



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, February 5, 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 or call 413-587-1288.

The February 5, 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. 6:30 P.M. 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). 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. 6:35 P.M. 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). 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

A. It All Starts at the Library/Forbes and Lilly Library Overview and Updates - Forbes and Lilly Library Directors Lisa Downing and Adam Novitt

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 December 18, 2025 and January 15, 2026 regular meetings and January 5, 2026 Organizational Meeting

Documents:

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

[01-05-2026_City Council Organizational Meeting.pdf](#)

[01-15-2026_City Council Meeting.pdf](#)

B. Approve 25.355 National Grid Petition for Park Hill Road (Petition#: 31193070)

See documents above

C. Approve 25.357 National Grid/Verizon Petition to install JO and Midspan Poles and Relocate Existing Pole #15 on Hawley Street (Petition# 31165186)

See documents above

D. 26.005 An Order to Appropriate \$251,025 Free Cash to NPS Special Education Stabilization Fund - 2nd reading

History:

- Referred to consent agenda - 1/15/2026

Documents:

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

E. 26.006 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for McKinney Vento Transportation Reimbursement -2ndreading

History:

- Referred as group with 26.007 to consent agenda - 1/15/2026

Documents:

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

F. 26.007 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for Foster Care Transportation Reimbursement - 2nd reading

History:

- Referred with 26.006 as group to consent agenda - 1/15/2026

Documents:

[26.007 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for Foster Care Transportation Reimbursement.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. 26.011 An Order to Make a \$290,317 Midyear Appropriation to NPS - 1st reading

Process note: Two readings are respectfully requested.

Documents:

[26.011 An Order to Make a 290,317 Midyear Appropriation to NPS.pdf](#)

B. 26.012 An Order to Reprogram \$75,161 from Various IT Accounts for NPS Chromebooks - 1st reading

Process note: Two reading are respectfully requested.

Documents:

[26.012 An Order to Reprogram 75,161 from Various IT Accounts for NPS Chromebooks.pdf](#)

9. Financial Orders (on 2nd reading)

A. 26.004 An Order to Appropriate Enterprise Retained Earnings to Various Project - 2nd reading

History:

- Referred to Finance Committee with 26.003 - 1/15/2026
- Positive recommendation, Finance Committee - 1/21/2026

Documents:

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

10. Orders

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.

A. 26.010 An Ordinance Relative to All-Way Stop Control for Finn Street at Prospect Street - 1st reading

Documents:

[26.010 An Ordinance Relative to All-Way Stop Control for Finn Street at Prospect Street.pdf](#)

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

16. 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.

17. Resolutions

18. Adjourn

Contact: Council President Rachel Maiore

Email: 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

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

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

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

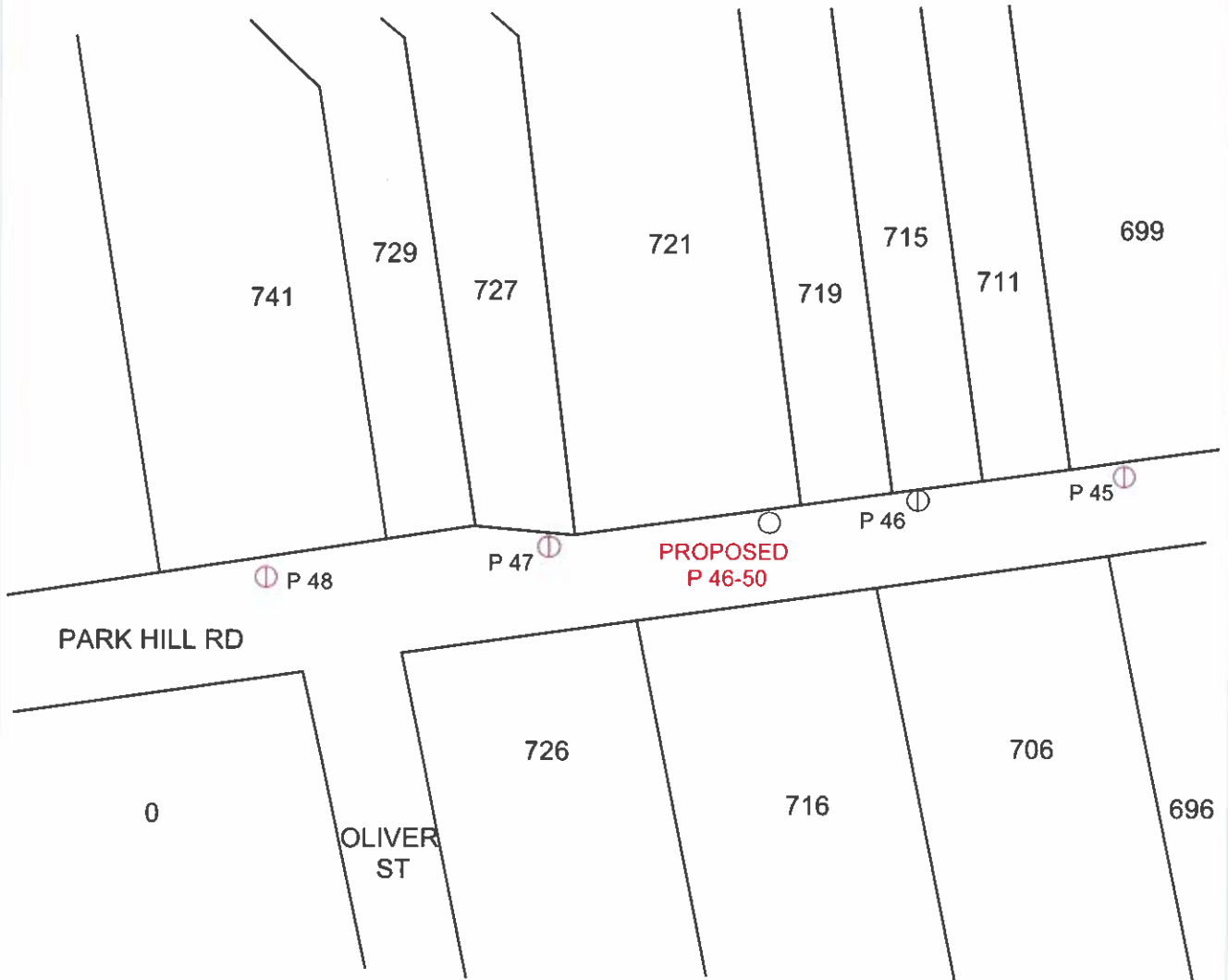
I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the location order and certificate of hearing with notice adopted by the of the City of Massachusetts, on the day of 20 , and recorded with the records of location orders of the said City, Book , Page . This certified copy is made under the provisions 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 PL 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

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__.

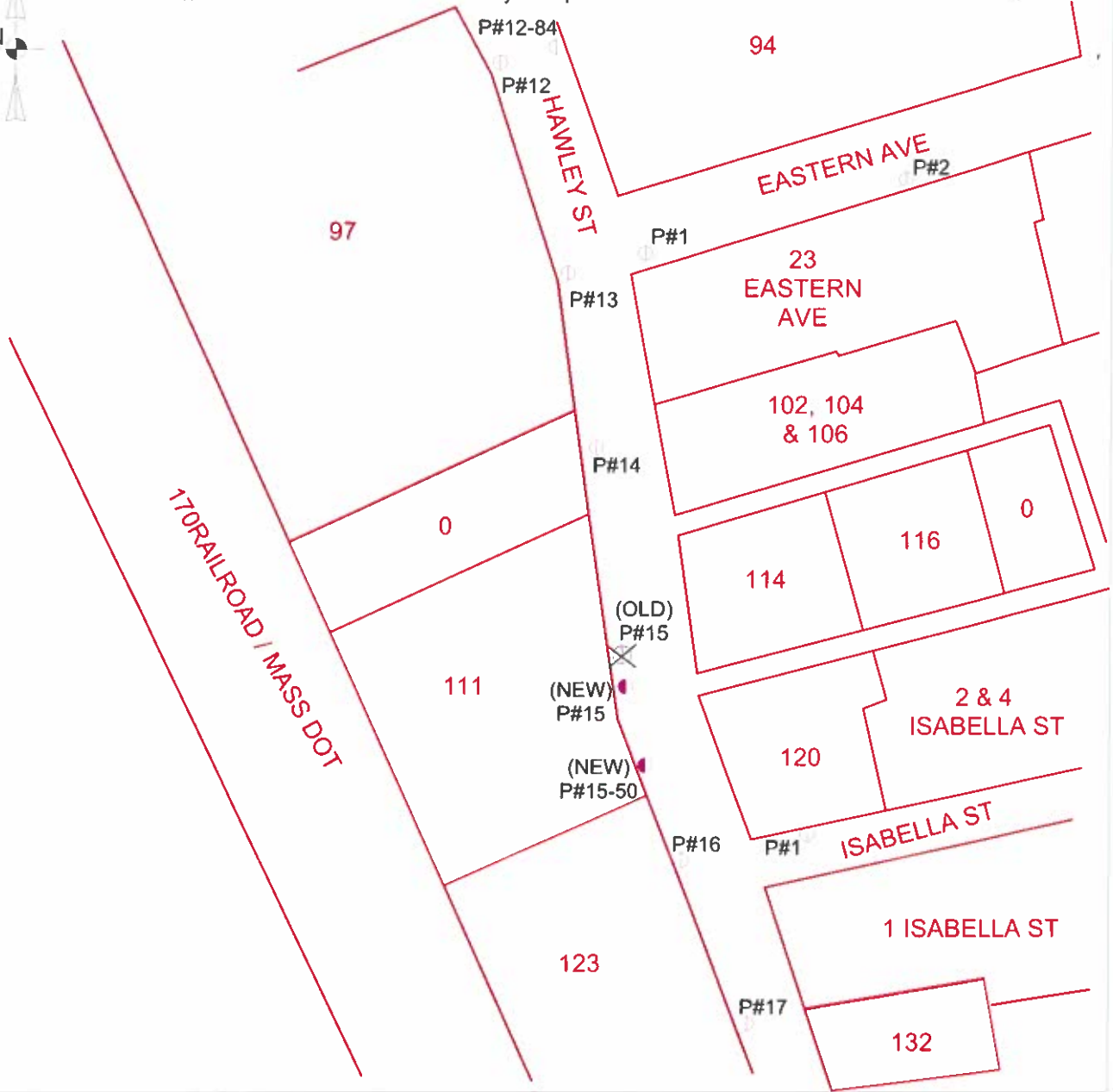
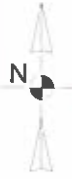
City/Town Clerk.

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:



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	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 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 11th 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 1st 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 their next steps are focused on getting some peace.

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

<u>Recess</u>	<u>Recess</u> The City Council recessed briefly at 7:49 p.m. The council reconvened at 7:58 p.m.
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<u>Announcements</u>	<p><u>Announcements</u></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 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 govern-</p>
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ment. 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 31st, including fireworks at 6:15 p.m. and the traditional ball-raising at the Hotel Northampton. More information can be found at 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 Maiore 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 Maiore announced a tractor parade December 27th. 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 Maiore 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

Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.

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

Financial Orders (on 2nd reading)
25.353 An Order to Reprogram Memorial Hall Funds for City-Wide Building Portfolio Upgrades – 2nd 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 Maire 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.

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

The following order passed final 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 –
2nd reading**

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

Councilor Rothenberg asked who uses this vehicle.

Director Nardi clarified that it is for 10 vehicles which are part of a pool 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.

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

The following order passed final 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
2nd reading, cont.)

Financial Orders (on 2nd 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
2nd reading, cont.)

Financial Orders (on 2nd 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).

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).

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).

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 23rd.

See minutes of December 23, 2025 for final reading.

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

EXHIBIT A

List of Documents Reviewed at December 18, 2025 Northampton City Council Meeting

1. December 18, 2025 Agenda
2. Minutes of December 4, 2025 City Council Meeting
3. Barbara Devlin Public Comment paying tribute to Councilor LaBarge
4. Rendering of 'close to final' design of Northampton High School Road Safety Project screen-shared by DPW Director Donna LaScaleia.
5. 25.342 Appointments to Various Committees - Memo to City Council from Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra dated November 20, 2025, SUBJECT: Appointments to Boards, Committees and Commissions, proposing the appointment of Clara Barnhart to the Arts Council and Casey Quinn to the Trust Fund Committee, together with their application.
6. 25.352 Appointment to Northampton Housing Authority - Memo to City Council from Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra dated December 4, 2025, SUBJECT: Appointments to Boards, Committees and Commissions, proposing the appointment of William Abrashkin to the Northampton Housing Authority, together with his application.
7. 25.356 Application for Supervised Display of Fireworks - First Night
8. 25.359 An Order to Authorize Payment of Prior Year Invoices
9. 25.353 An Order to Reprogram Memorial Hall Funds for City-Wide Building Portfolio Upgrades
10. 25.354 An Order to Appropriate \$112,500 from Capital Stabilization for Expanded Vehicle Leasing
11. 25.343-25.350 CPA Cover Letter – Letter from Brian Adams, Chair, Community Preservation Committee to Council President Alex Jarrett dated December 1, 2025 re: Community Preservation Committee Recommendations for Funding, August 2025
12. 25.343 An Order to Authorize Borrowing and Appropriate \$561,000 in CPA Funds for Veterans Field Pump Track Project
13. Chart showing Northampton CPA Bonding Projections for FY26 to FY32, December 2025
14. 25.344 An Order to Appropriate \$1,965 to Meadow City Conservation Coalition for Trail Improvement Project
15. 25.345 An Order to Appropriate \$3,000 in CPA Funds for Mill River Greenway Tree Planting
16. 25.346 An Order to Appropriate \$320,300 in CPA Funds for Mineral Hills Open Space Acquisition
17. 25.347 An Order to Appropriate \$75,000 in CPA Funds To PVH4H for Westhampton Road Affordable Home
18. 25.348 An Order to Appropriate \$600,000 in CPA Funds for 27 Crafts Avenue Affordable Housing Project
19. 25.349 An Order to Appropriate \$25,000 in CPA Funds to Install Electronic Scoreboards at Florence Fields
20. 25.350 An Order to Appropriate \$3,000 in CPA Funds to Forbes Library for Coolidge Desk Project
21. 25.358 An Order to Amend Temporary and Permanent Easements Between the City and Valley CDC to Support Affordable Housing

Record of City Council Votes for December 18, 2025		Dubs	Elkins	Jarrett	Klemer	LaBarge	Maio	Moulton	Perry	Rothenberg	Total
Roll Call by Laura Krutzler, Administrative Assistant to the City Council @ 6:30 p.m.		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	9 Present
Approval of Consent Agenda						Second		Motion to approve			Motion carried unanimously 9:0; voice vote
Minutes of December 4, 2025	Consent										
25.342 Appointments to Arts Council and Trust Fund Committee, all positive recommend	Consent										
25.352 Appointment to Northampton Housing Authority, for referral to City Services											
25.356 Application for Supervised Display of Fireworks - First Night	Consent										
25.359 An Order to Authorize Payment of Prior Year Invoices - 1st reading	Suspend rules	Second				Motion to suspend					Motion carried unanimously 9:0; voice vote
	Approve	Yes	Motion to approve	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Second Yes	Yes	Motion passed unanimously 9:0; roll call
25.353 An Order to Reprogram Memorial Hall Funds for City-Wide Building Portfolio Upgrades - 2nd reading	Call question		Second				Call question				Motion passed 8:1; Rothenberg opposed; voice vote
	2nd reading	Yes	Motion to approve	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Second Yes	Yes	No	Motion passed 8:1; Rothenberg opposed; roll call
25.354 An Order to Appropriate \$112,500 from Capital Stabilization for Expanded Vehicle Leasing - 2nd reading	2nd reading	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Second Yes	Motion to approve	Yes	Motion passed unanimously 9:0; roll call
25.243 - 25.250 Question on Adoption as Group Called			Call question			Second Yes				No	Motion passed 8:1; Rothenberg opposed; voice vote
25.343 An Order to Authorize Borrowing and Appropriate \$561,000 in CPA Funds for Veterans Field Pump Track Project - 2nd reading	2nd reading	Councilor Dubs moved to approve all eight (8) CPA orders as a group. Councilor LaBarge seconded.									
25.344 An Order to Appropriate \$1,965 to Meadow City Conservation Coalition for Trail Improvement Project - 2nd reading	2nd reading	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Motion passed 8:1; Rothenberg opposed; roll call
25.345 An Order to Appropriate \$3,000 in CPA Funds for Mill River Greenway Tree Planting - 2nd reading	2nd reading										
25.346 An Order to Appropriate \$320,300 in CPA Funds for Mineral Hills Open Space Acquisition - 2nd reading	2nd reading										
25.347 An Order to Appropriate \$75,000 in CPA Funds To PVH4H for Westhampton Road Affordable Home - 2nd reading	2nd reading										
25.348 An Order to Appropriate \$600,000 in CPA Funds for 27 Crafts Avenue Affordable Housing Project - 2nd reading	2nd reading										
25.349 An Order to Appropriate \$25,000 in CPA Funds to Install Electronic Scoreboards at Florence Fields - 2nd reading	2nd reading										
25.350 An Order to Appropriate \$3,000 in CPA Funds to Forbes Library for Coolidge Desk Project - 2nd reading	2nd reading										

Record of City Council Votes for December 18, 2025		Dubs	Elkins	Jarrett	Klemer	LaBarge	Maiore	Moulton	Perry	Rothenberg	Total
25.358 An Order to Amend Temporary and Permanent Easements Between the City and Valley CDC to Support Affordable Housing - 1st reading	Suspend rules		Second		Motion to suspend					No	Motion passed 8:1; Rothenberg opposed; voice vote
	Call question						Call question	Second		No	Motion passed 8:1; Rothenberg opposed; voice vote
	Approve	CHARTER OBJECTION LODGED AFTER MOTION AND SECOND BY COUNCILOR ELKINS/KLEMER									
Motion to Adjourn	to Adjourn			No				Second	Motion to adjourn		Motion passed 8:1; Jarrett opposed; voice vote

At 10:12 p.m., Councilor Perry moved to adjourn; Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion was approved on a roll call vote of 8 Yes, 1 No (Jarrett opposed).



CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NORTHAMPTON
MASSACHUSETTS

COUNCILORS:

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

Northampton City Council
Minutes of the Organizational Meeting
of January 5, 2026
Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, 2 p.m.
The meeting was presided over by City Councilor Rachel Maiore

1. Roll Call

At 2:01 p.m., Councilor Maiore convened the meeting. On a roll call, the following councilors were present:

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

2. Election of a City Council President for 2026 – 2027

[Editor’s note: Zoom audio was not working for the first several minutes of this agenda item.]

Councilor Maiore briefly described the procedure she would use in accepting nominations, then opened the floor to nominations.

Councilor Perry nominated Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore.

There being no further nominations, Councilor Maiore closed nominations and spoke to her nomination.

Currently in her 7th year, Councilor Maiore said she can’t believe she is the most senior person on council at this point. She has been doing this work for a long time and has seen what works, what doesn’t and how effective steady, compassionate leadership can be. She served on the City Council Rules Select Committee and for four years as Finance Committee chair, leading long budget hearings and adding fall budget listening sessions to the committee’s schedule during her tenure. As vice president last term, she learned the full scope of what the role of council president requires. With so many new faces on council, she thinks that experience matters now in particular. She also lives the reality of the people they serve. She has raised kids while serving the city, balancing homework and hearings, bedtime stories and budgets, daytime jobs and agenda deadlines, admittedly wondering sometimes if she should. She keeps showing up because she believes it is important that they have a range of representation that truly reflects their community. There is always something to learn or unlearn and one never quite arrives. She has this experience, but she will be learning in this role. For that reason, she wants

them to steer away from perfectionism and nit-picking and enter with a growth mindset so they can make mistakes, learn, respond, pivot, evolve and create.

The road for this term is guaranteed not to be easy. The city is facing real challenges, including housing issues, resident safety, schools and people's livelihoods. Some of their most vulnerable neighbors are in real danger. As leaders, it is their moment to show up with courage for them. They need leadership that can lower the temperature, bring people together and lead with diligence, emotional intelligence and fairness; leadership that every councilor feels they can approach for problem-solving, leadership that can keep them organized, accountable and focused on solutions, not conflict. "That's the leadership I'm going to commit to," she confirmed. With the fiasco at the federal level, they need to show residents that democracy here is alive and well, that a healthy separation of powers makes them all stronger and that they can challenge when necessary without tearing each other down. Strong and humble; firm and fair. Looking around the room, she sees hard-earned experience, lived experience, curiosity, concern, passion and care. She sees possibility. Together, they can leave behind dysfunction and build something that truly reflects their wonderful community – a council grounded in facts, collaboration and good faith.

"Let's take a deep breath, take a leap of faith and let's show our community what's possible when we work together," she urged. "They deserve no less."

Councilor Statements on Nomination

As the person who nominated her, Councilor Perry said he nominated her because of all the reason she stated. As the longest-serving councilor, with the very vast turnover, he believes this experience will really help guide them. He has watched as she has lived her values and made hard decisions and what sticks out to him is that she has kept her heart at the forefront. He is looking forward to seeing how she takes on this role and responsibility.

Councilor Klemer said she first met Rachel in 2017 when Rachel was one of the organizers of the Valley Women's March and she was chair of Indivisible Northampton. Since then, they have organized many marches together and, during the last term, worked closely co-sponsoring resolutions. She has always been dependable, supportive and a hard worker. During her last term as Council Vice President she consistently stepped up when needed, taking on responsibilities with confidence and professionalism. One quality she especially admires is her ability to work will with everyone and genuinely listen to different perspectives. She approaches her role with respect, openness and a collaborative spirit. She believes she is the kind of leader who can bring them together this term, and she is proud to support her nomination.

Councilor Loisel said she has watched as Councilor Maiore has been a councilor and vice president and really respects the passion she brings, the heart-felt sincerity. She is very inspired by the remarks she made today about collaboration and leaving dysfunction behind. She is happy to support her and glad she wants to serve.

Councilor Stratton said he would be absolutely pleased to support a fellow representative of the western hinterlands of Florence. "This body needs your leadership; it needs your perspective," he asserted. He would be very pleased to have her as their presiding officer.

Councilor Dubs said she's been his rock, kind of like his north star anytime there has been a divisive issue or anything he has struggled with on council. He could always talk to her; she is such a great listener and always reliable. He is honored to vote for her.

Councilor Nabad said she has appreciated Councilor Maiore's service over the years for vulnerable people and ability to listen and really liked what she said tonight about courage, emotional intelligence and working on solutions rather than conflicts. She also appreciated what she said about a healthy separation of powers and her description of what the city needs in a president as 'strong, humble, firm and fair.' "That really defines you," she observed. "Thank you for being our president."

There being no further comments, **Councilor Maiore called the nomination to a vote, and councilors voted for their preferred candidate by roll call as follows:**

Councilor Davis – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Dubs - Councilor Maiore
Councilor Klemer – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Loisel – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Maiore – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Nabad – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Perry – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Robbins – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Stratton – Councilor Maiore

The motion carried unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote. Councilor Maiore was elected by acclamation.

3. Election of a City Council Vice President for 2026 – 2027

Councilor Maiore opened the floor to nominations for vice president

Councilor Loisel nominated Councilor Perry.

Councilor Robbins nominated Councilor Klemer.

There being no further nominations, Councilor Maiore closed the nominations.

Councilor Perry thanked Councilor Loisel for the nomination, saying he is humbled by any support and belief in him. He has cherished this work and would be honored to help lead in this council. As to why he is interested and why qualified, over the last four years, he has pushed himself to learn and improve and get better at this work. He brings experience being now the second longest-serving councilor. As a returning at-large councilor, he has had to think about what it takes to balance the needs and wants of the city for at least one term. He has served on all but one of the four subcommittees and been the chair or vice chair of many. He knows how to run meetings, ask pertinent questions and do outreach. He has served on several committees and commissions, including the Public Service Advisory Committee for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Select Committee to Study Barriers to Service. He helped create and served on the Northampton Reparations Commission and, most recently, was vice chair of the Ordinance Review Committee. He has also served on interview panels for police recruits and on the search committee for a Police Chief. All of these things have given him a lot of insight. This brings him to his next skill of community-building and forming relationships. He chaired the Entertainment Committee for the Vibrancy Project, a collaboration between the city, Downtown Northampton Association (DNA) and Chamber of Commerce with involvement of non-profits. He worked with Sean Donovan in establishment of the Division of Community Care (DCC), dealing with issues of homelessness and business concerns. He has consistently attended DNA meetings and brought concerns of the business community to this council and is currently working with the Youth Commission and its subcommittees. He has a consistent record of going out and going above and beyond regular council work.

As far as leadership style, while opinionated, he is fairly laidback and appreciates input from others, he related. He believes he can be even-tempered under pressure. He can step back and knows when to ask questions or take more time. Part of his leadership style is trying to build in structure and be proactive. When he chaired the Community Resources Committee, he created a structure to bring in different groups to present and set up things like having their state representative, senator and DCC regularly come to speak. These are all things he set up which thankfully continued. He would like to bring that kind of value and foresight to City Council meetings to start building more structure and be proactive in how they interact with their community, departments and boards. He will always bring his ideas and passion as well as ‘a kind of silly amount of optimism.’ They all have lived experience, and he brings perspective as a renter, a person of color, [member of the] working class, and parent of kids at two of their schools, Smith Voke and the middle school. He doesn’t seek value from this position but wants to add *his* value and get to know each and every one of them as people and celebrate the work they do.

He wants to look at the struggles and sacrifices and learn from them all. He doesn’t look at this work as transactional; he sees it as transformative and wants to lead that change or transformation. He doesn’t think any of their votes should ever be personal. He believes his strengths, skills and experiences far outweigh any of his weaknesses and hopes they take that into account.

Councilor Klemer thanked Councilor Robbins for her nomination. She is asking for their support because she cares deeply about this council and doing this work well. She works hard, shows up and follows through and has taken the time to speak with each of them because she respects the body and the responsibility that comes with leadership. Those who’ve served alongside her know how seriously she takes this role. She does her absolute best to be responsive and accessible to constituents, fellow councilors and staff because she believes being accessible and dependable is not optional; it’s the job. When someone reaches out, it often matters to them, and she believes reliability and respect for people’s time is foundational to good public service. After nearly a decade of working with Council President Maiore, she knows her leadership well and would be honored to support her in this role. She deeply values the open and honest conversations they’ve always been able to have. She is proud of the consistency she’s brought to this work, not missing a council or subcommittee meeting. She comes prepared and stays engaged between meetings. Over the past term, she’s had the opportunity to co-sponsor 13 resolutions, working with nearly every councilor. To her, that reflects collaboration, trust and a shared commitment to moving their city forward. As chair of Community Resources, she worked closely with department heads, City Services and the housing partnership. She brought in a wide range of speakers and helped ensure that councilors and the community had the information needed to make informed decisions. When City Services needed support, she stepped in without hesitation because leadership means showing up and doing what needs to be done. She ran again to represent Ward 2 on a promise to unite their

community and has tried to live that value every day. She has worked with Councilor Maiore over many years on rallies, resolutions and community efforts, and their shared history reflects a commitment to collaboration, coalition-building and strengthening Northampton for everyone. She is especially proud to have support from people with different perspectives, and that matters in this moment. That support reflects her belief that they can disagree respectfully and still work together productively.

In closing, she is ready to serve in this role. She is steady, committed and deeply invested in the success of their community. In a time when trust and collaboration matter so much, she would be honored to serve as vice president and continue working alongside each of them to help this council function at its very best. She thanked them for their time, trust and consideration.

Councilor Loisel spoke to her nomination of Councilor Perry. She was thinking about running for City Council for over a year and so has been watching meetings for a long time. She has been impressed with his natural leadership ability and the thoughtful way he engages during council meetings. He listens to councilors and is humble and knows what he believes and shares that. This term, they have four returning councilors. Councilor Maiore is most senior, Councilor Perry is next and two councilors have one term under their belt. In her mind, seniority matters because these positions work most effectively when filled with people with deep knowledge of how the council works, how it interacts with the Mayor and its role with regard to all city departments. It is helpful if the vice president knows how to run a meeting efficiently and effectively and Councilor Perry can definitely do that. Other reasons she is confident he will make a fine vice president are, notably, his experience on council, his hard work on the Reparations and Youth Commissions and the Select Committee to Study Barriers to Serving and his able service on other board and commissions. Outside council, he has forged relationships with downtown businesses and the rich community of artists and musicians that make downtown vibrant. He has been a tireless promoter of downtown like no other. From what she has observed, he is motivated by one thing, his deep love of this city. In terms of lived experience, he is a long-time renter, parent of two children in Northampton Public Schools, a man of color and a gig worker. She thinks all of those things give him a perspective which is valuable.

All of this means no disrespect to Councilor Klemer, she assured. She truly believes in the Open Meeting Law (OML), not just the legal requirements but the spirit of the law which, to her, is all about getting public officials to deliberate, not just vote, in the public eye. To her, this vote is important as a matter of process, that they all show up here and explain their positions in the public eye. They have a choice to make; it's a hard choice and that's a good thing; that's democracy at its best. Once they make that choice, they will move on, roll up their sleeves and get to work.

Councilor Robbins said she nominated Councilor Klemer based on a number of strong factors that make her her solid choice for this work, which is specifically about the skills needed to do it well. Councilor Klemer has a demonstrable history of working collegially over the last two years with their new president, Councilor Maiore. They need to have that critical compatibility to do the detailed work of agenda creation and the often onerous administrative council demands together. Councilor Klemer has a 100%, in-person, on time attendance record at council and committee meetings. This matters. Council leadership needs to be present and in the room. She has served admirably as chair of Community Resources; she has a solid history of creating agendas and seeing that they're submitted for posting on time. She has shown her facilitation ability in that role, allowing all voices to be heard and moving the group through the agenda in a timely matter. She has a personal background of working with Councilor Maiore in the enormous task of organizing the details and logistics of political rallies, which require many of the same skills needed in conducting the business side of council meetings. She knows all too well that Councilor Klemer responds quickly to all constituent inquiries. This habit of work has been an outstanding hallmark of her ward council leadership. This is a new council with many new members serving at a time of great national unrest. Here in Northampton, they can as councilors create a new dynamic together in how they learn, listen and explore best outcomes that impact residents of a city they all love. She admires Councilor Maiore and Councilor Klemer's commitment to creating this powerfully impactful focus on thoughtful and reasoned discussions in which they consider all evidence and views presented with open minds. They ask serious questions, seek informed answers and adhere to a willingness to vote based on a solid commitment to what serves their city and the will of their people. She fully supports Councilor Klemer and hopes her new colleagues will as well.

Councilor Davis said she thinks they are lucky to have a hard decision and two excellent candidates. She voiced her support for Councilor Perry. As a fellow from Maryland, DC, very importantly, she values Councilor Perry's seniority and experience on the council. He has demonstrated through his work and interactions his interest in building bridges, advancing equity and honesty, strong values for her too. She sees it as especially valuable in a time of transforming downtown to have strong relationships with artists and businesses. She thinks Councilor Perry will work collaboratively with everyone on the council and in the community demonstrating that public service is something they also can aspire to. She doesn't know that an official rule can be made about this, and perhaps it's naïve of her to say, but, on a teeny scale of politics, she knows that in the state house and DC, people talk ahead of time and voice their interest in leadership. However, for her, discussions of leadership are better shared all right here instead of days and weeks prior to swearing in. Speaking only for herself, it has been

distracting for her from the work ahead. She really doesn't want to offend anyone on the council. Whatever happens; she thinks they are all committed to doing what's best for Northampton.

Councilor Dubs noted that he and Councilor Klemer became new councilors together two years ago and started learning the charter, rules and everything else. It has been a privilege to see how much she has evolved and progressed as a councilor; she always comes prepared to meetings. He's learned a lot from her. Councilor Maiore and Councilor Klemer have proven that they work really well together. It feels natural that she be the vice president. She is a good listener and very collaborative. They have had disagreements in the past but have always listened to each other, heard each other's perspective and moved on. He thinks that's really important in a leadership role. He has worked well with Councilor Perry, too. His vote for Councilor Klemer would not be a vote against him in any way.

