



CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
Northampton, Massachusetts

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the City Council was called to order by Council President Jim Nash at 7 p.m. Upon a roll call, the following City Councilors were physically present:

- |                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| At-Large Councilor Marissa Elkins     | At-Large Councilor Jamila Gore    |
| Ward 1 Councilor Stanley Moulton, III | Ward 2 Councilor Karen Foster     |
| Ward 3 Councilor James Nash           | Ward 4 Councilor Garrick Perry    |
| Ward 5 Councilor Alexander Jarrett    | Ward 6 Councilor Marianne LaBarge |
| Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore        |                                   |

Announcement that Meeting Audio/Video Recorded

Council President Nash announced that the meeting was being audio/video recorded.

Public Hearings  
Announcement of Public Hearing on 23.251 National Grid Pole Petition for Pleasant Street (Petition #30684497)

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Councilor Nash made the following announcement:  
Per M.G.L. Ch. 166, Section 22, the Northampton City Council will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, May 18, 2023 at 7 p.m.** in Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA on National Grid's petition to install a single-owned pole on Pleasant Street. (Petition #30684497). Instructions for accessing the hearing remotely may be found on the May 18, 2023 City Council agenda to be posted on [www.northamptonma.gov](http://www.northamptonma.gov) no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. The City Council will hear all persons who wish to be heard thereon.

Announcement of Public Hearing on 23.254 National Grid Pole Petition for Maple Street (Petition #30732483)

Announcement of Public Hearing on 23.254 National Grid Pole Petition for Maple Street (Petition #30732483)

Councilor Nash read the following notice:  
Per M.G.L. Ch. 166, Section 22, the Northampton City Council will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, May 18, 2023 at 7:05 p.m.** in Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA on National Grid's petition to install one single-owned pole on Maple Street. (Petition #30732483). Instructions for accessing the hearing remotely may be found on the May 18, 2023 City Council agenda to be posted on [www.northamptonma.gov](http://www.northamptonma.gov) no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. The City Council will hear all persons who wish to be heard thereon.

Announcement of Public Hearing on 23.255 National Grid Pole Petition for South Street (Petition #30734983)

Announcement of Public Hearing on 23.255 National Grid Pole Petition for South Street (Petition #30734983)

Councilor Nash announced a public hearing as follows:  
Per M.G.L. Ch. 166, Section 22, the Northampton City Council will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, May 18, 2023 at 7:10 p.m.** in Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA on National Grid's petition to install one single-owned pole on South Street. (Petition #30734983). Instructions for accessing the hearing remotely may be found on the May 18, 2023 City Council agenda to be posted on [www.northamptonma.gov](http://www.northamptonma.gov) no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. The City Council will hear all persons who wish to be heard thereon.

Public Comment

Public Comment

Councilor Nash explained the procedure he would use in conducting public comment and opened the floor to comments.

**Peter Kakos, 220 Rocky Hill Road, Florence**, thanked councilors for their public service. He is here to follow up on a proposed resolution submitted at the end of March. He has talked to two councilors in the meantime and realized there's an awful lot more than they could handle in a single resolution. He left a copy of the amended resolution for them. It tones down some of the language about the need for suicide and instead just talks about hospice and more indirectly refers to what people might need in the event of a nuclear attack. The resolution calls for the council to establish a commission but he decided that was too much as well. He decided that if it was his big idea he should carry the ball if he could, so what he is going to do is create what he calls a 'Nuclear Attack Assessment Team (NAAT).' He will be working to get six or

eight citizens on this team, two medical doctors if possible – people he knows and trusts and who have been at this work for a long time. The assessment team will discover 1) where the targets are in southern New England if there's a nuclear war, 2) what their distances are to Northampton, 3) the range of health effects people might suffer from radioactive poisoning, 4) potential symptoms, 5) treatment and 6) medicine necessary, 7) including enough morphine sufficient to meet the need. He will return, he promised. He thought he could take this on by himself as a lower case public servant.

**Jacqui McCreanor, Ward 3**, said she was appalled by the city's decision-making at the recent March 9, 2023 Planning Board, April 10, 2023 Legislative Matters and April 13, 2023 City Council meeting where city officials and staff rushed to pass the two-family reduced lot line (RLL) uses allowed by right zoning ordinance changes for Urban Residential B (URB) and Urban Residential C (URC) districts. This 'yes' vote cements developers' right to cut down healthy, mature trees and tear down modest, historic starter homes to build enormous, out-of-scale, fossil-fuel dependent luxury housing. Faced with an affordable and attainable housing crisis, climate crisis, potential nuclear crisis, social justice crisis, aging city infrastructure, sustainability issues, environmental and wetland concerns and the demolition of historic neighborhoods, Northampton city officials and staff are choosing to look the other way and embrace archaic, antiquated, harmful residential zoning ordinances reminiscent of the 1980's 'build, build, build at whatever cost' mentality. Residents have asked repeatedly to no avail to have public meetings arranged jointly with the Planning Board, Historical Commission and City Council to discuss concerns about developer-initiated housing projects and proposed solutions such as creating neighborhood conservation districts and requiring special permits for developer-initiated projects so that they are actually held accountable to the criteria set forth in the Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan 2021. Simply stated, RLL uses allowed by right is an attack on affordable and attainable housing, social justice, historic preservation, sustainability and climate action goals. She believes it is critically important for each city councilor to fully understand what they are voting for and to do proper due diligence before passing harmful residential zoning ordinances such as RLL uses allowed by right.

