



*CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CONDUCTED AS AN ON-LINE ZOOM MEETING
Northampton, MA*

Announcement of Audio/Video Recording

A regular meeting of the City Council was called to order by Council President Gina-Louise Sciarra at 7:01 p.m.

Councilor Sciarra announced that the meeting was being audio and video recorded.

Public Comment

City Clerk Pamela Powers made a public service announcement letting residents know that early voting is taking place in the great room at the Northampton senior center this week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and that voting for the preliminary election will take place on Tuesday, September 28th from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Roll Call

At 7:04 p.m. on a roll call the following City Councilors were present:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| At-Large Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra | At-Large Councilor William H. Dwight |
| Ward 1 Councilor Michael J. Quinlan, Jr. | Ward 5 Councilor Alex Jarrett |
| Ward 2 Councilor Karen Foster | Ward 6 Councilor Marianne LaBarge |
| Ward 3 Councilor James B. Nash | Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore |
| Ward 4 Councilor John Thorpe | |

Public Hearings

Public Hearings
None.

Updates from Council President and Committee Chairs

Updates from Council President and Committee Chairs
None.

Recognitions and One-Minute Announcements by Councilors

Recognitions and One-Minute Announcements by Councilors
Florence Night Out returns this Saturday, September 25, 2021 from 4 to 10 p.m. in downtown Florence, Councilor Jarrett announced. It will feature live music from local bands, an open-air artisan market and art installations, a film screening and family-friendly events. Organizers are asking guests to register to make sure they can keep an adequate head count for contact tracing purposes and it will be a masked event in accordance with the mask mandate for outdoor events. He will be there helping out MassBike with the valet bike parking. The website is www.florenceightout.org.

Councilor LaBarge recognized Ward 6 resident Al St. Onge for his work on the Rocky Hill Trail at Burts Bog, which runs from Sandy Hill to Overlook Drive to Burts Pit Road. He serves as eyes and ears to spot trouble for the Office of Planning and Sustainability (OPS). She commended him for working tirelessly and volunteering to keep the trails clean and safe.

The League of Women Voters is having its annual book sale from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, September 25th at Smith Vocational School, Councilor Maiore reminded. COVID precautions will be in place. And, Sunday at 3:30 p.m. the Leeds Civic and Ward 3 Associations are hosting a Councilor-At-Large forum in an outdoor tent at Leeds Elementary School. It is the last forum before the preliminary election.

Also, Sunday, September 26th is Miss Flo's Diner's 80th birthday. Owners are having a gala with live music. Tickets are available at the diner.

Communications

Communications and Proclamations from the Mayor

and Proclamations
from the Mayor

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update

Mayor Narkewicz gave a Powerpoint presentation entitled "Developing a Transparent, Strategic and Equitable Plan for Northampton's Federal COVID-19 Funding" to answer the following questions regarding American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for Northampton:

- What is ARPA?
- How much funding will Northampton receive?
- What are Northampton's options for spending the money?
- How can Northampton develop a transparent, strategic and equitable ARPA funding plan?

ARPA is a far-reaching COVID recovery measure proposed by the Biden/Harris administration signed into law in March of 2021, Mayor Narkewicz reminded. It's a \$1.9 trillion dollar measure providing direct financial relief to Americans, assistance to businesses and aid to states, counties and municipalities. The City of Northampton will receive approximately \$22 million in these relief funds over the next two years. All of the funding must be committed by December 31, 2024 and fully-expended by December 31, 2026.

Funds will be distributed in two installments. Northampton received its first payment in June of 2021 and the second will be distributed 12 months from the award date next year.

The breakdown of the \$21,747,984 in funding is as follows:

- \$8 million coming directly from the federal government in June of 2021 and
- \$8 million coming directly from the federal government in June of 2022 because of Northampton's status as a CDBG entitlement community
- \$5.7 million in an additional allotment for county allocation divided into two payments in '21 and '22

There is an additional payment to Northampton because, unlike other parts of the country with active county governments that will be receiving a direct allocation, not every county in Massachusetts has a county government. In cases where there is no county government, the feds divide the money allocated to the county on a per capita basis to each community.

How Northampton can spend the money.

ARPA program guidelines lay out four (4) broad, acceptable categories of use:

- 1) It is a rescue plan, so responding to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small business and nonprofits or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel and hospitality.
- 2) Paying workers providing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency,
- 3) Providing government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue to the city during the COVID-19 public health emergency in the most recent fiscal year.
- 4) Making necessary investments in water, sewer or broadband.

