. Rice of 52 Fairfield Avenue to serve on the Historical Commission. Mr. Rice will replace Ms. Lizabath Rodriguez and will finish the remainder of Ms. Rodriguez's term expiring April 16, 2027.
8. From Massachusetts Attorney General - Response to Open Meeting Law complaint , Councilor Linda Vacon 2026-21
9. From the Board of Fire Commission, minutes of the January 21, 2026 meeting.
10. From Alicia Zoeller, Office of Community Development, request for reprogramming of 2025 CDBG funding, updated DGR recommendations for 2026 CDBG funding.
11. From Alicia Zoeller, Office of Community Development, clarification of opioid settlement fund administrative costs.

12. From Holyoke Economic Development and Industrial Corporation, minutes of November 20, 2025 and January 22, 2026 meetings.
13. From Holyoke Redevelopment Authority, minutes of January 21, 2026 meeting.

PETITIONS

14. Petition of Riverside Cannabis LLC for marijuana establishment at 1 Cabot Street
15. Petition of Jonathan Nieves-Vidot for Livery Service at 131 Waldo Street
16. Petition of Wright Block LLC at 106-120 High Street for reconstruction of non-conforming structure to reconstruct two egress staircases at the rear of 106 and 120 High Street.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

17. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order The city's engineer and its law department review the definition of "motorized scooter" in Chapter 86-1 of city ordinances and advise the City council on whether the definition should be amended. Recommended that the order be adopted.
18. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order that the ordinance committee review the ordinance for repairing cars on city streets or in driveways, particularly the changes that were made a few years ago that allowed certain repairs to be made on the street or in driveways. Recommended that the order has been complied with.
19. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order By request of several business owners, update Graffiti ordinances 74-100 & 74-101 to transfer law enforcement responsibilities onto HPD instead of property owners. OR, give building owners warnings with a grace period of a specified number of days to clean up the graffiti BEFORE being fined. Building owners are currently fined for Graffiti creation on their property. This seems unfair as building owners are not tagging their own property and cannot control unlawful acts happening to their property. Recommended that the order has been complied with, and a communication be sent to the Board of Health Director that the BOG make an informal policy change to allow property owners 14 days instead of 7 days to address graffiti on their property.
20. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order That this be added to the Zoning Ordinance that addresses NOISE VIOLATIONS: after the words: "At the point or points where such elements shall be most apparent" Noise, Vibration, Glare, Odors Recommended that the order be given a leave to withdraw.
21. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order That the ordinance for battery storage be reviewed, and revised language be considered for small & large scale battery storage projects, due to new information documenting safety concerns. Recommended that the order be given a leave to withdraw.

22. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order The crosswalk and pedestrian signal on Homestead Ave at HCC's main gate remains in limbo. It's now going on 8 years since original orders were filed. Some progress was made under the tenure of Mike McManus but very little since. Order the City Engineer, HFD Alarm Division and DPW provide an update to City Council on when this dangerous situation will be corrected. Please respond with a communication in 30 days.
Recommended that the order be given a leave to withdraw.
23. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order The City Engineer review the feasibility of a mid-block crosswalk on Homestead Ave. proximate to the secondary entrance to HCC. (This entrance is N of the main gate). If it is feasible and if there is financing to install (you would need to make it ADA compliant) then please send a report to Ordinance. If not feasible, please send a communication to City Council by its first meeting in May 2025.
Recommended that the order be given a leave to withdraw.
24. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order The city council ordain a new crosswalk near the main gate to Holyoke Community College.
Recommended that the order be given a leave to withdraw.
25. The Committee on Ordinance to whom was referred an order The City Engineer review the parking situation on West Glen St. where is meets Northampton St. Residents feel with cars on both sides of the street it's too narrow a gap for more than one car to pass and is dangerous for first responders to navigate. Please determine whether the 20' limit enough. If not, please recommend any amendments.
Recommended that the order be given a leave to withdraw.
26. 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 **"MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL-CULTURAL DISTRICT INVESTMENT, \$15,000.00, 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.
Recommended that the order be adopted.
27. The Committee on Finance to whom was referred an order 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	
8815-10400 CANNABIS STABILIZATION	\$50,000.00
	TOTAL \$50,000.00

TO:

19442-53003 SOLICITOR LEGAL SERVICES	\$50,000.00
	TOTAL \$50,000.00

Recommended that the order be adopted.