**Nick Mottern, 16 Strong Avenue**, said he wanted to mention three things. 1) He thanked the council for putting barriers up on streets so people can start eating and enjoying being outside. 2) He would like the city to cause the owner of Pearl Street nightclub to properly maintain the night club so it is not an eyesore on that street. 3) He wanted to support what Peter Kakos said about the need to provide medicine including morphine and hospice care for people who would be made grievously ill by nuclear radiation if there was a nuclear attack. The policies of the United States government right now are very pro-nuclear weapons. They have a situation where drones have been flown over the Kremlin and exploded; people are clearly not using their heads and it would seem to be commonsensical that the city would make preparations for a nuclear attack given the number of nuclear-related industries and military bases in their area.

There being no further comments, at 7:19 p.m., public comment ended.

Announcements

Announcements

At their next meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> she will be presenting her budget message which she will be getting to them on or before May 17<sup>th</sup> as required by the city charter, Mayor Sciarra reminded. The budget book will be available for inspection at Forbes Library, Lilly library and in the City Clerk's office and posted on line on the city website. Budget hearings are the following week.

Pride is back; this Saturday is Hampshire Pride, Mayor Sciarra announced. She hopes to see councilors there. The parade will step off at 11 a.m. from Sheldon Field. The parade route is different from 2019 and is up Route 9 to the Armory Street lot where the festival will be. Those marching are asked to arrive by 10:30 a.m. There will be a stage and vendors and music and a chance to celebrate pride together as well as to assert their commitment to support and stand up for the rights, safety and health of community members that are under fierce attack in this country. She would love councilors to join her on stage for a proclamation at 1 p.m.

The following Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, is the 26<sup>th</sup> annual National Education Foundation (NEF) plant sale and garden market at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (SVAHS) from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. This year there will be a seed starting station for kids. The proceeds raise money for NEF's book fund which is distributed to all public schools in Northampton.

Speaking of school funding, in the beginning of April, she announced plans to use \$1.2 million from stabilization to cover a large portion of the \$2.3 million shortfall in the FY2024 Northampton Public Schools budget, Mayor Sciarra continued. This decision is part of a two-year plan to balance the school budget, return to strong fiscal principles and work together as a community to advocate for more and equitable school funding. Their community work needs to start now. The immediate goal is to have a positive impact on the choices for the state budget this year, including the Fair Share Amendment. Northampton voters overwhelmingly favored the Fair Share Amendment last November with 82% voting in favor of it. Concerningly, preliminary proposals for this new state revenue have seen little focus on K-12 funding. She is asking others to please join her, the Northampton Association of School Employees (NASE), state Senator Jo Comerford, state Representative Lindsay Sabadosa and the broader Northampton community in asking to increase state funding for public schools. She asked them to please add their names to a letter to state legislators she has asked the administrative assistant to forward and to share the URL with their constituents. (This link will also be up on the city website.) They are asking people to add their names to the letter to advocate for the following critical increases to the final state budget for education:

- ❖ \$100 per pupil for minimum state aid communities like Northampton (The governor’s budget had \$30 per pupil and the House budget raised it to \$60; they are going to ask the House Ways and Means Committee to increase it to \$100.)
- ❖ fully fund the charter school tuition reimbursement formula
- ❖ fully fund the special education circuit breaker
- ❖ reimburse the 14% increase in costs assessed to districts for out-of-district placements
- ❖ allocate \$166 million from the Fair Share Amendment for K-12 education. (The Fair Share Amendment is supposed to be for education and transportation so this would be half of its revenue with one-third for early childhood, one-third for K-12 education and one-third for higher education.)

Right now revenue is very skewed towards higher ed and early childhood education. She is asking them to join them in advocating for long-term goals as well. She thanked Andrea Egitto from NASE who created the form. NASE is organizing a trip on May 16<sup>th</sup> to the state house to lobby for these needs.

Legislative Matters will be cancelled this Monday, Councilor Jarrett related.

Not this Saturday but the following (May 13<sup>th</sup>) will be a community mural painting party between Thornes and the downtown parking garage from 1 to 3 p.m., Councilor Perry shared.

