



CITY COUNCIL MEETING
212 MAIN STREET
Northampton, Massachusetts
September 18, 2025

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the City Council was called to order by Council President Alex Jarrett at 6:32 p.m. Upon a roll call, the following City Councilors were present:

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| At-Large Councilor Marissa Elkins | At-Large Councilor Garrick Perry |
| Ward 1 Councilor Stanley Moulton, III | Ward 2 Councilor Deborah Klemer |
| Ward 3 Councilor Quaverly Rothenberg | Ward 4 Councilor Jeremy Dubs |
| Ward 5 Councilor Alexander Jarrett | Ward 6 Councilor Marianne LaBarge |
| Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore | |

Announcement that Meeting Audio/Video Recorded

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

Public Hearings
Announcement of Public Hearing on 25.313 National Grid/Verizon Petition to install a new pole and relocate an existing pole on Bridge Road (Petition #31169388)

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Councilor Jarrett made the following announcement:
Per M.G.L. Ch. 166, Section 22, the Northampton City Council will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, September 30, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.** in Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA on National Grid/Verizon's petition to relocate one jointly-owned pole (Pole #75) on Bridge Road to accommodate a new driveway at 737 Bridge Road and install one JO new pole (#74) to correct an existing overlong span. (Petition #31169388). Instructions for accessing the hearing remotely may be found on the September 30, 2025 City Council agenda to be posted on www.northamptonma.gov no later than 48 hours prior to the hearing. The City Council will hear all persons who wish to be heard thereon.

Public Comment

Public Comment

Councilor Jarrett explained the procedure he would use in conducting public comment and opened the floor to comments.

Peter Kakos, Florence, thanked councilors for their service to their community and for passing the resolution for a ceasefire, the resumption of desperately-needed humanitarian aid and the release of hostages on both sides last year. He is here tonight to talk about the fact that it has been a year since they had these conversations and matters have gone from bad to worse. It is no exaggeration to say that the livelihood of two million people has been demolished. There is something they can do locally. The interfaith community is having a benefit for a school in Gaza – the Samud School - which has had to vacate Gaza City. An interfaith concert will be held at First Churches on Main Street on Saturday, October 4th at 2 p.m. Jewish, Muslim and Christian prayers for peace will be lifted up. Come and donate if possible (the suggested donation is \$15); if not, just come.. They are having a professional Arabic ensemble and Spanish music. The time is now to free Palestine.

Mariel Berger, Northampton, a Jewish constituent, said she wants the City Council to divest funds from the companies that are fueling genocide in Gaza. Right now, as they speak, 900,000 people are trapped in Gaza city; not everyone could evacuate, and Israel is just bombing and demolishing every single apartment complex, every single person in Gaza. They don't even know how many are dead at this point; there was a media blackout, an internet blackout. It is so horrific right now. They have to do everything they can and divesting from companies involved in either surveilling with AI or producing the weapons could make an impact and might inspire other towns to divest as well. "This is what we need to be doing at this moment."

Veronica Darmon, Northampton, said she is here tonight to ask why this resolution is being considered. Northampton, MA is 5,500 miles away from Israel. Because a little over 71,000 is invested in companies several councilors deem to be complicit with human rights violations, there is now a ceremonial gesture to make a statement as a city. But boycotting or divesting from Israeli-affiliated igov is not actually helping anyone affected by the war between Israel and Gaza and applies severe double standards. Because they all know that, while Israel is being accused of human rights abuses, other countries with proven and continued human rights abuses are being ignored. To that, she would ask the council if BDS proposals

have been presented for Sudan, North Korea, Russia and a whole host of Arab countries surrounding Israel. Her guess is, probably not.

Much like the recent request of members of the River Valley Coop to stop shelving a handful of Israeli-made products, she fears the goal is not to affect the Israeli economy but to unfairly target the Jewish homeland and its individuals and institutions. BDS movements are counterproductive to peace because they undermine principles of engagement, tolerance, dialogue and co-existence needed for a two-state solution, which they all want. Please consider that harming the Israeli economy also hurts tens of thousands of Palestinians who live and work in the country they call home. Finally, she appeals to their sense of duty to all Northampton children. If this resolution is passing, can you imagine what it says to a child attending a Northampton school who may be Israeli or has Israeli parents? "I think it clearly says 'we do not support you, and we don't welcome you in this community,' and that is not okay with me."

Rivak Nisensweig, Greenfield, she/her, identified herself as an Israeli American and the grandchild of Holocaust survivors. The city of Northampton passing a resolution that would divest funds from this genocide would be honoring her ancestors, honoring her people, giving the Jewish people a future and stopping the endless, unfathomable death and suffering going on in Palestine and Gaza. There is a long history of nonviolent resistance that includes boycotts, divestments and sanctions. It is a normal thing people do when the unthinkable is happening. The only reason they can't speak openly about this is because her family's trauma, the Holocaust, is used as a shield to stop people from listening to their hearts and seeing what's right in front of them. It saddens her to no end; it terrifies her to no end and, in the end, it is not about her, it is about the tens of thousands and probably over a hundred thousand Palestinians who are dead right now and who are suffering. Right now in Israel there are basically two camps; the camp that believes in genocide and the camp that believe in apartheid. "As Americans, we should believe in neither of them and, locally, we should fund neither of them."

Anthony Fishel, Leeds, said this is not the first time he has stood alone in a room full of brainwashed people. He is the survivor of sexual abuse. He was abused for three years; his parents were in a religious cult and he was abused by the people in the cult. His mom fled that cult when she found out what was going on. He kept it to himself and the first time he spoke about it was in high school when there was a workshop about rape. In that workshop, they divided the room into four corners and then they told a story of a woman going on a date and wearing the wrong clothes and getting raped. Presenters then had people go into the corners representing what percentage of fault they assigned to the rapist vs. the victim. One corner was 50%/50%, 50% the rapist's fault and 50% the victim's fault. Another corner was 25%/75% and another 75%/25%. There was one corner that was 0% and 100%. He stood in that corner alone and felt so sad for his classmates. He didn't even have the words to understand what was different between him and them. How come he is the only one that can see it?

Jenny Bender, a Jewish Northampton resident, spoke in favor of the divestment resolution. "We are in a dangerous and terrifying moment in history," she observed. She thanked Rivka for her words. She acknowledged there are differences of opinion and identity and most are more nuanced than when it comes to what they are seeing in Gaza.

To the person who spoke before her, as an American, as a North American citizen, she doesn't conflate her government with the people of this country. When she stands against what her government is doing, she doesn't see that as harming her neighbors. She hopes they can bring that same lens to Israel and separate what the Israeli government is doing from the people of Israel. When she says she is in support of the divestment resolution, it is because she is in such deep despair and rage and terror and grief about the tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians who are being killed in their beds, while trying to get medical care and while trying to get food for their starving children. Whether they identify as Jewish, Zionist or anti-Zionist, conservative or progressive, she imagines that most of them here today oppose this unchecked bloodshed. She pleaded for them to put these small differences aside so that they can stand together against this onslaught of injustice, here and abroad. If people want to bring other resolutions to the council and protest what is going on in Sudan, "I am behind that!"

"Let us divest from companies that are complicit in human rights violations here and everywhere," she urged.

"Since we're playing identity politics," **Leeds resident Shanna Fishel**, said she is an Israeli Jew. They all want this war to end but divesting from Israel is ridiculous. Israel is a powerhouse in medical and technological innovation; almost every scientific medical breakthrough has some Israeli connection. Israel is a global leader in many fields, including the interface between hardware, software and biology. Everyone here with a smart phone in their hand benefits from what Israel has to offer. Divesting hurts the people, all people, the citizens, not the government. "All you are doing with this resolution is dividing this community and sowing the seeds of hate."

The cumulative effect of essentially three anti-Israel resolutions in the span of one year has surely had subconscious and conscious consequence on the populace of Northampton and creating some degree of anti-Jewish sentiment. "I feel it in my bones!"

Don't pretend this is about your values or the community. How about the hostages? How about Jews? How about those slaughtered by Hamas? Jews, Muslims, Christians, Bedouins, foreign nationals. How about genocide and targeted ethnic lending in Congo and Sudan? Where is your resolution for that? Or do you just get to pick and choose whose lives are important? Heard of blood libels? Why not a resolution that aims to end the war and call for accountability for Hamas? Why not ask for the return of hostages held by Hamas. Why not ask for a peaceful government of Gaza? Why have you not focused attention on the evil of Hamas against its own people? What has Hamas done for you that you are so powerful, supporting their agenda to eliminate Jews from the river to the sea? She said she was speaking for the memory of Shani Louk, who was kidnapped, raped and murdered by Hamas.

