



ORDER NO. 2021-010-001  
REQUEST OF THE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

UPON THE REQUEST OF THE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE, THE CITY OF FRAMINGHAM, THROUGH THE FRAMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL, IT IS SO ORDERED:

That the City Council convene four budget forums with Administration participation consistent with Article II, Section 7(c) of the Framingham Charter:

1. March: Report of the Mayor and Administration officials, and state legislative delegation on the current actuals and next fiscal year projections for all municipal revenues, including data from the previous nine fiscal years;
2. April: Report from the Administration and city auditor on the efficacy and efficiency of appropriations for the current and nine previous fiscal years by department and by program including but not limited to staffing levels for each;
3. November: Report of the Administration on the condition, utility and need of all municipal assets, real and personal, including a five-year plan for each; and,
4. August: Report from the Administration on monthly Allotments for the previous and current fiscal year, comparing the benchmarks set at the beginning of each fiscal year with actual performance by department and by program for each month.

YEAS: Bryant, Cannon, Case, King, Leombruno, Long, Ottaviani, Shepard, Stefanini, Steiner, Stewart-Morales  
NAYS: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: All members were present in person or via teleconferencing  
PASSED IN COUNCIL: MARCH 16, 2021

# City of Framingham



The City Council of Framingham



A True Record, Attest:

3/31/2021

Date Approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

*Lisa A. Ferguson*

Lisa A. Ferguson, City Clerk  
Emily Butler, Assistant City Clerk

SEE ATTACHED LETTER  
RETURNED WITH NO SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Yvonne M. Spicer, Mayor



**CITY OF FRAMINGHAM**  
CITY COUNCIL  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

2021 APR 14 AM 10:09  
Mayor

508-532-5401  
mayor@framinghamma.gov  
www.framinghamma.gov

MEMORIAL BUILDING  
150 Concord Street, Room 121  
Framingham, MA 01702

Thatcher W. Kezer III  
Chief Operating Officer

April 14, 2021

City Council *via* electronic transmission; hand delivered to City Council Office

Re: Signing Statement for City Council Order #2021-010-001

Dear Chairman King and Members of the City Council,

I recently received and reviewed the Council's order regarding the creation of a budget forum process for the City Council. I welcome any sincere collaborative effort by the City Council to work with the City administration regarding Framingham's fiscal planning. The forum concept relayed in the process proposed by the Council in the attached order, however, falls disappointingly short of that goal. Instead, it continues cumbersome reporting requirements harkening back to those that existed under the Town Meeting form of government. Like those arcane requirements, which, along with other inefficiencies helped lead to the passage of the Framingham Home Rule Charter and our transition to a city, the reporting directives in this ordinance from the Council similarly place a heavy and repetitive workload on City division heads, and the CFO and her staff, in particular, taking them away from their day-to-day duties, with little to no improvement in the overall budget process in exchange. For example:

- Creating additional reporting on revenue forecasts in the March forum is duplicative when the Council will receive the revenue forecast as part of the budget at the end of April/beginning of May as part of the budget process.
- The ordinance seeks to require a significant and extraordinary new report in April which uses vague and undefined terms of "efficacy" and "efficiency" as they relate to nine years of budget appropriations at a time when the Finance staff is at its most demanding period developing the next fiscal year budget.
- The November report is part of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which lays out a five-year plan for the City's real estate and other fixed assets in a manner which is a best practice among municipalities.
- The August report requirement misstates the Allotment process defined in the charter. The allotment requirement is applied only to personnel costs, not operating costs. The allotments are quarterly, not monthly, and are not by program. The reporting requirement would redefine the process in the Charter which is under the authority and discretion of the CFO.

One of the central purposes of both the general law and the Charter provisions regarding the annual budget process is to provide adequate time for the Mayor, along with City division heads and the CFO, to develop a comprehensive budget submission in the fiscal cycle that addresses the priorities that I believe to be in the best interest of the City and its residents, who placed their trust in me by electing me as your Mayor. The City Council's role is to review and act upon that proposed budget in line with the priorities that the Council collectively decides it believes to be in the best interest of the City and its constituents who have similarly placed their trust in you. There are times when we do not agree on what those priorities are and should be, that is the nature of our democratic form of government, but we all have to follow the process.



## CITY OF FRAMINGHAM

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I believe the Council's intentions here are in the right place. For that reason, I have decided not to veto the order, and my administration will work in good faith with the Council on the forum concept set forth in this ordinance and will comply with it to the extent feasible and permissible under the Charter. However, I do have misgivings about the concept as currently developed by the Council, so I cannot in keeping with my duties as Mayor to enforce the Charter approve it either. Please note that I specifically object to this ordinance to the extent the Council intends to use it to attempt to obtain production of the Mayor's annual budget or supporting materials before the May 1st date set forth in Article VI, Section 3 of the Charter, or attempts to modify the process for allotments set forth in Article VI, Section 7 of the Charter. Any changes to the budget submission deadline must be made by amending the Charter pursuant to the periodic review required to be undertaken in 2023 pursuant to Article, IX, Section 5. I also disagree with the ordinance to the extent it purports to require information from the executive branch in a manner inconsistent with the process the Council is required to follow under Article II, Section 7 of the Charter when it wants to request information from myself or other City officials.

The budget process set forth in the Charter, as we've all experienced over the past several years, is not perfect. While I look forward to discussions during the periodic review of the Charter coming up in 2023 on ways to improve the process for future fiscal years, these improvements should be developed by the administration and the Council working together, not by unilateral action like this from the Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Yvonne M. Spicer".

Dr. Yvonne M. Spicer, Mayor

CC: Thatcher W. Kezer; Mary Ellen Kelley; Chris Petrini