The city has extended the deadline for applications for the commission to study racialized harms, Councilor Nash announced. The deadline is tomorrow so last call for folks interested in serving. They have flyered neighborhoods and buildings and councilors have sent the notice out on their listservs. If interested, now is the time to get those applications in.

Councilor Nash invited Community Resources Committee Chair Garrick Perry to address a concern raised after last week’s meeting that it is actually taxpayer money going toward the Ninja Turtle manhole covers.

That is not the case, Councilor Perry assured. In a presentation, Leslie Laurie, a representative of the Northampton Vibrancy Project, talked about other projects in addition to the Ninja Turtle project. He encouraged people to check out the recording of that meeting for a fuller picture. The money being used is from ARPA funds which are for one-time use. They are using it for economic stimulation and are very confident that it will be a boon to their city and surrounding communities. It is rare to have such a unique icon birthed and founded in their city but it is not being funded by any taxpayer money, he stressed.

Presentations  
Third Quarter  
Financial Report

Presentations  
Third Quarter Financial Report

Finance Director Charlene Nardi reviewed the third quarter financial report. MUNIS was upgraded April 17th so the report looks a little different, she noted.

For General Fund (GF) revenue, three-quarters of the way through the fiscal year they would like to see 75% collections for most line items. For the most part, things are looking really good. For real estate and personal property taxes, 74.1% and 64.8% are the normal percentages they would expect to see at this time.

For motor vehicle excise tax, the city has collected \$2.1 million and they are at 91%, so they are above projected revenues.

At \$756,000, Hotel/Motel tax is at 112% of projections, exceeding not only budget estimates for FY2023 but 22% higher than the same time last year and 10% above FY2020, the last pre-pandemic time period for this revenue source. The same for meals. They have collected \$588,000, 106% of the estimated budget. This is 12% higher than the same time last year and about \$10,000 more than in FY2020. She really feels like those revenue sources have rebounded and are starting to grow again.

With \$643,000 collected, cannabis revenue continues to decline. It is only 66% of the projected budget, 29% below the same time period last year and 53% below the same time period in FY2020. She doesn't know where the bottom is but it continues to decline.

For PILOT accounts, these amounts are calculated and invoiced after the tax rate is set and most have been received. They will make sure those revenues come in before the end of the year.

Collectively, parking revenue for the third quarter is at \$1,090,088, an increase of \$76,000 from the same time last year (\$1,014,000). They are running about \$350,000 below what they took in for parking before the pandemic. As they have noted before, parking is different from other revenue sources. The way people visit the city and dine and shop is different than pre-pandemic.

Ambulance services continues to be a significant source of revenue at \$2.4 million. This continues to grow.

At 68.6%, Charges for Services is a little behind. It tends to run slightly behind and to catch up in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

Under Licenses and Permits, if they look at the Building Inspector, this was running slightly behind before. Now, they are at 122.7% of the projected budget. They are definitely seeing an ease in some factor, whether it is in transportation or the supply chain she doesn't know, but they are seeing an increase in building fees, which is good news.

In state revenue, they will notice that a few are a little behind. It will be interesting to see how those come in because she generally sees them at closer to 73 or 74%.

Parking tickets on pg. 4 are at 75%. This is a line item they don't expect to grow very much. They now offer ParkMobile which gives folks a different way to make sure they keep feeding the meter. Overall, general revenues are in sync with budget projections at 75.8%.

In Enterprise Fund revenue, everything is tracking as expected. Revenue funds are running at equal or slightly ahead of budget expectations. Sewer revenue is running slightly ahead at 83.4%, water is running ahead at 79.4%, stormwater is at 73.2% and solid waste is at 78.9%.

On the spreadsheet for GF expenses, Director Nardi pointed to the values for Personnel Services (PS) and Ordinary Maintenance budgets for departments. In percentages used they are looking for 75% or less. They don't like to see overages. The council did vote to transfer money into departmental budgets on April 13<sup>th</sup> which is not yet reflected in the report because it is as of March 31<sup>st</sup>. Also, they will not see the most recent payroll.

In Enterprise Fund expenses, again they can see percentages in the right hand column. They can't really tell until the end of the year if budgets are completely on target because not everything is spent equally throughout the year. She looks historically and these are all the percentages she would generally see throughout the year.

The only thing that seemed a little behind was the payments from the state through the cherry sheets, Councilor Nash said. He asked what she thought was behind this.

Director Nardi said she honestly didn't know. If she learns anything new, she will let them know.

Councilor Jarrett noted that in GF expenses, a few departments were significantly lower; i.e., Assessors at 51%, Parking at 52% and the health department/Division of Community Care at 34.5% and 31.7%. Is that because they are going to be ramping up in the last few months?

The Assessors' Office budgets for revaluation and other work that might not necessarily be needed that year but that they have to budget for. If it is not used, the money will flow to the GF.

At 52.3%, the parking enforcement department has been challenged with finding folks to work in that department.