Councilor Maiore said she and Councilor Klemer have worked together in many different iterations and she is always impressed with her ability to handle many things at once, new information and mini crises. She is someone who does not seek recognition and it's nice to see her in a leadership role. She sees the leadership role as getting bigger and bigger; they have an engaged community and complex issues in the world. She would like a leadership combo that is set up for the most efficiency and success. She sees Councilor Klemer as having a track record of being responsive, reaching across the aisle and being willing to talk to many different folks. She is great at giving feedback in a way people can hear. She plans to give this job all she's got but it is certainly a job for which she could use some reliable help and a good proven working relationship and that's what she has with Councilor Klemer. She will be supporting Councilor Klemer.

There being no further comments, **Councilor Maiore called the nomination to a vote, and councilors voted for their preferred candidate by roll call as follows:**

Councilor Davis – Councilor Perry
Councilor Dubs - Councilor Klemer
Councilor Klemer – Councilor Klemer
Councilor Loisel – Councilor Perry
Councilor Maiore – Councilor Klemer
Councilor Nabad – Councilor Klemer
Councilor Perry – Councilor Perry
Councilor Robbins – Councilor Klemer
Councilor Stratton – Councilor Klemer

Councilor Klemer was elected 6:3 by roll call vote.

4. Appointment of Enrollment Committee for 2024 – 2025

Councilor Maiore appointed Councilor Klemer and Councilor Loisel to the Enrollment Committee.

5. 26.001 An Order to Adopt Council Rules for 2024 – 2025

Councilor Klemer moved to adopt the City Council Rules. Councilor Robbins seconded.

Councilors adopt the rules at their initial meeting so they can proceed, Councilor Maiore explained. Council rules supersede Roberts Rules of Order but, in the absence of a council rule, they defer to Robert's rules.

The council can the amend rules at any time, she stressed. The benefit of doing it at a later date is that, if done then, the specific proposed amendment will be on the agenda for review and there would be time for public input through comments and emails.

Councilor Loisel said she read the rules many times. Rule 4.4, pg. 14, states that, for remote participation, when video technology is in use, people participating remotely should be visible. She thinks that's a great idea and noticed it didn't happen last term. "Maybe there's some rules that we don't always follow," she observed. She encouraged them to follow that rule.

Councilor Stratton said he spent a lot of time reading through council rules, watching videos of prior meetings, etc. There are things in the rules he thinks he would be interested in changing. The public is interested in changing the time limit for public comment. He didn't really understand what happens with written comments and so didn't really use that option. In retrospect, he thinks he would have tried to put some of his comment in writing for distribution to councilors. He hopes the body looks more at how they engage with the public and fosters that really critical conversation. He would like to see them more willing to recognize the public during deliberations. Looking back 10 years ago, that used to happen quite often. He thinks it is a conversation to have in their minds for the future.

He is okay starting out running with the rules they inherit, he concluded.

Councilor Robbins applauded Councilor Stratton for bringing that up. Councilor Maiore clarified that, at a councilor’s request, discussion of a rule change can be placed on the agenda.

Councilor Robbins suggested every now and then having a discussion of how they’re doing with the rules in place. She encouraged holding themselves accountable to them.

Referring back to his earlier reference to building in structure, Councilor Perry said he thinks councilors and the community would benefit from hearing more from boards and committees. He suggested having periodic check-ins with the boards as a regular agenda item.

Councilor Maiore noted that, without a time limit, the number of voices that could be heard would be less. She is certainly willing to look at that again. She pointed out that subcommittees can have different rules and allowing three minutes is fine there. Committee chairs have more discretion to regulate participation by the public.

There being no further discussion, **the motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.**

The following order passed single reading:

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**RULES OF THE 2026-2027 CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON**

1. These Rules
 - 1.1. Adoption
 - 1.2. Repeal or Amendment
 - 1.3. Precedence
 - 1.4. Suspension

2. Organization
 - 2.1. Presiding Officer
 - 2.1.1. Duties
 - 2.1.2. Participation
 - 2.1.3. Order of Succession
 - 2.2. Election of Council President and Vice-President
 - 2.3. Council President - Duties and Powers
 - 2.4. Council Vice-President - Duties and Powers
 - 2.5. Administrative Assistant to the City Council
 - 2.5.1. Duties
 - 2.6. Council Committees
 - 2.6.1. Establishment of Standing Committees
 - 2.6.1.1. Committee on Finance
 - 2.6.1.2. Committee on Community Resources
 - 2.6.1.3. Committee on City Services
 - 2.6.1.4. Committee on Legislative Matters
 - 2.6.2. Powers and Duties of Council Committees
 - 2.6.3. Select Committees

3. Duties and Powers of the City Council
 - 3.1. Selection of an Outside Auditor

4. Order
 - 4.1. Quorum
 - 4.2. Calling Meetings to Order
 - 4.3. Recognition of Mayor and Department Representatives
 - 4.4. Consent Agenda
 - 4.5. Order of Business
 - 4.6. Minutes of Previous Meeting

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- 4.7. Conduct
- 4.8. Public Comment
- 4.9. New Business
- 4.10. Recess
- 4.11. Order and Manner of Speaking
- 4.12. Order During Debate
- 4.13. Voting
 - 4.13.1. Deciding Votes
 - 4.13.2. Votes Required to Pass Measures
 - 4.13.3. Roll Call Votes
 - 4.13.3.1. Request
 - 4.13.3.2. Method of Recording
 - 4.13.4. Reconsideration
- 4.14. Remote Meeting Participation
- 4.15. Minutes of Executive Session Meetings

- 5. Legislative Process
 - 5.1. Proposed Matters
 - 5.1.1. Timely Filing
 - 5.1.2. Presentation to Council, Mayor
 - 5.1.3. Adding Matters to Council Agenda
 - 5.1.4. Presentation and Enacting Style of Matters
 - 5.1.5. Supporting Documents
 - 5.2. Referral of Matters to Committee
 - 5.3. Solicitor Review of Ordinances
 - 5.4. Withdrawal of Matters
 - 5.5. Matters Requiring Two Readings
 - 5.6. Matters Requiring One Reading
 - 5.7. Enrollment Committee
 - 5.8. Automatic Carryover

- 6. Appendices
 - 6.1. Special Permit Granting Authority
 - 6.2. Examples of Presentation and Enacting Styling of Matters

26.001 As Adopted in City Council on January 5, 2026

1. These Rules

- 1.1. **ADOPTION.** When adopted by the City Council, these Rules shall take effect at the time of the first Council meeting following January 1, 2026.
- 1.2. **REPEAL OR AMENDMENT.** City Council Rules may only be repealed or amended with a two-thirds majority vote of quorum present. The latest version of these Rules shall be published online.
- 1.3. **PRECEDENCE.** The City Council Meetings shall conform to parliamentary practices as set forth in the Rules of the City Council. The procedures defined in the most current version of Robert's Rules of Order will resolve questions not addressed by the Council Rules.
- 1.4. **SUSPENSION.** Suspension of these rules or any part thereof shall require a two-thirds majority of the quorum present. Nothing herein shall be construed to authorize suspension of any provision of the Charter of the City of Northampton, or any ordinance of the City of Northampton.

2. Organization

2.1. PRESIDING OFFICER

- 2.1.1. **DUTIES.** When present, the Council President shall be the presiding officer of the City Council at every meeting. The duties as presiding officer shall be only those set forth herein:
 - 2.1.1.1. To open the meeting at the appointed time by taking the chair, calling the meeting to order, and ascertaining that a quorum is present.
 - 2.1.1.2. To announce in proper sequence the business that comes before the City Council.
 - 2.1.1.3. To recognize members who are entitled to the floor.
 - 2.1.1.4. To state and to put to vote all questions that legitimately come before the City Council as motions or that otherwise arise in the course of proceedings (except questions that relate to the presiding officer as noted below), and to announce the result of each vote or, if a motion that is not in order is made, to rule it out of order; or, to refuse to recognize obviously frivolous or dilatory motions as defined by Robert's Rules;.
 - 2.1.1.5. To expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of all members of the body.

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- 2.1.1.6. To respond to inquiries of City Councilors relating to parliamentary procedure or factual information bearing on the business of the City Council.
- 2.1.1.7. To declare the meeting adjourned when the City Council so votes or, when applicable, at the time prescribed in the order of business, or at any time in the event an emergency.
- 2.1.1.8. To determine whether an amendment is germane to the motion under consideration.

2.1.2. PARTICIPATION. The Presiding Officer may make statements, ask questions and give opinions during debate without relinquishing the chair.

2.1.3. ORDER OF SUCCESSION. In the absence of the Council President, the first of the following list of persons who is not absent shall preside and shall retain voting privileges:

- First, the Council Vice-President
- Second, the Chair of the Committee on Finance
- Third, the Chair of the Committee on Legislative Matters

If none of the above are present or able to preside, the City Council shall elect by majority vote a President pro-tempore who shall preside for that meeting and shall retain voting privileges. Should the City Council fail to elect a President pro-tempore the meeting shall be adjourned.

2.2. ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT.

- 2.2.1. The City Council President and Vice-President shall be elected:
 - 2.2.1.1. At the first City Council meeting of a two-year session; and
 - 2.2.1.2. In the event of a vacancy for either office.
- 2.2.2. At any meeting when a City Council President is to be elected, the previous Council President will preside. If the previous Council President is absent or no longer a member of the Council, the longest serving member of the Council will preside. If two members of the Council are equal in seniority, a coin toss will determine which Councilor presides over the election of the Council President. If more than two members of the Council are equal in seniority they will draw lots to determine which Councilor will preside over the election of the Council President.
- 2.2.3. After nominations are made by members of the Council, candidates may present to the council.

2.3. COUNCIL PRESIDENT POWERS AND DUTIES. The powers and duties of the Council President shall include all duties pursuant to the Charter and also:

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- 2.3.1. To assign councilors to serve on any committee established by the City Council.
- 2.3.2. To remove members of a committee from a committee, or reassign them, at any time.
- 2.3.3. To appoint members to select committees, as provided below.
- 2.3.4. To determine seating arrangements for the members of the City Council.
- 2.3.5. To appoint the membership of Enrollment Committee and modify the membership meeting to meeting for any reason.
- 2.3.6. To set an agenda for the City Council.
- 2.3.7. To hire the Administrative Assistant to the City Council and to supervise the individual in that position generally, including conducting an annual performance review. The administrative assistant appointment must be ratified by the whole City Council.
- 2.3.8. To issue a Committee Study Request to any committee. Such a request shall require a committee to report to the full Council on a particular policy or issue area within 120 days optionally accompanied by legislation. However a committee may by majority vote decline to consider or respond to such a request.

2.4. COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT - POWERS AND DUTIES. The powers and duties of the City Council Vice-President will include all duties pursuant to the Charter.

2.5. ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- 2.5.1. DUTIES. The Administrative Assistant shall report to the City Council President, who may assign duties in addition to the following:
 - 2.5.1.1. To maintain a record of all matters and their status as they proceed through various legislative stages and committees, as well as all amendments and related documents.
 - 2.5.1.2. To provide staff support and recordkeeping to standing Council committees and select committees as assigned and to assist committees with all aspects of reporting.
 - 2.5.1.3. To act as custodian of all books, documents and papers belonging to the City Council and to keep an accurate list thereof.
 - 2.5.1.4. To notify the chair of any Council committee, board, executive commission, or other body when a matter is referred to it and to provide the body with all documents relative to the matter.
 - 2.5.1.5. To ensure that all documents addressed to the Council shall be provided to each Councilor, and that any documents reviewed during the meeting become part of the permanent public record of that meeting.
 - 2.5.1.6. To notify the appointees to all Council committees in writing upon their appointment.

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- 2.5.1.7. To assist in preparing requests for proposals for an independent auditor in accordance with Sec 7-6 of the Charter.
- 2.5.1.8. To advise the Council President on matters of parliamentary procedure.

2.6. COUNCIL COMMITTEES

2.6.1. ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES. The following committees are established as described below.

2.6.1.1. COMMITTEE on FINANCE

- 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. The Finance Committee will then convene separately outside of the full council meeting and before the next meeting.
- 2.6.1.1.2. Jurisdiction. Financial matters. The Committee shall review all orders authorizing a loan, supplemental appropriation, or financial transfer submitted by the Mayor in accordance with such authority by either the Massachusetts General Laws, the Charter of the City of Northampton, or the Code of Ordinances of the City of Northampton and make recommendations on referrals to the City Council.
- 2.6.1.1.3. In addition to the outside audit provided by Section 7-6 of the Charter, the Committee may request access to all books, vouchers, notes, securities, and bonds in the possession of the Treasurer-Collector, City Auditor or any board or executive commission and make a report thereof to the City Council.
- 2.6.1.1.4. The Committee shall review all proposals to sell or lease any City-owned land or building not put to public use that are submitted to the City Council for approval and all proposals to purchase or lease real property that are submitted to the City Council for approval. The Committee shall make recommendations to the City Council on the matter. All instruments of conveyance and leases approved by the City Council shall be executed by the Mayor on behalf of the City unless otherwise provided by Massachusetts General Laws.
- 2.6.1.1.5. The Committee shall consist of four Councilors.
- 2.6.1.1.6. The Committee may hold public hearings on water, sewer, Stormwater and other municipal utility rates.

2.6.1.2. COMMITTEE on COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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- 2.6.1.2.1. Jurisdiction. Matters affecting the community including economic development, local business, tourism, the environment, the arts, planning, zoning, sustainability, land use, housing and affordability, among others.
- 2.6.1.2.2. The Committee may review and make recommendations on licenses and permits.
- 2.6.1.2.3. The Committee shall consist of four Councilors.

2.6.1.3. COMMITTEE on CITY SERVICES

- 2.6.1.3.1. Jurisdiction. Matters related to the activities and operation of municipal government.
- 2.6.1.3.2. The Committee shall serve as the standing committee to review all candidates for appointment to boards and commission in accordance with Section 2-10 of the Charter.
- 2.6.1.3.3. The Committee shall consist of four Councilors.

2.6.1.4. COMMITTEE on LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

- 2.6.1.4.1. Jurisdiction. Upon referral by the City Council, the Committee shall have the power to make recommendations on ordinances, orders, resolutions and the rules of the City Council. Such recommendations shall be made in consultation with the City Solicitor.
- 2.6.1.4.2. The Committee may choose to be the last committee to review any matter that is also referred to another Council committee. The Committee shall not be required to wait to receive the report of any executive commission.
- 2.6.1.4.3. The Committee shall consist of four Councilors.

2.6.2. POWERS AND DUTIES OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES. The following shall apply to all committees unless otherwise stated:

- 2.6.2.1. Election of officers. Council Committees shall elect officers from among their members, such as Chair and Vice-Chair. At a committee's first meeting, the member who was first in the order of those announced by the Council President to serve on the committee shall preside until a Chair is elected.
- 2.6.2.2. Meetings. Committees shall meet as required by the City Council, the Committee's Chair, or at the request of two members. Committees shall hold an initial meeting no later than three months after the appointment of its members.

