



CITY COUNCIL  
**CITY OF NORTHAMPTON**  
MASSACHUSETTS

City Councilors:

Meg Robbins, At-Large  
Garrick Perry, At-Large  
Gwen Nabad, Ward 1  
Deborah L. Klemer, Ward 2 - Vice President  
Laurie Loisel, Ward 3  
Jeremy Dubs, Ward 4  
Aline Davis, Ward 5  
Christopher C. Stratton, Ward 6  
Rachel Maiore, Ward 7 - Council President

**Meeting Agenda**  
**City Council Chambers**  
**212 Main Street, Northampton**  
**Thursday, January 15, 2026, 6:30 p.m.**

The City of Northampton does not discriminate based on disability and is committed to hosting accessible meetings. To request a reasonable accommodation to attend any City meeting, please contact the ADA Coordinator at: [adacoordinator@northamptonma.gov](mailto:adacoordinator@northamptonma.gov) or call 413-587-1288..

Speakers needing time accommodations should notify the chair prior to the meeting at [rmaiore@northamptonma.gov](mailto:rmaiore@northamptonma.gov).

**The January 15, 2026 City Council meeting will be conducted in hybrid format with the option for both councilors and the public to attend in person or participate remotely. The public may follow the council's deliberations by attending in person, watching the meeting live on Comcast channel 15, live-streaming it on YouTube [here](#) or joining the virtual meeting by phone or computer. Live public comment begins at 6:30 p.m.**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR CALLING IN OR JOINING THE MEETING**

Join the meeting: [PUBLIC MEETING LINK](#)

For telephone call-in, call:

+929 436-2866 US

MEETING ID: 846 4414 6122

PARTICIPANT#: #

PASSCODE: 783792

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Announcement that meeting is being Audio/Video Recorded**  
This meeting is being audio/video recorded.
- 3. Public Hearings**

**A. Announcement of Public Hearing on 25.355 National Grid Petition for Park Hill Road (Petition#: 31193070)**

Per M.G.L. Ch. 166, Section 22, the Northampton City Council will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.** in Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA on National Grid's petition to relocate one SO pole and install new midspan pole on Park Hill Road to accommodate a service upgrade request. (Petition #31193070).

Instructions for accessing the hearing may be found on the February 5, 2026 City Council agenda to be posted on [www.northamptonma.gov](http://www.northamptonma.gov) no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. The City Council will hear all persons who wish to be heard thereon.

Documents:

[25.355 DPW Recommendation.pdf](#)

[25.355 National Grid Pole Petition for Park Hill Road, Petition No. 31193070.pdf](#)

**B. Announcement of Public Hearing on 25.357 National Grid/Verizon Petition to install JO and Midspan Poles and Relocate Existing Pole #15 on Hawley Street (Petition# 31165186)**

Per M.G.L. Ch. 166, Section 22, the Northampton City Council will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 6:35 p.m.** in Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA on National Grid/Verizon Petition to install JO and Midspan Poles and Relocate Existing Pole #15 on Hawley Street (Petition# 31165186). Instructions for accessing the hearing may be found on the February 5, 2026 City Council agenda to be posted on [www.northamptonma.gov](http://www.northamptonma.gov) no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. The City Council will hear all persons who wish to be heard thereon.

Documents:

[25.357 DPW Recommendation.pdf](#)

[25.357 National Grid-Verizon Petition to install JO and Midspan Poles and Relocate Existing Pole on Hawley Street, Petition No. 31165186.pdf](#)

**4. Public Comment**

**5. Announcements from Councilors and the Mayor**

**6. Presentations**

**7. Consent Agenda**

Rule 4.4.4 There shall be no debate or discussion by any City Council member regarding any item on the Consent Agenda, beyond asking questions for simple clarification.

Rule 4.4.5 Any item may be removed from the Consent Agenda upon the request of any City Council member prior to the taking of a vote on the motion to approve it. All such items will be considered individually, in the order in which they were removed, immediately following consideration of the Consent Agenda.

**A. Minutes of Special City Council Meeting December 9, 2025 and Regular Meeting December 18, 2025**

Documents:

[12-09-2025\\_City Council Meeting.pdf](#)

[12-18-2025\\_City Council Meeting.pdf](#)

**B. 26.008 Appointment of Attorney Alan Seewald as City Solicitor, for referral to City Services**

Documents:

[26.008 Appointment of Attorney Alan Seewald as City Solicitor.pdf](#)

**8. Financial Orders (on 1st reading)**

Rule 2.6.1.1.1 Process. Financial orders will be introduced and discussed at a full City Council meeting and referred to either the consent agenda of a future meeting or the Finance Committee for more public input, discussion and recommendation.

**A. 26.003 An Order to Appropriate \$2.1 Million Free Cash to Various Reserve Accounts - 1st reading**

Documents:

[26.003 An Order to Appropriate 2.1 Million Free Cash to Various Reserve Accounts.pdf](#)

**B. 26.004 An Order to Appropriate Enterprise Retained Earnings to Various Project - 1st reading**

Documents:

[26.004 An Order to Appropriate Enterprise Retained Earnings to Various Projects.pdf](#)

**C. 26.005 An Order to Appropriate \$251,025 Free Cash to NPS Special Education Stabilization Fund - 1st reading**

Documents:

[26.005 An Order to Appropriate 251,025 Free Cash to NPS Special Education Stabilization Fund.pdf](#)

**D. 26.006 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for McKinney Vento Transportation Reimbursement - 1st reading**

Documents:

[26.006 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for McKinney Vento Transportation Reimbursement.pdf](#)

**E. 26.007 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for Foster Care Transportation Reimbursement - 1st reading**

Documents:

[26.007 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for Foster Care Transportation Reimbursement.pdf](#)

**9. Financial Orders (on 2nd reading)**

## 10. Orders

### A. 26.009 An Order to Amend the 2026-2027 City Council Meeting Schedule - single reading only

Documents:

[26.009 An Order to Amend the 2026-2027 City Council Meeting Schedule.pdf](#)

## 11. Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)

Rule 5.2.3 provides that no ordinance shall be voted on by the City Council until it has been considered by the Committee on Legislative Matters.

## 12. Zoning Ordinances (Not yet Referred)

**Process note:** Per M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 5, the city council shall submit proposed zoning ordinances to the planning board for review within fourteen days of receipt. No zoning ordinance or amendment thereto shall be adopted until after the planning board in a city or town, and the city council or a committee designated or appointed for the purpose by said council has each held a public hearing thereon, together or separately.

Rule 5.2.3 provides that no ordinance shall be voted on by the City Council until it has been considered by the Committee on Legislative Matters.

## 13. Ordinances

## 14. Zoning Ordinances

## 15. Resolutions

## 16. Information Requests (Charter Provision 2-7) and Committee Study Requests

## 17. New Business

Rule 4.9 NEW BUSINESS. Any Councilor may introduce any written proposed order, ordinance, or resolution to be considered by the Council at the next meeting, but not to be debated during new business.

## 18. Adjourn

Contact: Council President Rachel Maiore

Email: [rmaiore@northamptonma.gov](mailto:rmaiore@northamptonma.gov)

Phone: (413) 923-4318



**CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
125 Locust Street  
Northampton, MA 01060**

**413-587-1570  
Fax 413-587-1576**

**Donna LaScaleia  
Director**

## Memorandum

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To: Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director *Approved 12-22-25*  
From: Kris Baker, P.E.  
Date: December 18, 2025  
Re: National Grid Pole Petition #31193070 – Park Hill Road – Pole #46-50

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National Grid is proposing to install 1 SO Pole on Park Hill Road beginning at a point approximately 190 feet east of the centerline of the intersection of Oliver Street. The installation is for a new midspan pole #46-50 approximately 60 feet east of Pole #47 and 120 feet west of Pole #46.

A review of City records indicates the following:

1. **SEWER, WATER, & DRAIN:** There are no City utilities located in the vicinity of the proposed pole on Park Hill Road.
2. **PUBLIC SHADE TREES:** Public shade trees are not located within the work area.

***A Northampton DPW Trench Permit is required prior to any construction.***



November 13, 2025

City of Northampton

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed please find a petition of NATIONAL GRID, covering NATIONAL GRID pole location(s)

If you have any questions regarding this permit please contact:

Please notify National Grid's Vincent LoGuidice of the hearing date / time at **978-255-5558**  
or [Vincent.LoGuidice@NationalGrid.com](mailto:Vincent.LoGuidice@NationalGrid.com)

If this petition meets with your approval, please return an executed copy to:

National Grid Contact: Vincent LoGuidice; 1101 Turnpike Street; North Andover, MA 01845

Very truly yours,

Jim Kehrer  
Name: Distribution Design Supervisor  
Supervisor, Distribution Design

Enclosures

Questions contact – Ken Creigle 413-207-5733

**PETITION FOR POLE AND WIRE LOCATIONS**

North Andover, Massachusetts

To the City Council  
Of Northampton, Massachusetts

Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid requests permission to locate poles, wires, and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures, along and across the following public way:

Park Hill Rd - Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid to Relocate 1 SO Pole on Park Hill Rd beginning at a point approximately 190ft east of the centerline of the intersection of Oliver St. Installing new Midspan Pole # 46-50 approximately 60' east of Pole # 47 and 120' west of Pole # 46 to support customer service upgrade request.

Location approximately as shown on plan attached

Wherefore it prays that after due notice and hearing as provided by law, it be granted a location for and permission to erect and maintain poles and wires, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as it may find necessary, said poles to be erected substantially in accordance with the plan filed herewith marked – Park Hill Rd - Northampton - Massachusetts.

Plan # 31193070 November 13, 2025

Also for permission to lay and maintain underground laterals, cables, and wires in the above or intersecting public ways for the purpose of making connections with such poles and buildings as each of said petitioners may desire for distributing purposes.

Your petitioner agrees to reserve space for one cross-arm at a suitable point on each of said poles for the fire, police, telephone, and telegraph signal wires belonging to the municipality and used by it exclusively for municipal purposes.

Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a

NATIONAL GRID *Jim Kehrer*

BY \_\_\_\_\_

Engineering Department

**ORDER FOR POLE AND WIRE LOCATIONS**

In the City of Northampton, Massachusetts

Notice having been given and public hearing held, as provided by law,  
IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

that Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid and be and it is hereby granted a location for and permission to erect and maintain poles and wires to be placed thereon, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as said Company may deem necessary, in the public way or ways hereinafter referred to, as requested in petition of said Company dated the 13th day of November, 2025.

All construction under this order shall be in accordance with the following conditions:

Poles shall be of sound timber, and reasonable straight, and shall be set substantially at the points indicated upon the plan marked – Park Hill Rd - Northampton - Massachusetts.

No. 31193070 Dated: November 13, 2025. Filed with this order

There may be attached to said poles such wires, cables, and fixtures as needed in their business and all of said wires and cables shall be placed at a height of not less than twenty (20) feet from the ground.

The following are the public ways or part of ways along which the poles above referred to may be erected, and the number of poles which may be erected thereon under this order:

Park Hill Rd - Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid to Relocate 1 SO Pole on Park Hill Rd beginning at a point approximately 190ft east of the centerline of the intersection of Oliver St. Installing new Midspan Pole # 46-50 approximately 60’ east of Pole # 47 and 120’ west of Pole # 46 to support customer service upgrade request.

I hereby certify that the foregoing order was adopted at a meeting of the City Council of the City/Town of \_\_\_\_\_, Massachusetts held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Massachusetts City/Town Clerk.  
20\_\_.

Received and entered in the records of location orders of the City/Town of \_\_\_\_\_  
Book \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Attest:  
City/Town Clerk

I hereby certify that on  
at

20 , at o'clock, M  
a public hearing was held on the petition of

Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid

for permission to erect the poles, wires, and fixtures described in the order herewith recorded, and that we mailed at least seven days before said hearing a written notice of the time and place of said hearing to each of the owners of real estate (as determined by the last preceding assessment for taxation) along the ways or parts of ways upon which the Company is permitted to erect poles, wires, and fixtures under said order. And that thereupon said order was duly adopted.

City/Town Clerk.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Board or Council of Town or City, Massachusetts

CERTIFICATE

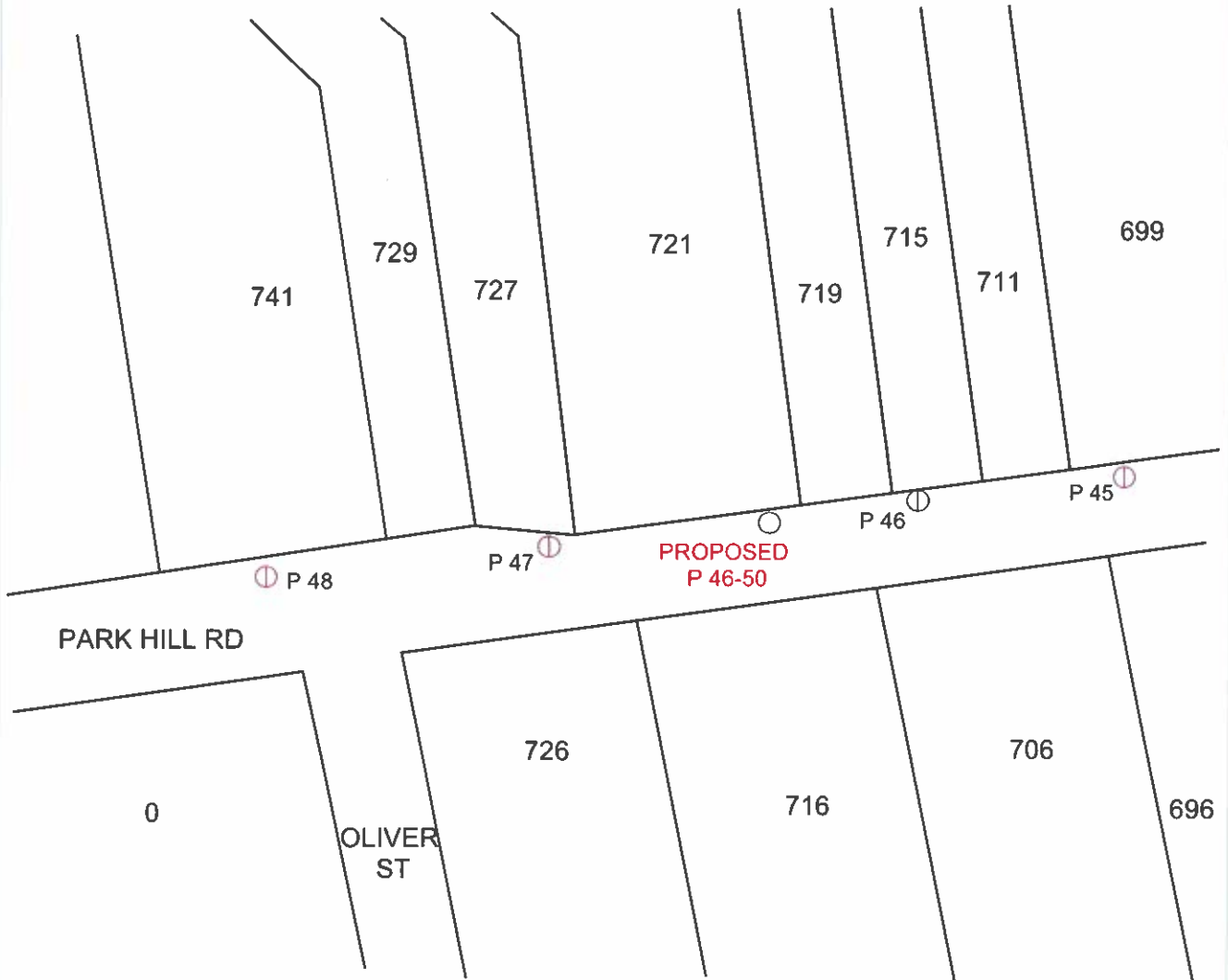
I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the location order and certificate of hearing with notice adopted by the of the City of Massachusetts, on the day of 20 , and recorded with the records of location orders of the said City, Book , Page . This certified copy is made under the provisions of Chapter 166 of General Laws and any additions thereto or amendments thereof.

Attest:

City/Town Clerk

**Exhibit A – Not to Scale**

The exact location of said Facilities to be established by and upon the installation and erection of the Facilities thereof.