The Division of Community Care (DCC) is no longer a separate budget line but was absorbed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Those funds were encumbered because they were already attached to contracts and are being used this year for contracts signed before the end of last year. The DHHS is using those funds for all of the purposes they were originally budgeted for.

Councilor Moulton asked about highways at 41%. He recognizes that work slows during the winter. Given the requests for street repairs, he asked if she expects all the money to be expended by the end of June.

Director Nardi said she didn't know if all the money would be used but she does know that spring is the busiest time for them and they are working hard. The DPW Director is struggling to hire staff and that is reflected in the department's expenses and in PS.

When talking about water/sewer rates, the DPW director was talking about still seeing a slight downward curve, Councilor Maiore noted. She asked if they are still seeing that.

Director Nardi said her recollection is that the director said they are seeing inconsistent revenue /use. She thinks they are still seeing inconsistencies. Director LaScaleia noted that the city can't rely on this revenue because every month it has been inconsistent. Now they are hearing that Coca-Cola is leaving in six months.

Councilor Nash thanked Director Nardi, commenting that he enjoys the quarterly report because it gives him a sense of how well their city is run.

Select Committee to Study Barriers to Serving on City Boards and Commissions Final Report

Select Committee to Study Barriers to Serving on City Boards and Commissions Final Report

As one of the sponsors of the resolution to create this select committee, he really appreciates the work this committee has done over the past year, Councilor Nash said. He finds the report's recommendations to be largely actionable although some are aspirational. He gave a shout out to all those serving the city in appointed positions.

Javier Luengo-Garrido thanked Councilor Foster, Councilor Nash, Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler and Vice Chair Councilor Gore for their help and support. The reality is that Northampton is a vibrant community with a lot of people who want to use their professional skills in service to the city even if that is unpaid work.

He reviewed some of the committee's findings as presented in the Executive Summary. Among other things, he shared a recurrent theme that some people felt lost after submitting their initial application because of not knowing what happened to it and/or not hearing whether they had been chosen to serve and not understanding that if not chosen for one committee they might be selected for another. In reflecting on the people who have applied and not been called to serve, select committee members realized this talented pool offers Northampton the possibility of filling the roughly 21 positions open right now. (They are cognizant that some commissions call for specific professional qualifications, he noted.)

In reflecting on the city council process itself, he shared the committees' assumption that whenever the charter requires the City Council to take a vote, it has a deep meaning and there is a reason behind it. In light of this principle, one of the committee's recommendations is the creation of a uniform process for the subcommittee interviewing prospective candidates so that every applicant goes through the same process and has the same set of questions.

One of the downsides to the survey conducted is that they had a captive audience – people who have had or have the privilege of serving, Javier observed. Often this comes with a certain privilege of having disposable time which often comes with a certain social position and disposable income. That made it difficult to find people who were not serving such as people of color. Primarily, the survey was answered by upper-middle class white folks, mostly females. They didn't have a tool to reach other members of their diverse community to ask why they were not serving. They did have a chance to meet one-on-one with some people of color as every member of the select committee was encouraged to meet individually with people they knew or those referred by others. Often in these conversations they found a single mother or father coming home after a full day of work having problems getting out of the house again.

This is in line with the observation that with the remote access available during COVID, the community was able to engage even more. They do believe that keeping the hybrid model in the city of Northampton will help those with children coming home from a day of work.

With regard to the role of the mayor's office, they have seen that the process for reviewing applications there is thoughtful. Coincidentally, the report lines up with a transition in the position in the mayor's office which handles appointment applications, offering an opportunity to reimagine this position.

Many people expressed that one of the reasons they stopped serving is that they didn't understand what they were getting into from the beginning, he continued. They didn't understand the workload or the frequency of the meetings or that they were going to be expected to do things outside of the meetings. To address this, they are recommending that city boards use a template designed by Human Rights Committee (HRC) Chair Megan Paik to create a handbook with a detailed description of their committee's work so that people considering applying have access to first-hand knowledge of the board's activities. Adding a section to the website with specific information about each committee's workload and charge would help people understand upfront what they are getting into, he suggested.

They also recommend adding input and participation into the appointment process from the chair and vice chair of the committee, he added.

Councilor Nash clarified that they would not be deliberating on the report tonight. Discussion of what to do with the report will be placed on a future agenda.

With respect to the recommendation that applicants receive an automated response, Mayor Sciarra noted that there currently is an automated system on the website to acknowledge applications. When residents submit an application online, a message pops up explaining the process going forward and letting them know that their application will be held for two years. She said she was not sure how long this feature had been in place. She said she is very sorry if people didn't receive it for a period of time.

Members and the mayor asked questions and offered comments. Councilor Perry and Councilor Gore shared reflections on their experience serving on the committee.

Councilor LaBarge shared her perception that the excessive length of some meetings and incidental cost of service can be a barrier to participation.