Alisa Klein, Leeds, said she is proud that her city councilor, Rachel Maiore, is one of the sponsors of the divestment resolution on the agenda. It is very appropriate for it to be on the agenda tonight because today begins the four-day global strike for Gaza, a coordinated international action to demand accountability and an end to a brutal, cruel, deliberate, intentional and carefully-orchestrated genocide being perpetrated by Israel and fueled with literally billions of U.S. dollars. The U.S. is more than complicit, this country, "we," are "full partners in the murder of tens of thousands of Palestinians and the starvation of over a million more in a supremacist ethnic cleansing of a people."

"Our tax dollars – this city's investments - make us partners to this massive crime against humanity." Divestment is the only stance.

She warned them they will be bombarded by Zionist rhetoric that any action to stop this genocide is anti-semitic, but this action is nothing more than their city's contribution to stopping a genocide. She is a Jew; she grew up in part in Israel. She is an Israeli citizen and served two years of compulsory service in the Israeli Army as a young adult. So the credentialing they'll hear from some Zionist Jews – that they get to decide what is anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic - is a red herring; it is a ploy to keep them from embracing a just and necessary action. She urged the council not to send the resolution to committee, saying it needs their action, their support and their 'yes' votes immediately. "Palestinians in Gaza can't wait."

Libi Bat Hoyin, Leeds, said she assumes the hostages can wait. Turning towards the audience, she said she wants she everybody to live, Gazans and her country and her people and the B-Bus babies and Shani Louk. You women, all you progressive people. Where were all you people when breasts were being sliced off by Hamas? Where are you now when hostages underground are being starved?

[Councilor Jarrett asked her to please direct her comments to the City Council.]

She stated her intention to just say the names of the hostages, adding "I just feel so bad for your souls. Your souls are crying."

Ms. Bat Hoyin read the names and ages of hostages. ""

"They burned babies in ovens. We didn't make this up. We didn't make any of this up!"

"You are so brainwashed. I feel so bad for your souls."

She continued reading names until Councilor Jarrett told her it was time.

She left the room saying she was so sorry for all of them.

Eli Gurevich, Ward 2, said he is here to ask the City Council to pass this resolution to divest from Israeli companies and groups that support genocide. He is also a Jewish resident. He said he hoped councilors were listening closely to speakers who previously spoke against passing this resolution. I didn't hear any denial of a genocide happening. I didn't hear any denial of Israel committing anything. I just heard a 'what about-ism.'

"Of course, it is horrendous what happened on October 7th and, of course, we would like the hostages to be freed and peace in the region."

But the arguments made previously were simply 'what about-ism' and 'this affects the economy of Israel that supposedly we benefit from.'

Somehow the hostages and the killing of Israelis justifies the 63,000 to 65,000 dead, including the children in Gaza. "There's no denial of that." There is an argument to be made that other genocides are going on around the world of similar import," he acknowledged. But, "that's not a denial of a genocide."

So he's hoping they were listening closely as that's basically the argument being made. As a Jewish person, he was educated and made to view as highly important being against any fundamental nationalism or racism that could lead to similar persecutions. He thinks this is really important because even a small amount of money divested by many towns could lead to a large change.

Nathan Chung, Northampton, said he was going to shift to some local issues. This will be his last public comment for a while unless things get really bad. There has been some misinformation and political targeting and that encouraged him to speak up about local issues. In Holyoke, between 2022 and 2024, he was interrupted twice by a City Councilor during public comment for expressing dissenting opinions. He thinks, unfortunately, Northampton political discourse has sunk just as low and probably even worse fueled by social media and COVID-19. He finds that people who portray themselves as anti-status quo and anti-elites are often local socio-economic elites such as doctors, lawyers, professors, engineers and wealthy transplants. They promote people from their own groups with limited government experience as opposed to people from lower socio-economic groups with actual experience. This is nothing new. He thinks what they need as a community is limiting distractions, like Facebook, so they can better educate themselves and recover the ability to talk in person with others with whom we disagree. They also probably need to be a little more transparent about their own privileges, like having really expensive homes or coming from really wealthy families. He encouraged everyone to stay alert, question everybody's intentions and backgrounds ignoring their self-promotions and ask people for the sources of their claims and specific solutions. He cited his blog <https://cityuntangled/politics/> for more information and his email. In his remaining time, he played a little music "just to get some tension out."

Laurel Carangelo, Ward 3, thanked divestment resolution sponsors and Councilor Rothenberg, who said she would be voting for divestment. She thanked Nathan for the music. She seconded everything Mariel Berger and Jenny Bender said and said she wanted to honor and lift up what Rivka said. (She talked about honoring her ancestors, who were Holocaust survivors, by honoring the Palestinian people). She is in favor of them as a small town doing everything they can to be on the right side of history and make ripples through other small towns to also make a difference. She doesn't think they are a community that wants their tax dollars to go towards bullets and weapons.

Patricia Rodrigues, Northampton, said she fully supports the resolution calling for divestment and refraining from future investment in companies complicit in violations of human rights and international law in Israel and Palestine, including through their involvement in settlements, walls, surveillance systems and checkpoints, Israeli bonds and exploitation of natural resources. Ongoing bombings in Gaza have created an apocalyptic social, economic, human rights and humanitarian aid situation that necessitates action from them all. At the local level, they can help by ending any link to the system that perpetuates brutal bombings, destruction, killings in the name of territorial control. One of the purposes of this territory control is the extraction of fossil fuels, both to uphold the war machine but also for profit. She thinks about those at the frontline of displacement and death, those who try to protect this territory in Gaza and the West Bank for the benefit of all the people to restore it, to generate healthy crops. "They are land defenders; they fight to expand the possibilities for human dignity in the world and merit our support with this resolution." Please, let's keep doing it together and in the process calling out those who are responsible for this brutality.

Thomas Campbell, Ward 3, said he came to show his support for the divestment. Like Portland and Dearborn, they should join their voices with others who are against this genocide.

John Lampley, Ward 2, spoke in support of the resolution, thanking Councilors Dubs, Maiore and Moulton for sponsoring it. Divestment is serious work but is also specific, actionable and effective. Many have been asking what they can do. "Tonight, we begin to consider something concrete." This week, the United Nations formally concluded what many of them have known, that the state of Israel is conducting a genocide against the people of Palestine. Countless Palestinian people have been kidnapped, beaten, tortured, maimed, starved, murdered and worse all along purely ethnic and racial lines. This has been done in part through the unconditional positive regard the state of Israel enjoys with the media and their allies in government and through direct financial support from the United States and from investments like some Northampton currently holds. Small as it may seem, resolutions such as the one they consider tonight really do take money away from the war machine - money that they can invest responsibly elsewhere- and send a clear message that no government can act with total impunity forever, that human rights matter and that humanity's thirst for peace and justice will prevail. Even though Palestine thousands

of miles away, its story and the suffering of its people is palpable and affects all of them. He urged them to vote ‘yes.’

Councilor Maiore said they were getting reports that the broadcast on Northampton Open Media (NOM) is not streaming.

Councilor Jarrett said the council would take a brief recess.

Recess

Recess

The City Council recessed briefly at 7:03 p.m. The council reconvened at 7:20 p.m.

Public Comment (continued)

Public Comment (continued)

Nathan Taskin, (Naz), a resident of Northampton up to a month ago when he moved to Amherst, said he had intended to start off by saying that he was yet another Jew against genocide. However, after another speaker disparaged the use of ‘identity politics,’ he realized they were right, identity shouldn’t matter when it comes to being against genocide. “All that matters is if you’re a human being.” He isn’t going to argue or dispute that it *is* a genocide, because every human rights group worth its salt has said as much, from Amnesty International to Israel’s own leading human rights group – SLM - to say nothing about the Palestinians who have actually experienced the genocide. The lowball estimate is 40,000; they know that’s not true. They know it’s as high as half a million. He thanked organizers and sponsoring councilors (Moulton, Maiore and Dubs) before addressing comments to Councilors Perry, Elkins, Rothenberg and Klemer, askin rhetorically what the four of them have in common besides the fact that they all seem to hate each other. Last year when Councilor Dubs passed a motion for a ceasefire resolution, the four of them decided to abstain. They decided to stay neutral, “neutral on genocide,” he suggested.

He hears Councilor Rothenberg’s position has changed since then but, “In November, a year into the genocide, you stayed out of it; you didn’t want to take a stance.” Why?

