

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – JANUARY 7, 2026

**Meeting held at 50 Payson Ave., 2ndflr meeting area and remotely by Google Meet
6:00 p.m.**

Members Present: President Koni Denham, Vice-President Felicia Jadczyk, James Kwiecinski, Tom Peake, Tamara Smith, Jonathan Schmidt, Amanda Newton, Nathan Markee and Kiam Jamrog-McQuaid.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence.

Moment of Silence for the tragedy in Minneapolis in which a woman was shot and killed by an ICE agent.

Act on Minutes: On motion by Councilor Schmidt and seconded by Councilor Smith, it was voted, with Councilor Markee and Councilor Jamrog-McQuaid abstaining, to approve the December 17, 2025 City Council meeting minutes.

Swearing-in of new firefighter:

Mayor Salem Derby gave the oath of office to new firefighter Ryan Chenevert. Fire Chief Norris congratulated Firefighter Chenevert.

Recognition of former City Councilor now State Representative Homar Gomez

City Council President Koni Denham and Mayor Salem Derby presented Homar Gomez with a plaque commemorating his time on the City Council (2018-2024) and as City Council President, (2022-2024). State Representative Gomez said that it was an honor to serve on the Easthampton City Council for four terms. He recognized that this is the first time that women are serving as the Easthampton City Council President and Vice-President.

Public Comment Summary:

President Denham stated that public speak will be set at 3 minutes per speaker with a reminder at the 2 minute, 30 second mark. She said that the in-person speakers will be called on first, then online participants who wish to speak.

JP Kwiecinski, 47 Hannum Brook Drive, said to take note of what happened in Minneapolis and to watch the videos.

Karl Prah, Gaston Street, thanked President Denham and Councilor Kwiecinski for addressing what occurred in Minneapolis. He said that a friend of his was struck in a crosswalk a month ago on Cottage Street.

Steve Delacqua, Culdaff Street, said that he has been an Easthampton resident for 26 years. He spoke about large rent increases and mentioned the Easthampton Tenants Association group which meets every Thursday at the Municipal Building.

Lindsy Sekula, Precinct 3, remote, congratulated the City Council members on their recent election. She said that it is amazing to see both President Denham and Vice-President Jadczyk in leadership roles.

Public Hearings: None

Items for Immediate Attention:

President Denham announced that the Councilors will now take 5-7 minutes to meet for re-organization of City Council Committees and to select a Chair and Clerk for each Committee.

The City Council Committees and roles for 2026-2027 are as follows:

Finance Committee

Councilor Peake, Chair
Councilor Schmidt, Clerk
President Denham

Ordinance Committee

Councilor Jamrog-McQuaid, Chair
Councilor Smith, Clerk
President Denham

Rules & Government Relations Committee

Councilor Kwiecinski, Chair
Vice-President Jadczyk, Clerk
Councilor Newton

Public Safety Committee

Councilor Newton, Chair
Councilor Markee, Clerk
Councilor Schmidt

Appointments Committee

Councilor Smith, Chair
Vice-President Jadczyk, Clerk
Councilor Markee

Property Committee

Councilor Kwiecinski, Chair
Councilor Jamrog-McQuaid, Clerk
Councilor Peake

Resolution Pertaining to Discrimination and Intolerance

Vice-President Jadczyk read the resolution in the form of a motion as follows:

Whereas, one of the fundamental core values of the City of Easthampton is to treat all persons with respect and dignity; and

Whereas, the City of Easthampton values all of its citizens and recognizes that the many races and ethnicities of its citizens have contributed to the strength of character of Easthampton; and

Whereas, the City of Easthampton recognizes the strength in the diversity and inclusiveness of its citizenry; and

Now, therefore, be it hereby resolved, that the City of Easthampton and its representatives shall not condone or tolerate any form of discrimination and will create spaces of inclusion by challenging any and all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, color, class, religious creed, age,

familial status, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity or expression, disabilities, or veteran status.

Dated this 7th day of January, 2026.

Easthampton City Council

On motion by Vice-President Jadczak and seconded by Councilor Schmidt, it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve the **Resolution Pertaining to Discrimination and Intolerance**.

Correspondence:

President Denham said that she would like Boards/Committees and Departments to have increased access to the City Council.

President/Vice-President Communications:

President Denham stated that the City Council now has two women in leadership roles as well as four democratically elected women on the Council. President Denham thanked Councilor Kwiecinski for his leadership. President Denham mentioned the Resolution Pertaining to Discrimination and Intolerance and said that the City Council has a diverse body of leaders. She acknowledged the tragedy in Minneapolis.

Vice-President Jadczak thanked outgoing City Council President JP Kwiecinski. President Denham said that going forward Vice-President Jadczak will be handling New Business on the City Council agenda. President Denham reminded the City Councilors of the Thursday at Noon deadline for items to be added to the City Council agenda. She said that it is in process to set up a meeting with the I.T. (Technology) Department for newly elected chairs for information on running the hybrid meetings for tech success.

President Denham said that the City Councilors will receive an email from Human Resources during the week of January 19, 2026 regarding the City's Harassment Policy.

It was mentioned that the Rent Study Committee is seeking new members. The committee was formed last year out of a resolution passed by City Council. The Rent Study Committee is going to explore the possibility of a Charter change for rent stabilization. The Committee is also looking at ways to help renters right now.

