



CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NORTHAMPTON
MASSACHUSETTS

COUNCILORS:

- Meg Robbins, At-Large
- Garrick Perry, At-Large
- Gwenevra L. Nabad, Ward 1
- Deborah Klemer, Ward 2
- Laurie Loisel, Ward 3
- Jeremy Dubs, Ward 4
- Aline Davis, Ward 5
- Christopher Stratton, Ward 6
- Rachel Maiore, Ward 7

Northampton City Council
Minutes of the Organizational Meeting
of January 5, 2026
Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, 2 p.m.
The meeting was presided over by City Councilor Rachel Maiore

1. Roll Call

At 2:01 p.m., Councilor Maiore convened the meeting. On a roll call, the following councilors were present:

- Meg Robbins, Councilor At-Large
- Garrick Perry, Councilor At-Large
- Gwen Nabad, Ward 1
- Deborah Klemer, Ward 2
- Laurie Loisel, Ward 3
- Jeremy Dubs, Ward 4
- Aline Davis, Ward 5
- Christopher Stratton, Ward 6
- Rachel Maiore, Ward 7

2. Election of a City Council President for 2026 – 2027

[Editor’s note: Zoom audio was not working for the first several minutes of this agenda item.]

Councilor Maiore briefly described the procedure she would use in accepting nominations, then opened the floor to nominations.

Councilor Perry nominated Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore.

There being no further nominations, Councilor Maiore closed nominations and spoke to her nomination.

Currently in her 7th year, Councilor Maiore said she can’t believe she is the most senior person on council at this point. She has been doing this work for a long time and has seen what works, what doesn’t and how effective steady, compassionate leadership can be. She served on the City Council Rules Select Committee and for four years as Finance Committee chair, leading long budget hearings and adding fall budget listening sessions to the committee’s schedule during her tenure. As vice president last term, she learned the full scope of what the role of council president requires. With so many new faces on council, she thinks that experience matters now in particular. She also lives the reality of the people they serve. She has raised kids while serving the city, balancing homework and hearings, bedtime stories and budgets, daytime jobs and agenda deadlines, admittedly wondering sometimes if she should. She keeps showing up because she believes it is important that they have a range of representation that truly reflects their community. There is always something to learn or unlearn and one never quite arrives. She has this experience, but she will be learning in this role. For that reason, she wants

them to steer away from perfectionism and nit-picking and enter with a growth mindset so they can make mistakes, learn, respond, pivot, evolve and create.

The road for this term is guaranteed not to be easy. The city is facing real challenges, including housing issues, resident safety, schools and people's livelihoods. Some of their most vulnerable neighbors are in real danger. As leaders, it is their moment to show up with courage for them. They need leadership that can lower the temperature, bring people together and lead with diligence, emotional intelligence and fairness; leadership that every councilor feels they can approach for problem-solving, leadership that can keep them organized, accountable and focused on solutions, not conflict. "That's the leadership I'm going to commit to," she confirmed. With the fiasco at the federal level, they need to show residents that democracy here is alive and well, that a healthy separation of powers makes them all stronger and that they can challenge when necessary without tearing each other down. Strong and humble; firm and fair. Looking around the room, she sees hard-earned experience, lived experience, curiosity, concern, passion and care. She sees possibility. Together, they can leave behind dysfunction and build something that truly reflects their wonderful community – a council grounded in facts, collaboration and good faith.

"Let's take a deep breath, take a leap of faith and let's show our community what's possible when we work together," she urged. "They deserve no less."

Councilor Statements on Nomination

As the person who nominated her, Councilor Perry said he nominated her because of all the reason she stated. As the longest-serving councilor, with the very vast turnover, he believes this experience will really help guide them. He has watched as she has lived her values and made hard decisions and what sticks out to him is that she has kept her heart at the forefront. He is looking forward to seeing how she takes on this role and responsibility.

Councilor Klemer said she first met Rachel in 2017 when Rachel was one of the organizers of the Valley Women's March and she was chair of Indivisible Northampton. Since then, they have organized many marches together and, during the last term, worked closely co-sponsoring resolutions. She has always been dependable, supportive and a hard worker. During her last term as Council Vice President she consistently stepped up when needed, taking on responsibilities with confidence and professionalism. One quality she especially admires is her ability to work will with everyone and genuinely listen to different perspectives. She approaches her role with respect, openness and a collaborative spirit. She believes she is the kind of leader who can bring them together this term, and she is proud to support her nomination.

Councilor Loisel said she has watched as Councilor Maiore has been a councilor and vice president and really respects the passion she brings, the heart-felt sincerity. She is very inspired by the remarks she made today about collaboration and leaving dysfunction behind. She is happy to support her and glad she wants to serve.

Councilor Stratton said he would be absolutely pleased to support a fellow representative of the western hinterlands of Florence. "This body needs your leadership; it needs your perspective," he asserted. He would be very pleased to have her as their presiding officer.

Councilor Dubs said she's been his rock, kind of like his north star anytime there has been a divisive issue or anything he has struggled with on council. He could always talk to her; she is such a great listener and always reliable. He is honored to vote for her.

Councilor Nabad said she has appreciated Councilor Maiore's service over the years for vulnerable people and ability to listen and really liked what she said tonight about courage, emotional intelligence and working on solutions rather than conflicts. She also appreciated what she said about a healthy separation of powers and her description of what the city needs in a president as 'strong, humble, firm and fair.' "That really defines you," she observed. "Thank you for being our president."

There being no further comments, **Councilor Maiore called the nomination to a vote, and councilors voted for their preferred candidate by roll call as follows:**

Councilor Davis – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Dubs - Councilor Maiore
Councilor Klemer – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Loisel – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Maiore – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Nabad – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Perry – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Robbins – Councilor Maiore
Councilor Stratton – Councilor Maiore

The motion carried unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote. Councilor Maiore was elected by acclamation.

3. Election of a City Council Vice President for 2026 – 2027

Councilor Maiore opened the floor to nominations for vice president

Councilor Loisel nominated Councilor Perry.

Councilor Robbins nominated Councilor Klemer.

There being no further nominations, Councilor Maiore closed the nominations.

Councilor Perry thanked Councilor Loisel for the nomination, saying he is humbled by any support and belief in him. He has cherished this work and would be honored to help lead in this council. As to why he is interested and why qualified, over the last four years, he has pushed himself to learn and improve and get better at this work. He brings experience being now the second longest-serving councilor. As a returning at-large councilor, he has had to think about what it takes to balance the needs and wants of the city for at least one term. He has served on all but one of the four subcommittees and been the chair or vice chair of many. He knows how to run meetings, ask pertinent questions and do outreach. He has served on several committees and commissions, including the Public Service Advisory Committee for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Select Committee to Study Barriers to Service. He helped create and served on the Northampton Reparations Commission and, most recently, was vice chair of the Ordinance Review Committee. He has also served on interview panels for police recruits and on the search committee for a Police Chief. All of these things have given him a lot of insight. This brings him to his next skill of community-building and forming relationships. He chaired the Entertainment Committee for the Vibrancy Project, a collaboration between the city, Downtown Northampton Association (DNA) and Chamber of Commerce with involvement of non-profits. He worked with Sean Donovan in establishment of the Division of Community Care (DCC), dealing with issues of homelessness and business concerns. He has consistently attended DNA meetings and brought concerns of the business community to this council and is currently working with the Youth Commission and its subcommittees. He has a consistent record of going out and going above and beyond regular council work.

As far as leadership style, while opinionated, he is fairly laidback and appreciates input from others, he related. He believes he can be even-tempered under pressure. He can step back and knows when to ask questions or take more time. Part of his leadership style is trying to build in structure and be proactive. When he chaired the Community Resources Committee, he created a structure to bring in different groups to present and set up things like having their state representative, senator and DCC regularly come to speak. These are all things he set up which thankfully continued. He would like to bring that kind of value and foresight to City Council meetings to start building more structure and be proactive in how they interact with their community, departments and boards. He will always bring his ideas and passion as well as 'a kind of silly amount of optimism.' They all have lived experience, and he brings perspective as a renter, a person of color, [member of the] working class, and parent of kids at two of their schools, Smith Voke and the middle school. He doesn't seek value from this position but wants to add *his* value and get to know each and every one of them as people and celebrate the work they do.

