



## **Committee on Finance and the Northampton City Council**

*Councilor Deborah Klemer  
Councilor Aline Davis  
Councilor Rachel Maiore  
Councilor Meg Robbins*

Meeting Date: January 21, 2026

Time: 5 p.m.

212 Main Street, Northampton, MA

**The January 21, 2026 Finance Committee 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 committee's deliberations by attending the meeting in person, watching the meeting live on Comcast Channel 15, live-streaming the meeting on YouTube [here](#) or joining the virtual meeting by phone or computer.**

Public comment begins at 5 p.m.

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

[PUBLIC MEETING LINK](#)

**MEETING ID: 856 6006 7321**

**PARTICIPANT #: #**

**PASSCODE: 923835**

- 1. Meeting Called To Order And Roll Call**
- 2. Announcement That Meeting Is Being Audio/Video Recorded**  
This meeting is being audio/video recorded.
- 3. Election Of Chair/Vice Chair**
- 4. Public Comment**
- 5. Approval Of Minutes From The Previous Meeting**

#### **A. Minutes Of May 12, 2025 And June 16, 2025**

Documents:

[05-12-2025\\_finance committee minutes.pdf](#)

[06-16-2025\\_finance committee minutes.pdf](#)

#### **6. Financial Orders**

- A. 26.003 An Order To Appropriate \$2.1 Million Free Cash To Various Reserve Accounts**

**History:**

- Referred to Finance - 1/15/2026

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**

**History:**

- Referred to Finance - 1/15/2026

Documents:

[26.004 an order to appropriate enterprise retained earnings to various projects.pdf](#)

**7. Set Meeting Schedule And Format For 2026 - 2027**

**8. Schedule FY2027 Budget Listening Session**

**9. Discussion Of Independent Audit Procurement Process**

Documents:

[gfoa and dor recommendation.pdf](#)  
[gfoa best practices.pdf](#)  
[sample timeline for fy2027 audit procurement process.docx](#)  
[fy2027audit.012126.pdf](#)

**10. New Business**

*-Reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.*

**11. Adjourn**

**Contact: Deborah Klemer at [dpastrichklemer@northamptonma.gov](mailto:dpastrichklemer@northamptonma.gov)  
or 646-824-2102**



## **Committee on Finance and the Northampton City Council**

### **Finance Committee Members**

*Councilor Rachel Maiore, Chair*

*Councilor Stanley W. Moulton, III, Vice Chair*

*Councilor Marissa Elkins*

*Councilor Marianne LaBarge*

Meeting Date: May 12, 2025

Time: 6 p.m.

Via Zoom

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** At 6:02 p.m. Councilor Rachel Maiore convened the meeting.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were Finance Committee members Rachel Maiore, Chair; Stanley W. Moulton, III, Vice Chair, Marissa Elkins and Marianne L. LaBarge. Also present were Finance Director Charlene Nardi and Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler.

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

3. **Public Comment**  
There being no one present for general public comment, Councilor Maiore moved to the next item on the agenda.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of April 30<sup>th</sup> were not completely transcribed, so they were not able to be approved.

4. **Third Quarter (Q3) Financial Report**

Finance Director Charlene Nardi presented the third quarter (Q3) financial report.

In reviewing the report, General Fund (GF) revenue is on track with the budget, Director Nardi reported. At 75% of projections, receipts from Personal Property taxes are tracking slightly higher than the same periods in FY2022, FY2023 and FY2024, and, at 73%, Real Estate taxes are right in line with third-quarter collections for the past three years.

At \$2.2 million, motor vehicle excise is at 77% with \$666,000 still to collect to meet the projection of \$2.9 million, slightly lower (by about \$165,000) than the same time last year. (Funds continue to come in until the end of June, she reminded.) They are expecting a little bump based on comments that people have bought cars in anticipation of pending tariffs. As a reminder, they had increased this projection by \$300,000, or 11.6%, over last year, she shared.

Hotel/motel is exceeding the budget estimate but is only \$5,000 more than last year. They increased this by 12% last year and increased it again for FY2026 by another 11.6%.

At 84%, Meals taxes are exceeding the projection and are \$26,000 higher than the same time last year. They increased this projection by 11.6% over last year.

