



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:

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| 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 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore |

Announcement that Meeting Audio/Video Recorded

Ward 6 Councilor Marianne LaBarge was participating remotely. Council President Nash announced that the meeting was being audio/video recorded.

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

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Councilor Nash read the legal notice.

Councilor Jarrett moved to open the public hearing. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

The public hearing was opened at 7:04 p.m.

National Grid representative Ken Creigle presented the petition. National Grid is looking to install one pole on Pleasant Street about 230 feet south of the intersection of Conz Street and the rotary for a new service. Another pole is needed to install equipment (a transformer) since the other poles nearby are already in use.

There being no questions, **Councilor LaBarge moved to close the public hearing. Councilor Maiore seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.**

The public hearing was closed at 7:07 p.m.

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

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Councilor Nash read the legal notice.

Councilor Moulton moved to open the public hearing. Councilor Gore seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

The public hearing was opened at 7:08 p.m.

National Grid is looking to install one new pole on Maple Street about 55 feet south of the intersection with Pine Street, Ken Creigle presented. The pole will be to serve a new control cabinet for Eversource so its service doesn't have to cross under the roadway.

Councilor LaBarge moved to close the public hearing. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

The public hearing was closed at 7:09 p.m.

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

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

Councilor Nash read the legal notice.

Councilor Jarrett moved to open the public hearing. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

The public hearing was opened at 7:10 p.m.

The request is to install one pole on South Street about 160 feet northeast of the centerline of Fairview Avenue. Similarly, the new pole is to provide service to a telemetry cabinet to be installed by Eversource.

There being no further comment, **Councilor LaBarge moved to close the public hearing. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.**

The public hearing was closed at 7:13 p.m.

Public Comment

Public Comment

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

Debin Bruce said she is with a group called Trash Walkers, a Northampton Neighbors’ interest group that cleans up parks and other public areas, and is there to talk about a problem with cigarette butts. She circulated a picture showing Pulaski Park’s condition today (littered with cigarette butts) even though the group cleaned the park up a week ago. The group uses a dustpan and broom to sweep up butts and collects a blue trash bag full every time they go out.

A Board of Health regulation prohibits smoking in workplaces and public places and this has led to some confusion as to whether it is acceptable to place a cigarette receptacle in the park. She spoke to Amy Hutchins at the health department and there was some thought that providing a receptacle in the park is not a good idea since smoking is not allowed there. Their group needs some clarity around this. They are willing to either donate or order receptacles for cigarette disposal purposes. Made primarily of cellulose acetate, cigarette butts are the most abundant form of plastic waste and can take 10 years to degrade. They contain lots of toxic chemicals and, near and dear to her heart is the fact that they are messing up their water system.

Jacqueline McCreanor, Ward 3, informed councilors that two days ago on Tuesday, May 16th, she, Councilor Jarrett and Councilor Moulton took a lovely tour of Smith Charities at 51 Main Street and learned a lot of history about Oliver Smith, the Hatfield farmer who left a remarkable will and legacy to Northampton residents and surrounding communities. Thanks to Oliver Smith, more than \$9 million dollars has been gifted to his beneficiaries, who include apprentices in the trades as well as nurses, first-time brides and widows with children. Also thanks to Oliver Smith, Northampton has Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (SVAHS) and a very active agricultural community with world-renowned and historically-significant farmland. In addition to being beautiful, this patchwork of open fields sequesters carbon, much like trees between the ages of 35 and 200 years old.

Oliver Smith – visionary and philanthropist - died in 1845 and his legacy has been benefiting Northampton and its surrounding communities for going on 200 years. It’s time they take the same approach and responsibly steward Northampton’s beautiful built and natural resources to protect them for at least another 200 years. Residents and newcomers are attracted to Northampton for its town and country lifestyle. Visiting Smith Charities reminded her of the importance of responsibly stewarding their precious resources so that they and future generations can continue to benefit from Northampton’s beauty, history and prosperity. Neighborhood conservation districts (NCD’s) are one way to properly steward Northampton at the residential neighborhood level. This is especially critical now at a time when Northampton is prioritizing developers who are demolishing historic homes and neighborhoods and building very expensive houses in their place.