Neutrality in the sight of oppression sides with the oppressor, he asserted.

Eve, Northampton, said not only does she very strongly support passage of the resolution, but she has been very actively working on the initiative for over a year. One thing that has been really important to organizers is community outreach. They have been going out to farmer’s markets every week and this past week were at the Taste of Northampton both days to get peoples’ perspective. She was nervous about talking to people about an issue that can be controversial and heated and surprised to find that, nearly universally, everybody they talked to was deeply in support of the shared values which underpin this resolution, namely, justice, freedom, dignity and equality for all people. Further, so many people – Israelis, Jews, Palestinians, old, young, parents and children - agreed that their city’s investments, where they’re putting their tax dollars, should align with these values.. It was really inspiring talking to people and the resolution is in large part a product of all of that feedback and community input. This is about equality, justice and collective liberation. It has been really meaningful to go out and do this work and to know that her community shares those values and wants their finances to align with them.

Chloe Rovitz, Greenfield, said she joins her voice with others. As a local trauma therapist, proud Jew and descendant of Holocaust survivors, she voices her definitive support for the Northampton divestment resolution. It is not in spite of, but because of, her Jewish ancestry that she is moved to support this. A core Jewish value instilled in her from a young age was that of ‘Tikkun Olam,’ or repairing the world. As more and more humanitarian groups condemn the Israeli government’s treatment of Palestinians as apartheid, as their own federal government greenlights and funds the Israeli war machine and as a full scale ground invasion of Gaza city has just begun, she feels it is their responsibility to take local action against these horrors. Divesting their city’s funds to the most egregious companies enabling this unspeakable violence is a step in the right direction, and she urges all City Council members to use their best judgment and conscience in how they vote.

Ella, Orchard Street, said she is grateful to be there tonight because their city has an amazing chance to take action towards ending a genocide. Northampton is deeply connected to Palestine by its Palestinian community members; unfortunately, also by their finances. Israel could not drop bombs on Palestinian civilians without buying them from companies like Raytheon and GE Aerospace. Israel could not expand legal settlements in occupied Palestinian territory without funding from the Parson International Bank of Israel and cement from companies like Heidelberg Materials. Northampton tax dollars are invested in each one of these companies. Divestment is one of the most powerful tools they have to undercut the forces that enable and profit from this genocide. And, they have a proud history of using that power by removing their financial complicity in climate chaos many years ago by divesting from fossil fuels. She echoed what

Eve said about all of their outreach showing that Northampton residents believe in peace, justice and freedom for all people. She hopes they will take this opportunity to enact those values by passing this. There will certainly be questions on financial implementation, but, as with the fossil fuel resolution, she hopes they will pass this value statement and take advantage of the suggested two-year implementation period to figure out the best way to enact it into policy.

Emma Noyes, Ward 2, commented that, as a taxpayer, she was horrified to learn that Northampton is invested in companies like RTX, the world's second largest military company which manufactures weapons used by the Israeli military to brutalize and massacre Palestinians. She is encouraging the City Council to support the resolution because investing in companies like RTX is not only morally corrupt, but, as others have said, is in complete misalignment with the values of Northampton. Their city's own website states that this is Paradise City, with a lively and caring community where people from all walks of life feel welcome. She and many others want to live in a paradise that does not support profiting off of apartheid, illegal settlements and other violations of international law.

Karen, Ward 1, said she is fortunate to have lived here for 46 years. She comes at her support from a different angle, its importance from an international historic perspective. She threw out the example of Algeria, a colony of France for 130 years and a colonial settler situation where the indigenous population was repressed and exterminated if it didn't cooperate. As an illustration, in 1962, when Algeria finally got its liberation as a country from France, only 10% of the population was literate, that's how repressive it was. A similar example is the apartheid system in South Africa. It too had a very repressive system for the indigenous population. In both cases, it was a situation where the locals fought back and did commit some atrocities and things they had to account for later. They basically brought attention to the problem. That is what the situation in Israel/Palestine is like; any kind of Palestinian opposition, even civil disobedience, is considered a crime against the Israeli system. In both Algeria and South Africa, residents couldn't change the system fully from inside, so they got their liberation through international pressure. Where did that pressure come from? It came from moral pressure and building political and economic pressure. "What you're doing here is part of that latter category."

Ace Tayloe, Ward 3, they/them, echoed support for the divestment resolution and reiterated Naz's request that those who abstained previously vote in favor this time. In an unrelated matter, they pointed out an agenda issue, two linked documents to 25.313 appear to be identical and the DPW recommendation appears to be missing. They finally congratulated everyone who participated in the preliminary election, saying they hoped for the election proper to get to 50% turnout.

Lois Ahrens, Ward 1, thanked sponsoring Councilors Moulton, Maiore and Dubs. She was thinking back on campaigns to divest in apartheid South Africa, which began here. Hampshire College was the first university in the country to divest in 1977, followed by UMass. She was part of the community divestment campaign led by Frances Crowe and Michael Hull. Everyone said what they were doing was symbolic and wouldn't matter. They were wrong. In 1980, Frances Crowe and Randy Kehler had an idea to have city councils and town meetings call for a freeze on nuclear weapons. By 1982, one million people were in Central Park calling for a nuclear freeze. The movement didn't achieve a complete freeze but did shift public opinion and hasten the end of the nuclear arms race. Boston is the cradle of liberty; Northampton is the cradle of people's campaigns, she suggested. "Let's build on Northampton's legacy and divest in the banks and arms manufacturers like Raytheon that are slaughtering men, women and children in Gaza."

Ellen Mosen James, a Jewish grandmother who said she lost two Jewish grandparents and other relatives in the Holocaust, spoke in support of the divestment resolution. She thanked the previous speaker for her review of historical commitments from Northampton on similar questions. She very much believes 'Never again for anyone' is an important slogan to remember and to stand up for that in Gaza and the West Bank and all over the Middle East and not be silent.

Laura Belushi, Ward 4, thanked councilors who proposed the resolution, which she strongly supports and urged others to support it also. She is a member of Demilitarize Western Mass and has been here before in opposition to L3Harris. She is also a member of River Valley for Palestine. Part of River Valley's work is to support the Samud School in Gaza City which has been bombed out. They don't know if the head mistress is alive or where the children are. 'Samud' means steadfastness and resilience. She is an activist and is sick of people coming up to her making excuses for Israel by saying in part, 'well, there are horrible things going on in Sudan. . . They're right; there are horrible things going on all over the world. Her answer is: everybody has one voice. For the love of god, speak up! Find a cause that you can get behind, but don't blame me because I'm speaking up for Israel!

Shelly Berkowitz, Northampton, said she is a Jewish 1st generation American whose mother and father survived torture and starvation in Auschwitz. That background made her initially feel safer knowing Israel existed but it also made her exquisitely hyper sensitive to any genocide. The Holocaust should never be

used as a justification for prior victims to become current oppressors. The U.S. government is not only complicit with this genocide but their tax dollars are providing funds for the corporations that actually produce the bombs dropped in Gaza. She has relatives in Israel who run a grocery store. They are not talking about divesting from small businesses, she stressed. She has a great grandfather who was a founder of the HaPoel HaMizrachi movement so she comes from a diverse background. Their progressive Northampton holds \$70,000 plus in investments in an Israeli state bank, Raytheon, etc. "That makes us complicit in genocide." At 50 Prince Street, they have L3Harris making vital parts for missiles being dropped in Gaza. "In the past we gave them tax breaks."

Please pass this. Divest from genocide. Maybe this will help counter the cowardice of Mayor Sciarra flying the flag at half-mast to honor a white supremacist.

Kala Goldstein, Ward 4, identified herself as another Jew in the room in favor of a resolution to divest from companies involved in human rights abuses in Palestine. This is a local issue. The only reason this genocide is continuing is because of investment from the U.S. at all levels of government, including local. Stop enabling genocide with our dollars.

Susan Theberge, Florence, said she really appreciates the moving and articulate comments, council sponsors and divestment organizers. Listening to the conversation has made her think about trauma. Her father was a Jewish POW in WWII, a Jew in a Nazi prison of war camp. That has shaped her life. She was born into that unspoken trauma. For her, it has been an exploration about what one learns and how one lives knowing trauma from birth. She could really feel that trauma tonight hearing some of the voices, the anger and the rage. To her, it's one more example of war, violence and dehumanization. It has such a corrosive effect on children. How is this trauma going to shape their lives? When we turn our trauma into rage and anger, it's so painful. She thanked everyone for taking the time and sharing in such a heartfelt way.