**SOLEY OWNED PETITION SKETCH**



PROPOSED SO POLE



EXISTING JO POLE

Date: 11/13/2025

Plan Number: 31193070

To Accompany Petition Dated:

To The: CITY Of NORTHAMPTON

For Proposed: INSTALL Pole: 46-50 Location: PARK HILL RD

Date Of Original Grant:

NGRID CONTACT: KEN CREIGLE 413-207-5733

DISTANCES ARE APPROXIMATE



CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
125 Locust Street  
Northampton, MA 01060

413-587-1570  
Fax 413-587-1576

Donna LaScaleia  
Director

## Memorandum

To: Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director *Approved DL 12-22-25*  
From: Kris Baker, P.E.  
Date: December 18, 2025  
Re: National Grid Pole Petition #31165186 – Hawley Street Pole #15 & Pole #15-50

National Grid is proposing to install 1 JO Pole on Hawley Street and relocate 1 JO on Hawley Street beginning at a point approximately 56 feet north of the centerline of the intersection of Isabella Street and continuing approximately 25 feet in a northern direction, to relocate existing Pole #15 approximately 12 feet south and to install a new midspan pole #15-50 approximately 37 feet south of existing pole #15.

A review of City records indicates the following:

1. **WATER & SEWER:** The water and sewer mains in Hawley Street are located on the east side of the roadway. No conflicts are anticipated with the proposed pole locations. There are sewer stubs and a water service that has been disconnected in the vicinity of Pole #15 that should be avoided.
2. **DRAIN:** The drainage system is located within the paved roadway and no conflict is anticipated.
3. **PUBLIC SHADE TREES:** Public shade trees are not located within the work area.

*A Northampton DPW Trench Permit is required prior to any construction.*



November 13, 2025

City of Northampton

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed please find a petition of NATIONAL GRID, covering NATIONAL GRID pole location(s)

If you have any questions regarding this permit please contact:

Please notify National Grid's Vincent LoGuidice of the hearing date / time at **978-255-5558**  
or [Vincent.LoGuidice@NationalGrid.com](mailto:Vincent.LoGuidice@NationalGrid.com)

If this petition meets with your approval, please return an executed copy to:

National Grid Contact: Vincent LoGuidice; 1101 Turnpike Street; North Andover, MA 01845

Very truly yours,

Jim Kehrer  
Name: Distribution Design Supervisor  
Supervisor, Distribution Design

Enclosures

Questions contact – Ken Creigle 413-207-5733

**PETITION FOR JOINT OR IDENTICAL POLE LOCATIONS**

North Andover, Massachusetts

To the City Council  
Of Northampton, Massachusetts

Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid and Verizon New England, Inc requests permission to locate poles, wires, and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures, along and across the following public way:

Hawley St - National Grid to install 1 JO Pole on Hawley St and Relocate 1 JO Pole on Hawley St beginning at a point approximately 56 feet north of the centerline of the intersection of Isabella St and continuing approximately 25 feet in a northern direction. Relocating existing Pole # 15 approximately 12' feet south to allow for proper guying to be installed around new buildings at 111 Hawley St. Also Installing new midspan Pole # 15-50, approximately 37' south of existing Pole # 15. New distance between Pole # 15 and 15-50 will be 25' feet.

Location approximately as shown on plan attached

Wherefore it prays that after due notice and hearing as provided by law, it be granted a location for and permission to erect and maintain poles and wires, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as it may find necessary, said poles to be erected substantially in accordance with the plan filed herewith marked – Hawley St – Northampton – Massachusetts.

No.# 31165186 October 29, 2025

Also for permission to lay and maintain underground laterals, cables, and wires in the above or intersecting public ways for the purpose of making connections with such poles and buildings as each of said petitioners may desire for distributing purposes.

Your petitioner agrees to reserve space for one cross-arm at a suitable point on each of said poles for the fire, police, telephone, and telegraph signal wires belonging to the municipality and used by it exclusively for municipal purposes.

Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a

NATIONAL GRID *Jim Kehrer*

BY \_\_\_\_\_

Engineering Department

VERIZON NEW ENGLAND, INC.

BY *Albert E. Bessette Jr.* \_\_\_\_\_

Manager / Right of Way

## ORDER FOR JOINT OR IDENTICAL POLE LOCATIONS

To the City Council - Northampton, Massachusetts

Notice having been given and public hearing held, as provided by law,  
IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

that Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid and VERIZON NEW ENGLAND INC. (formerly known as NEW ENGLAND TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY) be and they are hereby granted joint or identical locations for and permission to erect and maintain poles and wires to be placed thereon, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as said Companies may deem necessary, in the public way or ways hereinafter referred to, as requested in petition of said Companies dated the 28th day of October, 2025.

All construction under this order shall be in accordance with the following conditions:

Poles shall be of sound timber, and reasonable straight, and shall be set substantially at the points indicated upon the plan marked – Hawley St – Northampton – Massachusetts.

October 29, 2025. Filed with this order. WR # 31165186.

There may be attached to said poles by Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid and Verizon New England Inc. such wires, cables, and fixtures as needed in their business and all of said wires and cables shall be placed at a height of not less than twenty (20) feet from the ground.

The following are the public ways or part of ways along which the poles above referred to may be erected, and the number of poles which may be erected thereon under this order:

Hawley St - National Grid to install 1 JO Pole on Hawley St and Relocate 1 JO Pole on Hawley St beginning at a point approximately 56 feet north of the centerline of the intersection of Isabella St and continuing approximately 25 feet in a northern direction. Relocating existing Pole # 15 approximately 12' feet south to allow for proper guying to be installed around new buildings at 111 Hawley St. Also Installing new midspan Pole # 15-50, approximately 37' south of existing Pole # 15. New distance between Pole # 15 and 15-50 will be 25' feet.

Also for permission to lay and maintain underground laterals, cables, and wires in the above or intersecting public ways for the purpose of making connections with such poles and buildings as each of said petitioners may desire for distributing purposes.

I hereby certify that the foregoing order was adopted at a meeting of the  
of the City/Town of \_\_\_\_\_, Massachusetts held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_.

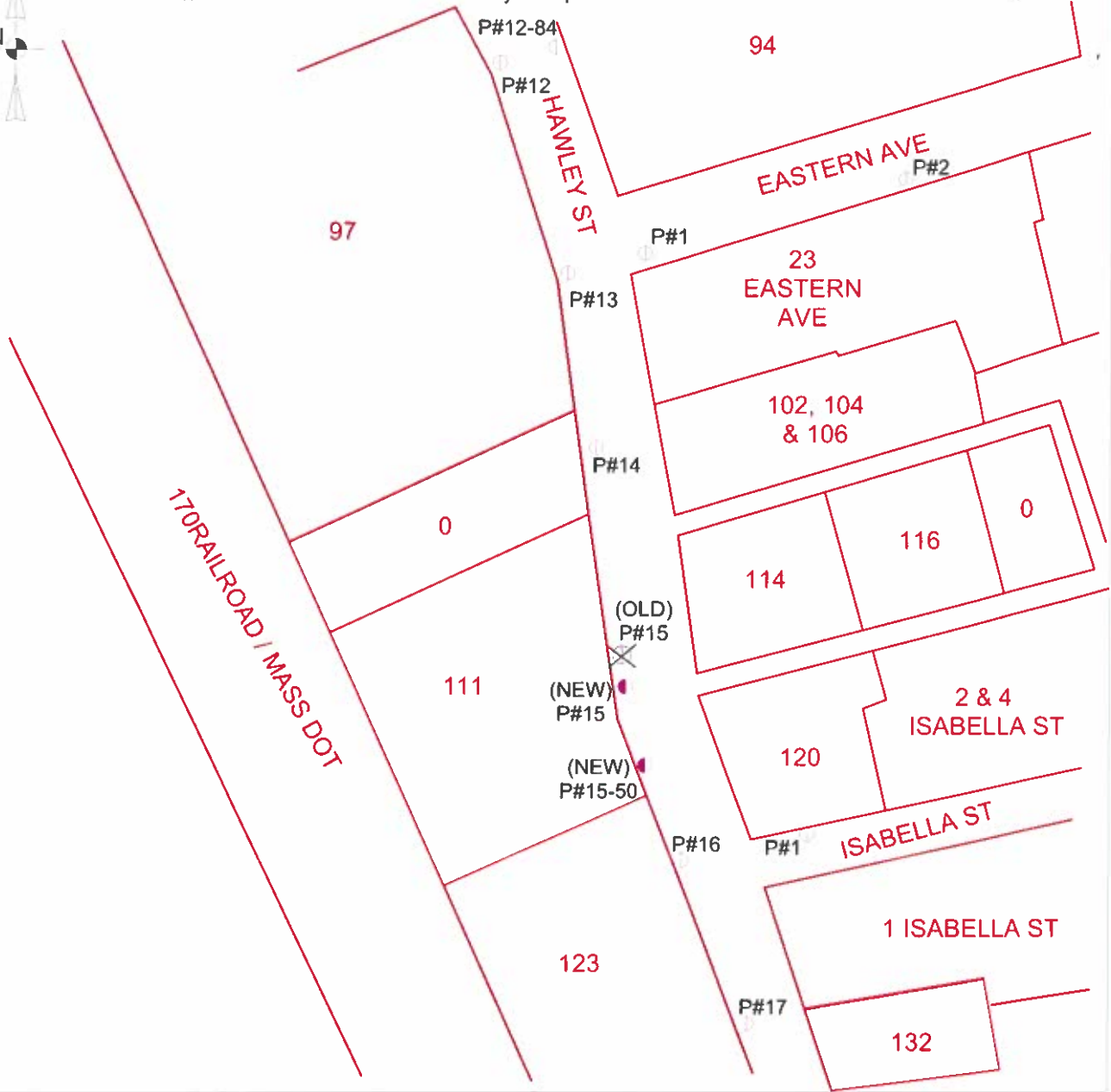
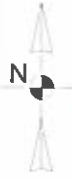
City/Town Clerk.

is made under the provisions of Chapter 166 of General Laws and any additions thereto or amendments thereof.

Attest:  
City/Town Clerk

Exhibit A – Not to Scale

The exact location of said Facilities to be established by and upon the installation and erection of the Facilities thereof.



**JOINTLY OWNED PETITION SKETCH**

-  PROPOSED JO POLE
-  EXISTING JO POLE
-  EXISTING JO POLE (TO BE REMOVED)

NGRID CONTACT: KEN CREIGLE 413-207-5733

DISTANCES ARE APPROXIMATE

**nationalgrid**  
**AND VERIZON**

Date: 10/27/2025

Plan Number: 31165186

To Accompany Petition Dated:

To The: CITY Of NORTHAMPTON

For Proposed: INSTALL Pole: 15 & 15-50 Location: HAWLEY ST

Date Of Original Grant:



**Roll Call**

*CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
212 MAIN STREET  
Northampton, Massachusetts  
December 9, 2025*

A special meeting of the City Council was called to order by Council President Alex Jarrett at 3:02 p.m. Upon a roll call, the following City Councilors were present:

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| At-Large Councilor Marissa Elkins, 6:31 pm | At-Large Councilor Garrick Perry  |
| Ward 1 Councilor Stanley Moulton, III      | Ward 2 Councilor Deborah Klemer   |
| Ward 3 Councilor Quaverly Rothenberg       | Ward 4 Councilor Jeremy Dubs      |
| Ward 5 Councilor Alexander Jarrett         | Ward 6 Councilor Marianne LaBarge |
| Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore             |                                   |

**Announcement that Meeting Audio/Video Recorded**

Councilor Alex Jarrett announced that the meeting is being audio/video recorded.

**School Energy Project Financial Orders Subject to Charter Objections December 4, 2025: 25.338 An Order to Appropriate Money from Climate Stabilization for Solar PV Array at Ryan Road School**

**School Energy Project Financial Orders Subject to Charter Objections December 4, 2025: 25.338 An Order to Appropriate Money from Climate Stabilization for Solar PV Array at Ryan Road School**

Councilors are here to discuss the school energy orders subject to charter objection at the regular meeting December 4, 2025, Councilor Jarrett reminded. Their consideration was postponed to the next special meeting today.

He asked if the Mayor or Director Weil would like to speak to the items.

Climate Action and Project Administration (CAPA) Director Ben Weil said he could reiterate his presentation and/or respond to some discussion he has heard since. The main point is that this is a transfer from an investment by the climate stabilization fund towards the operating budget of the schools in an average annual amount of \$63,000 and change. If they were to simply transfer the acquisition cost of \$319,484 after incentives, \$63,318 per year would last only five years. This will continually deposit that amount into the school's operating budget for 25 years or more, which feels like a fairly strong argument that it is helpful to the schools.

Regarding the result of delay, annual income would be reduced by up to \$26,173 because they would miss the SMART 3.0 incentive deadline. In addition, they would be required to use more expensive solar panels in order to get the investment tax credit but would still be eligible for the credit. The project would likely cost \$60,000 more. If they were to delay past July 4<sup>th</sup>, the total cost would be borne by the city because they would miss the deadline for the investment tax credit, which is about 30%.

Councilor Rothenberg expressed her understanding that the council still does not have a contract for this that they can see.

They have a contract form/template but they cannot legally enter into a contract until they have an appropriation to allow them to execute it, Director Weil explained.

Councilor Rothenberg expressed her understanding that the council has not seen the form.

Director Weil said that's true, but it would be in the amounts they've talked about. They have gotten a lot of free work to get them to this level of detail and specificity.

Councilor Rothenberg asked how this is different from Jackson Street in terms of the terms of its contract.

This would be a purchase because the roof is in better shape, Director Weil responded. The city would own the panels and get 100% of the value of their production and of SMART incentives. It is a much better deal for the city.

The Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Jackson Street School would be a 25-year agreement. The difference is that they are not paying any money up front.

**Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the order. Councilor Klemer seconded.**

Councilor Rothenberg asked why councilors did not hear about this sooner and approve it as part of the previous CIP.

Director Weil said they have been developing it as fast as they could. He's been on the job now a little over a year. He had to first figure out where they could have solar and then engage the services of a solar company to develop a proposal. The company had to do quite a bit of work on each of the sites identified. They are not hearing about a bunch of sites that turned out to not be the best choices. It took this long to get people physically out on the roofs to make sure they were in good enough shape and to see if transformers are in the right location and of the right size, etc. The first version of the Ryan Road project was larger, so it would have cost more to serve that larger PV array. They could dawdle on this all they want but the end of investment tax credits is looming. It was brought ahead of the CIP because of the consequences of not moving forward this year.

Councilor Rothenberg said that all makes sense.

Councilor LaBarge thanked Dr. Weil.

**The motion to approve passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.**

**The following order passed final reading:**

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

**In City Council**

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

**25.338 An Order to Appropriate Money from Climate Stabilization for Solar PV Array at Ryan Road School**

**Order appropriating funds from the Climate Stabilization Fund to purchase and install a solar photovoltaic system at Ryan Road Elementary School**

*WHEREAS*, the Mayor and City Council endorsed a goal for Northampton to be a net carbon neutral city by 2050 with net carbon neutral municipal operations by 2030; and

*WHEREAS*, installing solar photovoltaic arrays on school facilities will reduce greenhouse gas and carbon emissions resulting from school operations; and

*WHEREAS*, in order to avoid unnecessary cost, it is best practice that a roof that is slated to hold a solar photovoltaic array have sufficient life remaining so that re-roofing is unlikely to be needed during the lifetime of the solar array; and

*WHEREAS*, Ryan Road Elementary School has recently undergone roof replacement and thus re-roofing is unlikely to be needed during the lifetime of solar photovoltaic arrays installed on said roof; and

*WHEREAS*, the roof and electrical infrastructure at Ryan Road Elementary School is capable of supporting 180.2 kW of photovoltaics, which will typically produce 186.6 MWh of electricity per year, providing the Northampton Public Schools with estimated average net operating income of \$63,318 per year with an approximate \$1,582,941 savings and revenue over the 25-year nominal life of the array; and

*WHEREAS*, the investment of \$455,763 in photovoltaics at Ryan Road Elementary School will secure a Federal investment tax credit of \$136,279 if contracted and some materials are ordered before the last day of calendar year 2025, and

*WHEREAS*, the after tax credit investment cost would be \$319,484 and would have an internal rate of return greater than 17% and a simple payback period of just over 5 years: and

**APPROVED - 25.338**  
**An Order to**  
**Appropriate Money**  
**from Climate**  
**Stabilization for**  
**Solar PV Array at**  
**Ryan Road School**

*WHEREAS*, on November 13, 2025, the Northampton School Committee voted to approve the solar array on the Ryan Road Elementary School and directed the Superintendent of Schools to permit the City of Northampton and its vendors reasonable access Ryan Road Elementary School for the purpose of designing, installing, inspecting, operating, maintaining, and repairing the solar array project.

*Now, Therefore be it Ordered, that*

The City Council appropriate \$455,763 from the Climate Mitigation Stabilization fund for the purposes of installing a solar photovoltaic system at Ryan Road Elementary School, with the tax credits being credited back to the Climate Mitigation stabilization fund when received.