Daniel Evans of 53 Clark Street shared that he will be up in Florence at the VFW this weekend raising money for the survival center specifically for his Tuskegee Toddlers’ Fund. Manna and the survival center get plenty of adult food but nobody is focusing on their babies’ needs. Humanity is at a financial pinnacle where they as Americans are controlling 25% of the world’s commerce and total wealth. Americans are only 5% of the world’s population and 12 to

15% of American’s population controls approximately 80 to 85% of that wealth. Of the people, for the people and by the people must not be potential, it must become kinetic. People for honesty in America and the Brothers and Sisters for Humanity in tandem with their many associates endeavor to do as much as they can as well as they can for as long as they can.

Jackie Ballance of Bay State said she read about the proposed changes in compensation for elected officials and was absolutely thrilled to see that councilors can finally expect to earn a living wage. \$16,931.20 is kind of an odd amount; she would suggest rounding it off to \$16,932. She sent an email back in March when Houston, TX passed an NCD ordinance to allow pilot projects for specific historic neighborhoods where the traditional historic district criteria did not seem appropriate. Specifically, they want to protect historic black and working-class neighborhoods that don’t have the resources of fancy upper-class historic neighborhoods. The pilot will allow neighborhoods to choose from specific guidelines to guide development, allowing them to control such things as building height, size and massing, lot size and setbacks, architectural style and materials and demolitions. The more she learned about the history of her own neighborhood, the more she wanted to see their existing mill village visually preserved for posterity. She is going to create a walking tour or even invite them sometime on a historical tour of Bay State. If they are lucky enough to survive a climate catastrophe and enjoy the posterity to appreciate human history, she wants Bay State to be there.

There being no further comments, at 7:26 p.m., public comment ended.

Announcements

Announcements

Monday, May 29, 2023, the annual Florence Memorial Day Parade will be at Trinity Row Park, Councilor Jarrett reminded. He will be there and hopes others can join him.

The Finance Committee will be holding the FY2024 budget hearing next week in hybrid format, Councilor Maiore announced. Tuesday, May 23, 2023, they will hear from Central Services, Northampton Fire Rescue, the DPW and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Wednesday, May 24, 2023 they will hear from Northampton Public Schools and the Northampton Police Department. Public comment will be limited to three minutes instead of two and there will be no overall time limit to public comment. They will allow department heads to make presentations and then hear questions and comments immediately following as they want to give folks a chance to comment in real time. The hearings start at 6 p.m.

Councilor Nash noted that they will convene as a full council and recess for finance so the whole council can attend and participate in asking questions of the mayor and administrators.

The Northampton Arts Council is in the midst of its spring grant round and the deadline for applications is tomorrow (May 19, 2023), Councilor Perry reminded. A simple application form is available on their webpage.

Finance Director Charlene Nardi and Principal Assess Marc Dautreuil will give a presentation on available tax exemptions for seniors on Friday, June 9th from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at the senior center, Mayor Sciarra announced. The presentation will cover all discount options available for seniors and adults. There are no plans to record the presentation but they will post it on line, Director Nardi said.

Councilor Nash asked the council’s permission to take some liberties with the agenda. After presentation of the budget message, he would like to take financial orders relative to the budget out of order. They will also do some gymnastics around dividing the question so all councilors can participate in discussion. He will then come back to presentations to hear from the Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board and skip down to the ordinance related to that report. Afterwards, he will proceed to the consent agenda and continue in the regular order.

Hearing no objection, he yielded the floor to Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra for presentation of her FY2024 budget message.

Presentations

Presentations

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra read aloud her FY2024 budget message.

Financial Orders (on 1st reading)
23.315 An Order to Approve FY2023 Budgetary Transfers
23.316 An Order to Approve FY2024 General Fund Budget
23.317 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Sewer Enterprise Fund Budget
23.318 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Water Enterprise Fund Budget
23.319 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Solid Waste Enterprise Fund Budget
23.320 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Stormwater and Flood Control Enterprise Fund Budget
23.321 An Order to Approve FY2024 Revolving Funds

Financial Orders (on 1st reading)
23.316 An Order to Approve FY2024 General Fund Budget
23.317 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Sewer Enterprise Fund Budget
23.318 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Water Enterprise Fund Budget
23.319 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Solid Waste Enterprise Fund Budget
23.320 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Stormwater and Flood Control Enterprise Fund Budget
23.321 An Order to Approve FY2024 Revolving Funds

Councilor Nash stated his intention to address agenda item #8 Financial Orders (on 1st reading), items B through G (financial orders related to the FY2024 budget – see above).