Noah Jefferson, Northampton, said he is a proud Jew here to urge them to vote 'yes' on the resolution. The moral stakes of this issue could not be higher or clearer. They have all witnessed 23 months of genocide waged against the Palestinian people on top of decades of ethnic cleansing, occupation and apartheid. There is no ambiguity as to whether divestment is the right thing to do or what the right side of history will be. As American taxpayers, they are complicit in Israel's violation of human rights and international law and therefore have an urgent moral obligation to take every possible action to divest from that complicity. People in Northampton do not want their tax dollars going to companies that profit from settlements, natural resource exploitation, walls and checkpoints, weapons and discrimination. Their city's finances should align with their community's values. He hopes they'll take this opportunity to be on the right side of history by supporting this resolution.

Joshua Miller, Northampton, said he appreciated that councilors who brought forward this resolution did so. He's heard the fear and anger expressed by those who've spoken against this. Like every Jew, he can trace ancestors who were murdered during the Jewish Holocaust and he thinks that shaped his career. He became a professor of social work at Smith College focusing on racism, armed conflict, ethnic cleansing, apartheid and genocide. It pains him greatly that a Jewish state is committing genocide, but it is. Important to note is that it is not true of all Israelis; in fact, he thinks the majority are appalled by what is going on, the same that's true of Americans appalled by what is going on politically in this country. Under the bankrupt and morally-compromised leadership of Netanyahu and Trump, this genocide goes on unabated. He applauded the City Council for trying to do whatever it can – however small – to respond to this moral stain by taking this admirable moral position.

Mel, Easthampton, like many, a Jewish person with ancestors brutally murdered in the Holocaust, noted that many have connected Northampton's investment in companies that fund Israeli genocide [with the genocide itself], and she would like to expand that even further. The U.S. is actually profiting off this genocide. That's partly why it's happening and what they need to disconnect from right now. They all know L3Harris specifically has boasted about how they have profited off this genocide. This is just the beginning of a really difficult process. She hopes people pay attention as it is put into operation as bravery and dedication are needed to enact it with fidelity and make sure it has the impact they want it to have.

Jordy Rosenberg, a 20-year area resident and 10 plus-year Northampton resident, said they are gathered for a very simple reason. Because there is a genocide, they are here to discuss whether or not to respond to a call issued to the international community by Palestinian civil society, the genocide's most oppressed constituents. That call is to boycott, divest from and sanction (BDS) institutions complicit in the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestinian people. The call for BDS is something asked of them but also something given to them, a way to act in international solidarity when the forces in power feel colossal and immovable. They would be if it were just the city of Northampton against a rogue, nuclear-armed state conducting ethnic cleansing. But BDS works and is meaningful "because we do it together,

and each little step we take in solidarity is part of a huge international movement of solidarity. We should join this movement and we can. . . we can honor the call for solidarity that people living under impossibly severe conditions have made to us.”

Adrienne, Greenfield, encouraged the council to support the divestment resolution. Northampton can be a leader and example for the rest of the valley. Genocide and apartheid are crimes and they have a moral obligation to oppose them at every opportunity. Free Palestine!

Deborah, South Deerfield, thanked sponsors and organizers and especially Jordy for reminding them of the call for BDS and Adrienne for reminding them they can be an example to the valley. The council has the chance to do something concrete and be on the right side of history. Additionally, they have the chance to inspire other communities to do the same and join the thousands around the world that already have. She particularly lifted up the part of the resolution insuring that future investments are also aligned with Northampton’s values. She closed with the words of a UN Special Rapporteur who recently referred to, “relinquishing an inch of our privilege so that an entire people does not have to lose everything. . . “

“Disrupt, strike, boycott, speak out. This is Northampton’s chance to join that chorus,” she concluded.

Iyko Day, Northampton, spoke in support of the resolution, reminding everyone that, to date, Israel has killed well over 65,000 in Gaza of which 19,000 are children. While it is true other atrocities and wars are occurring around the world, the distinction of this genocide is that it has the full financial support of the U.S. government and most other western democracies. The violence is not contained to Gaza; Israeli settlers and military have also escalated attacks on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, killing over 1,000 Palestinians and injuring over 7,000, she noted. It is critical to divest for three reasons: 1) it sends a strong message that the city refuses to be complicit in genocide, 2) local action is important since they can’t rely on the federal government, and 3) the resolution will prevent the city from purchasing additional stocks and bonds in these entities going forward.

Northampton resident **Maria Yorgakopoulou** said she and her husband **Nikos** have lived here for four years but lived in Amherst since 1980 where they owned and operated a Greek restaurant. She comes from a line of genocide survivors, including survivors of former Ottoman Empire pogroms in 1915 and 1922 and [the Turkish invasion of] Cyprus in 1974. As a Greek Orthodox Christian, a clear memory during the first Intifada is that, as a woman in west Jerusalem and the West Bank, she could walk at 11 o’clock at night to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with no one really bothering them, either Muslims or Jews. That’s not possible today. “Our churches are set on fire, our priests are abused; pilgrims are abused,” she asserted. ‘48 pre-Palestine, 80% of Palestine was Christian; it is down to around 7%, she said.

The patriarch in Jerusalem representing the native Palestinian Orthodox community which goes back to the time of Jesus has gone to Gaza with the Latin patriarch, who is a native Palestinian. He has said the staff will not leave, the churches will not leave; “we will not abandon Gaza and please have the world do something.” Northampton is doing something. Please vote for this resolution. She is old enough to remember South Africa, Northern Ireland, etc. When she looks at pictures of Palestinians and Jews, they have mixed families and it is like seeing their [own] families.

Billy Grossman, Greenfield, expressed her support for divestment. She supports it because she is a Jew and she cares about the dignity and safety of all people. She knows that each of their well-being is inter-dependently connected with each other’s well-being and they must take care of each other by divesting.

Cal, Ward 3, spoke in support. He said he believes it is his duty as a citizen to speak out against how his tax dollars are being used and what his city is invested in.

Dorothea Melnicoff, Greenfield, a Jewish RN, said she stands in solidarity today with all who believe in equality and justice for all. “Palestine is the plumb line by which we weigh our humanity,” she observed. She agrees with so many others who have said it is a simple decision, do they invest in a war economy or a peace economy. This is not a war; it is a mass slaughter of civilians and has been identified by many authorities, including the UN and Amnesty International, as a genocide. Say ‘no’ to people doing business in their community to support genocide, apartheid and a war economy, she urged.

This is the very least we can do as human beings to take responsibility and act against the profiteers of war and their agenda She thanked them for their vote to divest and continued efforts to cut ties with L3Harris.

Kristen Elde, Northampton, a non-Jew and non-Palestinian, expressed her belief that the city should invest in people, companies and entities that endorse values of universal human rights and not in those that defile those values. She quoted a dear local Jewish friend as saying they hoped Northampton could

broaden the resolution and divest from companies that promote human rights violations everywhere, but, if they can't, Israel and Palestine is a good place to start. "Let's invest in a peace economy," she urged.

Hannah, Northampton, the grandchild of Holocaust survivors and great grandchild of Armenian genocide survivors, said she grew up steeped in that dark puddle of trauma. She is proud of and grateful to those who've worked to get this proposal where it is tonight and to the three sponsoring councilors. She wished they could read the names of the hundreds of thousands of civilians who've been slaughtered, starved to death and crushed under the rubble, but they would be here for days. Divestment is a local issue. "Our investment in this genocide is a hyper-local issue." 680,000 is the most informed estimate of the number who have died, including more than 300,000 children. Someone earlier asked if they could imagine how a Northampton child might feel if the city chose to divest. She asked if they could imagine how a child might feel if they knew their city could have done something to stop it and didn't? Can they as a city that purports to value equity, community, safety and inclusion afford not to divest? When the writing was on the wall about climate change, the council acted by supporting a fossil fuel divestment resolution. Will they stand up now and act or continue to live in complicity? The choice is theirs.

Amy, Northampton, addressed herself to those speaking against the resolution out of concern for Israel and Israelis. "Please don't," she pleaded, asking that they please not think dichotomously. She wanted everyone to hear the words from Hillel: "If I am not for myself, who will be? If I am for myself only, what am I? If not now, when?"

That's why she is in favor.