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- 2.6.2.3. Requests to appear before committees. A committee may make information requests pursuant Section 2-7 of the Charter.
 - 2.6.2.3.1. Notice. A committee shall give a minimum of 7 days notice to a person it may require to appear before it. No person shall be required to respond to any question not related to those questions presented in advance and in writing. The Committee will notify the Mayor of any Information Request under this section.
- 2.6.2.4. Committees shall have the power to hold hearings on and develop, review and recommend policies on any matter within their jurisdiction.
- 2.6.2.5. Power to amend. Council committees may recommend amendments to any measure. However, when a measure has been referred to the Committee on Legislative Matters, the Committee on Legislative Matters shall consider all amendments previously proposed by other committees and report one version of an amended measure to City Council.
- 2.6.2.6. Duty to report. "To report" shall mean transmitting a positive/favorable, negative/neutral or neutral recommendation and associated votes as well as any suggested textual amendments and related documents.
 - 2.6.2.6.1. For matters referred to the Committee on Legislative Matters, among others: All committees other than the Committee on Legislative Matters shall report to the Committee on Legislative Matters and the City Council within 60 days, whereupon the Committee on Legislative Matters shall report to the full City Council within an additional 30 days.
 - 2.6.2.6.2. For matters referred to the Committee on Legislative Matters exclusively: The Committee on Legislative Matters shall report to the full City Council within 60 days.
 - 2.6.2.6.3. For matters referred to committees not including the Committee on Legislative Matters: Committees shall report to the full City Council within 90 days.
 - 2.6.2.6.4. Committees shall make all reports in writing.
- 2.6.3. SELECT COMMITTEES. The City Council may establish select committees for the purpose of considering a particular policy or issue or

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for other purposes. Such committees may make recommendations and may sponsor ordinances, resolutions or other matters. Such committees may be created by resolution approved by a two-thirds vote of a quorum. The resolution shall specify the composition and scope of the select committee. No such committee shall exist beyond the current term of the Council. The Council President shall appoint all members to such committees, and may appoint members of the public who are residents of the City of Northampton or city employees provided the Mayor approve the appointment of any city employee. Select Committees shall elect their own Chair and other officers from among those appointed. At the first meeting, the person whose appointment was first announced by the Council President shall serve as temporary Chair until elections occur.

- 2.6.4. A majority of those appointed and serving on a committee shall constitute a quorum.

3. Duties and Powers of the City Council.

The City Council shall have those duties and powers pursuant the Charter and also:

- 3.1. SELECTION OF AN OUTSIDE AUDITOR. Pursuant Section 7-6 of the Charter, the City Council shall select an independent auditor according to the following provisions:
 - 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.
 - 3.1.2. The award of a three-year contract to audit shall be made by the City Council on or before September 15 of every third year.
 - 3.1.3. The Council shall require the report of the audit to be filed in final form with the Council not later than March 1 in the year following its award.

4. Order

- 4.1. QUORUM. The presence of 5 members shall constitute a quorum of the City Council.
- 4.2. CALLING MEETINGS TO ORDER. The presiding officer shall call the City Council to order at the time appointed for the meeting or to which it may have

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adjourned, if a quorum be present, which shall be determined by calling the roll. The names of members not present at the meeting shall be recorded by the Administrative Assistant to the City Council.

- 4.3. RECOGNITION OF MAYOR AND DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES.
The Mayor and all City department representatives are recognized at all Council Meetings.

4.4. CONSENT AGENDA

- 4.4.1. When any item of business requires action by the City Council, but is of a routine nature, such item may be presented at a regular meeting of the City Council as part of the Consent Agenda. Items eligible for consideration on the Consent Agenda include: approval of minutes, appointments, licenses, and petitions.
- 4.4.2. The Consent Agenda may be introduced by a motion "To approve the Consent Agenda," and may be considered by the City Council as a single item.
- 4.4.3. The presiding officer shall read the title of each item contained in the Consent Agenda before a vote.
- 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.
- 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.
- 4.4.6. Approval of the motion to approve the Consent Agenda shall be fully equivalent to approval, adoption, referral or enactment of each item of business thereon, exactly as if each had been acted upon individually.
- 4.4.7. When an appointment has not received a recommendation from the standing committee pursuant Sec 2-10 of the Charter, a vote within the Consent Agenda shall be equivalent to a motion to refer it to said standing committee. Otherwise a vote shall be equivalent to approval.

4.5. ORDER OF BUSINESS.

- 4.5.1. The order of business at every regular meeting of the Council shall be as follows unless otherwise decided by the Presiding Officer:

- Roll Call
- Public Hearings
- Public Comment
- Announcements from Councilors and the Mayor

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- Presentations
- Consent Agenda
 - Approval of minutes
 - Licenses and Petitions
 - Appointments
 - Financial Orders (As Referred)
- Financial Orders
- Orders
- Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)
- Ordinances
- Resolutions
- Information Requests (Charter Provision 2-7) and Committee Study
- Requests
- New Business

4.5.2. The agenda shall be published in this manner and adhered to at all meetings. The presiding officer may implement a change in the order of business unless any single Councilor objects, in which case the rules may be suspended as provided in these Rules.

4.6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING. The Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall submit the minutes of the previous meeting with the Council agenda for the next regular scheduled meeting of the City Council.

4.7. CONDUCT. City Councilors and members of the public shall conduct themselves with civility and respect at all times.

4.8. PUBLIC COMMENT. Members of the public may address the Council and all Council Committees on any matter for a period of up to two minutes. During committee meetings, this period may be extended or reduced at the discretion of the presiding officers. Public comment may be accepted for no more than 90 minutes. Whenever language translation is required for a member of the public to address the City Council or in the case of an individual with a speech-related disability, such person shall be provided four minutes. Individuals wishing to speak will be recognized by the presiding officer and shall state their name and city or town of residence and, optionally, their address. During public comment, councilors will not respond to any comments from the public. The City Council will take public comment in person or by remote participation as the technology allows.

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.

4.10. RECESS.

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- 4.10.1 Any Councilor may call for and be granted a recess the length of which will be determined by the presiding officer.
 - 4.10.2 The presiding officer may call for the recess of a hybrid meeting, to be resumed as a remote-only meeting, where the presiding officer determines that a disruption, disturbance, or other interruption materially interferes with continuing the in-person portion of such hybrid meeting. Prior to the recess, the presiding officer shall designate the time for the resumption of the meeting as remote-only, giving adequate time for each councilor to log into the meeting remotely.
- 4.1. ORDER AND MANNER OF SPEAKING. No City Councilor shall speak more than once on a question, to the prevention of any other who has not spoken,— and is desirous of speaking. The presiding officer may allow a brief immediate response to any statement posed directly to a particular City Councilor by a City Councilor. The presiding officer may request that any speaker discontinue any overly lengthy speech, but the right of a City Councilor to speak shall not be limited unless a formal motion is passed to set limits to debate for all City Councilors.
- 4.2. ORDER DURING DEBATE. No member should be interrupted while speaking, but by a call to order, or a request for information, or a question of privilege to appeal a decision from the presiding officer, or for the correction of a mistake, nor shall there be any conversation among the members while a paper is being read, or a question stated from the presiding officer
- 4.3. VOTING
- 4.3.1. DECIDING VOTES. The presiding officer shall decide all votes, but if a member rises to doubt a vote the presiding officer shall order a roll call vote.
- 4.3.2. VOTES REQUIRED TO PASS MEASURES
- 4.3.2.1. The affirmative vote, taken by roll call, of 6 members shall be required to adopt an appropriation order or transfer.
 - 4.3.2.2. The affirmative vote, taken by roll call, of 6 members shall be required to adopt a zoning ordinance.
 - 4.3.2.3. In the absence of statutory requirements providing otherwise, the affirmative vote, taken by roll call, of 5 members shall be required to adopt any other ordinance.
 - 4.3.2.4. In the absence of statutory requirements providing otherwise, an affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum shall pass any other measure.
- 4.3.3. ROLL CALL VOTES.

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- 4.3.3.1. REQUEST. Any member may request a roll call vote on any question before the City Council and the Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall take the census of the Council in that manner.
- 4.3.3.2. METHOD OF RECORDING. Roll call votes shall be conducted by this method. The first roll call vote of every session of the City Council shall be in alphabetical order. Each roll call vote after that shall progress to the next City Councilor in the alphabet to be the first Councilor voting, so that at the end of every nine roll call votes each Councilor has by alphabetical progression voted first in one of the nine roll call votes.
- 4.3.4. RECONSIDERATION.
 - 4.3.4.1. When a vote has passed, except for adjournment or to lay on the table, any member voting with the majority may move a reconsideration, to be acted upon at the same meeting. Any member voting with the minority may move a reconsideration to be acted upon at the next meeting.
 - 4.3.4.2. Minority reconsideration shall have priority over majority reconsideration. Minority reconsideration shall be used to allow time for the submission of new or additional information. Reconsideration shall not be used in a dilatory manner as defined in Robert's Rules of Order.
 - 4.3.4.3. No motion shall be twice reconsidered.
- 4.4. REMOTE MEETING PARTICIPATION. Councilors may participate remotely in meetings pursuant to the following regulations:
 - 4.4.1. Requirements
 - 4.4.1.1. Any Councilor who participates remotely and all persons present at the meeting location shall be clearly audible to each other;
 - 4.4.1.2. A quorum including the presiding officer shall be physically present at the meeting location;
 - 4.4.1.3. Any Councilor who participates remotely may vote and shall not be deemed absent.
 - 4.4.2. Permissible Reasons for Remote Participation. Any Councilor may participate remotely if the presiding officer determines that one or more of the following factors make the participation of the Councilor's physical attendance unreasonably difficult:
 - 4.4.2.1. Personal Illness;
 - 4.4.2.2. Personal Disability;
 - 4.4.2.3. Emergency;
 - 4.4.2.4. Military Service; or
 - 4.4.2.5. Geographic Distance
 - 4.4.2.6. Family Illness or Family Caretaking
 - 4.4.3. Technology

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- 4.4.3.1. The following media are acceptable methods for remote participation. Remote participation by any other means is not permitted. Accommodations shall be made for any Councilor who requires TTY service, video relay service, or other form of adaptive communications.
 - 4.4.3.1.1. Telephone, Internet, or satellite-enabled audio or video conferencing;
 - 4.4.3.1.2. Any other technology that enables the remote participation and all persons present at the meeting location to be clearly audible to one another.
- 4.4.3.2. When video technology is in use, the remote participant shall be clearly visible to all persons present in the meeting location.
- 4.4.3.3. The presiding officer may decide how to address technical difficulties that arise as a result of utilizing remote participation, but is encouraged, wherever possible, to call a brief recess while reasonable efforts are made to correct any problem that interferes with a remote participant's ability to hear or be heard clearly by all persons present at the meeting location. If technical difficulties result in a remote participant being disconnected from the meeting, that fact and the time at which the disconnection occurred shall be noted in the meeting minutes.
- 4.4.3.4. All costs associated with remote participation, if any, shall be borne by the Councilor remotely participating.
- 4.4.4. Procedures
 - 4.4.4.1. Any Councilor who wishes to participate remotely shall, as soon as reasonably possible prior to a meeting, notify the presiding officer of their desire to do so and the reason for and facts supporting their request.
 - 4.4.4.2. At the start of the meeting, the presiding officer shall announce the name of any member who will be participating remotely and the reason for their remote participation. This information shall be recorded in the meeting minutes.
 - 4.4.4.3. All votes taken during any meeting in which a member participates remotely shall be by roll call vote.
 - 4.4.4.4. Any Councilor participating remotely may participate in executive session, but shall state at the start of any such session that no other person is present and/or able to hear the discussion at the remote location. Any Councilor participating remotely who cannot certify that no other person is present and/or able to hear the discussion at the remote location may not participate in executive session.
 - 4.4.4.5. When feasible, the presiding officer shall distribute to remote participants, in advance of the meeting, copies of any documents of exhibits that they reasonably anticipates will be used during the meeting. If used during the meeting, such documents shall be a part of the official record of the meeting, and shall be listed in the

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meeting minutes and retained in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30A Section 22.

- 4.4.5. Application. This rule shall apply to Council Committees.
- 4.4.6. Amendment. This section may not be amended unless it is in accordance with the Mayor's Remote Meeting Participation Policy, Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30A Sections 18-25 and 940 Code of Massachusetts Regulations 29.10.

- 4.5. MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE SESSION. The City Council shall create and maintain accurate minutes of all executive sessions in accordance with the following:
 - 4.5.1. The minutes shall set forth the day, time and place, the members present or absent, a summary of the discussions on each subject, a list of documents and other exhibits used at the meeting, the decisions made and the actions taken at each meeting, including the record of all votes.
 - 4.5.2. Any vote taken in an executive session shall be recorded by roll call and entered into the minutes.
 - 4.5.3. The minutes of any executive session and the notes, or other materials used in the preparation of such minutes, and all documents and exhibits used at the session may be withheld from disclosure to the public in their entirety, according to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 4 § 7 (26) (a), as long as publication would defeat the lawful purposes of the executive session, but no longer.
 - 4.5.4. Approving minutes.
 - 4.5.4.1. Votes to approve executive session minutes may be, but are not required to be, taken in executive session.
 - 4.5.4.2. Review of, deliberation on and amendments to executive session minutes shall be done in executive session.
 - 4.5.5. Releasing minutes.
 - 4.5.5.1. As provided in MGL Ch 30A, Sec 22(g)(1), The Council President, with the assistance of the Administrative Assistant to the City Council and City Solicitor, shall, at reasonable intervals, not to exceed three months, review the minutes of executive sessions to determine if the relevant statutory provisions warrant continued nondisclosure. Such determination shall be announced at the City Council's next meeting and such announcement shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.
 - 4.5.5.2. Whenever the Council President requests that a vote of the Council be taken to determine whether to release executive session minutes, that vote must be taken in executive session.

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- 4.5.6. Upon request by any person to inspect or copy the minutes of an executive session or any portion thereof, the Council shall respond to the request within 10 days following receipt and shall release any such minutes that would not defeat the lawful purposes of the executive session.
- 4.5.7. Any notes, documents or other exhibits used in the preparation of the minutes of executive sessions shall be retained for at least 60 days following the approval of the minutes of the executive session by the Council. The Council President shall periodically review said notes and other documents prior to the discarding or destruction thereof.

5. Legislative Process

5.1. PROPOSED MATTERS

- 5.1.1. Matters proposed for inclusion in City Council agendas shall be filed with the Administrative Assistant to the City Council. Agendas shall be published in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.
- 5.1.2. COMMUNICATION WITH MAYOR’S OFFICE. The Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall serve as a point of contact with the Mayor’s office regarding the City Council’s agendas.
- 5.1.3. ADDING MATTERS TO COUNCIL AGENDA. The Council President shall have discretion over the items added to Council agendas, except that if the addition of an item has been once requested by a member of the City Council or the Mayor and at the discretion of the Council President that item is not placed on an agenda of a regular Council meeting, then before the next regular Council meeting any two members of the City Council may petition the Council President who shall then add the item to the agenda of the next regular Council meeting.

5.1.4. PRESENTATION AND ENACTING STYLE OF MATTERS

- 5.1.4.1. Matters shall be presented in a format as indicated in the table below:

Line	Ordinances	Orders	Resolutions
1. Date	“In the Year 2016”	“In the City Council, February 2, 2016.”	“In the Year 2016”
2. Sponsorship	“Upon the recommendation of...”		
3. ID Number	Not prefaced	Prefaced by “O”	Prefaced by “R”
4. Type of Matter	“An Ordinance”	“An Order”	“A Resolution”
5. Short Title	“Relative to...” “Entitled the ...”	“To...” et al.	“To...”, “In support of...”, et al.

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	Ordinance of 2016”, or “To ...” et al.		
6. Enacting Clause	“Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Northampton in City Council assembled, as follows”	“Ordered, that”	“Be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Northampton in City Council assembled, as follows”

5.1.4.2. Administrative ID Number. The Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall assign each matter, upon formal submission, a unique identification number, in the form of the last two digits of the calendar year followed by an incrementally increasing number. The incrementally increasing portion shall reset to “1” every Council session.

5.1.4.3. Additions to the Code of Ordinances shall be indicated in bold and/or underline. Deletions shall be indicated by striking through.

5.1.5. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS. Maps and visuals, along with all other supportive evidence essential to a matter, shall be presented in a clear and intelligible way.

5.2. REFERRAL OF MATTERS

5.2.1. In general, all matters may be referred to Council committees or executive multiple-member bodies, which shall constitute a request for a report on such matters.

5.2.2. Financial orders. No order or resolution authorizing a loan, the levying of a tax or the expenditure of money (with the exception of the printing of the annual reports) shall be voted on by the City Council until it has been considered by the Committee on Finance, unless the Council determines that such consideration is not necessary, as provided in 2.6.1.1.1. It shall be the duty of such committee to report on the relation of such order, resolution, levy or expenditures to the finances of the City, but new provisions shall not be added to such resolution, order, levy or expenditure by the Committee unless directly connected with the financial features thereof, and then by recommendation only.

