



CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
Northampton, Massachusetts

Roll Call

A special meeting of the City Council (FY2024 Budget Hearing) was called to order by Council President Jim Nash at 6:02 p.m. Upon a roll call, the following City Councilors were physically present:

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

Announcement that Meeting Audio/Video Recorded

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

Recess for Committee on Finance Meeting

At 6:03 p.m., the City Council recessed for the City Council Committee on Finance to conduct the FY2024 Budget Hearing.

Public Hearing on FY2024 Budget

Public Hearing on FY2024 Budget

Councilor Maiore explained the way she would conduct the hearing.

Councilor Nash moved to open the public hearing. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

Central Services

Councilor Jarrett disclosed that, as a member of the Pedal People Co-operative, he has a conflict of interest on this item due to a pre-existing contract between pedal people and the Central Services Department. Due to this conflict, he cannot participate. He will recuse himself but may pop back in at the end if he has specific questions unrelated to that contract.

The Central Services Department oversees grounds, maintenance, heating, cooling, ventilation, plumbing, electrical, security, fire protection, custodial, renovation, construction operations and capital programs for city and school buildings, Central Services Director Pat McCarthy presented. The department maintains approximately 70,092 square feet of facilities including City Hall, the Puchalski municipal building, Memorial Hall, the senior center, Main and Florence fire stations, the Academy of Music, six schools in the Northampton public school district and public works facilities. Highlights of its successes in 2023 include reconfiguration of the Roundhouse parking lot, completion of the main fire station rear parking lot expansion, the installation of a new ERV ventilation system in the DPW admin building on Locust Street and, finally, delivery and installation of new department copiers and upgrades to the JFK energy management system (EMS), Dobson controls. Looking forward to FY2024, they will be entering the sixth and final year of EMS upgrades at JFK, working on ventilation and greenhouse gas reductions at Leeds and Jackson Street elementary schools, undertaking the phase II sprinkler project at the Academy of Music (AOM) and completing important code upgrades to city elevators, repairs to senior center windows and floors and exterior envelope repairs to City Hall, James House and Memorial Hall. Finally, they will be initiating full plans and specs for the installation of a guardrail on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the E.J. Gare Parking Garage.

Comparing last year's budget and this year's, he sees two new line items, standby pay and out of class, Councilor Nash observed.

Central Services is looking forward to hiring one new project manager, Director McCarthy advised. The out of class line item is the salary augmentation of an employee who is doing someone else's work. (The maintenance foreman is getting some of the facilities' program coordinator's pay.) Standby pay is on-call pay. Central Services has never gotten on-call pay but now has alternating one-week on-call assignments and two people on call 24/7.

Councilor Nash asked if the second project coordinator position is new, and Director McCarthy confirmed that it is.

When asked what he is hoping to get out of this new position, Director McCarthy said they are hoping to get more accomplished. With only one coordinator, the net zero improvements the city needs to make are a little overwhelming, he noted. There is going to be a huge need for project oversight, writing plans and specs for jobs, coordinating contractors and overseeing construction. Adding another coordinator will really increase their accomplishments.

On-call pay is something that was negotiated this year as part of collective bargaining with NAPEA, Mayor Sciarra added.

Referring to her concerns around vacancies, Councilor LaBarge asked if the custodian vacancy is at the police department.

Director McCarthy said yes and that they have now filled the position.

Councilor LaBarge noted that trash removal line items are found both in the Central Services main budget (\$35,000) and under parking maintenance (\$45,000).

The main budget line item is for all city buildings, including schools, the downtown campus, police department, Lilly Library and main and Florence fire stations. The contract is up at the end of next month and the city will go out to bid following municipal procurement guidelines.

Councilor Maiore thanked the director.

#### **Northampton Fire Rescue**

Last year was the busiest year in the department's history with 8,500 calls and an average of about 25 calls per day, Fire Chief Jon Davine reported. There is a shortage of paramedics across the country. Department members went out of town 436 times for mutual aid. They were successful with a bunch of grants and so were able to replace a lot of damaged fire hose, some of which was 20 to 25 years old and/or lost during hose testing.

