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City of Northampton

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Northampton City Council
210 Main Street, Room 3
Northampton, MA 01060

To the Honorable Members of the City Council,

Pursuant to my authority under Article 6, Section 6-1 of the City Charter, I am respectfully submitting the attached Administrative Order making the following two changes to the City's Administrative Code:

(1) My first proposed revision to the Administrative Code is under Section 2.0 Administration and Finance Division to insert a new Climate Action and Project Administration (CAPA) Department.

In 2021, the City of Northampton clearly articulated in *The Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan - Resilience and Regeneration Plan* many aggressive goals to meet a 2030 target for carbon neutrality for city operations and a 2050 target for net zero carbon emissions citywide. The plan recognizes the imperative for Northampton's residents and leaders to

"...grow and change with a full understanding of this generation's responsibility to leave behind a community that will not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This means learning to be smarter about how we use our resources, creatively thinking about patterns of consumption and usage."

The Resilience and Regeneration Plan further commits Northampton to:

"...reduce its carbon footprint [through] changes in city operations inside and outside the city (e.g., its purchasing power and management of city watershed lands), our community's energy footprint, and community-wide direct carbon emissions."

Last month, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, under Governor Maura Healy, demonstrated an unprecedented commitment to addressing climate change. On the first full day of her administration, Governor Maura Healey signed an Executive Order establishing the position of Climate Chief and creating an Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience within the Governor's Office. Governor Healy appointed Melissa Hoffer as Massachusetts' first Climate Chief. Massachusetts is the first state in the nation to establish such a position at the cabinet level.

“The establishment of Climate Chief and the Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience is critical to Massachusetts' future,” said Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer. “Climate change impacts all aspects of our lives, and it's essential that we are coordinating our response across the entire government and the entire state. The action Governor Healey is taking today is putting Massachusetts on the path to a better, healthier, more equitable future.”

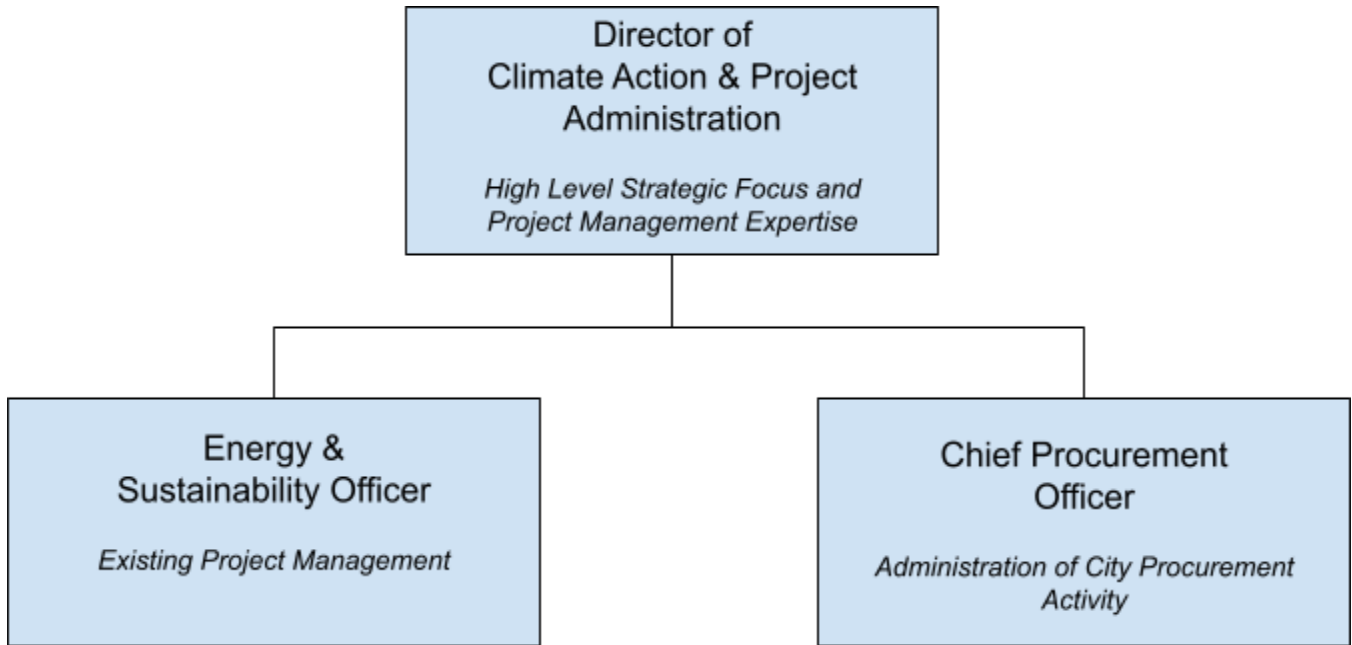
Among other provisions, the Governor's Executive Order directs the Climate Chief to begin a comprehensive review of current staffing, policymaking, and resources of all Secretariats to support a whole-of-government approach to addressing climate change.

In much the same way, I, supported by a group of committed residents calling themselves the *Northampton Climate Emergency Coalition*, have identified the need for a director-level position that will guide the city's efforts to realize the goals outlined in the comprehensive plan. I agree that a department-head-level position that reports directly to the city's chief executive officer has the highest potential to succeed in bringing about the changes necessary to meet the city's environmental goals.

Further, I have identified a need to add project management principles with a sustainability lens to all city projects. Innovative cities around the country are applying the discipline of project management to municipal projects to establish, maintain, and govern standards for project management across the organization. Annually, millions of federal, state, and local dollars are spent in the City of Northampton, with each project requiring significant oversight to ensure outcomes are on-time and within budget. I am confident that adding project management practices informed by environmental goals to every city project will improve municipal efficiency and climate outcomes.

This moment in the history of the City of Northampton represents a unique opportunity to consolidate existing efforts in the Office of Planning and Sustainability to set strategic goals for climate response, in the Central Services Department to manage projects with an environmental focus through the Energy and Sustainability Officer, and in the Office of the Auditor with the efforts to insert sustainability into the city's procurement activities by the Chief Procurement Officer. These three functions represent the positions that will be housed under the new Climate Action and Project Administration Department. The proposed structure is as follows:

Proposed Organizational Structure



(2) Remove the position of Chief Procurement officer from the Office of the Auditor in section 2.10. While the Energy and Sustainability Officer’s position is not specifically mentioned in the Administrative Code, the Chief Procurement Officer is specifically located in the Office of the Auditor. This order cleans up the code, so the position is now housed in the CAPA Department.

Thank you in advance for reviewing these proposed changes to our Administrative Code. I stand ready to answer any questions or provide additional information and respectfully request the City Council’s approval of the attached Administrative Order.

Sincerely,

Gina-Louise Sciarra
Mayor

cc: City Clerk