5.2.3. Ordinances. No ordinance shall be voted on by the City Council until it has been considered by the Committee on Legislative Matters.

5.2.4. Licenses and permits. Licenses and permits may be referred to the Committee on Community Resources for the committee’s recommendation.

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- 5.2.5. Should a committee fail to report within the time set forth in Section 2.6.2.6, or if a multiple-member body fails to report within 45 days of referral to that body, the City Council shall be authorized to proceed with the matter in absence of such report.
- 5.3. SOLICITOR REVIEW OF ORDINANCES. At or before the meeting at which the Committee on Legislative Matters considers any matter for approval and/or recommendation the City Solicitor shall be requested to examine the matter's form and legal character.
- 5.4. WITHDRAWAL OF MATTERS. If the Council has previously acted on a matter, the matter may be withdrawn by this method. At the written request of any sponsor(s) of a matter, a matter shall be withdrawn from consideration in the City Council and in all City Council Committees to which the matter had been referred provided the withdrawal be placed on the agenda of a City Council meeting. No vote shall be required. However, if at that meeting all sponsors of a matter do not unanimously agree to withdraw a matter, the matter shall not be withdrawn. However at that time any Councilor shall upon their request have their individual sponsorship removed.
- 5.5. MATTERS REQUIRING TWO READINGS. Before a vote on a matter may be held, it must first have been introduced at a prior City Council meeting, unless otherwise provided in these Rules. Introduction shall include a description of purpose and effects and full discussion by the Council is allowed.
- 5.6. MATTERS REQUIRING ONE READING. The following shall require only one reading of the Council:
 - 5.6.1. Licenses
 - 5.6.2. Approval of minutes
 - 5.6.3. Acceptances of reports
 - 5.6.4. Petitions, and orders to grant petitions
 - 5.6.5. Appointments
 - 5.6.6. Orders to adopt or amend the Council Rules and
 - 5.6.7. Orders to set dates and times of Council meetings.
- 5.7. ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE. When matter has passed the required number of votes, it shall be signed by the Administrative Assistant to the City Council and signed by the Enrollment Committee consisting of two City Councilors.
- 5.8. AUTOMATIC CARRYOVER. Matters that have not passed the required number of votes by the end of the current session shall automatically carry over to the next session of the City Council and shall remain in the Council and in all committees and executive commissions to which they have been referred at the start of the next session unless:
 - 5.8.1. A matter has already failed on the first of two required votes; or

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- 5.8.2. A matter has received a negative recommendation from the Committee on Legislative Matters; or
- 5.8.3. The City Council votes to prevent automatic carryover of a matter to the next session. For this purpose, at the request of any City Councilor, the City Council President shall place any such pending matter on the agenda at the final meeting of the session. Only one vote shall be required to prevent automatic carryover, but 2/3 majority of the full Council shall be required; or
- 5.8.4. None of the sponsors of a matter will be serving in the next session of the City Council.

6. APPENDICES

6.1 SPECIAL PERMIT GRANTING AUTHORITY

Chair/Moderator

I. Selection of a Chair/Moderator

The City Council President will serve as the presiding officer of the hearing.

MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

II. Notice of Public Hearings

Notice of hearings shall be advertised as required by the provisions of General Law Chapter 40A. In addition to the legally required notices the City Council will make every effort to publish this notice broadly so the public will be fully informed, methods might include the City website, email distribution list and Northampton Community Television.

III. Calling of Public Hearing

All hearings held by the Council as a Special Permit Granting Authority Shall be open to the public.

IV. Public Hearings

- 1. Public hearings, when called, will be conducted in the following manner:
 - A. The presiding officer will announce that it is time for a Public Hearing and will announce the subject of such hearing.
 - B. The presiding officer will review evidence of adequate advertisement and legal notice and, if found to be appropriate and proper according to law, will have the advertisement read into the record. The presiding officer will then explain the procedure to be followed, including the time limits on speakers' and the fact that each speaker shall give their name and address for the record. By majority vote the City Council may extend the time granted to a particular speaker by the presiding officer. The chair may limit testimony that is repetitive.

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- C. The presiding officer will report on any new or changed information pertinent to the subject, if any, and then have read into the record all memoranda, opinions, comments and recommendations or City departments or boards pertinent to the matter.
- D. The applicant will be given a reasonable amount of time to make a presentation regarding the matter.
- E. Other persons supporting the position of the proponents will then be allowed to express the fact of their support and to present such supportive information as was not included in the initial or previous presentations. A five-minute time limit shall apply but the Council could extend the time on a majority vote.
- F. Before opponents to an application or petition are called to speak, a member of the Council may move for invocation of a summary procedure and, if seconded and approved by a majority of the quorum, may subsequently move to deny the request made by the applicant, based on a finding that the evidence presented was not adequate to justify the request. If the motion for denial is then seconded and is approved by the quorum, the public hearing may be deemed complete.
- G. Those persons speaking in opposition to the position taken by the principal proponent are then allowed to speak, each being allowed to express the fact of their opposition and to present such supportive information as was not included in previous presentations before the Council. A five-minute time limit shall apply and the Council could extend the time on a majority vote.
- H. After all opponents have been heard, the presiding officer will then allow the proponent and or project staff person to respond to any issues/questions raised by the opponents.
- I. After the proponents have responded to the opponents, the opponents shall have an additional opportunity to respond, the presiding officer shall determine which opponent shall respond at which time. A three minute time limit shall apply but the Council may extend the time by majority vote. The motion to extend time is non-debatable.
- J. The presiding officer will then enter all documents received concerning the matter into the record. The applicant or project staff may then answer any questions raised in the letters.
- K. If new information is presented the presiding officer or the Council may allow additional time for the appropriate party to respond. Immediately or in writing later but before the close of the public hearing.
- L. The presiding officer will then hear questions from the general public regarding aspects/issues that have not been addressed in previous testimony. The presiding officer shall refer questions to the appropriate person and may rule questions out of order if the subjects of the questions have already been addressed. Questions may also be submitted in writing.
- M. At any point, a public hearing may be continued or postponed to a time, place and date certain, provided that these rules and procedures are adhered to when it is resumed, or may be continued or postponed to a time, place and date not certain, providing required advertising and notice procedures are

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followed to announce the time, place and date of resumption. Each meeting is a continuation of the same public hearing.

V. Votes of the Council

All votes for Special Permits shall require a 2/3 majority of the Council to pass.

Applications before the City Council

VI. Permit Applications

Applications for a Special Permit before the City Council shall be prepared in accordance with the procedures in the Northampton Zoning Ordinance and the instruction on and attached to the application form. Every application for action by the Council shall be made on the official application form, and as approved by the Council and adopted by reference in these Bylaws and Rules of Procedure.

6.2 Examples of Presentation and Enacting Styling of Matters

<p><i>In the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen</i> Upon the Recommendation of Councilor J. Calvin Coolidge</p> <p style="text-align: center;">15.073 AN ORDINANCE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RELATIVE TO ZONING IN CENTRAL BUSINESS (OR) ENTITLED THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF 2016 (OR) TO REVISE SEC. 000 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES</p> <p><i>Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Northampton, in City Council</i> <i>in the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen</i> Upon the Recommendation of Councilor J. Calvin Coolidge</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">R-15.003 A RESOLUTION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">IN SUPPORT OF DEMOCRACY (OR) TO CREATE A SELECT COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND A STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA</p> <p><i>Be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Northampton, in City Council assembled, as follows:</i></p>

6. Open Meeting Law, Conflict of Interest Law and Public Records Law – Attorney Seewald

Attorney Seewald thanked new and returning councilors for their service. He introduced himself as someone who has lived in Northampton since 1981 and been the city solicitor since 2012, so he is going on his 14th year.

He has been asked to speak about topics of open government. His goal is to keep them out of trouble, he advised. He encouraged them to contact him if they have questions about these or any other issues. He said he would give them his cell phone number off air. "I want to help you succeed."

Open government is a three-legged stool: the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law and Conflict of Interest law, he presented. The Open Meeting Law (OML) requires government meetings to be open to the public. That requires that the deliberation of a quorum be in public. The council has skilled staff to post meetings and keep minutes. However, there are other things councilors need to do. For example, councilors will get OML materials and be required to sign a certification that they were received.

The OML has many traps for the unwary. A quorum of this body is five. He said to please never let him see legislation sponsored by five of them since the message will be that five have them have communicated on an issue that is before the council, which is a violation of OML. The limit for communication for them is four.

Four councilors can speak to each other about anything they want to speak to each other about. None of those four can then speak to any other councilor because serial communications can constitute the deliberation of a quorum, he explained. This includes expressing an opinion by electronic or any other means to a quorum. He cautioned not to 'Reply All' to emails and said he encourages the administrative assistant to regularly remind them not to 'Reply All.'

They can put a question forward in response to an email, he clarified. The violation is expressing an opinion on a matter that comes before the council to a quorum. Placing things on an agenda and sending documents is not a violation. Do not ever vote by secret ballot.

Councilor Stratton asked a hypothetical question about being in communication with four members and another councilor contacting him about the same issue. He was told he could not communicate with that councilor about the matter.

A quorum must meet in public because the public has the right to know and to see and hear their deliberations, Attorney Seewald stressed.

PUBLIC RECORDS LAW

Any record made or received as a councilor is presumptively a public record, Attorney Seewald continued. It doesn't matter the form, so texts, emails and phone records are all public records. His strong recommendation is to use their city email address for this purpose. If using city email, IT can actually respond on their behalf to extract emails responsive to public record requests received.

Councilor Robbins asked about having a listserv; if it could be collected on a public email account. She said she knows Councilor Davis will be inheriting Councilor Jarrett's listserv.

Mail Chimp will not let them use their government (Northampton) email account, Councilor Klemer volunteered. Mail Chimp users have to use a personal/private google account.

Government employees can't use city email for non-government purposes such as campaign material, but as long as they are communicating as a councilor and not a candidate, they can use city email, Attorney Seewald clarified. Understanding that all records are public, he advised them to think carefully about what records they create.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is very little punitive enforcement with the OML and Public Records Law, Attorney Seewald advised. However, Conflict of Interest law is different. There is a whole enforcement arm at the state Ethics Commission. If they have a question, ask him. If they have a concern, contact him before doing anything. If they call the Ethics Commission, they will get the lawyer of the day and be given advice to guide them through potential conflict, but if they call and say, 'last night I voted on 'x,' they're going to connect them to enforcement.

"Let me tell you, you don't want to be connected to enforcement."

The underpinning is that, when a government employee acts, they act exclusively in the interests of the city. For any matter they, their immediate family, their employer or a prospective employer has a financial interest in, they need to get advice before they proceed. Holding a contract with the city should raise red flags. If taking action on something that could foreseeably affect the value of their property, get advice before proceeding.

When public employees have a conflict, it is not enough just not to vote. The Ethics Commission's advice is to leave the room. He doesn't think it's necessary to leave the room but, certainly, they should step down from the dais. "You should not be sitting up here if you have a conflict," he said.

No quid pro quo, he continued. Nobody can give them something of any amount for them to do something as a councilor. Even if it's not a quid pro quo, as a councilor, they can't accept anything of substantial value (over \$50).

Councilors can't participate in any matter in which they or their immediate family, etc. has a financial interest. They may not receive compensation from anyone in a private matter in which the city has a direct financial interest, meaning they can't represent interests adverse to the city in matters which the city has a financial interest. They can't act as an agent or attorney for any other party in which the city holds a financial interest and they can't hold contracts with the city.

One thing that has arisen quite frequently is fundraising for private nonprofits by councilors. It potentially can have a coercive effect on constituents. If people are coming before the council on a matter, they shouldn't be asking them for money. He reiterated the encouragement to call him if they ever have a concern.

Regarding social media, if a councilor creates a City Council social media account, they have two choices: they can prohibit all comments or the page has to allow all comments and be open to everybody. They can have a private account but, as a city councilor, they cannot exclude comments they don't like.

A candidate's Facebook page is a private Facebook page, he clarified.

Councilor Stratton said he has three profiles: personal, candidate and an official profile as a councilor. On the City's Facebook page, there is a comment policy, he shared. The City asserts the rule to limit people to the topic. He has sort of adopted that. He also found a flow chart from the ACLU which he has found helpful.

Subcommittees are also subject to the OML, Councilor Maiore noted.

A quorum of a four-member committee would be three, Attorney Seewald confirmed.

Councilor Nabad asked him to talk a little more about fundraising for nonprofit organizations. Conflict of Interest related to fundraising is very fact-driven, Attorney Seewald noted. He gave the example of soliciting money from restaurants when the city council is the local licensing authority. It is not a problem to put an advertisement in the newspaper, he clarified. Fundraising is okay as long as they are not targeting a constituency beholden to the council as those constituencies may feel coerced.

A posting of the Hot Chocolate Run on a Facebook page is not a violation.

Councilor Loisel asked whether making an announcement about a fundraiser on the council floor is allowed and Solicitor Seewald said 'yes.'

Councilor Davis asked if they needed permission to contact him about a conflict of interest.

Attorney Seewald said 'no.' As elected officials each of them has a right to his opinion on the conflict of interest.

7. **26.002 An Order to Set Date and Time of 2024-2025 City Council Meetings – single reading only**
Councilor Klemer moved approval of the order. Councilor Dubs seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

The following order passed single reading:

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council January 5, 2026

Upon recommendation of the Northampton City Council

O-26.002

An Order

To Set the Date and Time of 2026-2027 City Council Meetings

Ordered, that, the attached City Council meeting schedule for 2026-2027 be and hereby is adopted.

26.002



City Council Meeting Schedule 2026-2027

All meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. except the January 5, 2026 organizational meeting, which starts at 2 p.m.

January 5, 2026	January 7, 2027
January 15, 2026	January 21, 2027
February 5, 2026	February 4, 2027
February 19, 2026	February 18, 2027
March 5, 2026	March 4, 2027
March 19, 2026	March 18, 2027
March 31, 2026 (Tuesday)	April 1, 2027
April 16, 2026	April 15, 2027
May 7, 2026	May 6, 2027
May 21, 2026	May 20, 2027
June 4, 2026	June 3, 2027
June 18, 2026	June 17, 2027
July 9, 2026	July 8, 2027
August 20, 2026	August 19, 2027
September 3, 2026	September 2, 2027
September 17, 2026	September 16, 2027
October 1, 2026	October 7, 2027
October 15, 2026	October 21, 2027
November 5, 2026	November 4, 2027
November 19, 2026	November 18, 2027
December 3, 2026	December 2, 2027
December 17, 2026	December 16, 2027

All meetings will be held in hybrid form, except July and August meetings which will be held on Zoom only.

26.002 Order to Set Date and Time of 2026-2027 City Council Meetings

Passed final reading and enrolled.

8. **Administrative Items**

Councilor Maiore said she would let them know by Friday about their committee assignments. The next regular meeting is January 15th.

9. **Adjourn**

There being no other business, **Councilor Perry moved to adjourn. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.**



CITY COUNCIL MEETING
212 MAIN STREET
Northampton, Massachusetts
January 15, 2026

Roll Call

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| At-Large Councilor Meg Robbins | At-Large Councilor Garrick Perry |
| Ward 1 Councilor Gwen Nabad | Ward 2 Councilor Deborah Klemer |
| Ward 3 Councilor Laurie Loisel | Ward 4 Councilor Jeremy Dubs |
| Ward 5 Councilor Aline Davis | Ward 6 Councilor Christopher Stratton |
| Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore | |

Announcement that Meeting Audio/Video Recorded

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

Public Hearings
Announcement of Public Hearing on 25.355 National Grid Pole Petition for Park Hill Road (Petition#: 31193070)

Public Hearings

Councilor Maiore made the following announcements:

Announcement of Public Hearing on 25.355 National Grid Pole 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 no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. The City Council will hear all persons who wish to be heard thereon.

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)

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 no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. The City Council will hear all persons who wish to be heard thereon.

Public Comment

Public Comment

Councilor Maiore explained the procedure she would use in conducting public comment and opened the floor to comments.