Category #1 - public health emergency and negative economic impacts – covers all activities related to direct response to the health crisis, including a lot of the things they have been doing all along using other federal funding sources such as the CARES Act and FEMA, both of which have been extended a little. This includes ongoing funding for things like testing, vaccinations and contact tracing, he explained.

Category #1 includes direct assistance to households, small business and non-profits, particularly specific industries that may have been impacted such as hospitality and tourism industries. Assistance to households includes direct funding to workers for job training and/or funding for food assistance programs, housing programs, utilities, counseling and legal aid.

There is also aid to disproportionately impacted populations, defined as individuals earning less than 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Category #3, Provision of Government Services, essentially makes up for local revenues negatively impacted by COVID. Many key revenues the city depends on to pay for services such as parking, hotel/motel and meals taxes were heavily impacted due to COVID. ARPA regulations contain a formula for calculating lost revenue based on a comparison to pre-pandemic revenue (FY2019) together with an adjustment for expected growth without the pandemic. Following the formula approved by the Department of Revenue (DOR) and United States (U.S.) Treasury Department, city officials have preliminarily estimated the city is eligible to recapture approximately \$6.2 million in lost revenue.

Unlike other funding categories, revenue replacement comes back to the city and can be used to pay for city services. If parking revenue that normally would have come into the system under normal circumstances is made up, it can be replenished to pay for capital and parking expenses to keep the parking system running and solvent.

Category #4 is for water, sewer and broadband infrastructure. The federal government put some parameters around the types of water and sewer projects eligible for funding. Eligible projects must be aligned with the guidelines for the EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund or the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. The wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) project the city is in the middle of right now is using money from the state revolving fund to finance it so it is an example of a project that would qualify. Stormwater projects are also allowed in this category.

To be eligible, broadband must provide minimum upload and download speeds of 100Mbps. Northampton is in the middle of a broadband study so this could be a potential source of funding for broadband infrastructure moving forward, he said.

What would be the goals for distributing ARPA funds?

City officials obviously want to seek extensive input and feedback from the community to help structure the city's use of ARPA funding and design a transparent, accessible and equitable project selection process, Mayor Narkewicz advised. Other goals include prioritizing projects, people, businesses and organizations that have been most impacted by COVID-19 and leveraging other state and federal resources to maximize funding. They may notice Northampton is not alone among communities that haven't actually spent ARPA funds to this point. One of the reasons is that staff have spent many hours attending presentations by the National League of Cities and others to learn about ARPA. A key consideration is other funds that have been distributed to state governments and other federal programs that will be funded using ARPA funds. In Massachusetts, the legislature is holding hearings about the \$5 billion the state has received, and a bipartisan infrastructure bill and a reconciliation package with a number of social service supports could be coming out to cities and states as part of this. They have been advised and many communities are waiting to see what those state and federal programs may look like so as to really maximize funding and spend it on things that won't be covered by these other programs or, alternatively, to make sure they are leveraging ARPA funds with these other types of funds when they deploy them in the community.

This is a massive grant program with lots of reporting requirements so they also want to make sure they are able to cover the city's costs for administering the program over the next four years. Those would be the goals for how best to distribute the funds.

Best Practices

The Government Financial Officers Association (GFOA) has issued a set of best practices aligned with U.S. Treasury guidelines on ARPA, Mayor Narkewicz continued. He reviewed these practices as follows:

- ❖ ARPA funds are non-recurring and must be spent by a date certain so they should be focused on non-recurring expenditures. Like any grant funds, they want to be careful about how they apply them to the budget.
- ❖ Replenishing revenue funds lost during the pandemic should be a high priority.
- ❖ Use other dedicated grants and programs first whenever possible and use ARPA for activities not eligible for other state and federal assistance programs.
- ❖ Avoid creation of new programs or add-ons of existing programs that require an ongoing financial commitment.

- ❖ Use of ARPA funds to cover operating deficits caused by COVID-19 should be considered temporary.

The Mayor presented a slide laying out a proposed ARPA timeline:

The first ARPA payment was received June 11, 2021 and the second payment is expected in June of 2022.