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**Passed final reading and enrolled.**

**25.339 An Order**  
**Authorizing**  
**Leasehold Interest**  
**and 25-year Power**  
**Purchase**  
**Agreement for**  
**Canopy Solar**  
**Installation at**  
**Jackson Street**  
**School**

**25.339 An Order Authorizing Leasehold Interest and 25-year Power Purchase Agreement for Canopy Solar Installation at Jackson Street School**

Director Weil again framed the project as a transfer of resources to the operating budget of Northampton Public Schools (NPS), representing almost \$43,703 in average annual savings over 25 years. They can think of it as a transfer of the labor of CAPA and other entities, including Central Services, to make the savings possible. The result of delay beyond December 31<sup>st</sup> is more expensive photovoltaic (PV) panels, meaning the developer would have to charge them a higher rate, resulting in less savings. Missing the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline also results in a lower SMART 3.0 incentive, although they don't know exactly how much lower. With the lower incentive, the PPA would likely come in at about \$.18 per kwh, which is about what they pay now. They could still decide to proceed since the cost of electricity is likely to rise while this rate would be fixed for 25 years.

In response to a question from Councilor LaBarge, Director Weil clarified that this is a PPA, not a bond. The city agrees to buy any energy produced at a fixed rate. Based on current conditions, it would be about \$.15 per kwh, better than the \$.18 they pay now.

The reason solar panels would be more expensive has to do with the change to tax incentives under the Trump administration. If they have a contract by the end of this year, they will have safe-harbored their project, meaning they will be able to purchase solar panels produced in China, which are cheaper. After the first of the year, the solar producer would have to use U.S.-made panels, which are more expensive.

Councilor Rothenberg expressed her understanding that, in this case also, they have not yet seen a contract.

They have shared a model contract with Director Nardi but without prices, Director Weil clarified.

Councilor Rothenberg asked what happens if the solar company goes out of business.

Director Weil said he actually didn't know.

Councilor Rothenberg asked about any kind of escalation clause.

There is *no* escalation. It is a fixed rate, Director Weil stressed.

What does it say for any kind of exit clause? She asked.

Director Weil said he would have to look. Specific terms would all be negotiated by the city solicitor, he pointed out.

Councilor Rothenberg asked if her math is correct that \$40,000 is only about a tenth of one percent (1%) of the overall school budget.

Director Weil agreed it's not a lot but said it's better than zero.

He stressed that the request is for an enabling authorization. It is not a commitment to sign the contract. If the school's lawyer determines it is not in the city's best interest, it would not go forward.

She would be comfortable with this if the motion were approved such that it would come back to council prior to signing, Councilor Rothenberg said.

Mayor Sciarra clarified that while the council appropriates funds, it does not authorize contracts unless they are over three years.

The administration typically does not bring contracts to City Council for authorization, that is a function of the executive branch, Director Nardi elaborated. The City Council's role is to appropriate funding.

Regarding the project's size and scope, Councilor Perry asked how long construction would take and what sort of impacts it would have on the school and parking lot.

Construction can only happen when school is closed, so the work would be done in the summer, Director Weil said. The facilities manager is hoping to repave the parking lot as part of the process. Staff shifted the design of the canopy so as not to impact major trees, he added.

Councilor Moulton expressed his understanding that the way the 25-year agreement would be negotiated and approved by the executive branch is no different from any other contract. "This is following standard protocol," he observed. Director Nardi confirmed that is correct.

**Councilor LaBarge moved to approve. Councilor Moulton seconded.**

Councilor Rothenberg expressed surprise that it would be considered 'standard operating protocol,' saying she can think of no more naïve action than to enter into a 25-year agreement with an energy company. "It seems awfully reckless," she opined.

She hasn't been able to find anyone who thinks the lack of an escalation clause can be real. "Everyone says that's too good to be true," she reported.

"We don't know what the exit clause is. . . [or] what happens if they go out of business," she continued. That they are rushing into a 25-year agreement for a savings of one-tenth of 1% of the school budget is something for the next council to grapple with in terms of its understanding of the City Council's role and its standard operating procedure, she suggested. She thinks the council needs to get its own attorney if it wants to have somebody reviewing contracts.

This will be a 'no' vote for her, she asserted.

**The motion passed 8:1 by roll call vote with Councilor Rothenberg opposed.**

**The following order passed final reading:**

**APPROVED - 25.339**  
**Order Authorizing**  
**Leasehold Interest**  
**and 25-year Power**  
**Purchase Agree-**  
**ment for Canopy**  
**Solar Installation at**  
**Jackson Street**  
**School**

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

**In City Council**

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

**25.339 An Order Authorizing Leasehold Interest and 25-year Power Purchase Agreement for Canopy Solar Installation at Jackson Street School.**

*WHEREAS*, the Mayor and City Council endorsed a goal for Northampton to be a net carbon neutral city by 2050 with net carbon neutral municipal operations by 2030; and

*WHEREAS*, installing solar photovoltaic arrays on school facilities will reduce greenhouse gas and carbon emissions resulting from school operations; and

*WHEREAS*, in order to avoid unnecessary cost, it is best practice that a roof that is slated to hold a solar photovoltaic array have sufficient life remaining so that re-roofing is unlikely to be needed during the lifetime of the solar array; and

*WHEREAS*, Jackson Street School is currently in need of re-roofing and thus not appropriate for the installation of photovoltaic arrays, and

*WHEREAS*, installation of photovoltaic arrays over parking lots and other developed land is environmentally and socially preferable to clearing forested land or removing farmland from production; and

*WHEREAS*, solar parking canopies provide shade and reduce snow removal requirements from covered parking spaces; and

*WHEREAS*, a Power Purchase Agreement will enable the construction of solar canopies over the parking lot at Jackson Street Elementary school with no up-front cost to the City or to the Northampton Public Schools; and

*WHEREAS*, the current cost of electricity is 18.4¢, and current cost of virtual net metered electricity production is 17.4¢, both changing with markets and likely to increase;

*WHEREAS*, the cost of electricity produced by the solar canopies will be fixed for 25 years at 15.8¢ per kWh at Jackson Street School, and

*WHEREAS*, the proposed Power Purchase Agreement will provide an average annual savings of \$43,703 and a cumulative savings of \$1,092,570 over 25 years

*WHEREAS*, a 25-year lease is a condition precedent the establishment of a Power Purchase Agreement contract; and

*WHEREAS*, on November 13, 2025, the Northampton School Committee voted to approve the solar array canopy project at Jackson Street Elementary School parking lot and to permit the City of Northampton to enter into a Solar Power Purchase Agreement and Lease Agreement with Solect Energy Development, LLC that will give Solect Energy reasonable access to the Jackson Street Elementary School parking lot for the purpose of designing, installing, inspecting, operating, maintaining repairing and removing the solar array canopy project, and, further to grant the Superintendent of Schools the authority to secure approvals on behalf of the school Department from DESE or other agencies that may be necessary for the City and Solect Energy to complete the project; and

*WHEREAS*, M.G.L. c. 40, § 15B requires a vote of the City Council to surplus any interest in public property prior to its disposal.

*Now, Therefore be it Ordered, that*

The City Council declares surplus a leasehold interest in the parking lot of the Jackson Street Elementary School located at 120 Jackson Street and authorizes the Mayor to execute a 25 year lease and Power Purchase Agreement with Solect Energy on such terms and conditions as the Mayor deems reasonable.

The Superintendent of Schools shall have the authority to secure approvals on behalf of the Northampton Public Schools from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or other agencies that may be necessary for the City and Solect Energy to complete the project

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**Passed final reading and approved.**

**25.340 An Order to Authorize Appropriation and Borrowing for Geothermal System at Northampton High School**

**25.340 An Order to Authorize Appropriation and Borrowing for Geothermal System at Northampton High School**

Director Weil restated the project’s financial terms and the consequences of delay. Primarily financed by loans and the climate stabilization fund, in terms of savings, it represents an annual transfer of about \$40,000 to the NPS operating budget from investment on the part of climate stabilization and the city’s borrowing capacity, he presented. It will actually improve comfort and thermal performance at the school, which is known to have direct and measurable effects on test scores and social and emotional well-being. A consequence of delay is that the city will have to replace the chillers soon anyways. If left to chance, it will be a ‘like for like’ replacement on an emergency basis with no incentives and will foreclose the decarbonization potential of the school for the next 25 years. If run at the current rate, boilers will likely have to be replaced in the next eight years. Total replacement cost for the boiler and chiller is likely to be equal to or somewhat less than the total incentivized geothermal cost once rigging complexities are factored in.

He reminded them that, even though the city acquired two free boilers for the Leeds Elementary School, getting them into the building and installing them cost \$300,000. He asked them to imagine the challenge of getting four much larger boilers out of the high school and bringing four new ones in. This avoids that by replacing the chillers with essentially a ‘heat pump boiler room in a box’ configured in a factory and installed outside the building on the site of the chillers. “No need to break down walls,” he pointed out.

Tax incentives are available now and not guaranteed forever, he added. Negotiated incentives discussed with National Grid may not carry over to 2028. Failure to register the project with the Massachusetts Alternative Portfolio Standard Market will causes them to miss nearly \$100,000 in annual payments. While it doesn’t have the same kind of deadline imposed by the federal government as solar projects, there are reasons to move forward as quickly as possible, he suggested.

**Councilor Moulton moved to approve the order. Councilor Maiore seconded.**

Councilor Jarrett asked if there are any concerns about not being able to pay off short-term bonds with the tax credits for geothermal.

The Trump administration actually improved tax credits for commercial geothermal systems, Director Weil shared. A possible interpretation is that they see it as drilling so those credits are likely to be dependable. However, the sooner they move, the more likely they will be able to grandfather in or safe harbor the project since if rules change there is always a glide path to allow existing projects to continue.

Councilor Jarrett thanked the director for providing these savings, expressing his understanding that the long-term savings of this are greater than any other replacement option. In the current budget scenario, carbon goals and savings have to go hand in hand, he noted.

Do the energy savings pay for the debt service right away or does that come after a time? He asked.

Energy cost savings are only about \$48,000, Director Weil said. He doesn't have the cost of debt service in his head but his guess is that it does not directly pay for it.

Director Nardi clarified that the savings will go to the school while the city pays the debt service. Payments are estimated to be about \$467,000 annually at 3.75% over 20 years, she said.

Councilor Jarrett referred to two types of bonds: those that provide an immediate savings and those that don't. The city is going to have to replace the fossil-fuel chillers and boilers no matter what, which also would require substantial bonding. He expressed his understanding that Director Weil is saying that the geothermal provides a net savings over the other options.

Or, that they're very close to equivalent after incentives, Director Weil clarified.

How does this affect their debt schedule and ability to bond for other projects? Councilor Jarrett asked.

Director Nardi reiterated that debt service is dropping by \$1.1 million from FY2026 to FY2027, so the \$467,000 payment will replace some of the lost debt. The city's debt service has dropped slightly as they used more reserves during the pandemic because of federal funds received. They want to start building up their borrowing just a little; right now, it is at 3.4% of operating revenue. They want to increase it to 4% and move towards 5%. It will not affect any enterprise fund borrowing. All enterprise operational debt and project costs come out of enterprise funds, she confirmed.

Councilor Jarrett expressed his understanding that they are not looking to increase debt service simply to increase debt service; they are looking to accomplish goals with capital projects. If not, some of that could be spent on operating budgets. They will need to bond to replace the boiler if they don't do this project.

Best practice is to maintain a level debt service so they are always able to maintain infrastructure regardless of whether reserves are on hand or not, Director Nardi explained. They want to have borrowing power for important projects such as this.

Councilor Maiore asked about the impact on the operating budget. How long would it take for the city to receive the tax credits?

Director Nardi said she understands it takes about two years. They will do short-term bonds, meaning they would pay just the interest, estimated conservatively at \$210,000 a year. They will be getting back \$5.8 million to pay off that loan.

Councilor Maiore expressed her understanding that the supplementary boiler will only be supplementary until it inevitably dies. She asked if they plan to have a continuing supplementary heating and cooling source.

Director Weil said it is always a good idea to have a back-up; in fact, schools require N+1 in case of a power outage, for example. In extreme cold weather situations, it is possible heat pumps may not be able to extract enough heat out of the ground fast enough so it might be necessary to bump up the temperature using the boiler. If boilers are cycling only a few times a year, it extends their life significantly. There is an understanding in the renewable energy/building science world that new technology is coming along that can provide higher temperatures at higher efficiencies. All sorts of things could happen in the future to let the technology catch up so when they do have to replace their back-up source they have options they might not even know about yet.

Councilor Maiore said her first thought was that a supplementary heat source was not as important since schools would likely be canceled in the event of a large storm. However, during the pandemic, schools were used as emergency shelters and the city wants to maintain that capacity as climate change implications play out.

Finally, what challenges does he anticipate in the implementation of the geothermal project? She asked.

Director Weil said he has thought about this a lot because he does not want to encounter those challenges. The first thing is to make sure the project is designed properly for the technology the driller is using, which is one reason he hopes to procure it as a turnkey project. The other is having a single point of control and some degree of a performance guarantee.

The biggest reason for failure for geothermal systems has been unbalanced thermal loads, he presented. If it's too hot and too much cooling is needed, the geothermal field ends up warming up over the years. Vice versa, if too much heat is needed, the field doesn't warm up enough. One thing he is confident about is that the high school has a very balanced thermal load.

Smith College offers a lot of lessons. School officials hadn't expected to run their back-up system but recently experienced the need to run the fossil fuel-based generating station to make up the difference when not enough heat could be extracted from the ground. In Smith's case, it takes a lot of time to load enough heat into the ground.

Another lesson is simplicity. At the high school, they are talking about a single bore field on the parking lot with short loops going to a pre-fabricated shipping house so they don't have to worry about workmanship defects and multiple trades to coordinate. A lot has to do with coordination of the project from the top.

In response to a question from Councilor Klemer, Director Nardi clarified that while the total project cost is \$13 million, the cost to the city is only \$7.3 million because of tax incentive credits.

People have suggested putting this off, Councilor Klemer shared. Besides the loss of rebates and credits, she asked Director Weil what it would look like if the chiller just died and they had to replace it emergently.

Director Weil stressed that it is not the case, nor is he claiming, that investment tax credits for geothermal from the federal government are going away. There is no expectation that they are going away until 2032. However, generally speaking, getting a project going ensures they are able to retain credits. The urgency really has to do with the chiller, which is already causing problems both in operation and maintenance. If it fails, they need to replace it under emergency conditions. Estimates for its replacement are \$3 million. Once replaced, they will have secured the chiller portion of the heating and cooling system so that is occupied. Removal costs for the chillers escalate total project costs to \$4 million.

When and if the boilers fail, they have a challenge because essentially the building was built around them, he continued. To get them out and get new boilers in, they would probably have to temporarily demolish and reinforce the boiler room wall and use expensive rigging, adding a million to consultants' estimate of \$2.5 to \$3 million dollars.

Councilor Klemer said it sounds like it will be as expensive as the geothermal.

Director Weil noted that geothermal could be up to \$2 million dollars less if they find out after digging the test well that water can be handled in a lower-cost way.

He recited the life cycle cost of the various options as set forth in the Life Cycle Cost (25-year) and First Cost Comparisons slide of the "Three School Energy Projects" Powerpoint presentation.

Some members of the public had hands raised. Councilor Elkins said it's her understanding that they are not taking public comment, and Councilor Jarrett asked members to please stop raising virtual hands.

Councilor Rothenberg said she wanted to make some comments about choices. Councilor Klemer said "when the schools are in the situation they're in, every little bit counts." The reason the schools are in the situation they're in is choices they as a City Council and the Mayor have made about funding. The primary comment received from the public is, why the rush? Why is this not being considered in conjunction with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and the budget? Because, of course, it affects both.

Director Nardi said the city should maintain its debt service so they are always able to maintain their infrastructure, as if borrowing is somehow an indication of maintenance, which, of course, it's not, she continued. "Again, we're making choices there," she pointed out. The sidewalks are already broken; they haven't maintained those. This half a million a year could have been a loan for sidewalks, which would make a very significant and meaningful difference. That is not to say that this is not a meaningful choice.

How do we make those choices? She asked rhetorically. The way it's being presented today is in a vacuum. The obligations, the priorities, the balancing, the options; "these things need to be considered as a whole." That is why the public and two-thirds of the budget and property subcommittee is asking them to please consider this alongside everything else. Because, inevitably there are competing good choices.

"If we are not looking at all of those together and balancing them, we are not really functioning properly as a City Council," she suggested. There is a reason they have a CIP and a budget process. She is not hearing anything from Director Weil's presentation to indicate it makes sense for the project to be rushed before the impending CIP and budget conversations with the new council that are coming very shortly.

Councilor LaBarge says she feels Director Weil is very well-versed in energy projects. She asked if he had been working with outside experts on these projects.

Director Weil said absolutely. This project is based on two separate feasibility studies by geothermal experts. He is reporting to them mainly what was provided to them by Brightcorp Engineering.

