

CITY OF NORTH ADAMS  
City Clerk's Office  
April 3, 2014

I hereby notify that at twelve noon today the following items of business have been filed with this office and will be acted upon at the meeting in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, Tuesday evening April 8 at seven-thirty o'clock according to Section 8, Rules and Orders of the City Council.

Marilyn Gomeau  
City Clerk

REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
April 8, 2014

Roll Call

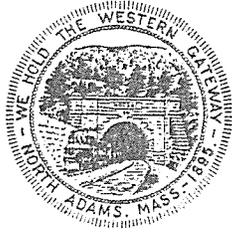
Moment of silent prayer

The Pledge

Approval of the minutes of regular meeting held on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

- 10,792-3** An Ordinance amending Chapter 23 entitled Taxicabs and Busses, Section 23-13, which was passed to a second reading and publish as required by law.
- 10,792-4** An Ordinance amending Chapter 23 entitled Taxicabs and Busses, Section 23-14, which was passed to a second reading and publish as required by law.
- 11,240-2** An Ordinance amending Chapter 2 Section 2-28(a) of the Revised Ordinance, Schedule B the Compensation Plan – Police-Fire and Hourly Wage for FY'13, which was passed to a second reading and publish as required by law.
- 11,314-1** An Ordinance amending Chapter 2 Section 2-28(a) of the Revised Ordinance, Schedule B the Compensation Plan – Police-Fire and Hourly Wage for FY'14, which was passed to a second reading and publish as required by law.
- 11,367** Mayor's communication #22 recommending the re-appointment of Timothy Lesarbeau to the Hoosac Water Quality District for a term to expire April 8, 2017.
- 11,368** Mayor's communication #23 recommending the re-appointment of Michael Canales to the Hoosac Water Quality District for a term to expire April 8, 2017.
- 11,369** Mayor's communication #24 presenting proclamations to the Elizabeth Freeman Center: Business and Professional Women and Berkshire County Kid's Place.
- 11,370** Report of the Finance Committee submitted by Councilor Bullett, Chairman.
- 11,371** Communication submitted by Councilor Lamb on behalf of Glenn Maloney regarding Day of Service in the City.

**CORRESPONDENCE  
LICENSE  
OPEN FORUM  
COUNCILLOR'S & MAYOR'S CONCERNS**



CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor  
Richard J. Alcombright

April 8, 2014

#22

To: North Adams City Council  
Re: Appointment to Hoosac Water Quality District

Dear Honorable Councilors:

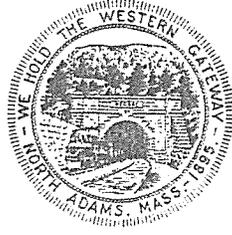
It is with great confidence that I recommend the re-appointment of Timothy Lescarbeau to the Hoosac Water Quality District for a term to expire April 8, 2017.

Tim has served in this capacity for several years and as DPW Commissioner and overseer of our Water Works, his experience and knowledge are significant attributes to this Commission.

I respectfully request confirmation.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Alcombright  
Mayor



CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor  
Richard J. Alcombright

April 8, 2014

#23

To: North Adams City Council  
Re: Appointment to Hoosac Water Quality District

Dear Honorable Councilors:

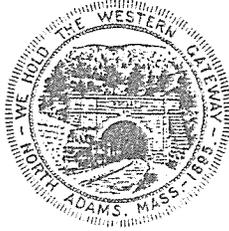
It is with great confidence that I recommend the re-appointment of Michael Canales to the Hoosac Water Quality District for a term to expire April 8, 2017.

Mike has served in this capacity for several years and as the City's Administration Officer, he brings significant fiscal oversight to the Commission on behalf of the City.