Koby Leff, Greenfield, thanked the councilors who brought the resolution and the community supporting this. It is very moving to see the needle move towards peace but heartbreaking that it has taken two years to get to this level of consensus. He is a Jew and went to the same high school as Benjamin Netanyahu in Philadelphia. His grandfather helped fund the Israeli Navy and left Israel after a year realizing that he had been tricked and was part of an ethnic cleansing project. "I never returned." He likes to think it is not because of his Judaism that he stands for this; he likes to think it is because of his humanity. He has been told it is not something that matters to people in the Valley; it is an issue that's happening elsewhere. He reminded them they are interdependent and, as stated by a Palestinian scholar, "genocide is suicide." By endorsing and being complicit in this genocide, they are putting everyone in this city at risk. What is happening in Palestine is not unique in world history or the present moment, what is unique is the fact that it is being livestreamed and visibly supported. Fascists are trying to see if they are okay with that. "It is time to draw a line." [He was told it was time.]

JM Sorrell, Northampton, said that, under the guise of social justice, the city council and many testifiers are propping up Hamas. "You're not helping Palestinians at all. Israel is fighting for its very survival."

She recommended reading Bernard-Henri Levy's book 'Israel Alone' to deepen understanding about the history and facts in Israel. Do not support Hamas and Hezbollah who want to destroy LGBTQ people, women's autonomy and the values of a healthy and diverse democracy. "You're very much on the wrong side of history." Hamas could have ended the war at any time by returning the hostages. They don't care about their own people; they are the ones starving Palestinians and using them mercilessly as they enjoy the world stage. The resolution is wrong-headed to the nth degree. Despite the identity of many of the testifiers, she strongly believes this is hatred against Jews.

Heather, Hutcheson, Leverett, spoke in support of the divestment initiative, which she said she believes is visionary and has the capacity to be a catalyst to launch change here and in other communities. "You all once again can be at the forefront of this type of change and standing for values against genocide and against human rights abuses." She came to support publicly denouncing the actions of a genocidal regime and sharing a truth about omnicide of the entire Palestinian population. This resolution is a lifeline that Northampton's council and this community can offer. She referred to an 'engineered Holocaust' in which children and their mothers and fathers succumb to illness, starvation and death. If they resolve to take action today, it will be concrete steps to actually implement real change and tangible action to divest the city's holdings tomorrow.

Ella Condon, Greenfield, thanked organizers and community members who have shown support for this resolution and voiced her own support. It has given her the hope that she needed this week and her wish is for the City Council to continue sustaining that hope.

Karen Baker, Ward 4, said it is hard to even imagine why an explanation for why they should divest is needed at this point but she mentioned a few reasons. She cited a constantly increasing number of experts concluding that it is genocide, including the International Organization of Genocide Scholars. Even if they don't see it as genocide, she can't see how they don't see it as a whole mass of war crimes;

starvation as a weapon of war, constant displacement, intentional targeted demolition of housing over and over, etc. At the moment, they keep hearing about high-rise apartment buildings being taken down. Regular statements of Israeli government officials saying that Palestinian residents should leave. The reasons are obvious; they're overwhelming. Somebody said this earlier; it's already too late. So many people have died; they can't waste any more time. Divest Northampton.

The time being up, Councilor Jarrett brought public comment to a close. He apologized to those who didn't get a chance to speak and announced an eight-minute recess.

Someone asked if it was possible to make a note of those left to speak. It was noted that one more person was present in person and that, on Zoom, 20 more people were queued up to make public statements.

<u>Recess</u>	<u>Recess</u> The City Council recessed briefly at 8:19 p.m. The council reconvened at 8:31 p.m.
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<u>Announcements</u>	<p><u>Announcements</u></p> <p>Mayor Sciarra announced that Saturday, September 20, 2025 is the Doozy Doo parade put on by Northampton Neighbors. Marchers will step off at 11 a.m. at 33 Hawley Street and proceed to Pulaski Park. New this year are pop-up performances, food and art celebrating the Doozy Doo.</p> <p>The following weekend, September 26th and 27th, is Jazz Fest, Mayor Sciarra continued. Tickets are available and the line-up can be seen at Northamptonjazzfest.org.</p> <p>Councilor Klemer announced that the Community Resources Committee meeting normally held this past Monday, September 16th, has been rescheduled to Wednesday, September 24th from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in the 2nd floor Hearing Room of City Hall, virtually and in person. It will be a joint meeting with the Northampton Housing Partnership (NHP). Committees have invited housing developers and professionals to discuss current trends in the housing market - from financing to regulatory and energy requirements - contributing to the high cost of construction and creating impediments to housing creation and discuss the implications for affordability in Northampton and beyond. She will co-host with NHP Chair Gwen Nabad.</p> <p>This Sunday is a celebration of clean energy, Councilor Maiore volunteered. From 1 to 4 p.m. at Smith Vocational High School, participants will enjoy a global day of action celebrating the unstoppable rise of clean energy and celebrating and showcasing the way communities in the Pioneer Valley are using solar and clean energy sources to power their lives. Representative Lindsay Sabadosa and the city's CAPA Director Benjamin Weil are expected to speak.</p> <p>Ordinance Review Committee Chair Councilor Dubs previewed the next two meetings of his committee, which has been spending the past few months hearing from the public on suggestions for changes to city ordinances. At its next meeting Wednesday, October 8th, members will review a proposed update to the city's sign ordinance at a time to be determined. Wednesday, October 22nd, they will talk about the snow removal ordinance. [Editor's note: The October 22nd meeting was subsequently rescheduled to Wednesday, October 29th.]</p> <p>Councilor Jarrett reminded everyone that, due to Yom Kippur, the City Council's first meeting in Oct. will be held Tuesday, September 30th.</p> <p>Councilor Rothenberg responded to the question raised in public comment of why she abstained from an earlier council vote on a resolution calling for an embargo of U.S. arms to Israel. She will be at the JBP Shabbat tomorrow and is willing to talk about it there as well as when they debate this resolution. She is happy to tell anybody and everybody the story of how she made the biggest and what she sees as the only mistake of her time as a councilor. The crux is she gave too much weight to the concept of divisiveness. It took her time in this office doing work she knows a lot about where the only counter argument was that she was being too divisive. She didn't have that experience before becoming a councilor. She wanted to see the embargo resolution passed, so she counted votes before deciding to abstain. She thought her job as a representative was to make a record of what she thought her constituents were telling her, which was that some of them didn't like it. However, when they do work like this, they have to filter things out, including things that are not relevant. The error in her discretion was letting in concern about divisiveness. "It's just not something that has place in democracy; it's really not relevant." She regrets leaving a record of that. She's happy it passed and looks forward to the next one passing.</p>
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<u>Presentations</u>	<u>Presentations</u>
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	<p>None.</p>
<p><u>Consent Agenda</u></p>	<p><u>Consent Agenda</u> Councilor Jarrett reviewed the single item on the consent agenda. Councilor Moulton moved to approve the consent agenda. Councilor Klemer seconded. The motion passed unanimously 7:0 by voice vote with Councilor Elkins and Councilor Perry absent.</p> <p>The following item was approved as part of the consent agenda: A. <u>Minutes of August 21, 2025</u></p>
<p><u>Resolutions</u> <u>25.314 A Resolution Calling for the City of Northampton to Divest from Entities Complicit in Human Rights Violations in Israel and Palestine - 1st reading</u></p>	<p><u>Resolutions</u> <u>25.314 A Resolution Calling for the City of Northampton to Divest from Entities Complicit in Human Rights Violations in Israel and Palestine - 1st reading</u></p> <p>Since many of those present were interested in its consideration, there being no objection, Councilor Jarrett took the resolution out of order.</p> <p>Councilor Maiore thanked the dedicated activists who did not waiver over an extended period and those who came out to speak in support.</p> <p>Sponsoring Councilors Jeremy Dubs, Rachel Maiore and Stan Moulton took turns reading the resolution.</p> <p>Councilor Maiore praised the community organizers as it was not easy and took a lot of fortitude and research. There's a lot of nuance here, and, frankly, it can't get done in a small city without committed folks like them.</p> <p>In the face of devastating state violence it is her feeling that they have a responsibility to act and need to see this as an opportunity to do something, she continued. She would love to have world leaders figure out a political solution. "They are failing us." That is the answer to local. State and local government have over four trillion in investments in the entities they've named. "This is public money. . . Where we put our money is not neutral." They are all the stewards of human rights; they are all stewards of the world's children. The pushback they get on divestment is that it is impactful. It is also nonviolent, legal and an opportunity to urge and give opportunity to offending industries to self-correct. The amount of human rights violations happening constantly in their world is overwhelming but they need specificity and focus to have the most impact. As Americans, they are supporting this devastating, systematic oppression of a people. She feels they have a particular responsibility as people who live in this country. It is not a blanket boycott; it targets corporations and industry. This is not a burden to fall on everyday people in Israel. It is an action they can all take together. When they look back on this, which she hopes they do because it's over, "what do we want to feel we did?" she asked.</p> <p>Councilor Dubs thanked cosponsors and the people who have led the way. Going all the way back to the ceasefire and arms embargo resolutions, he feels like he is on council to be a voice for the community. "It is really you all who have been leading me this whole time to know what the right thing to do is."</p> <p>"We need to take action against genocide to be on the right side of history," he stressed. It is a local issue as it concerns the use of government funds. There is precedence as, in 2013, the Northampton City Council adopted a resolution calling for divestment from fossil fuel companies prompting an executive policy order from the Mayor. Critics have asked why they are talking about something thousands of miles away in another part of the world. He would ask, what would we do if there were a genocide happening here? Wouldn't they want people all over the world speaking up for them, thousands of miles away? From the perspective of someone involved in other resolutions, it is heartening to see how much more support there is now.</p> <p>Councilor Moulton thanked those who spoke out about the resolution and those who came out and didn't get a chance to speak. The emotions he heard underscored for him the importance of this work. He thanked cosponsors and the activists/organizers for keeping it on their radar for so many months. In February of 2024, he was cosponsor of the resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and one of eight affirmative votes. In November of 2024, he was one of five affirmative votes that ratified a resolution supporting federal legislation to impose an embargo on U.S. arms to Israel. He believes they have a moral imperative as leaders in the community to continue responding to violations of international law and human rights in Israel and Palestine. For him, the next meaningful step for the city to take is to divest from any company complicit in those violations.</p>

