



Roll Call

*CITY COUNCIL MEETING
212 MAIN STREET
Northampton, Massachusetts
December 9, 2025*

A special meeting of the City Council was called to order by Council President Alex Jarrett at 3:02 p.m. Upon a roll call, the following City Councilors were present:

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| At-Large Councilor Marissa Elkins, 6:31 pm | At-Large Councilor Garrick Perry |
| Ward 1 Councilor Stanley Moulton, III | Ward 2 Councilor Deborah Klemer |
| Ward 3 Councilor Quaverly Rothenberg | Ward 4 Councilor Jeremy Dubs |
| Ward 5 Councilor Alexander Jarrett | Ward 6 Councilor Marianne LaBarge |
| Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore | |

Announcement that Meeting Audio/Video Recorded

Councilor Alex Jarrett announced that the meeting is being audio/video recorded.

School Energy Project Financial Orders Subject to Charter Objections December 4, 2025: 25.338 An Order to Appropriate Money from Climate Stabilization for Solar PV Array at Ryan Road School

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Councilors are here to discuss the school energy orders subject to charter objection at the regular meeting December 4, 2025, Councilor Jarrett reminded. Their consideration was postponed to the next special meeting today.

He asked if the Mayor or Director Weil would like to speak to the items.

Climate Action and Project Administration (CAPA) Director Ben Weil said he could reiterate his presentation and/or respond to some discussion he has heard since. The main point is that this is a transfer from an investment by the climate stabilization fund towards the operating budget of the schools in an average annual amount of \$63,000 and change. If they were to simply transfer the acquisition cost of \$319,484 after incentives, \$63,318 per year would last only five years. This will continually deposit that amount into the school's operating budget for 25 years or more, which feels like a fairly strong argument that it is helpful to the schools.

Regarding the result of delay, annual income would be reduced by up to \$26,173 because they would miss the SMART 3.0 incentive deadline. In addition, they would be required to use more expensive solar panels in order to get the investment tax credit but would still be eligible for the credit. The project would likely cost \$60,000 more. If they were to delay past July 4th, the total cost would be borne by the city because they would miss the deadline for the investment tax credit, which is about 30%.

Councilor Rothenberg expressed her understanding that the council still does not have a contract for this that they can see.

They have a contract form/template but they cannot legally enter into a contract until they have an appropriation to allow them to execute it, Director Weil explained.

Councilor Rothenberg expressed her understanding that the council has not seen the form.

Director Weil said that's true, but it would be in the amounts they've talked about. They have gotten a lot of free work to get them to this level of detail and specificity.

Councilor Rothenberg asked how this is different from Jackson Street in terms of the terms of its contract.

This would be a purchase because the roof is in better shape, Director Weil responded. The city would own the panels and get 100% of the value of their production and of SMART incentives. It is a much better deal for the city.

The Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Jackson Street School would be a 25-year agreement. The difference is that they are not paying any money up front.

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the order. Councilor Klemer seconded.

Councilor Rothenberg asked why councilors did not hear about this sooner and approve it as part of the previous CIP.

Director Weil said they have been developing it as fast as they could. He's been on the job now a little over a year. He had to first figure out where they could have solar and then engage the services of a solar company to develop a proposal. The company had to do quite a bit of work on each of the sites identified. They are not hearing about a bunch of sites that turned out to not be the best choices. It took this long to get people physically out on the roofs to make sure they were in good enough shape and to see if transformers are in the right location and of the right size, etc. The first version of the Ryan Road project was larger, so it would have cost more to serve that larger PV array. They could dawdle on this all they want but the end of investment tax credits is looming. It was brought ahead of the CIP because of the consequences of not moving forward this year.

Councilor Rothenberg said that all makes sense.

Councilor LaBarge thanked Dr. Weil.