I respectfully request confirmation.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Alcombright  
Mayor



CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor  
Richard J. Alcombright

April 8, 2014

#24

To: North Adams City Council  
Re: Proclamations

Dear Honorable Members:

I have been approached by several groups to invoke proclamations at this meeting. The proclamations are:

- Sexual Assault Awareness Month – requested by the Elizabeth Freeman Center
- Equal Pay Day in North Adams – requested by MA Federation of Business and Professional Women
- Child Abuse Prevention Month – requested by Berkshire County Kid's Place

I am hoping that folks from agencies requesting these proclamations will be in attendance at the meeting.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Alcombright  
Mayor



CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor  
Richard J. Alcombright  
Child Abuse Awareness Month

Whereas, child abuse and neglect is a community condition and problem, and finding solutions depends on involvement among people in the community; and

Whereas, approximately 3,000 reports of children are reported abused and neglected in Berkshire County annually and

Whereas, the effects of child abuse and neglect are felt by whole communities, and need to be addressed by the entire community; and

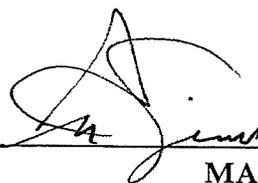
Whereas, Berkshire County Kids' Place is sponsoring several events throughout the month to heighten public awareness of abuse and neglect in communities in Berkshire County; and

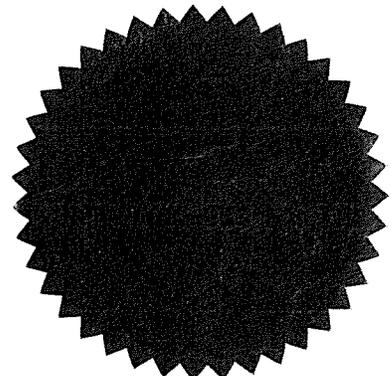
Whereas, these events will provide information and materials that support families to prevent child maltreatment and celebrate people who work with and support children and families; and

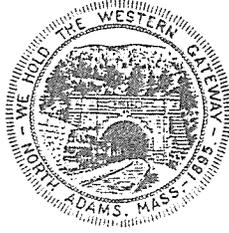
Whereas, an effective response to childhood trauma and abuse in Berkshire County Kids' Place, the District Attorney's Office Sexual Assault Intervention Network, the Department of Children and Families, law enforcement, medical and mental health professionals.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT I, MAYOR RICHARD J. ALCOMBRIGHT DO PROCLAIM APRIL 2014 CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH in the CITY OF NORTH ADAMS and that all citizens, community agencies, religious organization, medical facilities, and businesses increase their participation in efforts to prevent child abuse, thereby strengthening the communities in which we live.**

CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

  
MAYOR





CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor  
Richard J. Alcombright

**SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH PROCLAMATION**

**Whereas**, Sexual Assault Awareness Month calls attention to the fact that sexual violence is widespread and impacts every community member of **NORTH ADAMS**; and

**Whereas**, Rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment impact our community, and statistics show one in five women and one in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives (Black et al., 2011); and

**Whereas**, child sexual abuse prevention must be a priority to confront the reality that one in six boys and one in four girls will experience a sexual assault before the age 18 (Dube et al., 2005).; and

**Whereas**, Young people experience heightened rates of sexual violence and youth ages 12-17 were 2.5 times as likely to be victims of rape or sexual assault (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).;

**Whereas**, we must work together to educate our community about sexual violence prevention, supporting survivors, and speaking out against harmful attitudes and actions; and

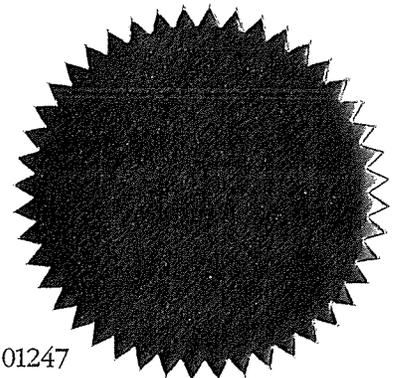
**Whereas**, With leadership and dedication, we can be successful in preventing sexual violence in **NORTH ADAMS** by increasing education, awareness, and community involvement; and

