



## **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: September 6, 2018

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 7:20 p.m. Councilor Murphy called the meeting to order.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were committee members David Murphy, Maureen Carney, Marianne LaBarge & Gina-Louise Sciarra. Also present from the City Council were Bill Dwight, Jim Nash, Ryan O'Donnell, Dennis Bidwell, and Alisa Klein.
3. **Approval Of Minutes From The Previous Meeting**
  - A. **Minutes of August 16, 2018**

Councilor Carney moved to approve the minutes. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by voice vote.
4. **Financial Orders**
  - A. **18.155 An Order to Authorize Intermunicipal Agreement For Greenfield Community College To Use City Fiber Network**

Councilor Murphy read the text of the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order to the full City Council with a positive recommendation. Councilor Sciarra seconded.

The Greenfield Community College (GCC) nursing program moved into the former Park & Recreation Department building at Smith Vocational and Agricultural School, Mayor Narkewicz reminded. In its first year of operation the college used a Comcast service line but they now want to procure internet service through the Five College network. The city has access to the Five College network through its fiber optic network but needs a municipal agreement in order to allow the college access to a strand of that network. The terms of this agreement track the terms of the lease between GCC and Smith Vocational. The fee is minimal and amounts to about \$780 a year to

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cover maintenance and incidental supply costs. City officials want to support the arrangement of having GCC in Franklin County and having the nursing program at Smith Vocational.

In response to a question, he clarified that such agreements are needed for government agencies as well as municipalities.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by voice vote.

**B. 18.156 An Order to Rescind Borrowing Authorizations For Rail Trail Access And Mineral Hills Land Acquisition**

Councilor Murphy read the text of the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order to the full City Council with a positive recommendation. Councilor Sciarra seconded.

Tonight will be a good tutorial in the debt authorization process as city officials are asking to rescind borrowing authority but then subsequently will ask to authorize new borrowing, Mayor Narkewicz explained. The process of authorizing and then rescinding borrowing authority to fulfill grant program requirements has become routine, he noted. As always, administrators' pledge is that they will never actually borrow the money. Financial officers need to rescind unused borrowing authorizations so that the debt will not apply against the city's debt limit.

Councilor Klein expressed her understanding that the bike path into Williamsburg is being paved. She asked where that money was coming from if not from this source.

Mayor Narkewicz said he was fairly certain it was coming from another grant program but would have to research it to identify the specific source of funding.

Generally speaking, the city has a pretty good record of getting some of these grants, Councilor Murphy observed.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by voice vote.

**C. 18.158 An Order To Apply Bond Premium To Installation Of Arcanum Field Play Structure**

Councilor Murphy read the text of the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Sciarra seconded.

The play structure at Arcanum field was a subject of suspected arson, Mayor Narkewicz reminded. City officials have been going through a long process of insurance settlement and bidding and design and are now going through the construction phase of actually replacing the structure. There was an insurance settlement of \$30,000 and the Ray Ellerbrook Memorial Fund contributed \$10,000. They went through the bidding process, acquired the play structure and now have to hire a construction firm to assemble it, he explained. They have come up a little short in the final budget

by about \$5,000. Coincidentally, they have bond proceeds of \$5,013.40 from a borrowing that occurred earlier this year. They typically apply these bond proceeds to a capital project and are asking the council to appropriate it to this project. Given the age and condition of the play structure, the insurance settlement was less than what is needed to replace it.

Councilor Klein noted that she has gotten a lot of e-mails from constituents about the popular play structure and is really happy to see its replacement moving forward. She asked if there is a timeline for its completion.

The city is almost ready to sign a contract. It has hired Mountainview Landscaping & Construction. The DPW needs to do a little bit of site prep work but the hope is to get it done very quickly this fall. He said he could maybe give a quicker timeline once the contract is signed. The components are all nearby at the cemetery.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by voice vote.

**D. 18.159 An Order To Authorize Borrowing And Grant Application For Florence Recreation Fields**

Councilor Murphy read the text of the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Sciarra seconded.

This is the reverse of the earlier procedure, Mayor Narkewicz advised. This has been one of the most successful and popular recreation areas in the city. On any given day, people are using the walking trails, a number of games are going on and families are playing on the playground.

The goal of this final phase is to try to complete the project by adding additional shade trees, final playground pieces including a play structure for young children and an accessible play area, fencing in the baseball dugout area, solar-powered score boards, accessible benches, etc. The City has to demonstrate that it is committed to the project and that it has the funds needed.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by voice vote.

**5. New Business**

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

None.

6. **Adjourn:** At 7:38 p.m., Councilor LaBarge moved to adjourn. Councilor Sciarra seconded. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.

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