At \$882,000 (119.8%), cannabis revenue has exceeded projections, with collections \$220,000 more than at the same time last year, she shared. They just crept this projection in FY2025 since it had been dropping for the last three years since its peak. However, at the end of FY2024 they saw an increase and the positive trend appears to be continuing in FY2025. They increased this projection by another 22% for FY2026 based on this most recent data.

Most Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTS) have been collected. However, since the report is as of March 21, 2025, it doesn't show payments received after that date.

On Page 2, collectively, third-quarter parking revenues are \$1.4 million, higher compared to \$1.3 million last year at the same time, representing an increase of \$99,000. They increased this projection for FY2026 by 18.8%. All revenue above projections goes to the reserve fund to support the parking system, she reminded.

Ambulance services continues to be a significant source of revenue at \$2.9 million. They still have \$157,000 to collect but are at 94.9%. They increased this projection by 10.84% in FY2025 and are increasing it again for FY2026 by another 13.3%.

Charges for services are at 79.3% but, when Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (SVAHS) tuition is removed, charges for services are at 107.4%. The amount collected over budget is just \$27,000.

Licenses and permits are at 103.8% of that category for a total of \$48,304 over budget. They increased this projection by 15.29% in FY2026.

Federal revenue (Medicaid reimbursement) is at 62.3% of budget projections. They generally see a large payment in late May/early June, so it is expected to meet projections. At the Massachusetts Government Financial Officers Association (GFOA) conference she attended recently, a state official said Medicaid is likely to be safe in FY2026 but most likely to be impacted for FY2027.

State revenue is at 75%, she noted. Parking tickets are at 98.2%, with \$10,515 left to collect. This line was increased by an additional 27.33% for FY2026.

Under miscellaneous revenue, interest on investments is \$2.1 million, she reported. This projection was increased by 1,065.62% for FY2026, or \$2 million. As a reminder, the increase is because of the new Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) account offered for the first time in FY2023. There is no guarantee that this type of account will always be available, she pointed out. They are taking a calculated risk by increasing this line and using it to support the budget in FY2026.

Overall, general revenues are in sync with budget projections at 78.7%, and, if they remove SVAHS tuition and parking revenue, receipts are at 78.4% with \$22,969,755 left to collect for the rest of the year.

Director Nardi reviewed the spreadsheet comparing quarterly receipts for Hotel/motel, meals, cannabis and short-term rental revenue from FY2022 to FY2025.

Moving on to enterprise fund revenue, everything is tracking as expected with enterprise funds running ahead of budget expectations, she reported. Receipts look very similar to FY2021. As a reminder, overall budgets have not changed in four to five years. Unless they have specific questions, she doesn't have much to say about these. There is a little extra in the solid waste enterprise due to the sale of landfill stickers because the DPW started selling stickers in July instead of June this year.

Director Nardi reviewed General Fund Personnel Services (PS) expenditures, noting that, ideally, at this time, departmental PS budgets should be at or below 75%. Not all of the March payroll is included, so budget lines are generally a little lower than 75%. Ordinary Maintenance (OM) for some departments, especially DPW, runs a little slower because these gear up and do most of their projects starting in the spring.

Snow and Ice is in deficit. As always, at the end of the year they make yearend transfers to true up redlined budgets. Snow and Ice is the only budget allowed to maintain a deficit throughout the year. The \$208,000 shortfall will need to be covered with a transfer.

Councilor Maiore asked about Assessor's - Capital, which seemed to be above 75%.

The capital fund is used for the revaluation required to be done every five years, Director Nardi explained.

Enterprise fund expenses are tracking as Director LaScaleia expected, she continued. As mentioned before, enterprise percentages are generally lower due to carryovers and carry forwards for projects. The DPW has a lot of vacancies so PS lines are much lower than expected.

Councilor Maiore asked if they know how many quarters or years in a row the same vacancy rates have been maintained. Is there a certain time when administrators reassess because of ongoing vacancies?

Director Nardi said the Mayor will talk about this more, but she knows they have had difficulty in the DPW ever since the pandemic. There has been a lot of talk about how to address it, whether through negotiations or otherwise. Because they don't have the personnel she knows they are using contractors. She believes that has been part of the conversation between DPW Director LaScaleia and Mayor Sciarra. It always makes sense to have their own personnel doing the work if possible.

Councilor LaBarge noted that, even on Cardinal Way, an outside company was cutting city trees and she had residents concerned about why they were cutting city trees on Burts Pit Road. She called Cyndi Quinn who explained that it is not unusual for outside contractors to be hired for tree cutting. The last time they heard from Donna the DPW was 30 or 31 employees short, she reminded.