He wants to look at the struggles and sacrifices and learn from them all. He doesn't look at this work as transactional; he sees it as transformative and wants to lead that change or transformation. He doesn't think any of their votes should ever be personal. He believes his strengths, skills and experiences far outweigh any of his weaknesses and hopes they take that into account.

Councilor Klemer thanked Councilor Robbins for her nomination. She is asking for their support because she cares deeply about this council and doing this work well. She works hard, shows up and follows through and has taken the time to speak with each of them because she respects the body and the responsibility that comes with leadership. Those who've served alongside her know how seriously she takes this role. She does her absolute best to be responsive and accessible to constituents, fellow councilors and staff because she believes being accessible and dependable is not optional; it's the job. When someone reaches out, it often matters to them, and she believes reliability and respect for people's time is foundational to good public service. After nearly a decade of working with Council President Maiore, she knows her leadership well and would be honored to support her in this role. She deeply values the open and honest conversations they've always been able to have. She is proud of the consistency she's brought to this work, not missing a council or subcommittee meeting. She comes prepared and stays engaged between meetings. Over the past term, she's had the opportunity to co-sponsor 13 resolutions, working with nearly every councilor. To her, that reflects collaboration, trust and a shared commitment to moving their city forward. As chair of Community Resources, she worked closely with department heads, City Services and the housing partnership. She brought in a wide range of speakers and helped ensure that councilors and the community had the information needed to make informed decisions. When City Services needed support, she stepped in without hesitation because leadership means showing up and doing what needs to be done. She ran again to represent Ward 2 on a promise to unite their

community and has tried to live that value every day. She has worked with Councilor Maiore over many years on rallies, resolutions and community efforts, and their shared history reflects a commitment to collaboration, coalition-building and strengthening Northampton for everyone. She is especially proud to have support from people with different perspectives, and that matters in this moment. That support reflects her belief that they can disagree respectfully and still work together productively.

In closing, she is ready to serve in this role. She is steady, committed and deeply invested in the success of their community. In a time when trust and collaboration matter so much, she would be honored to serve as vice president and continue working alongside each of them to help this council function at its very best. She thanked them for their time, trust and consideration.

Councilor Loisel spoke to her nomination of Councilor Perry. She was thinking about running for City Council for over a year and so has been watching meetings for a long time. She has been impressed with his natural leadership ability and the thoughtful way he engages during council meetings. He listens to councilors and is humble and knows what he believes and shares that. This term, they have four returning councilors. Councilor Maiore is most senior, Councilor Perry is next and two councilors have one term under their belt. In her mind, seniority matters because these positions work most effectively when filled with people with deep knowledge of how the council works, how it interacts with the Mayor and its role with regard to all city departments. It is helpful if the vice president knows how to run a meeting efficiently and effectively and Councilor Perry can definitely do that. Other reasons she is confident he will make a fine vice president are, notably, his experience on council, his hard work on the Reparations and Youth Commissions and the Select Committee to Study Barriers to Serving and his able service on other board and commissions. Outside council, he has forged relationships with downtown businesses and the rich community of artists and musicians that make downtown vibrant. He has been a tireless promoter of downtown like no other. From what she has observed, he is motivated by one thing, his deep love of this city. In terms of lived experience, he is a long-time renter, parent of two children in Northampton Public Schools, a man of color and a gig worker. She thinks all of those things give him a perspective which is valuable.

All of this means no disrespect to Councilor Klemer, she assured. She truly believes in the Open Meeting Law (OML), not just the legal requirements but the spirit of the law which, to her, is all about getting public officials to deliberate, not just vote, in the public eye. To her, this vote is important as a matter of process, that they all show up here and explain their positions in the public eye. They have a choice to make; it's a hard choice and that's a good thing; that's democracy at its best. Once they make that choice, they will move on, roll up their sleeves and get to work.

Councilor Robbins said she nominated Councilor Klemer based on a number of strong factors that make her her solid choice for this work, which is specifically about the skills needed to do it well. Councilor Klemer has a demonstrable history of working collegially over the last two years with their new president, Councilor Maiore. They need to have that critical compatibility to do the detailed work of agenda creation and the often onerous administrative council demands together. Councilor Klemer has a 100%, in-person, on time attendance record at council and committee meetings. This matters. Council leadership needs to be present and in the room. She has served admirably as chair of Community Resources; she has a solid history of creating agendas and seeing that they're submitted for posting on time. She has shown her facilitation ability in that role, allowing all voices to be heard and moving the group through the agenda in a timely matter. She has a personal background of working with Councilor Maiore in the enormous task of organizing the details and logistics of political rallies, which require many of the same skills needed in conducting the business side of council meetings. She knows all too well that Councilor Klemer responds quickly to all constituent inquiries. This habit of work has been an outstanding hallmark of her ward council leadership. This is a new council with many new members serving at a time of great national unrest. Here in Northampton, they can as councilors create a new dynamic together in how they learn, listen and explore best outcomes that impact residents of a city they all love. She admires Councilor Maiore and Councilor Klemer's commitment to creating this powerfully impactful focus on thoughtful and reasoned discussions in which they consider all evidence and views presented with open minds. They ask serious questions, seek informed answers and adhere to a willingness to vote based on a solid commitment to what serves their city and the will of their people. She fully supports Councilor Klemer and hopes her new colleagues will as well.

Councilor Davis said she thinks they are lucky to have a hard decision and two excellent candidates. She voiced her support for Councilor Perry. As a fellow from Maryland, DC, very importantly, she values Councilor Perry's seniority and experience on the council. He has demonstrated through his work and interactions his interest in building bridges, advancing equity and honesty, strong values for her too. She sees it as especially valuable in a time of transforming downtown to have strong relationships with artists and businesses. She thinks Councilor Perry will work collaboratively with everyone on the council and in the community demonstrating that public service is something they also can aspire to. She doesn't know that an official rule can be made about this, and perhaps it's naïve of her to say, but, on a teeny scale of politics, she knows that in the state house and DC, people talk ahead of time and voice their interest in leadership. However, for her, discussions of leadership are better shared all right here instead of days and weeks prior to swearing in. Speaking only for herself, it has been

distracting for her from the work ahead. She really doesn't want to offend anyone on the council. Whatever happens; she thinks they are all committed to doing what's best for Northampton.

Councilor Dubs noted that he and Councilor Klemer became new councilors together two years ago and started learning the charter, rules and everything else. It has been a privilege to see how much she has evolved and progressed as a councilor; she always comes prepared to meetings. He's learned a lot from her. Councilor Maiore and Councilor Klemer have proven that they work really well together. It feels natural that she be the vice president. She is a good listener and very collaborative. They have had disagreements in the past but have always listened to each other, heard each other's perspective and moved on. He thinks that's really important in a leadership role. He has worked well with Councilor Perry, too. His vote for Councilor Klemer would not be a vote against him in any way.

Councilor Maiore said she and Councilor Klemer have worked together in many different iterations and she is always impressed with her ability to handle many things at once, new information and mini crises. She is someone who does not seek recognition and it's nice to see her in a leadership role. She sees the leadership role as getting bigger and bigger; they have an engaged community and complex issues in the world. She would like a leadership combo that is set up for the most efficiency and success. She sees Councilor Klemer as having a track record of being responsive, reaching across the aisle and being willing to talk to many different folks. She is great at giving feedback in a way people can hear. She plans to give this job all she's got but it is certainly a job for which she could use some reliable help and a good proven working relationship and that's what she has with Councilor Klemer. She will be supporting Councilor Klemer.

There being no further comments, **Councilor Maiore called the nomination to a vote, and councilors voted for their preferred candidate by roll call as follows:**

Councilor Davis – Councilor Perry
Councilor Dubs - Councilor Klemer
Councilor Klemer – Councilor Klemer
Councilor Loisel – Councilor Perry
Councilor Maiore – Councilor Klemer
Councilor Nabad – Councilor Klemer
Councilor Perry – Councilor Perry
Councilor Robbins – Councilor Klemer
Councilor Stratton – Councilor Klemer

Councilor Klemer was elected 6:3 by roll call vote.