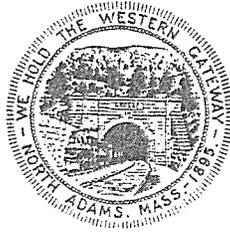
**Whereas**, **NORTH ADAMS** strongly supports the efforts of national, state and local partners, and of every citizen, to actively engage in public and private efforts to prevent sexual violence. It's time for all of us to take appropriate action and support one another to create a safer environment for all.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, That I, Mayor Richard J. Alcombright, join advocates and communities across the country in playing an active role to prevent sexual violence. Along with the United States Government and State of Massachusetts, I do hereby proclaim **April** as;

**SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH**

  
MAYOR





CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor  
Richard J. Alcombright

**EQUAL PAY DAY 2014 PROCLAMATION**

**Whereas**, fifty years after the passage of the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, women especially minority women, continue to suffer the consequences of unequal pay; and

**Whereas**, according to the U.S. Census bureau, year-round, full-time working women in 2010 earned only 77% of the earnings of year-round, full-time working men, indicating little change or progress in pay equity; and

**Whereas**, in 2009 the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was signed into law which amends Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and now we must pass The Paycheck Fairness Act, which amends the Equal Pay Act by closing loopholes and improving the laws effectiveness; and

**Whereas**, there were 68 million women in the workforce in 2008, a significant increase from 18.4 million in 1950, and women were 46.8 percent of the labor force in 2010; and

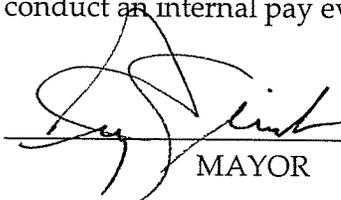
**Whereas**, over a working lifetime, this wage disparity costs the average American woman and her family and her family an estimated \$700,000 to \$2 million in lost wages, impacting Social Security benefits and pensions; and

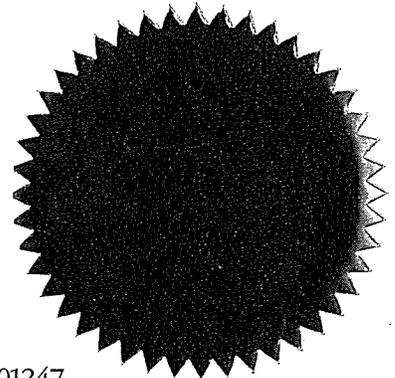
**Whereas**, fair pay equity policies can be implemented simply and without undue costs or hardship in both the public and private sectors; and

**Whereas**, fair pay strengthens the security of families today and eases future retirement costs, while enhancing the American economy; and

**Whereas**, Tuesday, April 8 symbolizes the time in the New Year in which the wages paid to American women catch up to the wages paid to men from the previous year,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, That I, Mayor Richard J. Alcombright do hereby proclaim Tuesday, April 8, 2014: **Equal Pay Day** the City of North Adams urges the citizens of **North Adams** to recognize the full value of women's skills and significant contributions to the labor force, and further encourages business to conduct an internal pay evaluation to ensure women are being paid fairly.

  
MAYOR



Finance Committee Meeting  
03-19-2013

Present: Committee members: Nancy Bullett, chairwoman; Wayne Wilkinson Absent; Lisa Blackmer

Others present: Mayor Richard Alcombright, Dave Fierro, and Mike Canales. Councilors present: Keith Bona, Josh Moran, Kate Merrigan and members of the press and the community

Meeting opened at 6PM

Chair Nancy Bullett welcomed those in attendance and asked the Mayor to begin the presentation. The Mayor began by stating the presentation will show the plan to close out FY 14. Mike Canales and Dave Fierro will present information about how we build local receipts and how they have been trending, with a comparison going back to 2009.

Two areas most looked at; salaries and expenses. Salaries pacing about 290,000 over budget primarily due to over time in police and fire related to injured on duties, which is unavoidable. The amount over budget also reflects retro pay for 3 contracts recently settled; fire, police and DPW.

