



## MAYOR DAVID J. NARKEWICZ

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November 29, 2016

Northampton City Council  
210 Main Street, Room 3  
Northampton, MA 01060

To the Honorable Members of the City Council,

Pursuant to my authority under Article 6, Section 6-1 of the City Charter, I am respectfully submitting the attached Administrative Order making the following changes to the Administrative Code:

(1) Change Information Technology Department to Information Technology Services Department and expand service role to include the Northampton Public Schools.

A key finding of the Information Technology (IT) Assessment prepared for the City of Northampton by the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management in 2014 was the recommendation that the city's information technology service resources be consolidated to full extent possible, citing multiple benefits to this mission-critical municipal function: (1) the ability to recruit, retain, and develop skilled personnel is enhanced with a central department, (2) Cross training of staff across various application systems will reduce the risk of support loss from staff turnover, and (3) The ability to develop stronger expertise in important technical areas such as networking, software support, web design, and voice and data communications is enhanced with a larger organization.

This same key finding included a long-term recommendation that the city consider "the consolidation of all city and school IT activities into a central IT department." While NPS Superintendent Provost and I have periodically discussed the potential benefits of this recommendation since he began his tenure, the pending retirement of the NPS information technology director has now presented the opportunity to move it forward. On November 17, 2016 the School Committee voted in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, § 37M to authorize consolidation of city and school committee information technology service functions into a centralized city IT department. A corresponding required Chapter 71, § 37M vote by the City Council is currently pending. This change in the Administrative Code would serve to reflect a slightly modified name for the department and reflect the consolidation of city and school IT services under its authorities and responsibilities.

(2) Replace Board of Almoners with Whiting Street Trust Committee.

The 1875 will of the late Mr. Whiting Street left \$112,500 to be held in trust for twenty area communities, including \$25,000 to Northampton, "for the relief and comfort of the worthy poor of said towns and city, who shall not be in the Almshouse, nor be town or city paupers." Upon distribution following the death of Mr. Street's last living heirs, the funds held in trust for Northampton totaled

\$46,856 and this constitutes the restricted principal of the Whiting Street trust fund account that has a current balance of \$345,167.

Under the City of Northampton's former charter, a six-member Board of Almoners consisting of five residents elected by City Council plus the Mayor as an ex-officio member was charged with disbursing funds from the Whiting Street trust to the "worthy poor" of the city. In modern practice, this involved individuals submitting applications for funding to the city Treasurer who in turn brought them to the Board of Almoners for review and approval. The Board was temporarily eliminated following adoption of the city's current special act charter in 2012, but was reconstituted in largely the same format in 2014 as part of my first Administrative Order reorganizing city government. Shortly after the Board was reconstituted I attended one of its meetings to begin a dialogue about its current authorities and responsibilities and potential ways for improving how it carries them out.

The current structure requires a board made up of citizen volunteers to assess the "worthiness" of a myriad of highly individualized funding requests from residents related to financial hardship such as paying overdue rents or mortgage payments, preventing utility shut-offs, or making emergency home repairs. In addition to the challenge of assessing and verifying both the hardship and an applicant's income, a public body evaluating said requests while subject to modern open government laws has a limited ability to offer any measure of privacy to applicants. Both the Board's deliberations about these often-sensitive matters as well as the accompanying documentation must be part of the public record.

I am issuing an Administrative Order modifying both the name and role of the Board of Almoners. Whiting Street Trust Committee more accurately reflects the work of this multiple-member body in carrying out the trust as set forth by Whiting Street in his bequest to the city. Instead of fielding individual funding requests from "the worthy poor," the Committee will instead be charged with managing an annual grant process whereby our many well-established local social service agencies that serve our community could apply for funding from the Whiting Street Trust Committee that would be specifically earmarked for serving low-income Northampton residents. These local agencies are much better equipped to assess both the financial means and needs of those who could benefit from Whiting Street funds, while at the same time maintaining their confidentiality and dignity. I believe this new structure will allow the City to better carry out its obligations under the will of Whiting Street.

Finally, this change was developed in close consultation with both the Board of Almoners and our Treasurer/Collector Kristine Bissell. The Board voted unanimously to endorse my proposed Administrative Order at its most recent November 17, 2016 meeting.

Thank you in advance for your review of these proposed changes to our Administrative Code. I stand ready to answer any questions or provide additional information and respectfully request the City Council's approval of the attached Administrative Order.

Sincerely,



David J. Narkewicz  
Mayor

cc: City Clerk



## ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

**Amend City of Northampton Administrative Code,  
Part I Administrative Organization, Section 2.06 as follows:**

**DELETE IN ITS ENTIRETY AND REPLACE WITH:**

2.06 Information Technology Services Department

Established

There shall be an Information Technology Services Department under the supervision of a chief information officer.

Authorities and Responsibilities

The Information Technology Services Department provides computer hardware and software acquisition, telecommunications infrastructure, information security, maintenance, and support to all City departments and the Northampton Public Schools. It is further responsible for computer supplies management, desktop and web publishing, social media management, and voice and data communications. The department shall be responsible for systems development and planning, systems modification and enhancement, operations, central services, and management and administrator of the hardware and software for the geographic information system. The department shall be responsible for planning, development and implementation of instructional technology within Northampton Public Schools in support of the established educational goals. The department shall be responsible for safeguarding Information Technology (IT) Resources, achieving confidentiality, integrity and availability of the data and IT Resources used to manage the services provided by the City. The department is responsible for computer training and the official City website. The department is the central depository for all electronic information.

**Amend City of Northampton Administrative Code,  
Part II Multiple-Member Appointive Organization, Section 3.0 as follows:**

**DELETE IN ITS ENTIRETY AND REPLACE WITH:**

3.0. Whiting Street Fund Committee

Established

There shall be a Whiting Street Fund Committee consisting of five members.

Authorities and Responsibilities

The Whiting Street Fund Committee shall advise the Mayor on the distribution of the income earned on the funds held in trust by the City in accordance the will of the late Whiting Street, "for the relief and comfort of the worthy poor" of Northampton.

The committee shall work with the Treasurer/Collector to establish a process for making annual recommendations to the Mayor for the distribution of funds to non-profit agencies for the sole purpose of providing direct financial assistance to low-income Northampton residents and, thereafter, to recommend annually one or more non-profit agencies to which the funds should be distributed. Pursuant to the will, the total annual distribution shall be restricted to interest earned on the trust fund.

The Whiting Street Fund Committee is an advisory multiple-member body of the City.