



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

*Councilor David A. Murphy, Chair  
Councilor Maureen T. Carney  
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge  
Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra*

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

Meeting Date: June 20, 2019

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

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** At 8:45 p.m. Councilor Murphy called the meeting to order.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were committee members David Murphy (Chair), Maureen Carney, Marianne LaBarge and Gina-Louise Sciarra. Also present from the City Council were Dennis Bidwell, William H. Dwight, Alisa Klein, Jim Nash and Ryan O'Donnell.
3. **Financial Orders**
  - A. **19.097 An Order To Surplus Prospect Street Water Department Building**  
Councilor Murphy read the text of the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor Carney seconded.

DPW Director Donna LaScaleia made a reference at the budget hearing to the fact that employees have been slowly clearing items out of this building awaiting assembly of the storage facility at the water treatment plant, Mayor Narkewicz reminded. That building is actually slated to arrive on June 28<sup>th</sup> so they feel comfortable now bringing forward this order. It would be the fourth city building to be surplus during his tenure; they no longer have a municipal use for the building. Using the same process they have used in the past, he will ask the City Council to surplus the property and then issue an RFP.

Councilor Dwight mentioned that there is outdoor storage in the yard. He asked if the Mayor knew of any 21E issues.

Those would be the kinds of things that would be the due diligence of a buyer, Mayor Narkewicz. The city never had gasoline storage or any kind of fuel storage on the property.

There was road salt there, Councilor Dwight noted.

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That would be part of the due diligence of any buyer, Mayor Narkewicz reiterated. They would provide all relevant information about how the building was used. He doesn't believe it will rise to the level of a 21E investigation, he indicated.

She hears about this building a lot from people who want to know how it's being used, what's in it, etc., Councilor Klein related. She expressed her understanding that the Recreation Department used to be located there.

Mayor Narkewicz confirmed the Recreation Department was there a few years ago on the second floor of the building. The building is not handicapped accessible and is very tired. It is not well-insulated, is dated and has lots of issues. It is not by any stretch a modern building. The city couldn't have the Recreation Department there now because it is not accessible.

Councilor Dwight stepped out.

Operations had been split between the Prospect Street building and the water treatment plant and Director LaScaleia has now consolidated operations at the water treatment plant. With the erection of the cold storage building, they will be able to move the equipment. They have been able to do a re-visioning of the building at Locust Street and created more work space there. They have freed up enough space to move all the staff out... it is a building that has been slated for a number of year to be surplus. His predecessor had talked about that. They must use the proceeds of sale for capital expenses of the water enterprise, most likely for water line replacement.

Councilor Klein asked how much he would envision the building being sold for.

Councilor Dwight returned.

The building was appraised and the fair market value given them was \$290,000. That will be the minimum bid.

Councilor Klein asked if using the amount raised for capital expenses would free up other money for other uses, but Mayor Narkewicz explained that the proceeds need to be reallocated to the water enterprise fund.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by voice vote.

**B. 19.098 An Order For FY2019 Budget Transfers**

Councilor Nash stepped out.

Councilor Murphy reviewed the transfers listed in the order.

Councilor Carney moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor LaBarge seconded.

The city has over-expended overtime in flood control because it had to man pump stations but it hasn't spent all the overtime in the storm drain category, Finance Director Susan Wright explained. It's been so rainy they've been running the pump stations, she elaborated.

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Councilor Nash returned.

Councilor Bidwell asked about the \$85,000 transfer into Legal Services.

This is the year they spend a lot in collective bargaining, Ms. Wright advised. She confirmed the Mayor's office is requesting two readings

Councilor Murphy called the motion to a vote, and it passed unanimously 4:0.

C. 19.099 An Order To Dedicate Medicare Part D Reimbursement To OPEB Trust Fund

Councilor Murphy read the text of the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor Sciarra seconded.

The city provides Medicare Part D coverage to its retirees, Ms. Wright explained. The federal government offers a subsidy intended to offer an incentive to employers. Employers get reimbursement from the government for offering a good plan to their retirees. The money comes to the city from the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) in the form of a deduction on the GIC bill. As a best practice, cities have been taking that Medicare reimbursement and moving it into the OPEB trust fund.

\$220,000 was contributed to the OPEB fund from this source in 2018.

Councilor Murphy called the motion to a vote, and it passed unanimously 4:0.

4. Approval Of Minutes From The Previous Meeting

A. Minutes of June 6, 2019

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the minutes of June 6, 2019. Councilor Sciarra seconded. The motion passed 4:0 by voice vote.

5. New Business

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

None.

6. Adjourn: There being no other business, Councilor Carney moved to adjourn. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

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