He is mindful that his administration is coming to an end and that decisions will be made by the next administration. His goal has been to put together internal infrastructure to make sure they are learning about and understanding the grants, fulfilling paperwork and reporting requirements and beginning to collect information so the city will be in the best possible position to deploy this important funding when the new administration takes office.

He reviewed a tentative timeline for action:

- September 22, 2021: Mayor Narkewicz presents ARPA framework to City Council
- October 1, 2021: City launches online Community ARPA Survey
- November 2, 2021: voters elect the 45th Mayor of Northampton
- November 3, 2021 - January 2, 2022: Mayor Narkewicz works with Mayor-Elect and their transition team to form ARPA Advisory Committee and plan/execute a series of ARPA Community Stakeholder Meetings
- January 3, 2022: 45th Mayor of Northampton sworn into office
- February 2022 (Tentative): Projects solicited internally & externally
- Spring 2022 (Tentative): Projects selected, funded, and initiated

The online Community ARPA Survey will collect information from residents about how COVID impacted them and some of their initial ideas for programs and priorities that might be most impactful in the city, he elaborated. As they look around the state and around the country, this has been one of the ways communities have begun to collect information about the types of programs and priorities funds should be used for. Following the election, the city will immediately move into transition mode. Between November 3rd and January 2nd he would envision working with the Mayor-Elect and her transition team to form an ARPA advisory committee to plan/execute a series of ARPA stakeholder meetings. On January 3rd, 2022, the 45th Mayor of Northampton will be sworn in and projects will begin to be solicited and selected. His presentation will be posted on line.

Councilor Nash briefly assumed the role of chair after it was realized that the council president was having technical difficulties.

Questions and Answers.

Councilor Foster noted that Northampton Public School (NPS) Superintendent John Provost sent out some information that the schools are looking at \$3.4 million in funding. She asked if that was included in the total the mayor just gave them.

That is a separate allocation directly to NPS, Mayor Narkewicz clarified. Dr. Provost has started a similar information-gathering and community meeting process.

Councilor Quinlan referred to the \$6.2 million to be recaptured in lost revenue. With the stability fund tied in with the delay in implementation of the Proposition 2 ½ and now this money becoming available, what is he projecting for the future of the stability fund? He asked. "Are we going to be in a better position than we would be?"

By delaying the override, administrators certainly used more stability funds than originally projected because it was used to delay implementation, Mayor Narkewicz confirmed. They also 'trimmed their sails' in other areas, such as by forgoing contributions they would normally make to stabilization funds. He hasn't really run a calculation that way.

They went through revenues to look at things like parking facilities, a major source of local revenue that represents \$650,000 to \$700,000 of the calculation. The city relies on this revenue to fund the parking system and pay for capital projects. All projects within the parking system whether fixing the deck or investing in new equipment are paid for by that fund. It did not grow or replenish itself during COVID because they had either closed parking systems or empty lots. Using recaptured funds to create more stability going into

the future is certainly a strategy that could be looked at. Restored revenue could also be used to buffer issues that lie ahead due to Coca-Cola's departure and the loss in water and sewer revenue, he suggested.

These are all the kinds of decisions that will need to be made going forward as they decide the priorities for the community. This funding will come back to the city and would most typically go into Free Cash or different stabilization funds. The fiscal stability fund (FSF) could be one landing spot for some of these funds.

Councilor Quinlan noted that the mayor mentioned grant administrative work. He asked if he is considering hiring someone or if this is something the mayor's office will take on with existing staff.

The city currently has a grant administrator that has been managing CARES Act and FEMA funding, Mayor Narkewicz advised. Like all federal grants, applicants are allowed to use some funding for grant administration. He thinks the plan going forward would be to have that grants administrator continue to play that role with ARPA funds. Abbie Stone has been doing that work and a lot of the work of attending seminars, figuring out the regulations and gathering examples of ways other cities are going about it. He thinks they would want to continue having someone administering the funds. Obviously, the finance director has been involved in this process as well. He and [former Finance Director] Susan Wright can tell them from experience that the CARES and FEMA workload was not normal. It is a large amount of funding with a lot of regulatory requirements so he does think it merits having somebody to continue to provide grant administration.

Obviously, it will be up to the next administration if they want to continue that. The grant writer/administrator has to become almost an expert in ARPA just like in the Office of Planning and Sustainability (OPS) some folks have become expert in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

Councilor Sciarra and Councilor Maiore returned after a brief absence due to technical difficulties. Councilor Sciarra resumed the role of chair.