4. Appointment of Enrollment Committee for 2024 – 2025

Councilor Maiore appointed Councilor Klemer and Councilor Loisel to the Enrollment Committee.

5. 26.001 An Order to Adopt Council Rules for 2024 – 2025

Councilor Klemer moved to adopt the City Council Rules. Councilor Robbins seconded.

Councilors adopt the rules at their initial meeting so they can proceed, Councilor Maiore explained. Council rules supersede Roberts Rules of Order but, in the absence of a council rule, they defer to Robert's rules.

The council can the amend rules at any time, she stressed. The benefit of doing it at a later date is that, if done then, the specific proposed amendment will be on the agenda for review and there would be time for public input through comments and emails.

Councilor Loisel said she read the rules many times. Rule 4.4, pg. 14, states that, for remote participation, when video technology is in use, people participating remotely should be visible. She thinks that's a great idea and noticed it didn't happen last term. "Maybe there's some rules that we don't always follow," she observed. She encouraged them to follow that rule.

Councilor Stratton said he spent a lot of time reading through council rules, watching videos of prior meetings, etc. There are things in the rules he thinks he would be interested in changing. The public is interested in changing the time limit for public comment. He didn't really understand what happens with written comments and so didn't really use that option. In retrospect, he thinks he would have tried to put some of his comment in writing for distribution to councilors. He hopes the body looks more at how they engage with the public and fosters that really critical conversation. He would like to see them more willing to recognize the public during deliberations. Looking back 10 years ago, that used to happen quite often. He thinks it is a conversation to have in their minds for the future.

He is okay starting out running with the rules they inherit, he concluded.

Councilor Robbins applauded Councilor Stratton for bringing that up. Councilor Maiore clarified that, at a councilor’s request, discussion of a rule change can be placed on the agenda.

Councilor Robbins suggested every now and then having a discussion of how they’re doing with the rules in place. She encouraged holding themselves accountable to them.

Referring back to his earlier reference to building in structure, Councilor Perry said he thinks councilors and the community would benefit from hearing more from boards and committees. He suggested having periodic check-ins with the boards as a regular agenda item.

Councilor Maiore noted that, without a time limit, the number of voices that could be heard would be less. She is certainly willing to look at that again. She pointed out that subcommittees can have different rules and allowing three minutes is fine there. Committee chairs have more discretion to regulate participation by the public.

There being no further discussion, **the motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.**

The following order passed single reading:

26.001 As Adopted in City Council on January 5, 2026



**RULES OF THE 2026-2027 CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON**

1. These Rules
 - 1.1. Adoption
 - 1.2. Repeal or Amendment
 - 1.3. Precedence
 - 1.4. Suspension

2. Organization
 - 2.1. Presiding Officer
 - 2.1.1. Duties
 - 2.1.2. Participation
 - 2.1.3. Order of Succession
 - 2.2. Election of Council President and Vice-President
 - 2.3. Council President - Duties and Powers
 - 2.4. Council Vice-President - Duties and Powers
 - 2.5. Administrative Assistant to the City Council
 - 2.5.1. Duties
 - 2.6. Council Committees
 - 2.6.1. Establishment of Standing Committees
 - 2.6.1.1. Committee on Finance
 - 2.6.1.2. Committee on Community Resources
 - 2.6.1.3. Committee on City Services
 - 2.6.1.4. Committee on Legislative Matters
 - 2.6.2. Powers and Duties of Council Committees
 - 2.6.3. Select Committees

3. Duties and Powers of the City Council
 - 3.1. Selection of an Outside Auditor

4. Order
 - 4.1. Quorum
 - 4.2. Calling Meetings to Order
 - 4.3. Recognition of Mayor and Department Representatives
 - 4.4. Consent Agenda
 - 4.5. Order of Business
 - 4.6. Minutes of Previous Meeting

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- 4.7. Conduct
 - 4.8. Public Comment
 - 4.9. New Business
 - 4.10. Recess
 - 4.11. Order and Manner of Speaking
 - 4.12. Order During Debate
 - 4.13. Voting
 - 4.13.1. Deciding Votes
 - 4.13.2. Votes Required to Pass Measures
 - 4.13.3. Roll Call Votes
 - 4.13.3.1. Request
 - 4.13.3.2. Method of Recording
 - 4.13.4. Reconsideration
 - 4.14. Remote Meeting Participation
 - 4.15. Minutes of Executive Session Meetings
- 5. Legislative Process
 - 5.1. Proposed Matters
 - 5.1.1. Timely Filing
 - 5.1.2. Presentation to Council, Mayor
 - 5.1.3. Adding Matters to Council Agenda
 - 5.1.4. Presentation and Enacting Style of Matters
 - 5.1.5. Supporting Documents
 - 5.2. Referral of Matters to Committee
 - 5.3. Solicitor Review of Ordinances
 - 5.4. Withdrawal of Matters
 - 5.5. Matters Requiring Two Readings
 - 5.6. Matters Requiring One Reading
 - 5.7. Enrollment Committee
 - 5.8. Automatic Carryover
- 6. Appendices
 - 6.1. Special Permit Granting Authority
 - 6.2. Examples of Presentation and Enacting Styling of Matters

26.001 As Adopted in City Council on January 5, 2026

1. These Rules

- 1.1. ADOPTION. When adopted by the City Council, these Rules shall take effect at the time of the first Council meeting following January 1, 2026.
- 1.2. REPEAL OR AMENDMENT. City Council Rules may only be repealed or amended with a two-thirds majority vote of quorum present. The latest version of these Rules shall be published online.
- 1.3. PRECEDENCE. The City Council Meetings shall conform to parliamentary practices as set forth in the Rules of the City Council. The procedures defined in the most current version of Robert's Rules of Order will resolve questions not addressed by the Council Rules.
- 1.4. SUSPENSION. Suspension of these rules or any part thereof shall require a two-thirds majority of the quorum present. Nothing herein shall be construed to authorize suspension of any provision of the Charter of the City of Northampton, or any ordinance of the City of Northampton.

2. Organization

2.1. PRESIDING OFFICER

- 2.1.1. DUTIES. When present, the Council President shall be the presiding officer of the City Council at every meeting. The duties as presiding officer shall be only those set forth herein:
 - 2.1.1.1. To open the meeting at the appointed time by taking the chair, calling the meeting to order, and ascertaining that a quorum is present.
 - 2.1.1.2. To announce in proper sequence the business that comes before the City Council.
 - 2.1.1.3. To recognize members who are entitled to the floor.
 - 2.1.1.4. To state and to put to vote all questions that legitimately come before the City Council as motions or that otherwise arise in the course of proceedings (except questions that relate to the presiding officer as noted below), and to announce the result of each vote or, if a motion that is not in order is made, to rule it out of order; or, to refuse to recognize obviously frivolous or dilatory motions as defined by Robert's Rules;.
 - 2.1.1.5. To expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of all members of the body.

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- 2.1.1.6. To respond to inquiries of City Councilors relating to parliamentary procedure or factual information bearing on the business of the City Council.
- 2.1.1.7. To declare the meeting adjourned when the City Council so votes or, when applicable, at the time prescribed in the order of business, or at any time in the event an emergency.
- 2.1.1.8. To determine whether an amendment is germane to the motion under consideration.

2.1.2. PARTICIPATION. The Presiding Officer may make statements, ask questions and give opinions during debate without relinquishing the chair.

2.1.3. ORDER OF SUCCESSION. In the absence of the Council President, the first of the following list of persons who is not absent shall preside and shall retain voting privileges:

- First, the Council Vice-President
- Second, the Chair of the Committee on Finance
- Third, the Chair of the Committee on Legislative Matters

If none of the above are present or able to preside, the City Council shall elect by majority vote a President pro-tempore who shall preside for that meeting and shall retain voting privileges. Should the City Council fail to elect a President pro-tempore the meeting shall be adjourned.

2.2. ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT.