Al Simon, Ward 2, said he didn't realize he would be starting the next two-year term for public comment but was happy to kick it off. At the start of councilors' new two-year term, he offered a couple of thoughts for them to keep in mind. Last month, the Mayor proposed and the council approved a \$13 million dollar capital project for geothermal energy at the high school. This \$13 million was not in the approved Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and, by itself, is more than 10% of the entire five-year \$103 million plan previously adopted. The point here is to show the kind of flexibility and discretion the mayor's office has when it comes to spending money. This brand new, unscheduled project adds about \$500,000 per year in recurring expenses to pay off the 20-year loan. Somehow, the mayor's office did find \$500,000 in recurring revenue to pay for a project that had not been scheduled. Regardless of the project's merits, the example of finding recurring money is instructive. The mayor's office can find money when it wants. Of course, as a choice, the recurring money could also be used for ongoing operations, such as the school budget. It's still a matter of priorities. His second point is that the November election was a referendum on the current administration and its policies and direction. A majority of the voters who came to the polls chose not to vote for the Mayor. This is a vote of no confidence in her policies and direction. All city officials should recognize this and collaborate to change policy decisions to address resident concerns, focused on providing essential services with greater engagement and transparency.

Nancy Smith, Chapel Street, said she loved the streamlining of council rules. She's opposed to forcing members to be in chambers for meetings. It limits participation for those with children or without transportation. Same for public commenters and camera requirements. Bring people into the process, not

limit them. Also loved the idea of inviting committees, boards and experts into council for updates: transparency, inclusion, streamlining – Yes!

Dr. Weil's report on geothermal underperformance at Smith was shocking to Smith and to him. He was honest about there being no rush to sign contracts as geothermal funding is not ending. Still, the old council rushed to sign contracts for NPS. Why would people rush to fund a huge project that is underperforming? Smith will not be fossil fuel-free, being heavily dependent on its old system.

Regarding the close election, she actually read deals were made to give the mayor four more years. If that is true, she's guessing maybe the extended after school hours starting next Fall was one. Great shiny object, likely funded by the state and possibly some foundations. 2026 is an election year. Are large contracts or big party donors behind the rush to sign geothermal contracts?

Do not believe the enemies are the school or vice versa. "Our administration creates conflict like the now-debunked schools vs. senior sham. Our schools have been intentionally underfunded for years." If geothermal is not performing here, if PMS is not happening for years, she believes all these groups, under non-combative and unvengeful leadership can come together and right the wrongs done to their children and schools. Critics of the mayor's policies are being called Trumpian now by her allies. Trump wants to kill Head Start, the Department of Education. Heroes who oppose that are called resisters. Here, the mayor vilifies and attacks resisters to her underfunding of schools to buy dilapidated churches and things that aren't working. Please stop tossing our children's futures and attacking our heroes. Civility begins with you. Fully fund our schools via the budget. It's streamlining and morality at its best.

Luke Rotello, Ward 5, co-chair of the western Massachusetts Club of the Communist Party USA, noted that, as he's sure they're all aware, they enter this new term facing harrowing circumstances. Sections of their country are under paramilitary occupation, facing siege by ICE agents bearing chemical weapons and quotas for the abduction of people. Their government has itself abducted the leader of Venezuela in violation of any law and precedent and now looks to the rest of Latin America in pursuit of ever-expanding war. As asserted during his campaign last year, these are political crises that demand political solutions at the level of City Council, as well as all levels of society. He noted the transfer of more than \$2 million in stabilization funds on tonight's agenda, associating it with "policies of austerity within our local and state contexts." These crises emerge from the erosion of democratic rights and the collapse of civil society, which has created inroads for MAGA politics here in Massachusetts, and they fester from the operation of L3Harris, a genocidal war profiteer supportive of the Trump administration within city limits. It is in this light that they will seek, in the coming weeks and months, the establishment of two new commissions in defense of the rights of workers and queer and transgender residents. They will likewise continue to advance with urgency the struggles for peace and democracy within their city and region. "It is a pivotal moment and our city must act like it," he asserted.

Jennifer Scarlott, she/her, Ward 4, noted that complacent Northampton calls itself a peace city while offering prime real estate to L3Harris. Complacent voters choose war-mongering, ICE-expanding Hillary Clinton, Barrack Obama, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. All refuse to acknowledge the direct connection between the fascist terror that their tax dollars fund in Palestine and the fascist terror conducted by Trump's domestic army. Have we asked ourselves what role the Northampton Police Department (NPD) would play should ICE, DHS, CBP, the National Guard, the Marines come to town for a racist and anti-first amendment rampage? As can be seen by last weekend's large anti-ICE rally on Main Street, people are deeply concerned and opposed to ICE but they are vulnerable not only to federal but local law enforcement as well. In the best of times, an armed police force must be accountable to the people; at a time when a domestic army is killing, maiming, kidnapping and human trafficking with impunity, they need far more than casual chats with the Chief like the one with at Thornes tomorrow. The City Council must require that the NPD hold mandatory monthly public meetings at which city government is present. The NYPD in NYC is required to hold formal monthly meetings in every precinct; NPD must do the same. Is Northampton a city of laws and constitutional protections or is it a city of inevitable collaboration between federal brown shirts and city cops? She urged the council to create structures, transparency and accountability to demand answers to these questions and ensure the protections the public requires. Fascism must be fought, not acquiesced to.

Laura Belushi, Ward 4, said she is here to pick back up on where she left off the last time on the anti-nuclear proclamation that was signed. As a reminder, returning councilors already received a copy. She is proud to be anti-L3Harris. She expressed her intention to read the proclamation and give it to the Mayor, and proceeded to read aloud a proclamation indicting Mayor Sciarra "for her failure to honor the covenant of Mayor's for Peace" signed into law by Northampton Mayor Clare Higgins in 2005.

Mayor Sciarra signed the longer document in 2023 which says she is still interested in upholding the nuclear-free ban, Ms. Belushi suggested. She presented a framed copy of the proclamation to the Mayor.

Deborah Yaffe, South Deerfield, urged city councilors to support a weapons ban ordinance in Northampton and shut down L3Harris. Israel's genocide of Palestinians has been armed by L3Harris and funded by their tax dollars. ICE's military take-over of their streets, including the murder and kidnapping of residents, has been bought and paid for by 'We the People' without their consent. L3Harris is committing war crimes in Palestine while ICE is violating the constitution and murdering people in their own country. Weapons manufacturers are in every state and even on the board of directors of Mass General. It's never been more clear that no matter who is in office, weapons manufacturers are profiting. "We have never been closer to mass destruction and nuclear war. 'We the People' must act now," she stressed. L3Harris technology, known as the trusted disrupter, brags about connecting space, air and land, all in the interest of national security. While L3Harris arms nuclear weapons and ICE's surveillance equipment, CEO Chris Kubasik is making millions of dollars and is worth about \$150 million today. If they really care about preserving the public good, they'll work to end nuclear proliferation and war profiteering in their own backyard. To remain silent while L3Harris continues to profit and commit war crimes makes them complicit, so this isn't the time to remain silent.

Mel Flaxer, Easthampton, urged councilors to join them to pass a weapons-free ordinance and shut down L3Harris. L3Harris arms genocide in Palestine, ICE kidnappings and nuclear war, and to her it is self-evident why need to shut down this death factory and get it out of town. Over the past election season, she heard many of them say they agree but it is not within the city's purview to do this. If this is the very first time they have felt small and powerless in the face of empire, welcome to the struggle! She enjoined. All social movements begin here, feeling small and powerless and that is by design; it is how L3Harris wants them to feel so that they feel defeated and give up and end their fight. She wants them to honor that feeling and set it aside so they can join together and begin the true work of social change and resistance. "Let's protect our comrades overseas, our neighbors in ICE detention and each other." She is emotional because it's a really scary time right now, thinking about what's happening in Minneapolis. The way weapons manufacturers ship component parts of weapons to each other and profit off it is very convoluted by design. In the same way L3Harris is directly murdering Palestinians, L3Harris or another one of them is arming ICE in Minneapolis right now. The connections are real and present. "Let's join together and use the power we have. . . Let's shut down L3Harris and pass a weapons ban ordinance," she urged.

Dan Breindel, Phillips Place, said he sees many of his friends both on the council and in the audience. He spoke to the form-based code, a giant omnibus bill passed in the early days of 2022, kind of the biggest legislative accomplishment of this council and this Mayor. In terms of zoning, there is something called 'sufficient to identify.' When making zoning changes, city officials have to alert the public to the specific lots being rezoned, the extent to which they are being rezoned and the nature of the rezoning. "That was not done here," which is why many people don't know about the form-based code. He doesn't think many of the councilors even know about everything it did. "We are now seeing it come to fruition." It hasn't created any affordable housing, but it is creating consternation and safety issues. Because there were not sufficient notifications, it sidestepped historical oversight, security oversight, safety oversight and natural environment oversight. "Every single neighborhood is being shocked that these changes were made."

In the past election, which was a referendum on the mayor, he thinks voters refuted the Mayor's agenda, and this is central to it. That doesn't mean they should throw it out with the bathwater, but it means they should reconsider it. They are not unanimous, certainly this city is divided. He would ask the council to re-look at this. Online only and during the pandemic it was passed; it deserves much more oversight. He looks forward to their talking about it, considering it and reviewing it.

Katherine Yeagel, Ward 6, said she is also here to talk about L3Harris. Northampton likes to tout itself as a really progressive city yet it has the country's 6th largest weapons manufacturer right down the road. They are creating components of weapons going to ICE, to Palestine and being used by the U.S. military all over the world, and, "it's right here in our city and we can do something about it." It's really frustrating to keep hearing the excuses for why not. Imagine if Northampton really did get rid of L3Harris, how incredible and nationally-inspiring it would be. Imagine being a city saying, 'we are opposed to fascism and making tangible changes and refusing to support the manufacturing of weapons.' She urged them to consider it and make it a priority this term.

Amy Bookbinder, asked the council to please keep all funding proposals to first reading only or refer them to committees for further study to ensure adequate input from the public, School Committee and other stakeholders. Regarding possible approval of Attorney Seewald for another term, she thinks it is important for the council to have its own attorney as it would help reassert the separation of powers in their government that sharing an attorney with the mayor contradicts. Third, it is now known that L3Harris is collaborating with ICE. "Mayor, you can and must do better, and you should tell L3Harris, get the f*** out." If she is concerned about ICE, she should take action now to remove L3Harris. Given the predicted

and pending ICE surge to the Boston area and Northampton's reputation as a progressive city and possible target, she hereby calls on the Mayor, this council, the School Committee and other relevant groups to devise a plan to protect them, especially their brown people, school children and others most vulnerable. This includes better defining whether or not they are a sanctuary city and what the NPD has been instructed to do if ICE comes to their city. "This can't wait; the time is now."

Shelly Berkowitz, Ward 1, noted that, at inauguration, Mayor Sciarra advised the public and members of city government to be joyful if they disagree with her. This mantra makes her as a woman especially angry. Her words remind her of how she felt when she was younger when creepy guys would pass her in the street and command her to smile. By no means is she saying that only women were pissed at the Mayor, but that is certainly what she felt. Horrible things are happening in their city and beyond, yet the recommended solution is to smile and be joyful; to avoid honest discourse. This fits the narrative of the Handmaid's Tale. Was she expected to be joyful seeing the flag flying at half-mast to honor white supremacist Charlie Kirk? Was she expected to be joyful hearing the mayor say during the election that nothing could be done about L3Harris, despite their \$4.4 million contract with ICE to provide tracking surveillance of immigrants' phones? Is joy the rational, knowing response to knowing the midyear appropriation was hijacked off the final School Committee agenda last term and replaced with a potential censure of the two most effective School Committee members, Mike Stein and Anat? She would feel joy if the mayor empowers the city council and School Committee to work transparently for all of Northampton, their schoolchildren and their most vulnerable and disenfranchised residents, not for the elite, developers and consultants..

Clarifying that she was speaking on her own behalf, **Ward 3 School Committee member Renika Montgomery-Tamakloe** asked councilors to delay voting on the Free Cash appropriation. Member Weisenfreund and she sent an email earlier this week asking for this delay because they have put an item on the February 12th School Committee agenda for a midyear appropriation for the schools. They know at the very least they are going to need money for additional hall monitors to address ongoing bathroom issues at the high school and money for staffing to address missed services and issues at other schools. She asked them to delay action on the appropriation until after the February 12th meeting.

Phil Wilson, Ward 1, brought up two important precedents just established critical to how Northampton is governed. One is an assertion by the Philadelphia police chief that if ICE agents violate any laws, the Philadelphia police department will arrest and detain them. ICE is violating constitutional law. They are criminals, they are murders, they are thugs. If ICE comes to town, it is absolutely an obligation of Mayor Sciarra, the City Council and the police chief to understand it is the duty of the police department to interrupt ICE in its criminal behavior. To not do this would be a violation of the Constitution. Also, recently four defendants were acquitted of charges for committing civil disobedience at L3Harris. They were acquitted because they used the necessity defense that a person can intervene in a harmful act if not intervening would cause more harm. Therefore, there is precedence that when there is civil disobedience at L3Harris, their police department should not intervene and stop people from engaging in civil disobedience. If they're committing acts of violence, that's another matter, he allowed.

Joella (Jada) Tarbutton, Ward 3, expressed her wholehearted and positive support for Councilor Maiore as City Council president following her election at the January 2nd meeting. She has known Councilor Maiore for over 30 years and long before public office, title or politics. They were undergraduates together at UMass Amherst and lived together briefly at the People's House on Graves Avenue. Even then, Rachel was remarkable. At the time, she arrived from the south with a thick southern accent and deep drawl and very heavy protective shell shaped by growing up in the South amid deep racial and economic divisions. Many struggled to understand her, literally and figuratively. Rachel never did. She met her with patience, curiosity, kindness and a genuine yearning for connection and sisterhood. She understood where she came from and helped bridge that divide, not with judgment or the Great White Hope mindset but with empathy, humility and steadiness. What she knows with certainty is that the person Rachel was then is the same person she is now. "Rachel is the real deal." Northampton is well-served by her leadership.

She briefly shared an observation from the December 18th City Council meeting. When she first joined, she saw symbols with 'Q' and was a little freaked out at first. Later it became clear that the "Q" was intended for support of a particular person and not a reference to an extremist ideology. It highlighted for her how charged and ambiguous symbolism could be, especially in civic places meant to feel safe, democratic and inclusive. "I share this reflection in the spirit of civil care," she noted.

Jennifer James said she is here tonight because she received the CPAC feedback on the high school schedule change and has requested that CPAC leadership forward it to all of them. Her comments are addressing CPAC feedback about this change and also the speed of the change happening. "You guys handle the purse strings. Your ability to support the high school is incredible." As they may or may not know, every single student with an IEP at the high school is affected by the four-block schedule, which is

the current schedule. Students with IEP's have their civil rights violated daily because they do not have access to arts, music or drama. They lose a whole years' worth of classes just because they receive services. She asked CPAC leadership to forward their feedback and read her own comment on it. She supports the CPAC feedback because this change is generally going to be negative since it is not going to restore civil rights but rather give another subpar option. Students taking these classes will not receive credits that will give them the ability to graduate. Creating full inclusion based on the typical models in other districts should happen in Northampton this year. Northampton is an outlier. She said she would send this to all of them and asked them to read it. "This change is happening too fast," she asserted.

Melissa Maciborski, Northampton, thanked Jen James and welcomed the new council. She has one request. "Please keep people at the center of your work. Please fund our schools, please fund our services." When things feel really complicated, sometimes they're actually very simple. The answer here is simple. "We can actually do this." How wonderful would it feel if the injustice in Northampton ended and they could all get along? She asked. She would love to see people in their community actually really getting what they need. It's a reality that's really possible. "Let's do this guys. Come on, please."

Kala Goldstein, Ward 4, added her voice to others calling for Northampton to reject L3Harris, create a weapons ban ordinance and invest in jobs and industry that support life instead of selling death machines and surveillance technology. They have all been watching horrified as U.S.-sanctioned murders and kidnappings throughout the United States and around the globe are carried out. Some of them might have been among the hundreds gathered in the center of town this weekend in public outcry against ICE and U.S. attacks and imperial intervention in Venezuela.