On the expense side; the majority is Veteran's benefits and snow and ice removal. Councilor Wilkinson asked why would veteran's services be over and the Mayor replied more cases and the budget increasing since his first year in office from approx. 100,000 to over 600,000 in benefits at present.

How to cover; through the use of reserves, land sale reserve accounts. Will require approval from the state to use land sale reserve accounts and a request to use these funds for other uses than the purchase of land sent to Senator Downing's office. Councilor Wilkinson asked if it would be difficult to be approved and the Mayor indicated no "that it is a process".

Local receipts

Drop in state aid while local receipts are not increasing enough to keep pace. The local receipts have flat lined even with the 800,000 collected in sewer fees. Since 2009 receipts down approx. 3.2 million due specifically do to reduction in state aid.

Wilkinson was under impression we were using reserves to close out the year and that he was glad to learn he was wrong, that the city would use monies from the accounts discussed. Efforts were to build free cash accounts but that has not been possible essentially due to budget over runs, primarily from OT and veteran's benefits. The stabilization account requires council approval for use.

Wilkinson asked if accounts are restricted; Mayor yes the land sale account, landfill reserve, tech fund and parking meter reserve accounts are restricted and funds are used as

needed within areas directly related to that fund. For instance, landfill account for costs associated with the landfill.

Bottom line, at the end of this fiscal year, there will be approximately \$95,000 left in reserves finishing FY 14 in the black. When setting the budget for FY 15, the city will not have reserves to cover the \$800,000; therefore, the city will have to make \$800,000 in cuts to the budget to balance the budget.

Questions:

Aaron Crandall; "What were the expenditures for veteran's services? Mayor; "approximately \$55,000/ month.

Aaron; when will the federal government reimburse the city? Mayor it comes from the state as local aid, quarterly and paid next fiscal year, reimbursed at 75%. These numbers are factored in to the next budget.

Wayne Goodell Asked about the overages in salaries; mayor stated it includes OT and meeting contractual agreements for fire, police and DPW.

Mike Canales presented a summary of all general fund revenues for use in FY15 and the projections are based on current available data. Overall,

General Fund Revenues are projected to increase by \$274,443.77 or .69%. There is no free cash for capital projects or for balancing the budget.

Mayor indicates costs, such as health insurance will go up and Councilor Wilkinson thought the \$ 274, 443.77 was low and the Mayor agreed.

Mike Canales presented on overview of the growth in revenue and indicated the city's 46% reliance on state aid is difficult as the amount received is dependent on the state.

The amount of state aid has gone down from 53% in 2009 to 46 2014, shifting the burden to the city. Local receipts have gone down, while taxes have gone up.

Councilor Wilkinson asked why the state has reduced its aid. Is it because they changed the formula? Mike Canales replied no, the state says it has no money. The Mayor stated the state has \$1.7 billion in reserves and they make prudent decisions, wanting to keep the state healthy in case of an economic down turn, but what this does is shift the burden back to cities and towns. The legislators are working to try to get funds back to the cities and towns. Councilor Wilkinson asked if this is the worst-case scenario and the Mayor and Mike Canales said yes. Even if the state increases funding, it will not be enough to make a substantial difference.

The decrease in local receipts is largely due to a drop in tuition revenues received from other communities who send students to the North Adams School system. Councilor Bullett asked why the drop in numbers and Mike Canales replied 11 students have grown out of the system. Councilor Bullett asked is the BART school affected our numbers and the answer is yes. Councilor Bona asked if a drop in population is a factor and that is the case as well, affecting our tuition receipts. While the state could increase the amount of aid, the state has mandated an increase in spending on education.

Mark Trottier asked if the increase in state aid was from the increase in gas tax. Mayor responded saying the monies raised goes back to the state and the state decides what to do with it. The funds will not float to the city as state aid; however, Rep Cariddi and Sen. Ben Downing are working to get \$1.2 million in funding for the Brown St. bridge and this funding would come from the increased gas tax.

Councilor Wilkinson asked about school choice funds and the amount received continues to decline.