28. The Committee on Finance to whom was referred an order that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2026, **EIGHTEEN THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED FIFTY AND 00/100 Dollars (\$18,250.00)** as follows:

FROM

12101-51107 PAY-PATROL OFFICERS	\$18,250.00
	TOTAL \$18,250.00

TO:

19131-51999 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION	\$18,250.00
	TOTAL \$18,250.00

Recommended that the order be adopted.

29. The Committee on Finance to whom was referred an order 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

19161-51999 F.I.C.A.-MEDICARE	\$50,000.00
	TOTAL \$50,000.00

TO:

19131-51999 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION	\$50,000.00
	TOTAL \$50,000.00

Recommended that the order be adopted.

30. The Committee on Finance to whom was referred an order that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2026, **FIFTY FIVE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND 00/100 Dollars (\$55,800.00)** as follows:

FROM

11381-51102 PAY-ASSISTANT C.P.O.	\$55,800.00
	TOTAL \$55,800.00

TO:

11461-51107 PAY-REVENUE COLLECTION SPCLST	\$17,100.00
11451-51132 PAY-PAYROLL SPECIALIST	4,100.00
11451-51101 PAY-TREASURER	7,200.00
11351-51101 PAY-AUDITOR	6,400.00
19202-57200 OUT OF STATE TRAVEL	21,000.00
	TOTAL \$55,800.00

Recommended that the order be adopted.

31. The Committee on Finance to whom was referred an order request our outside auditor provide an update on the status of the 2023 & 2024 audits, in person or by written update as soon as possible.

Recommended that the order has been complied with.

32. The Committee on Finance to whom was referred an order Treasurer please appear before the finance committee to explain how he is paying the city bills with no payments from the state & no cash transfer requests submitted to the city council. That our Auditor share any information provided to her office re: any cash transfers to pay city payroll & bills.
Recommended that the order has been complied with.
33. The Committee on Finance to whom was referred an order Mayor, Treasurer and other officials named in the DLS letters of 9/22/25 and 10/1/25 provide a status report to the City Council as to the commands imposed by the State relative to unreconciled accounts for Fiscal Years 2023, 2024 and 2025. The letter orders the City to comply no later than 12/1/2025. Here's a direct quote from the 10/1/25 letter (emphasis in the original): PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT you MUST complete all outstanding reconciliations within 60 days of the date of this letter.
Recommended that the order has been complied with.
34. The Committee on Development and Governmental Relations to whom was referred a Special permit for a driveway in a front yard application of Cindy Ely to add a driveway/parking pad at 17 Myrtle Ave (112-00-100) per sec 6.1.8.1
Recommended that the special permit be granted.
35. The Committee on Development and Governmental Relations to whom was referred an order that the City Council invite the Board of Health to a DGR meeting to discuss the vacant building fees and get an update.
Recommended that the order has been complied with.
36. The Committee on Development and Governmental Relations to whom was referred an order FFY2026 Community Development Block Grant Applications (Proposal Book), FFY2026 Spreadsheet and Annual Plan Calendar.
Recommended that the CDBG allocation recommendations and HOME funds resolution be adopted.
37. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order that the Law Dept review the Charter and previously adopted Special Act to identify any additional changes in order to reflect the recent adoption of the Municipal Modernization Act.
Awaiting disposition
38. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order that the Honorable Holyoke City Council petition the Great and General Court of Massachusetts to amend Section 46 of the Holyoke Charter to reflect the residency clause set by ordinance.
Awaiting disposition
39. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order that the Honorable Holyoke City Council petition the Great and General Court of Massachusetts to amend Section 45 of the Holyoke Charter to reflect the residency clause set by ordinance.
Awaiting disposition

40. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order that the Honorable Holyoke City Council petition the Great and General Court of Massachusetts to amend Section 15 of the Holyoke Charter to reflect the new appointing authorities to financial departments be set by ordinance.
Awaiting disposition
41. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order that the Honorable Holyoke City Council petition the Great and General Court of Massachusetts to amend Section 6 of the Holyoke Charter to remove all references to the city treasurer.
Awaiting disposition
42. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order that the Law Department and City Council review Section 22 of the Holyoke Charter to consider amendments to clarify its language, and to examine whether provisions therein related to the \$200 threshold for applicability, and for voting procedure and thresholds, should be revised or eliminated.
Awaiting disposition
43. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order 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.
Awaiting disposition
44. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order that the Council Rules be examined and revised as necessary to clarify the Rule 9 provisions relating to legal form and committee procedure.
Awaiting disposition
45. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order 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.
Awaiting disposition
46. The Committee on Charter and Rules to whom was referred an order add a rule that any city councilor named by a speaker during public speak has 2 minutes to respond at the end of public speak
Awaiting disposition

MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS

47. Panitch, Thalheimer: Ordered that representatives of the DPW and Holyoke's Emergency Response team join the Public Safety Committee for an in-depth presentation on the city's snow response protocols, and a lessons-learned analysis based on Holyoke's response to the past two major snow events. This analysis is

intended to (1) better inform the public and the Council about the details of how snow removal is managed in the city; (2) correct misunderstandings, if any; (3) provide an opportunity for a public exchange of information among the relevant city departments, the public, and councilors; and (4) provide the Council and the public the information and tools we need to be better partners for our emergency responders and DPW professionals.

48. Panitch: Ordered that Council Rule 8(L) be amended to conform to the Council's practice with respect to approval of amendments to said Rules; and further ordered that the Council take such measures as are necessary to affirm that Rules amendments adopted in the past without strict compliance with Rule 8(L) as currently worded shall be deemed to have been validly adopted.
49. Panitch: ordered that sections 13 and 24 of the Holyoke Charter be amended as necessary to conform to any changes to Section 22, and to provide that except where otherwise specified by the Charter or by state law, every ordinance shall be considered as adopted by final action by vote of a simple majority of all members of the city council, voting in a recorded roll-call vote.
50. Rivera, I. - Order that the honorable city council provide a proclamation to the Holyoke High Wrestling team for their win of the MIAA division III West Wrestling Championship, and in additions that the honorable city council provide Jose Santiago (120 lbs.), Jesus Morales (215 lbs.), and Parker Brunelle (285 lbs) with individual proclamations recognizing their individual championship wins within their divisions.
51. Rivera, I. - Order that the honorable city council in collaboration with the Mayor create a Lived Experience Committee (LEC) that would assist in advising the city regarding community efforts around topics of Homelessness, Substance Use Disorder, Education and Quality of Life issues.
This committee is to be comprised of Holyoke residents hailing from all 7 wards capturing representation from all over the city.
52. Rivera, J. - ORDERED: That the Holyoke City Council authorize and approve a six-month pilot program allowing the temporary use of two on-street parking spaces directly in front of 267 High Street to operate as valet parking spaces during business hours.
FURTHER ORDERED: That this pilot program is intended to support accessibility for a senior wellness center providing direct primary care services to individuals aged 55 and older, many of whom experience mobility limitations or other health-related accessibility challenges.
FURTHER ORDERED: That the operation of said valet parking spaces be subject to review and oversight by the appropriate City department(s), including but not limited to the Parking Committee, and comply with any required signage, meter coverage, traffic management, insurance, permitting, or operational conditions deemed necessary by the City.
FURTHER ORDERED: That vehicles utilizing the valet service be parked in the municipal parking lot on Suffolk Street, with applicable parking fees paid, and that the pilot program be evaluated at the conclusion of the six-month period to determine its effectiveness and any impact on surrounding parking availability, traffic flow, and downtown activity.

