



Legislative Branch

RL Number:	64
Date Submitted:	3/20/24

City Clerk, City Hall, Binghamton, NY 13901 607-772-7005

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION

Requests for Legislation (RLs) may be submitted to the City Clerk's Office for possible consideration at City Council Work Sessions. Incomplete/incorrect RLs will be returned to applicant for revisions. Please include as much supplemental material as is necessary to substantiate the request for legislation. Use "Additional Presenters" line to include anyone that will appear to present this in City Council Work Session.

Applicant Presenting RL at Work Session

Nate Hotchkiss / Michael Dundon	City Councilman #4 / City Councilman #7	(607) 772-7236 (607) 772-7234
(Print Name)	(Title)	(Phone number)

(Additional Presenters)

Proposed Title: To Be Completed By Applicant

Reform Legislation

Executive Summary (Explain why legislation is necessary):

This legislation is necessary to bring forth ethics changes, an ethics board and financial disclosure statements.

Effective Date: (if applicable) upon Adoption

Budget transfer or amendment: RL Budget Transfer Worksheet must be attached w/ Dep. Head signature.

RL related to a grant: RL Grant Worksheet must be attached.

RL related to previously adopted legislation: Perm. number _____, adoption date _____

Contract: Person/Company _____

Total Cost _____ Funds available in Budget Line _____ Title _____

Public Hearing required? Yes Not Applicable SEQRA required? Yes Not Applicable

Additional information related to this RL attached? Yes No

Expedition requested for this RL? Yes No

Please explain why expedition is necessary:

REFORM: Reshaping Ethics and Fostering Organizational Responsibilities for Municipalities

1. **Financial Disclosure Policy:** Pursuant to Article 18 of the New York State General Municipal Law, the City of Binghamton hereby adopts the following financial disclosure policy:
 - a. The Mayor of the City of Binghamton shall file with the City Clerk, on or before January 1 of each year, a list of the names or the office, title or job classification of those elected officials, appointed officials, boards and commissions that shall be required to file the annual financial disclosure statement.
 - b. Time of filing. All financial statements shall be filed on or before April 30th of every year following enactment of this subsection during the term of the City official's office. The time for filing such a statement may be extended pursuant to the Board of Ethics, for justifiable cause and for undue hardship upon application to the Board of Ethics pursuant to the rules and regulation set forth in the law.
 - c. Place and manner of filing. Financial disclosure statements are to be completed and filed with the Binghamton City Clerk. The statements shall be confidential and shall be made accessible to the general public and to City of Binghamton officers, employees and City Council by formal Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request through the clerk's office.
 - d. The Board of Ethics shall have all necessary authority to enforce the filing requirements of this chapter, including the authority to promulgate such rules and regulations as the Board of Ethics determines are necessary to implement this chapter. The Board of Ethics shall be authorized to review requests for exceptions with respect to complying with timely filing of such disclosure statements due to justifiable cause or undue hardship. The Board of Ethics shall inspect all financial disclosure statements that are filed to ascertain whether any person subject to the reporting requirements of this chapter, a Code of Ethics, local law, ordinance or resolution has failed to file such a statement, has filed a deficient statement or has filed a statement which reveals a possible law violation.
 - e. Failure to file a timely disclosure. If a person required to file a financial disclosure statement with the Board of Ethics has failed to file a statement, has filed a deficient statement, the Board of Ethics shall notify the reporting person in writing, state the failure to file or detail the deficiency, provide the person with a fifteen (15) period to cure the deficiency and advise the person of the penalties for failure to comply with the reporting requirements. If the person fails to make such filing or fails to cure the deficiency within the specified time period, the Board of Ethics shall send a notice of delinquency to the reporting person and to the appointing authority for such person.
 - f. Opportunity to be heard. If a reporting person has filed a statement which reveals a possible violation of a duly adopted Code of Ethics of the City of Binghamton, local law, ordinance or resolution or if the Board of Ethics receives a sworn complaint alleging such a violation or if the Board of Ethics determines on its own initiative to investigate a possible violation, the Board of Ethics shall notify the reporting person in writing, describe the possible or alleged violation of such Code of Ethics, local law, ordinance or resolution or of this chapter and provide the person with a fifteen (15) day period in which to submit a written response setting forth information relating to the activities cited as a possible or alleged violation of such Code of Ethics, local law, ordinance or resolution or of this chapter and provide the person with a fifteen (15) day period in

which to submit a written response setting forth information relating to the activities cited as a possible or alleged violation of law. If the Board of Ethics thereafter makes a determination that further inquiry is justified, it shall give the reporting person an opportunity to be heard. The Board shall also inform the reporting individual of its rules regarding the conduct of adjudicatory proceedings and appeals and the dues process procedural mechanisms available to such individual.