Next year, they will be adding one position, a fire prevention captain. The fire prevention bureau currently has only one captain. Last year in December, the state took the solar code and put it into the fire code so the department is now required to inspect every solar installation in the city. Contractors submit plans for review by the fire prevention officer. If changes are needed, the fire inspector returns the plans to the contractor for amendment and is required to inspect the array once installed. The inspector has 95 solar inspection projects sitting on his desk right now.

On top of solar, firefighters are now required to inspect and permit any energy storage system greater than one (1) kilowatt whereas the threshold used to be 20 kw or higher. Building code requirements being moved into the fire code has added significantly to their workload. As folks are promoted, every new hire is also now a paramedic. Paramedic certifications require them to take ongoing trainings which take them out of the office. When the fire prevention captain is out of the office, there is no one to do inspections. Quite a few inspections just aren't getting done, leading to a backlog of inspections such as those for residences of six units and above and restaurants without liquor licenses.

Also situations such as the ones with Bi-Oem and Bombyx up in Florence take up a lot of the inspector's time. The plan is to make sure the two inspectors don't take vacations at the same time so they will always have someone in the office to insure constant coverage.

The new position is the biggest addition to their budget. The city settled its contract with the firefighter's union this year, too, so the budget includes associated raises.

Councilors asked questions and offered comments. In response to the question of why the fire department is inspecting solar arrays, Chief Davine said solar inspections got moved to the fire code because an important fire-fighting tactic is to go to the roof and cut a hole in it to ventilate since heat, smoke and fire go up. The building code had been allowing solar contractors to

cover the entire roof with solar panels preventing access to the roof. The new solar code mandates leaving a three-foot path between panels so firefighters can have access.

Chief Davine discussed the department's challenges to recruitment combined with increasing calls. An exciting development with respect to recruitment is a new internship program with Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (SVAHS), he shared. In 2018, the department had 7,000 to 7,300 calls and they now have another 700 a year. During contract negotiations, there was a lot of concern about the increased workload fire departments are taking on. There is a backlog in inspections but with another fire prevention inspector they should be able to catch up fairly quickly, he suggested.

Chief Davin fielded additional questions about the expected arrival of the new ladder truck, call volume, overtime, fire prevention programs and turnover. He keeps an eye on overtime and hasn't overspent the line item since he's been chief, he related. If he sees it getting high, they start dialing back and limiting nonessential trainings.

70% of the department's calls are emergency medical in nature. Northampton has a large houseless population that accounts for a lot of their call volume.

#### **Public Comment**

**Quaverly Rothenberg of Northampton** said she loved what the chief is doing with offering students a certification while they're working. She asked him to elaborate about the department's services to the houseless population.

Dr. Bossey has opened a home for half a dozen medically-complex homeless individuals at 5 Franklin Street and they now take calls from that facility, Chief Davine reported. They also take calls from the general homeless population related to illness, addiction, etc. Working with Dr. Bossey and other agencies has been great. They are hoping the new Department of Community Care (DCC) will cut down on some of the calls and assist people by finding them a stable place to live and making sure they are taking their medication, eating right, etc.

**Gwen Nabad** asked if he could talk more about inspections of residences of six (6) or more units.

He looked to see if he could determine how many are in the city but, unfortunately they are lumped together with three-families, Chief Davine said. Inspections are supposed to be done jointly with the building inspector's office. One of their objectives this year is getting those done.

She asked if he sees a lot of calls coming from public housing.

He doesn't see it as a huge call volume, Chief Davine responded. He would characterize it as normal business.

Councilor Maiore recognized Roy Martin, who joined the meeting via Jo Ella (Jada) Tarbutton's device. Mr. Martin asked if the four positions discussed are already in the budget.

Mayor Sciarra clarified that there is only one new fire prevention officer position. Chief Davine said he is filling three vacancies which are already in the budget.