One of the committee's more long-term, aspirational recommendations is for the city to conduct a needs assessment to find a way to compensate volunteer board members for childcare and other expenses, Javier responded. When they consulted the city solicitor, he raised some red flags since people can't receive compensation from a municipality without technically being considered employees and a per diem could affect a low-income person's eligibility for other programs or services. At this point, while recognizing this as a sticking point and hugely

important, as a select committee with limited expertise, they recommended a further needs assessment and more in-depth evaluation.

As a member of the standing committee that makes recommendations on appointments (City Services), Councilor Gore said she thinks having a standard set of questions with the option for interviewers to elaborate is a good idea. Asking people the same questions makes the process more transparent in a way, she suggested.

Being on the City Services Committee also gave him a unique perspective, Councilor Perry commented. While the select committee tried to cast a wide net, they were limited in what they could do. Even though they took a survey and held a public forum, he thinks there are still more answers to be sought. While it was often insightful it was also inspirational. 53% of the people said the experience of applying was positive, and 68% said they would consider applying for another board in the future. Although there are things that could be improved, what stood out to him and surprised him was that people seemed to enjoy the process.

The mayor thanked the committee for its recommendations, saying she thinks some can be implemented quite easily.

Councilor Nash thanked Select Committee members for their work, Beth Kaplowitt for her support and Javier Luengo-Garrido for his leadership

Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda

Councilor Nash reviewed the items on the consent agenda offering to remove any item for separate consideration upon request.

The administrative assistant respectfully requested removal of the April 13, 2023 minutes.

**Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the consent agenda with the removal. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion carried 9:0 by roll call vote.**

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

A. 23.283 Appointments to Various Committees, all positive recommendations, City Services - 5/1/2023

Conservation Commission

**Kevin Lake**, 35 Washington Avenue, Northampton  
Term: July 2023-June 2026  
*Reappointment*

Disability Commission

**Kathy Murri**, 50 Laurel Park, Northampton  
Term: July 2023-June 2026  
*Reappointment*

Housing Partnership

**Edgardo Cancel**, 37 Indian Hill Road, Florence  
Term: July 2023- June 2026  
*Reappointment*

**Gordon Shaw**, 482 Haydenville Road, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Leeds,  
Term: July 2022-June 2025  
*Reappointment*

**Hannah Shaffer**, 115 Milton Street, Florence  
Term: July 2023-June 2026  
*Reappointment*

**Ace Tayloe**, 14 Fruit Street, Northampton  
Term: July 2023-June 2026  
*Reappointment*

**Parks & Recreation Commission**

**Julia Chevan**, 8 Cosmian Avenue, Florence  
Term: July 2023-June 2026  
*Reappointment*

**David Cronin**, 103 Pioneer Knolls, Florence  
Term: July 2022- June 2025  
*Reappointment*

**Whiting Street Fund Committee**

**Joseph Misterka**, 312 Chesterfield Road, Leeds  
Term: July 2023- June 2026  
*Reappointment*

- B. 23.290 An Order to Reprogram Funds for NHS Heating System Repair - 2nd reading
- C. 23.295 Appointments to Various Committees, all positive recommendations, City Services - 5/1/2023

**Energy & Sustainability Commission**

**Angela Gregory**, 595 Haydenville Road, Leeds  
Term: May 2023-June 2026  
*To fill a vacancy*

**Eric Winkler**, 105 Pine Street, Florence  
Term: May 2023-June 2026  
*To fill a vacancy*

**Urban Forestry Commission**

**Richard Parrish**, 138 South Street, Northampton  
Term: May 2023-June 2026  
*To fill a vacancy*

**Zoning Board of Appeals**

**Sherry Taylor**, 25 Edwards Square, Northampton (Associate Member)  
Term: May 2023-June 2026  
*To fill a vacancy*

- D. 23.298 An Order to Reprogram Funds for Ryan Road School Renovations - 2nd reading

- E. 23.303 Applications for Renewal of Secondhand Dealer Licenses  
Applications for Renewal of Secondhand Dealer Licenses:

Feeding Tube Records, 221 Pine Street, Room 141  
Applicant: Ted Lee

Phoenix Rising, 5 Old South Street  
Applicant: Robert J. Templeton

Urban Exchange, 233 Main Street  
Applicant: Sylvia Naumburger

VNA Hospice Shop, 18 Bridge Street  
Applicant: Nancy Case

- F. 23.304 Applications for Ten (10) Taxicab Licenses, Jeffrey Miller - Cosmic Cab Company

Taxicab Licenses for the following vehicles:

- 2013 Chrysler Town & Country - Blue
- 2014 Dodge Grand Caravan - Gray
- 2010 Dodge Grand Caravan - White
- 2007 Chevy Suburban - Brown
- 2012 Chrysler Town & Country - Gray



