



Office of the City Clerk

City of North Adams

10 Main Street Room 109

North Adams, Massachusetts 01247

(413) 662-3000 Ext. 1

Deborah M. Pedercini

City Clerk

North Adams City Council ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

Regular Meeting

January 12, 2021

A meeting of the Organization of Government and Regular Meeting was held at 7:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

The City Clerk called the meeting to order.

The City Clerk 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.

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Councilors Blackmer, Bona, Harpin, Lamb, Oleskiewicz, Sweeney, Wilkinson remote, Councilors Hopkins and LaForest in chambers.

The City Clerk gave a reflection for the new year.

I would like to take this time to reflect on the past year and the many challenges we endured as a community. We all made sacrifices, the opportunity to socialize, presented challenges; that, when overcome, tightened relationships between people and gave an opportunity to rise to the occasion. We, as a community, chose to push through, even if we didn't like it, for the betterment of those around us.

With a common threat, individuals, no matter how different from each other, shared in the hardships and grew more interconnected through the value of true human kindness in the face of adversity.

2020 has not been easy by any means, nor has it been carefree, but at the end of the day, we have learned to appreciate our relationships with our family, friends and neighbors and to cherish all that we do have.

This new year is an opportunity to reflect on our lives; to understand what and who are important, and what we really value. I am confident that with our community's leadership, 2021 will see a much brighter future.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Clerk called for nominations for the Office of Council President for the ensuing year 2021.

Councilor Wilkinson nominated Councilor Hopkins, duly seconded by Councilor Oleskiewicz.

With no further nominations for President, Councilor Lamb made a motion to cease nominations, seconded by Councilor Wilkinson

The Clerk declared Councilor Hopkins President for the ensuing year 2021.

The Clerk administered the oath of office to Councilor Hopkins.

President Hopkins took the chair and thanked the Clerk for her hard work in the past year.

The President called for nominations for the Vice President for the ensuing year 2021.

Councilor Oleskiewicz nominated Councilor LaForest for Vice President, seconded by Councilor Lamb.

With no further nominations for Vice President, Councilor Wilkinson made a motion to cease nominations, seconded by Councilor Blackmer.

The President declared Councilor LaForest Vice President for the ensuing year 2021.

The Clerk administered the oath of office to Councilor LaForest.

The President presented the Rules of Order for the City Council for 2021, with no changes.

On motion of Councilor LaForest, duly seconded by Councilor Blackmer, it was VOTED: to adopt the Rules and Order for 2021.

Without objection, the President postponed the committee assignments and liaison assignments for 2021 to the meeting of January 26, 2021.

The President requested that the drawing of the names and numbers for Council seats for 2021 be postponed until such time that all Council members can meet in person.

On motion of Councilor LaForest, duly seconded by Councilor Sweeney, it was VOTED: to postpone the seating numbers until such time that all Council members can meet in person.

The President called the Regular City Council meeting to order.

The President called for a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of December 22, 2020.

On motion of Councilor Lamb, duly seconded by Councilor Blackmer, it was VOTED: to approve the minutes.

The President called for hearing of visitors, hearing none.

11,862 The President presented communication from Councilor Bona regarding the North Adams Youth Commission which was postponed at the meeting of August 25, 2020.

On motion of Councilor Bona, duly seconded by Councilor Lamb, it was VOTED: to postpone to the meeting of March 23, 2021.

11,926 The President presented Mayor's communication #1 setting the bond level for the City Treasurer/Tax Collector in the amount \$250,000.

Without objection, the President filed the communication.

11,926 The President presented an Order establishing the bond level for the City Treasurer/Tax Collector at \$250,000.

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

The Order was adopted by yea and nay vote, yea, Councilors Blackmer, Bona, Harpin, Hopkins, LaForest, Lamb, Oleskiewicz, Sweeney, Wilkinson, nay none.

11,927 The President presented Mayor's communication #2 setting the bond level for the Assistant City Treasurer at \$62,500.

Without objection, the President filed the communication.