Councilor Perry asked what would happen if they do discover dewatering takes more effort and money. He also asked if it is correct that they currently try not to run the chiller in summertime to preserve it.

Director Weil said not necessarily to preserve it, but, primarily, because it only has one speed. It turns on and sends a huge demand to the grid, spiking peak demand for the month so that the demand charge is set by the chiller. They try to run it as infrequently as possible, but, once it is running, to run it for a while. They are trying to balance discomfort to the school vs. discomfort to the energy budget.

The benefit of geothermal is that the cooling part uses very little energy.

They are budgeting for the worst-case scenario as far as dewatering, he added.

Councilor Moulton asked his estimate of how long until it's up and running if approved today.

The city has to go through the Ch. 25A procurement process and work with DCAMM and DOER, which will take a little while, Director Weil said. He anticipates not being able to get it fully contracted until March/April at which point the company would do a test well. Consultants then take information from the test well to create a design which would take a few months potentially meaning starting to drill in June. It could take about six months. To be fully operational might take a little longer – early spring/late winter of 2027.

Councilor Dubs said he doesn't think it is fair to say it is either sidewalks or these projects. Since he's been councilor, there's been an increase in sidewalk funding. He thinks they need to give some credit to the Mayor for what's been done.

Councilor Rothenberg said it is fair; it's actually exactly how the CIP works. "You don't know yet if it's either/or" because the CIP is not in front of them.

Councilor Moulton referred to a gamble as to whether the chillers will continue to work; they are gambling already with their sidewalks, Councilor Rothenberg countered. "Actually, we're not even gambling because we know they don't work," she noted. She referred to a similar gamble with school staffing. There are many things in the city that are broken, she pointed out.

They were shown 'ridiculous slides' about how they were going to 'bankrupt the city' if they made a mid-year appropriation to the schools, Councilor Rothenberg continued. This is being presented to them as though it's a choice that doesn't affect everything else. . . "That is just nonsensical."

You cannot know that because it's being presented separately. There is no reason being presented today to take this separately and not as part of the CIP.

Councilor Rothenberg said she had to get back to work. She asked the Council President to consider her a 'no' vote.

Director Nardi disagreed. They are still going to be able to afford the other priorities being brought forward on the CIP. "I don't think it will change the impact on the operational budget or our ability to have other projects go forward," she said.

Councilor Jarrett said he appreciates the risks but the needs are compelling, and the comparison of other costs and the unanimous approval of the School Committee persuades him to be in support.

**APPROVED - 25.340**  
**An Order to**  
**Authorize**  
**Appropriation and**  
**Borrowing for**  
**Geothermal System**  
**at Northampton High**  
**School**

There being no further comments or questions, **the motion passed unanimously 8:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Rothenberg absent.**

**The following order passed final reading:**

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

**In City Council**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

**25.340 An Order to Authorize Appropriation and Borrowing for Geothermal System at Northampton High School**

**Order authorizing the use of Climate Stabilization funds and municipal long and short term bonds to finance the design, installation and construction of a geothermal heating and cooling system at Northampton High School**

*WHEREAS*, the Mayor and City Council endorsed a goal for Northampton to be a net carbon neutral city by 2050 with net carbon neutral municipal operations by 2030; and

*WHEREAS*, heating with high efficiency ground source heat pumps instead of methane combusting boilers will reduce greenhouse gas and carbon emissions resulting from school operations; and

*WHEREAS*, providing cooling with high efficiency ground source heat pumps instead of lower efficiency air-cooled chillers will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity consumption; and

*WHEREAS*, the chillers at Northampton High School are well past their expected useful life and will need to be replaced within 5 years at the latest; and

*WHEREAS*, the boilers at Northampton High School are nearing the end of their expected useful life if continually operated; and

*WHEREAS*, ground source heat pumps are protected from the elements and have an equipment lifetime of 25 to 30 years and extract and reject heat to a ground loop heat exchangers which have lifetime of more than 100 years; and

*WHEREAS*, heating and cooling with ground source heat pumps is projected to reduce energy cost by 17%, maintenance cost by 50% and carbon emissions by 43%, and total energy use by 68%; and

*WHEREAS*, Federal tax credits are currently available to reduce the installed cost of a geothermal system by up to 40%; and

*WHEREAS*, because geothermal technology is supported by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Mass Save rebates for the project will significantly reduce its cost; and

*WHEREAS*, the proposed geothermal system at Northampton High School is estimated to earn \$105,000 per year in Alternative Energy Credits in the Massachusetts Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard market; and

*WHEREAS*, compared to the alternative heating and cooling solutions, a geothermal system has the lowest lifecycle cost over 25 years; and

*WHEREAS*, the Northampton School Committee voted to approve the geothermal project at Northampton High School and to direct the Superintendent of Schools to permit the City of Northampton and its vendors reasonable access to Northampton High School property for the purpose of designing, installing, inspecting, operating, maintaining, and repairing, the geothermal project

*Now, Therefore be it Ordered, that*

That the sum of \$2,000,000 be and hereby is appropriated from the Climate Mitigation Stabilization Fund to pay the costs of design and construction of geothermal improvements to the Northampton High School.

That \$11,166,625 is appropriated for the purpose of paying costs of design and construction of geothermal improvements to the Northampton High School, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto, and that to meet this appropriation, the City Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said amount under Chapter 44, Section 7(1) of the General Laws, or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the City therefor;

Further Ordered: That all or a portion of the bonds or notes authorized by this Order may be issued in the form of tax credit bonds under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or in any other manner as the City Treasurer and the Mayor shall determine to be in the best interests of the City, and are hereby designated as tax credit bonds within the meaning of Chapter 44, Section 21B of the General Laws.

Further Ordered: That the City is authorized to accept and expend any grants, gifts, rebates, credits or any other contributions from any source whatsoever (including Section 6417 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended) that may be available to finance costs of the project described in this Order, the amount authorized to be borrowed by this Order shall be reduced to

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the extent of any such grants or gifts received by the City on account of the project authorized by this Order.

Further Ordered: That the Mayor is authorized to take any action and to execute such documents as are necessary or convenient to carry out this project .

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**Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.**

**Adjourn**

**Adjourn**  
**Councilor Moulton moved to adjourn. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 8:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Rothenberg absent. The meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.**

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_, Administrative Assistant



CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
212 MAIN STREET  
Northampton, Massachusetts  
December 18, 2025

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the City Council was called to order by Council President Alex Jarrett at 6:30 p.m. Upon a roll call, the following City Councilors were present:

- At-Large Councilor Marissa Elkins, 6:31 pm
- Ward 1 Councilor Stanley Moulton, III
- Ward 3 Councilor Quaverly Rothenberg
- Ward 5 Councilor Alexander Jarrett
- Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore
- At-Large Councilor Garrick Perry
- Ward 2 Councilor Deborah Klemer
- Ward 4 Councilor Jeremy Dubs
- Ward 6 Councilor Marianne LaBarge

Announcement that Meeting Audio/Video Recorded

Councilor Jarrett announced that the meeting was being audio/video recorded.

Public Hearings

Public Hearings  
None.

Public Comment

Public Comment  
Councilor Jarrett explained the procedure he would use in conducting public comment and opened the floor to comments.

[Editor’s note: For this final meeting of the 2024-2025 City Council session, Council Chambers was packed with members of the public and former elected officials present to recognize and pay tribute to outgoing Ward 6 Councilor Marianne LaBarge, who, with 28 years of service, held the distinction of being the longest-serving city councilor in Northampton history. Many of the public comments consisted of accolades extolling Councilor LaBarge’s accomplishments.]

Addressing the council as a whole, [former Council President] **Jim Nash, Northampton**, extended his thanks to them for their service to the city as the term comes to a close. He particularly thanked the four councilors stepping down who he had the honor of serving with, namely Councilor Elkins, Councilor Jarrett and Councilor Moulton. To them, he offered thanks for leading important community discussions around zoning, housing, policing and cannabis to name a few. It was an honor serving with all three on Legislative Matters. He thanked them for their leadership and the grace they brought to this chamber.

Addressing Councilor LaBarge, Mr. Nash said she has pretty much been on City Council the entire 30 years he’s lived here, serving as a model of what a city councilor should be. When he joined the council, Gerry Budgar advised him, “Jim, watch Marianne. No one is better at constituent service.” He did. For three decades, residents of Ward 6 were blessed to have a councilor who answered every phone call, met with every resident at their earliest convenience and was always a champion for people vulnerable and in need. Referring to her reputation for operating with a big heart, he thanked her for her lifetime of service.

He closed by thanking Northampton Open Media, the Mayor, city staff and Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler for their service.

**Nancy Smith, Chapel Street**, publicly thanked Councilor Rothenberg for her courageous fight to bring transparency and the public into the process instead of the ‘closed doors for the rich and powerful’ process which has plagued the city for decades, a process that has hoarded money for vanity and capital projects for the rich and powerful while starving schools and vital city services. The truth, commitment and fight she brought to this battle has been unparalleled. The fire and passion she brought inspired others on council and in the community to stand up and speak out. “You sparked hope in a people’s revolution for change . . . “

People banded together because there was hope because they had a relentless fighter on their side who inspired others to ask questions and fight back, too.

“Sadly, our corrupt city and its wealthy owners made you pay dearly for your courage and fight. . . The unjust and outrageous way you were treated by these power brokers and those who service them is a

testament to how effective a leader you are” she asserted. “If the bad guys are after you, you know you’re doing something right.”

Hailing her as a ‘hero,’ she assured her that her supporters will not go away. “Bring the fire,” she urged.

Nancy also thanked Councilor LaBarge for her decades of service. Stopping the destruction of their working-class neighborhoods is her #1 issue. “Every people’s meeting in any ward I ever attended, you were always there,” she attested. It speaks volumes about the leader and person she is and meant the world to all of them. “Enjoy the holidays, everyone,” she concluded.

**Northampton Police Chief John Cartledge** recognized and thanked Councilor LaBarge for her decades of dedicated service to the community. Her commitment to the city and, in particular, her steadfast support of the police department has made a lasting impact. He is especially grateful for her support of him as Police Chief, especially during his time as interim chief. Her trust, guidance and advocacy has meant more than he can adequately express. Her leadership has always been rooted in a genuine desire to serve others and to make this community safer and stronger for everyone. “Your legacy will be felt for many years to come,” he assured.

He extended sincere thanks to all of the councilors for their years of service and dedication to the city. The work they do, often behind the scenes, is always a service to the public and helps ensure their community continues to move forward. He thanked them for their commitment, leadership and unwavering support.

**Barbara Devlin, South Hadley**, identified herself as an active member of the Northampton Rotary with a daughter and family in Northampton who is pleased to be here via Zoom to honor outgoing City Councilor Marianne LaBarge. She had intended to come in person but is battling a cough and cold. Marianne has been a long-time member of the Northampton Rotary and has helped with numerous rotary service projects, including the annual children’s Christmas party and more recently, the annual day of service. In 2022, Ms. Devlin volunteered to chair the club’s first day of service, a tree planting at R.K. Finn Ryan Road Elementary School. Since she was new to the area, she asked Councilor LaBarge for guidance on how to get the project off the ground. Councilor LaBarge jumped in enthusiastically. She advised her to contact the mayor and Director of Public Works and recommended outreach to the city forester, Urban Forestry Commission, Tree Northampton, the City Council, the Northampton Youth Commission and other potential volunteers. She contacted the Council President to arrange for her to speak at a Community Resources Committee meeting, encouraged fellow councilors to volunteer on the day of the event and participated herself in all but one day of service since 2022. Her email inbox contains numerous messages from Marianne throughout the planning process. Unfortunately, she didn’t save all the voice mails but there were many of those too. Marianne’s assistance on the Rotary Day of Service is just one of the many ways she contributed to the Northampton community over her many years on the City Council.

[She was told that was time.]

On behalf of the Northampton Rotary Club, she congratulated Councilor LaBarge on her many contributions and wished her the very best as she returned to private life.

**Northampton Parks and Recreation Director Ann Marie Moggio, Leeds**, thanked councilors for their service and dedication to the city, especially the outgoing ones. With all of her involvement with parks and recreation, she assured Councilor LaBarge that her love for the city shines in all that she does.

She read aloud a poem, concluding by saying, “Northampton is so much better thanks to you.”

**Bill Dwight, Northampton**, focused on councilors attending their last meeting of the term. He knows meetings inspire a host of feelings, many of them conflicting. He thanked Councilor Jarrett, referring to him as a person of significant integrity and temperance, especially under challenging circumstances; his balance and calmness will be missed. Councilor Moulton, too, displayed remarkable balance and fairness; his serenity and decency know few equals. Councilor Elkins – “I will miss your moxie and your analytical mind, and your commitment to collaboration and good outcomes. . . .” Her sophistication has been an asset that served them well, and he really appreciated her service.

To Councilor LaBarge, there are 30-somethings who have grown up here who have known only one ward councilor all their lives, he pointed out. “You and I got elected at the same time together, and I’ve retired twice since,” he quipped. She is a bridge between Northampton’s two generations, a context they will be poorer without.

And then there’s. . . oops, “time’s up,” he said.

**DPW Director Donna LaScaleia** thanked the council for its support of public works, its employees and all their operations. To her dear friend, Councilor Marianne LaBarge - on May 2, 2016, former Mayor David Narkewicz appointed her director in the City Hall hearing room. Councilor LaBarge was in attendance and one of the first people to whom she was introduced in Northampton. She has been a constant presence for her since that day. As DPW Director, she has had a front row seat to her advocacy. She has met so many of her residents at so many places at so many times. She has received emails from her at 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning and been awake to read them all. They have worked together on so many initiatives. Who doesn't remember Burts Pit Road before it was paved and Glendale Road before it was paved? She mentioned other projects undertaken together, such as intersection improvements on Route 66 and smaller items like 'Deer Crossing' signs or road striping.

Her representation of her constituents has been steadfast and inspirational, indicative of her commitment to her community. "You have pushed all of us to be better; you have pushed me to be better," she shared. It has been her great honor to serve all these years with her. She wished her good health and good fortune, and most importantly, great happiness. She thanked her for her friendship and support of her and all of their employees.

**Gwen Agna, Northampton**, said she would not repeat the incredible testimonies heard although she wanted to say those words as well. She thanked councilors who were leaving and those who will stay. As a retiring School Committee member, she knows how hard it is to be an elected official. She was an employee before, but being an elected official is quite a challenge. In particular, she thanked Councilor LaBarge. She kind of grew up as a professional in this town with her. When she was the principal and an administrator in the district's central office, she could count on her to be friendly, smiling, kind and supportive. She has always sought her out in different venues when they've been together. She knows her to be a very good representative councilor and knows she will be a model for many in the future. She wished her all the best.

**Wendy Foxmyn, Leeds, Ward 7**, happily represented by Councilor Maiore, thanked those who served and those no longer going to be serving on the council: Councilor Moulton, Councilor Jarrett, Councilor LaBarge, Councilor Elkins and Councilor Rothenberg. She has watched their meetings and it has not been an easy run. For all the differences and challenging discussions they've had, one thing that unites them is that everybody cares. "Keep that in mind," she urged.

**Summer Cable, Florence**, said Councilor Jarrett is her current and soon to be former representative. She thinks all the work he and the current council has done, particularly Councilor Elkins, Councilor Perry and Councilor Moulton, has been incredible. She thinks it should be reiterated and focused on that the work they do every day is not glamorous and is guaranteed to make a third of the city mad at them about something. Yet, they show up every day, sacrifice their Thursday nights and afternoons and do it with grace, patience and aplomb. She wants to honor what they have done during their terms and thank them and is glad they'll get their Thursdays back.

**Joe Twarog, Florence**, thanked Councilor LaBarge for her decades of services. She was incomparable as a city councilor. He remembers sitting on a folding chair on Burts Pit Road counting cars. She was instrumental in getting stop signs there. She was instrumental in getting working lights at Florence Road and Rocky Hill Road where people had been killed. She was 'councilor fix it.' She had a strong voice but was totally independent. She answered to her constituents. He recalled another time holding signs on Florence Road and Rocky Hill Road. As people went by, she could tell who was in the car. She knew their names and life stories, she knew their dogs' names. "That's what she was. . . We'll miss you."