- 2008 Dodge Grand Caravan - Gray
- 2010 Dodge Grand Caravan - Gray
- 2009 Dodge Grand Caravan - Blue
- 2011 Dodge Grand Caravan - Gray
- 2014 Chrysler Town & Country - Gray

G. 23.305 Application for Business Owner's Permit, Jeffrey Miller - Cosmic Cab Company

Renewal License for:

Jeffrey David Miller, Cosmic Cab Company  
Business Address: 160 Main Street, #8

H. 23.313 Appointments to Various Committees - for referral to City Services Whiting Street Fund Committee

**Andrea Murray**, 54 Day Ave., Northampton  
Term: July 2023 - June 2026  
*Reappointment*

Board of Assessors

**David Murphy**, 78 North Elm St., Northampton  
Term: July 2023 - June 2026  
*Reappointment*

Central Business Architecture Committee

**Melissa Frydlo**, 123 South St. #2, Northampton  
Term: July 2023 – June 2026  
*Reappointment*

Council on Aging

**Adrienne Andrews**, 84 Pines Edge Drive, Northampton  
Term: July 2023 – June 2026  
*To fill a vacancy*

**Mark Bird**, 19 West Center St., Florence  
Term: July 2023 – June 2026  
*To fill a vacancy*

Housing Partnership

**Spencer Ghazey-Bates**, 86 Massasoit St., Northampton  
Term: July 2023 – June 2026  
*To fill a vacancy*

For the text of financial orders approved as part of the consent agenda, see Financial Orders (on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading) below.

Financial Orders (on 1st reading)  
23.308 An Order to Reprogram funds to NPS Playground Account - 1st reading

Financial Orders (on 1st reading)  
23.308 An Order to Reprogram funds to NPS Playground Account - 1st reading  
School Supervisor of Maintenance Tony Kuznierz has requested that funds be reprogrammed from the chimney repair account and Leeds School Playground Account for expenses related to other playgrounds in the school system, Director Nardi presented. He is asking for the extra money to be used for playground equipment and projects. While they are taking \$15,000 from the Leeds playground account, they are leaving money to finish some fencing work that needs to be done there. He is getting a lot of requests to address playground needs from all of the schools and this gives him that flexibility.

Councilor LaBarge moved to refer the order to the consent agenda. Councilor Jarrett seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

See minutes of May 18, 2023 for final reading.

23.309 An Order to Accept DA Sullivan \$10,000 Gift for Public Art and Economic Development Project - Portable Stage - 1st reading

23.309 An Order to Accept DA Sullivan \$10,000 Gift for Public Art and Economic Development Project - Portable Stage - 1st reading

As some may know, DA Sullivan has very generously been gifting \$10,000 to the city every year for quite a few years now, Mayor Sciarra related. The desks councilors are sitting in were purchased with this donation in 2016, and other gifts have been used for early childhood playgrounds at the Leeds and Bridge Street elementary schools, to purchase a water fountain in Pulaski Park, for public art projects and for the Senior Center technology lending program. They have been trying to find really great uses for this gift that benefit the community and, this year, their idea is to use it to buy a portable stage for economic development and the Arts and Culture Department. It will actually have its debut this weekend at the Pride parade. This will be a stage that the city will own and can use for events in Pulaski Park, etc. They will be using it all summer for a new entertainment venue (Garage Band) between the parking garage and the buildings on Hampton Avenue and will use it for the Taste of Northampton. It will get an amazing amount of use, and they can also lend it to folks for events. It will pay for itself very shortly in savings on rentals. As always, they are remarkably grateful for this continual gift.

The Sullivan family is so generous and so many people appreciate what they do every year, Councilor LaBarge said.

Councilor Perry said he's very excited about this and excited to help Ryan set it up this weekend. If anyone wants to help them they'll be there at 8 a.m. setting up for Pride.

Councilor Elkins said she's very excited that the first use of the stage will be for the Pride parade and looks forward to many epic, epic drag performances on this platform.

Councilor Elkins moved to refer the order to the consent agenda. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

See minutes of May 18, 2023 for final reading.

23.310 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds for Smith Charities Phase 2 Rehabilitation Project - 1st reading

23.310 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds for Smith Charities Phase 2 Rehabilitation Project - 1st reading

Councilor Nash read the order aloud.

As they know, she comes before them twice a year to pass on the recommendations of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), Assistant Director LaValley reminded. The CPC conducts two funding rounds; one in the spring and one in the fall. This is the final round for the fiscal year and represents the expenditure of nearly all the funds allocated. This project is essentially a continuation of work that was funded in the fall through a partial grant award. Smith Charities returned with another application and made the case that this is work that really needs to be completed. They had a lot of discussion with the committee about the public visibility of the building and its importance to the streetscape. CPC members wanted to send a clear message that Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds shouldn't be the sole source of funding and that Smith Charities needs to develop other funding sources.