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

The following order passed final reading:

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

25.338 An Order to Appropriate Money from Climate Stabilization for Solar PV Array at Ryan Road School

Order appropriating funds from the Climate Stabilization Fund to purchase and install a solar photovoltaic system at Ryan Road Elementary School

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council endorsed a goal for Northampton to be a net carbon neutral city by 2050 with net carbon neutral municipal operations by 2030; and

WHEREAS, installing solar photovoltaic arrays on school facilities will reduce greenhouse gas and carbon emissions resulting from school operations; and

WHEREAS, in order to avoid unnecessary cost, it is best practice that a roof that is slated to hold a solar photovoltaic array have sufficient life remaining so that re-roofing is unlikely to be needed during the lifetime of the solar array; and

WHEREAS, Ryan Road Elementary School has recently undergone roof replacement and thus re-roofing is unlikely to be needed during the lifetime of solar photovoltaic arrays installed on said roof; and

WHEREAS, the roof and electrical infrastructure at Ryan Road Elementary School is capable of supporting 180.2 kW of photovoltaics, which will typically produce 186.6 MWh of electricity per year, providing the Northampton Public Schools with estimated average net operating income of \$63,318 per year with an approximate \$1,582,941 savings and revenue over the 25-year nominal life of the array; and

WHEREAS, the investment of \$455,763 in photovoltaics at Ryan Road Elementary School will secure a Federal investment tax credit of \$136,279 if contracted and some materials are ordered before the last day of calendar year 2025, and

WHEREAS, the after tax credit investment cost would be \$319,484 and would have an internal rate of return greater than 17% and a simple payback period of just over 5 years: and

APPROVED - 25.338
An Order to
Appropriate Money
from Climate
Stabilization for
Solar PV Array at
Ryan Road School

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2025, the Northampton School Committee voted to approve the solar array on the Ryan Road Elementary School and directed the Superintendent of Schools to permit the City of Northampton and its vendors reasonable access Ryan Road Elementary School for the purpose of designing, installing, inspecting, operating, maintaining, and repairing the solar array project.

Now, Therefore be it Ordered, that

The City Council appropriate \$455,763 from the Climate Mitigation Stabilization fund for the purposes of installing a solar photovoltaic system at Ryan Road Elementary School, with the tax credits being credited back to the Climate Mitigation stabilization fund when received.

Passed final reading and enrolled.

25.339 An Order
Authorizing
Leasehold Interest
and 25-year Power
Purchase
Agreement for
Canopy Solar
Installation at
Jackson Street
School

25.339 An Order Authorizing Leasehold Interest and 25-year Power Purchase Agreement for Canopy Solar Installation at Jackson Street School

Director Weil again framed the project as a transfer of resources to the operating budget of Northampton Public Schools (NPS), representing almost \$43,703 in average annual savings over 25 years. They can think of it as a transfer of the labor of CAPA and other entities, including Central Services, to make the savings possible. The result of delay beyond December 31st is more expensive photovoltaic (PV) panels, meaning the developer would have to charge them a higher rate, resulting in less savings. Missing the December 31st deadline also results in a lower SMART 3.0 incentive, although they don't know exactly how much lower. With the lower incentive, the PPA would likely come in at about \$.18 per kwh, which is about what they pay now. They could still decide to proceed since the cost of electricity is likely to rise while this rate would be fixed for 25 years.

In response to a question from Councilor LaBarge, Director Weil clarified that this is a PPA, not a bond. The city agrees to buy any energy produced at a fixed rate. Based on current conditions, it would be about \$.15 per kwh, better than the \$.18 they pay now.

The reason solar panels would be more expensive has to do with the change to tax incentives under the Trump administration. If they have a contract by the end of this year, they will have safe-harbored their project, meaning they will be able to purchase solar panels produced in China, which are cheaper. After the first of the year, the solar producer would have to use U.S.-made panels, which are more expensive.

Councilor Rothenberg expressed her understanding that, in this case also, they have not yet seen a contract.

They have shared a model contract with Director Nardi but without prices, Director Weil clarified.

Councilor Rothenberg asked what happens if the solar company goes out of business.

Director Weil said he actually didn't know.

Councilor Rothenberg asked about any kind of escalation clause.

There is *no* escalation. It is a fixed rate, Director Weil stressed.

What does it say for any kind of exit clause? She asked.

Director Weil said he would have to look. Specific terms would all be negotiated by the city solicitor, he pointed out.

Councilor Rothenberg asked if her math is correct that \$40,000 is only about a tenth of one percent (1%) of the overall school budget.

Director Weil agreed it's not a lot but said it's better than zero.