Councilor Jarrett stated that, as a member of the Pedal People Cooperative, he has a conflict of interest in the form of a pre-existing contract with the Central Services Department. Council President Nash has agreed to accommodate this conflict by entertaining a motion to divide discussion of the General Fund budget to consider that item separately. After the question has been divided he will return to participate in discussion about everything in the General Fund (GF) budget except the Ordinary Maintenance (OM) budget of Parking Division – Maintenance.

Councilor Jarrett recused himself and turned off his camera.

Under Councilor Nash’s direction, councilors went through the following exercise to allow Councilor Jarrett to participate in discussion of the GF budget.

Councilor Elkins moved to put the FY2024 General Fund budget on the floor for discussion. Councilor Moulton seconded.

Councilor Maiore moved to divide the question to separately consider the OM budget of Parking Division – Maintenance. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously 8:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Jarrett recused.

Councilor Nash called the main motion to a vote (discussion of the FY2024 budget with the Parking Maintenance OM budget removed), **and it passed 8:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Jarrett recused.**

Councilor Nash welcomed Councilor Jarrett back.

Mayor Sciarra once again has done an excellent job of balancing the varied needs of the city and he is generally very pleased with what he’s reading, Councilor Jarrett shared. With respect to vacancies at the DPW, he asked if the city has been able to raise wages to attract people. He expressed his understanding that, under the current step system, employees are required to come in at a lower step and it takes a long time to get to a higher step. Given that they’ve had so many vacancies for so long, he’s hearing that the step system may need an overhaul. He asked if there is a plan in place to look at that system.

They can talk about this in depth with DPW Director Donna LaScaleia next week, but the city did go through collective bargaining last year and reach agreements they are hopeful will help attract staff, Mayor Sciarra said. They also have a home rule petition in process at the state that they are hopeful will help.

Councilor Jarrett said he is trying to better understand the \$1.2 million she is proposing to take from the Fiscal Stability Stabilization Fund (FSSF) to augment the school budget. He expressed his understanding that, although part of a two-year plan, it all comes out this fiscal year.

The deficit they were looking at in the schools was estimated at \$2.3 million, Mayor Sciarra advised. The plan the School Committee put forward initially to fill some of that gap was to use ESSER funds and something called tailings; i.e. - funds left over at the end of the year (the equivalent of Free Cash). This amount is generally not known in advance. The proposal was to use a pretty sizable amount of money that the hope was would come from tailings. It was not something she was comfortable with because these are not guaranteed funds and the amount proposed was larger than what is normally seen. If the tailings didn’t materialize, it would require cuts while the school year was in process rather than through attrition at the end of the year which she thinks would be much more disruptive. She didn’t want to take that gamble.

This \$1.2 million doesn't fill the entire gap so additional cuts have been made this year and more will be needed next year, she stated. However, it helps ease the transition back to the more reasonable increase of 4% called for by the fiscal stability plan. Tailings that do come in can go into the school choice fund to start building up that reserve account again. One reason they got into a hole is because this revolving fund with a planned use was overspent.

POLICE BUDGET

Councilor Jarrett asked how the proposed police budget fits into the recommendations of the Northampton Policing Review Commission (NPRC). He presented his own assessment that, from 2020 to 2023, per the consumer price index, the cumulative inflation rate was 17.2%. In FY2021, the police department expended \$5.7 million of a \$6 million budget. Bringing that forward to 2023 with an adjustment for inflation leads to equivalent actual spending of \$6.7 million on a budget of \$7 million. Since actual spending is generally less than what is budgeted, a \$6.8 million budget is certainly within the range of inflation, he suggested. From that perspective, he voiced his perception that it is a level amount of funding and not an expansion.

He went on to express his understanding that the goal is not to increase the total number of personnel hours but to allow for more personnel to reduce the amount of overtime. He asked if she would agree with this assessment.

It allows for flexibility to start the incredibly long hiring process, Mayor Sciarra clarified. The city is somewhat dependent on the state as far as when it is going to run an academy. The whole process very often takes at least 18 months. Now, although Chief Kasper is aware of upcoming retirements, she is not able to begin filling a position until an officer retires. She can't hire for the retirement until after the retirement because there is no money in the budget. This allows the chief to look at retirements coming up and plan for them, helping to reduce the really long lag time. It will get them to a place with more stable staffing so they can cut down on overtime. The chief will talk next week about other impacts of all those forced hours on officers and the community.

He asked if she sees this as being in line with the NPRC's recommendation of maintaining the police force at a level state while continuing to work on expanding alternative options.

Mayor Sciarra agreed he said this really well. It is in line with the NPRC's report in that there is recognition that the city will maintain a police department. Her goal is to maintain it in the safest way possible that meets the city's needs. The existing budget does *not* meet the needs. There are a lot of calls to which there is not an available response.