Councilor Maiore noted that she missed some of the presentation. She heard that there was going to be a survey but wasn't sure if there was going to be community engagement and a community advisory board.

That is definitely part of the process he is envisioning, Mayor Narkewicz confirmed. He is proposing to wait until after the election to work with the Mayor-elect to put together this group and hold community stakeholder meetings. He wants to begin collecting information with the online survey between now and the election.

Councilor Sciarra asked if there are special county-wide requirements for use of the county allocation or if it is just earmarked for Northampton.

The \$5.2 million represents only Northampton's share, Mayor Narkewicz advised. It will be blended in with the direct ARPA funds to be used in the community.

There being no further questions, Councilor Sciarra thanked the mayor for his presentation.

<p><u>Resolutions</u></p>	<p><u>Resolutions</u> None.</p>
<p><u>Consent Agenda</u></p>	<p><u>Consent Agenda</u> Councilor Sciarra reviewed the items on the consent agenda, offering to remove any item for separate consideration upon request. Councilor Sciarra asked for removal of the appointment of Adam Novitt and the appointment of Pamela Powers. Councilor Dwight moved approval of the consent agenda with the two removals. Councilor Maiore seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.</p>

The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda:

- A. Minutes of September 2, 2021
- B. 21.316B Appointments to Various Committees, all positive recommendations, City Services - 9/8/2021

Council on Aging

~~Monica V. Grezzi-Mulea, 573 Burts Pit Road, Florence~~

~~Term: September 2021-June 2024~~

~~To fill a vacancy~~

Application withdrawn at applicant’s request

Energy & Sustainability Commission

Benjamin Weil, 123 Audubon Road, Leeds

Term: July 2021-June 2024

Reappointment

Planning Board

Melissa Fowler, 87 Chesterfield Road, Leeds

Full Member

Term: July 2021-June 2024

Reappointment

Christian Tait, 46 Upland Road, Leeds

Associate Member

Term: July 2021-June 2024

Reappointment

Transportation & Parking Commission

Jami Albro-Fisher, 50 Manhan Street, Northampton

Term: July 2020-June 2023

Reappointment

Adam Novitt, 17 Hooker Avenue, Northampton

Term: July 2021-June 2024

Reappointment

Zoning Board of Appeals

David Bloomberg, 86 Vernon Street, Northampton

Term: July 2021-June 2024

Reappointment

- C. 21.327 Appointment to Council on Aging - for referral to City Services Committee

21.324 Appointment of Pamela Powers as City Clerk - for referral to City Services Committee

Councilor Dwight moved approval of the referral of Pamela Powers as City Clerk to the City Services Committee. Councilor LaBarge seconded.

Councilor Sciarra disclosed that Pamela Powers made a contribution to her campaign but said it would not preclude her from being able to act impartially on the referral. **The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.**

Transportation & Parking Commission

Adam Novitt, 17 Hooker Avenue, Northampton

Term: July 2021-June 2024

Reappointment

Councilor Dwight moved approval of the appointment of Adam Novitt to the City Services Committee. Councilor Jarrett seconded.

Councilor Sciarra disclosed that Adam Novitt contributed to her campaign but said it would not preclude her from acting on his appointment. **The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.**

Recess for Committee on Finance Meeting

Recess for Committee on Finance Meeting

The City Council recessed for Finance Committee at 7:48 p.m. The Finance Committee adjourned at 9:08 p.m. The council reconvened at 9:08 p.m.

Financial Orders (On 1st reading)
21.320 Order to Suspend Parking Fees on Certain Days - 1st reading

Financial Orders (On 1st reading pending Finance Committee review)

21.320 An Order to Suspend Parking Fees on Certain Days - 1st reading

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the order in first reading. Councilor Dwight seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

See minutes of October 7, 2021 for second reading.

21.321 Order Authorizing Lease of Rooftop Bridge Street, Leeds and Ryan Road Schools for Solar PV Arrays - 1st rdg

21.321 An Order Authorizing the Lease of Rooftop Space on Bridge Street, Leeds and Ryan Road Elementary Schools for Solar PV Arrays - 1st reading

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the order in first reading. Councilor Dwight seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

See minutes of October 7, 2021 for second reading.