He stressed that the request is for an enabling authorization. It is not a commitment to sign the contract. If the school's lawyer determines it is not in the city's best interest, it would not go forward.

She would be comfortable with this if the motion were approved such that it would come back to council prior to signing, Councilor Rothenberg said.

Mayor Sciarra clarified that while the council appropriates funds, it does not authorize contracts unless they are over three years.

The administration typically does not bring contracts to City Council for authorization, that is a function of the executive branch, Director Nardi elaborated. The City Council's role is to appropriate funding.

Regarding the project's size and scope, Councilor Perry asked how long construction would take and what sort of impacts it would have on the school and parking lot.

Construction can only happen when school is closed, so the work would be done in the summer, Director Weil said. The facilities manager is hoping to repave the parking lot as part of the process. Staff shifted the design of the canopy so as not to impact major trees, he added.

Councilor Moulton expressed his understanding that the way the 25-year agreement would be negotiated and approved by the executive branch is no different from any other contract. "This is following standard protocol," he observed. Director Nardi confirmed that is correct.

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve. Councilor Moulton seconded.

Councilor Rothenberg expressed surprise that it would be considered 'standard operating protocol,' saying she can think of no more naïve action than to enter into a 25-year agreement with an energy company. "It seems awfully reckless," she opined.

She hasn't been able to find anyone who thinks the lack of an escalation clause can be real. "Everyone says that's too good to be true," she reported.

"We don't know what the exit clause is. . . [or] what happens if they go out of business," she continued. That they are rushing into a 25-year agreement for a savings of one-tenth of 1% of the school budget is something for the next council to grapple with in terms of its understanding of the City Council's role and its standard operating procedure, she suggested. She thinks the council needs to get its own attorney if it wants to have somebody reviewing contracts.

This will be a 'no' vote for her, she asserted.

The motion passed 8:1 by roll call vote with Councilor Rothenberg opposed.

The following order passed final reading:

APPROVED - 25.339
Order Authorizing
Leasehold Interest
and 25-year Power
Purchase Agree-
ment for Canopy
Solar Installation at
Jackson Street
School

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

25.339 An Order Authorizing Leasehold Interest and 25-year Power Purchase Agreement for Canopy Solar Installation at Jackson Street School.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council endorsed a goal for Northampton to be a net carbon neutral city by 2050 with net carbon neutral municipal operations by 2030; and

WHEREAS, installing solar photovoltaic arrays on school facilities will reduce greenhouse gas and carbon emissions resulting from school operations; and

WHEREAS, in order to avoid unnecessary cost, it is best practice that a roof that is slated to hold a solar photovoltaic array have sufficient life remaining so that re-roofing is unlikely to be needed during the lifetime of the solar array; and

WHEREAS, Jackson Street School is currently in need of re-roofing and thus not appropriate for the installation of photovoltaic arrays, and

WHEREAS, installation of photovoltaic arrays over parking lots and other developed land is environmentally and socially preferable to clearing forested land or removing farmland from production; and

WHEREAS, solar parking canopies provide shade and reduce snow removal requirements from covered parking spaces; and

WHEREAS, a Power Purchase Agreement will enable the construction of solar canopies over the parking lot at Jackson Street Elementary school with no up-front cost to the City or to the Northampton Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, the current cost of electricity is 18.4¢, and current cost of virtual net metered electricity production is 17.4¢, both changing with markets and likely to increase;

WHEREAS, the cost of electricity produced by the solar canopies will be fixed for 25 years at 15.8¢ per kWh at Jackson Street School, and

WHEREAS, the proposed Power Purchase Agreement will provide an average annual savings of \$43,703 and a cumulative savings of \$1,092,570 over 25 years

WHEREAS, a 25-year lease is a condition precedent the establishment of a Power Purchase Agreement contract; and

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2025, the Northampton School Committee voted to approve the solar array canopy project at Jackson Street Elementary School parking lot and to permit the City of Northampton to enter into a Solar Power Purchase Agreement and Lease Agreement with Solect Energy Development, LLC that will give Solect Energy reasonable access to the Jackson Street Elementary School parking lot for the purpose of designing, installing, inspecting, operating, maintaining repairing and removing the solar array canopy project, and, further to grant the Superintendent of Schools the authority to secure approvals on behalf of the school Department from DESE or other agencies that may be necessary for the City and Solect Energy to complete the project; and

WHEREAS, M.G.L. c. 40, § 15B requires a vote of the City Council to surplus any interest in public property prior to its disposal.