Councilor Maiore said she will be curious to unpack those calls and see what the vision is for which will be covered by their mental health task force or Division of Community Care (DCC).

They will be talking to DHHS Commissioner Merridith O'Leary next week, the Mayor confirmed.

Councilor Foster asked what percentage of the overall budget is funding for Northampton Public Schools (NPS).

Total education out of the General Fund is 41.6%, Director Nardi advised. She referred councilors to the expenditure summary page.

They talked about an increase in calls to the Northampton Fire Rescue department, so she is curious to know what the volume of calls coming into the Northampton Police Department (NPD) looks like, Councilor Foster said.

Mayor Sciarra said she would make sure Chief Kasper knows to respond to that.

NPS represents 32.3% of the city's overall budget, Director Nardi confirmed. This includes the one-time \$1.2 million contribution from the Fiscal Stability Stabilization Fund (FSSF).

It doesn't include indirect costs, Mayor Sciarra clarified.

Councilor Foster commented that it was a little lower than she expected. She said she couldn't remember the reason for not including indirect costs in each department's budget. These represent one of the greatest percentages of the city's budget and vary from department to department since some are more personnel-heavy than others, she pointed out.

Mayor Sciarra said they could include more about it in the budget next year.

Indirect costs for the schools are estimated based on the indirect costs experienced the year before since exact costs are not known at the time the budget is presented, Director Nardi explained. Exact costs For FY24 are calculated in August. Last year they predicted higher indirects and they were actually lower. Including them for individual departments in the budget might be misleading because they do change.

Councilor Moulton observed that the budget reflects not only the mayor's priorities but the city council's as well. With regard to the decision to use \$1.2 million to fill the gap in the school budget, he thinks it was a wise decision as they continue to deal with the learning deficit created by the pandemic. It's well-documented nationally that students are at least half a year behind and that it has disproportionately impacted low income students and students of color. He believes it is critical at this time to give strong and certain support to the schools rather than relying on uncertain revenue sources. He applauds her decision. His question is what the impact of using that \$1.2 million will be on other things, such as the projected timing of the next override.

They have to look at the fiscal stability stabilization fund every year, Mayor Sciarra confirmed. Right now, the plan calls for an override in 2025 which would be the four years talked about as the minimum term for the fiscal stability plan. The previous plan implemented in 2013 managed to last for seven years. A lot of factors helped to extend that time such as a strong economy, cannabis revenue and new growth on Village Hill.

Right now, even though they are having some strong new growth, it looks like it won't make it past four years. One reason her team is focused so much on economic development is that the only way to meet the ever-growing needs that exceed 2.5% is to pass an override or have new growth. They are looking at it and will do their best to handle it as responsibly as possible. They are also looking at what the amount will need to be. Previous overrides were \$2.5 million. With the significant use of the fund at this point, they are trying to model what the amount will need to be in order for the next override to sustain operations for at least four years.

Councilor LaBarge said she was really proud of her. They have been hearing about Ch. 70 for so long. She asked if she knew what might be happening there.

When she presented the \$1.2 million to the School Committee the other part of her plan was to rally everyone in the community to help advocate for more state funding, Mayor Sciarra related. Just last week the Northampton Association of School Employees (NASE) and members of the School Committee went to the state house to focus attention on the Fair Share Amendment. They had really high hopes for this and are very concerned that it is not going to translate into actual resources for Northampton and very little for K – 12 in general. Right now, it is focused on early education and higher ed. For them in particular, what they really need is more money for K-12. The Chapter 70 formula is really complicated and their place in this particular world is complicated for multiple reasons. There is a glimmer of hope on the horizon that they will start to see a little increase in the next few years coming from the Student Opportunity Act. As a minimum aid community, something called a 'hold harmless' buffer insures that, even with reduced enrollment they get a minimum amount of Chapter 70 money, but it prevents them from getting the benefit of new revenue sources. The state really needs a complete overhaul of the formula and the charter reimbursement mitigation formula has been unfair and broken from the beginning. Next year she imagines they are going to go over \$3 million in charter sending tuition and they will get reimbursed under the current formula for only maybe half a million.

"Imagine what we could do if we had three million more dollars to put towards our public schools." It would be revolutionary, she suggested.