Mr. Martin asked if he is going to be asking for more people next year and Chief Davine said he doesn't expect to.

He doesn't want to go way over the budget and have to go for a Proposition 2 ½ override again, Mr. Martin said. Northampton has had more overrides than any municipality in the state, he asserted.

There being no further questions, Councilor Maiore thanked the chief.

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#### **Department of Public Works (DPW)**

Councilor Jarrett disclosed that, as a member of the Pedal People Cooperative, he has a financial interest in decisions regarding the Locust Street transfer station and so will recuse himself. He may come back at the end for questions unrelated to the landfill's operation.

The General Fund budget is organized into four divisions: Administration and Engineering, Highway (including Streets and Fleet Maintenance), Snow and Ice and Forestry, Parks and Cemeteries, DPW Director Donna LaScaleia presented. Within the General Fund, the department's responsibilities are for the maintenance of roadways, sidewalks, 38 bridges, more than 30 signal-controlled intersections, vehicles and specialized pieces of equipment, more than 10,000 public shade trees, athletic fields, parks, four cemeteries and bike paths.

In putting together this year's budget, it was necessary to balance the need to accommodate personnel services increases due to collective bargaining and the reality that the cost of goods and services continues to rise very rapidly. They are faced not only with financial challenges but also with actual logistical challenges based on vacant positions. They have 19 vacancies right now out of a total of 90 full-time positions. They also have a large contingent of seasonal workers who work at parks, field maintenance employees and casual employees who work at the transfer station. A lot of challenges are involved in putting together the budget requiring some level of creativity and elasticity of thought in making decisions about how to spend money and in dividing up financial resources between operations and contractual expenses.

In items of note, they continue to see fluctuations in the price of gasoline and diesel fuel. With vehicles and equipment using over 80,000 gallons of gasoline and 40,000 gallons of diesel a year, a couple of years ago they were paying \$2.74 a gallon for diesel while last year they were paying \$6 and now they're back to around \$3. They have seen the price of electricity go up by 50%. They have to engage in quite a bit of discipline on a day-to-day basis to make sure they are balancing the needs of the city and those who rely on them for services with the reality that their fixed costs are rising faster than their ability to keep up with them.

The DPW purchases asphalt by the ton to patch potholes throughout the city, etc., and buys about \$200,000 worth a year. In 2022, they were paying \$60 a ton and last year they were paying close to \$80 a ton. This year they are down to \$73. Still, in the course of two years they went from \$60 to \$73, which cuts into their ability to perform more work. The higher the price per ton, the less tons they can buy.

Similarly, last year they spent \$160,000 restriping the entire city and they have seen an increase in that line item this year to continue to support those efforts since one of the biggest things they can do for roadway safety is to communicate to vehicles, bicycles, etc. what they expect them to be doing.

The DPW has taken financial control of the radio systems throughout the city on the heels of a \$7 million city-wide upgrade, she added.

With regard to enterprise funds, she spoke in detail about water and sewer operations and capital projects during the rate-setting process, Director LaScaleia reminded. The DPW operates and maintains extensive systems on both the water and sewer side. The water treatment plant flows three million gallons a day and the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) treats four million gallons a day; the enterprises also have extensive capital needs and rising costs which they talked about in great detail during the rate-setting process. The uncertainty of Coca-Cola leaving puts them in a very difficult position. They are just finishing up an \$11 million upgrade to the WWTP. The level of debt service they are about to take on in the sewer enterprise is about to become equivalent to the amount of debt service in the water enterprise. In the water enterprise they are running roughly \$2 million worth of debt service in a roughly \$7 million utility and are about to be at that level in sewer, which is a \$6 million utility. The level of debt service to fund necessary capital improvements is significant. The uncertainty of Coca-Cola leaving and who will replace it required the recent change in rate structure. They are starting to see very unstable usage from Coca-Cola; its usage was down as low as she has seen in March although it rebounded slightly in the following months. She thinks they are starting to get tailings.