Wayne Goodell asked about health insurance and pension costs. The Mayor indicated that a less costly insurance plan had been secured, however, the rate is increasing by 8%, so we are where we were 2 years ago. The pension cost is non-negotiable at the city level.

Mark Trottier asked about why health insurance premiums are going up. The Mayor indicated it is based on claims paid out and Mike Canales reported mandates from the Affordable Care Act have had an influence as well.

Councilor Bullett asked if the push for a healthier community begins, could this influence the cost? Mayor; only if the pool gets healthier, so it is possible. However, Mike Canales stated a significant illness such as cancer would have a great impact on the loss ratio.

Aaron Crandall asked what percentage of the insurance does the city pay? Mayor; 75% being paid by the city.

Keith Bona commented while the city is paying 75% of the premium, the new plan negotiated requires higher co-pays, so the employees are paying more, but the monthly premium is less.

Wayne Goodell asked then wouldn't the city be better off hiring part time people to decrease the cost of benefits? And letting go of full time positions? Financially we're strapped, so... Mayor replied full time employees tend to work harder and have a greater commitment than part timers; "you get more bang for your buck". Councilor Wilkinson commented about the hospital reducing positions to part time and the negative effect it has had on morale.

Mike Canales reviewed the trends From FY 2012 to FY 2015. Basically, state aid is minimally higher, local receipts have dropped slightly and taxes are slightly higher. Though the state aid is higher, it is \$2,514,271 less than received in fiscal 2009. The cumulative difference in revenues received since fiscal 2009 are \$13,208,282.50. While state aid continues to drop, expenses are up and the cost of doing business is up. The Mayor commented about the effect of the deep recession and the difficulty of getting above it. There seems to be no upside.

Local receipts saw an increase in FY12 due to the sewer fee increase and stayed steady until FY15, a decrease of \$165,757 due primarily to school tuition loss.

A spreadsheet provided a comparison of known years, FY11 –FY13 and projections calculated based on those previous years. Mayor indicated these projections must be reported to the Department of Revenue and the projections must be pretty accurate or the state will not allow the city to set its budget.

Councilor Wilkinson asked about how much in delinquent water bills are out there?

Mike Canales reported collections at about 94%. The Mayor indicated the city would be more assertive with demand letters to increase the collections. Councilor Wilkinson

commented to “ just shut it off” if payments not made. The Mayor was empathetic to tenants in multifamily homes where the landlord may be delinquent in payments.

Mike Canales indicates taxes are the fastest growing revenue source. 2014 saw strong amount of new growth primarily due to Walmart. The growth in taxes is a direct response to the reduction in state aid.

Councilor Wilkinson asked if there would be a balanced budget. The Mayor said that will happen with approx. \$800,000 in cuts. The cumulative effect of reduced state aid has been most hurtful. Community has not grown enough and we cannot tax enough to catch up to the loss of state aid. The cit is \$3.3 million behind. Had the over ride been approved 3 cycles ago, we would not be where we are now. And, budgets that have been approved by the council have been up less than 1% per year, which is essentially a flat budget.

Aaron Crandall asked about back taxes. Approx. \$2.4 million, most from abandoned property. It is properties of little value, but the interest that builds on that owed drives the number higher. Demolition of buildings is costly; therefore little is gained on the city side. Block grants are used for demolition. Councilor Wilkinson asked of the \$2.4 million, how much is commercial? Mike Canales reported not much, mostly residential, other than large buildings, such as the mushroom factory, large apartment buildings. Mark Trottier: how many of these properties are dead properties? Mayor said the only way to get them off the books is to sell the tax title. But it would be a 2 year process though the land court and costly.

Mark Trottier: Fair to say those properties on the books is not in condition for sale? The Mayor said yes. Mike Canales reports the city does not own these properties, the city would have to go through land court.

Mark Trottier: if use a block grant, no cost to the city? Mike Canales; yes, but you must place a lien against the property to use the block grant.

