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PUBLIC HEARING OF NOVEMBER 18, 2019

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ATTENDANCE

Ten (10) Councillors were present including President Scott Joseph Graves and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Ronald Cormier, Karen Hardern, Christine Johnson, James Johnson, Elizabeth Kazinskas, and James Walsh.

PUBLIC HEARING

President Scott Joseph Graves opened the Public Hearing at 7:15 p.m. in the City Council Chamber concerning the percentages of the local tax levy to be borne by each class of Real Estate and Personal Property within the City for the Fiscal Year 2020, reading aloud the Hearing Notice, as follows:

Pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. c.40, §56, the Gardner City Council will conduct a Public Hearing on **Monday, November 18, 2019 at 7:15 p.m.** in the Council Chamber, City Hall concerning the percentages of the local tax levy to be borne by each class of Real Estate and Personal Property within the City for the Fiscal Year 2020. Persons interested in this matter who desire to offer testimony are invited to attend or may submit their testimony in writing.

Addressing the Council on behalf of the Board of Assessors, City Assessor Susan Byrne stated that the Board of Assessors voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council adopt Factor 1 for each class of Real Estate and Personal Property Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2020.

Continuing, Ms. Byrne said that there is insufficient commercial, industrial, and personal property to assume a greater share, since residential properties account for 92.43% of all parcels. She stated that the overall valuation increased by \$75,176,051 and values increased by classifications, as follows:

Residential = 6.35%  
Commercial = 1.70%  
Industrial = 5.35%  
Personal Property = 2.15%

Continuing, Ms. Byrne informed the Council that some smaller communities have contemplated lowering their rates for commercial and industrial properties in order to spur business growth. Based on the Recapitulation Sheet, she said, the City's FY2020 Tax Rate would equal \$19.70 per thousand. However, if the Factor was shifted to a ratio of 1.1% for Commercial, Industrial, and Personal Property, the tax rate would equal \$21.67 for these property classifications and the Residential rate would be reduced to \$19.22 per thousand valuation, amounting to about \$98.00 per year on a single family home valued at \$205,900.



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Councillor James Boone questioned whether any cities and towns with split tax rates are switching to a single tax rate.

Ms. Byrne stated that Fitchburg is attempting to close the gap and to seek a single rate for Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Personal Property, while Templeton is discussing “going the other way” as a result of the new elementary school and the [new] Police Station, thus seeking to shift the tax burden to business. She noted that the Cities of Worcester and Lowell continue to maintain a split tax rate while some smaller towns may seek a split rate to prevent business from locating in their communities.

President Graves again called for persons wishing to testify.

There being no other persons presenting themselves, the President declared the Hearing closed at 7:22 p.m.

Accepted by the City Council: *December 2, 2019*