Regarding the recent extension of parking enforcement until 8 p.m., Councilor LaBarge said she is concerned because when she and another councilor tried to get a cup of coffee recently,

many stores were actually closed at 6 o'clock. They are paying for parking enforcement officers up until 8 o'clock. Are we gaining or losing money? She wondered.

They actually shifted hours to start enforcement later so it is a shift, not just an increase, Mayor Sciarra clarified. They were trying to respond to restaurants which were struggling with having enough parking turnover during the evening dinner rush. They will see what parking revenue looks like with this change but it was never meant to be about increasing revenue; it was really about trying to help sustain downtown business.

Councilor LaBarge asked if the Finance Committee could have a breakdown of how parking revenue has changed since the shift at some point.

Councilor Maiore asked if there is any value to having a dedicated stabilization fund for education, especially for special education costs which are inherently unstable.

That's certainly something the School Committee could consider, Mayor Sciarra said. She thinks they should build up their reserves to be able to be more nimble. On the city side, the city council administers and approves appropriations from stabilization funds. It seems murky to her for the city council to be in charge of a fund for the schools.

Councilor Gore thanked the mayor for her presentation and the budget book. She asked if the \$1.2 million going to NPS balances the budget for this year.

Like the city, the schools need to present a balanced budget, Mayor Sciarra confirmed. The \$1.2 million in addition to cuts that have been made gives them a balanced budget. For next year, there will need to be additional cuts.

The fiscal stability plan was based on the promise that the schools receive a 4% annual increase, greater than the 2.5% the city is able to raise through taxes. Even with the guarantee of 4% there is still going to be a deficit next year so there will need to be additional cuts.

Councilor LaBarge said she is really impressed with Kim Park's accomplishment in attracting 200 new members and 151 returning members to the senior center.

Councilor Nash said the paragraph that stood out to him has to do with the expanding desire of Northampton residents for more services. As the Climate Action Project Administration (CAPA) department and Division of Community Care (DCC) show, people aren't asking for less and they are trying to do more with decreasing revenue streams. He looks forward to meeting with her and administrators next week to discuss all of this in more detail.

There being no further discussion, the council moved on to action on the budget. Councilor Nash suggested starting with the FY2024 General Fund and Solid Waste Enterprise fund budgets since Councilor Jarrett will need to recuse himself for those.

Councilor Jarrett referred to his earlier disclosure about his conflict of interest with regard to the GF budget. For solid waste, as a member of the Pedal People Cooperative, he has a financial interest in decisions regarding the Locust Street transfer station and so will be recusing himself for that item too.

Councilor Foster moved to refer 23.316 An Order to Approve FY2024 General Fund Budget and 23.319 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Solid Waste Enterprise Fund Budget to the Finance Committee. Councilor Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously 8:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Jarrett recused.

Councilor Elkins moved to refer 23.317 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Sewer Enterprise Fund Budget, 23.318 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Water Enterprise Fund Budget, 23.320 An Order to Approve FY 2024 Stormwater and Flood Control Enterprise Fund Budget and 23.321 An Order to Approve FY2024 Revolving Funds to the Finance Committee. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

See minutes of June 1, 2023 for final reading.