Now, Therefore be it Ordered, that

The City Council declares surplus a leasehold interest in the parking lot of the Jackson Street Elementary School located at 120 Jackson Street and authorizes the Mayor to execute a 25 year lease and Power Purchase Agreement with Solect Energy on such terms and conditions as the Mayor deems reasonable.

The Superintendent of Schools shall have the authority to secure approvals on behalf of the Northampton Public Schools from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or other agencies that may be necessary for the City and Solect Energy to complete the project

Passed final reading and approved.

25.340 An Order to Authorize Appropriation and Borrowing for Geothermal System at Northampton High School

25.340 An Order to Authorize Appropriation and Borrowing for Geothermal System at Northampton High School

Director Weil restated the project’s financial terms and the consequences of delay. Primarily financed by loans and the climate stabilization fund, in terms of savings, it represents an annual transfer of about \$40,000 to the NPS operating budget from investment on the part of climate stabilization and the city’s borrowing capacity, he presented. It will actually improve comfort and thermal performance at the school, which is known to have direct and measurable effects on test scores and social and emotional well-being. A consequence of delay is that the city will have to replace the chillers soon anyways. If left to chance, it will be a ‘like for like’ replacement on an emergency basis with no incentives and will foreclose the decarbonization potential of the school for the next 25 years. If run at the current rate, boilers will likely have to be replaced in the next eight years. Total replacement cost for the boiler and chiller is likely to be equal to or somewhat less than the total incentivized geothermal cost once rigging complexities are factored in.

He reminded them that, even though the city acquired two free boilers for the Leeds Elementary School, getting them into the building and installing them cost \$300,000. He asked them to imagine the challenge of getting four much larger boilers out of the high school and bringing four new ones in. This avoids that by replacing the chillers with essentially a ‘heat pump boiler room in a box’ configured in a factory and installed outside the building on the site of the chillers. “No need to break down walls,” he pointed out.

Tax incentives are available now and not guaranteed forever, he added. Negotiated incentives discussed with National Grid may not carry over to 2028. Failure to register the project with the Massachusetts Alternative Portfolio Standard Market will causes them to miss nearly \$100,000 in annual payments. While it doesn’t have the same kind of deadline imposed by the federal government as solar projects, there are reasons to move forward as quickly as possible, he suggested.

Councilor Moulton moved to approve the order. Councilor Maiore seconded.

Councilor Jarrett asked if there are any concerns about not being able to pay off short-term bonds with the tax credits for geothermal.

The Trump administration actually improved tax credits for commercial geothermal systems, Director Weil shared. A possible interpretation is that they see it as drilling so those credits are likely to be dependable. However, the sooner they move, the more likely they will be able to grandfather in or safe harbor the project since if rules change there is always a glide path to allow existing projects to continue.

Councilor Jarrett thanked the director for providing these savings, expressing his understanding that the long-term savings of this are greater than any other replacement option. In the current budget scenario, carbon goals and savings have to go hand in hand, he noted.

Do the energy savings pay for the debt service right away or does that come after a time? He asked.

Energy cost savings are only about \$48,000, Director Weil said. He doesn't have the cost of debt service in his head but his guess is that it does not directly pay for it.

Director Nardi clarified that the savings will go to the school while the city pays the debt service. Payments are estimated to be about \$467,000 annually at 3.75% over 20 years, she said.

Councilor Jarrett referred to two types of bonds: those that provide an immediate savings and those that don't. The city is going to have to replace the fossil-fuel chillers and boilers no matter what, which also would require substantial bonding. He expressed his understanding that Director Weil is saying that the geothermal provides a net savings over the other options.

Or, that they're very close to equivalent after incentives, Director Weil clarified.

How does this affect their debt schedule and ability to bond for other projects? Councilor Jarrett asked.