- 2.2.1. The City Council President and Vice-President shall be elected:
 - 2.2.1.1. At the first City Council meeting of a two-year session; and
 - 2.2.1.2. In the event of a vacancy for either office.
- 2.2.2. At any meeting when a City Council President is to be elected, the previous Council President will preside. If the previous Council President is absent or no longer a member of the Council, the longest serving member of the Council will preside. If two members of the Council are equal in seniority, a coin toss will determine which Councilor presides over the election of the Council President. If more than two members of the Council are equal in seniority they will draw lots to determine which Councilor will preside over the election of the Council President.
- 2.2.3. After nominations are made by members of the Council, candidates may present to the council.

2.3. COUNCIL PRESIDENT POWERS AND DUTIES. The powers and duties of the Council President shall include all duties pursuant to the Charter and also:

26.001 As Adopted in City Council on January 5, 2026

- 2.3.1. To assign councilors to serve on any committee established by the City Council.
- 2.3.2. To remove members of a committee from a committee, or reassign them, at any time.
- 2.3.3. To appoint members to select committees, as provided below.
- 2.3.4. To determine seating arrangements for the members of the City Council.
- 2.3.5. To appoint the membership of Enrollment Committee and modify the membership meeting to meeting for any reason.
- 2.3.6. To set an agenda for the City Council.
- 2.3.7. To hire the Administrative Assistant to the City Council and to supervise the individual in that position generally, including conducting an annual performance review. The administrative assistant appointment must be ratified by the whole City Council.
- 2.3.8. To issue a Committee Study Request to any committee. Such a request shall require a committee to report to the full Council on a particular policy or issue area within 120 days optionally accompanied by legislation. However a committee may by majority vote decline to consider or respond to such a request.

2.4. COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT - POWERS AND DUTIES. The powers and duties of the City Council Vice-President will include all duties pursuant to the Charter.

2.5. ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- 2.5.1. DUTIES. The Administrative Assistant shall report to the City Council President, who may assign duties in addition to the following:
 - 2.5.1.1. To maintain a record of all matters and their status as they proceed through various legislative stages and committees, as well as all amendments and related documents.
 - 2.5.1.2. To provide staff support and recordkeeping to standing Council committees and select committees as assigned and to assist committees with all aspects of reporting.
 - 2.5.1.3. To act as custodian of all books, documents and papers belonging to the City Council and to keep an accurate list thereof.
 - 2.5.1.4. To notify the chair of any Council committee, board, executive commission, or other body when a matter is referred to it and to provide the body with all documents relative to the matter.
 - 2.5.1.5. To ensure that all documents addressed to the Council shall be provided to each Councilor, and that any documents reviewed during the meeting become part of the permanent public record of that meeting.
 - 2.5.1.6. To notify the appointees to all Council committees in writing upon their appointment.

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- 2.5.1.7. To assist in preparing requests for proposals for an independent auditor in accordance with Sec 7-6 of the Charter.
- 2.5.1.8. To advise the Council President on matters of parliamentary procedure.

2.6. COUNCIL COMMITTEES

2.6.1. ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES. The following committees are established as described below.

2.6.1.1. COMMITTEE on FINANCE

- 2.6.1.1.1. Process. Financial orders will be introduced and discussed at a full City Council meeting and referred to either the consent agenda of a future meeting or the Finance Committee for more public input, discussion and recommendation. The Finance Committee will then convene separately outside of the full council meeting and before the next meeting.
- 2.6.1.1.2. Jurisdiction. Financial matters. The Committee shall review all orders authorizing a loan, supplemental appropriation, or financial transfer submitted by the Mayor in accordance with such authority by either the Massachusetts General Laws, the Charter of the City of Northampton, or the Code of Ordinances of the City of Northampton and make recommendations on referrals to the City Council.
- 2.6.1.1.3. In addition to the outside audit provided by Section 7-6 of the Charter, the Committee may request access to all books, vouchers, notes, securities, and bonds in the possession of the Treasurer-Collector, City Auditor or any board or executive commission and make a report thereof to the City Council.
- 2.6.1.1.4. The Committee shall review all proposals to sell or lease any City-owned land or building not put to public use that are submitted to the City Council for approval and all proposals to purchase or lease real property that are submitted to the City Council for approval. The Committee shall make recommendations to the City Council on the matter. All instruments of conveyance and leases approved by the City Council shall be executed by the Mayor on behalf of the City unless otherwise provided by Massachusetts General Laws.
- 2.6.1.1.5. The Committee shall consist of four Councilors.
- 2.6.1.1.6. The Committee may hold public hearings on water, sewer, Stormwater and other municipal utility rates.

2.6.1.2. COMMITTEE on COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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- 2.6.1.2.1. Jurisdiction. Matters affecting the community including economic development, local business, tourism, the environment, the arts, planning, zoning, sustainability, land use, housing and affordability, among others.
- 2.6.1.2.2. The Committee may review and make recommendations on licenses and permits.
- 2.6.1.2.3. The Committee shall consist of four Councilors.

2.6.1.3. COMMITTEE on CITY SERVICES

- 2.6.1.3.1. Jurisdiction. Matters related to the activities and operation of municipal government.
- 2.6.1.3.2. The Committee shall serve as the standing committee to review all candidates for appointment to boards and commission in accordance with Section 2-10 of the Charter.
- 2.6.1.3.3. The Committee shall consist of four Councilors.

2.6.1.4. COMMITTEE on LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

- 2.6.1.4.1. Jurisdiction. Upon referral by the City Council, the Committee shall have the power to make recommendations on ordinances, orders, resolutions and the rules of the City Council. Such recommendations shall be made in consultation with the City Solicitor.
- 2.6.1.4.2. The Committee may choose to be the last committee to review any matter that is also referred to another Council committee. The Committee shall not be required to wait to receive the report of any executive commission.
- 2.6.1.4.3. The Committee shall consist of four Councilors.

2.6.2. POWERS AND DUTIES OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES. The following shall apply to all committees unless otherwise stated:

- 2.6.2.1. Election of officers. Council Committees shall elect officers from among their members, such as Chair and Vice-Chair. At a committee's first meeting, the member who was first in the order of those announced by the Council President to serve on the committee shall preside until a Chair is elected.
- 2.6.2.2. Meetings. Committees shall meet as required by the City Council, the Committee's Chair, or at the request of two members. Committees shall hold an initial meeting no later than three months after the appointment of its members.

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- 2.6.2.3. Requests to appear before committees. A committee may make information requests pursuant Section 2-7 of the Charter.
 - 2.6.2.3.1. Notice. A committee shall give a minimum of 7 days notice to a person it may require to appear before it. No person shall be required to respond to any question not related to those questions presented in advance and in writing. The Committee will notify the Mayor of any Information Request under this section.
- 2.6.2.4. Committees shall have the power to hold hearings on and develop, review and recommend policies on any matter within their jurisdiction.
- 2.6.2.5. Power to amend. Council committees may recommend amendments to any measure. However, when a measure has been referred to the Committee on Legislative Matters, the Committee on Legislative Matters shall consider all amendments previously proposed by other committees and report one version of an amended measure to City Council.
- 2.6.2.6. Duty to report. "To report" shall mean transmitting a positive/favorable, negative/neutral or neutral recommendation and associated votes as well as any suggested textual amendments and related documents.
 - 2.6.2.6.1. For matters referred to the Committee on Legislative Matters, among others: All committees other than the Committee on Legislative Matters shall report to the Committee on Legislative Matters and the City Council within 60 days, whereupon the Committee on Legislative Matters shall report to the full City Council within an additional 30 days.
 - 2.6.2.6.2. For matters referred to the Committee on Legislative Matters exclusively: The Committee on Legislative Matters shall report to the full City Council within 60 days.
 - 2.6.2.6.3. For matters referred to committees not including the Committee on Legislative Matters: Committees shall report to the full City Council within 90 days.
 - 2.6.2.6.4. Committees shall make all reports in writing.
- 2.6.3. SELECT COMMITTEES. The City Council may establish select committees for the purpose of considering a particular policy or issue or

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for other purposes. Such committees may make recommendations and may sponsor ordinances, resolutions or other matters. Such committees may be created by resolution approved by a two-thirds vote of a quorum. The resolution shall specify the composition and scope of the select committee. No such committee shall exist beyond the current term of the Council. The Council President shall appoint all members to such committees, and may appoint members of the public who are residents of the City of Northampton or city employees provided the Mayor approve the appointment of any city employee. Select Committees shall elect their own Chair and other officers from among those appointed. At the first meeting, the person whose appointment was first announced by the Council President shall serve as temporary Chair until elections occur.