It was announced that the annual Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade will take place on Sunday, March 22, 2026. An invitation to walk in the parade has been sent to the City Council. It was announced to please notify the City Council Clerk by January 21, 2026 if interested in marching in the parade.

There was an announcement of a MMA Connect 351 Conference taking place in Boston on January 22-24, 2026. The deadline to register is January 20, 2026 and there are funds available in the City Council budget for those Councilors who wish to attend.

The 9/11 Tribute Committee is requesting feedback. It was mentioned to please contact Dillon Maxfield in the Planning Department regarding this. The next 9/11 Tribute Committee meeting will be held on January 26, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging at 19 Union Street.

Mayor Communications:

Mayor Derby congratulated the City Councilors at the start of their new term. Mayor Derby acknowledged that it is amazing to have two capable and competent women as the President and Vice-President of the City Council.

Mayor Derby also spoke of the Minneapolis shooting and killing of a woman by ICE.

Committee Reports

Finance: Councilor Peake said that the next Finance Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. The agenda items will include the City Clerk’s proposal for a vital statistics fee increase.

Councilor Kwiecinski asked if tonight’s agenda section on “Communications from Elected Boards and Officials is taking place. It was inadvertently missed earlier in the meeting.

Communications from Elected Boards and Officials:

Councilor Kwiecinski mentioned that property tax bills have been mailed out. He said that residents have until February 2, 2026 to file an abatement if they wish to do so.

Councilor Jamrog-McQuaid announced that the Easthampton Tenant’s Association meets weekly at the Municipal Building, 50 Payson Avenue on the second floor.

Public Safety: Councilor Newton said that the Public Safety Committee has not met but will set a meeting soon.

Appointment: Councilor Smith said that the Appointment Committee has not met since the last City Council meeting. At their previous meeting the Board and Committee Fair was discussed. More information on the Fair will be announced at the next meeting.

On motion by Councilor Smith and seconded by Vice-President Jadczak it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to extend by 60 days the following agenda items:

1. Ongoing agenda item request for board/committee vacancy review/recruitment
2. Proposal for Mayor and Clerk to create an Appointment Committee Handbook

Ordinance: Councilor Jamrog-McQuaid reported that the City Council Ordinance Committee last met December 18, 2025, at which he attended as a member of the Affordable & Fair Housing Partnership.

On motion by Councilor Jamrog-McQuaid and seconded by Councilor Smith it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to set a Public Hearing for January 21, 2026 at 6:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers, 50 Payson Avenue, Second Floor, to discuss the proposal to amend Exhibit A (Classification of Employees) to add the position of Public Safety Dispatch Director.

Councilor Jamrog-McQuaid said that the City Council Ordinance Committee voted in favor of Sections 1-4 of the Affordable & Fair Housing Partnership's recommendations. Councilor Jamrog-McQuaid shared his screen and review the following sections.

1. Updating References to DHCD

- Replace all references to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC).

2. Parking Minimums:

- Adopt a blanket minimum of 1.5 spaces per unit for all multifamily housing, which can be reduced to an average of 1 space per unit based on unit mix and project location.

3. Fair Housing & State Law Compliance:

- Modify local language to align with and defer to state housing law where applicable

3a. Definition of "Family".

- Update the definition of "Family" to include "All the people who occupy a single housing unit, regardless of their relationship to one another" to reflect diverse living arrangements.

4. "Community Character" Language:

- Remove, rephrase, or clarify vague and subjective references to "character" throughout the zoning ordinance and replace them with clear, objective criteria.

On motion by Councilor Jamrog-McQuaid and seconded by Councilor Schmidt it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to refer the above Sections 1-4 of the Affordable & Fair Housing Partnership's recommendations to the Planning Board to hold a joint Public Hearing with the City Council.

Councilor Jamrog-McQuaid said that the next Ordinance Committee meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. The agenda will include the proposed short-term rental ordinance, review of sandwich board signs, and the Ordinance Committee's final report.

Property: Councilor Kwiecinski said that the Property Committee will meet later this month to discuss the two agenda items regarding the disposition of the Town Lodging House and Flags on Public Property (including over ponds).

Rules and Government Relations: Councilor Kwiecinski said that the Rules and Government Relations Committee will meet later this month to discuss the two agenda items. The items are the Resolution in support of water operator retirement reclassification and the City Council Action Request: Code of Conduct for Appointed Members of Boards, Committees, and Commissions.

New Business: Four Mayoral Appointments

On motion by Vice-President Jadczyk and seconded by Councilor Kwiecinski it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to refer the following appointments to the City Council Appointment Committee for review:

NAME	BOARD/COMMITTEE	TERM EXPIRATION
Marlene Michonski	Parks and Recreation Commission (re-appt.)	12/31/2029
Michele Subocz	Parks and Recreation Commission	12/31/2026
Mary Church	Housing Authority (move to EHA resident appt.)	12/31/2031
Karl Prah	Housing Authority	12/31/2031

Resolution Adopting the Hazard Mitigation Plan

On motion by Vice-President Jadczyk and seconded by Councilor Kwiecinski it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to refer the Fire Chief's request for a Resolution Adopting the Hazard Mitigation Plan to the Public Safety Committee.

On motion by Councilor Schmidt and seconded by Councilor Smith it was unanimously voted that this meeting **ADJOURN**.

Time: 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mary Ann Giza
Clerk to the City Council