The Stormwater budget is level-funded. The solid waste enterprise has been running at a deficit for years since the closure of the landfill back in 2011/2012, Director LaScaleia continued. What

they have tried to do to insure long-term sustainability of the transfer station is to scale back operations to the point that they do not have to pull from stabilization to balance the budget. Councilors will notice in solid waste they are actually pulling from retained earnings to balance the budget but they have tried to rely less on that and to hold fees stable to the extent possible. Northampton also has the situation of a 2<sup>nd</sup> transfer station with Valley Recycling.

She greatly appreciates the efforts of all DPW employees to provide the services they do every day and is honored to stand up and talk about the work they do. "They're the ones who keep our critical services running and it's important to recognize their efforts," she concluded.

### Councilor Questions

With regard to line striping, Councilor Nash asked if they could do the striping earlier in the year. His memory is that it tends to be later in the season.

The reason for this delay is that they need time to sweep the streets, Director LaScaleia explained. They will not have as high a quality job if the streets are not swept first.

He used to hear city officials say they had \$100 million in deferred maintenance on their roadways, Councilor Nash recalled. He knows they've cut into that quite a bit but he asked where they are as far as that.

They have between 150 and 160 miles of roadway. A map on the DPW's website shows all of the streets that have been paved in the city and the roads that still need paving. Over the last six or seven years they have paved 21+ miles of their 150+ miles of roadway including major arterial roads like Burts Pit Road, North Farms Road, Ryan Road, West Farms Road and Pleasant Street. She can confidently say they have made great progress in the amount of work they have done in the last several years but that they can't take their foot off the gas. She said she would be happy to share some of the great visuals on the city website.

Councilor Nash agreed all of their major roads are in superb condition. Deferred maintenance tends to be on the secondary roads, he noted.

In response to a question from Councilor LaBarge about vacancies, Director LaScaleia said the city has signed new collective bargaining agreements which have increased salaries. They backfill vacancies with overtime and contractors because the work still needs to get done.

Councilor Moulton said he noticed that the solid waste operating budget had decreased. On behalf of all their constituents he stated how much he appreciates that she has decreased expenses rather than raising fees for trash disposal or trash bags. He thanked her for recognizing there are times when the city can reduce expenses rather than increase fees.

The DPW is responsible for maintaining a significant amount of infrastructure in the city, he continued. It seems to him she's dealing with two major impediments, money and people power. He imagines this leads to her having to make some tough decisions.

Director LaScaleia articulated her philosophy of providing the best possible service within the constraints of the budget. "We do the absolute best we can," she stressed. "It's about doing the best you can with what you have."

Councilor Maiore asked if the DPW has retention once they do fill a position.

They do see turnover, Director LaScaleia acknowledged. Their main competition is the private sector construction industry.

With regard to the stormwater and flood control enterprise, there is certainly still interest in taking a fresh look at how that fee is calculated, Councilor Jarrett reminded. He recalled that the mayor and others were interested in looking at that.

At the mayor's request, the DPW engaged the engineering firm Tighe & Bond to do a thorough review of the budgets, billing structure and ordinances related to stormwater management, Director LaScaleia confirmed. They do a lot of work for utilities within Massachusetts. It is important to remember the stormwater enterprise was created in response to federal and state

regulations so the consultant's work is looking at the compliance and regulatory piece as well. Its work is ongoing and she will let know when they have something to report.

**Public Comment**

**James Cope of Jewett Street**, said they have been very concerned about the condition of streets and sidewalks in the older residential parts of Northampton. It is almost impossible to imagine someone in a wheelchair or pushing a stroller using the sidewalks in their neighborhood and they are within two blocks of the high school, not in an outlying area. He recognizes the priority of giving attention to the main streets, but the overall budget is way too little to deal with the deferred maintenance that was mentioned and they are never going to get there at this rate or see the sidewalks in a condition where they are safe to use. On a corner just a few blocks away, a woman in her 90's using a walker walks in the street and it is full of potholes. The street needs to be reconstructed but so do others in their neighborhood and in other neighborhoods. It generally reflects poorly on the community and creates an appearance of blight and that the city doesn't care although he knows that's not true.