Director Nardi said she would defer to Director LaScaleia to talk about her divisions and where her vacancies are. She is hopeful they will see a glimmer of hope as they put positions back out to fill.

Councilor LaBarge said she knows other cities are having the same problem.

Councilor Maiore said she sees the budget line for storm drains below 75%. Is it that they are appropriating funds that aren't being fully utilized? She wondered.

Projects usually start in the spring and go through to the fall so she will encumber a lot of this money to carry over for ongoing projects to be completed in the fall, Director Nardi said. OM capital lines are often misleading because a lot of them are pass-throughs for transfer to capital projects.

Councilor Moulton thanked Director Nardi for the presentation. As she noted, parking revenue is up significantly which is a good economic sign for downtown. He thinks this partly reflects success in the change of hours for which the city is charging for parking. He also noticed that the mobile app revenue is substantial, at 212%. Is part of that the fact that now the mobile app is usable on virtually every parking space in Northampton?

Director Nardi said she believes so.

He asked the increased projection for FY2026 for Interest on Investments. 1,065% or so, Director Nardi said.

He expressed his understanding that this is dependent on the same investment vehicle which has been in use for the past three years remaining available for use. At what point might it no longer be available? He asked.

The Treasurer had a meeting with the bank today and asked the question of whether this vehicle could be discontinued, and it could be, Director Nardi shared. She is not sure under what circumstances it would be discontinued, but their statement that it could be means that it contains risk for them. It is also dependent on interest rates. As the president and the Federal Reserve argue about interest rates, if they drop that will also impact that line.

Councilor Moulton said he understands the calculated risk involved but, given the recent experience, he feels it is a comfortable risk. It could mean significantly less revenue if that vehicle is no longer available.

Regarding the meals, lodging and cannabis revenue tracking spreadsheet, Councilor Moulton said he thinks the best news is that they now have six straight quarters of year-to-year comparisons on cannabis that is up, which to him is definitely a positive trend, reversing the negative trend they saw a couple of years ago. It suggests to him that is a reasonable projection to continue increasing the cannabis revenue. He's not quite sure how that is explained.

Councilor Maiore said she was wondering if they are new businesses or existing businesses just doing more business.

There are no new ones because they put a cap on it, Councilor Moulton reminded. Ten have been operating consistently over the last couple of years and ten remain open.

Councilor Maiore said her unsubstantiated human social theory is that since cannabis has become legal and businesses have opened, the more it becomes institutionalized, the more comfortable using it people become.

Councilor Maiore thanked the director for her report.

5. **Items Referred to Committee**

None.

6. **Structure and Format of FY2026 Budget Hearings - Discussion**

Councilor Maiore said she wanted to review the structure because they had 11 ½ hours of budget hearings last year and she would like to keep them as concise as possible this year for everyone's benefit. She decided they should give more guidelines to departments about how long they would like their presentations to be.

Members discussed an informal proposal for the order of proceedings on Tuesday, May 27<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> attached to the agenda entitled, 'FY2026 budget hearings – proposed structure' and agreed to follow the order and estimated times shown.

City Council Committee on Finance Meeting Minutes for May 12, 2025

Her preference is to open the floor to public comment immediately after presentations rather than going first to councilors and to have just one section for councilor comments and questions. Departmental presentations are generally limited to 15 to 20 minutes.

Councilor Elkins said it looks like a good idea. Reducing the back and forth between public comment and their musings makes sense. The time limits may be aspirational but she thinks it's helpful to have an expectation out there.

Councilor Maiore confirmed she could check with solicitor Seewald about hard time limits.

Councilor Elkins suggested the possibility of having separate sign-up sheets for each department to help them anticipate how long question and answer periods might last.

Councilor Maiore said she will not have a separate section at the end for budget questions for other departments since last year other department heads ended up having to wait on standby all night in case questions were posed to them.

If questions arise for other departments, those could be addressed at the June 5<sup>th</sup> full council meeting when the budget is deliberated, Councilor Moulton pointed out. That makes more sense than having department heads who are not making presentations at the budget hearings.

They should always remind people that all budget books can be accessed on line, Councilor Elkins said. Councilor Maiore mentioned linking the budget on the agenda.

