



Committee on Finance and the Northampton City Council

*Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra, Chair
Councilor Marianne LaBarge, Vice Chair
Councilor Michael J. Quinlan, Jr.
Councilor John Thorpe*

**City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street
Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building
Northampton, MA**

Meeting Date: January 14, 2020
Time: 5 p.m.

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** At 5 p.m. Councilor Sciarra called the meeting to order.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were committee members Gina-Louise Sciarra (Chair), Marianne LaBarge (Vice-Chair), Michael J. Quinlan, Jr. and John Thorpe.
3. **Announcement of Audio/Video Recording**
Councilor Sciarra announced that the meeting was NOT being audio and video recorded.
4. **Election of Chair/Vice Chair**
Councilor Sciarra opened the floor to nominations for chair. Councilor LaBarge nominated Councilor Sciarra. Councilor Thorpe seconded.

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

She called her nomination to a vote, and it passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

Councilor Sciarra opened the floor to nominations for vice chair. Councilor Thorpe nominated Councilor LaBarge. Councilor Quinlan seconded.

There being no further nominations, Councilor Sciarra closed nominations and called the nomination to a vote. The election of Councilor LaBarge as vice chair was unanimously approved 4:0 by roll call vote.

5. **Set Meeting Schedule For 2020 – 2021**
The Finance Committee meets within the City Council meeting but reserves the 4th Tuesday of the month for special meetings if needed, Councilor Sciarra explained. Members reviewed the proposed schedule.

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the meeting schedule. Councilor Quinlan seconded.

City Council Committee on Finance Meeting Minutes for January 14, 2020

After discussion of the fact that November special meetings are in the same week as Thanksgiving, members decided to change the November date to TBD. The motion to approve the schedule passed unanimously 4:0 by voice vote as amended to change the November meetings to TBD.

6. Financial Orders

None.

7. Jurisdiction - Financial Matters

Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler gave a heads up to the committee that one of the projects on their agenda this year may be conducting a procurement process for the Independent Audit.

The Charter assigns City Council the responsibility to annually provide for an outside audit of the city's books and accounts, and council rules assign the Administrative Assistant the responsibility to "assist in preparing requests for proposals for an independent auditor in accordance with Sec 7-6 of the Charter," she reminded.

The City Council awarded a three-year contract to Scanlon & Associates in 2015 for the FY16-FY18 audits. That contract has been extended twice, so the city is now in the fifth year of the contract. The Finance Committee has been the committee charged with making recommendations to the full council on financial matters, including the audit. Last year when the committee recommended extending the contract for another year, it was with the understanding that there would be a full procurement process this year.

With the new council, she isn't sure the sentiment is the same. However, the charter says, "The award of a contract to audit shall be made by the city council on or before September 15 of each year." So if the Finance Committee does want to conduct a procurement process this year, it needs to commence in the spring in order to meet this deadline.

Mrs. Krutzler referred to a sample timeline showing the steps involved and why the work needs to start so early. Ideally, accounting firms should be given 30 days to respond to an RFP. Additionally, Finance Committee members have to review the proposals, decide which firms to interview and conduct interviews. The Finance Committee's recommendation needs to get to council by its August meeting in order to allow two readings prior to the September 15th deadline.

She thought this would be a good opportunity to bring this to members' attention outside of a full council meeting. It's one of the few things that necessitates scheduling special meetings of the Finance Committee.

At some point, the full council may need to be consulted to see if it is still its will to go out to bid this year, she suggested.

8. New Business

-Reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.

None.

9. Adjourn: There being no further business, Councilor LaBarge moved to adjourn. Councilor Thorpe seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No. The meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

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City Council Committee on Finance Meeting Minutes for January 14, 2020