- 2.6.4. A majority of those appointed and serving on a committee shall constitute a quorum.

3. Duties and Powers of the City Council.

The City Council shall have those duties and powers pursuant the Charter and also:

- 3.1. SELECTION OF AN OUTSIDE AUDITOR. Pursuant Section 7-6 of the Charter, the City Council shall select an independent auditor according to the following provisions:
 - 3.1.1. The Finance Committee shall oversee the process of selection of an independent auditor and shall make a recommendation on the award of a contract for auditing services to the full Council.
 - 3.1.2. The award of a three-year contract to audit shall be made by the City Council on or before September 15 of every third year.
 - 3.1.3. The Council shall require the report of the audit to be filed in final form with the Council not later than March 1 in the year following its award.

4. Order

- 4.1. QUORUM. The presence of 5 members shall constitute a quorum of the City Council.
- 4.2. CALLING MEETINGS TO ORDER. The presiding officer shall call the City Council to order at the time appointed for the meeting or to which it may have

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adjourned, if a quorum be present, which shall be determined by calling the roll. The names of members not present at the meeting shall be recorded by the Administrative Assistant to the City Council.

- 4.3. RECOGNITION OF MAYOR AND DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES.
The Mayor and all City department representatives are recognized at all Council Meetings.

4.4. CONSENT AGENDA

- 4.4.1. When any item of business requires action by the City Council, but is of a routine nature, such item may be presented at a regular meeting of the City Council as part of the Consent Agenda. Items eligible for consideration on the Consent Agenda include: approval of minutes, appointments, licenses, and petitions.
- 4.4.2. The Consent Agenda may be introduced by a motion "To approve the Consent Agenda," and may be considered by the City Council as a single item.
- 4.4.3. The presiding officer shall read the title of each item contained in the Consent Agenda before a vote.
- 4.4.4. There shall be no debate or discussion by any City Council member regarding any item on the Consent Agenda, beyond asking questions for simple clarification.
- 4.4.5. Any item may be removed from the Consent Agenda upon the request of any City Council member prior to the taking of a vote on the motion to approve it. All such items will be considered individually, in the order in which they were removed, immediately following consideration of the Consent Agenda.
- 4.4.6. Approval of the motion to approve the Consent Agenda shall be fully equivalent to approval, adoption, referral or enactment of each item of business thereon, exactly as if each had been acted upon individually.
- 4.4.7. When an appointment has not received a recommendation from the standing committee pursuant Sec 2-10 of the Charter, a vote within the Consent Agenda shall be equivalent to a motion to refer it to said standing committee. Otherwise a vote shall be equivalent to approval.

4.5. ORDER OF BUSINESS.

- 4.5.1. The order of business at every regular meeting of the Council shall be as follows unless otherwise decided by the Presiding Officer:

- Roll Call
- Public Hearings
- Public Comment
- Announcements from Councilors and the Mayor

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- Presentations
- Consent Agenda
 - Approval of minutes
 - Licenses and Petitions
 - Appointments
 - Financial Orders (As Referred)
- Financial Orders
- Orders
- Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)
- Ordinances
- Resolutions
- Information Requests (Charter Provision 2-7) and Committee Study
- Requests
- New Business

4.5.2. The agenda shall be published in this manner and adhered to at all meetings. The presiding officer may implement a change in the order of business unless any single Councilor objects, in which case the rules may be suspended as provided in these Rules.

- 4.6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING. The Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall submit the minutes of the previous meeting with the Council agenda for the next regular scheduled meeting of the City Council.
- 4.7. CONDUCT. City Councilors and members of the public shall conduct themselves with civility and respect at all times.
- 4.8. PUBLIC COMMENT. Members of the public may address the Council and all Council Committees on any matter for a period of up to two minutes. During committee meetings, this period may be extended or reduced at the discretion of the presiding officers. Public comment may be accepted for no more than 90 minutes. Whenever language translation is required for a member of the public to address the City Council or in the case of an individual with a speech-related disability, such person shall be provided four minutes. Individuals wishing to speak will be recognized by the presiding officer and shall state their name and city or town of residence and, optionally, their address. During public comment, councilors will not respond to any comments from the public. The City Council will take public comment in person or by remote participation as the technology allows.
- 4.9. NEW BUSINESS. Any Councilor may introduce any written proposed order, ordinance, or resolution to be considered by the Council at the next meeting, but not to be debated during new business.
- 4.10. RECESS.

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- 4.10.1 Any Councilor may call for and be granted a recess the length of which will be determined by the presiding officer.
 - 4.10.2 The presiding officer may call for the recess of a hybrid meeting, to be resumed as a remote-only meeting, where the presiding officer determines that a disruption, disturbance, or other interruption materially interferes with continuing the in-person portion of such hybrid meeting. Prior to the recess, the presiding officer shall designate the time for the resumption of the meeting as remote-only, giving adequate time for each councilor to log into the meeting remotely.
- 4.1. ORDER AND MANNER OF SPEAKING. No City Councilor shall speak more than once on a question, to the prevention of any other who has not spoken,— and is desirous of speaking. The presiding officer may allow a brief immediate response to any statement posed directly to a particular City Councilor by a City Councilor. The presiding officer may request that any speaker discontinue any overly lengthy speech, but the right of a City Councilor to speak shall not be limited unless a formal motion is passed to set limits to debate for all City Councilors.
- 4.2. ORDER DURING DEBATE. No member should be interrupted while speaking, but by a call to order, or a request for information, or a question of privilege to appeal a decision from the presiding officer, or for the correction of a mistake, nor shall there be any conversation among the members while a paper is being read, or a question stated from the presiding officer
- 4.3. VOTING
- 4.3.1. DECIDING VOTES. The presiding officer shall decide all votes, but if a member rises to doubt a vote the presiding officer shall order a roll call vote.
- 4.3.2. VOTES REQUIRED TO PASS MEASURES
- 4.3.2.1. The affirmative vote, taken by roll call, of 6 members shall be required to adopt an appropriation order or transfer.
 - 4.3.2.2. The affirmative vote, taken by roll call, of 6 members shall be required to adopt a zoning ordinance.
 - 4.3.2.3. In the absence of statutory requirements providing otherwise, the affirmative vote, taken by roll call, of 5 members shall be required to adopt any other ordinance.
 - 4.3.2.4. In the absence of statutory requirements providing otherwise, an affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum shall pass any other measure.
- 4.3.3. ROLL CALL VOTES.

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- 4.3.3.1. REQUEST. Any member may request a roll call vote on any question before the City Council and the Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall take the census of the Council in that manner.
- 4.3.3.2. METHOD OF RECORDING. Roll call votes shall be conducted by this method. The first roll call vote of every session of the City Council shall be in alphabetical order. Each roll call vote after that shall progress to the next City Councilor in the alphabet to be the first Councilor voting, so that at the end of every nine roll call votes each Councilor has by alphabetical progression voted first in one of the nine roll call votes.
- 4.3.4. RECONSIDERATION.
 - 4.3.4.1. When a vote has passed, except for adjournment or to lay on the table, any member voting with the majority may move a reconsideration, to be acted upon at the same meeting. Any member voting with the minority may move a reconsideration to be acted upon at the next meeting.
 - 4.3.4.2. Minority reconsideration shall have priority over majority reconsideration. Minority reconsideration shall be used to allow time for the submission of new or additional information. Reconsideration shall not be used in a dilatory manner as defined in Robert's Rules of Order.
 - 4.3.4.3. No motion shall be twice reconsidered.
- 4.4. REMOTE MEETING PARTICIPATION. Councilors may participate remotely in meetings pursuant to the following regulations:
 - 4.4.1. Requirements
 - 4.4.1.1. Any Councilor who participates remotely and all persons present at the meeting location shall be clearly audible to each other;
 - 4.4.1.2. A quorum including the presiding officer shall be physically present at the meeting location;
 - 4.4.1.3. Any Councilor who participates remotely may vote and shall not be deemed absent.
 - 4.4.2. Permissible Reasons for Remote Participation. Any Councilor may participate remotely if the presiding officer determines that one or more of the following factors make the participation of the Councilor's physical attendance unreasonably difficult:
 - 4.4.2.1. Personal Illness;
 - 4.4.2.2. Personal Disability;
 - 4.4.2.3. Emergency;
 - 4.4.2.4. Military Service; or
 - 4.4.2.5. Geographic Distance
 - 4.4.2.6. Family Illness or Family Caretaking
 - 4.4.3. Technology