They have gone to other communities like Shelburne Falls and noticed the streets and sidewalks seem to be in much better repair. He thinks there is not going to be a way out of the situation. Roads and sidewalks are going to continue to deteriorate and it gets more and more expensive to fix them once they get beyond a certain tipping point.

**Gwen Nabad** asked about hiring and what the single greatest barrier to it is; also, how the recruiting is done.

**Roy Martin, 1 Conz Street**, asked about having something like the Honor Court to help out on the labor end. It would help put a lot of them into housing. Maybe they could figure out something to help the homeless get into housing and get help to fix the sidewalks. When Honor Court was here, Bill Nagle ran it well and people were very happy with it, he commented.

There being no further comments from the public, Councilor Moulton reviewed the questions posed so Director LaScaleia and the mayor could respond.

The minimum entry requirement for an equipment operator is having a commercial driver's license (CDL) and that is probably their greatest challenge, Director LaScaleia said. Commercial drivers have a lot of employment options. It is a highly competitive market and it is a difficult license to get with rules, regulations and drug testing associated with it. Under federal motor carrier rules, heavy equipment operators must have a CDL license. The Commonwealth also has strict licensing requirements and a lengthy licensing process with an apprenticeship component for water treatment and wastewater treatment officers. It is not a scenario where they hire someone and just throw them behind the wheel of a truck.

In response to Mr. Martin's query, there are reasons that the Honor Court is not active anymore, Mayor Sciarra related. It is not something she's particularly comfortable with anyway. She doesn't think it will be coming back anytime soon.

And, the city borrows \$1.5 million annually for paving which is a significant amount to borrow. They do try to chip away at it every year and keep up but they also try to advance. In the last couple of years they have doubled the amount of money they are putting toward sidewalk repair, which has tensions involving trees, etc. She joins everyone in saying she hopes all of their sidewalks could be maintained in a way in which all of them are passable.

Councilor Maiore asked if it is the director's belief that climate change is making maintenance more difficult.

The vast majority of sidewalk damage seen throughout the city is due to conflict with trees, Director LaScaleia advised.

Councilor LaBarge mentioned the sidewalk near Florence Heights which is not ADA compliant. "It's been years and years and years and nothing has been done for the safety of anyone using that sidewalk," she lamented.

