



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*

On line Zoom Meeting

Meeting Date: June 18, 2020

Note: The Finance Committee Meeting took place during the City Council Meeting as announced. The City Council Meeting began at 5 p.m.

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** At 1:22 a.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. Also present from the City Council were William H. Dwight, Alex Jarrett, Karen Foster, Rachel Maiore and Jim Nash.
3. **Financial Orders**
 - A. **20.067 An Order to Appropriate Approximately \$1 Million from Free Cash to Capital Stabilization**
Councilor Sciarra read the order.

Councilor Quinlan moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor Thorpe seconded.

The order's purpose was previewed during his presentation on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Mayor Narkewicz reminded. To avoid having to request two readings on a financial order, administrators are asking to have monies transferred into capital stabilization so the funds will still be available when the second reading occurs at the council's July meeting.

The motion passed 4:0 by roll call vote.

- B. **20.068 An Order to Appropriate Balance of Bond Premium for Replacement Doors for SVAHS Building A**
Councilor Sciarra read the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor Quinlan seconded.

Orders are separated by funding source, Mayor Narkewicz explained. This is an example of using residual funds from one of their bonding actions to pay for upgrades to the doors at Smith Vocational and

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Agricultural High School (SVAHS). Since it is considered a distinct funding source it is listed on a separate order.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

C. 20.069 An Order to Authorize Borrowing \$640,000 for New Fire Truck

Councilor Sciarra read the order.

Councilor Quinlan moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor LaBarge seconded.

This is the replacement of a 2006 engine, Mayor Narkewicz presented. City officials are proposing to make the purchase through bonding. They won't actually do the borrowing until next year. There is a long lead time to construct these vehicles. They have slowly over the last several years on a rotating basis been trying to replace some of this front-line equipment for the fire rescue department and this is the one that is next in the queue.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

D. 20.070 An Order to Appropriate \$1.22 Million from Capital Stabilization for Various Capital Projects

Councilor Sciarra read the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor Quinlan seconded.

These projects are all part of the FY2021 CIP, Mayor Narkewicz confirmed. They are actually the ones they had intended to fund mostly from Free Cash but for which they instead had councilors transfer money from Free Cash to capital stabilization. It is a cross section of projects, some of which he described. GHG is greenhouse gas, so the first project consists of net zero greenhouse gas analyses of city buildings. AOM is the Academy of Music. Since they have been trying to complete some upgrades there, it is a good time to bring the fire suppression system up to code. AOM administrators are seeking state grants for the work as well. The remaining projects are various infrastructure improvements. He has already described several central services projects and school projects. Forbes library drainage repairs are to address a drainage issue that threatens the stability of the parking lot and embankment behind the Forbes library.

Mayor Narkewicz fielded questions about specific projects.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

A. 20.071 An Order to Appropriate \$25,000 from Cemetery Trust and Income for Cemetery Restorative Work

Councilor Sciarra read the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor Quinlan seconded.

This is part of an ongoing multi-year commitment on the part of the city to making investments in its cemeteries, Mayor Narkewicz reported. The funds are coming specifically from the cemetery trust and income account. The city did an assessment of all its cemeteries several years ago. They have been able to secure funds for the work from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and Community Preservation Act (CPA) as well as leveraging these funds.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

B. 20.072 An Order to Appropriate \$46,000 from PEG Access and Cable Related Fund to IT for Various Projects

Councilor Sciarra read the order.

Councilor Quinlan moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor Thorpe seconded.

This is a set of funds the city has as a result of its 10-year contract with Comcast, Mayor Narkewicz related. One account is used to fund the operation of Northampton Open Media (NOM). Capital funding that comes to the city was used initially to construct the city's INET which connects various schools and municipal buildings. Going forward, administrators use funds paid to the city through this agreement for maintenance and in this case replacement of network switches and other parts to keep the fiber network going. It is a pot of money intended for capital improvements related to the Wide Area Network (WAN), he clarified.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

C. 20.073 An Order to Reprogram \$75,908 from MSBA School Projects to SVAHS Gym Lockers

Councilor Sciarra read the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor Quinlan seconded.