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- 4.4.3.1. The following media are acceptable methods for remote participation. Remote participation by any other means is not permitted. Accommodations shall be made for any Councilor who requires TTY service, video relay service, or other form of adaptive communications.
 - 4.4.3.1.1. Telephone, Internet, or satellite-enabled audio or video conferencing;
 - 4.4.3.1.2. Any other technology that enables the remote participation and all persons present at the meeting location to be clearly audible to one another.
- 4.4.3.2. When video technology is in use, the remote participant shall be clearly visible to all persons present in the meeting location.
- 4.4.3.3. The presiding officer may decide how to address technical difficulties that arise as a result of utilizing remote participation, but is encouraged, wherever possible, to call a brief recess while reasonable efforts are made to correct any problem that interferes with a remote participant's ability to hear or be heard clearly by all persons present at the meeting location. If technical difficulties result in a remote participant being disconnected from the meeting, that fact and the time at which the disconnection occurred shall be noted in the meeting minutes.
- 4.4.3.4. All costs associated with remote participation, if any, shall be borne by the Councilor remotely participating.
- 4.4.4. Procedures
 - 4.4.4.1. Any Councilor who wishes to participate remotely shall, as soon as reasonably possible prior to a meeting, notify the presiding officer of their desire to do so and the reason for and facts supporting their request.
 - 4.4.4.2. At the start of the meeting, the presiding officer shall announce the name of any member who will be participating remotely and the reason for their remote participation. This information shall be recorded in the meeting minutes.
 - 4.4.4.3. All votes taken during any meeting in which a member participates remotely shall be by roll call vote.
 - 4.4.4.4. Any Councilor participating remotely may participate in executive session, but shall state at the start of any such session that no other person is present and/or able to hear the discussion at the remote location. Any Councilor participating remotely who cannot certify that no other person is present and/or able to hear the discussion at the remote location may not participate in executive session.
 - 4.4.4.5. When feasible, the presiding officer shall distribute to remote participants, in advance of the meeting, copies of any documents of exhibits that they reasonably anticipates will be used during the meeting. If used during the meeting, such documents shall be a part of the official record of the meeting, and shall be listed in the

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meeting minutes and retained in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30A Section 22.

4.4.5. Application. This rule shall apply to Council Committees.

4.4.6. Amendment. This section may not be amended unless it is in accordance with the Mayor's Remote Meeting Participation Policy, Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30A Sections 18-25 and 940 Code of Massachusetts Regulations 29.10.

4.5. MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE SESSION. The City Council shall create and maintain accurate minutes of all executive sessions in accordance with the following:

4.5.1. The minutes shall set forth the day, time and place, the members present or absent, a summary of the discussions on each subject, a list of documents and other exhibits used at the meeting, the decisions made and the actions taken at each meeting, including the record of all votes.

4.5.2. Any vote taken in an executive session shall be recorded by roll call and entered into the minutes.

4.5.3. The minutes of any executive session and the notes, or other materials used in the preparation of such minutes, and all documents and exhibits used at the session may be withheld from disclosure to the public in their entirety, according to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 4 § 7 (26) (a), as long as publication would defeat the lawful purposes of the executive session, but no longer.

4.5.4. Approving minutes.

4.5.4.1. Votes to approve executive session minutes may be, but are not required to be, taken in executive session.

4.5.4.2. Review of, deliberation on and amendments to executive session minutes shall be done in executive session.

4.5.5. Releasing minutes.

4.5.5.1. As provided in MGL Ch 30A, Sec 22(g)(1), The Council President, with the assistance of the Administrative Assistant to the City Council and City Solicitor, shall, at reasonable intervals, not to exceed three months, review the minutes of executive sessions to determine if the relevant statutory provisions warrant continued nondisclosure. Such determination shall be announced at the City Council's next meeting and such announcement shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.

4.5.5.2. Whenever the Council President requests that a vote of the Council be taken to determine whether to release executive session minutes, that vote must be taken in executive session.

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- 4.5.6. Upon request by any person to inspect or copy the minutes of an executive session or any portion thereof, the Council shall respond to the request within 10 days following receipt and shall release any such minutes that would not defeat the lawful purposes of the executive session.
- 4.5.7. Any notes, documents or other exhibits used in the preparation of the minutes of executive sessions shall be retained for at least 60 days following the approval of the minutes of the executive session by the Council. The Council President shall periodically review said notes and other documents prior to the discarding or destruction thereof.

5. Legislative Process

5.1. PROPOSED MATTERS

- 5.1.1. Matters proposed for inclusion in City Council agendas shall be filed with the Administrative Assistant to the City Council. Agendas shall be published in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.
- 5.1.2. COMMUNICATION WITH MAYOR’S OFFICE. The Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall serve as a point of contact with the Mayor’s office regarding the City Council’s agendas.
- 5.1.3. ADDING MATTERS TO COUNCIL AGENDA. The Council President shall have discretion over the items added to Council agendas, except that if the addition of an item has been once requested by a member of the City Council or the Mayor and at the discretion of the Council President that item is not placed on an agenda of a regular Council meeting, then before the next regular Council meeting any two members of the City Council may petition the Council President who shall then add the item to the agenda of the next regular Council meeting.

5.1.4. PRESENTATION AND ENACTING STYLE OF MATTERS

- 5.1.4.1. Matters shall be presented in a format as indicated in the table below:

Line	Ordinances	Orders	Resolutions
1. Date	“In the Year 2016”	“In the City Council, February 2, 2016.”	“In the Year 2016”
2. Sponsorship	“Upon the recommendation of...”		
3. ID Number	Not prefaced	Prefaced by “O”	Prefaced by “R”
4. Type of Matter	“An Ordinance”	“An Order”	“A Resolution”
5. Short Title	“Relative to...” “Entitled the ...”	“To...” et al.	“To...”, “In support of...”, et al.

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	Ordinance of 2016”, or “To ...” et al.		
6. Enacting Clause	“Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Northampton in City Council assembled, as follows”	“Ordered, that”	“Be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Northampton in City Council assembled, as follows”

5.1.4.2. Administrative ID Number. The Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall assign each matter, upon formal submission, a unique identification number, in the form of the last two digits of the calendar year followed by an incrementally increasing number. The incrementally increasing portion shall reset to “1” every Council session.

5.1.4.3. Additions to the Code of Ordinances shall be indicated in bold and/or underline. Deletions shall be indicated by striking through.

5.1.5. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS. Maps and visuals, along with all other supportive evidence essential to a matter, shall be presented in a clear and intelligible way.

5.2. REFERRAL OF MATTERS

5.2.1. In general, all matters may be referred to Council committees or executive multiple-member bodies, which shall constitute a request for a report on such matters.

5.2.2. Financial orders. No order or resolution authorizing a loan, the levying of a tax or the expenditure of money (with the exception of the printing of the annual reports) shall be voted on by the City Council until it has been considered by the Committee on Finance, unless the Council determines that such consideration is not necessary, as provided in 2.6.1.1.1. It shall be the duty of such committee to report on the relation of such order, resolution, levy or expenditures to the finances of the City, but new provisions shall not be added to such resolution, order, levy or expenditure by the Committee unless directly connected with the financial features thereof, and then by recommendation only.

5.2.3. Ordinances. No ordinance shall be voted on by the City Council until it has been considered by the Committee on Legislative Matters.

5.2.4. Licenses and permits. Licenses and permits may be referred to the Committee on Community Resources for the committee’s recommendation.