	<p>Director LaScaleia cited that location as a great example of everything just covered that makes sidewalk maintenance so challenging.</p>
<p><u>Recess</u></p>	<p><u>Recess</u> The City Council recessed briefly. The council reconvened at 7:47 p.m.</p>
<p><u>Department of Health and Human Services</u></p>	<p><u>Department of Health and Human Services</u> Tonight she is presenting the budget of the reorganized Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for the second time, DHHS Commissioner Merridith O'Leary advised. As they can see, there is a very slight increase to the budget primarily because they are unsure of some grant funding through the Equitable Approaches to Public Safety (EAPS) grant program. However, they will also notice that there is a decrease in Personnel Services (PS) line items because two positions merged into one position and there is a slight increase in how much current grants are supporting personnel services. There is also a small increase in Ordinary Maintenance due to the uncertainty of another grant funding source.</p> <p>When the budget was submitted three months ago, they had eight vacancies in their staff of 23. Of those eight, they have now filled the Division of Community Care (DCC) coordinator with Nataya Birch and the Administrative Assistant grants manager position with Cara Lacoponi. They have four community responder positions and just started interviewing this week. They are hoping to have those positions filled and to start the onboarding process June 20th.</p> <p>A regional public health nursing position is also open and the last vacancy is a regional database manager position which they are putting on hold since it is fully grant funded and they don't have the grant funding to support it yet. In terms of grant funding, she is happy to report that they have taken in \$2.6 million in grants, ranging from some very large grants that support prevention work to EAPS and Public Health Excellence. DHHS has six divisions: public health nursing, inspectional services, emergency preparedness and response, substance use prevention, public health excellence and the Division of Community Care (DCC).</p> <p>They have two approved IRB's (Institutional Review Boards): a research IRB with UMass to evaluate and document the DCC and a data equity IRB for research on opioid overdose fatalities, she continued. They have also become an approved affiliate for the naloxone purchasing program with the state Department of Public Health so they now obtain all their narcan free. Another notable highlight is that they have expanded the number of communities using their DART model from 24 to 45.</p> <p>With regard to the analysis of three years' worth of dispatch data in connection with the DCC, Councilor Moulton asked if that analysis is done and if they have drawn any conclusions from it.</p> <p>They have received a report from the consultant (LEAP) charged with assessing the volume of calls, origin of calls, types of calls, etc., Commissioner O'Leary advised. DHHS staff have been doing a deeper dive into the report and meeting with the police department to suss it out even further. It needs to be a little more granular.</p> <p>Councilor Maiore asked about the timeframe for outreach workers beginning to respond to calls.</p> <p>Their hope to have at least some community responders start June 20th. They will have two days of training in house and then a rigorous 120 hours of training between the end of June and the end of August. They will begin responding to calls via phone, email or text September 1st.</p> <p>Councilor Maiore expressed the understanding that by the fall they will have an alternative place for calls to go.</p> <p>In response to a question from Councilor Gore, Commissioner O'Leary said the OM budget is not broken down by division. Of the \$166,000 overall budget, much of the contractual services line item will be used for the DCC. The DCC also has technology needs and expenses for the retrofitting of vehicles, uniforms, furniture, supplies, etc.</p>

Mayor Sciarra asked her to go through some of the positions that will assist the DCC. One of the beauties of bringing the DCC into the DHHS is its existing administrative framework, she noted.

The public-facing community space for the DCC (the former Smithsonian restaurant at One Roundhouse Plaza) is being designed using a trauma-informed lens since community members entering the space may be undergoing a crisis, Commissioner O'Leary related. They intend to have staff such as their substance use prevention specialist and primary prevention specialist available for drop in services, and a public health nurse will be in the space during operating hours in addition to the DCC coordinator.

She wanted to make sure it was clear that additional staff will serve the DCC, Mayor Sciarra stressed. Much of the work in all of the divisions intersects, Commissioner O'Leary confirmed.

He is very excited to hear that the DCC will be operational in a few months, Councilor Jarrett said. He read from the NPRC report as follows: "The Department also needs to be accountable to those that it serves in a way that is not currently seen in city departments, or by social service agencies who contract with the city or state. The leadership and governance of the department should include people with lived experience of marginalization and criminalization, and those impacted by it. These people should be prioritized in hiring decisions at all levels."

He acknowledge this is a tough charge within the constraints of municipal government. He asked if they had been able to incorporate those principles within the leadership and functioning of the DCC.

As they see it, the DCC is an additional public health-led resource in the public safety system that focuses on addressing racial and social inequities and supporting community members during times of significant challenges, Commissioner O'Leary advised. It was very important to them in thinking about community responders and the DCC team to look at language used and to make sure they were inclusive and very thoughtful and tactful in how they were recruiting people. They want people who have had lived or living experiences. They have looked at national models and are taking the best of what they have learned and integrating it into their choice of words, how they promote the positions and where they are marketing and putting out job descriptions. They are looking at that report and integrating it to the best of their ability while also thinking about risk management to roll out the best program that they can.

In terms of feedback from those in the community most impacted, he asked how they would take that and work it into the program.

They consulted with C-4 Innovations to conduct key informant interviews with people they intend to serve and with agencies that currently serve this population and it has put together a report, Commissioner O'Leary advised. When she thinks about measuring success, she would like to re-interview key informants one year after the launch to see what changes they report.

Jo Ella Tarbutton asked if they target nontraditional job listing networks and websites (she named several) and, if so, if they feature diversity, equity and inclusion training within their own agency. She knows a lot of qualified people who look like her and need jobs who would want these jobs. She asked how they are seeking out a diverse group of people.