<p><u>Financial Orders (on 1st reading)</u> <u>23.315 An Order to Approve FY2023 Budgetary Transfers - 1st reading</u></p>	<p><u>Financial Orders (on 1st reading)</u> <u>23.315 An Order to Approve FY2023 Budgetary Transfers - 1st reading</u> Before them is an order to cover some over-expended accounts, Finance Director Nardi advised. She reviewed the proposed transfers as presented.</p> <p>Councilor Elkins moved to refer the order to the consent agenda. Councilor Jarrett seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.</p> <p><u>See minutes of June 1, 2023 for final reading.</u></p>
<p><u>Recess</u></p>	<p><u>Recess</u> At 9:06 p.m., the City Council recessed briefly. The City Council reconvened at 9:11 p.m.</p>
<p><u>Presentation Elected official compensation advisory board report</u></p>	<p><u>Presentation Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board Report</u> The committee was appointed back in November, Councilor Nash reminded. Any action on its recommendations must take place within the first 18 months of their terms or by June 30th, he stressed. If they don't act by then, they are giving up their opportunity to change compensation for the next term.</p> <p>He recognized Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board Chair John Bidwell and advisory board members Deb Henson, Javier Luengo-Garrido and Sam Hopper.</p> <p>Mr. Bidwell named other members as Tara Brewster, Felicia Corbeil and Peter Whalen.</p> <p>Mr. Bidwell presented the findings and recommendations of a report entitled, "Advisory Report on the Compensation of Northampton Elected Officials."</p> <p><u>DISCUSSION</u> She is really impressed with the thoughtfulness of the report, Councilor Maiore commented. They are creating a baseline and that's a lot of work. She attended one of their later meetings and felt like there was a shift in thinking at that meeting.</p> <p>Mr. Bidwell said he thought she was referring to the shift in reasoning from basing salaries on a cost of living adjustment to basing them on the cost of living itself or a living wage.</p> <p>Members originally relied heavily on just the cost of living adjustment (COLA), he confirmed. COLA's from 2014 to the present amounted to a 27% increase so they were originally basing recommended salaries on a 27% increase. However, some on the board brought up that this was just keeping up with salaries set in 2014, not recognizing the amount of time it takes to do the job and how it's increased, much less what might be required to bring in a more diverse population and cohort. Rather than having the increase rest on COLA's, they changed the underlying assumption to have it rest on a living wage.</p> <p>Councilor Elkins said she very much supports looking at the living wage aspect. She is a court-appointed attorney and has gone through extended periods when rates were not raised at the state level. With wages stagnant, contractors begin covering more of the overhead expenses. It gets to a point where it is so lopsided that the constitutional obligation is actually subsidized by individual attorneys doing the work. It is incredibly important not to look at it as a gift or a thank you for the service; it is literally what allows people to do the work and it is actually unconscionable to ask people in effect to subsidize the civic process. The only fair and equitable way to go is to meaningfully think about what fair compensation is.</p> <p>She asked if the Mayor's salary being 98th is in terms of Massachusetts communities.</p> <p>Mr. Bidwell clarified that it is 98th in salary within the city of Northampton.</p> <p>It is important to recognize that being able to subsidize to some degree is a privilege and not one that everybody has, he added.</p>

Councilors asked questions and offered comments. One consideration he remembers hearing is that advisory board members weren't supposed to take city budget considerations into account but to look solely at appropriate compensation, Councilor Jarrett noted. As councilors, they are expected to take budget considerations into account, he suggested.

Councilor Moulton noted that one of the drivers of the recommendations is increasing diversity. He believes intuitively that overall compensation, including pay and benefits, is a tool for this objective. He wondered if the board came up with any data that backs that up.

There is a paucity of data to some degree since these are newer considerations, Mr. Bidwell observed. There is some data out there to point in that direction but not as much as they would like.

Javier Luengo-Garrido noted that a recommended exercise was to contrast Northampton with surrounding communities. That was a huge mistake because surrounding communities are grossly underpaid. What they're seeing across the board is that the predominant representation is middle-aged white people.

With respect to adding diversity and inclusion into the recommendation, it played out in an interesting way at the Monday meeting, he continued. The salary thinking at that point for the city council was \$11,500, the equivalent of \$9,000 from 2014. But the first two pages of the report talk about adding diversity and making monetary compensation a consideration as far as whether people are able to run or not. For the record, \$16,931.20 is a living wage for a single individual, he pointed out.

"It's pretty baseline." He personally was cognizant that whatever recommendation the board made to the mayor and city council was going to be the ceiling. Sadly, they are giving them a pretty low ceiling, he reflected.

He knows how much elected officials work. If someone doesn't come from a family with money, have a person supporting them or isn't retired with a pension, it is not an option. He encouraged councilors to advocate for the ceiling because going lower would be a bad idea.

Councilor Foster acknowledged Peter Whalen's dissenting opinion and the fact that the report's recommended salaries are higher than surrounding communities'.

"Yet, if we are going to increase the diversity and make it more sustainable for people to serve in these positions," it is incumbent on them to be leaders in this regard, she asserted.

She appreciates that they looked beyond what other councilors are making to how they could meet the values and goals they've articulated as a city.

Councilor Maiore said she feels like the expectation of elected officials in general has gone way up. They also have a little bit of an older population that is very engaged. She thinks accepting the report's recommendations is a way of really expressing their values and that the 2% annual increase is a great idea.

Councilor Perry echoed others by saying how heartened he is that the committee started the process by looking at diversity.

Councilor Gore said she thinks the recommendations will enable more diversity and a greater variety of people on the council than have served in the past.

As discussion continued, Councilor LaBarge asked Mr. Bidwell how to handle the situation of a single parent with children who would love to serve on council but can't afford to hire a babysitter. How do we accommodate that? She wondered.

Mr. Bidwell said he was hoping the question was rhetorical because he doesn't have an answer.