Director Nardi reiterated that debt service is dropping by \$1.1 million from FY2026 to FY2027, so the \$467,000 payment will replace some of the lost debt. The city's debt service has dropped slightly as they used more reserves during the pandemic because of federal funds received. They want to start building up their borrowing just a little; right now, it is at 3.4% of operating revenue. They want to increase it to 4% and move towards 5%. It will not affect any enterprise fund borrowing. All enterprise operational debt and project costs come out of enterprise funds, she confirmed.

Councilor Jarrett expressed his understanding that they are not looking to increase debt service simply to increase debt service; they are looking to accomplish goals with capital projects. If not, some of that could be spent on operating budgets. They will need to bond to replace the boiler if they don't do this project.

Best practice is to maintain a level debt service so they are always able to maintain infrastructure regardless of whether reserves are on hand or not, Director Nardi explained. They want to have borrowing power for important projects such as this.

Councilor Maiore asked about the impact on the operating budget. How long would it take for the city to receive the tax credits?

Director Nardi said she understands it takes about two years. They will do short-term bonds, meaning they would pay just the interest, estimated conservatively at \$210,000 a year. They will be getting back \$5.8 million to pay off that loan.

Councilor Maiore expressed her understanding that the supplementary boiler will only be supplementary until it inevitably dies. She asked if they plan to have a continuing supplementary heating and cooling source.

Director Weil said it is always a good idea to have a back-up; in fact, schools require N+1 in case of a power outage, for example. In extreme cold weather situations, it is possible heat pumps may not be able to extract enough heat out of the ground fast enough so it might be necessary to bump up the temperature using the boiler. If boilers are cycling only a few times a year, it extends their life significantly. There is an understanding in the renewable energy/building science world that new technology is coming along that can provide higher temperatures at higher efficiencies. All sorts of things could happen in the future to let the technology catch up so when they do have to replace their back-up source they have options they might not even know about yet.

Councilor Maiore said her first thought was that a supplementary heat source was not as important since schools would likely be canceled in the event of a large storm. However, during the pandemic, schools were used as emergency shelters and the city wants to maintain that capacity as climate change implications play out.

Finally, what challenges does he anticipate in the implementation of the geothermal project? She asked.

Director Weil said he has thought about this a lot because he does not want to encounter those challenges. The first thing is to make sure the project is designed properly for the technology the driller is using, which is one reason he hopes to procure it as a turnkey project. The other is having a single point of control and some degree of a performance guarantee.

The biggest reason for failure for geothermal systems has been unbalanced thermal loads, he presented. If it's too hot and too much cooling is needed, the geothermal field ends up warming up over the years. Vice versa, if too much heat is needed, the field doesn't warm up enough. One thing he is confident about is that the high school has a very balanced thermal load.

Smith College offers a lot of lessons. School officials hadn't expected to run their back-up system but recently experienced the need to run the fossil fuel-based generating station to make up the difference when not enough heat could be extracted from the ground. In Smith's case, it takes a lot of time to load enough heat into the ground.

Another lesson is simplicity. At the high school, they are talking about a single bore field on the parking lot with short loops going to a pre-fabricated shipping house so they don't have to worry about workmanship defects and multiple trades to coordinate. A lot has to do with coordination of the project from the top.

In response to a question from Councilor Klemer, Director Nardi clarified that while the total project cost is \$13 million, the cost to the city is only \$7.3 million because of tax incentive credits.

People have suggested putting this off, Councilor Klemer shared. Besides the loss of rebates and credits, she asked Director Weil what it would look like if the chiller just died and they had to replace it emergently.

Director Weil stressed that it is not the case, nor is he claiming, that investment tax credits for geothermal from the federal government are going away. There is no expectation that they are going away until 2032. However, generally speaking, getting a project going ensures they are able to retain credits. The urgency really has to do with the chiller, which is already causing problems both in operation and maintenance. If it fails, they need to replace it under emergency conditions. Estimates for its replacement are \$3 million. Once replaced, they will have secured the chiller portion of the heating and cooling system so that is occupied. Removal costs for the chillers escalate total project costs to \$4 million.

When and if the boilers fail, they have a challenge because essentially the building was built around them, he continued. To get them out and get new boilers in, they would probably have to temporarily demolish and reinforce the boiler room wall and use expensive rigging, adding a million to consultants' estimate of \$2.5 to \$3 million dollars.