The city's current investment in companies identified as complicit is \$71,000, roughly 6/10ths of one percent of its total investments. Sponsors recognize the complexities to disentangling these indirect investments from offending companies, so the resolution establishes a two-year period for implementation. Just as important as divesting from current investments, the resolution calls for officials to notify investment advisors of their desire to avoid future investments in companies that have a substantial, ongoing and intentional complicity in violations of international law and human rights in Israel and Palestine. This is not tied to a static list but, importantly, is tied to a running list of the American Friends Service Committee. If there is a change in behavior, companies on the list could be removed in the future. For all those reasons, he is proud to be a sponsor and urges fellow councilors to support it.

Councilor LaBarge, Councilor Klemer, Councilor Jarrett and Councilor Rothenberg in turn voiced their support, with Councilor LaBarge saying she feels it needs to be put in place immediately and would like to see two readings tonight.

Councilor Rothenberg moved to suspend the rules to waive two readings. Councilor Dubs seconded.

Discussion continued, with Councilor Klemer saying she hoped it would encourage other communities to take a similar stand.

Councilor Jarrett said he appreciated the research and resources available through the American Friends Service Committee to determine which companies are complicit. He wants to fully understand how this action will affect city finances since it's not possible to just pull out those companies but instead necessary to switch to other investment instruments. He understands and supports the focus on Israel and Palestine but takes a "yes and" approach in that he would like to apply the same policy to companies complicit in human rights violations anywhere.

Councilor Rothenberg said she understands some people in the community may still be uncomfortable with the word 'apartheid.' She is not here to tell them their feelings are appropriate or not but to tell them they have to set them aside. Oppression is a spectrum and this is egregious and at the very far end of it. This is a global movement. They're joining Norway, Somerville, cities in California, Portland, ME and are the 2nd city in Massachusetts to sign on. She thanked Eve Glazier, Matt Spurlock, Ella, Deb and Heather, acknowledging what they have taken on and exposed themselves to. Their efforts have worked, she confirmed; her constituents talk about it differently than they did two years ago. "Let's abolish violence as a form of control, as a form of profit, as a form of governance," she urged. She thanked the proponents for leading them as a community.

Councilor Maire reiterated that the resolution is way of assuring divestment moving forward, saying she heard willingness in her brief conversations with the finance director to do so. Because it is a resolution and not an ordinance, implementation would be an executive action. She thinks she could say cosponsors and community members would work with the city to try to figure that out.

Councilor Jarrett asked Mayor Sciarra to speak to what steps might need to be taken.

The city's investment firm is attuned to their concerns about not investing in certain companies and has worked to accommodate them and limit their exposure, Mayor Sciarra said. There are no investments from the list in retirement accounts at all. She heard RTX and Raytheon mentioned, and these are not on the city's list of investments.

Since only two of the named entities are included in the city's investments, the investment firm believes they can quite easily move them out and have very limited impact on performance, she reported.

Councilor Rothenberg asked which two companies those are and Mayor Sciarra said she believed they are GE and the First International Bank of Israel. Bartholomew is the city's investment firm.

The share of city investments involved has been updated from 0.65% to 0.62%, Councilor Rothenberg shared.

Councilor Moulton clarified that off the list of investments are Heidelberg, Primo Water and Raytheon.

The motion to suspend rules passed unanimously 7:0 by voice vote with Councilor Elkins and Councilor Perry absent.

Councilor Maire moved to approve the resolution. Councilor Moulton seconded.

Let's keep working on the L3 issue, Councilor Rothenberg proposed.

The motion passed unanimously 7:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Elkins and Councilor Perry absent.

The following resolution passed final reading:



City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In the City Council, September 18, 2025

Upon the Recommendation of: Councilors Jeremy Dubs, Rachel Maiore and Stanley W. Moulton III

R-25.314 A Resolution Calling For The City Of Northampton To Divest From Entities Complicit In Human Rights Violations In Israel And Palestine

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes the importance of peace and justice for all communities and nations around the world regardless of national, ethnic or religious affiliations, and advocates for the safety, dignity, freedom, and equality of all people; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes that all human life is precious; and recognizes the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the West Bank in particular, and seeks to avoid economically supporting such crises through the City's financial investments; and

WHEREAS, on February 1, 2022, Amnesty International concluded that Israel has imposed a system of oppression and domination over Palestinians wherever it exercises control over their rights, across Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and that it enforces segregation in a systematic and highly institutionalized manner through laws, policies, and practices, which amounts to the international wrong of apartheid, as a violation of human rights and international law;¹ and

WHEREAS, on July 19, 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Israel's occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem is illegal and must end immediately; that Israel must halt all settlement construction, evacuate settlers, pay reparations to Palestinians, and allow them the right of return; that Israel is committing

¹ Amnesty International, Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime Against Humanity (Feb. 1, 2022), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>

racial segregation and discrimination; and that all states and international organizations have a legal obligation not to recognize or assist the occupation;² and
WHEREAS, as of Jan.3, 2025, Northampton had an estimated \$71,010 invested in companies identified by the American Friends Service Committee as complicit in substantial, ongoing and intentional violations of international law and human rights in Israel and Palestine, based on information provided by the City Treasurer; and

WHEREAS, on February 27, 2024 the City Council passed a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza; and

WHEREAS, on November 7, 2024, the City Council expressed its support for the proposed Congressional Joint Resolutions of Disapproval to block the sale of more than \$20 billion of offensive U.S. weapons to Israel, and called for the introduction of legislation to impose an embargo on unrestricted sales and shipment of U.S. weapons to Israel; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that the City's finances should align with our values; and

WHEREAS Northampton has a precedent for divesting from entities that do not align with our city's values. For example, on September 26, 2018, the mayor issued an Executive Policy Order enacting a policy that the City shall not contract with companies that are directly involved in the manufacture or maintenance of nuclear weapons, and shall work to eliminate and avoid any investments in companies involved in the manufacture or maintenance of nuclear weapons; and

WHEREAS another example occurred on July 22, 2013, when the City Council passed a resolution urging the City to divest from fossil fuel companies, and adopt policies precluding new investments in fossil fuel companies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the City Council urges the City Treasurer and the City Retirement Board to divest from, and refrain from future investments in, companies with a substantial, ongoing, and intentional complicity in violations of international law and human rights in Israel and Palestine, including through their involvement in:

² *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, No. 186, International Court of Justice (ICJ), 19 July 2024, <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/186>

- [The Settlement Industry](#);
- [Exploitation of Natural Resources](#);
- [Walls and Checkpoints](#);
- [Weapons and Military Equipment](#); and
- [Discrimination](#)

consistent with the American Friends Service Committee’s investigative human rights rating system;³ and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council urges the City Treasurer and the City Retirement Board to refrain from making investments in the Israeli military in the form of Israel Bonds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council urges the City Treasurer and the Retirement Board to divest from any assets included in the above clauses within two years, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council urges that the City Treasurer and the Retirement Board contact their respective investment advisors to request that they notify fund managers of the City’s desire to remove companies with a substantial, ongoing, and intentional complicity in violations of international law and human rights in Israel and Palestine as set out above, from all investment products; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the clerk of the City Council will send this resolution to Northampton Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra, Northampton City Treasurer Kristine Bissell, Northampton Retirement Board Chair Charlene Nardi, State Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, State Senator Jo Comerford, Congressman Jim McGovern, U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, U.S. Senator Ed Markey, Governor Maura Healey, and Treasurer Deborah Goldberg of the Commonwealth.