**Dan Breindel, downtown Northampton**, reminded the council that, at the beginning of many of their terms in 2022, they voted to do two things: make a rule change to bring public comment from three minutes to two and pass an omnibus bill called the form-based code. He thinks many didn't realize what they were doing by voting the form-based code, but what it did was create a whole new zoning type. It rezoned many lots in the city without the notification to the public that was legally due. Councilor Jarrett, "I think you weren't aware that you got rid of affordability requirements," he posited. Councilor Elkins was not aware that it in any way changed parking requirements, et cetera, etc. That just means there needed to be some oversight on this giant bill. He and his neighbors came to them and tried to force them to do some oversight on these issues yet, over and over, no matter how often they asked, they were turned down, rejected, barred. Councilor Perry voted 'no' on bills that bounced back to him through email so he knew he never read them or the supporting evidence; Councilor LaBarge spoke to him at length about her issues with real estate development in the city yet did not back that up by her votes. There are many issues all over the city they have been begging them to look at; he named 'the \$3 million church purchase' and business owners throughout downtown saying that Picture Main Street will hurt them. Just because half of business owners say it won't hurt them doesn't make it controversial, it means that "you're hurting half of the business owners. . ."

“We’re asking for basic oversight. We’re not trying to force your hand; we’re asking you guys to pay some attention to these major issues.”

[Councilor Jarrett told him his time was up.]

Parents of disabled children have been coming to them saying their children are being underserved in the city schools, just like disabled people are telling them they are being underserved on the sidewalks and roads. . .

Mr. Breindel continued speaking without interruption and was muted.

A contingent of retired military officers entered the room accompanied by **Peggy Pease**. They aligned themselves in formation in front of Councilor LaBarge.

**Tom Pease, Commander of VFW Post 8006**, said it was with great pleasure that Post 8006 wished to congratulate her on her many years of services as a city councilor to their community and to honor her never-ending commitment to local military organizations. Not only has she served with genuine honesty and integrity, but true devotion. They could always count on her to be there, whether marching in a parade, sitting in many of their organization’s meetings or heading up meetings with the Veterans Council of Northampton. She is the true definition of community, involvement and dedication. Her contribution will be missed by all whose lives she has touched. “In passing, let us not say good-bye; let us say good-bye for now,” he concluded.

He presented her with a document signed by himself, William D. Ahearn, Corporation President and Auxiliary President Liz Cummings.

Peggy Pease presented her with flowers, and the color guard saluted and left the room.

**Rachel Simpson, Westhampton Road, Ward 6**, said she has lived in Northampton 57 years and for more than half that time, Councilor LaBarge has been the epitome of public service so she wanted to take a minute to thank her. It wasn’t until she moved to Ward 6 seven years ago that she realized how hard she works. She really cares about her constituents; she works for the people she represents and helps them in all kinds of ways, many of which go above and beyond the job of a city councilor. She’s done so much for so many people over the years; connecting people with financial assistance, addressing individual food insecurity, helping with housing, helping with traffic signs and pushing to get sidewalks built on Florence Road. Unlike many politicians, she does this work for the people she represents quietly, not for political points or fanfare but because she knows it’s the right thing to do. She has been quite fortunate to be her constituent and is grateful to know her and be her neighbor. She also thanked Councilor Moulton, Councilor Jarrett and Councilor Elkins for their service.

**Patty Healey, Longfellow Drive**, said Councilor LaBarge was her councilor. She looked outside her window one day 29 years ago and this little woman was coming up the driveway. When she opened the door, she said, “I’m Councilor LaBarge and I’m running for City Council.” She’s been fortunate to have her as her city councilor all this time. Within a year, she asked her to be her campaign manager. She said, ‘Don’t worry, you don’t have to do a thing; all I need is your name on this paper.’

She was a union member at Belchertown State School for many years and that’s where her passion grew to take care of people with disabilities. Her favorite committee was the Commission on Disabilities and that’s what she was most passionate about. She was a powerhouse. “Powerful people quaked in their boots when they saw that red Buick driving up the street,” she quipped. She had the DPW on speed dial. “She got everything taken care of in our neighborhood.” She went to every single door on every single street in the ward for years. Her favorite of Councilor LaBarge’s achievements was getting the full blown light at Westhampton Road and Ryan Road. She has the energy of an Olympian. She is the boldest woman she knows. City councilors will come and go but there will never be another Marianne LaBarge. “From my heart I love you and thank you for your service.”

**Nina Shields, Ward 3**, thanked Councilor Rothenberg for her service to the city. Whenever anyone has asked her, she has told them she is the only city councilor who has tried to help them, and it’s true. Councilor LaBarge’s legacy is significant, but for her and her neighbors, that kind of interest, integrity and speaking truth to power is embodied in Councilor Rothenberg. She is interested to see the dynamic on the Council and in public dialogue going forward without Councilor Rothenberg as a scapegoat for the city’s problems. She is hopeful several incoming councilors will continue working for people and not for power. “Maybe you’ve also been tallying the number of restaurants and cafes that have announced closure since the Mayoral election,” she suggested. Just this week, she has spoken to several business owners who

have not seen the needed demand this holiday season “and have rarely, if ever, felt interest from City Hall in supporting them now or during the disruption of Picture Main Street.”

She is hopeful the new council will attempt to support their business community so they will have a vibrant downtown Northampton and Florence. She hopes that includes accessibility improvements and sidewalk and road repairs that have been necessary for decades.

She is hopeful that the incoming council will see that there's a wide spectrum between tax money for unfettered luxury development on one hand and working with the community to solve housing needs on the other. She is hopeful that, working with the School Committee, the incoming Council will allocate the money that they absolutely have to supporting all of their children.

She thanked Councilor Rothenberg again and wished everyone a restful and safe holiday season.

**Tom Burton, Northampton, Ward 3**, said he is here tonight to say thank you to Q., who's done an awesome job for their district. He thanked Councilor LaBarge specifically for what she did when the housing authority took air conditioners away from folks at McDonalds and she gave them hell. To Q, “you did an outstanding job and I always felt well-represented.”

**Gwen Nabad, Ward 1**, recently elected as the Ward 1 City Councilor but speaking as a private citizen, thanked Councilor Moulton for his dedication to Ward 1 over the past two terms, service to the city and for supporting her throughout her campaign. She thanked Councilor Jarrett for his dedication to climate issues, sustainability and commitment to community, and for staying grounded in truth and facts. She thanked Councilor LaBarge because she did an amazing thing in fighting for 17 years to get sidewalks over near Florence Heights, and she did it. She really appreciated her making her laugh as they have gotten to know each other. She thanked Councilor Elkins for her commitment and dedication to the city, for keeping the city functioning and for supporting her throughout her campaign even in the smallest way. She thanked Councilor Rothenberg for standing up for vulnerable people and tenants in public housing. She also appreciates her commitment to the city.

**Barbara Rakaska, Florence**, thanked councilors and read a dedication from Susan Roth. Ms. Roth wrote that she lives in Ward 6 and will be sorry to see Councilor LaBarge leave her post. Besides all she has done for the community, she has helped her personally over the last 20 years. She welcomed her and her husband when they moved to Northampton, brought them gifts like a leaf-gathering basket for autumn cleanups, a garden sculpture and variously wrapped Christmas presents. She helped get her mother into low-income housing so she could live nearby. It was great working with her to save the Mineral Hills Conservation Area. During election years, she delivered her campaign flyers door to door. Marianne cares about people. They were lucky to have her as their ward councilor and to continue to have her as their neighbor.

As examples of Councilor LaBarge's work, she cited the C-54 Memorial on Florence Road, Habitat for Humanity affordable housing and helping any resident with any issue, big or small.

**Sara Howard, Florence**, expressed her utmost appreciation and gratitude for the work of her wonderful city councilor who also happens to be her wonderful spouse, Alex Jarrett. She has had a firsthand view of the incredible amount of dedication and thoughtfulness Alex has brought to this work. Alex is a person of genuine caring for the well-being of the community and has put in uncountable hours of diligent effort: continuous listening, scrupulous research, nights of worrying, moments of humor, tears, celebration, lots and lots of connecting and collaborating, tremendous compassion, limitless patience and the utmost integrity and humility in the past six years. He is one of the kindest humans she has ever known. He also happens to have a brilliant mind. He has made skillful use of zoning and other ordinance changes and understands how planning and design interconnectedly affect social justice, including housing affordability, climate and economic concerns. Alex has worked, proposed or supported such changes as allowing two housing units to be built anywhere in the city, including ADU's, implementing zoning bonuses for the creation of affordable units, removing parking requirements that add barriers to housing development, the rezoning of Bombyx, rezoning so that housing could be built on the site of the former toxic Bi-chem plant and, most recently, co-sponsoring an ordinance to allow historic accessory structures to be converted to living units, to name a few.

He was also one of the main catalysts, along with Rachel Matoire, for freeing up the funds allowing for the creation of the Division of Community Care (DCC).

[She was informed it was time.]

**Michael Bardsley, Ward 3**, said he has been a resident for 25 years and served on the City Council for over a dozen, eight of them as council president. From that perspective, he wholeheartedly believes Quaverly Rothenberg has been an outstanding city councilor. She has advocated for her constituents with enthusiasm, passion and the courage of her convictions. She has raised difficult questions that needed to be asked and aggressively challenged proposals she believed were not in Northampton's best interests. That is what a city councilor is supposed to do. For her independent thinking, personal integrity and the honorable manner in which she has conducted herself, he thanked Councilor Rothenberg for her outstanding efforts. The debate of this council regarding the censure of Councilor Rothenberg was, in his opinion, personality politics at its worst. It seemed intended to damage the personal reputation of one who dared challenge the political establishment. It was not the council's finest moment. The wisdom of Voltaire rings true. "It is dangerous to be right in matters in which the established authorities are wrong."

He echoed thanks to Councilor LaBarge for her service.

**Aline Davis** thanked everyone for their service and work ethic; their ideas and leadership have been an inspiration to her as she has attempted to be a leader in the community as well. She appreciates their public service.

**Shelley Berkowitz, Ward 1**, thanked Councilor Rothenberg for all she has done, not just for Ward 3 but for all of Northampton for bravely speaking truth to power, especially after the attempt to tarnish her reputation by censure on false and trumped up charges, as Mr. Bardsley said, and despite bullying tactics. Despite this treatment, she persisted. She spoke strongly at School Committee on December 11<sup>th</sup> when the same censure tactic was again attempted against two Northampton residents who gave respectful, articulate public comment at City Council two days earlier in direct violation of their 1<sup>st</sup> amendment right to free speech. After Quaverly's comments at that meeting, the censure was walked back and an apology publicly issued by Gwen Agna but not by the mayor. She thanked her for her courage, which she said has served as a catalyst for increased transparency and true change in the city.

"We all know that 76 votes is not a mandate," she continued. She thanked councilors who are leaving, especially Councilor LaBarge for her long service. She is excited and hopeful for both newly-elected and returning councilors who she hopes have learned that 'we the people' expect this increase in transparency and public involvement as the new norm from which they will not back down. She thanked Quaverly for her brilliance, her accomplishments and her compassion, which she suggested will continue regardless of the forum she chooses to serve in.

**Karen Foster-Cannon, Northampton**, said that when she was a brand new councilor in 2020 there was an issue in one of her neighborhoods that was pretty divisive. As she was bringing people together and meeting with the mayor and residents, someone looked at her and said 'why can't you just be like Councilor LaBarge?'

"Councilor, you set a high bar," she observed. "You represented your residents with such compassion and care, and it was really a thing to see." To Councilor Elkins, Jarrett and Moulton, she said what a privilege it was to serve alongside them. Every single issue that came before them, she knew they had done their due diligence and research and come with what they truly believed to be Northampton's best interests at heart. "Northampton is better for all of you."

**Andrea Bertini, Ward 5**, thanked Councilor Rothenberg for her commitment to the most marginalized people in their community. She is the only city councilor who actually listened to their story and heard them, she asserted. "You acted, advocated and mobilized," she observed. "You are a leader of a movement. You are and will continue to be the voice of the voiceless in this town." She will continue to be the fierce fighter for civil rights for their kids, calling out what is wrong and holding leaders accountable for their lack of action resulting in national news and DESE findings of wrongdoing. She's watched these meetings for months and seen councilors yell at her, curse at her and work hard to dim her light.

Through it all, she has never wavered from her duties to represent those in Ward 3. "You continue to be an absolute unflappable bad ass," she urged. "What has happened has only amplified your voice and connected a community." Lastly, as the most vetted member of the Quav-wave, she thanked her for pulling them all into her massive tent. In addition, she thanked her for hearing them, for being the change candidate the town needs, for her leadership and willingness to fight for transparency and accountability and for bringing the voices of the voiceless to the forefront.

**Ruthy Woodring, Florence**, said she has taken some amazingly beautiful walks in the snowy woods lately and is astounded by the beauty of Northampton's conservation areas. One of the things you notice when you walk in the woods in winter is the tracks. It helps you to realize all the variety of creatures trying

to co-exist in Northampton. She encouraged people to spend some time in the woods if they can, saying she really appreciates all the accessible conservation areas and rail trails.

[Former Mayor] **Clare Higgins, Northampton**, said she was there primarily to say thank you to Councilor LaBarge for her decades of service. She actually predated her which means she served with her son, who held the seat before Marianne. They were not always on the same side of an issue but always disagreed in ways they were able to work through. One place they definitely agreed was affordable housing. She was at the forefront of saying, 'there's a lot here, let's use it for Habitat for Humanity.' She constantly advocated for the housing needs of people in the community. Even after she left city government and was working for a local social service agency, Councilor LaBarge reached out and asked what the Rotary Club and Elks could do for kids of their community. Service in her runs long and deep, and she thinks that's not going to end anytime soon. When first elected, Councilor LaBarge called her up to yell at her about something the state was doing on Route 66. Councilor LaBarge and she had many, many conversations about Route 66 and ended up at the right place because Councilor LaBarge never walked away from the table and always tried to find a solution. "The city is going to miss your service."

On this last night of the council's term, **Amy Bookbinder** thanked all of them and the Mayor for their hard work and stepping up to serve Northampton. She gave special thanks to her councilor, Rachel Maiore - their Vice President - Councilor Dubs - local rock star and wonderful councilor - and the fabulous Marianne for her good Finance Committee leadership, advocacy for the disabled and great constituent support, respectively. She offered big thanks to Councilor Rothenberg for her "righteous work" on behalf of Ward 3 and the entire city. *She* has served well, but some of them have not served her - their colleague - or others, well, or democracy, transparency, accountability or the importance of separation of powers in their government, not to mention school children, school staff, school families and the needs and rights of their most marginalized people.

Some have said Northampton now has its own scarlet letter, and that letter is Q. "That's why I'm wearing this proudly," she said, referring to a 'Q' on her fleece, which she said stands for 'Quaverly' and 'Questioning.' She stands with all Councilor Rothenberg has and will continue to do on behalf of a better council and a more democratic government.

[She was told that was time.]

**Wendy Mazza, Leeds**, said she has had the privilege of knowing Marianne for many years. As a member of the Northampton Elks Lodge, Marianne would deliver thanksgiving baskets to people in need and she saw how much her acts of kindness meant to them. She learned a lot by going with her. She worked with Councilor LaBarge on a fashion show with proceeds going to Cooley Dickinson Hospital. She dressed as an elf at the children's Christmas party and danced around. There were so many times Marianne donated her time to causes she believes in. She will be missed but she knows she will always be ready to help the people in Ward 6. She personally thanked her for her years of service.

[Former Mayor] **Mary Ford**, said that, looking around the room, she sees Northampton, a community they all love in all its variety. One of the things she remembers about serving with Marianne is that, even though the city kept changing a lot and often functioned in tribes; she never let on being part of any tribe; she respected the individuals she chose to serve. She noticed she never called them 'constituents;' she doesn't think she thought of it as being an exchange. She would say, "my people." She didn't mean they were a group she was in control of; they were people to her and that's why she brought their issues forward. That's why they were so comfortable sharing their issues, trusting her to take them up. "You've just been a wonderful public servant," she volunteered. She wished them all well.

[She was told it was time.]

**Lynn Simmons, Ward 6**, added her voice to other voices expressing their appreciation to Councilor LaBarge. She thanked her for being her city councilor for half her life. What sticks out most about her as a city councilor is the relationships she developed with her constituents. She knows everyone personally - what's going on in their homes and where they might be struggling - and she connects them with resources. "Thank you and enjoy what comes next," she enjoined.

**Denise Lello, Northampton**, publicly thanked outgoing councilors for their service. City councilors devote an enormous amount of time and energy to serving the community. Their job is to make decisions on behalf of their constituents taking into account their concerns as well as the good of the broader community. Always, they must listen carefully and ask questions for clarification. Her primary concern is climate change because it is the problem that impacts and dwarfs every other issue. She recognized three councilors in particular for their efforts to mitigate as well as ameliorate climate change: Councilor Moulton, who has addressed many issues in a caring and supportive manner, Councilor Elkins, who has

always done her homework and asked for additional study when information is unclear and is open to changing her opinion if the facts warrant it, and Councilor Jarrett, who earned admiration and gratitude for his service, first as a councilor and second as president. His patience and openness to citizen comments combined with the fairness and discipline necessary to run effective meetings is a model.

