



SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NORTHAMPTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

January 22, 2026 ~ 3:55 pm - 5:30 pm
By Videoconference



MINUTES

Approved: February 12, 2026

Attending: Mayor Sciarra, Member Bartoli, Member Weisenfreund, Member Montgomery-Tamakloe, Member Stein, Member Martyn, Member Mahoney, Member Reiss, Member Jewell, Member Saner Sullivan

Also Attending: Superintendent Bonner, Business Administrator Jones

Documents Reviewed

Mid-Year Appropriation Request FY26

Mid-Year Appropriation: Immediate Stabilization & the Path to Sustainable Funding

2025-2026 Mid-Year Appropriation Request

- I. **Announcement** that Meeting is Being Videorecorded -
- II. **Roll Call** - Mayor Sciarra called the meeting to order at 3:55 pm and the roll was called. This meeting was held by videoconference and the roll and all votes taken were done so remotely.

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra	Present
W1 Alena Bartoli	Present
W2 Anat Weisenfreund	Present
W3 Renika Montgomery-Tamakloe	Present (join time not recorded)
W4 Michael Stein	Present (4:27 pm)
W5 Amy Martyn	Present
W6 Cindy Mahoney	Present
W7 Valerie Reiss	Present
AL Tiffany Jewell	Present
AL Robbie Saner Sullivan	Present
QUORUM	Present

- III. **A Presentation by Superintendent Bonner and Discussion of Possible Mid-Year Appropriation Request** - Superintendent Bonner presented the ALT team's

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra	Member Tiffany Jewell	Member Robbie Saner Sullivan	Member Alenda Bartoli
Member Anat Weisenfreund	Member Renika Montgomery-Tamakloe	Member Michael Stein	Member Amy Martyn
	Member Cindy Mahoney	Member Valerie Reiss	

recommendations for a mid-year appropriation. She said that \$123K for Student Services should be added to the list. She had asked ALT to focus on one-time expenses. Requests for all schools had common areas, i.e., curricular materials, classroom equipment, professional development, facilities and infrastructure, student-focused interventions, and special education. She reviewed the requests. Member Weisenfreund offered a statement:

‘I am glad to be here this afternoon to discuss, and hopefully approve, a request that the Mayor bring a financial order to the City Council for a robust and meaningful mid-year appropriation. We are here today because Member Montgomery-Tamakloe and I requested an opportunity to discuss a critically important mid-year appropriation for our District. We also asked that Dr. Bonner come prepared with specific and prioritized suggestions that address the various crises such as literacy interventions, resources to solve the bathroom issues at the high school, non-compliance with IEPs and so on. Thank you, Dr. Bonner, for your presentation this evening! In preparation for this meeting, I, along with Members Stein and Montgomery-Tamakloe, prepared and sent to you a detailed proposal and mid-year appropriation request in the amount of \$925,000. We will present this to you in a little while, when Members Stein and Montgomery-Tamakloe are able to get out of work and attend. As the proposal states, it is based on the needs identified by building principals and staff as part of the FY26 budget process. We developed this proposal with the best information we had, are aware that there may be minor omissions or wrongful additions in our proposal – honestly, with so many cuts over time and then some partial restorations, and with the real restrictions we have to communicate directly with NPS staff, we may not have gotten it 100% right. But as we said, we appreciate everyone’s input! A mid-year appropriation is urgent. I know that most, if not all of you, ran for your seats because you want more funding for our schools, and you understand the critical nature of the need. We have listened to public comment from families, students, and staff. We have read the CASE report that, among other things, identified “a deep erosion of trust” between the community, parents, and the school administration due to the impacts of devastating funding cuts and failures of communication. We are under investigation by the State because we are failing our students with disabilities. And while there appears to be agreement that the schools are in crisis, there isn’t a plan to fix it. Instead, many (both on and off this body) are bothered by the intense passion, and sometimes exasperation, that we hear in the words of the public. And many of us feel beleaguered by the ongoing pleas and demands for a just budget. In our roles as School Committee members, our charge is to put the needs of children first, and we don’t have very much time to effect change. We could have talked about a mid-year appropriation in December but instead, two members and the Mayor decided to attempt a bogus censure of Member Stein and myself, an effort that ended by withdrawing the agenda item and a public apology for having brought it in the first place. For the sake of our kids, we really don’t have time to waste. No one claims that school funding is simple, but our city is privileged to have the resources to meet the needs of our children and providing adequate funding for our schools will not only alleviate the crisis, but it will also “bring down the temperature” in our city, something that all of us want and need. Let us all discuss and agree on a robust mid-year appropriation that will move us one step closer towards meeting the needs of our District!