There is a company empowering these unconscionable acts right here. The last city council affirmed the city's values to end complicity with war profiteering by passing a resolution to divest from companies complicit in Israel's war crimes. Northampton is supposedly a nuclear-free city. L3Harris is one of 12 primary contractors responsible for overseeing the entire nuclear weapons industry in the United States. They are calling on them to find innovative ways to make sure what Northampton stands for is not contradicted by its exports. Blocking merchants of death and destruction is necessary; it is their obligation. Please work with them to find any way possible to use their power as city councilors and as citizens. Passing a weapons ban ordinance is not just about L3Harris. The U.S. war machine is constantly trying to expand as they see with imperialism in Venezuela and ICE's authoritarian activity on their streets. Northeast U.S. is a huge hub of weapons production, and there are already other weapons companies in Northampton, elsewhere in western Mass and a ton near Hartford. Right now, nothing is stopping other weapons companies from setting up shop in Northampton. A weapons ban could do that. The U.S. war machine only functions because they make it function. Their tax dollars, labor and municipal governments allow these companies to exist in communities just like theirs throughout the country. "We can and must resist our role in the war industry," she asserted.

Lena Rubin, Ward 5, added her voice to those urging them to pass a weapons ban ordinance and find other pathways to getting L3Harris out of their community. The Northampton Human Rights Commission in 2014 proclaimed Northampton a sanctuary city and claimed to protect this community's residents from anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiments. How can this be when the city allows and gives tax breaks to L3Harris which equips the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and ICE with surveillance technologies that support their brutal mission of tracking, detaining and deporting migrants? ICE agents are a violent arm of state repression. If they allow L3Harris to continue unchecked in Northampton, they are directly complicit in funding this violence.

Heather Hutchinson, Leverett, said she is a procurement specialist who not too long ago worked for a company invested in sourcing pieces and parts to build airplanes, commercial and military. When the Ukraine attacks began, it became clear who she was working for. The CEO shared his glee with the press about how the value of their stocks and shares were climbing. It was well-paid work with great benefits and great people who were smart and committed but she and they were materially invested in a system of exploitation and violence. Their health insurance, rent payments, vacations and children's futures all were invested in war. It was hard to leave a job and took her eight months to find new work. Noho has the opportunity and responsibility to invest in and develop ways for its residents and the larger community to become materially invested in the community; not war, genocide or apartheid. She supports any initiative to move a genocidal military company out of the Pioneer Valley. L3Harris must go if they are to create fiscally- and socially-responsible and environmentally sustainable businesses for residents to invest in and be invested in.

A weapons ban ordinance is in order. Let's put the smart engineers, procurement specialists, chemists and professionals that come to Northampton every day to work doing things that are right.

Gillian Cannon, accompanied on Zoom by her children **Shilo** and **Aster, of Easthampton**, said they are here to echo a lot of what has been said about supporting a weapons ban ordinance in Northampton. She echoed the concept that they have a responsibility as people who live in a place where violent things. . . [After unsuccessful efforts to restrain her enthusiastic three-year old, she yielded her time.]

A female speaker who didn't identify herself said this is an important issue she has spoken to before that was never addressed. This afternoon, she was crossing at the corner of King and North Street, a blind corner across from Cumberland Farms. Two police officers were doing something 'over there,' and one of them nearly got hit by a car from Vermont turning on the red light. The city needs a 'No turn on Red' or at least some type of investigation. She is wondering if someone needs to be killed on that corner before this happens. "This was one of our police officers and [he] nearly got hit. That's pretty bad."

She also requested that the city council look into a weapons ban as she knows L3Harris is most likely a target because of the type of weapons they make.

Ethan, Amherst, repeated the call for Northampton to pass a weapons ban ordinance and commit to finding a way to shut down L3Harris. L3 and weapons manufacturers exist for one purpose: to make incredible tons of money by making tools used to surveil and kill people. They offer no redeeming value; mass surveillance and mass killing are their only contributions to society. They are the military industrial complex, the war profiteers. They are literally merchants of death and repression. They cannot meaningfully claim to oppose the military industry, ICE terrorism, or the U.S. empire's bloody crimes, whether in Palestine, Venezuela, Lebanon, Los Angeles or Minneapolis, without making every effort to keep them from setting up shop in their own backyard and making business untenable for the ones already here. This will be difficult and take a long time. "We will celebrate small victories and keep working." Please pass a weapons ban ordinance to set an example for other communities who wish to keep these bleak institutions out of their towns and commit to finding creative ways to make life difficult for L3Harris.

Deb Henson welcomed new and returning members and shared a letter she submitted to city councilors and the Mayor, asking that its attachments be put into the public file cabinet so as to be accessible to others. She read aloud a request for increased transparency and public involvement in the budgeting process this year. She is optimistic the Mayor will be more willing to collaborate this year given her near loss in the November election. Toward that end, she has been researching other cities with strong mayor charters such as Somerville. (She referred to specific information on Somerville attached to the letter.) Although the size is larger, the political tension demonstrated there is a mirror of the situation here. She is hopeful they can learn from other communities who have also struggled with school funding dilemmas and dealt with power tensions between the mayor and city council. She is asking the City Council as a whole and Finance Committee in particular to host one or more public meetings early in this budget season so taxpayers can weigh in on capital projects early rather than in June. If the Mayor truly wants to become more transparent, she is hoping she will agree to present the following information: capital improvements by department heads in order of priority, plans for increasing operating services, schools, roads and sidewalks, financial disclosures and construction updates regarding Picture Main Street and the resilience hub.

Kristen Elde, Ward 7, welcomed councilors, saying she was there to comment on two things: 1) the latest bolus of Free Cash, which she urges councilors to delay moving into any stabilization funds until the School Committee has met to discuss unmet NPS needs and review all operating and capital needs, and 2) their city's charter which she urges the council to review this year instead of the next scheduled review date of 2029, which she understands is an option. She along with many other members of the public think it is an important step toward changing the distribution of power among city officials. Their mayor should not have the concentration of power that she currently has. City Councilors should have more than they presently do, as should School Committee members. The current power imbalance is inconsistent with Northampton's expressed commitment to equity and taking up a comprehensive review of their charter offers an opportunity to change this. 'Yes' on a weapons ban ordinance, she added.

Ella Carlson, Ward 3, said she was really thrilled last session when the council passed a divestment resolution. She hopes this council will encourage Mayor Sciarra to implement it with executive policy. She is also here to urge them to take the next step to continue to align their city's values with its operations. In her view, that would be to pass a weapons ban. L3Harris is on the divestment list and the presence of this dangerous company in their city brings her here. It's not just about getting rid of an established company, but there's nothing to stop new weapons companies from coming and setting up shop here. They need to change that. She really hopes this Council will step up, as all the other folks in the room have said, to do their part to resist the U.S. government war machine.

Eve Glazier, Ward 3, said she was really pleased to help work on getting the resolution passed last term to divest from companies investing in civil rights violations in Palestine. L3Harris is on that list of

companies they agreed to divest from with resounding public support. Of course, they don't actually have investments in L3Harris, but the city just agreed that L3Harris and all the atrocities they're committing are squarely against their values. She's really excited to continue thinking creatively in this next term about how they can stop L3Harris. She often hears the protest that 'they just make periscopes.' But these periscopes go on naval submarines that carry nuclear weapons. 70% of the nuclear arsenal is carried through naval submarines, so this is really a very serious matter of life and death. The products L3Harris is making right here in Northampton are fueling their nuclear capacity. She is really, really concerned by this and hopes they are too,

Ace Tayloe, Ward 3, joked that they are attempting to contain their jealousy at being on this side of the podium instead of that side. They echoed their support for a weapons manufacturer ban and for what Luke Rotello said about what they want to do going forward and for the future. They added to their plates a request to ban qualified immunity, which is basically a legal precedent that says that if someone did something in the past they were found not guilty of, a case cannot even be brought against them, which prevents and stifles a lot of legal ways of stopping people from massive abuses of power. Senators Ed Markey and Ayana Pressley are pressing for this at the federal level. It is unlikely to go far there but they think it is worthwhile for Northampton to push for banning qualified immunity here and statewide.

Ryan Minett, Ward 3, said he is here to support a weapons ban, getting L3Harris out of here and also preparing for ICE and for fascism rolling through Northampton. What happens when ICE shows up? He queried. What happens when ICE starts using L3Harris as a staging place? What happens when President Trump cuts off all the federal funding to the blue states? What happens? What's the plan. He has some suggestions. He thinks they should increase everyone's knowledge of all their rights, civil and criminal and promote community strengthening. "Have a bunch of block parties," he suggested. From Benito Mussolini, fascism should actually be called corporatism because it is the merger between corporate and state power. "Don't be the state side of that," he enjoined.

There being no further comments, Councilor Maiore brought comment to a close at 7:35 p.m

<u>Recess</u>	<u>Recess</u> The City Council recessed briefly at 7:35 p.m. The council reconvened at 7:47 p.m.
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<u>Announcements</u>	<p><u>Announcements</u></p> <p>Councilor Klemer announced that the Finance Committee is holding its organizational meeting this Wednesday, January 21st at 5 p.m. in Council Chambers and on Zoom.</p> <p>Community Resources will have its organizational meeting Monday, January 26th at 4 p.m. via Zoom, Councilor Perry advised. He also gave plugs for a Bombyx event to celebrate Martin Luther King Day on Monday, the 19th and the Ice Arts Festival beginning Saturday, January 31st.</p> <p>Councilor Robbins announced the holding of another event in the effort toward transparency and sharing they heard about tonight. She will be holding a 'What's on your mind' session at Bombyx February 4th starting at 5:45 for pizza with thought-sharing beginning at 6:30 p.m. It should be a good start to creating community. Additionally, she made an appeal. A lot of them went to the rally and heard Representative Sabados asking them to please send letters of support for safe cities. She needs a pile of letters and people on her phone saying to support their state's most vulnerable immigrants.</p> <p>City's Services organizational meeting is Monday, February 2nd at 4 p.m., Councilor Dubs mentioned. He shared that he was happy to be reappointed to that committee and also to the Disability Commission, marking his 7th year on that body, which meetings the 2nd Tuesdays of the month. He is also happy to be appointed to the Transportation and Parking Commission (TPC).</p> <p>Mayor Sciarra reminded folks that the Silver Chord Bowl will be held Sunday, February 8th at John M. Greene Hall at 2 p.m. This is now in its 40th year, and this year's showcase features a special opening by the Northamptoners as always. The event, hosted by Steve Sanderson of WRSI The River, herself and Smith College President Sarah Willie-LeBreton, offers the finest a capella.</p> <p>And, Kids Best Fest, a week-long celebration of cinema for kids, happens during February break from February 16th to February 20th at the Academy of Music, she related. Every movie is free. Lilo and Stitch is the first movie.</p>
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<u>Presentations</u>	<u>Presentations</u>
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	<p>None.</p>
<p><u>Consent Agenda</u></p>	<p><u>Consent Agenda</u> Councilor Maiore reviewed the items on the consent agenda. Councilor Stratton asked for removal of both items.</p> <p><u>Minutes of Special City Council Meeting December 9, 2025 and December 18, 2025 regular meeting</u> In the December 18, 2025 minutes under the heading Northampton High School (NHS) Road Safety Project Update, Councilor Stratton said he thought some really key technical information from Director LaScaleia could be better represented. He is happy to approve the December 9, 2025 minutes but asked to postpone acceptance of the December 18, 2025 minutes.</p> <p>He so moved. Councilor Perry seconded.</p> <p>Councilor Davis asked if he would be able to clarify what details from Director LaScaleia he would like to include.</p> <p>Councilor Stratton indicated he could review the recording to provide a more specific proposal.</p> <p>Councilor Robbins wondered if, when complex detailed presentations are made, it would be possible for presenters to provide a chart summarizing the project costs and funding sources.</p> <p>Councilor Stratton said his colleague Councilor Robbins is speaking to things that are very important to him in terms of how information is presented at public meetings. He would like presentations to be more routinely available to the public and very much hopes that could be a topic for discussion in the future.</p> <p>His concern with this specific set of minutes is that he'd like to make sure a few key verbal comments he remembers are part of the public record.</p> <p>The motion to postpone carried unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.</p> <p><u>26.008 Appointment of Attorney Alan Seewald as City Solicitor, for referral to City Services</u> Councilor Stratton expressed his understanding that the appointment itself is basically a straightforward procedure but said it hints of a larger discussion. For the record, he is very interested in discussing the idea that council should have its own attorney. To some degree the city solicitor is the Mayor's attorney. He also thinks there is a very large role for legal voices from the community. Sometimes proposals are brought to them that only one voice says they can't do. He sees a role for three different kinds of legal input to the city – a city solicitor, a council attorney and voices for the community.</p> <p>He thinks the larger topic is something they do need to talk about in the future.</p> <p>Councilor Nabad moved to refer the appointment to City Services. Councilor Stratton seconded. The motion carried unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.</p>
<p><u>Financial Orders (on 1st reading)</u> <u>26.003 An Order to Appropriate \$2.1 Million Free Cash to Various Reserve Accounts - 1st reading</u> <u>26.004 An Order to Appropriate Enterprise Retained Earnings to Various Project - 1st reading</u> <u>26.005 An Order to Appropriate \$251,025 Free Cash to NPS Special Education</u></p>	<p><u>Financial Orders (on 1st reading)</u> <u>26.003 An Order to Appropriate \$2.1 Million Free Cash to Various Reserve Accounts - 1st reading</u> <u>26.004 An Order to Appropriate Enterprise Retained Earnings to Various Projects - 1st reading</u></p> <p>Councilor Robbins moved to refer 26.003 and 26.004 to Finance Committee. Councilor Dubs seconded.</p> <p>Mayor Sciarra gave a Free Cash presentation, noting the slides would be available on the city website tomorrow. Free Cash financial orders are brought to City Council every year after Free Cash is certified, she reminded.</p> <p>Mayor Sciarra reviewed why Free Cash is necessary, noting that cautious budgeting minimizes the risk of deficits, which would force abrupt cuts or deplete reserves, and ensures the ability to continue to absorb cost increases in future years. Revenues received over projections help fund reserves and support capital infrastructure improvements. Around 2012, the city was down to almost zero in reserves. At that time, city officials couldn't do long-range planning and school funding was unstable. Generally, reserves should not be used for recurring expenses such as the yearly operational budget, except for the Fiscal Stability Stabilization Fund (FSSF), which was expressly created for this purpose. When they use FSSF transfers</p>

Stabilization Fund - 1st reading
26.006 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for McKinney Vento Transportation Reimbursement - 1st reading
26.007 An Order to Appropriate Free Cash to NPS for Foster Care Transportation Reimbursement - 1st reading

to support the operating budget, as they have done in the past three years to the tune of \$5 million dollars, those higher levels of spending can only be sustained if residents are willing to pass periodic overrides.

The tradeoff to pushing revenue projections is generating less Free Cash, and the risk of going too far is the possibility of creating a budget deficit. Pushing revenues while simultaneously using reserves for operational needs will lead to a deficit, she advised.

The city follows best practices by using revenues for ongoing operations and reserves for one-time emergency expenses, she continued. Northampton’s financial policies follow the Department of Revenue (DOR) and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The Division of Local Services (DLS) states that, as a nonrecurring revenue source, Free Cash should be restricted to paying one-time expenditures, funding capital projects or replenishing reserves. As a byproduct of many fluctuating revenues, DLS defines Free Cash itself as nonrecurring revenue.

She encouraged councilors to spend some time on the DLS website as the state provides a lot of educational resources.

Free Cash is generated from three sources, 1) unspent funds from the prior year’s certified Free Cash, 2) revenue in excess of projections and 3) unspent amounts in departmental budgets.

FY2025 revenues over projections generated \$5.8 million, or 92.5% of total certified Free Cash. Of that, \$3.186 million came from revenues excluding interest on investments. (54.4% of excess revenue). In FY2026, they are using an additional \$1 million of this to support the operating budget. \$2.67 million of revenue over projections came from high interest on investments (45.6% of excess revenue and 42.2% of total certified Free Cash). In FY2026, financial officers are using an additional \$1.9 of that source this year to support the operating budget.