Councilor Maiore said she would get a refresher from Attorney Seewald about the nature of public hearings and add overall times and budget links to the agenda as well as a note as to where the budget is available in hard copy.

7. **New Business**

*-Reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.*

8. **Adjourn:** There being no further business, **Councilor Elkins moved to adjourn. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion carried 4:0 by roll call vote. The Finance Committee meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.**

**Contact: Rachel Maiore @[rmaiore@northamptonma.gov](mailto:rmaiore@northamptonma.gov) or (413) 923-4318**



## **Committee on Finance and the Northampton City Council**

### **Finance Committee Members**

*Councilor Rachel Maiore, Chair*

*Councilor Stanley W. Moulton, III, Vice Chair*

*Councilor Marissa Elkins*

*Councilor Marianne LaBarge*

Meeting Date: June 16, 2025

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Council Chambers, 212 Main Street

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** At 6:31 p.m. Councilor Rachel Maiore convened the meeting.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were Finance Committee members Rachel Maiore, Chair; Stanley W. Moulton, III, Vice Chair, Marissa Elkins and Marianne L. LaBarge. Also present were Office of Planning and Sustainability Assistant Director Sarah LaValley and Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler.

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

3. **Public Comment**  
There being no one present for general public comment, Councilor Maiore moved to the next item on the agenda.

### **Approval of Minutes**

**Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the April 30, 2025 and May 12, 2025 minutes. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.**

The May 12, 2025 minutes were not able to be accepted since they were not yet fully transcribed.

4. **Items Referred to Committee**  
A - I 2nd round of FY2025 Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funding Recommendations, referred to Finance by City Council - 5/21/2025

**25.260 An Order to Appropriate \$17,400 in CPA Funds for Ruggles Center Accessibility Upgrades**

**25.261 An Order to Appropriate \$248,000 in CPA Funds for Boggy Meadow Road Trail Construction**

**25.262 An Order to Appropriate \$35,000 in CPA Funds to Laurel Park Documentation Project**

**25.263 An Order to Appropriate \$70,000 in CPA Funds for Maines Field Flood Resilience Project Phase**

**2**

**25.264 An Order to Appropriate \$639,615 in CPA Funds for Leeds School Playground for All**

**25.265 An Order to Appropriate \$91,065 in CPA Funds for Priority Clothing Collection Restoration**

**Project**

City Council Committee on Finance Meeting Minutes for June 16, 2025

**25.266 An Order to Appropriate \$98,329 in CPA Funds for Priority Historic Gravestone Conservation Project**

**25.267 An Order to Appropriate \$3,000 in CPA Funds to Forbes Library for Textile Preservation Project**

**25.268 An Order to Appropriate \$316,553 in CPA Funds for 148 South Street Accessibility Upgrades**

After extensive review of worthwhile applications, these were the ones selected to bring forward for funding consideration by City Council, Assistant Director LaValley shared. It will expend available funding for FY2025. She presented individual projects in greater detail.

Order 25.260, a \$17,400 award to the Ruggles Center, will provide a permanent, code-compliant ramp for ADA access to the facility. A wheelchair ramp exists but does not meet current code. An application to the National Register of Historic Places is in process for the center.

Since they are looking for ADA compliance; "how can we say 'no?'" Councilor LaBarge asked. She has been to the Ruggles Center many times. "I feel this is absolutely necessary."

As a general matter, Councilor Elkins asked Ms. LaValley to let them know if any of the funding requests were particularly controversial. It would help to understand if any public concern was raised at earlier meetings.

With this, the only issue was figuring out if the design made sense, Assistant Director LaValley said. Everything at the Ruggles Center is done by volunteers and the design also was done on a volunteer basis. There was no issue with the merits of the project.

Councilor Moulton asked if the Disability Commission was involved. Ms. LaValley said not specifically, since the design related to technical code requirements.

Councilor Elkins suggested discussing the applications individually and then voting on them as a group.

If anyone is familiar with the Cooke Avenue entrance to Fitzgerald Lake, it is a popular entrance but has a lot of rocks, roots and slope issues that make it challenging for people with mobility issues, Assistant Director LaValley explained. Boggy Meadow Road trail construction (25.261) will create an accessible trail for people to reach the beaver pond. A design was previously funded and is now ready to move forward. If the pending grant application is successful, the cost to the city will be limited to the Mass Trails grant's local match.