Wayne Goodell; Aluminum anodizing was sold. Were there back taxes? Mike Canales indicated they were not behind in taxes but in water fees, which were paid prior to the sale.

Councilor Bona: asked if you take away the interest and the demolition fees, how much is truly back taxes? That number not readily available, however, the Mayor commented that over 4 cycle, \$150,000, or \$600,000 in 4 years for demolition alone plus interest at 16%, the amount of true taxes owed is much less than the \$2.4 million.

Wayne Goodell: asked about people that might choose not to pay taxes. Mayor: most people have a mortgage and if taxes were not paid, a lien would be placed on their home.

Councilor Moran: Asked about larger organizations, such as MCLA who do not pay taxes. Mayor: these organizations pay water and sewer; Mass MoCa pays taxes on the rental spaces. Mayor discussed PILOT; “ payment in lieu of taxes”. The most the city would likely gain from this is \$60-80,000.

Councilor Wilkinson: Asked if doctor’s building is taxed and the Mayor replied it is taxed.

Councilor Bona: Is the space at the college that is rented to, for example Subway, taxed?  
Mayor: no because Subway is housed in a state owned building.

The Mayor reiterated the increase in taxes is not something he wants to do, however, it is necessary in order to continue to provide services.

Councilor Wilkinson raised the issue of tax rate vs tax bill. Mike Canales explained the difference has to do with the value of the property. So, a building in another community might have a lower tax rate, but the tax bill will be higher due to higher assessed value.

A motion by Chairwoman Nancy Bullett to adjourn, seconded by Committeeman  
Wilkinson  
Meeting adjourned at 7:50PM

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy P. Bullett". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Respectfully submitted,".

Nancy Bullett, chairwoman of the finance committee



*City of North Adams*  
FY 2015 Preliminary  
Revenue

## CLOSING

- ◉ Once again, we face a challenging budget process with limited revenue sources to close a significant budget deficit.
- ◉ Overall, the City's financial base continues to be weak. Limited reserves, lack of free cash, inadequate capital funding and taxes at the levy limit have left the City in a precarious position.
- ◉ The Governor's proposed budget numbers will further deteriorate our financial base.
- ◉ The summary of this presentation is that, revenues will continue to weaken the City's ability to provide services. We are in a rather weak financial position that is over reliant on state aid that continues to remain below the levels of Fiscal Year 2009.
- ◉ We need to continue conservative financial practices with a keen eye on the many needs and challenges that lie ahead. Discretion and good sense must be our guide as we evaluate our opportunities and challenges that remain before us.



PO Box 344, North Adams, MA 01247 [info@NorthAdamsChamber.com](mailto:info@NorthAdamsChamber.com)

April 23, 2013

Dear City Councilor

For over 20 years the city of North Adams and the students, faculty and staff from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts have come together in the spring with the goal of making North Adams a nicer to live. Over the years the projects have changed, many new faces have come to take part in the effort to clean, paint and otherwise beautify North Adams. What has not changed is the great feeling of collaboration at the end of the day.

On **Saturday, April 27, 2013** We will again come together for Day of Service. Along with many MCLA students we will be joined by North Adams Public School students, local residents, employees from Price Chopper, Big Y, McAndrews-King, City of North Adams DPW. We are also glad to welcome many local agencies including Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, Art About Town, North Adams Chamber of Commerce Board members and many dedicated community members. Our Day will start at 9:30 at the MCLA Church Street Center for a welcome by President Grant. We will conclude our day in downtown North Adams at the culmination of the Eagle Street Rising project.

For the last 4 years The North Adams Chamber of Commerce [formerly Develop North Adams] has partnered with Spencer Moser and MCLA to help increase community awareness and participation in Day of Service. We are pleased to see many projects being led by community members and organizations.

I would like to personally invite you to join us on Saturday, April 27 as we come together for a Day of Service to North Adams.

Sincerely,

Glenn M. Maloney  
President, North Adams Chamber of Commerce  
[glenn@northadamschamber.com](mailto:glenn@northadamschamber.com)  
413.672.2261