A big increase in interest income happened in 2023. In mid FY2023, the Treasurer/Collector identified a higher-yield banking account called a SOFR account. The average interest rate in FY2024 was 4.85% and in FY2025 4.23%. This fiscal year the interest rate is at 3.79%.

The Federal Reserve has cut interest rates six times since September of 2024, she noted, and it is now down to 3.73%. In a year and a half, it has dropped over 1%.

She showed a graph reflecting a 20-year history of investment income, with a blue bar representing interest on ARPA funds. Those funds are now fully allocated and have to be expended by December 2026.

Next, Mayor Sciarra showed a chart showing the composition of full Free Cash over 22 years broken down by New Funds, Carryover and ARPA and a chart showing the trend of Free Cash levels without ARPA funds.

She also showed the amounts of Free Cash certified in Northampton as compared to its comparison communities. Using these baseline comparisons, Northampton can be seen to be ranked on the low end.

In the next slide, showing certified Free Cash as a percentage of General Fund (GF) budget, Northampton can be seen to be the lowest of the seven communities listed, she shared. Communities not listed (Agawam, Chicopee, Easthampton, Greenfield and Holyoke) have still not certified Free Cash. DLS’s recommendation is for a municipality to generate 5 to 7% of its budget as Free Cash. Northampton is below that. Their policy has been to generate 3 to 5% and it has not been updated to reflect DLS policy. As can be seen, FY2026 Free Cash is just below 5% of the city’s GF budget.

With her presentation concluded, the Mayor entertained questions from Councilors.

Councilor Stratton expressed his understanding that, when talking about Free Cash, they are basically talking about revenue. These are not yet reserves, he asserted. \$5.857 million of it at least is ‘fresh revenue’ that they basically are deciding what to do with, he suggested. Was any of that surprising? He questioned. There was some variation. The state says that, by law, they cannot ever estimate future revenue above last year’s revenue but “we always estimate well less than” last year’s actual revenue. There were some arguments during the election season that they should estimate much closer. The other argument is to go with cautious estimates.

The idea that the money they’re left with comes from unpredictability and is therefore special and only able to be used a certain way as opposed to very predictable money like property taxes, troubles him, he

volunteered. It troubles him because it indicates that their ratio of capital spending vs. recurring spending "is determined by this invisible hand of unpredictability."

It also bothers him that they don't budget more for capital. Some cities bond more for capital so it becomes a debt service line item which easily shows up in a budget. Northampton doesn't have an overt process of saying, "this is what we want to spend on capital in cash; we don't have a cash capital budget."

He thinks that puts them in a challenging position because they do not have a community conversation where they weigh the value of the two different types of investments. Instead, the level of investment is determined for them by the categories of the money. He thinks they need to be willing to weigh them on their merits.

Mayor Sciarra pointed out that they used to budget for cash capital but pulled that funding out to divert more money toward the schools.

She asked if he's saying he doesn't agree with what DOR says should be considered recurring and nonrecurring funds.

That is a very general guideline and certainly not a law, Councilor Stratton responded. He could argue these are all recurring revenue (hotel/motel, meals, etc.) since they come in every year.

However, he is not saying they need to push their revenue, he clarified. He is saying that they know what they got last year. "There's no uncertainty about last year's money. Now we're in a position where we can decide how we best use last year's money."

As he's sure they're all aware, they just got a bunch of outreach from School Committee members who want to propose a midyear appropriation.

Councilor Loisel raised the point of order that this was not the time to hear a long lecture about this.

Councilor Maiore said she would say they need to focus their discussion on where to refer this.

He would be okay with forwarding 26.003 to finance, Councilor Stratton said. He thinks 26.004 needs further elaboration.

Councilor Loisel said she went to an MMA meeting where the head of DLS gave an hour-long presentation and said DLS recommends generating 5 to 7%, as the Mayor said. She disagreed with Councilor Stratton's point that it is all recurring revenue.

Councilor Klemer commented that Councilor Stratton said they weren't pushing revenue but they have pushed it significantly, in many cases over 90%.

Councilor Robbins moved to call the question. Councilor Klemer seconded. The motion passed 7:2 with Councilor Perry and Councilor Stratton opposed by roll call vote.

Councilor Maiore gave the general point of information that Finance Committee has 60 days to review and make a recommendation on anything referred to it.

Mayor Sciarra noted that Director LaScaleia came tonight to make a presentation.

Councilor Stratton moved to reconsider calling the question. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion carried unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

After reconsideration, councilors recognized Director LaScaleia to make a presentation.

Director LaScaleia explained that each Enterprise Fund is a closed system, so all revenues generated stay within the enterprise. If more revenue is generated than expected or fewer expenses are incurred, that money remains in the fund.

She gave an overview of each project listed in the order, noting that city officials strive to retain 10% of the value of the enterprise within retained earnings. From Water enterprise, \$1.4 million is proposed to be appropriated toward reconstruction of transmission mains. The city is served by two transmission mains coming from the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Williamsburg, one 36-inch and one 20-inch, she noted. The 20-inch main was constructed around the turn of the century. The DPW has been working on a project to relocate this line, increase its size to 24 inches and bring it out onto the road. A TIP project is

scheduled for Mountain Street this year, so they are looking to piggyback this project onto reconstruction of the road.

From sewer enterprise, the proposal is to appropriate \$569,233 for sewer main replacement and wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and pump station improvements, she continued. The city engaged a consulting firm to draft a comprehensive wastewater management plan, which was completed in 2016. The city is now in the midst of a \$20 million dollar plus upgrade at the WWTP and also needs to make improvements to remote pump stations throughout the city. The city has over a hundred miles of sewer mains, many of which were installed around the turn of the century, and the DPW is continuing to do what it can where it can to reinforce them. Since many are buried up to 15 feet under the street, workers line the pipes instead of digging them up. Under the code of MA regulations, cities are required to address inflow and infiltration (I & I) into their stormwater systems to prevent unnecessarily treating rainwater at the WWTP that seeps into the pipes when it rains.

The DPW is currently focused on lining old pipes in Ward 2 (Crescent Street, Franklin Street and Prospect Street), she advised.

The stormwater enterprise is valued at \$2 million, so the request for appropriation from its retained earnings is \$60,740 for the replacement of drains.

Councilor Robbins asked if these are referenced in the CIP for FY2026, and Director LaScaleia said yes.

She said it would be helpful for Finance if Director LaScaleia could point out where it can be found in the CIP.

Director Nardi said the project will be reflected in the CIP as coming out of the director's GF budget. These are annual allocations to ongoing projects in the CIP every year, she noted.

Projects in the CIP are very expensive, Director LaScaleia elaborated. The enterprises are so small relative to overall financial needs that \$30 million can't be funded in its entirety from retained earnings so they have to make payments in installments towards those projects. "We are funding ongoing projects that have been discussed in prior CIPs and will be discussed in the coming CIP to the extent that we can with the funding that is available to us," she explained.

The projects are line items in the CIP and in the operating budgets of all the enterprises, she noted.

Regarding replacing the transmission line down Mountain Street, Councilor Stratton asked if there has been any conversation with IT about running fiber along the line.

Regarding I & I, he also asked if the city still has problems with illegal cross connections such as when someone misroutes a sump pump.

They do, Director LaScaleia said. As part of the city's regulatory requirements, they are required to search for these and to report and correct them when found. When those arise, she will be reaching out to the ward councilor to ask for their assistance.

He said he thinks it would be very helpful if she could give councilors a list of where the stormwater and sewer projects are.

He heard mention of using the stormwater fund for the project on Old Wilson Road and Nashawannuck Brook, he continued. He asked if any of that is included in this.

Director LaScaleia said any money earmarked for Old Wilson Road was previously appropriated.

Councilor Maiore thanked Director LaScaleia.

The motion to refer 26.003 and 26.004 to Finance was called to a vote, and it passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

This will go to a future agenda of finance, Councilor Maiore confirmed.

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

Councilor Stratton said this is an interesting order because special education is really a recurring expense. Now suddenly, after just talking about how they couldn't use reserves for routine, predictable expenses,

**26.003 AND 26.004
REFERRED TO
FINANCE**

that is now exactly what they are proposing to do, he asserted. There is a balance in this account, which was seeded with \$800,000, and the order creating it established a yearly spending limit of \$350,000. If they actually had an unexpected expense that this fund exists to address, they would not have the money to fund it. He would ask that the Mayor consider rewriting this order and appropriating this money to the operating budget instead of the stabilization fund. Funding intended for recurring expenses should go into the operating budget as the funding source, he maintained.

Director Nardi said the money really does go into the operating budget. An unexpected expense above and beyond the fund limit would be addressed with a supplemental order, she indicated.

Councilor Nabad commented that, having reviewed the establishment of this stabilization fund and thought it was a great solution, she would support moving the order to the consent agenda. She thinks the stabilization account ensures a balanced approach to addressing the needs of their most vulnerable students and is a sustainable solution. She feels like time is pressing as they watch the federal government hack away at Medicaid and Medicare, so she would move referral of this to the consent agenda.

She so moved. Councilor Davis seconded.

Councilor Stratton said it is his understanding that after this money goes into the stabilization fund, the School Committee still cannot spend it.

Both bodies have to agree to spend it, Mayor Sciarra confirmed.

Councilor Nabad expressed her understanding that this has nothing to do with mid-year appropriations. That also informed her decision to refer it to the consent agenda, she shared.

The motion passed 8:1 by voice vote with Councilor Stratton opposed.

See minutes of February 5, 2026 for final reading.

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

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

Councilor Klemmer moved to refer 26.006 and 26.007 to the consent agenda. Councilor Stratton seconded.

Councilor Stratton confirmed these are major cost centers but said they are extremely important commitments to their children. When a child's world dissolves/fractures and they end up in foster care, being able to stay in their school with their teachers and friends may be the rock in their lives. This is expensive but extremely important, he observed.

The motion to refer the orders as a group passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

See minutes of February 5, 2026 for final reading.

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

Orders
26.009 An Order to Amend the 2026-2027 City Council Meeting Schedule - single reading only
[The order proposed amending the City Council's meeting schedule to cancel the February 19, 2026 regular meeting and change the July 2026 meeting from Thursday, July 9th to Wednesday, July 15th.]
Councilor Nabad moved to approve. Councilor Perry seconded.

Councilor Stratton said he is troubled that this body would elect to meet on February 5th and then not again until March 5th. Voters elected them to do a job, and he thinks they need to be present and doing their jobs. He is troubled that they are removing a meeting instead of rescheduling it and worries it may lead to less than ideal practices such as running two readings through in one night or needing a special meeting. He would encourage his colleagues to consider rescheduling the meeting in February rather than cancelling it.

Councilor Maiore said she respectfully disagrees. She is happy to have a special meeting if there is a time-sensitive item. She is not concerned that they are not attending enough meetings or working hard enough for the city.

Councilor Klemer said she and Councilor Maiore discussed this and do not cancel meetings lightly. They felt it was prudent to not have a meeting in the middle of the month during School Vacation week when a lot of people are away.

Councilor Maiore added that a lot of the general public is also not able to attend that meeting.

The motion passed 8:1 by voice vote with Councilor Stratton opposed.

The following order passed single reading:

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

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)~~

Passed single reading and enrolled.

<u>Ordinances</u>	<u>Ordinances</u> None.
<u>Zoning Ordinances (Not yet Referred)</u>	<u>Zoning Ordinances (Not yet Referred)</u> None.
<u>Zoning Ordinances</u>	<u>Zoning Ordinances</u> None.
<u>Resolutions</u>	<u>Resolutions</u> None.
<u>Financial Orders (on 2nd reading)</u>	<u>Financial Orders (on 2nd reading)</u> None.
<u>New Business</u>	<u>New Business</u>
<u>Adjourn</u>	<u>Adjourn</u> Councilor Perry moved to adjourn. Councilor Davis seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.
	Attest: _____, Administrative Assistant

City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

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

In City Council

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

**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

In City Council

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

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

In City Council February 5, 2026

Upon recommendation of Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra

O-26.011 An Order to Make a \$290,317 Midyear Appropriation to NPS

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2026, the Northampton School Committee voted to have the Superintendent request the Mayor put forward to the City Council a mid-year appropriation request for \$790,175 for the Northampton Public Schools, as presented by School Committee Member Jewell; and

WHEREAS, Superintendent Bonner was also requested by two members of the School Committee to create a list based on current requests from the schools, and working with school principals and the Administrative Leadership Team, created and presented a list of requests at the January 22, 2026 meeting. The voted-upon list included items that were not requested and are not included in this order; and

WHEREAS, the voted upon list includes \$123,000 for Student Services that the district anticipates will be covered by the Commonwealth Special Education Reimbursement Program (Circuit Breaker) funds, and are therefore not included; and

WHEREAS, the voted upon list includes items that are already on the Capital Improvement Plan, as well as other items that are capital requests, those items, totaling \$79,050, are on or will be moved to the Capital Improvement Plan; and

WHEREAS, the voted upon list includes the following items that will be funded with one-time Free Cash for the remainder of this school year:

Math & Reading Interventionists (BSS)	\$81,890
Tiered Support Educator (JSS and RR)	\$33,404
1.0 FTE Clerical Support (RR)	\$16,107

Four Campus Safety Monitors (JFK/NHS)	\$66,808
Four Math/Literacy Tutors	\$66,808
Curriculum Kits and Classroom Supplies	\$13,300
Curriculum Software & Subscriptions (District Wide)	\$12,000
TOTAL	\$290,317

Ordered, that, the City Council appropriate \$290,317 from the FY26 Certified General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance (Free Cash) as a one-time funding for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year.

City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council

February 5, 2026

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

26.012 An Order to Reprogram \$75,161 from Various IT Accounts for NPS Chromebooks

WHEREAS, entry-level Chromebooks are needed within the Northampton Public Schools (NPS); and

WHEREAS, the current Chromebooks being used at NPS are eight years old and they are having issues with the newest applications; and

WHEREAS, the number of Chromebooks that need to be replaced due to breakage is higher than expected; and

WHEREAS, there is not enough funds in the NPS Chromebook account; and

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to purchase these books as soon as possible to be used this current school year; and

WHEREAS, there are remaining FY25 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds in the completed NPS Website Redesign and NPS Server Equipment Upgrade, and the FY23 IT NPS UPS System Replacement accounts; and

WHEREAS, an amount of the FY26 CIP project for IT NPS Infrastructure Upgrades can be reprogrammed to fill this urgent need.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED,

That the City Council reprogram and authorize the transfer of the funds in the following NPS Information Technology project accounts for the purposes of purchasing Chromebooks for the Northampton Public Schools.

Account Name	Amount From	Amount To:
NPS Website Redesign	\$ 39,475.00	
IT NPS Server System Replacement	\$ 5,178.69	
IT NPS UPS System Replacement	\$ 497.00	
IT NPS Infrastructure Upgrade	\$ 30,000.00	
IT NPS 1:1 Chromebooks		\$75,150.69

City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council

January 15, 2026

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**

In the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Five

Upon the Recommendation of the Transportation and Parking Commission

**26.010
AN ORDINANCE**

**RELATIVE TO ALL-WAY STOP CONTROL FOR
FINN STREET AT PROSPECT STREET**

An Ordinance of the City of Northampton, Massachusetts. Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Northampton, in City Council assembled, as follows:

SECTION 1

That the § 312-113 of the Code of Ordinances be amended as follows:

§ 312-113 Schedule XII: Stop and Yield Intersections.

- A. Isolated stop signs. Stop intersections are established at the following locations:
[10-15-1981; 10-15-1987; 5-18-1989; 5-6-1993; 11-5-1998; 1-7-1999; 3-6-2003;
12-2-2004]

Location	Direction of Travel	At the Intersection of
Prospect Street	North	Finn Street

- D. Multiway stop signs. Multiway stop intersections are established at the following locations:

Location	Direction of Travel	Intersection
<u>Finn Street</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>Prospect Street</u>
<u>Prospect Street</u>	<u>North/South</u>	<u>Finn Street</u>