Councilor Moulton confirmed the entrance is very popular and heavily used. He is entirely in favor of universal access and making it easier for everyone to use.

The trail will be a soft surface, Director LaValley added.

If the city receives Mass Trails funding and the grant is not matched, the city would have to forfeit the grant, LaValley said. There is a 25% required local match.

The \$35,000 for Laurel Park documentation (Order 25.262) was a request from the Historical Commission and a recommendation of the preservation element of the Sustainable Northampton Plan completed last year, Director LaValley advised. It is the next step for a National Register of Historic Places listing. Laurel Park is an incredibly unique and important resource for the city. A lot of buildings there are threatened by having been converted from summer residences to full-time residences. Some have been taken care of perfectly and are in amazing shape and others were never intended as year-round residences and face possible demolition if conditions get too bad. It is a unique Methodist summer community founded in the 1870's, very few of which are left across the

country. The Laurel Park association and homeowners are very much in favor and are willing to open up their archives and contribute research to get the work done.

Councilor Jarrett reminded those listening that Laurel Park is both a condominium community and nonprofit organization (website: [Laurelparkarts.org](http://Laurelparkarts.org)) that holds events for the public. He asked if there is a commitment to that continuing. He would like to think they are providing a public benefit in exchange for this benefit.

No commitment is tied to this specific request, Director LaValley said. The request to document the community came from the Historical Commission on behalf of the city as a potential springboard to a National Register of Historic Places listing, similar to what was done most recently for the Pomeroy Terrace neighborhood. Since the application is not coming from Laurel Park, they didn't think it appropriate at this point to put requirements on the condominium community itself, she explained.

As background for the Maines Field resilience project Phase 2 (25.263), Maines Field has been hit very hard in the last few years by damaging flooding, Director LaValley reminded. With its location on the Mill River and the increase in storms, the recreation department understands flooding is something that is going to continue. The department received funding in a previous round to do some analysis (H & H modeling and a topographic study) as to where flooding and the velocity of storms and floods will be. These are heavily utilized fields. Phase I data will inform how they can reimagine Maines Field in a way to minimize damage to the most actively-used areas.

The \$70,000 will continue Fuss & O'Neil's work to the next stage.

The Leeds School Playground for All (25.264) is the second accessible playground the Community Preservation Commission (CPC) has recommended, Director LaValley reminded. The council previously funded a playground at Ryan Road School currently in design stage. This is a joint project of Leeds School and Central Services. The pre-K playground is limited and not accessible to all students and residents and needs to be removed in coming years due to age and corrosion. The money will fund a new playground able to accommodate everybody, including those with physical, sensory and developmental disabilities.

They are very excited about this in Leeds, Councilor Maiore shared. The playground is actively used by the whole community in the summer and after school, so it is a community investment.

That was important for CPC members to hear, LaValley acknowledged.

Councilor Moulton recalled the statement from advocates for the Ryan Road playground that there is no similar facility for many miles. He thinks it shows Northampton's leadership.

As Councilor Maiore noted, it is specifically targeted for very young children, which might not be the case for Ryan Road, Ms. LaValley added.

Councilor Jarrett noted that the Ryan Road playground also used a loan. He wondered if she could tell them its outstanding balance and how much debt service for the two will detract from annual funding going forward.

The city has not made any payments on the first one yet, LaValley said. She would need to look at the estimated payments. The order includes an authorization to borrow \$370,000, it was noted.

Regarding the Priority Clothing Collection Restoration Project (Order 25.265), the CPC heard from Historic Northampton and others, including experts in the field, how amazing Historic Northampton's clothing collection is, with samples of both day-to-day items and clothing from historical figures such as a Robin Hood costume

made by Grace Coolidge for Calvin Coolidge, Jr., Assistant Director LaValley shared. As historic clothing, it can't just be thrown in a washing machine; wear and tear needs to be addressed in an appropriate manner.

Councilor Maiore said she's glad the clothing will be preserved. Councilor Elkins referred to it as 'a great project to preserve the stuff of lives,' saying it speaks to her theater heart.

The Priority Historic Gravestone Conservation Project (25.266) is a joint application from the DPW and the Historical Commission and will build on work done to address Priority 1 and Priority 2 gravestones, Director LaValley continued. The Historical Commission works closely with the DPW as a steward of the city's historic cemeteries, and the DPW has worked hard to do a thorough assessment of historic stones and what is needed for their treatment. The highest priority stones were able to be completed with a prior CPA award. West Farms Road and Park Street cemeteries will be the targets for the restoration.

