

Dear Voters,

I'm writing to tell you about an issue of concern which will be presented to the city council this [Tuesday, Feb. 27, at 6:00 p.m.](#), a vote to ratify the appointment of Kala Fisher as City Auditor. I hope you will take a few minutes to read the information below, and if you share my concerns please contact your ward councilors, council president, and both at-large councilors. Ask them to vote "no" on the appointment of Kala Fisher for City Auditor and request that Mayor Sciarra find a qualified candidate by reposting the job opening with an appropriate pay scale (\$130-160k). (Councilor contact info listed below)

Why is the City Auditor position so crucial?

The City Auditor plays an essential role in helping the public understand city finances **as** they affect - and are affected by - decisions made by the mayor or legislation proposed by the city council. When our pooled resources are spent by the City, it should be on our behalf, in ways that we understand, toward initiatives we support. Audits are indispensable tools of transparency, accountability, and planning.

You can read the responsibilities of the City Auditor [here](#).

Why I voted "no" on the initial recommendation of Kala Fisher as City Auditor

[At the Feb. 5 meeting](#) of the City Services Committee we were carrying out our charge to review Mayor Sciarra's [appointment of Kala Fisher](#) to the City Auditor position. As a member of the City Services committee, I took my duty to review the appointment quite seriously, so I voted "no" on sending a positive recommendation on the appointment to the full city council, as I did not feel we had finished doing our due diligence. Following the vote, I continued the due diligence process, and I simply am not confident that the taxpayers of Northampton would be adequately served by a candidate whose limited education, training, and experience do not meet the City's stated minimum requirements for the position.

What Northampton needs in a City Auditor candidate

My understanding is that to adequately serve the city of Northampton, we need an auditor with a track record of increasingly independent and unsupervised professional responsibility, an education and ongoing professional training that adequately prepares them for the demands of the profession, and auditing experience in a city or town whose budget size and complexity at least *approaches* that of Northampton. I do not believe that the mayor's candidate for City Auditor has those qualifications.

Comparison of the City Auditor job requirements and the candidate's experience:

<p>City Auditor position Northampton (Information from <u>posted job listing</u>)</p> <p>(Pay range: \$86,495-\$113,486)</p>	<p>Candidate's background (Town size and budgetary information from public sources)</p>
<p>Education requirements</p> <p>"Minimum qualifications - Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, or business or a related subject... Master's degree...preferred."</p>	<p>Candidate's education</p> <p>Earned an Associate's degree in 2014.</p>
<p>Preferred certification</p> <p>Massachusetts Municipal Auditors' & Accountants' Association Certification</p> <p>The <u>Mayor's appointment letter</u> says the candidate is pursuing the MMAAA certification and "expects to complete the training for the certification within two years."</p>	<p>Candidate's certifications</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>Experience requirements</p> <p>"Five to seven years of progressively responsible financial, administrative and supervisory experience in a municipal system"</p>	<p>Candidate's experience</p> <p>At second-most-recent position, Town of Athol, candidate was supervised by the Town Accountant.</p> <p>In the <u>Mayor's appointment letter</u> (the only record of candidate's qualifications available to the public), there is no evidence of supervisory experience.</p>
<p>Size of Northampton's budget</p> <p>"This position is responsible for supervising and controlling the expenditures of all City funds."</p> <p>In the current fiscal year, Northampton has a budget of \$132 million.</p>	<p>Size of budgets candidate has managed</p> <p>Northampton's budget is over 3,000% larger than the total budget managed by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (candidate's most recent position).</p> <p>Northampton's budget is 500% larger than the total budget of the Town of Athol (candidate's second most recent position).</p>

I welcome your thoughts and questions on this appointment. If you share my concerns, I urge you to contact your city councilor, the council president, and both at-large councilors. Northampton's residents deserve fully qualified department heads working for us.

Very truly yours,

Quaverly H. Rothenberg
 Ward 3 Councilor, Northampton

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