Councilor Jarrett said he looked through some of the letters of support and appreciated that there was discussion that Smith Charities considered selling the building and moving to a different space but that because of the historic restrictions on the building they wouldn't actually be able to get very much for it and it made more sense to occupy it.

Often appropriations come with a requirement for historic preservation protections but in this case that wasn't necessary because the building is already permanently protected, Assistant Director LaValley confirmed. The building has a historic preservation restriction held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission as a result of state grant funding. It is a quirky structure because the first floor is 1,500 square feet of space and occupied by a giant walk-in bank vault that greatly reduces the usable space so it presents a challenge on the open market. It's really unique in the downtown because, as far as they are aware, it is the only building still occupied by the original tenant for whom it was constructed.

In combination with the earlier request it is certainly a large amount for the city to be giving, Councilor Jarrett pointed out. He appreciates the work Smith Charities does but wonders if

there is a way to get more public use from the building other than the view from the street. Could the outdoor space become a park that could be open to the public at certain times or is there additional room in the building for public activities? He asked.

Those are things that come to mind for a building that they are supporting so much.

Those are things CPC members discussed with trustees as well, Assistant Director LaValley said. The trustees are excited about opening the building to the public and looking for more opportunities to do so.

Councilor Moulton said he appreciates the language that refers to establishing a strategic plan for securing funds for long-term capital needs. This is at least the third CPA grant; one in 2020, one last fall and one now. The application states that, according to the architects, the project will require another phase in future years to complete the exterior of the building. The commitment to a long-term plan is very important and he expects they will monitor it. If people are aware of Smith Charities they know it for its charitable work and the money it distributes but are not as familiar with the space, the building. He thinks promoting that public awareness is important to justify the city's investment which, as Councilor Jarrett said, is significant. The total of the two grants for this fiscal year is \$583,836, he noted.

Councilor Maiore said she was thinking about the cost of preserving historic buildings and residences in Northampton and how they are balancing the goal of historic preservation with sustainability goals. Historic preservation restrictions drive cost ups, she suggested. If they have to preserve a building according to historic standards they may not be prioritizing energy efficiency which is part of their climate regeneration plan and this potential drawback needs to be balanced with their desire to preserve their history. She is assuming that costs are much higher because of its status as a historic building. She is wondering if it might be time to review some of their tenets of historic preservation with an eye toward balancing them with sustainability, energy efficiency and cost considerations.

This project is really about securing the envelope of the building, which is also definitely working toward the goals of sustainability and energy efficiency, Ms. LaValley advised.

She is glad to see the trustees realizing that they really need to keep control of the building, Councilor LaBarge commented. She has not seen them come into City Council for any kind of help in restoring the building, she said. For a long time a lot of people didn't know what Smith Charities was all about. She would like to see more on the website about them. She can't wait to see the renovations done as part of Phase 1.

**Councilor Elkins moved to refer the order to the consent agenda. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.**

**See minutes of May 18, 2023 for final reading.**

**23.311 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds to Historic Northampton for Collections Preservation Project - 1st reading**

**23.311 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds to Historic Northampton for Collections Preservation Project - 1st reading**

Councilor Nash read the order.

Historic Northampton has a 40,000-plus item collection, Assistant Director LaValley presented. This work will allow Historic Northampton working with museum professionals to assess each item, identify objects at risk, look for potentially-damaging storage conditions, recommend conservation treatments and determine the best long-term care protocols. It is also part of an effort to make items more accessible to people on line. They are not really stored in accessible storage conditions and this is moving forward towards that.

The whole historic grounds are absolutely beautiful, Councilor LaBarge said. She wholly believes in preservation and thinks it's well worth the investment of CPA money.

Councilor Nash asked if she could give examples of some of the items in the collection.

Articles of clothing and accessories make up roughly 5,000 of the items, which are known throughout New England as a large and culturally-significant collection, Director LaValley

shared. Items include 19<sup>th</sup> century dresses made from silk products grown and spun locally and, coming all the way up to the present, artifacts from the LGBTQ movement. Other items include household textiles such as blankets, sheets, napkins, tablecloths and window coverings and shelves, clocks, chests and boxes, many of which were used to furnish local houses.

Councilor Perry moved to refer the order to the consent agenda. Councilor Maiore seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

See minutes of May 18, 2023 for final reading.

23.312 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds for Forbes Library Restroom Ventilation Project - 1st reading

23.312 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds for Forbes Library Restroom Ventilation Project - 1st reading

This project is a little bit different for the CPA but is one the committee is really excited about, Director LaValley said. The Forbes Library bathroom doors are a really important architectural feature and historic in their own right. They are made from heavy wood and incorporate design elements used throughout the library. They are designed to be really heavy and to have a tight seal on purpose to separate the humidity and moisture of the bathrooms from the use of the library and to protect the collections. They serve their purpose well; however, the bathrooms were not designed with adequate ventilation. They have no fresh air exchange, they're really humid and they have high CO2, so they are just unpleasant to be around from everything they heard from patrons. This will allow the bathrooms to be brought up to modern code.