21.322 Order to Authorize Borrowing \$1.09 Million for New Fire Ladder Truck - 1st reading

21.322 An Order to Authorize Borrowing \$1.09 Million for New Fire Ladder Truck - 1st reading

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the order in first reading. Councilor Jarrett seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

Councilor LaBarge moved to suspend rules to allow a second reading. Councilor Jarrett seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

Councilor Dwight moved to approve the order in second reading. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

The following order passed two readings:

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council September 22, 2021

Upon recommendation of the Mayor

21.322 An Order to Authorize Borrowing \$1.09 Million for New Fire Ladder Truck

Ordered, that

\$1,090,656 is appropriated to pay costs of acquiring a fire ladder truck, including all costs incidental and related thereto; that to meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said amount under Chapter 44, Section 7(1) of the General Laws, or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the City therefor; that the Mayor is authorized to take any action necessary or convenient to carry out this project; and that any premium received by the City upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this order, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs of the project approved by this order in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws and thereby reduce the amount of the authorized borrowing by a like amount.

Rules suspended, passed two readings and enrolled.

21.323 Order to Acquire, Surplus and Dispose of a Certain Property Located at 33 King

21.323 An Order to Acquire, Surplus and Dispose of a Certain Property Located at 33 King Street - 1st reading

Councilor Quinlan moved to approve the order in first reading. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed 8:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Thorpe recused.

<p><u>Street - 1st reading</u> <u>21.326 Order Adding Parcel on Mt Tom Road and Dike Road to CT River Greenway-Historic Mill River - 1st reading</u></p>	<p><u>See minutes of October 7, 2021 for second reading.</u></p> <p><u>21.326 An Order Adding Parcel on Mt Tom Road and Dike Road to CT River Greenway-Historic Mill River - 1st reading</u> Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the order in first reading. Councilor Maiore seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.</p> <p><u>See minutes of October 7, 2021 for second reading.</u></p>
<p><u>Financial Orders (On 2nd reading)</u></p>	<p><u>Financial Orders (On 2nd reading)</u> None.</p>
<p><u>Orders</u></p>	<p><u>Orders</u> None.</p>
<p><u>Ordinances (Not yet Referred)</u> <u>21.325 Ordinance Relative to Compensation for Elected Officials</u></p>	<p><u>Ordinances (Not yet Referred)</u> <u>21.325 An Ordinance Relative to Compensation for Elected Officials</u> Councilor Dwight moved to refer the ordinance to Legislative Matters. Councilor Nash seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.</p>
<p><u>Zoning Ordinances (Not yet Referred)</u> <u>21.318 Ordinance to Amend §350-17 FFR District and §350 3-4 Zoning Map to Include Recreation Land</u></p> <p><u>21.319 Ordinance to Require Installation of EV Charging Stations in Parking Lots over 25 Spaces</u></p>	<p><u>Zoning Ordinances (Not yet Referred)</u> <u>21.318 An Ordinance to Amend §350-17 FFR District and §350 3-4 Zoning Map to Include Recreation Land</u> Councilor Dwight moved to refer the ordinance to Legislative Matters and the Planning Board. Councilor Maiore seconded.</p> <p>Councilor Jarrett offered the friendly amendment to also add a referral to Community Resources.</p> <p>Councilor Dwight accepted the friendly amendment.</p> <p>Since the map change involves extensive areas of the city and a lot of private property, Councilor Nash said he is curious to know what kind of outreach the planning department is already doing so they won't be repeating something.</p> <p>The motion as amended passed 9:0 by roll call vote.</p> <p>Director Feiden communicated to him that his department will be notifying all property owners affected by the proposed change, Mayor Narkewicz advised.</p> <p><u>21.319 An Ordinance to Require Installation of EV Charging Stations in Parking Lots over 25 Spaces</u> Councilor Foster moved to refer the ordinance to Legislative Matters and Community Resources. Councilor Thorpe seconded.</p> <p>Councilor Quinlan moved to amend the motion to add referral to the Planning Board. Councilor Foster seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.</p> <p>The motion as amended passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.</p>
<p><u>New Business</u></p>	<p><u>New Business</u> None.</p>

Motion to Adjourn

Upon motion made by Councilor Dwight and seconded by Councilor LaBarge, the meeting was adjourned at 9:24 p.m. The motion passed 9:0 by roll call vote.

Attest: _____ Administrative Assistant to the City Council