³ American Friends Service Committee, Investigate: Occupations, <https://investigate.afsc.org/occupations>

Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.

Financial Orders (on 1st reading)
25.318 An Order to Appropriate FY2026 CPA Funds for Community Preservation Purposes - 1st reading

Financial Orders (on 1st reading)
25.318 An Order to Appropriate FY2026 CPA Funds for Community Preservation Purposes - 1st reading

Office of Planning and Sustainability (OPS) Assistant Director Sarah LaValley said this is a standard order the City Council considers every fiscal year. It is necessary both to set the tax rate and to allow anticipated FY2026 CPA revenue to be spent on projects in the two upcoming rounds. She referred to a letter with additional explanatory information.

Councilor Jarrett asked if expenditures are still about evenly split in the four eligible categories of funding.

Ms. LaValley said it fluctuates from funding round to funding round and fiscal year to fiscal year depending on the types of applications received. Right now, over the life of the CPA, 24.9% has been allocated to historic preservation, 22.9% to affordable housing, 24% to open space and 28.3% to recreation.

Councilor LaBarge moved to refer the order to the consent agenda. Councilor Klemer seconded. The motion passed unanimously 7:0 by voice vote with Councilor Elkins and Councilor Perry absent.

See minutes of September 30, 2025 for final reading.

Orders

Orders

25.316 An Order to Approve an Exemption for Mary Anne McKenna Contract for Personnel Services - 1st reading

25.317 An Order to Approve an Exemption for Mia Skowren Contract for Personnel Services - 1st reading

Councilor Jarrett introduced the two orders for exemptions. Exemptions are needed to allow two regular School Department employees (substitute teachers) to take summer jobs with the Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor Sciarra explained.

Councilor Maiore moved to suspend the rules for the orders as a group. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 7:0 by voice vote with Councilor Elkins and Councilor Perry absent.

Councilor Moulton moved to approve the orders as a group. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 7:0 by voice vote with Councilor Elkins and Councilor Perry absent.

The following orders passed final reading:

25.316 An Order to Approve an Exemption for Mary Anne McKenna Contract for Personnel Services - 1st reading

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council

September 18, 2025

Upon recommendation of the Mayor

25.316 An Order To Approve an Exemption for Mary Anne McKenna Contract for Personnel Services

Ordered that

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 268A s. 20 (b) requiring disclosure by a municipal employee having a financial interest in a municipal contract, particularly as it relates to seasonal positions, wherein a teacher may not have a financial interest in a contract with an agency of the town in which she works under §§ 7 and 20, which includes a second job in the same municipality unless an exemption applies.

Toward that end, the City Council hereby approves an exemption for Mary Anne McKenna, a substitute teacher with the City of Northampton Public Schools, to be a Leader in the Parks and Recreation School's Out and Youth Programs. In approving this exemption, the City Council finds as follows:

- The contract was made after public notice of the availability of the Parks and Recreation Department position;
- Ms. McKenna's services to the Parks and Recreation Department are done outside of the normal working hours of her primary position;
- Her work with the Parks and Recreation Department is not required as part of her regular duties as an NPS substitute teacher;
- She is compensated for not more than 500 hours during a calendar year for her position with the Parks and Recreation Department;
- She has filed a disclosure with the City Clerk, fully disclosing her financial interest in the contracts;
- Parks & Recreation Director Ann-Marie Moggio has filed written certifications with the City Clerk stating that no employee of those agencies is available to perform those services as part of their regular duties.

Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.

25.317 An Order to Approve an Exemption for Mia Skowren Contract for Personnel Services - 1st reading

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council

September 18, 2025

Upon recommendation of the Mayor

25.317 An Order To Approve an Exemption for Mia Skowren Contract for Personnel Services

Ordered that

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 268A s. 20 (b) requiring disclosure by a municipal employee having a financial interest in a municipal contract, particularly as it relates to seasonal positions, wherein a teacher may not have a financial interest in a contract with an agency of the town in which she works under §§ 7 and 20, which includes a second job in the same municipality unless an exemption applies.

Toward that end, the City Council hereby approves an exemption for Mia Skowren, Long Term Substitute Preschool Paraeducator, with the City of Northampton Public Schools, to be a Leader in the Parks and Recreation School’s Out and Youth Programs and site supervisor. In approving this exemption, the City Council finds as follows:

- The contract was made after public notice of the availability of the Parks and Recreation Department position;
- Ms. Skowren’s services to the Parks and Recreation Department are done outside of the normal working hours of her primary position;
- Her work with the Parks and Recreation Department is not required as part of her regular duties as an NPS substitute teacher;
- She is compensated for not more than 500 hours during a calendar year for her position with the Parks and Recreation Department;
- She has filed a disclosure with the City Clerk, fully disclosing her financial interest in the contracts;
- Parks & Recreation Director Ann-Marie Moggio has filed written certifications with the City Clerk stating that no employee of those agencies is available to perform those services as part of their regular duties.

Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.

25.319 An Order Laying out and Accepting Main Street and Portions of West Street, etc. and Authorizing Acquisition of Easements for such Layout and Acceptance - 1st reading

Councilor Jarrett reviewed the order’s history, noting that the Planning Board recommended acceptance. At the street layout hearing before City Services, no interested person objected.

Mayor Sciarra explained that MassDOT needs a layout and hasn’t been able to find one in the public records.

OPS Director Carolyn Misch said this is laying the street out officially as it has existed for the last 150 years. She confirmed nothing is changing but it is setting the foundation so that it is all on record and meets MassDOT’s standards.

Councilor Jarrett expressed his understanding that, although it is listed as an Order of Taking, no compensation is being paid because the public way has been in existence for decades.

Councilor Moulton moved to suspend the rules. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion carried 6:1 by voice vote with Councilor Rothenberg opposed and Councilor Elkins and Councilor Perry absent.

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the order. Councilor Klemer seconded. The motion carried 6:1 by roll call vote with Councilor Rothenberg opposed and Councilor Elkins and Councilor Perry absent.

The following order passed in final reading:

APPROVED - 25.319
An Order Laying out
and Accepting Main
Street and Portions
of West Street, etc.
and Authorizing
Acquisition of
Easements for such
Layout and
Acceptance - 1st
reading

City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council, September 18, 2025

Upon the recommendation of Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra and Department of Public Works

25-319 AN ORDER LAYING OUT AND ACCEPTING MAIN STREET AND PORTIONS OF WEST STREET, NEW SOUTH STREET, CRAFTS AVENUE, CENTER STREET, GOTHIC STREET, PLEASANT STREET, STRONG AVENUE, HAWLEY STREET, AND MARKET STREET AS CITY WAYS AND AUTHORIZING ACQUISITION OF EASEMENTS FOR SUCH LAYOUT AND ACCEPTANCE

WHEREAS, Main Street and portions of West Street, New South Street, Crafts Avenue, Center Street, Gothic Street, Pleasant Street, Strong Avenue, Hawley Street, and Market Street are public ways within the City of Northampton; and

WHEREAS, no layout plan can be found for the ways specified in the preceding paragraph.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council Orders as follows:

The City Council hereby lays out and accepts as city ways Main Street and portions of West Street, New South Street, Crafts Avenue, Center Street, Gothic Street, Pleasant Street, Strong Avenue, Hawley Street, and Market Street, all as shown as "Area of Roadway to be Accepted = 323,981 +/- Square Feet" on a plan set entitled "Street Acceptance Plan Main Street (Route 9) in Northampton, Massachusetts," dated August 15, 2025, by BSC Group.

The City Council hereby authorizes the acquisition by purchase, gift, eminent domain, or otherwise permanent public easements of way shown as "Area of Roadway to be Accepted = 323,981 +/- Square Feet" on a plan of land entitled "Street Acceptance Plan Main Street (Route 9) in Northampton, Massachusetts," dated August 15, 2025, by BSC Group. The easements taken herein are over the parcels owned pursuant to M.G.L. c. 183, § 58 commencing at the center line of the way abutting such parcel and for the entire width of each such parcel. The owners and lienholders for each parcel over which an easement is taken hereby are set forth in Exhibit A, attached hereto.

