



Committee on City Services and the Northampton City Council

Committee Members:

*Chair: Councilor Stanley Moulton, III
Vice-Chair: Councilor Marianne LaBarge
Councilor Jeremy Dubs
Councilor Deborah Klemer*

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 15, 2025, 4 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

At 4 p.m., Councilor Stanley Moulton, III called the meeting to order. On a roll call, Councilor Moulton, Chair; Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge, Vice Chair, Councilor Jeremy Dubs and Councilor Deb Klemer were present. Also present was Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler.

2. Announcement of Audio/Video Recording

Councilor Moulton announced that the meeting was being audio/video recorded.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2025

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the December 1, 2025 minutes. Councilor Klemer seconded. The motion passed 4:0 by roll call vote.

5. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

A. 25.342 Appointments to Arts Council and Trust Fund Committee, referred by City Council on Nov. 20, 2025

Arts Council

Clara Barnhart, 17 Madison Ave

Term: November 2025 - June 2028

To fill a vacancy

Trust Fund Committee

Casey Quinn, 20 Harrison Ave

Term: November 2025 - June 2027

To fill a vacancy

Councilor Dubs said it was great to speak to Ward 4 resident Clara Barnhart, a Northampton resident for the past 10 years. Clara has ties to the area, having receiving a Master's degree in Arts History from UMass Amherst as well as having family members who went to Smith College. She made the decision to move to Northampton after getting the opportunity to teach photography at the Five Colleges and, in particular, teaching a course on 1930's arts and culture in the U.S. She is aware of the annual First Night celebration the Arts Council hosts as well as the Silver Chord Bowl and is a big fan of the murals in Northampton. She

became interested in applying to the Arts Council because of her love for Northampton and her huge support for public arts. Plus, in her own words, “I want to be involved in arts *now*.”

Clara is interested in learning more about the Arts Council. She is drawn toward the visual arts, is a big believer in arts in general and writes poetry. When a friend suggested she join, she felt like it sounded like the right fit. In terms of a particular issue she would like to work on, she expressed a desire to learn what it takes to get a sculpture up in Northampton. She is also very interested in collaborations. Clara describes herself as “someone with a liveliness and exciting energy.” She regularly asks herself “what more can we do?” She has a strong curiosity to learn what is possible and figure out ways she can be useful and how she can contribute. For example, she is interested in exploring project opportunities for pop-up temporary arts, such as limited edition art prints. She stated with confidence that there is a lot of potential for local art exhibitions and installations. She taught a course at Smith on race and gender in the history of photography and also taught at Hampshire College, which she said was both satisfying and fulfilling.

Clara’s goal is to use her expansive experience in the Arts so that she can be helpful, show up consistently and offer an honest point of view. For that reason, he believes she will be an excellent addition to the Arts Council.

Councilor Dubs moved a positive recommendation for Clara Barnhart’s appointment to the Arts Council. Councilor LaBarge seconded.

Councilor Moulton said it sounds like Clara has eclectic interests in the arts in terms of being a practicing artist and someone with a deep interest in teaching and working with younger people. He agreed she sounds like a strong addition to the Arts Council.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

Councilor Klemer confirmed she interviewed Casey Quinn. Casey is Australian and has been here for 13 years and works remotely. He became a dual citizen a few years ago and wanted to get involved in Northampton politics. He chose the Trust Fund Committee to start off his involvement. He lived in New York for a while and was the senior advisor for patient care-centered burdens and economic outcomes at the patient-centered Outcomes Research Clinic. He has over two decades experience as a funder, all involving health and healthcare, and a degree in economics. His wife works at UMass. They were talking about how they both kept their New York phone numbers and weren’t going to let them go. His wife’s mother (his mother in-law) is from Bolivia and they only have four-digit phone numbers there. He is able to make the meetings. He had more detailed questions than she was able to answer so she recommended he speak to Jacob Dissinger, the other member on the committee. He is enthusiastic about contributing to local government and it will be nice to have two of the three positions filled.