11,927 The President presented an Order establishing the bond level for the Assistant City Treasurer at \$62,500.

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

The Order was adopted by yea and nay vote, yea, Councilors Blackmer, Bona, Harpin, Hopkins, LaForest, Lamb, Oleskiewicz, Sweeney, Wilkinson, nay none.

11,928 The President presented Mayor's communication #3 setting the bond level for the City Clerk in the amount of \$15,000.

Without objection, the President filed the communication.

11,928 The President presented an Order establishing the bond level for the City Clerk in the amount of \$15,000.

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

The Order was adopted by yea and nay vote, yea, Councilors Blackmer, Bona, Harpin, Hopkins, LaForest, Lamb, Oleskiewicz, Sweeney, Wilkinson, nay none.

11,929 The President presented Mayor's communication #4 regarding the appointment of Kate Merrigan to the North Adams Housing Authority for a term to expire July 1, 2024.

Councilor Blackmer welcomed Ms. Merrigan back to municipal government, Councilor Wilkinson and Lamb echoed Councilor Blackmer.

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

11,930 The President presented Mayor's communication #5 regarding the acceptance of a donation from the Trust of John G. & Joyce C. Brooks to the North Adams Public Library.

Without objection, the President filed the communication.

11,930 The President presented an Order authorizing the Mayor, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53 to accept the gift of \$40,000 from the estate of John G. and Joyce C. Brooks to the North Adams Public Library.

The Mayor spoke about Mr. & Mrs. Brooks and their generosity to the City and expressed his gratitude. Councilor LaForest stated his gratitude as well and spoke about their involvement and devotion to the community.

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

The Order was adopted by yea and nay vote, yea, Councilors Blackmer, Bona, Harpin, Hopkins, LaForest, Lamb, Oleskiewicz, Sweeney, Wilkinson, nay none.

11,931 The President presented Mayor's communication #6 regarding the acceptance of a donation from the Trust of John G. & Joyce C. Brooks to Drury High School.

Without objection, the President filed the communication.

11,931 The President presented an Order authorizing the Mayor, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53 to accept the gift of \$40,000 from the estate of John G. and Joyce C. Brooks to Drury High School.

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

The Mayor again expressed his gratitude and appreciation and stated that he brought this before the School Committee last week and that this was the next step to decide how these funds would be utilized for purposes related to computers and language sciences.

The Order was adopted by yea and nay vote, yea, Councilors Blackmer, Bona, Harpin, Hopkins, LaForest, Lamb, Oleskiewicz, Sweeney, Wilkinson, nay none.

11,932 The President presented Mayor's communication #7 regarding the adoption of the City of North Adams Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan.

Without objection, the President filed the communication.

11,932 The President presented a Resolution regarding the City of North Adams Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

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

Councilor Harpin thanked the people that put the plan together. She inquired if the plan would be presented on an annual basis.

The Mayor stated that there will be a publicly presented plan annually.

Councilor Lamb inquired to the Mayor how he saw this plan going forward benefitting and essentially linking the study to actual improvement to the structures such as dams. The Mayor stated that this would be the next step to actually implementing the plan, stating that flood resilience is essential and will require community engagement.

Councilor Blackmer stated that it was her understanding that this document is a required document going forward in order to obtain many grants. The Mayor stated she was correct, it is a condition of eligibility for FEMA and other grants.

Councilor LaForest stated he thought it was one action to meet two requirements, one through state and one through federal government to apply for grants. He stated the Commonwealth switched to Action Grants that can only be applied for with this plan. He stated that he participated on the ad hoc committee working group that went over information regarding high hazard dams, if it were to fail, the damage would be a high level of damage. He thanked the administration for moving forward to complete the work and make our community safer.

Councilor Harpin again thanked all involved for their hard work. She stated that it is important to support this document. She stated that there needs to be greater public participation and this was a concern.

Councilor LaForest stated that this was a living document that will be continued over time, there are other communities throughout the region participating and that this is a great beginning to address these issues.