There is an answer for that, Javier Luengo-Garrido interjected. The answer is long-term but this is the right starting point. If councilors do not act on this, those concerns will continue. He

invited councilors to think about it as raising the salary of the position to improve it systemically rather than simply raising their own salaries.

He does think the answer to her question is owned by this council.

Councilor Nash said the important thing to him is the way the recommendations offer stability by providing access to health insurance and a more reasonable level of compensation for the many hours of work. They are under the gun here and are considering this at a difficult time because they are also considering a budget that will likely involve asking residents to pay more for their services. This isn't necessarily about them and it definitely isn't about him.

What really heartens him is that this council is ready to vote. They've been talking about this with their constituents and in their campaigns for a while and he thinks they're ready to act on these recommendations.

With the presentation concluded, councilors dismissed the advisory board and proceeded to a discussion of amending the ordinance.

Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)

Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)

Discussion to Consider Amending Section 5-5 per Recommendations of Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board

The advisory board recommends changing the ordinance, Councilor Nash confirmed. Members discussed that, as an ordinance change, the recommendations need to go to Legislative Matters.

Councilors expressed the preference for having the proposed ordinance change before them in the form of documents with the figures recommended by the advisory board inserted. The council president agreed to present specific ordinances for referral at the June 1, 2023 City Council meeting.

Councilor Jarrett said he calculated that the total cost of implementing the recommendations is \$161,589.52.

See minutes of June 1, 2023 for first reading.

Consent Agenda

Councilor Nash reviewed the items on the consent agenda. Councilor Jarrett requested removal of **23.310 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds for Smith Charities Phase 2 Rehabilitation Project - 2nd reading.**

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

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

- A. **Minutes of January 31, 2023 Joint City Council/School Committee/SVAHS Trustees Meeting and April 13, 2023 and May 4, 2023 City Council meetings**
- B. **Approve 23.251 National Grid Pole Petition for Pleasant Street (Petition #30684497)**
- C. **Approve 23.254 National Grid Pole Petition for Maple Street (Petition #30732483)**
- D. **Approve 23.255 National Grid Pole Petition for South Street (Petition #30734983)**
- E. **23.308 An Order to Reprogram funds to NPS Playground Account - 2nd reading**
- F. **23.309 An Order to Accept DA Sullivan \$10,000 Gift for Public Art and Economic Development Project - Portable Stage - 2nd reading**
- G. **23.311 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds to Historic Northampton for Collections Preservation Project - 2nd reading**
- H. **23.312 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds for Forbes Library Restroom Ventilation Project - 2nd reading**

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

Councilor Jarrett thanked Jacqueline McCreanor for organizing a tour of the building Tuesday. The building itself has a number of challenges since there is only one egress and no accessible entrance. He wants to encourage the trustees in whatever way possible to open the building up to public use or use by other nonprofits. The outdoor space as well could be made available for public use at certain times. It is a great asset to the community.

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

The following order was approved in final reading:

**City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS**

In City Council, May 4, 2023

Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee
23.310 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds for Smith Charities Phase 2 Rehabilitation Project

Ordered, that

WHEREAS, the Trustees of Smith Charities submitted a CPA application for continued critical exterior repairs to the Smith Charities Building at 51 Main Street;

WHEREAS, the project will continue to address the most critical needs identified in an historic building assessment to ensure that it will remain a unique part of the downtown streetscape in the future, and will leverage state grant funds;

WHEREAS, CPA funds will be utilized exclusively for critical exterior repairs, and in no way contribute to the operating expenses of Smith Charities;

WHEREAS, Smith Charities agrees to pursue a strategic plan for establishing and securing funds for long-term capital needs;

WHEREAS, the Trustees of Smith Charities will open the building to the public during historic tours and other events, and will work to promote public awareness of this downtown historic resource;

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2023, the Northampton Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend that \$234,618 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support this project.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,

That \$234,618 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funding to the Smith Charities for the Smith Charities Phase 2 Rehabilitation project. And, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.

Specifically, \$234,618 is appropriated from the CPA Budgeted Reserve (account #2344930-359930).

Passed final reading and enrolled.

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

**Zoning Ordinances
(not yet referred)
23.322 An Ordinance
to Create a National
Flood Insurance
Program Overlay
District - 1st reading**

Zoning Ordinances (not yet referred)
23.322 An Ordinance to Create a National Flood Insurance Program Overlay District - 1st reading
The purpose is to enable people who live in the flood zone to buy flood insurance, Councilor Nash explained.