**Megan Wolf, Northampton, Ward 4**, thanked everyone for their service this term, especially outgoing Councilor Moulton, Councilor Elkins, Councilor Jarrett, Councilor LaBarge and Councilor Rothenberg. She offered sincere gratitude to Councilor LaBarge for her decades of service to the city. 30 years of public service is not just a measure of time, it represents thousands of meetings, votes and conversations with constituents and many difficult decisions made in full view of the public. Whether or not they always agreed, that level of commitment deserves recognition and respect. More broadly, serving in elected office requires judgment and restraint and a willingness to engage in disagreement without personalizing it. Their local democracy depends on the ability to debate strongly, hold one another accountable and still respect the processes that govern them. Disagreement is not misconduct, accountability is not persecution, she stressed. Feeling aggrieved does not make one a victim, especially when established processes are followed and colleagues are acting in good faith. When conflicts move from policy disagreement into personal grievance, it undermines trust not only among elected officials but between the public and the institutions meant to serve them. As they mark this transition, 30 years of service reflects a deep investment in this community and the often unseen work of local governance. She hopes they can honor that legacy by strengthening, not weakening, the norms that make public bodies function.

**Nathan Chung, Northampton**, offered general thanks to everyone in the western Mass region for making it through this year. It's been a rough year, so he thanked councilors, other elected officials, appointed officials and those who work in government and those who don't, just for making it through. He personally found it very helpful to read children's books from the Forbes library, he shared. He held up the book "Hoptoad" by Jane Yolen. They live in a society with too much information so people have to 'upcycle' and 'downcycle,' he suggested. He thinks this is a really nice way to relax. With the holiday's coming up, he recommended taking some time to relax and read some children's books.

**Laurie Loisel, Northampton**, sincerely thanked departing councilors who worked hard for the good of their city. Councilor Jarrett has shown stellar leadership at a time when it was badly needed, and his knowledge of parliamentary procedure helped meetings run smoothly. She always counted on Councilor Moulton to bring the conversation back to salient facts, and he is a model for coming to a meeting prepared. She admired Councilor Elkin's breadth of knowledge about legislative matters, intelligence, and important work that led to the creation of the reparations committee. Finally, she thanked Councilor LaBarge for her unparalleled devotion to not only her ward but all of Northampton. She also thanked those staying on: Councilors Perry, Klemmer, Maiore and Dubs. It's a difficult time to be engaged in public office when elected officials get blamed for things not under their control. They often don't hear appreciation when they get things right, so she just wants to thank them for all their work.

**Melissa Maciborski**, thanked all of the councilors who kept people at the center of their work. Quaverly Rothenberg, "you know this means you," she confided. "We'll see you in the next cycle."

**Scott Jackson, Northampton**, completed Amy Bookbinder's unfinished statement at her request. At the last School Committee meeting of the term last week, a request for censure was put forth by two School Committee members and approved by the Mayor for two members returning next term. After public outcry, the censure was withdrawn with an apology for a mistake and the division it caused in the city. Quaverly apologized for mistaken votes she made on a resolution. On Ms. Bookbinder's behalf, he asked councilors, 'where is your apology for censuring Quaverly?' And where is the Gazette's apology for mentioning the censure every time her name was mentioned in articles throughout the campaign? Their censure on dubious grounds was shameful if not ableist and conspiratorial and, in the opinion of many, led to her losing her seat on the council. Those who continue to treat her with the worst contempt, rudeness, disrespect and attempted silencing will not be returning to this council either, for which she is thankful. She hopes the new council will not repeat their misguided, uncivil behavior toward their colleagues, the people of Northampton, or democracy itself. "Good night and good luck, signed Amy Bookbinder," he concluded.

**Virginia Ahearn, Ward 1**, thanked Councilor Jarrett and everyone else.

**George Kohout, State Street**, facetiously asked Marianne if she could take any more accolades. It's been a great treat to work with her the past 28 years. Many citizens don't understand how many hours councilors put in. He thanked her for all her hard work. He had a chance to work with Councilor Elkins on the Planning Board, which was just wonderful, and he thought she brought a lot of those skills and perspectives to the City Council debates. He thanked Councilor Moulton, his neighbor and Ward 1 councilor, for his greatly informative newsletter and for being very responsive to everyone in Ward 1.

“Alex, your partner said it all,” he volunteered. “You’re a bit of a wonky guy; you wear that with pride.” He and Councilor Elkins did some great jobs on revising some of their city ordinances, whether on lighting or around housing and zoning. He also thanked him for “waving the progressive banner,” which always needs to be held high. For all the councilors coming on again, “good luck and God bless.”

**Jen Nery, Ward 3**, noted that times are very difficult across the country and cities this size are particularly pinched. She knows many of them have worked very hard to make things here as good as they can be. She knows many of them have paid a toll in terms of their well-being and in terms of their family. She really hopes that the next steps are focused on getting some peace.

There being no further comments, Councilor Jarrett brought public comment to a close.

<b><u>Recess</u></b>	<b><u>Recess</u></b> The City Council recessed briefly at 7:49 p.m. The council reconvened at 7:58 p.m.
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<b><u>Announcements</u></b>	<p><b><u>Announcements</u></b></p> <p>Saying it was an honor to serve as council president, Councilor Jarrett addressed each councilor in turn to share his appreciation for his/her unique contributions. To Councilor Elkins, it’s been wonderful to work with her on ordinances and resolutions, he shared. “We did some things,” he allowed. He appreciates her eloquent discourse on the challenges facing the city and its difficult financial situation. To Councilor Perry, he appreciated his tireless work on recognition that the success of their city is linked to the success of their downtown, as well as his candor and willingness to slow things down to gather all information and viewpoints. Councilor Moulton’s researched and thoughtful opinions, newsletters and analysis of council decisions helped him to consider many angles on every issue, he noted. “It was fabulous to cosponsor and work together,” he added. He loved working with Councilor Klemer on the Transportation and Parking Commission (TPC), her newsletters and her work seeking input from constituents and getting the facts out there. To Councilor Rothenberg, he said he appreciated her passion and tenacity and her desire for a better Northampton. He commended Councilor Dubs for his commitment to moving accessibility for all forward with the recognition that it <i>is</i> for everyone and his considered and value-centered decision-making. He is very excited he is going to carry the work on sidewalk snow-clearing forward and hopes to see significant progress there.</p> <p>He commended Councilor LaBarge for her nonstop constituent work and communication and recalled walking Florence Road with her years ago as one of their common ward boundaries. “It’s great to see those improvements finally coming,” he related. She let him and city staff know exactly what concerned her residents and never stopped advocating.</p> <p>He said it has been an honor to share leadership with Councilor Maiore. He has sought her counsel with almost every leadership decision, and it was helpful to talk through many difficult decisions. Referring to their work together on climate, public safety and other issues, she has been a steady collaborator for six years, he observed.</p> <p>He thanked Mayor Sciarra for her former work as a councilor, saying he has appreciated the tough decisions she’s had to make and knows how hard the past two years have been. “You’ve moved so many amazing projects forward,” he acknowledged.</p> <p>He also thanked the administrative assistant.</p> <p>Councilor Jarrett said he is excited moving forward to work on depolarization, trying to look at the divisions both locally and nationally. He wants to work to heal divisions. Their local chapter of ‘Braver Angels’ is a great place to start.</p> <p>In what became his time-honored tradition, he concluded by singing an adapted version of “You Can Get it if You Really Want,” by Jimmy Cliff.</p> <p>Councilor Rothenberg began by acknowledging and holding space for the family members and friends of the woman who died in the fire, Local 108 and their mutual aid partners. The last two years have been eye-opening, often troubling but very worthwhile, she shared. As an openly autistic councilor, she has been met with scorn for seeing things differently and expressing herself in ways that don’t conform to the</p>
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social expectations of Northampton's political establishment. Unfortunately, some people in that establishment went beyond just expressing ordinary disdain and took extraordinary measures to attack her character and reputation during an election year. Tonight, she wanted to let the people of Northampton know she is suing Councilor Jarrett, Councilor Moulton, Councilor Elkins and Northampton city government. The lawsuit arose from the censure, an unprecedented occurrence in their city. The same fate nearly befell two of her colleagues on School Committee last week. The City Council's baseless but very specific allegations included the crime of public corruption arising from her call to dispatch to report a dangerous icy road which ultimately was closed after the responding officer slipped and fell. She initially sent a cease and desist order demanding a retraction, but the city attorney responded incorrectly that city councilors are free to accuse her of committing crimes since such allegations are merely opinions the truth and falsity of which is irrelevant. The city and three councilors who authored the resolution have been served and she looks forward to a fair trial in a court of law to show that she has done nothing wrong and that, in fact, they have. Her hope is that, going forward, they can all remember that disagreeing is part of their jobs and not a crime. She is heartened and encouraged by the changes in political culture she has witnessed and is proud to be a part of in their community. She is heartened by all of them. It has been an honor to serve Ward 3. She hopes her legacy as a councilor will be that of someone who pushed for accountability and transparency and for the council to assert itself as a co-equal branch of government and for emphasizing the value of centering the voice of the public and the needs of their most vulnerable neighbors in every decision the council makes.

Councilor Perry reminded folks that it is a great time to enjoy their community with First Night celebrations happening Wednesday, December 31<sup>st</sup>, including fireworks at 6:15 p.m. and the traditional ball-raising at the Hotel Northampton. More information can be found at [firsnightnorthampton.org](http://firsnightnorthampton.org). He thanked departing colleagues as they transition to the 'Valhalla of councilors.' They may return, but know "you will always be here in my heart."

Councilor Elkins said it has been a tremendous honor and her privilege to serve the city of Northampton; not many things she does in life will be as consequential. She has learned a tremendous amount and worked hard to come always prepared, to know her own mind and to change her opinion when necessary and hold firm when appropriate. She thanked city staff and department heads. She could not be more in awe of their work and commitment to this city. She feels like she has gotten a mini degree in city planning by working with Carolyn Misch and has seen pictures of the most disgusting things in the city's sewer system courtesy of Director LaScaleia. It has been an honor and a privilege to work with all the councilors she's served with. She is so happy Mayor Sciarra will be with them for the next four years. She is confident she is the leadership they need and has been proud to work alongside her.

Finally, she thanked her family. In four years, her wife has not come to a single meeting, but Tara and Bess are watching tonight on YouTube. Their families really do give up a lot of time with them. She is looking forward to having some weeknights back with them.

Councilor LaBarge thanked Councilor Jarrett for being who he is. He has worked tirelessly as their council president. She finds that his voice has become stronger and she thinks having a little stronger voice makes it easier for a Council President. She doesn't know what they will do without the knowledge of Councilor Elkins. She thanked Councilor Perry, saying she hopes he continues on and eventually becomes council president or vice president because that's where he belongs. She thanked Councilor Moulton, calling him a 'great asset,' and told Councilor Klemer she would miss her dearly, adding she would love to see her as council president. She rounded out her remarks by thanking Councilor Dubs, Councilor Rothenberg, Councilor Maiore, the Mayor, the Finance Director, Chief of Staff Alan Wolf and the administrative assistant.

Councilor Moulton confined his remarks to giving thanks, first thanking constituents who put their faith in him and others in the city who reached out to engage him, the vast majority in a very civil way. Trying to listen to different points of view in a respectful manner does not mean they are trying to silence critics, he stressed. He also thanked the hundreds of people who volunteer to serve on the city's multi-member boards and committees. As chair of City Services, he has had the opportunity to get to know them and to appreciate the diversity they bring to their city.

All the department heads he has worked with are consummate professionals and the city is very fortunate to have them, he continued. He is happy to see [former council president and vice president] Jim Nash and Karen Foster Cannon here tonight, having appreciated their distinctive leadership in his first term. To

his colleagues who worked diligently to problem solve and address their many challenges, he thanked them for working respectfully together. Though they didn't agree on all the issues they treated each other in a respectful manner. He thanked Councilor Jarrett and Councilor Maire for their inclusive leadership. He did not write a poem or bring a color guard but said Councilor LaBarge was 'one of a kind' and 'a woman with a big heart.' Similarly, he told the administrative assistant she was 'the glue that held the council together.'

"Mayor Sciarra, your leadership has been inspirational," he avowed. With the federal government not only dismantling the constitution but dismantling many social safety nets so many people depend on, her progressive, visionary leadership has resulted in a long list of accomplishments: creation of the Division of Community Care (DCC), the Climate Action and Project Administration (CAPA), preparation for Picture Main Street to revitalize downtown and make it safer and more inviting, support for more than 280 affordable housing units and a \$10.7 million investment in Northampton Public Schools (NPS) over four years.

Councilor Klemer also paid tribute to fellow councilors, saying she enjoyed working with all of them, while Councilor Dubs said he learned a lot from each and every one. To newly-elected councilors, he is looking forward to working with them and finding out what they can accomplish together.

Councilor Maire announced a tractor parade December 27<sup>th</sup>. She'll be a judge. The parade will be going through Florence Center and Look Park.

Reflecting on this term, what she's left with is those moments in between, Councilor Maire shared. To outgoing councilors, "it has been an honor." She complimented Councilor Jarrett as a stellar leader 'noticeably lacking in ego' and amazing friend.

Mayor Sciarra thanked all of the councilors for their work this term, offering thanks to departing councilors for their work and dedication. She thanked Councilor Rothenberg for her two years of service and her passion. She has had the privilege of serving with Councilor Elkins and Councilor Moulton for the entirety of her first term as mayor. "It is truly a tremendous body of work that you have accomplished," she said. She had the honor of serving as a councilor with Councilor Jarrett and Councilor LaBarge. She thanked Councilor Jarrett for his leadership, equanimity and the remarkable time and care he has dedicated to this work. She will miss their twice monthly meetings for not just the good work and great conversation but also the joy of spending time with him.

Mayor Sciarra invoked Shirley Chisholm's famous quote: "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." With respect to Councilor LaBarge, another quote attributed to Chisholm exemplifies her: "Service is the rent that you pay for room on this earth."

"Councilor LaBarge, you live that ethos," she intoned. Northampton was incorporated in 1884 but its City Council began in 1958; before then there were aldermen and common council systems. Since there has been a city council, Councilor LaBarge is the longest serving councilor in Northampton history, first taking office in 1998. She presented her with a plaque to recognize her exceptional service.

**Presentations**

**Presentations**

**Northampton High School (NHS) Road Safety Project Update**

Following an introduction by Mayor Sciarra, DPW Director Donna LaScaleia updated councilors on the NHS Road Safety Project.

The project addresses safety issues around Northampton High School (NHS) on Elm Street, North Elm Street and Woodlawn Avenue, Mayor Sciarra presented. A crash analysis by Fuss & O'Neill showed each intersection experienced one to two crash each year over the past five and a half years, one of which resulted in a bicyclist's death. Two others involved pedestrians on North Elm and Elm. "These instances created a clear and urgent mandate for safety improvements," she confirmed.

Public meetings to solicit community input revealed a wide spectrum of perspectives. Over the course of conversations, participants naturally coalesced into groups with different priorities, notably bicyclists and high school parents, whose strongly held and often competing views shaped the discussion. After listening closely, city officials have refocused the project on the essential safety improvements originally envisioned and developed a balanced plan reflecting the concerns and priorities heard.

The design for upgrades to the corridor in front of the high school have been in progress for about 15 months, Director LaScaleia continued. Design engineer Fuss & O'Neill recommended a wide range of improvements to enhance safety in a radius around the high school, including signalized intersections on Route 9 and restoration of the old bus loop directly in front of the high school. The available funding is \$1.5 million in ARPA funds which must be fully expended by September 30, 2026 and an additional \$1.5 million from the capital plan. Ultimately, their greatest concern was for students crossing Route 9 at pickup and dismissal and for bicyclists.

Director LaScaleia screen-shared a rendering of what she said is close to the final design. She highlighted important safety improvements to be implemented as shown on the plan. The primary safety improvement is the installation of two signalized intersections at Woodlawn Avenue and Route 9 and Elm Street and Route 9, she noted. The signals will have 'exclusive pedestrian phasing,' meaning cars in all directions will stop when the pedestrian push button is activated.

For this project, she is often asked why they didn't do a rotary. A roundabout will not geometrically fit due to the proximity of Childs Park and other private properties and would be subject to domain takings, she explained. They ultimately decided signalized traffic signals will provide the safest scenario for students to cross the street. They have implemented a school speed zone of 20 mph with flashing beacons. Because there is free-flowing traffic on Route 9, even with a school zone limit of 20 mph; left and right turn movements onto Route 9 from the minor approaches of Woodlawn Avenue and Elm Street are risky and difficult during high traffic times. So, signalization of these intersections is going to greatly improve the safety of all cross movements for school buses, cars, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Additionally, they have narrowed travel lanes to reduce traffic speeds, she continued. The existing travel lane width on Route 9 is between 12 and 14 feet and it is going to be decreased to 11 feet, while the turn lanes on Woodlawn and Elm Street will be 10 feet.