"It's about time," Councilor LaBarge said. She is so happy this has come forth so they can do what they have to do with the stones.

The Textile Preservation Project at Forbes Library (25.267) will preserve articles of clothing on a much smaller scale, Director LaValley reported. It is the beginning of Forbes assessing what they have and figuring out how best to make it available to the public. Like Historic Northampton, Forbes has clothing from notable residents like two hats from Calvin and Grace Coolidge as well as an extensive t-shirt collection including Pride t-shirts from the '80's.

The 148 South Street accessibility funding request (25.268) came from Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Betty Allen Chapter, which owns the house at 148 South Street, one of the best preserved colonial structures in the city. It is not currently accessible at all. DAR is working hard to open its doors for more tours, historical events and genealogical research and create more inclusivity.

In 2022, there was an award for replacement of knob and tube wiring which was a hazard.

Councilor Moulton said there was also an application going back to 2008/2009, shortly after the CPA was established. LaValley confirmed there was a small award (under \$20,000) for refurbishment of a historic flag pole and custom interior storm windows.

The structure is owned by DAR but also home to the sons of the American Revolution, Councilor Moulton noted.

Noting that Northampton has some of the oldest housing stock in the country, Councilor Elkins referred to the need for balance between the goal of maintaining historic structures and updating places people live modern life and meeting current needs. She feels like they do a pretty good job, saying she knows of other communities that get really bogged down in historic preservation at the expense of growth and development and meeting current needs. She feels like it is important to get the balance right and the CPA process is a big part of that, helping identify key structures and put city skin in the game. This is a good example, she suggested.

The Historical Commission reviewed this application and was fully supportive of the sensitive way in which the improvements respected the historical nature of the house, Director LaValley said.

Councilor Jarrett said he also appreciates that it will add accessibility to this important building. It is a significant amount of money for a private non-profit, so he would appreciate hearing more about the DAR's work, he said.

One of the DAR's main focuses is historic preservation and education, Assistant Director LaValley responded. The house is open a minimum of one day a month to the general public and DAR also hosts events, such as the

City Council Committee on Finance Meeting Minutes for June 16, 2025

LaFayette celebration this weekend. DAR is working to be more inclusive, hold more events and teach residents about the revolution.

Councilor Maiore said people are interested in hearing how the CPA is meeting the goal of increasing attainable /affordable housing. She asked how that is going this cycle.

A minimum of 10% must be set aside for each of the four program areas: historic preservation, recreation, open space and affordable housing, Ms. Lavalley reminded. To some extent, it's driven by the timing of projects the city's affordable housing partners have in the pipeline. Through FY2025 Round 1, investment is pretty even at about 25% for each program area. Spending fluctuates but has been fairly even over time.

In his cover letter, Brian Adams noted that over 200 units of affordable housing have been created through the CPA over its 20-year existence, Councilor Moulton noted. He complimented Assistant Director LaValley on the slide show showing the exact nature of the projects being funded. People are curious about how CPA money is being used, he confirmed.

Councilor Elkins thanked the CPC for its work, noting that it is a very community-driven process.

Assistant Director LaValley commented that the CPA has served as a springboard to start a lot of projects that would not otherwise have been started. It has made a huge difference to the city.

Councilor LaBarge thanked the CPC.

**Councilor Elkins moved a positive recommendation for all of the orders. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by voice vote.**

1. **New Business**

*-Reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.*

2. **Adjourn:** There being no further business, **Councilor Elkins moved to adjourn. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion carried 4:0 by voice vote. The Finance Committee adjourned at 7:18 p.m.**

**Contact: Rachel Maiore @[rmaiore@northamptonma.gov](mailto:rmaiore@northamptonma.gov) or (413) 923-4318**

**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.

## Mass DOR / Division of Local Services on Rotating Outside Auditors

O'Donnell - 9/5/15

### DLS Fact Sheet:

“It happens that municipalities will rely on one auditor or audit firm for multiple years. In fact, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that communities engage the same auditor by entering into multi-year agreements, or a series of one-year contracts, for a term of at least five years. A multi-year agreement allows for greater continuity and enables a new auditor to spread initial start-up costs over multiple years, potentially reducing costs in the initial years. However, after this term, GFOA recommends a full competitive selection process and a rotation of auditors after each multi-year agreement, provided there is adequate competition among qualified auditors. Contracting with a new audit firm can not only bring a fresh perspective, but reflects good practice. **In general, communities are encouraged to re-advertise for auditing services every five to eight years.** GFOA also acknowledges circumstances or locations where there is a lack of competition among fully qualified auditors. In such cases, the participation of the current auditors is acceptable, assuming their past performance has been satisfactory and has conformed to industry standards.”