Councilor Klemer said it sounds like it will be as expensive as the geothermal.

Director Weil noted that geothermal could be up to \$2 million dollars less if they find out after digging the test well that water can be handled in a lower-cost way.

He recited the life cycle cost of the various options as set forth in the Life Cycle Cost (25-year) and First Cost Comparisons slide of the "Three School Energy Projects" Powerpoint presentation.

Some members of the public had hands raised. Councilor Elkins said it's her understanding that they are not taking public comment, and Councilor Jarrett asked members to please stop raising virtual hands.

Councilor Rothenberg said she wanted to make some comments about choices. Councilor Klemer said "when the schools are in the situation they're in, every little bit counts." The reason the schools are in the situation they're in is choices they as a City Council and the Mayor have made about funding. The primary comment received from the public is, why the rush? Why is this not being considered in conjunction with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and the budget? Because, of course, it affects both.

Director Nardi said the city should maintain its debt service so they are always able to maintain their infrastructure, as if borrowing is somehow an indication of maintenance, which, of course, it's not, she continued. "Again, we're making choices there," she pointed out. The sidewalks are already broken; they haven't maintained those. This half a million a year could have been a loan for sidewalks, which would make a very significant and meaningful difference. That is not to say that this is not a meaningful choice.

How do we make those choices? She asked rhetorically. The way it's being presented today is in a vacuum. The obligations, the priorities, the balancing, the options; "these things need to be considered as a whole." That is why the public and two-thirds of the budget and property subcommittee is asking them to please consider this alongside everything else. Because, inevitably there are competing good choices.

"If we are not looking at all of those together and balancing them, we are not really functioning properly as a City Council," she suggested. There is a reason they have a CIP and a budget process. She is not hearing anything from Director Weil's presentation to indicate it makes sense for the project to be rushed before the impending CIP and budget conversations with the new council that are coming very shortly.

Councilor LaBarge says she feels Director Weil is very well-versed in energy projects. She asked if he had been working with outside experts on these projects.

Director Weil said absolutely. This project is based on two separate feasibility studies by geothermal experts. He is reporting to them mainly what was provided to them by Brightcorp Engineering.

Councilor Perry asked what would happen if they do discover dewatering takes more effort and money. He also asked if it is correct that they currently try not to run the chiller in summertime to preserve it.

Director Weil said not necessarily to preserve it, but, primarily, because it only has one speed. It turns on and sends a huge demand to the grid, spiking peak demand for the month so that the demand charge is set by the chiller. They try to run it as infrequently as possible, but, once it is running, to run it for a while. They are trying to balance discomfort to the school vs. discomfort to the energy budget.

The benefit of geothermal is that the cooling part uses very little energy.

They are budgeting for the worst-case scenario as far as dewatering, he added.

Councilor Moulton asked his estimate of how long until it's up and running if approved today.

The city has to go through the Ch. 25A procurement process and work with DCAMM and DOER, which will take a little while, Director Weil said. He anticipates not being able to get it fully contracted until March/April at which point the company would do a test well. Consultants then take information from the test well to create a design which would take a few months potentially meaning starting to drill in June. It could take about six months. To be fully operational might take a little longer – early spring/late winter of 2027.

Councilor Dubs said he doesn't think it is fair to say it is either sidewalks or these projects. Since he's been councilor, there's been an increase in sidewalk funding. He thinks they need to give some credit to the Mayor for what's been done.

Councilor Rothenberg said it is fair; it's actually exactly how the CIP works. "You don't know yet if it's either/or" because the CIP is not in front of them.

Councilor Moulton referred to a gamble as to whether the chillers will continue to work; they are gambling already with their sidewalks, Councilor Rothenberg countered. "Actually, we're not even gambling because we know they don't work," she noted. She referred to a similar gamble with school staffing. There are many things in the city that are broken, she pointed out.

They were shown 'ridiculous slides' about how they were going to 'bankrupt the city' if they made a mid-year appropriation to the schools, Councilor Rothenberg continued. This is being presented to them as though it's a choice that doesn't affect everything else. . . "That is just nonsensical."