Plans also call for reconstructing existing medians, new ADA compliant curb ramps, shifting of the existing inbound bus stop slightly towards downtown and the intentional shrinking of crossing distances in the crosswalks as well as the installation of continuous protected bike lanes on Route 9. Five-foot bike lanes separated from travel lanes by a four-foot concrete buffer with rumble strips will extend through the project area. Pavement will be milled and overlaid to allow for high-visibility striping and new signage is proposed. She will be coming to City Council for an ordinance implementing parking restrictions along Route 9 and the left-turn movement from Woodlawn Avenue onto Route 9 will be restored.

With a project like this, they need to be careful of scope creep. If they try to engage in major geometrical reconstruction, the project becomes unaffordable because they would need to address utilities. Given the budget and their schedule, city officials are confident the design of this project will improve core safety. The traffic movements and volume of people moving through this corridor is significant. They are confident this project accomplishes the core needs of protecting the most vulnerable users. ARPA funding must be fully expended by September 30, 2026, she reiterated They need to move on this project, and it will be bid in January for as immediate construction as can be arranged.

Councilor Rothenberg asked about public input on this design.

Director LaScaleia said they have had multiple renderings that looked like this but didn't have a separated bike lane.

Rothenberg asked what she would say are lingering concerns of the public with this design?

The separated bike lanes on Route 9 will restrict parking. Some members of the school community like to park on Route 9 for pick-up and drop-off. As part of this public process there were competing priorities, but this is the safest design for bicyclists. In their professional opinion, the loss of these parking spaces is actually going to be a benefit to the school community.

Councilor Jarrett said he and others advocated for alternatives to stop lights, in part because stop lights do not slow the speed of traffic passing through. He does appreciate that narrowing the lanes will slow speed and the commitment to year-round bicycle lanes.

Councilor Rothenberg asked the projected cost differential between protected bike lanes and non-protected bike lanes.

Director LaScaleia said it's more of a maintenance issue. Physical barriers themselves are not particularly expensive; the issue is the operations and maintenance cost of fixing the post when it gets hit. The plan is

to use scored concrete to separate them. This will be absorbed into the DPW's operating budget as compared to being a capital expense to install physical barriers.

Councilor Jarrett thanked Director LaScaleia for the presentation.

**Bullet-point Summary of Ordinance Review Committee Recommendations**

Councilor Dubs and Councilor Perry described the review process and presented the recommendations of the 2025 Ordinance Review Committee. They thanked committee citizen members, Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler and Attorney Seewald for their assistance.

Councilor Maiore and Councilor Elkins thanked the committee for its work, with Councilor Elkins referring to it as 'shovel-ready legislation.' She hopes to see councilors take some of these recommendations and run with them.

**Consent Agenda**

**Consent Agenda**

Councilor Jarrett reviewed the items on the consent agenda. There being no removals, **Councilor Moulton moved to approve the consent agenda. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.**

The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda:

- A. Minutes of December 4, 2025
- B. 25.342 Appointments to Arts Council and Trust Fund Committee, all positive recommendations, City Services - 12/15/2025

**Arts Council**

**Clara Barnhart, 17 Madison Ave**

Term: November 2025 - June 2028

*To fill a vacancy*

**Trust Fund Committee**

**Casey Quinn, 20 Harrison Ave**

Term: November 2025 - June 2027

*To fill a vacancy*

- C. 25.352 Appointment to Northampton Housing Authority, positive recommendation, City Services – 12/15/2025

**Northampton Housing Authority**

**William Abrashkin, 26 Adare Place**

Term: December 2025 - June 2026

*Filling the term of Maureen Carney*

- D. 25.356 Application for Supervised Display of Fireworks - First Night

**Financial Orders (on 1st reading)**  
**25.359 An Order to Authorize Payment of Prior Year Invoices - 1st reading**

**Financial Orders (on 1st reading)**

**25.359 An Order to Authorize Payment of Prior Year Invoices - 1st reading**

**Councilor LaBarge moved to suspend the rules to waive two readings. Councilor Dubs seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.**

**Councilor Elkins moved to approve the order. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.**

**The following order passed final reading**

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

*In City Council*

December 18, 2025

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

**25.359 An Order to Authorize Payment of Prior Year Invoices**

*Ordered, that*

The City Council authorize payment of two prior fiscal year invoices (FY2025) for the Department of Health and Human Services:

Big Y Foods, Inc. – \$34.74

Ernie’s Garage, Inc. –\$35.00

**Passed final reading and enrolled.**

**Financial Orders (on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading)**  
**25.353 An Order to Reprogram Memorial Hall Funds for City-Wide Building Portfolio Upgrades – 2<sup>nd</sup> reading**

**Financial Orders (on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading)**  
**25.353 An Order to Reprogram Memorial Hall Funds for City-Wide Building Portfolio Upgrades – 2<sup>nd</sup> reading**  
**Councilor Elkins moved to approve. Councilor Moulton seconded.**

Councilor Rothenberg said she asked Chief of Staff Alan Wolf to send her a breakdown of expenditures for the most recent work. She asked if anyone could explain why the two most recent payments to Keiter were not in Open Checkbook.

Mayor Sciarra pointed out that the invoices referenced are not associated with this agenda item. Director Nardi said she believes the payments Councilor Rothenberg is talking about are for emergency repairs to Memorial Hall and not this project.

Councilor Rothenberg wondered if they would still like to answer the question of why the invoices do not yet appear on Open Checkbook. It may simply be a question of how the accounting system works.

Councilor Jarrett said he did not think it was relevant to the project at hand.

“But, is it more important to bury your sword on the relevance than to not answer a question that would seem like it's avoiding just basic transparency?” Councilor Rothenberg persisted. “It's probably an easily answerable question,” she suggested.

Councilor Moulton said he believed it is out of order. “We’re discussing a different project; we’re discussing different money,” he pointed out.

Councilor Jarrett agreed.

Councilor Elkins raised the point of order that it is a violation of Open Meeting Laws (OML) to discuss items not on the agenda.

Councilor Rothenberg asked how the bidding for the new study project will take place.

An RFP will be created, and it will be put out to bid, Director Nardi said.

Councilor Rothenberg asked why councilors feel this should not be part of the CIP?

Councilor Perry reiterated that he would love to get a sense of how many buildings are included in the city-wide building portfolio.

Mayor Sciarra said they are planning a tour with Central Services.

Councilor Rothenberg said it is great that the immediate needs came in under budget. However, there is no reason these funds should not be returned to the Undesignated Fund (Free Cash), no reason this should not be on the CIP and no reason the new council should not be considering it. This will be a 'no' vote for her.

Director Nardi clarified that this is not money left over. The City Council appropriated \$400,000 for looking at efficiency reconfiguration of Memorial Hall as part of the CIP. They are asking the council to reprogram the funding for a larger look including additional buildings.

Councilor Maiore reminded that, at the time, the feedback from residents was that they wanted them to look at a broader scope.

Councilor Jarrett said he sees this as a way to audit internally and gain expertise externally for their buildings and their usage, and he hopes it will generate savings.

Councilor Elkins said she generally thinks where ever there are opportunities to look at things holistically they should do so since it leads to greater efficiencies.

Councilor Rothenberg expressed her understanding that it is \$400,000 to pay consultants to look at their buildings. Director Nardi confirmed that is the case.

Councilor Rothenberg started to speak, and Councilor Jarrett asked her to please raise her hand.

Councilor Rothenberg asked him to please make an accommodation.

Councilor Maiore raised the point of order that they are speaking out of turn, and Councilor Jarrett sustained the objection. **Councilor Maiore called the question. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion carried 8:1 by voice vote with Councilor Rothenberg opposed.**

**The motion to approve carried 8:1 by roll call vote with Councilor Rothenberg opposed.**

**The following order passed final reading:**

**APPROVED - 25.353**  
**An Order to**  
**Reprogram**  
**Memorial Hall Funds**  
**for City-Wide**  
**Building Portfolio**  
**Upgrades – 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**reading**

**City of Northampton**

MASSACHUSETTS

**In City Council**

December 4, 2025

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

**25.353 An Order to Reprogram Memorial Hall Funds for City-Wide Building Portfolio Upgrades**

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2025 as part of the FY2026 CIP, the City Council appropriated \$400,000 for *Memorial Hall Structural Remediation & Efficiency Reconfiguration* to address building needs at Memorial Hall; and

WHEREAS, subsequent capital planning discussions identified the need for a comprehensive, citywide facilities assessment to evaluate conditions, space needs, and options for renovation, demolition/reconstruction, or relocation across multiple municipal buildings; and

WHEREAS, the City will draft an RFP for a Citywide Municipal Facilities Analysis to guide this work, including facility condition assessments, space utilization studies, scenario development (renovation, rebuild on existing sites subject to historic restrictions, and relocation to City- or privately-owned properties), conceptual layouts, and order-of-magnitude cost estimates; and

WHEREAS, consolidating this work under a single program—*Building Portfolio Upgrades*—will enable a holistic approach to planning, yield greater efficiency in the use of public funds, and position the City for informed, phased investments; and

WHEREAS, completion of the RFP scope may identify near-term critical repairs and require subsequent design services to advance priority projects emerging from the analysis;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED,

that the City Council reprogram the Four Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$400,000) from Memorial Hall Structural Remediation & Efficiency Reconfiguration to Building Portfolio Upgrades for the purposes of a Citywide Municipal Facilities Analysis and to fund subsequent design necessary to implement priority recommendations resulting from the study.

**Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.**

**25.354 An Order to**  
**Appropriate**  
**\$112,500 from**  
**Capital Stabilization**  
**for Expanded**  
**Vehicle Leasing –**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> reading**

**25.354 An Order to Appropriate \$112,500 from Capital Stabilization for Expanded Vehicle Leasing – 2<sup>nd</sup> reading**

Councilor Rothenberg asked who uses this vehicle.

Finance Director Nardi clarified that it is for 10 vehicles which are part of a pool serving used by multiple employees. CAPA Director Benjamin Weil said the pool serves the Building Department, Central Services and the School maintenance department. The DCC has one vehicle being rotated out.

The DPW is not participating in the leasing program in this phase.

**Councilor Perry moved to approve the order. Councilor Moulton seconded.**

Councilor Rothenberg asked why Ford cancelled the F-150. Ford determined that the F-150 was not profitable for them, Director Weil said.

**The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.**

**The following order passed final reading:**

**APPROVED - 25.354**  
**An Order to**  
**Appropriate**  
**\$112,500 from**  
**Capital Stabilization**  
**for Expanded**  
**Vehicle Leasing –**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> reading**

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

**In City Council**

December 4, 2025

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

**25.354 An Order to Appropriate \$112,500 from Capital Stabilization for Expanded Vehicle Leasing**

WHEREAS, excluding the Police and Fire Departments and the Department of Public Works, the City of Northampton maintains a fleet of approximately forty-two vehicles that fall within categories subject to the EV-first vehicle procurement policy; and

WHEREAS, of those, one third are more than a decade old; and

WHEREAS, most of the current fleet consists of internal combustion vehicles that could be replaced with battery electric vehicles, which have significantly lower emissions and operating and maintenance costs; and

WHEREAS, those vehicles for which electric vehicle options are either unavailable or not cost-effective can be replaced with newer, more efficient functionally-equivalent vehicles, which also result in lower emissions; and

WHEREAS, older vehicles lack safety features that are standard on new vehicles that would reduce the likelihood of insurance claims and costs associated with crashes; and

WHEREAS, many departments have requested new vehicles on the capital improvement plan, but repeatedly postponed acquisition to later years; and

WHEREAS, for the above reasons, more rapid updating of the municipal fleet would help the city pursue its goals of reduced maintenance and operations costs, reduced fossil fuel consumption, and a transition toward decarbonization of municipal operations; and

WHEREAS, on average the city acquires 3.1 new vehicles per year at an average annual cost of \$200,000; and

WHEREAS, using an open-ended leasing program, the city can triple the rate of vehicle replacement in one year, with an initial appropriation equivalent to or less than the typical annual appropriation for vehicle purchases; and

WHEREAS, using an open-ended leasing program, the city benefits from the purchasing power and expertise as well as the national sales network of the lease provider; and

WHEREAS, Northampton’s motor pool has piloted vehicle acquisition through an open-ended leasing program and has demonstrated an ability to cut costs in half while achieving

a ten-fold increase in value returned from sales of old vehicles compared to the prior sales approach.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,**

The City Council appropriate \$112,500 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the city’s leasing program.

**Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.**

**Financial Orders (on**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> reading, cont.)**

**Financial Orders (on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, cont.)**

**25.343 An Order to Authorize Borrowing and Appropriate \$561,000 in CPA Funds for Veterans Field Pump Track Project - 2nd reading**

**25.344 An Order to Appropriate \$1,965 to Meadow City Conservation Coalition for Trail Improvement Project - 2nd reading**

**25.345 An Order to Appropriate \$3,000 in CPA Funds for Mill River Greenway Tree Planting - 2nd reading**

**25.346 An Order to Appropriate \$320,300 in CPA Funds for Mineral Hills Open Space Acquisition - 2nd reading**

25.347 An Order to Appropriate \$75,000 in CPA Funds To PVH4H for Westhampton Road Affordable Home - 2nd reading

25.348 An Order to Appropriate \$600,000 in CPA Funds for 27 Crafts Avenue Affordable Housing Project - 2nd reading

25.349 An Order to Appropriate \$25,000 in CPA Funds to Install Electronic Scoreboards at Florence Fields - 2nd reading

25.350 An Order to Appropriate \$3,000 in CPA Funds to Forbes Library for Coolidge Desk Project - 2nd reading

**Councilor Dubs moved to approve all eight (8) CPA orders as a group. Councilor LaBarge seconded.**

Councilor Jarrett said he appreciated the email received from Assistant Director Sarah LaValley with answers to pump track questions.

Councilor Rothenberg said she would like to remove the pump track to vote on separately; however, there was not unanimous consent to withdraw the motion.

Councilor Rothenberg said that, although she agrees with everything besides the pump track, she will vote 'no.' It has been presented as something beneficial to those in affordable housing because of its proximity but none of her residents have indicated a desire for this; they have other immediate needs. The city has plenty of recreational facilities that are not being maintained. There is no reason to add new things when they are not taking care of what they already have. She will vote 'no' although she does not oppose any other projects.

Councilor Elkins noted that CPA projects are never included on the CIP and the project involved extensive public fundraising.

Councilor Moulton said he was first introduced to the pump track project in 2022 when he served on the ARPA review committee. There was significant public input and support, he attested. In response to the claim that it will not be maintained, the email received from Sarah LaValley today specifically outlines an agreement the Northampton Cycling Club (NCC) has made with the Parks and Rec department about how it will be maintained.

They have many bathrooms at many facilities that don't exist, Councilor Rothenberg said. She acknowledged it was brought through the CPA but contended that the CPA exists to encourage communities to do non-essential things in lean years. It is hard to justify this when they have kids that can't read. . .

Councilor Elkins raised the point of order that it is not pertinent to the agenda item.

The fact that a well-organized, privileged group of residents pushing for their hobby came to the CPA is not a compelling reason, Councilor Rothenberg asserted. They should do more outreach to ensure everyone in their community knows how to bring requests to the CPA.

Councilor Perry said he is very pleased to hear that the bathroom will be maintained as it is a public restroom many people use. He is pleased to see this because it brings much-needed attention to the area.

**Councilor Elkins called the question. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion carried 8:1 by voice vote with Councilor Rothenberg opposed.**

**The motion to approve passed 8:1 by roll call vote with Councilor Rothenberg opposed.**

**The following eight (8) orders passed final reading:**

**APPROVED - 25.343**  
**An Order to**  
**Authorize Borrowing**  
**and Appropriate**  
**\$561,000 in CPA**  
**Funds for Veterans**  
**Field Pump Track**  
**Project - 2nd reading**

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

*In City Council, December 4, 2025*

*Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee*

**25.343 An Order to Authorize Borrowing and Appropriate \$561,000 in CPA Funds for Veterans Field Pump Track Project**

Ordered, that

WHEREAS, the Northampton Cycling Club and Parks and Recreation Department submitted an application for Community Preservation Act funding for creation of a bicycle skills pump track at Veterans Field;

WHEREAS, the project will provide an alternative recreational and sporting opportunity in an existing accessible and dynamic park facility;

WHEREAS, the pump track has widespread support, will contribute to positive health status of residents, enhance and revitalize the existing park, and contribute to quality of life by creating new recreational and social opportunities;

WHEREAS, on November 19, 2025, the Northampton Community Preservation Committee voted to recommend that \$561,000 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support this project.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,**

That \$561,000 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funds to pay costs of the Veterans Field Pump Track Project, and, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.

