



Committee on Finance and the Northampton City Council

*Councilor David A. Murphy, Chair
Councilor Maureen T. Carney
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge
(Vacant)*

**City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street
Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building
Northampton, MA**

Meeting Date: July 14, 2016

MEETING MINUTES

- 1. Meeting Called To Order:** At 8:05 Councilor Murphy called the meeting to order.
- 2. Roll Call:** On a roll call the following councilors were present: Councilors Murphy, LaBarge and Carney. Also present from the City Council were: Councilors O'Donnell, Sciarra, Bidwell, Dwight and Klein.
- 3. Approve Minutes Of June 23, 2016 Meeting:** Councilor Carney moved to approve the minutes; Councilor LaBarge seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.
- 4. Financial Orders**

16.125 Financial Order To Appropriate Capital Projects From The General Fund FY17 Cash Capital Account

Councilor LaBarge moved to send back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Mayor Narkewicz explained that these are cash capital items in the FY17 Cash Capital plan. These are smaller sized projects that the City would not bond for which is why they are paid for out of Cash Capital.

Councilor Dwight asked about the radio study. The Mayor explained that this is different from the Dispatch console project that was already brought forward. Dispatch is leading this project that will look at all of the City's radio needs. There is a working group that has been established, including members of Police, Fire Rescue, Dispatch, Schools, DPW, and Central Services. The plan is for a communications expert to look for ways to combine towers and equipment to enhance cross communication between City

departments and perhaps save money. Councilor Murphy explained that the Capital Improvements Team has requested that the various departments look at the possibility of combining radio services, so he believes the project makes sense.

16.126 Financial Order To Transfer Funds Into The Compensated Absences Reserve Fund

Councilor LaBarge moved to send back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

The Mayor explained that the DOR recommended that the City set up a sort of reserve account in case any monies need to be paid out to City employees outside of the budget. The account has been in place for a year or two. The money will not have to be appropriated again once it is in the reserve fund.

16.128 Financial Order To Authorize Inter-Municipal Agreements For FY 2017

Councilor LaBarge moved to send back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

The agreements defined in this order are examples where Northampton has partnered with surrounding communities to regionalize various services. All are existing agreements being renewed, however, under Mass General Law, the City is required to renew the agreements yearly. In addition to the City Council voting on this, Select Boards in other communities are voting on these agreements as well.

Councilor Dwight asked about Pioneer Valley Bike Share Program; Mayor Narkewicz explained that it is a project with a longer term planning process. The City continues to work collaboratively with the four communities involved and have applied for CMAQ funding for this initiative. (CMAQ is for congestion mitigation funding through the regional Transportation Improvement Program). Some monies have been received for the planning phase; more is expected. Given the cost of capital needs, maintenance, etc., it is better that the City try to make the most by way of economies of scale.

Councilor Bidwell notes that the level of regionalization is impressive. He wondered if there were more opportunities; Mayor Narkewicz explained that the City continues to have conversations with different communities. A few years ago the City applied for a grant with the town of Easthampton to look at regional dispatch service. At the time the model didn't really work. The Health Department is trying to form a Mosquito Control District. This year the City has contracted with a private company to do mosquito monitoring and testing. They will also work on mitigation efforts. Setting up as a district will mean that the regional area may be eligible for funding from the State. There have been conversations among various communities, but the plans are in the early stages. The Mayor also notes that the City's IT Director also sits on a board with other community IT Directors. There have been discussions among the directors about the potential for the sharing of resources.

Councilor Klein asked about procurement of products in bulk; Mayor Narkewicz explained that the City does participate in some regional procurement programs where it makes sense to do so. Sometimes the City can find better deals outside of the regionalized programs. Energy is one area where the City gets better rates when representing itself rather than purchasing through a regional program.

16.129 Financial Order To Reprogram Remaining Funds From An FY 15 Capital Project To The Fire Rescue Department Security Access System

Councilor LaBarge moved to send back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Mayor Narkewicz noted that this project was already in the works, however, when the bids came in, the cost was \$7,000 more than anticipated. The monies will be coming from a completed project where there was money left over.