Councilor Klemer moved a positive recommendation to appoint Casey Quinn to the Trust Fund Committee. Councilor LaBarge seconded.

Councilor Moulton reminded councilors for the record that this committee makes recommendations to the city treasurer on the city’s trust fund investments to realize the best possible gain while maintaining a balance between risk and return with the primary objectives of the preservation of capital, maintenance of the security of trust fund and investments, maximization of total return for each trust fund, efficient disbursement of funds on an equitable basis and effective collection of all due monies. It is a three-member committee with two vacancies, for which a background in economics is essential. **The motion carried unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.**

B. 25.352 Appointment to Northampton Housing Authority, referred by City Council - 12/4/2025 Northampton Housing Authority

William Abrashkin, 26 Adare Place

Term: December 2025 - June 2026

Filling the term of Maureen Carney

This appointment came to them at the last meeting, Councilor Moulton reminded. Because Mr. Abrashkin is a constituent of his, he assigned himself to interview him. He grew up in New York City and Connecticut and went to the Putney School in Vermont then on to Columbia University, where he got both a Bachelor's and a Masters' degree in history.

After leaving Columbia University, he moved to Massachusetts and worked first as a writer for the former Channing L. Bete company up in Franklin Company. He then decided to get a law degree which he earned at then Western New England College, now University, in 1978. He initially practiced for legal services on Cape Cod serving low-income clients, then worked for the MA Law Reform Institute in Boston, which advocates for laws and policies that support economic, racial and social justice for low-income people and communities.

Mr. Abrashkin has lived in Northampton since 1984 when he was confirmed as a judge after being appointed by then Governor Michael Dukakis. He sat as First Justice of the Housing Court in the western division based in Springfield for 22 years until 2006, hearing civil cases from all four western counties, many of them involving evictions and zoning issues and code enforcement affecting tenants and residential properties.

After retiring from the bench, he served for 10 years as executive director of the Springfield Housing Authority. After that decade and a second retirement, he subsequently served as interim director at the Turners Falls Housing Authority for a year and served another year at the Greenfield Housing Authority. He continues as a member of a Dispute Resolution Board for the Massachusetts Real Estate Bar Association and as a hearing officer to mediate appeals filed by tenants against housing authorities throughout western Massachusetts. He has experience on boards for organizations including Springfield Technical Community College and the Western MA Regional Employment Board.

Despite remaining busy after two retirements, he put himself forward to serve on the Northampton Housing Authority (NHA) after reading news accounts of changes in leadership there, including the resignation of former chair Maureen Carney this fall. He feels that his varied and broad experience, including as a judge, having many public housing tenants come before him, will be useful. Based on their conversations, he feels he has a very strong empathic feeling for the problems faced by tenants in public housing and a very strong belief in the need for effective public housing in a city like Northampton since otherwise many people would not be able to afford to live here. He appreciates his willingness to serve at a time when there is a need for additional leadership on the board. He would be filling the remaining term left vacant by Maureen Carney.

For all those reasons, **Councilor Moulton moved a positive recommendation to appoint Mr. Abrashkin to the NHA. Councilor LaBarge seconded.**

NHA Chair Patty Healey talked to her and was so pleased to see his name come forward because he will be a great asset with all his knowledge, Councilor LaBarge recounted. She. She is very glad to hear all the experience that he has. **The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.**

6. NEW BUSINESS

As it was the final meeting of the term, Councilor Moulton thanked Councilor LaBarge who served on this committee for many years for her interest, diligence and attention to the dozens of appointments that have come before the committee. He also thanked Councilor Dubs for his very thorough and illuminating reports on all the candidates he interviewed. And, he thanked Councilor Klemer for joining them in September when they had a vacancy and ably filling in.

7. ADJOURN

There being no further business, **Councilor Dubs moved to adjourn. Councilor Klemer seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 4:21 p.m.**

Prepared By:

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