Lastly, and since we will be working together for the next two years, I do want to make a comment about how the process around scheduling this meeting diminished accessibility and did not reflect what I assume are shared values of respect and collaboration. First, the date and time for this afternoon’s meeting was set without our input. When I and others wrote to the newly elected Vice-Chair and asked her to reschedule so that folks who work during the day could attend, both members of the body and the public, our requests were denied without explanation. When I stated that this time caused hardship for me personally, the Vice-Chair responded in a cold and dismissive way. You will note that neither Members Stein nor Montgomery Tamakloe are able to join us prior to 4:30. Second, as is customary and courteous, neither Member Montgomery-Tamakloe nor I were invited to add any items to the agenda for the meeting that we requested. Third, our request that our presentation be circulated to all of you along with the agenda, was not honored. I bring this up because members have already talked a lot about the value you place on collaboration and I’d like us to reflect on how the actions I have described by the leadership of this body around this meeting do or do not reflect that value.

Member Martyn made a motion, seconded by Member Mahoney, to consider a presentation prepared by Member Jewell. Member Montgomery-Tamakloe said it was premature to vote on this because the presentation from Members Montgomery-Tamakloe, Stein, and Weisenfreund had not yet been reviewed. Mayor Sciarra asked why some requested funds were for items that could be addressed in the capital budget. Superintendent Bonner said she would follow up with Tony Kusnierz. Member Stein expressed frustration that capital projects are not reviewed with the School Committee or the Budget & Property Subcommittee. He presented the proposal developed by himself and Members Montgomery-Tamakloe and Weisenfreund. Member Saner Sullivan said that she intends to rely on the Superintendent and her team. Member Martyn thanked the public who submitted correspondence to the School Committee. Member Martyn made a motion, seconded by Member Mahoney, to approve Member Jewell’s proposal for a mid-year appropriation of \$790,615. In response to a question from Member Bartoli, the Mayor said that it is nebulous whether these are one-time requests or recommendations for the FY27 budget. Member Stein said ALT does not have a track record for bringing forward its needs to the Committee’s attention. He expressed frustration that resources are not explicitly tied to services. In response to a question from Mayor Sciarra, Superintendent Bonner said that hall monitor positions have been posted and these positions are needed whether through a mid-year appropriation or through reallocation. The roll call vote follows.

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra	Abstain
W1 Alena Bartoli	Aye
W2 Anat Weisenfreund	Aye
W3 Renika Montgomery-Tamakloe	Aye
W4 Michael Stein	Aye
W5 Amy Martyn	Aye
W6 Cindy Mahoney	Aye

W7 Valerie Reiss	Aye
AL Tiffany Jewell	Aye
AL Robbie Saner Sullivan	Aye
VOTE	Aye 9 Abstain 1

Member Stein made a motion, seconded by Member Martyn, to amend the motion on the floor to direct the Superintendent to bring an order to the Mayor to bring to City Council for a mid-year appropriation of \$790,175 that conforms to the list of positions presented by Member Jewell. Mayor Sciarra clarified that she cannot be ordered to bring a request to the City Council. The roll call vote follows.

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra	Abstain
W1 Alena Bartoli	Aye
W2 Anat Weisenfreund	Aye
W3 Renika Montgomery-Tamakloe	Aye
W4 Michael Stein	Aye
W5 Amy Martyn	Aye
W6 Cindy Mahoney	Aye
W7 Valerie Reiss	Aye
AL Tiffany Jewell	Aye
AL Robbie Saner Sullivan	Aye
VOTE	Aye 9 Abstain 1

IV. **Adjourn** - Member Mahoney made a motion, seconded by Member Montgomery-Tamakloe, to adjourn. The roll call vote follows.

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra	Aye
W1 Alena Bartoli	Aye
W2 Anat Weisenfreund	Aye
W3 Renika Montgomery-Tamakloe	Aye
W4 Michael Stein	Aye
W5 Amy Martyn	Aye
W6 Cindy Mahoney	Aye
W7 Valerie Reiss	Aye
AL Tiffany Jewell	Aye
AL Robbie Saner Sullivan	Aye
VOTE	Aye 10

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 pm.