



Committee on City Services and the Northampton City Council

Committee Members:

*Chair: Councilor Karen Foster
Vice-Chair: Councilor Jamila Gore
Councilor Marianne LaBarge
Councilor Garrick Perry*

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 5, 2023
Time: 5 p.m.
Via Teleconference

1. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

At 5 p.m., Councilor Karen Foster called the meeting to order. On a roll call, Councilor Foster, Chair; Councilor Jamila Gore, Vice Chair, Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge and Councilor Garrick Perry were present. Also present was Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler.

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

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

3. **MINUTES OF MAY 1, 2023**

Councilor Perry moved to approve the minutes of May 1, 2023. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

4. **ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE**

A. **23.313 Appointments to Various Committees, referred by City Council - 5/4/2023
Whiting Street Fund Committee**

Andrea Murray, 54 Day Ave., Northampton

Term: July 2023 - June 2026

Reappointment

Board of Assessors

David Murphy, 78 North Elm St., Northampton

Term: July 2023 - June 2026

Reappointment

Central Business Architecture Committee

Melissa Frydlo, 123 South St. #2, Northampton

Term: July 2023 – June 2026

Reappointment

Council on Aging

Adrienne Andrews, 84 Pines Edge Drive, Northampton

Term: July 2023 – June 2026

To fill a vacancy

Mark Bird, 19 West Center St., Florence

Term: July 2023 – June 2026

To fill a vacancy

Housing Partnership

Spencer Ghazey-Bates, 86 Massasoit St., Northampton

Term: July 2023 – June 2026

To fill a vacancy

Councilor Foster read the names of those referred for **re**appointment: Andrea Murray, David Murphy and Melissa Frydlo.

Councilor Gore moved to make a positive recommendation for appointment of the three reappointments as a group. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

Councilor Perry said he had a lovely conversation with Adrienne Andrews. She came here to go to Smith College and has lived in Northampton a number of years. She left for a bit but came back and has been working with seniors for a while. She has volunteered at the senior center and was approached by Michael Ford to join the Council on Aging. She is looking forward to using some of her organizational skills as well as her ability to listen objectively. A number of times she served as an ombudsperson at Smith College. He thinks she would be an excellent addition to the Council on Aging.

Councilor Perry made a positive recommendation for the appointment of Adrienne Andrews to the Council on Aging. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

Councilor LaBarge said she had a great talk with Mark Bird, who's just awesome. He emailed her to say it was a pleasure to speak with her. Mark is very interested in becoming a part of the Council on Aging and working together with the board and staff to enhance the quality of life of the elder population in Northampton. Since he joined the senior center, his experience as a social worker in many settings has enabled him to advocate for others of varied backgrounds who struggle with physical and psychosocial issues. As the population ages, the need for services and programs will increase. The Council on Aging is an agency which can continue to make Northampton a place that feels like home.

Councilor LaBarge made a motion for a positive recommendation. Councilor Gore seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

Councilor Gore said she talked to Spencer Ghazey-Bates, who applied for appointment to the Housing Partnership. He saw that there were some openings and wanted to help out. He has lived here for 16 years. His wife grew up in Northampton and his mother-in-law is on the School Committee. He is a practicing attorney who does some real estate work. He wants to focus on creative ways to maintain affordable housing and is excited to give back to the city. He definitely has time to give to the Housing Partnership although he wouldn't have time to run for office. He wants to do something to give back and affordable housing is what he really wants to work on.

Councilor Gore moved to positively recommend the appointment of Spencer Ghazey-Bates to the Housing Partnership. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Future Meeting Format (Hybrid or Remote)

Committee members expressed their thoughts about whether to continue meeting remotely or resume in-person meetings. Councilor LaBarge said she personally would like to stay remote. She has been watching City Services very carefully and there are no changes. They don't see very much public comment. Even with department heads, she thinks they feel comfortable with zooming also. Why go all the way downtown, be there for half an hour or 40 minutes and then go back home. If something serious comes up, they could have a hybrid meeting.

Councilor Perry said he's of a similar mind. He thinks the nature of the committee lends itself to quicker turnover. While he lives less than a ten-minute walk from the chambers, he knows not everyone does.

Councilor Gore said she thought they could stay remote at least for the summer and possibly revisit the decision later.

Councilor Foster agreed with the consensus to stay remote.

6. SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON BARRIERS TO SERVICE ON CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, REFERRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION ON MAY 18, 2023

The City Council referred the Select Committee final report to City Services for implementation, Councilor Foster reminded. In the interest of time tonight, she just wanted to discuss a preliminary plan for approaching this assignment. She confirmed that members received the implementation matrix circulated by the administrative assistant.

Councilor Foster said she noticed an Item missing, the recommendation that City Services consider adopting a standardized set of questions. This got her thinking that, as a first step, it might be a good idea to reread the report with the matrix in hand to see if anything else is missing. Ms. Krutzler took the key recommendations from the executive summary but there were some other things buried deeper in the report.

Councilor Foster asked if there was anything anyone wanted to start working on right away.

Councilor LaBarge mentioned hearing that applicants were not being told how long meetings are and what committees were working on. She thinks it should be their responsibility on City Services to make sure to verify that applicants have been told the length of meetings.

Councilor Perry said he thought a good place to start would be to work on the goal of coming up with a standard set of questions for City Services. He suggested having each member compile the list of questions they typically ask applicants for the next meeting.

Councilor Gore said she would like time to review the matrix and compare it to the final report.

Ms. Krutzler was asked to send out the Excel spreadsheet so that, as members reread the report, they can send their edits back to Laura. Councilor Foster asked members to make it a goal to send their additions back to Laura a week before the next meeting so she would have time to compile them. Also, before the next meeting, she asked members to write down the questions they typically ask applicants as a jumping off point for the next meeting's discussion.

Members discussed the possible need to reschedule the July meeting, since it falls on July 3rd and may conflict with vacation plans. Councilor Foster asked Laura to send out an email tomorrow re: an alternative meeting date.

Cynthia Suopis asked via the chat if the committee will be addressing the question of how applicants are reviewed.

Yes, Councilor Foster said.

7. **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, **Councilor Perry moved to adjourn. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion carried 4:0 by roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 5:24 p.m.**

Prepared By:

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