### Financial Management Review for the City of Taunton / September 2013:

“Taunton has contracted with KPMG to conduct annual audits for more than a decade. While staying with one auditor over multiple years promotes continuity and minimizes disruption of everyday activities, the Government Finance Officers Association recommends that outside auditors be changed every five to eight years. Cycling new auditors provides fresh perspective and fosters long-term independence. We therefore also advise Taunton to solicit proposals from multiple firms for the next fiscal year.”

### Financial Management Review for the Town of Pembroke / December 2013:

“We recommend that the town advertise for auditing services every five-to-eight years. According to DOR’s records, audits conducted since FY1985 have been completed by Raymond Kasperowicz CPA. As a routine practice, we comment on the number of years that a municipality might contract with or rely on the same auditor. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that communities enter into multi-year agreements with auditors, or a series of one- year contracts, for a term of five-to-eight years. A multi-year agreement allows for greater continuity and enables a new auditor to spread initial start-up costs over multiple years, potentially reducing costs in the initial years. However, after this term, GFOA recommends a full competitive selection process. If auditors are retained over many years, the principal in charge of the town’s account should periodically change. Contracting with a new audit firm can not only bring a fresh perspective, but reflects good practice.”



Government Finance Officers Association

# BEST PRACTICE

## Audit Procurement

### BACKGROUND:

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has long recommended that state and local governmental entities obtain independent audits of their financial statements performed in accordance with the appropriate professional auditing standards. Properly performed audits play a vital role in the public sector by helping to preserve the integrity of the public finance functions and by maintaining citizens confidence in their elected leaders.

### RECOMMENDATION:

GFOA makes the following recommendations regarding the selection of auditing services:

- The scope of the independent audit should encompass not only the fair presentation of the basic financial statements, but also the fair presentation of the financial statements of individual funds and component units. The cost of extending full audit coverage to the financial statements of individual funds and component units can be justified by the additional degree of assurance provided. Nevertheless, the selection of the appropriate scope of the independent audit ultimately remains a matter of professional judgment. Accordingly, those responsible for securing independent audits should make their decision concerning the appropriate scope of the audit engagement based upon their particular governments specific needs and circumstances, consistent with applicable legal requirements.
- Governmental entities should require in their audit contracts that the auditors of their financial statements conform to the independence standard promulgated in the General Accounting Offices *Government Auditing Standards* even for audit engagements that are not otherwise subject to generally accepted government auditing standards.
- **Governmental entities should enter into multiyear agreements of at least five years in duration when obtaining the services of independent auditors.** Such multiyear agreements can take a variety of different forms (e.g., a series of single-year contracts), consistent with applicable legal requirements. Such agreements allow for greater continuity and help to minimize the potential for disruption in connection with the independent audit. Multiyear agreements can also help to reduce audit costs by allowing auditors to recover certain "startup" costs over several years, rather than over a single year.
- Governmental entities should undertake a full-scale competitive process for the selection of independent auditors at the end of the term of each audit contract, consistent with applicable legal requirements. Ideally, auditor independence would be enhanced by a policy requiring that the independent auditor be replaced at the end of the audit contract, as is often the case in the private sector. Unfortunately, the frequent lack of competition among audit firms fully qualified to perform public-sector audits could make a policy of mandatory auditor rotation counterproductive. In such cases, it is recommended that a governmental entity actively seek the participation of all qualified firms, including the current auditors, assuming that the past performance of the current auditors has proven satisfactory. Except in cases where a

multiyear agreement has taken the form of a series of single-year contracts, a contractual provision for the automatic renewal of the audit contract (e.g., an automatic second term for the auditor upon satisfactory performance) is inconsistent with this recommendation.