No appropriation is required, and no damages are to be paid as the ways laid out herein are existing public ways encumbered by public rights of way.

The Mayor is hereby authorized to execute such documents as are necessary and convenient to effectuate this Order.

Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.

Zoning Ordinances
25.315 An Ordinance
Permitting
Residential
Conversion of
Existing Non-
Conforming Historic
Accessory
Structures - 1st
reading

Zoning Ordinances
25.315 An Ordinance Permitting Residential Conversion of Existing Non-Conforming Historic
Accessory Structures - 1st reading
Councilor Jarrett read the 'Whereas' clauses aloud.

Right now, if a property owner has an historic accessory structure and it meets setback requirements for residential, it can be converted to residential use, he explained. If it does not meet setbacks, residential conversion is not allowed. This would allow structures that do not meet setback requirements to be converted with some limitations, including that 70% of the structure must have been constructed before 1976 and that character-defining features must be preserved to the extent feasible.

If the nonconforming historic structure is under 1,000 square feet (s.f.), additional parking is not required but if it is over 1,000 s.f., a parking space is required, he continued. Essentially, the dual purpose is to allow for historic preservation and additional housing while reducing demolition and tree removal. About

900 of these structures currently exist in the applicable zoning districts. All building and fire codes must be followed.

Councilor Jarrett moved to refer the ordinance to the Historical Commission, Housing Partnership, Legislative Matters and the Planning Board. Councilor Maiore seconded.

Councilor Maiore said she was curious about how this got on his radar.

Some constituents have been writing to him for years saying they have a carriage house that is 11 feet from the property line instead of 15 feet. There is nothing they can do short of physically connecting their house to the structure. There are a number of these situations. The change allows more housing options, recognizing that, when someone already owns a house, it is cheaper to build or convert a housing unit on the existing lot since it is not necessary to buy another piece of property.

Councilor Maiore said she was surprised to learn how polluting demolishing existing buildings to build new ones can be.

Councilor Rothenberg asked where they are on the ability to restrict structures from becoming Airbnb's.

The city has opted into a tax on Airbnb's but he is not sure of their ability to regulate them, Councilor Jarrett said. It is true that many apartments throughout the city have been converted to Airbnb's, thereby taking them off the market and contributing to the rise in rents.

As an initial step, the City Council passed an ordinance permitting short-term rentals (rentals shorter than 30 days), Director Misch reminded. The council could certainly pass an ordinance to prohibit them. Revenue from the fund goes into the creation of affordable housing, she noted.

Councilor Jarrett asked if it would be an all or nothing measure or if the council could allow short-term rentals in certain districts. . .

It all comes down to enforcement, Director Misch suggested. The more detailed and nuanced it is, the harder it is to enforce.

Councilor Rothenberg asked if it could be put into the ordinance that these structures not be able to be used that way. She asked how much of the tax revenue is going into affordable housing.

Mayor Sciarra clarified that it is a short-term rental fee, not a tax.

It is really used as leveraging money, Director Misch advised. The last amount was allocated to Valley CDC for the 737 Bridge Road project. It takes a while to collect enough to be substantive enough to support housing.

For FY25, the local option total was \$52,184. The associated short-term rental fees charged on an annual basis was \$1.74 million.

Director Misch said she thinks just the fee portion goes to support affordable housing.

Councilor Klemer said she supports this resolution. She thinks they need to take advantage of anything they can do to increase housing. Many people want to age in place so this would be an opportunity for them to either move into a carriage house or to stay in their home and have a caretaker on the property.

Councilor Moulton said he sees two important guardrails. If the ordinance is adopted it would establish a date after which the non-conforming footprint could not be expanded. Also, subsection G states that this would not override a zoning district's density limit, so density will not change.

Councilor Rothenberg said she hopes the bodies looking at this will consider adding stronger language for affordability and encouraging accessibility. She doesn't think there are a lot of guardrails.

The motion to refer passed unanimously 7:0 by voice vote.

See minutes of September 30, 2025 for final reading.

Adjourn

Adjourn

Councilor LaBarge moved to adjourn. Councilor Klemer seconded. The motion passed unanimously 7:0 by voice vote with Councilor Elkins and Councilor Perry absent. The meeting adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

Attest: _____, Administrative Assistant

EXHIBIT A

List of Documents Reviewed at September 18, 2025 Northampton City Council Meeting

1. September 18, 2025 Agenda
2. Minutes of August 21, 2025 City Council Meeting
3. 25.313 National Grid/Verizon Petition to install a new pole and relocate an existing pole on Bridge Road (Petition #31169388)
4. 25.313 DPW Recommendation – Memo from Kris Baker, P.E. to Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director dated September 16, 2025 Re: National Grid Pole Petition #3116388 – 737 Bridge Road, Poles #74 and 75
5. 25.318 An Order to Appropriate FY2026 CPA Funds for Community Preservation Purposes
6. 25.316 An Order to Approve an Exemption for Mary Anne McKenna Contract for Personnel Services
7. 25.317 An Order to Approve an Exemption for Mia Skowren Contract for Personnel Services
8. 25.319 An Order Laying out and Accepting Main Street and Portions of West Street, etc. and Authorizing Acquisition of Easements for such Layout and Acceptance
9. 25.310 Petition for Layout and Acceptance of Main Street and Portions of West Street, etc.
10. Plan entitled, “Street Acceptance Plan, Main Street (Route 9) in Northampton, Massachusetts (Hampshire County),” dated August 15, 2025, prepared for Office of the City Solicitor, City of Northampton by BSC Group
11. 25.319 Main Street Order of Taking
12. 25.315 An Ordinance Permitting Residential Conversion of Existing Non-Conforming Historic Accessory Structures
13. 25.314 A Resolution Calling for the City of Northampton to Divest from Entities Complicit in Human Rights Violations in Israel and Palestine

Record of City Council Votes for September 18, 2025		Dubs	Elkins	Jarrett	Klemer	LaBarge	Maiore	Moulton	Perry	Rothenberg	Total
Roll Call by Laura Krutzler, Administrative Assistant to the City Council @ 6:30 p.m.		Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Present	7 Present
Approval of Consent Agenda	Consent				Second			Motion to approve			Motion passed unanimously 7:0; Elkins/Perry absent, voice vote
Minutes of August 21, 2025											
25.318 An Order to Appropriate FY2026 CPA Funds for Community Preservation Purposes - 1st reading	Referred to consent				Second	Motion to refer					Motion passed unanimously 7:0; Elkins/Perry absent, voice vote
25.316 An Order to Approve an Exemption for Mary Anne McKenna Contract for Personnel Services - 1st reading	Suspend rules as group					Second	Motion to suspend				Motion passed unanimously 7:0; Elkins/Perry absent, voice vote
25.317 An Order to Approve an Exemption for Mia Skowren Contract for Personnel Services - 1st reading											
25.316 An Order to Approve an Exemption for Mary Anne McKenna Contract for Personnel Services - 1st reading	Approved as group					Second		Motion to approve			Motion passed unanimously 7:0; Elkins/Perry absent, voice vote
25.317 An Order to Approve an Exemption for Mia Skowren Contract for Personnel Services - 1st reading											
25.319 An Order Laying out and Accepting Main Street and Portions of West Street, etc. and Authorizing Acquisition of Easements for such Layout and Acceptance - 1st reading	Suspend rules					Second		Motion to suspend		No	Motion carried 6:1; Rothenberg opposed, Elkins/Perry absent; voice vote
	Approve	Yes		Yes	Second Yes	Motion to approve	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Motion carried 6:1; Rothenberg opposed, Elkins/Perry absent; roll call
25.315 An Ordinance Permitting Residential Conversion of Existing Non-Conforming Historic Accessory Structures - 1st reading	Referred to HC, NHP, LM & PB				Motion to refer			Second			Motion passed unanimously 7:0; Elkins/Perry absent, voice vote
25.314 A Resolution Calling for the City of Northampton to Divest from Entities Complicit in Human Rights Violations in Israel and Palestine - 1st reading	Suspend rules	Second								Motion to suspend	Motion passed unanimously 7:0; Elkins/Perry absent, voice vote
	Approve							Motion to approve	Second		Motion passed unanimously 7:0; Elkins/Perry absent, voice vote
Motion to Adjourn	Adjourn				Second	Motion to adjourn					Motion passed unanimously 7:0; Elkins/Perry absent, voice vote

At 9:49 p.m., Councilor LaBarge moved to adjourn; Councilor Klemer seconded. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 7 Yes, 0 No, 2 absent (Councilor Elkins and Councilor Perry).