Specifically: That, pursuant to the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, and in addition to other amounts appropriated therefor, the sum of \$561,000 is hereby appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund to pay costs of design and construction of a pump track located at Veterans Field in order to make it more functional for its intended use and any costs incidental and related thereto (the "Veterans Field Pump Track Project").

To meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow \$561,000 under and pursuant to Chapter 44B, Section 11 of the General Laws, or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the City therefor; that the Mayor is authorized to take any action necessary or convenient to carry out the Veterans Field Pump Track project.

APPROVED - 25.344  
An Order to  
Appropriate \$1,965  
to Meadow City  
Conservation  
Coalition for Trail  
Improvement Project  
- 2nd reading

**City of Northampton**  
**MASSACHUSETTS**

*In City Council, December 4, 2025*

*Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee*

25.344 An Order to Appropriate \$1,965 to Meadow City Conservation Coalition for Trail Improvement Project

***Ordered, that***

WHEREAS, the Meadow City Conservation Coalition submitted a CPA small grant application for creation of native pollinator garden and installation of interpretive signage along forested trails;

WHEREAS, the project will expand the recreational and educational values of existing protected open spaces, and will foster deeper community engagement with conservation areas;

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2025, the Northampton Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend that \$1,965 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support this project.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,**

That \$1,965 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funding to the Meadow City Conservation Coalition for the Montview and Terrace Trails improvement project. And, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.

Specifically, \$1,965 is appropriated from the CPA Open Space Reserve (account #2344930-359931).

APPROVED - 25.345  
An Order to  
Appropriate \$3,000  
in CPA Funds for  
Mill River Greenway  
Tree Planting - 2nd  
reading

**City of Northampton**  
**MASSACHUSETTS**

*In City Council, December 4, 2025*

*Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee*  
25.345 An Order to Appropriate \$3,000 in CPA Funds for Mill River Greenway Tree Planting

***Ordered, that***

WHEREAS, the Mill River Greenway Initiative submitted a CPA small grant application for planting of 20 trees on permanently protected open spaces within the Mill River Greenway;

WHEREAS, the trees are part of a larger project to commemorate the Mill River Flood of 1874 and its victims, and will serve multiple ecological and social functions;

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2025, the Northampton Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend that \$3,000 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support this project.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,**

That \$3,000 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funding to the Mill River Greenway Initiative for the Mill River Greenway Tree Planting project. And, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.

Specifically, \$3,000 is appropriated from the CPA Open Space Reserve (account #2344930-359931).

APPROVED - 25.346  
An Order to  
Appropriate  
\$320,300 in CPA  
Funds for Mineral  
Hills Open Space  
Acquisition - 2nd  
reading

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

*In City Council, December 4, 2025*

*Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee*

25.346 An Order to Appropriate \$320,300 in CPA Funds for Mineral Hills Open Space Acquisition

***Ordered, that***

WHEREAS, the Northampton Conservation Commission and Office of Planning & Sustainability submitted a CPA application for purchase of 72 acres in the Mineral Hills;

WHEREAS, the parcel includes existing trails and viewsheds, vernal pools and headwater streams, and a diversity of landforms, surficial geology and hydrology that create important wildlife habitat and climate change resiliency, and will connect to other protected open spaces;

WHEREAS, CPA funds will be used as a match for an already received \$297,330 state Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity Grant;

WHEREAS, on November 19, 2025, the Northampton Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend that \$320,300 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support this project.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,**

That \$320,300 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funding to the Northampton Conservation Commission and Office of Planning and Sustainability for the Mineral Hills South open space acquisition Project. And, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.

Specifically, \$249,710 is appropriated from the CPA Open Space Reserve (account #2344930-359931), and \$70,590 is appropriated from the CPA Budgeted Reserve (account #2344930-359930).

APPROVED - 25.347  
An Order to  
Appropriate \$75,000  
in CPA Funds To  
PVH4H for  
Westhampton Road  
Affordable Home -  
2nd reading

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

*In City Council, December 4, 2025*

*Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee*

25.347 An Order to Appropriate \$75,000 in CPA Funds to PVH4H for Westhampton Road Affordable Home

Ordered, that

WHEREAS, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity submitted an application for Community Preservation Act funding for creation of a carbon-neutral affordable homeownership unit on Westhampton Road;

WHEREAS, Habitat for Humanity has an excellent record of creating housing throughout the City and the Pioneer Valley, and the project has wide community support, leverages funding from many other sources, and utilizes volunteer labor;

WHEREAS, the house will be permanently restricted to individuals and families earning 80% of area median income or below;

WHEREAS, on November 19, 2025, the Northampton Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend that \$75,000 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support this project.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,**

That \$75,000 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funding to Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity for the Westhampton Road Cottage project. And, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.

Specifically, \$75,000 is appropriated from the CPA Budgeted Reserve (account #2344930-359930).

Financial Orders (on  
2<sup>nd</sup> reading, cont.)

Financial Orders (on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, cont.)  
The following orders passed final reading:

25.348 An Order to Appropriate \$600,000 in CPA Funds for 27 Crafts Avenue Affordable Housing Project - 2nd reading

APPROVED - 25.348  
An Order to  
Appropriate  
\$600,000 in CPA  
Funds for 27 Crafts  
Avenue Affordable  
Housing Project -  
2nd reading

**City of Northampton**  
**MASSACHUSETTS**

*In City Council, December 4, 2025*

*Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee*  
25.348 An Order to Appropriate \$600,000 in CPA Funds for 27 Crafts Avenue Affordable Housing Project

**Ordered, that**

WHEREAS, Valley Community Development Corporation submitted an application for Community Preservation Act funding for creation of an affordable housing project at 27 Crafts Avenue;

WHEREAS, CPA funds will be used to create 30 fossil-fuel free, permanently affordable units in the heart of downtown, with close access to bus transportation, bike travel or by walking to an abundance of workplace opportunities, services and amenities;

WHEREAS, CPA funds will be used to leverage significant funds from a variety of other sources, including an already-received \$921,300 Municipal Vulnerability Program grant, \$450,000 Department of Energy Resources grant, and anticipated additional state grants and low income and renewable energy tax credits;

WHEREAS, on November 19, 2025, the Northampton Community Preservation Committee, voted unanimously to recommend that \$600,000 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support this project.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,**

That \$600,000 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funding to the Downtown Affordable Housing Creation Project. And, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.

Specifically, \$254,675 is appropriated from the CPA Housing Reserve, (account #2344930-359933), and \$345,325 is appropriated from the CPA Budgeted Reserve (account #2344930-359930).

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**Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.**

**25.349 An Order to Appropriate \$25,000 in CPA Funds to Install Electronic Scoreboards at Florence Fields - 2nd reading**

APPROVED - 25.349  
An Order to  
Appropriate \$25,000  
in CPA Funds to  
Install Electronic  
Scoreboards at  
Florence Fields -  
2nd reading

**City of Northampton**  
**MASSACHUSETTS**

*In City Council, December 4, 2025*

*Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee*  
25.349 An Order to Appropriate \$25,000 in CPA Funds to Install Electronic Scoreboards at  
Florence Fields

**Ordered, that**

WHEREAS, Northampton Parks and Recreation Department submitted a CPA application for installation of two electronic scoreboards at Florence Recreation Fields;

WHEREAS, the project has wide community support, will enhance Florence Fields, an extremely popular recreational resource through addition of a positive feature to benefit players, coaches;

WHEREAS, the scoreboards have already been donated by the Ray Ellerbrook Fund, and the CPA match is necessary only for installation costs.

WHEREAS, on November 19, 2025, the Northampton Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend that \$25,000 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support the project.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,**

That \$25,000 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funding to the Northampton Parks and Recreation for the Florence Fields Scoreboard project. And, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.

Specifically, \$25,000 is appropriated from the CPA Budgeted Reserve (account #2344930-359930).

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**Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.**

**25.350 An Order to Appropriate \$3,000 in CPA Funds to Forbes Library for Coolidge Desk Project -**  
**2nd reading**

APPROVED - 25.350  
An Order to  
Appropriate \$3,000  
in CPA Funds to  
Forbes Library for  
Coolidge Desk  
Project - 2nd reading

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

*In City Council, December 4, 2025*

*Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee*  
25.350 An Order to Appropriate \$3,000 in CPA Funds to Forbes Library for Coolidge Desk  
Project

***Ordered, that***

WHEREAS, the Trustees of Forbes Library submitted a CPA small grant application for critical repairs to Calvin Coolidge’s City Council desk;

WHEREAS, restoration of the desk will allow it to be removed from storage and placed on display in an exhibit featuring Coolidge’s service in local and state elected offices prior to becoming president;

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2025, the Northampton Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend that \$3,000 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support this project.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,**

That \$3,000 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funding to the Forbes Library for the Coolidge desk project. And, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.

Specifically, \$3,000 is appropriated from the CPA Historic Preservation Reserve (account #2344930-359932).

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**Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.**

**Orders**  
**25.358 An Order to Amend Temporary and Permanent Easements Between the City and Valley CDC to Support Affordable Housing - 1st reading**

**Orders**  
**25.358 An Order to Amend Temporary and Permanent Easements Between the City and Valley CDC to Support Affordable Housing - 1st reading**

Planning Director Carolyn Misch explained that the order is essentially an amendment to an order the City Council adopted in 2021. The original area for temporary and permanent easements has changed since the plan now calls for using the parking area as a geothermal wellfield for 27 Crafts Avenue.

In order for Valley CDC to build the project with geothermal, they need a temporary easement for construction and a permanent easement to access and maintain the wells, Director Misch advised. The expanded area essentially takes in the entire back portion of the city property, including the parking lot and all the way up to the building face.

Councilor Jarrett asked Director Misch to speak to the impacts of drilling on the availability of parking.

During construction, it was always planned for the parking lot to be a staging area for Valley CDC, Director Misch said. Afterwards, they would rebuild the parking lot and vacate it. Putting the bore holes in the parking lot won't prohibit parking in the future. The parking lot will be restored to its slightly altered space reduced by two spaces.

Councilor Maiore asked the timing of the bore hole drilling.

Director Misch said that is a good question. She imagines it would be one of the earlier things to happen.

Councilor Rothenberg said the whole project is really tainted by Wayne Feiden changing the assessment value to avoid triggering a bid. She doesn't want to have anything to do with it. It financially benefited Dorie Brooks. She said she would like to lodge a charter objection.

Councilor Jarrett said she was not able to lodge an objection because it is not on the floor for a vote.

**Councilor Klemer moved to suspend the rules. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion carried 8:1 by voice vote with Councilor Rothenberg opposed.**

**Councilor Elkins moved to approve the order. Councilor Klemer seconded.**

Councilor Rothenberg again attempted to lodge a charter objection.

**Councilor Maiore moved to call the question. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion passed 8:1 by voice vote with Councilor Rothenberg opposed.**

**Councilor Rothenberg lodged a charter objection.**

Councilor Jarrett said they would try to hold special meeting on Tuesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**See minutes of December 23, 2025 for final reading.**

<p><b><u>Ordinances</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Ordinances</u></b> None.</p>
<p><b><u>Zoning Ordinances (Not yet Referred)</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Zoning Ordinances (Not yet Referred)</u></b> None.</p>
<p><b><u>Zoning Ordinances</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Zoning Ordinances</u></b> None.</p>
<p><b><u>Resolutions</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Resolutions</u></b> None.</p>
<p><b><u>Financial Orders (on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading)</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Financial Orders (on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading)</u></b> None.</p>

New Business

New Business

Adjourn

Adjourn

**Councilor Perry moved to adjourn. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion passed unanimously 8:1 by voice vote with Councilor Jarrett opposed. The meeting adjourned at 10:12 p.m.**

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_, Administrative Assistant



# MAYOR GINA-LOUISE SCIARRA

City of Northampton

Office of the Mayor

210 Main Street Room 12

Northampton, MA 01060-3199

(413) 587-1249 Fax: (413) 587-1275

mayor@northamptonma.gov

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council  
FROM: Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra  
CC: City Solicitor Alan Seewald  
DATE: January 13, 2026  
RE: Appointment of City Solicitor

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I am appointing Attorney Alan Seewald of 60 Revell Avenue, Northampton, MA as City Solicitor for the City of Northampton effective Thursday, January 15, 2022. Attorney Seewald's term as City Solicitor expired with the end of my last term as Mayor, and he has been appointed on a temporary basis in the interim.

Alan Seewald has served as City Solicitor for the City of Northampton since 2012. He brings an unparalleled wealth of experience, expertise, and wise counsel that has helped guide the city to the stability Northampton currently enjoys.

I respectfully submit his appointment to the City Council for confirmation in accordance with Section 2-10 of the Northampton City Charter and Northampton Administrative Code Chapter A, Part II, § 2-02. I have attached a copy of Attorney Seewald's professional resume for your review.

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

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*In City Council*

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Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

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**26.003 An Order to Appropriate \$2.1 Million Free Cash to Various Reserve Accounts**

*Ordered, that*

\$2,112,722 be appropriated from the FY26 General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance (Free Cash) to the following accounts:

\$528,180.50	Capital Stabilization Fund
\$528,180.50	Climate Mitigation Stabilization Fund
\$528,180.50	Fiscal Stability Stabilization Fund
\$528,180.50	Stabilization Fund

# City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

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*In City Council*

January 15, 2026

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Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra and DPW Director LaScaleia

## **26.004 An Order to Appropriate Enterprise Retained Earnings to Various Projects**

*Ordered, that*

\$ 1,412,999 be appropriated from the FY26 Water Enterprise Retained Earnings to the Transmission Main account (3200610 583004) for the reconstruction of transmission mains.

\$ 569,233 be appropriated from the FY26 Sewer Enterprise Retained Earnings to the Sewer Line Replacement account (3200600 589168) for ongoing sewer projects.

\$ 569,233 be appropriated from the FY26 Sewer Enterprise Retained Earnings to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) account (3200600 583003) for WWTP and Pump Station Improvements.

\$ 60,740 be appropriated from the FY26 Stormwater Enterprise Retained Earnings to the Drain Replacement account (3200620-589022) for replacement of drain pipes throughout the city.

# City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

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## *In City Council*

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Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

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### **26.005 An Order to Appropriate \$251,025 Free Cash to NPS Special Education Stabilization Fund**

*WHEREAS*, on June 6, 2024, the City Council accepted Chapter 40, §13E of the Mass. General Laws, and pursuant to that statute, authorized the creation of a special purpose stabilization fund called the Northampton Public Schools (NPS) Special Education Stabilization Fund; and

*WHEREAS*, on June 20, 2024, \$800,000 was appropriated to initially fund the special purpose stabilization fund; and

*WHEREAS*, in order to support the stabilization account an annual appropriation would be made into the NPS Special Education Stabilization Fund by the amount of the prior year's Medicaid reimbursement and the amount of any turnback to the city from the prior year's NPS budget following the certification of free cash; and

*WHEREAS*, the method of this appropriation would be by an Order to the Northampton City Council filed by the mayor.

## **Now, Therefore be it Ordered, that**

The City Council appropriate \$235,310.62 which is the amount of Medicaid reimbursement the city received in FY2025 and \$15,713.92 which is the amount of unspent funds from the FY2024 NPS budget returned to the city, for a total of \$251,024.54 from the FY2026 General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance (Free Cash) to the Special Education Stabilization Fund.

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

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*In City Council*

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Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

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**26.006 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for McKinney Vento Transportation  
Reimbursement**

*Ordered, that*

\$ 55,323 be appropriated from the FY2026 General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance (Free Cash) to Northampton Public Schools (W0330000-533000) to provide the schools with the reimbursement from the Commonwealth which was received by the city in FY2025 for the transportation of homeless students in FY2024, such reimbursement being known as the McKinney Vento Transportation Reimbursement.

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

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*In City Council*

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Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

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**26.007 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for Foster Care Transportation Reimbursement**

*Ordered, that*

\$17,743 be appropriated from the FY2026 General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance (Free Cash) to Northampton Public Schools (W0330000-533002) to provide the schools with the reimbursement from the Commonwealth which was received by the city in FY2025 for the transportation of foster students in FY2024.

# City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

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*In City Council January 15, 2026*

Upon recommendation of Council President Rachel Maiore

O-26.009

An Order

## **To Amend the City Council Meeting Schedule 2026-2027**

***Ordered, that,*** the following amendment be made to the [2026-2027 City Council Meeting Schedule](#) as adopted by [26.002 An Order to Set Date and Time of 2026 - 2027 City Council Meetings](#) on January 5, 2026.

~~February 19, 2026~~

~~July 9, 2026~~ July 15, 2026 (Wednesday)