16.130 Financial Order To Appropriate Funds For Northampton Public Schools And Smith Vocational And Agricultural High School

Councilor LaBarge moved to send back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

The school's budgets were prepared using the Governor's proposed budget, which had projected a \$20 per child increase in Chapter 70 funds. The House Budget increased the Chapter 70 funds by \$55 per child. The Senate maintained that amount, but cut other funding, including the Kindergarten Incentive grants. The Mayor committed to the schools that if the Chapter 70 amount was increased, that additional amount would be passed on to the schools.

Councilor Dwight asked about the stipulation that monies be spent only on net school spending eligible items; Mayor Narkewicz explained that this is language suggested by DESE and is also in the orders that were presented when the budget was brought forward to the City Council.

16.132 Financial Order To Provide For FY2016 End Of Year Budget Transfers

Councilor LaBarge moved to send back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Mayor Narkewicz explained that the bulk of the money is going to Street/Signal Light line item. When the budget was first put together, savings had been built in based on the estimates of using new more energy efficient lighting throughout the City. That project has been delayed so that more public input can be gotten. Some of the savings estimates have not been realized.

The Interest on Long Term Debt excess was realized when the City re-issued bonds this year. The City was able to save significantly on long term debt interest.

16.133 Financial Order: For The City Council To Accept A Gift Of A 1953 Jeep On Behalf Of The City From The Family Of Jack Joyce

Councilor LaBarge moved to send back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Mayor Narkewicz noted that initially when the gift was made, they were trying to think of a way for the Veterans' Council to accept the gift. However, the VC is not really an entity, but rather a collaborative of veteran's organizations. The City would be able to register and the Veterans' Services department will be the constant entity that is able to take charge. The Jeep is currently being restored and it will only be used for ceremonial purposes.

Councilor LaBarge asked about the value of the Jeep. The Mayor is not aware of its value, but because it is real property, the City Council needs to vote on it and the Mayor needs to approve acceptance of the gift.

16.134 An Order For A Home Rule Petition To Authorize The Mayor To Seek Special Legislation To Amend The Acts Of 1994, Chapter 86

Councilor LaBarge moved to send back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Mayor Narkewicz explained that this is an issue that he has been working on with Representative Kocot for many months. The Legislature only has about two more weeks of formal session and Representative Kocot is trying to get this completed before the break.

When the Northampton State Hospital was closed, Chapter 86 of the Acts of 1994 was adopted and called for the disposition all of the land. Various organizations were given land, including the City. The Village Hill parcel was set aside for redevelopment. The agricultural land that Smith Voke controls is another parcel that was disposed of by this Act. The Grove Street Shelter was conveyed to the City and it is the City's obligation to run it as a homeless shelter forever. The City would like the flexibility to work with the Grove Street Shelter operator (ServiceNet) to have the option to convey the property to them. Right now the City leases the property to ServiceNet, however, under this arrangement ServiceNet is not able to apply for grants, or make improvements to the property when donation money is available. Also, Central Services maintains the property and this is not ideal for the City given that it is run by another organization.

There were two parcels given to the Northampton Housing Authority one parcel on Laurel Street, and one parcel on Grove Street. Part of the requirement when the land was conveyed was that the NHA had to build affordable housing on the land within five years. The NHA did not meet the five year requirement to build affordable housing due to funding. The City would like to have the property re-conveyed to the City for the purpose of working with other organizations to get the land developed for affordable housing. The Housing Authority supports the plan, and they will be voting on the proposal in the near future.

Councilor O'Donnell asked whether the Housing Authority still had authority over the decision to re-convey the property; the Mayor indicates that a vote of the Board is requested by the State to see whether this would be a non-adversarial sort of agreement. Councilor O'Donnell asked whether the City could place certain restrictions on the conveyance of the properties; the Mayor believes that this is a possibility. Councilor O'Donnell noted that the City would be eligible for CPA funds, while the NHA would not. The Mayor is not sure of the timetable for these development projects once the land is conveyed to the City; an RFP process will be established.

Councilor Bidwell notes that as the project unfolds, he would like to see community involvement in that neighborhood, and since the land is part of Ward 2, he would be willing to facilitate discussions with the residents.

5. New Business

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

Adjourn: Councilor LaBarge moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m.; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Prepared by:

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