FURTHER ORDERED: That this matter be referred to the appropriate committee for review and recommendation.

53. Rivera, J. - ORDERED: That the Holyoke City Council request the Holyoke Police Department to appear before the appropriate committee to explain the policies, procedures, and enforcement practices related to complaints against property owners who fail to clear snow and ice from sidewalks in accordance with City ordinance.
FURTHER ORDERED: That this matter be referred to the Public Safety Committee for review and discussion, including how repeated complaints are handled when properties have been reported multiple times without compliance.
FURTHER ORDERED: That this information be provided to increase transparency, inform residents, and better prepare the City Council, the City, and the public for future snow events.
54. Thalheimer -- Invite Tapestry Health to an upcoming Public Safety meeting for a conversation highlighting the work that they are doing in Holyoke, specifically around harm reduction.
55. Devine - Ordered that the Charter and Rules committee, Law Department and Parks and Recreation department check if wording in the appropriate Charter section can be changed so that city lifeguards can be given raises.
56. Devine, Sullivan, Anderson-Burgos, Magrath-Smith, Maisonet - Ordered that the city staff attending the Tyler Tech conference in April be requested to come to a Finance Committee meeting to report on what they learned at the conference.
57. Devine- ORDERED: That the Retirement Board conduct a feasibility study to fund Chapter 32 S90, a, c, d for half pay for retirees.
58. Devine-Ordered, that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44 Sec. 53A, the City Council hereby accepts the provisions of the **"FY26 RECYCLING DIVIDENDS PROGRAM \$7,800.00, 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.
59. Devine-Ordered, that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44 Sec. 53A, the City Council hereby accepts the provisions of the **"FY26 EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY EARMARK \$50,000.00"** 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.

60. DEVINE - Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2026, **TWENTY ONE THOUSAND AND 00/100 Dollars (\$21,000.00)** as follows:
FROM

11381-51102 PAY-ASSISTANT C.P.O.	\$21,000.00
	TOTAL \$21,000.00

TO:

19202-57200 OUT OF STATE TRAVEL	\$21,000.00
	TOTAL \$21,000.00

61. DEVINE - Ordered, that there be and is hereby appropriated by transfer in the fiscal year 2026, **THIRTY FOUR THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND 00/100 Dollars (\$34,800.00)** as follows:
FROM

11381-51102 PAY-ASSISTANT C.P.O.	\$34,800.00
	TOTAL \$34,800.00

TO:

11461-51107 PAY-REVENUE COLLECTION SPCLST	\$17,100.00
11451-51132 PAY-PAYROLL SPECIALIST	4,100.00
11451-51101 PAY-TREASURER	7,200.00
11351-51101 PAY-AUDITOR	6,400.00
	TOTAL \$34,800.00

62. Magrath-Smith - Ordered, that Sec. 54-18. on removal of shopping carts be revised to add that establishments who employ shopping carts must ensure that a locking wheel system is used and that businesses have a responsibility to maintain them/handle removal of carts. Review and revise the existing enforcement structure for carts found off property.
63. Magrath-Smith, Ordered - that our winter parking ordinance be revised as necessary for clarity, functionality, and flexibility based on constituent and DPW needs.
64. Murphy-Romboletti - Ordered that the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee and the Ancient Order of Hibernians be invited to the March 17, 2026 meeting to continue the annual tradition of kicking off "green season" and presenting proclamations to the Parade Committee President, their award winners, and to award winners of the AOH.
Parade Committee President - James Wildman
Citizenship Award Winner - Miracle League of Western Massachusetts
Thomas Rohan Award Winner - Tessa Murphy-Romboletti
Gallivan Award Winner - James Menard
George E. O'connell Award Wlnner - D.J. O'Connor
Ladies AOH Lady of the Year Award Winner - Catherone "Kit" Collamore
AOH Man Man of the Year Award Wlnner - Jordan Lemieux
AOH Christian Charity Award Winner - Sister Betty Sullivan

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]