You cannot know that because it's being presented separately. There is no reason being presented today to take this separately and not as part of the CIP.

Councilor Rothenberg said she had to get back to work. She asked the Council President to consider her a 'no' vote.

Director Nardi disagreed. They are still going to be able to afford the other priorities being brought forward on the CIP. "I don't think it will change the impact on the operational budget or our ability to have other projects go forward," she said.

Councilor Jarrett said he appreciates the risks but the needs are compelling, and the comparison of other costs and the unanimous approval of the School Committee persuades him to be in support.

APPROVED - 25.340
An Order to
Authorize
Appropriation and
Borrowing for
Geothermal System
at Northampton High
School

There being no further comments or questions, **the motion passed unanimously 8:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Rothenberg absent.**

The following order passed final reading:

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

25.340 An Order to Authorize Appropriation and Borrowing for Geothermal System at Northampton High School

Order authorizing the use of Climate Stabilization funds and municipal long and short term bonds to finance the design, installation and construction of a geothermal heating and cooling system at Northampton High School

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council endorsed a goal for Northampton to be a net carbon neutral city by 2050 with net carbon neutral municipal operations by 2030; and

WHEREAS, heating with high efficiency ground source heat pumps instead of methane combusting boilers will reduce greenhouse gas and carbon emissions resulting from school operations; and

WHEREAS, providing cooling with high efficiency ground source heat pumps instead of lower efficiency air-cooled chillers will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity consumption; and

WHEREAS, the chillers at Northampton High School are well past their expected useful life and will need to be replaced within 5 years at the latest; and

WHEREAS, the boilers at Northampton High School are nearing the end of their expected useful life if continually operated; and

WHEREAS, ground source heat pumps are protected from the elements and have an equipment lifetime of 25 to 30 years and extract and reject heat to a ground loop heat exchangers which have lifetime of more than 100 years; and

WHEREAS, heating and cooling with ground source heat pumps is projected to reduce energy cost by 17%, maintenance cost by 50% and carbon emissions by 43%, and total energy use by 68%; and

WHEREAS, Federal tax credits are currently available to reduce the installed cost of a geothermal system by up to 40%; and

WHEREAS, because geothermal technology is supported by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Mass Save rebates for the project will significantly reduce its cost; and

WHEREAS, the proposed geothermal system at Northampton High School is estimated to earn \$105,000 per year in Alternative Energy Credits in the Massachusetts Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard market; and

WHEREAS, compared to the alternative heating and cooling solutions, a geothermal system has the lowest lifecycle cost over 25 years; and

WHEREAS, the Northampton School Committee voted to approve the geothermal project at Northampton High School and to direct the Superintendent of Schools to permit the City of Northampton and its vendors reasonable access to Northampton High School property for the purpose of designing, installing, inspecting, operating, maintaining, and repairing, the geothermal project

Now, Therefore be it Ordered, that

That the sum of \$2,000,000 be and hereby is appropriated from the Climate Mitigation Stabilization Fund to pay the costs of design and construction of geothermal improvements to the Northampton High School.

That \$11,166,625 is appropriated for the purpose of paying costs of design and construction of geothermal improvements to the Northampton High School, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto, and that to meet this appropriation, the City Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said amount under Chapter 44, Section 7(1) of the General Laws, or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the City therefor;

Further Ordered: That all or a portion of the bonds or notes authorized by this Order may be issued in the form of tax credit bonds under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or in any other manner as the City Treasurer and the Mayor shall determine to be in the best interests of the City, and are hereby designated as tax credit bonds within the meaning of Chapter 44, Section 21B of the General Laws.

Further Ordered: That the City is authorized to accept and expend any grants, gifts, rebates, credits or any other contributions from any source whatsoever (including Section 6417 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended) that may be available to finance costs of the project described in this Order, the amount authorized to be borrowed by this Order shall be reduced to

the extent of any such grants or gifts received by the City on account of the project authorized by this Order.

Further Ordered: That the Mayor is authorized to take any action and to execute such documents as are necessary or convenient to carry out this project .

Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.

Adjourn

Adjourn
Councilor Moulton moved to adjourn. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 8:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Rothenberg absent. The meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Attest: _____, Administrative Assistant