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- 5.2.5. Should a committee fail to report within the time set forth in Section 2.6.2.6, or if a multiple-member body fails to report within 45 days of referral to that body, the City Council shall be authorized to proceed with the matter in absence of such report.
- 5.3. SOLICITOR REVIEW OF ORDINANCES. At or before the meeting at which the Committee on Legislative Matters considers any matter for approval and/or recommendation the City Solicitor shall be requested to examine the matter's form and legal character.
- 5.4. WITHDRAWAL OF MATTERS. If the Council has previously acted on a matter, the matter may be withdrawn by this method. At the written request of any sponsor(s) of a matter, a matter shall be withdrawn from consideration in the City Council and in all City Council Committees to which the matter had been referred provided the withdrawal be placed on the agenda of a City Council meeting. No vote shall be required. However, if at that meeting all sponsors of a matter do not unanimously agree to withdraw a matter, the matter shall not be withdrawn. However at that time any Councilor shall upon their request have their individual sponsorship removed.
- 5.5. MATTERS REQUIRING TWO READINGS. Before a vote on a matter may be held, it must first have been introduced at a prior City Council meeting, unless otherwise provided in these Rules. Introduction shall include a description of purpose and effects and full discussion by the Council is allowed.
- 5.6. MATTERS REQUIRING ONE READING. The following shall require only one reading of the Council:
 - 5.6.1. Licenses
 - 5.6.2. Approval of minutes
 - 5.6.3. Acceptances of reports
 - 5.6.4. Petitions, and orders to grant petitions
 - 5.6.5. Appointments
 - 5.6.6. Orders to adopt or amend the Council Rules and
 - 5.6.7. Orders to set dates and times of Council meetings.
- 5.7. ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE. When matter has passed the required number of votes, it shall be signed by the Administrative Assistant to the City Council and signed by the Enrollment Committee consisting of two City Councilors.
- 5.8. AUTOMATIC CARRYOVER. Matters that have not passed the required number of votes by the end of the current session shall automatically carry over to the next session of the City Council and shall remain in the Council and in all committees and executive commissions to which they have been referred at the start of the next session unless:
 - 5.8.1. A matter has already failed on the first of two required votes; or

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- 5.8.2. A matter has received a negative recommendation from the Committee on Legislative Matters; or
- 5.8.3. The City Council votes to prevent automatic carryover of a matter to the next session. For this purpose, at the request of any City Councilor, the City Council President shall place any such pending matter on the agenda at the final meeting of the session. Only one vote shall be required to prevent automatic carryover, but 2/3 majority of the full Council shall be required; or
- 5.8.4. None of the sponsors of a matter will be serving in the next session of the City Council.

6. APPENDICES

6.1 SPECIAL PERMIT GRANTING AUTHORITY

Chair/Moderator

I. Selection of a Chair/Moderator

The City Council President will serve as the presiding officer of the hearing.

MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

II. Notice of Public Hearings

Notice of hearings shall be advertised as required by the provisions of General Law Chapter 40A. In addition to the legally required notices the City Council will make every effort to publish this notice broadly so the public will be fully informed, methods might include the City website, email distribution list and Northampton Community Television.

III. Calling of Public Hearing

All hearings held by the Council as a Special Permit Granting Authority Shall be open to the public.

IV. Public Hearings

- 1. Public hearings, when called, will be conducted in the following manner:
 - A. The presiding officer will announce that it is time for a Public Hearing and will announce the subject of such hearing.
 - B. The presiding officer will review evidence of adequate advertisement and legal notice and, if found to be appropriate and proper according to law, will have the advertisement read into the record. The presiding officer will then explain the procedure to be followed, including the time limits on speakers' and the fact that each speaker shall give their name and address for the record. By majority vote the City Council may extend the time granted to a particular speaker by the presiding officer. The chair may limit testimony that is repetitive.

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- C. The presiding officer will report on any new or changed information pertinent to the subject, if any, and then have read into the record all memoranda, opinions, comments and recommendations or City departments or boards pertinent to the matter.
- D. The applicant will be given a reasonable amount of time to make a presentation regarding the matter.
- E. Other persons supporting the position of the proponents will then be allowed to express the fact of their support and to present such supportive information as was not included in the initial or previous presentations. A five-minute time limit shall apply but the Council could extend the time on a majority vote.
- F. Before opponents to an application or petition are called to speak, a member of the Council may move for invocation of a summary procedure and, if seconded and approved by a majority of the quorum, may subsequently move to deny the request made by the applicant, based on a finding that the evidence presented was not adequate to justify the request. If the motion for denial is then seconded and is approved by the quorum, the public hearing may be deemed complete.
- G. Those persons speaking in opposition to the position taken by the principal proponent are then allowed to speak, each being allowed to express the fact of their opposition and to present such supportive information as was not included in previous presentations before the Council. A five-minute time limit shall apply and the Council could extend the time on a majority vote.
- H. After all opponents have been heard, the presiding officer will then allow the proponent and or project staff person to respond to any issues/questions raised by the opponents.
- I. After the proponents have responded to the opponents, the opponents shall have an additional opportunity to respond, the presiding officer shall determine which opponent shall respond at which time. A three minute time limit shall apply but the Council may extend the time by majority vote. The motion to extend time is non-debatable.
- J. The presiding officer will then enter all documents received concerning the matter into the record. The applicant or project staff may then answer any questions raised in the letters.
- K. If new information is presented the presiding officer or the Council may allow additional time for the appropriate party to respond. Immediately or in writing later but before the close of the public hearing.
- L. The presiding officer will then hear questions from the general public regarding aspects/issues that have not been addressed in previous testimony. The presiding officer shall refer questions to the appropriate person and may rule questions out of order if the subjects of the questions have already been addressed. Questions may also be submitted in writing.
- M. At any point, a public hearing may be continued or postponed to a time, place and date certain, provided that these rules and procedures are adhered to when it is resumed, or may be continued or postponed to a time, place and date not certain, providing required advertising and notice procedures are

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followed to announce the time, place and date of resumption. Each meeting is a continuation of the same public hearing.

V. Votes of the Council

All votes for Special Permits shall require a 2/3 majority of the Council to pass.

Applications before the City Council

VI. Permit Applications

Applications for a Special Permit before the City Council shall be prepared in accordance with the procedures in the Northampton Zoning Ordinance and the instruction on and attached to the application form. Every application for action by the Council shall be made on the official application form, and as approved by the Council and adopted by reference in these Bylaws and Rules of Procedure.

6.2 Examples of Presentation and Enacting Styling of Matters

<p><i>In the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen</i> Upon the Recommendation of Councilor J. Calvin Coolidge</p> <p style="text-align: center;">15.073 AN ORDINANCE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RELATIVE TO ZONING IN CENTRAL BUSINESS (OR) ENTITLED THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF 2016 (OR) TO REVISE SEC. 000 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES</p> <p><i>Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Northampton, in City Council</i> <i>in the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen</i> Upon the Recommendation of Councilor J. Calvin Coolidge</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">R-15.003 A RESOLUTION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">IN SUPPORT OF DEMOCRACY (OR) TO CREATE A SELECT COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND A STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA</p> <p><i>Be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Northampton, in City Council assembled, as follows:</i></p>

6. Open Meeting Law, Conflict of Interest Law and Public Records Law – Attorney Seewald

Attorney Seewald thanked new and returning councilors for their service. He introduced himself as someone who has lived in Northampton since 1981 and been the city solicitor since 2012, so he is going on his 14th year.

He has been asked to speak about topics of open government. His goal is to keep them out of trouble, he advised. He encouraged them to contact him if they have questions about these or any other issues. He said he would give them his cell phone number off air. "I want to help you succeed."

Open government is a three-legged stool: the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law and Conflict of Interest law, he presented. The Open Meeting Law (OML) requires government meetings to be open to the public. That requires that the deliberation of a quorum be in public. The council has skilled staff to post meetings and keep minutes. However, there are other things councilors need to do. For example, councilors will get OML materials and be required to sign a certification that they were received.

The OML has many traps for the unwary. A quorum of this body is five. He said to please never let him see legislation sponsored by five of them since the message will be that five have them have communicated on an issue that is before the council, which is a violation of OML. The limit for communication for them is four.

Four councilors can speak to each other about anything they want to speak to each other about. None of those four can then speak to any other councilor because serial communications can constitute the deliberation of a quorum, he explained. This includes expressing an opinion by electronic or any other means to a quorum. He cautioned not to 'Reply All' to emails and said he encourages the administrative assistant to regularly remind them not to 'Reply All.'