- Professional standards allow independent auditors to perform certain types of nonaudit services for their audit clients. Any significant nonaudit services should always be approved in advance by a governmental entity's audit committee. Furthermore, governmental entities should routinely explore the possibility of alternative service providers before making a decision to engage their independent auditors to perform significant nonaudit services.
- The audit procurement process should be structured so that the principal factor in the selection of an independent auditor is the auditor's ability to perform a quality audit. In no case should price be allowed to serve as the sole criterion for the selection of an independent auditor.

#### References:

- *CPA Audit Quality: A Framework for Procuring Audit Services*, General Accounting Office, August 1987.
- *Audit Management Handbook*, Stephen J. Gauthier, GFOA, 1989.
- *An Elected Officials Guide to Auditing*, Stephen J. Gauthier, GFOA, 1992.
- *Governmental Accounting, Auditing and Financial Reporting (GAAFR)*, Stephen J. Gauthier, GFOA.

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203 N. LaSalle Street - Suite 2700 | Chicago, IL 60601-1210 | Phone: (312) 977-9700 - Fax: (312) 977-4806

TIMELINE FOR PROCUREMENT PROCESS FOR INDEPENDENT AUDIT TO ALLOW CITY COUNCIL AWARD  
OF CONTRACT BY SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

## COUNCILORS

AT LARGE

Meg Robbins  
Garrick Perry



WARD

1 Gwen Nabad  
2 Deborah Klemer – Vice President  
3 Laurie Loisel  
4 Jeremy Dubs  
5 Aline Davis  
6 Christopher C. Stratton  
7 Rachel Maiore – Council President

CITY COUNCIL  
***CITY OF NORTHAMPTON***  
MASSACHUSETTS

## MEMORANDUM

**FROM:** Laura Krutzler, Administrative Assistant, Northampton City Council

**TO:** City Council Committee on Finance

**DATE:** January 21, 2026

**Re:** FY2027 Independent Audit

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I suggested putting this on the agenda to give a heads up to the committee that one of the projects on their agenda this year may be conducting a procurement process for the Independent Audit.

As you probably know, a key financial responsibility assigned to the City Council by the Charter ([Section 7-6 Independent Audit](#)) is to annually provide for an outside audit of the city's books and accounts by a certified public accountant or firm. The council rules assign the Administrative Assistant the responsibility to "assist in preparing requests for proposals for an independent auditor in accordance with Sec 7-6 of the Charter."

The City Council last awarded a three-year [contract](#) to Scanlon & Associates by order adopted September 7, 2023 for the FY2024-FY2026 audits. Charter 7-6 requires that, "The award of a 3-year contract to audit shall be made by the city council on or before September 15 of every third year." Therefore, the council is required to award a new audit contract by September 15, 2026.

[City Council rules](#) (3.1 SELECTION OF AN OUTSIDE AUDITOR) further provide that, "3.1.1 The Finance Committee shall oversee the process of selection of an independent auditor and shall make a recommendation on the award of a contract for auditing services to the full Council."

In order to result in a contract award by September 15th, a full procurement process ideally needs to commence in the Spring.

I prepared a sample timeline to show the steps involved and why the work needs to start so early. Ideally, accounting firms should be given 30 days to respond to an RFP. And Finance Committee members have to review the proposals, decide which firms to interview and conduct interviews. The Finance Committee's recommendation needs to get to council by its August meeting in order to allow two readings prior to the September 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.

I thought this would be a good opportunity to bring this to your attention outside of a full council meeting. It's one of the few things that necessitates scheduling special meetings of the Finance Committee.

Important to note is that, per M.G.L. c. 30B, Section, **contracts with** labor relations representatives, lawyers or **certified public accountants are exempt from the state procurement act**. So going out to bid is not legally required, and the procurement process to be followed is not prescribed by Chapter 30B but is at the discretion of the city council.

While going out to bid is not legally required, both the Department of Revenue (DOR) and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommend municipalities undertake a full-scale competitive process for the selection of an independent auditor every five to eight years. (See quotes from DLS Fact Sheet and GFAO Best Practice, attached to 1/21/2026 Finance Committee agenda.)

In short, I am looking for direction from the City Council and its Finance Committee as to whether to undertake a full procurement process this year.

Please note, that, if, for whatever reason, the Finance Committee/City Council decides not to go out to bid, the alternative is simply to request a quote from Scanlon & Associates for providing auditing services for the next three years.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Krutzler