These are some old lockers installed in 1976, Mayor Narkewicz continued. They've seen a lot of use and have more than reached the end of their useful life. The city has some residual funds leftover from school-related roof repairs, so they are asking to reprogram them to replace these bicentennial era lockers.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

D. 20.074 An Order to Reprogram Ryan Road School Cafeteria Funds to NPS Projects

Councilor Sciarra read the order.

Councilor Quinlan moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor LaBarge seconded.

This is another reprogramming of funds left over from the renovation of the Ryan Road school cafeteria to pay for some needed projects in the food service departments, Mayor Narkewicz advised. The Point of Sale (POS) system is the one used by students to pay for lunches throughout the Northampton public school system. The walk-in freezer controls being installed are at the middle school and high school and the steam table being replaced is at the high school. Again, money originally appropriated for food service needs is being reprogrammed to pay for other food service-related projects.

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The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

E. 20.075 An Order to Purchase Land on Boggy Meadow Road to Add to the Broad Brook-Fitzgerald Lake Greenway

Councilor Sciarra read the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor Quinlan seconded.

Office of Planning and Sustainability Director Wayne Feiden informed councilors this is a beautiful piece of property consisting of about 53 acres. The city owns conservation land on two sides and holds a conservation restriction on the third side. The tract includes a gorgeous beaver meadow and wonderful upland habitat and has been one of the planning department's top priorities for acquisition. As councilors will remember, almost every year the city applies for a land grant. Planners need the order in order to be eligible for the grant but will come back to the council to rescind the borrowing authorization.

Councilor LaBarge asked if it was Dr. Wilbur's home. Feiden said it is not his home, but he owned the property. His four children own the property now. The city generally surveys its holdings as a routine matter but since the city owns land on three sides, it already shows up on their surveys. The assessors say it is 54 acres and the survey says 53, so that's why it's listed as 53 plus acres. It's accurate within an acre.

Councilor Jarrett said he has walked this property many times. It's got some beautiful parts to it, he confirmed. He asked if the right of way indicated will be available to the public.

Mr. Feiden said they think so. There are two parts to the right-of-way. There's a row along the northerly part of the cemetery which is clear, so they definitely get that. The attorneys need to do a little more research on the other part. Assuming it is clear, then, yes, they would have that right.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

F. 20.078 An Order to Authorize King Street Corridor Improvements Right of Way Acquisition

Councilor Sciarra read the order.

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward the order with a positive recommendation. Councilor Quinlan seconded.

These row acquisitions are related to the King Street corridor improvement project between Bright Street and the Mass Central Rail Trail, Mayor Narkewicz explained. The project is being funded by federal highway and MassDOT funds but requires the city to do these row acquisitions in the form of either fee taking, permanent easements or temporary easements. The city hired a contractor to satisfy the federal requirements for row acquisition. The contractor met with each property owner to discuss the project and its impacts. A certified appraisal was done and offer letters were sent out based on the appraised value.

Of the 26 owners, seven agreed to actually forgo the appraisal and donate their easements to the city. A second reading is slated for July 9, 2020. Once the right-of-ways have been secured, the plan is for the project to go out to bid August 15, 2020 with bid openings on September 22nd.

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Construction is being paid for by MassDOT but the city has to do row acquisition, he reiterated. He publicly thanked the property owners (Servicenet, VHS Realty, Trident Realty, Alan Verson, Gayle Cannon, RKE Realty and Mr. Geneco, LLC) who donated easements to the city. The city is using Chapter 90 money to actually pay for the takings since it's an allowable expense under Chapter 90.

Councilor Jarrett asked the total of damages listed. That's the \$215,000 in the order, Mayor Narkewicz said.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

4. New Business

None.

5. Adjourn: There being no further business, Councilor Thorpe moved to adjourn. Councilor Quinlan seconded. The motion carried on a roll call vote of 4 Yes, 0 No. The meeting adjourned at 2 a.m.

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