Councilor Maiore asked if they didn't have some funding last year for a ventilation project at Forbes Library.

Not with CPA money, Director LaValley said. Additional upgrades to the library are being done with a variety of other funds, she confirmed.

Councilor Maiore said she's heard of the need for this and will be supporting it.

Councilor Elkins moved to refer the order to the consent agenda. Councilor Jarrett seconded.

Councilor Foster said she had the pleasure of chaperoning a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade field trip to the library today. The first question 2<sup>nd</sup> graders were asked when they entered the room was who owns the library. There were a lot of answers before the correct answer of 'we all do' was finally given. Forbes has always sought ways to stay a really relevant public space used by all sectors of the community. She will be supporting this.

The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

See minutes of March 2, 2023 for final reading.

<u>Recess</u>	<u>Recess</u> At 9:03 p.m., the City Council recessed briefly. The City Council reconvened at 9:11 p.m.
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<u>Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)</u>	<p><u>Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)</u></p> <p><u>23.306 An Ordinance Relative to Accessible Parking Spaces - 1st reading</u></p> <p>The city's ADA coordinator Keith Benoit has done a lot of research and gone through the city's ordinance relative to accessible parking, Councilor Nash explained. He has been out in the community photographing and measuring parking spaces and has a detailed presentation he will be showing to the committees to which the ordinance is referred.</p> <p>The bigger question he is pursuing is whether the accessible parking spaces on the ground match what is laid out in the general ordinance, Mr. Benoit explained. To determine that, he has been looking at on-street accessible parking spaces and off-street accessible spaces in city-owned lots. City officials wants to understand if the city is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Also, a major redesign of Main Street is in process and they want to make sure the language in the ordinance is correct before they start changing it. His full presentation contains a lot of details. Planners want to make sure the schedule of on- and off-street parking is correct and right now it is not. For example, they have added parking spaces</p>
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mostly to parking lots that have not been reflected in the ordinance and have taken away parking spaces on the street. Taking away a regular parking space changes the reference point for the accessible space since, rather than being the fifth parking space; if one is taken away, the accessible space becomes the fourth space. The language in the schedule needs to be updated to reflect changes to the physical environment. Also, there is a lot of inconsistency in how spaces are referenced. Some references use ordinal numbers (1<sup>st</sup> parking space, 2<sup>nd</sup> parking space, etc.) and others use the distance from a fixed point (i.e. 400 feet from the intersection of Maple Street). He wants to make sure the language is consistent and able to be audited, meaning that parking spaces can be found without the use of measuring tools.

He presented the changes to the Disability Commission, which was enthusiastic and provided a letter of positive recommendation. As a parking ordinance, he is expecting it to be referred to the Transportation and Parking Commission (TPC) and Legislative Matters (LM).

It is a lot of detail but is not technically or politically challenging. As an example, there used to be two accessible spaces on Elm Street in front of the high school. When the road in front of the high school was closed, the spaces were never taken off the schedule. Similarly, on Center Street across from Serio's there is an accessible parking space on the end but the paint has disappeared. While this is largely a maintenance issue, it could appear that a new accessible parking space will just appear when, in reality, it has been on the schedule for a while.

Councilor LaBarge moved to refer the schedule of parking changes to Legislative Matters and the TPC. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

Financial Orders (on 2nd reading)  
23.290 An Order to Reprogram Funds for NHS Heating System Repair - 2nd reading

Financial Orders (on 2nd reading)

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

The following order passed final reading:

23.290 An Order to Reprogram Funds for NHS Heating System Repair - 2nd reading

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

*In City Council* April 13, 2023

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

23.290 An Order to Reprogram Funds for NHS Heating System Repair

*Ordered, that*

\$10,000 from the Northampton High School Chimney Repairs Account (19303 586406) be reprogrammed for repairing a heating system glycol line at the Northampton High School.

Passed final reading and enrolled.

The following order passed final reading:

23.298 An Order to Reprogram Funds for Ryan Road School Renovations - 2nd reading

23.298 An Order to Reprogram Funds

for Ryan Road School Renovations - 2nd reading

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

*In City Council* April 13, 2023

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

**23.298 An Order to Reprogram Funds for Ryan Road School Renovations**

*Now, Therefore be it Ordered, that*

\$136,122.81 from the Ryan Road Bathroom project account (19303 586909) be reprogrammed to do general renovation work at the Ryan Road school.

Passed final reading and enrolled.

Orders

Orders  
None

Ordinances

Ordinances  
None

Resolutions

Resolutions  
None

New Business

New Business

Adjourn

Adjourn  
Councilor Foster moved to adjourn. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_, Administrative Assistant