



Office of the City Clerk

City of North Adams

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Deborah M. Pedercini
City Clerk

Regular Meeting of the City Council

December 22, 2020

A meeting of the North Adams City Council was held at 7:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Councilors Blackmer, Bona, Harpin, Hopkins, LaForest, Lamb, Oleskiewicz, Sweeney, Wilkinson.

Council President Hopkins read the following statement regarding COVID-19. Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the North Adams City Council is being conducted via remote participation and in City Council Chambers. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.

A moment of silent remembrance was held remembering Joan Vincent, teacher at the former Mark Hopkins School and MCLA and board member of the North Adams Public Library.

The President called for a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of December 8, 2020.

On motion of Councilor Blackmer, duly seconded by Councilor Bona, it was VOTED: to approve the minutes. Councilors LaForest and Lamb abstained.

The President called for hearing of visitors, hearing none.

11,876 The President presented communication submitted by Councilor Lamb addressing speed limits and safety concerns in the Autumn Drive and Birchwood Terrace area which was postponed at the meeting of November 10, 2020.

On motion of Councilor Lamb, duly seconded by Councilor LaForest, it was VOTED: to postpone to the meeting of January 26, 2021.

Councilor Lamb stated that Public Safety did a traffic study, which the Traffic Commission met and reviewed, however the Public Safety Committee has not had a chance to meet to discuss the

issue. He felt that there needed to be more discussion before a decision is made.

Councilor LaForest stated he was frustrated with the concerns of speeding in the City, he feels that drivers must police themselves and obey the speed limits.

11,923 Mayor's communication #72 recommending the appointment of Alyssa Tomkowicz to the North Adams Historical Commission for a term to expire January 2, 2024.

On motion of Councilor Blackmer, duly seconded by Councilor Oleskiewicz, it was VOTED: to confirm the appointment.

11,924 Mayor's communication #73 regarding a PILOT agreement with the North Adams Housing Authority (NAHA), a resolution affirming the cooperative agreement and payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) formulas for the properties owned and maintained by the North Adams Housing Authority.

Without objection, the President filed the communication.

11,924 A Resolution affirming the cooperative agreement and payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) formulas for the properties owned and maintained by the North Adams Housing Authority.

On motion of Councilor Blackmer, duly seconded by Councilor Wilkinson, it was VOTED: to adopt the Resolution.

The Mayor spoke about the cooperative agreement and Payment in Lieu of Taxes with the North Adams Housing Authority (NAHA) that has been in place for several years. He welcomed Steven Narey and Nathan Bondar to speak on behalf of the NAHA to discuss the cooperative agreement.

Mr. Narey is the counsel for the NAHA, and Mr. Bondar is the consultant that has been working on the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program.

Mr. Nary explained that the NAHA, being an independent public agency, does not pay taxes; therefore, a Payment in Lieu of Taxes agreement has been in effect for fifty plus years with the City of North Adams. The NAHA has decided to create HALO Homes, Inc., a nonprofit, governmental instrumentality. The authority is asking that the modification would be allowed to be a party to the current agreement with the City. He gave a brief description of RAD and the revenue stream it would provide to programs for local housing authorities.

Mr. Bondar gave a brief summary of what the RAD program entailed through its HUD program and the benefits to local housing authorities. He stated that the budgeting appropriations fluctuate each year and does not allow them to do necessary upgrades to the units. HUD created this program to allow housing authorities to create a steady stream of funding for capital improvements and support its residents. He stated that this program is being done throughout the country. The program is basically switching from a 9 to a Section 8 platform. The NAHA is not able

to rent their own properties, therefore HALO, Homes, Inc was established.

Councilor Harpin inquired if any other Berkshire County authorities have converted to this model. Mr. Bondar stated he was unsure, but close to fifty percent of Massachusetts housing authorities are currently in this process.

Councilor Lamb inquired when the last time this PILOT was reviewed; Mr. Nary stated 2009.

Councilor Lamb inquired if this was a privatization of public housing or just a support or shift of financial burden. Mr Narey stated it was not privatization, it is a governmental instrumentality, this model is under public control, He did state however, other parts of the country there is privatization

The Resolution was adopted by yea and nay vote, yea, Councilors Blackmer, Bona, Harpin, Hopkins, LaForest, Lamb, Oleskiewicz, Sweeney, Wilkinson, no nays.

11,925 Communication submitted by Council President Hopkins accepting the City Clerk's resignation.

Council President stated that it was with a heavy heart that the Council must accept Clerk Pedercini's resignation and thanked her for her service.

On motion of Councilor Wilkinson, duly seconded by Councilor Harpin, it was VOTED: to accept the resignation of City Clerk, Deborah M. Pedercini.

Councilor Lamb, Harpin, Bona, Blackmer and other Councilors gave thanks and gratitude to Clerk Pedercini for her thirty-one plus years of service to the City and wished the best of luck to her in her new endeavor.

The resignation was accepted by yea and nay vote, yay, Councilor Blackmer, Bona, Harpin, Hopkins, LaForest, Lamb, Oleskiewicz, Sweeney, nay, Councilor Wilkinson.

The President called for Open Forum.

Bryan Sapienza, 113 Quincy Street, commented about the trash on West Shaft Road on route to the City's landfill, he requested people cover their loads. He gave kudos to the City Yard for the work that was done to clean up the snow.

Megan Karlen, 48 Windom Terrace, she was concerned with the snow that was pushed up against the wall and would like to know who is responsible for the fence on Windom Terrace.

Councilor Bona stated that if she could reach out to him, he would be happy to help her.

The President called for Mayors Concerns.

The Mayor thanked Clerk Pedercini for her service.

The Mayor gave a brief summary of the COVID updates to the limited number of persons in various establishments that will run through January 10, 2021. He spoke about the Hazard Mitigation plan that will be coming for adoption in January.

The Mayor extended his appreciation to the many people that have provided support for the community in need and wished everyone a happy and safe new year.

The President called for Committee Reports and Minutes. Hearing none.

Liaison Updates and Councilor Concerns.

Councilor Wilkinson asked residents to be cautious this holiday season and to please do their part to stay safe and healthy.

Councilor Oleskiewicz recognized Christopher Gelinas, fourteen-year police veteran that was sworn in as sergeant today. He wished everyone a healthy new year.

The President called for a motion to adjourn.

On motion of Councilor Wilkinson, duly seconded by Councilor Oleskiewicz, it was VOTED: to adjourn at 8:11 pm.

A True Record
Attest,



City Clerk