Councilor Lamb stated that there are items, that in the future, we could talk about such as Barbour Street and linking to trails. He inquired how the City would go about changes; the Mayor stated that BRPC would continue to be involved and could be something to consider going forward.

Councilor LaForest mentioned that FEMA and Army Corp of Engineering is continuing to assess the levy system despite the engineering of the 1940s or 1950s they are missing documents, so this remains an ongoing process which needs to be up to standards.

The Resolution was adopted by yea and nay vote, yea, Councilors Blackmer, Bona, Harpin, Hopkins, LaForest, Lamb, Oleskiewicz, Sweeney, Wilkinson, nay none.

There were no licenses to come before Council.

The President called for Open Forum.

Megan Karlen, 48 Windom Terrace, inquired who was responsible for the wall at the end of the street, she wants to make sure that the wall is attended to before the wall falls down. Councilor Bona stated that he would reach out to Megan.

The president called for Mayor's Concerns.

The Mayor thanked BRPC, Michael Canales and Angela Lopez in their efforts in completing the Resolution for Hazard Mitigation.

The Mayor gave an update on COVID-19 and Governor Baker's orders as well as notifications to businesses and restaurants. The Board of Health determined not to make any further restrictions at this time, but will monitor carefully; a good practice reminder will come from the Board of Health. The Mayor reminded all residents to practice social distancing and wearing of masks to keep our community safe.

The Mayor spoke about the Paycheck Protection Plan program for small businesses from Community Development financial institutions, Greylock Federal CU, applications close on January 15, 2021. He also mentioned the forgivable loans for local businesses of up to \$10,000 for businesses with five or less employees.

The Mayor recognized the swearing in of full-time firefighter, Charlee Sanchez-Rio and part-time police officer, Khalil Paul, as well as the promotion of police officer, Christopher Gelinas to sergeant.

The Mayor acknowledged the flag at City Hall is at half-mast for police and law enforcement officers at the Capitol and across the nation per Governor Baker.

The Mayor extended his gratitude to the family, friends and loved ones of Representative

Gailanne Cariddi and spoke about the final estate distributions. He stated an additional \$91,651 was donated to the Library for a total of \$266,651.56, as well as an additional \$109,276.86 for upkeep and maintenance of the future bike path for a total of \$319,276.86.

The Mayor reminded all that January 18, is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and a virtual program at 9:00 and a peacemaker ceremony can be found at the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition's Facebook page.

The President called for Committee Reports and Minutes, hearing none.

The President called for Liaison updates and Councilor Concerns.

Councilor LaForest inquired if the Mayor could provide an update on what was reported; that multiple firefighters having COVID-19 were out, as well as many Public Service employees. The Mayor stated that based on the testing for Public Services, they are back up and running at this time. In regards to the firefighters, they remain in their period of quarantine, however the department did a shift adjustment and is fully staffed.

Councilor LaForest also stated he was concerned about City employees that were not wearing masks, it is his hope that all employees respect the call to maintain the ability of the City to function and protect all while "on the clock".

Councilor Harpin informed that there is a testing site on Church Street for COVID-19 testing and stated it was running well, she mentioned the hotline for residents to call.

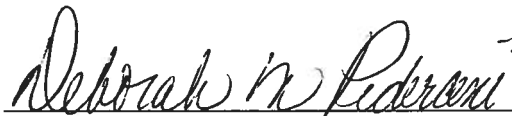
Councilor Blackmer wanted to remind Councilors about the upcoming MMA annual meeting, would like councilors to fit this into their schedule.

Councilor Bona reminded about the parking application that would work with the City's meters. He stated that many tourists had come to his store inquiring and that there is an interest in the parking application.

The President notified the residents that the 2021 City Census will be arriving next week and urged that they fill the forms out and return to the City Clerk's office.

The President called for a motion to adjourn. On motion of Councilor Blackmer, duly seconded by Councilor Wilkinson, it was VOTED: to adjourn at 8:28 pm.

A True Record
Attest,


City Clerk