Councilor Jarrett moved to refer the ordinance to the Planning Board and Legislative Matters. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

**Financial Orders
(on 2nd reading)**

**23.308 An Order to
Reprogram funds
to NPS Playground
Account - 2nd
reading**

Financial Orders (on 2nd reading)

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

The following order passed final reading:

23.308 An Order to Reprogram funds to NPS Playground Account - 2nd reading

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council _____
May 4, 2023

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

23.308 An Order to Reprogram funds to NPS Playground Account

Ordered, that

\$8,792.07, the balance in the Northampton Public School (NPS) Chimney Repair account (19303 586705) and \$15,000 from the Leeds School Playground account (19303 586514), for a total of \$23,792, be transferred into the district wide Northampton Public School Playground account (19303 586817) to address issues as needed at all the NPS playgrounds.

Passed final reading and enrolled.

The following order passed final reading:

23.309 An Order to Accept DA Sullivan \$10,000 Gift for Public Art and Economic Development Project - Portable Stage - 2nd reading

**23.309 An Order to
Accept DA Sullivan
\$10,000 Gift for
Public Art and
Economic Develop-
ment Project -
Portable Stage -
2nd reading**

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council _____
May 4, 2023

Upon recommendation of the Mayor

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

Ordered, that

The Northampton City Council gratefully accepts the donation of \$10,000, a gift to the City of Northampton from D.A. Sullivan and Sons, Inc., and in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 53A approves using the gifted funds to fund a public arts and economic development project, the purchase of a portable stage to facilitate performances at various locations throughout the city, for events like the Taste of Northampton, Salsa in the Park, and other events, under the direction of the Northampton Arts and Culture and the Economic Development Departments.

Passed final reading and enrolled.

The following order passed final reading:

23.311 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds to Historic Northampton for Collections Preservation Project - 2nd reading

**23.311 An Order to
Appropriate CPA
Funds to Historic
Northampton for**

Collections
Preservation
Project - 2nd
reading

**City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS**

In City Council, May 4, 2023

Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee
23.311 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds to Historic Northampton for Collections
Preservation Project

Ordered, that

WHEREAS, Historic Northampton, Inc. submitted a CPA application for Community Preservation Act funding for preservation assessment of its clothing and accessories, textiles, and furniture collections;

WHEREAS, the project will ensure the long-term preservation and public accessibility of Historic Northampton’s significant local collections, a resource determined significant to the City and the region by the Historical Commission and valued by the community;

WHEREAS, on March 15 2023 the Northampton Community Preservation Committee, voted unanimously to recommend that \$128,000 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support this project.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,

That \$128,000 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funding to Historic Northampton, Inc. for the Collections Preservation Project. And, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.
Specifically, \$128,000 is appropriated from the CPA Budgeted Reserve (account #2344930-359930).

Passed final reading and enrolled.

The following order passed final reading:
23.312 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds for Forbes Library Restroom Ventilation Project - 2nd reading

23.312 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds for Forbes Library Restroom Ventilation Project - 2nd reading

**City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS**

In City Council, May 4, 2023

Upon the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee
23.312 An Order to Appropriate CPA Funds for Forbes Library Restroom Ventilation Project

Ordered, that

WHEREAS, the Trustees of Forbes Library submitted a CPA application for bathroom ventilation upgrades at the library;

WHEREAS, the project will address building code requirements, and will adhere to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties;

WHEREAS, Forbes Library is valued not only as a National-Register listed historic resource and Presidential Library, but as a critical public space accessible to the entire community;

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2023, the Northampton Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend that \$66,500 in Community Preservation Act funds be used to support this project.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,

That \$66,500 be appropriated from Community Preservation Act funding to the Forbes Library for the Bathroom Mechanical Systems Improvements project. And, that the grantee meets the conditions approved by the Community Preservation Committee, the Mayor, and City Council.

Specifically, \$66,500 is appropriated from the CPA Budgeted Reserve (account #2344930-359930).

Passed final reading and enrolled.

Select Committee to Study Barriers to Service Final Report - Discuss Process for Implementing Recommendations

Select Committee to Study Barriers to Service Final Report - Discuss Process for Implementing Recommendations

His suggestion is to refer this report to City Services for them to work on implementing the recommendations, Councilor Nash said.

Councilor Elkins moved to refer the report to City Services for implementation. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion pass unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

New Business

New Business

Adjourn

Adjourn

Councilor Elkins moved to adjourn. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 p.m.

Attest: _____, Administrative Assistant