Human Resources (HR) has a set of places where they post positions and they have been working with HR very closely on different avenues to try to attract a diverse pool of applicants, Commissioner O'Leary confirmed. She would love the list that Jada just rattled off. They have worked with Casa Latina and partnering agencies that work with diverse populations to try to get these postings as far and wide as possible.

They also changed the language to be more inclusive and are working with a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) consultant to craft inclusive language.

And, yes, indeed they are doing DEI training for DHHS staff and also city-wide. The mayor would like all employees to have foundational training on interrupting racism.



Gwen Nabad wondered if the data analysis included rates of asthma, cancer, health issues and cognitive and developmental disabilities in children living in low-income housing; also if people will have access to the results of the DCC focus groups.

Near the end of Mayor Narkewicz’s service, he decided to start charging for final Board of Health reports. She asked if that cost could be removed for low income or elderly citizens.

**Javier Luengo-Garrido of 27 Northern Avenue** said he served on the same subcommittee and as a full commissioner on the NPRC alongside Councilor Jarrett. The accountability piece is always complicated. In creating a feedback loop, it is important that people who receive services don’t feel they are in jeopardy of losing the services if they complain. Because of the numbers in Northampton, it is really easy to deconstruct who is reporting a situation. With that in mind, he asked if they have thought about how feedback coming from people getting the services of the DCC will be safeguarded/treated in order to preserve their privacy.

Having been the health director for 10 years and health commissioner for the past year, she is all about following HIPAA-compliant laws, Commissioner O’Leary assured. Whenever they get data it is always aggregate data and never super granular and personally-identifiable. As DHHS they have policies and guidelines for all of their staff to make sure everybody understands the importance of privacy.

In response to Gwen’s question, a community health needs assessment done every three years by the Cooley Dickinson Hospital gives county-wide data that speaks to rates of various health outcomes in public housing, Commissioner O’Leary said. They will also be conducting a community health assessment for the city itself.

Every year that the community health needs assessment (CHNA) comes out they look at the data. As DHHS, they like to look at prevention so that people don’t get sick. It is the kind of data they look at to help write their health plans.

Commissioner O’Leary clarified that the health department does not charge for reports. If staff perform an inspection and have a written report, they provide a copy of it.

Jada asked the mayor about the training for city staff.

The city has contracted with Human in Common to run full-day in-depth trainings for city leadership and city staff, Mayor Sciarra confirmed. She has asked all department heads to take it and to identify key staff to take it, too.

Almost 200 employees have completed that training, Commissioner O’Leary said.

There being no further comments, **Councilor Nash moved to continue the public hearing to tomorrow night at 6 p.m. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.**

Adjourn

Adjourn

**Councilor Maiore moved to adjourn. Councilor Foster seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.**

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

## **EXHIBIT A**

List of Documents Reviewed at May 23, 2023 Northampton special City Council Meeting (FY2024 budget hearing):

1. May 23, 2023 Agenda
2. Document entitled, "City Northampton Proposed FY2024 Budget," dated May 17, 2023, prepared by Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra

Record of City Council Votes for May 23, 2023		Elkins	Foster	Gore	Jarrett	LaBarge	Maioire	Moulton	Nash	Perry	Total
Roll Call by Council Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler @ 6:02 p.m.		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	9 Present, 0 Absent
RECESS FOR FINANCE COMMITTEE											
Open Public Hearing on FY2024 Budget						Second			Move to open		Motion carried 4:0; voice vote
Close Public Hearing on FY2024 Budget - Continued to May 24, 2023 @ 6 p.m.						Second			Move to continue		Motion carried 4:0; voice vote
Adjourn Finance						Second			Move to adjourn		Motion carried 4:0; voice vote
RESUME CITY COUNCIL											
Adjourn		Yes	Second	Yes	Yes	Yes	Move to adjourn	Yes	Yes	Absent	Motion carried 8:0; roll call