They can put a question forward in response to an email, he clarified. The violation is expressing an opinion on a matter that comes before the council to a quorum. Placing things on an agenda and sending documents is not a violation. Do not ever vote by secret ballot.

Councilor Stratton asked a hypothetical question about being in communication with four members and another councilor contacting him about the same issue. He was told he could not communicate with that councilor about the matter.

A quorum must meet in public because the public has the right to know and to see and hear their deliberations, Attorney Seewald stressed.

PUBLIC RECORDS LAW

Any record made or received as a councilor is presumptively a public record, Attorney Seewald continued. It doesn't matter the form, so texts, emails and phone records are all public records. His strong recommendation is to use their city email address for this purpose. If using city email, IT can actually respond on their behalf to extract emails responsive to public record requests received.

Councilor Robbins asked about having a listserv; if it could be collected on a public email account. She said she knows Councilor Davis will be inheriting Councilor Jarrett's listserv.

Mail Chimp will not let them use their government (Northampton) email account, Councilor Klemer volunteered. Mail Chimp users have to use a personal/private google account.

Government employees can't use city email for non-government purposes such as campaign material, but as long as they are communicating as a councilor and not a candidate, they can use city email, Attorney Seewald clarified. Understanding that all records are public, he advised them to think carefully about what records they create.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is very little punitive enforcement with the OML and Public Records Law, Attorney Seewald advised. However, Conflict of Interest law is different. There is a whole enforcement arm at the state Ethics Commission. If they have a question, ask him. If they have a concern, contact him before doing anything. If they call the Ethics Commission, they will get the lawyer of the day and be given advice to guide them through potential conflict, but if they call and say, 'last night I voted on 'x,' they're going to connect them to enforcement.

"Let me tell you, you don't want to be connected to enforcement."

The underpinning is that, when a government employee acts, they act exclusively in the interests of the city. For any matter they, their immediate family, their employer or a prospective employer has a financial interest in, they need to get advice before they proceed. Holding a contract with the city should raise red flags. If taking action on something that could foreseeably affect the value of their property, get advice before proceeding.

When public employees have a conflict, it is not enough just not to vote. The Ethics Commission's advice is to leave the room. He doesn't think it's necessary to leave the room but, certainly, they should step down from the dais. "You should not be sitting up here if you have a conflict," he said.

No quid pro quo, he continued. Nobody can give them something of any amount for them to do something as a councilor. Even if it's not a quid pro quo, as a councilor, they can't accept anything of substantial value (over \$50).

Councilors can't participate in any matter in which they or their immediate family, etc. has a financial interest. They may not receive compensation from anyone in a private matter in which the city has a direct financial interest, meaning they can't represent interests adverse to the city in matters which the city has a financial interest. They can't act as an agent or attorney for any other party in which the city holds a financial interest and they can't hold contracts with the city.

One thing that has arisen quite frequently is fundraising for private nonprofits by councilors. It potentially can have a coercive effect on constituents. If people are coming before the council on a matter, they shouldn't be asking them for money. He reiterated the encouragement to call him if they ever have a concern.

Regarding social media, if a councilor creates a City Council social media account, they have two choices: they can prohibit all comments or the page has to allow all comments and be open to everybody. They can have a private account but, as a city councilor, they cannot exclude comments they don't like.

A candidate's Facebook page is a private Facebook page, he clarified.

Councilor Stratton said he has three profiles: personal, candidate and an official profile as a councilor. On the City's Facebook page, there is a comment policy, he shared. The City asserts the rule to limit people to the topic. He has sort of adopted that. He also found a flow chart from the ACLU which he has found helpful.

Subcommittees are also subject to the OML, Councilor Maiore noted.

A quorum of a four-member committee would be three, Attorney Seewald confirmed.

Councilor Nabad asked him to talk a little more about fundraising for nonprofit organizations. Conflict of Interest related to fundraising is very fact-driven, Attorney Seewald noted. He gave the example of soliciting money from restaurants when the city council is the local licensing authority. It is not a problem to put an advertisement in the newspaper, he clarified. Fundraising is okay as long as they are not targeting a constituency beholden to the council as those constituencies may feel coerced.

A posting of the Hot Chocolate Run on a Facebook page is not a violation.

Councilor Loisel asked whether making an announcement about a fundraiser on the council floor is allowed and Solicitor Seewald said 'yes.'

Councilor Davis asked if they needed permission to contact him about a conflict of interest.

Attorney Seewald said 'no.' As elected officials each of them has a right to his opinion on the conflict of interest.

7. **26.002 An Order to Set Date and Time of 2024-2025 City Council Meetings – single reading only**
Councilor Klemer moved approval of the order. Councilor Dubs seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

The following order passed single reading:

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council January 5, 2026

Upon recommendation of the Northampton City Council

O-26.002

An Order

To Set the Date and Time of 2026-2027 City Council Meetings

Ordered, that, the attached City Council meeting schedule for 2026-2027 be and hereby is adopted.

26.002



City Council Meeting Schedule 2026-2027

All meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. except the January 5, 2026 organizational meeting, which starts at 2 p.m.

January 5, 2026 January 15, 2026	January 7, 2027 January 21, 2027
February 5, 2026 February 19, 2026	February 4, 2027 February 18, 2027
March 5, 2026 March 19, 2026	March 4, 2027 March 18, 2027
March 31, 2026 (Tuesday) April 16, 2026	April 1, 2027 April 15, 2027
May 7, 2026 May 21, 2026	May 6, 2027 May 20, 2027
June 4, 2026 June 18, 2026	June 3, 2027 June 17, 2027
July 9, 2026	July 8, 2027
August 20, 2026	August 19, 2027
September 3, 2026 September 17, 2026	September 2, 2027 September 16, 2027
October 1, 2026 October 15, 2026	October 7, 2027 October 21, 2027
November 5, 2026 November 19, 2026	November 4, 2027 November 18, 2027
December 3, 2026 December 17, 2026	December 2, 2027 December 16, 2027

All meetings will be held in hybrid form, except July and August meetings which will be held on Zoom only.

26.002 Order to Set Date and Time of 2026-2027 City Council Meetings

Passed final reading and enrolled.

8. **Administrative Items**

Councilor Maiore said she would let them know by Friday about their committee assignments. The next regular meeting is January 15th.

9. **Adjourn**

There being no other business, **Councilor Perry moved to adjourn. Councilor Klemer seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.**

EXHIBIT A

List of Documents Reviewed at January 5, 2026 Northampton City Council Organizational Meeting:

1. January 5, 2026 City Council Agenda
2. 26.001 An Order to Adopt City Council Rules for 2026 – 2027
3. 26.002 An Order to Set Date and Time of 2026-2027 City Council Meetings

Record of City Council Votes for January 5, 2026		Davis	Dubs	Klemer	Loisel	Maiore	Nabad	Perry	Robbins	Stratton	Total
Roll Call by Laura Krutzler, Administrative Assistant to the City Council @ 2 p.m.		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	9 Present
Election of a City Council President for 2026 - 2027		Maiore	Maiore	Maiore	Maiore	Maiore	Maiore	Maiore	Maiore	Maiore	The nomination of Rachel Maiore passed unanimously 9:0.
Election of City Council Vice-President for 2026 - 2027		Perry	Klemer	Klemer	Perry	Klemer	Klemer	Perry	Klemer	Klemer	The nomination of Deb Klemer passed 6:3 with Davis, Loisel and Perry in favor of Perry.
Appointment of Enrollment Committee for 2026 - 2027		Councilor Maiore appointed Councilors Klemer and Loisel to the Enrollment Committee.									
26.001 An Order to Adopt City Council Rules for 2026 - 2027	Single reading			Motion to approve					Second		The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.
26.002 An Order to Set Date and Time of 2026-2027 City Council Meetings - 1st Reading	Single reading		Second	Motion to approve							The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.
Motion to Adjourn	to Adjourn			Second				Motion to adjourn			The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

At 3:30 p.m., Councilor Perry moved to adjourn. Councilor Klemer seconded. The motion carried 9:0 by voice vote.