



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

### Committee Members:

*Chair: Councilor Maureen T. Carney*

*Vice-Chair: Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge*

*Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell*

*Councilor James B. Nash*

### Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: February 21, 2019.

Location: City Council Chambers  
212 Main St., Northampton, Massachusetts

Note: The City Services Committee Meeting took place during the City Council Meeting as announced. The City Council Meeting began at 7 p.m.

Present: Councilor Maureen T. Carney, Chair  
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge, Vice Chair  
Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell  
Councilor James Nash

#### 1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

At 9:01 p.m., Councilor Carney called the meeting to order. On a roll call, Councilors Bidwell, Carney, LaBarge and Nash were present.

#### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no members of the public present specifically for the purpose of the meeting, there was no public comment.

#### 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Councilor Nash moved to defer approval of the minutes. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with 4 Yes, 0 No.

#### 4. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

- A. **18.241B Appointment to Northampton Housing Authority**  
Housing Authority  
Elizabeth Silver, 67 Willow Street, Florence  
Term: February 2019 to March 2021  
*To fill the unexpired term of Jerry Budgar*

Members took up the Mayor's proposal to appoint Elizabeth Silver to the Housing Authority.

Councilor Bidwell said he spoke with Elizabeth Silver last week and thinks this is really an outstanding appointment.

Ms. Silver has a distinguished career in legal services dating back to 1976, much of which has focused on public housing work. Some eight or nine years ago she was under contract to the housing authority one day a week working on tenant advocacy issues. Ms. Silver wants to work on issues of fairness and respect to tenants. He thinks she would be a worthy successor to their dear friend Gerry Budgar.

Councilor Bidwell moved to forward the appointment of Elizabeth Silver to the Northampton Housing Authority with a positive recommendation. Councilor LaBarge seconded.

Councilor O'Donnell said he supports the recommendation but would like to briefly discuss what he feels is the job of a member of the Housing Authority board. The Housing Authority board is the Housing Authority, he stressed. The law says that every Housing Authority is governed by a board. The director is the one to whom the board delegates responsibility.

He thinks they have a Housing Authority in Northampton that has serious, serious problems. He thinks there is a desire to pass the buck. If there is a problem - air conditioners, faulty elevators, policies that are implemented without notice - the buck stops with the Housing Authority board. He has heard, 'Well, it's the Executive Director;' in other words, that it is the person to whom they delegate authority that is ultimately responsible. He thinks it's vital for the Housing Authority to start to work better so that it can fulfill its mission.

Councilor Carney called the motion to a vote, and it passed unanimously with 4 Yes, 0 No by voice vote.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

6. **Adjourn**

There being no new business, Councilor Bidwell moved to adjourn. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

*Prepared By:*

*L. Krutzler*

*Administrative Assistant to the City Council*

*413.587.1210; [krutzler@northamptonma.gov](mailto:krutzler@northamptonma.gov)*