- i. If the Board determines at any stage of the proceedings that there is no violation or that any potential conflict of interest violation has been rectified, it shall so advise the reporting person and complainant, if any. All of the foregoing proceedings shall be confidential.
- ii. If the Board determines that there is reasonable cause to believe that a violation has occurred, it shall send a notice of reasonable cause to the reporting person, to the complainant, if any, and to the City Council of the City of Binghamton.

2. Ethical Disclosure: Disclosure of interest in legislation, contracts and other matters.

- a. Any municipal officer or employee (or spouse of such municipal officer or employee) who has, will have, or later acquires an interest in any actual or proposed contract, purchase agreement, lease agreement or other agreement, including oral agreements, with the municipality of which he/she is an officer or employee shall disclose, in writing, the nature and extent of such interest.
- b. Whenever a matter requiring the exercise of discretion comes before a municipal officer or employee, either individually or as a member of a board, and the disposition of the matter could result in a direct or indirect financial or material benefit to himself or herself, a relative, or any private organization in which he or she is deemed to have an interest, the municipal officer or employee shall disclose, in writing, the nature of the interest.
- c. The disclosure shall be made when the matter requiring disclosure first comes before the municipal officer or employee, or when the municipal officer or employee first acquires knowledge of the interest requiring disclosure, whichever is earlier.
- d. In the case of a person serving in an elective office, the disclosure shall be filed with the City Clerk, who shall be the Clerk of the Ethics Board. In all other cases, the disclosure shall be filed with the person's supervisor, or, if the person does not have a supervisor, the disclosure shall be filed with the municipal officer, employee or board having the power to appoint to the person's position. In the case of a person serving on a municipal board, a copy of the disclosure shall be filed with the board. Any disclosure made to a board shall be made publicly at a meeting of the board and must be included in the minutes of the meeting.

3. Strategic Planning: Creating a systematic reporting process to encourage careful consideration of various factors, including budgetary constraints, community needs, infrastructure development, and strategic goals for each department in the City of Binghamton

- a. Each Department in the City of Binghamton will draft and present a 5 year strategic plan to align with the budget process
- b. First draft will be presented at a special Council session in June of each year

- c. Final draft will be presented at a special Council session in January of the following year
- d. Plans will model a specific template and include budgetary projects as necessary
- e. Each Department in the City of Binghamton will provide a regular report (quarterly, monthly) to Council in writing, indicating activities undertaken in that time period, according to a specific template

4. Employee Support Services

- a. Onboarding new employees: An onboarding policy is crucial for ensuring that new employees have a smooth transition into the organization, understand their roles and responsibilities, and feel welcomed and supported from day one. This process will also ensure a consistent and supportive transition for other employees in a department and avoid disruption of services
 - i. Comprehensive orientation session conducted by HR, covering topics such as company policies, benefits, safety procedures, and organizational structure
 - ii. Department-specific orientations to familiarize new hires with their roles, responsibilities, and team members, including "off-boarding" session with previous role-holder when possible
 - iii. Comprehensive "off-boarding" process for exiting employees, including exit interviews and memos for guiding new staff
 - iv. Regular check-ins with new hires during their first few months to address any questions or concerns and provide additional support as needed
 - b. Professional development: The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for facilitating the professional growth and development of employees at City of Binghamton. We recognize that investing in the skills and knowledge of our workforce is essential for achieving organizational objectives, fostering employee engagement
 - i. Each department will be designated a professional development budget according to a proposed budget for that department
 - ii. Each employee will design a professional development plan at the start of each year in coordination with their Manager and Personnel; they will evaluate the professional development plan in June of the same year
 - iii. Professional development activities include, but are not limited to: training workshops, seminars, and conferences; online courses and webinars; industry certifications and credentials; on-the-job training and mentoring; higher education programs (e.g., tuition reimbursement for degree programs); leadership development programs; cross-functional projects and assignments; professional memberships and networking events
 - iv. All professional development activities will be considered as part of an employee's regular work hours, including activities taking place outside of regular business hours
- 5. Integrated Appointment process:** ensure mayoral appointments receive thorough scrutiny and consideration by both the City Council and the public, helping to uphold standards of competence, integrity, and accountability in city government

- a. The Mayor nominates individuals to various positions within city government, including commissioners, department heads, and members of boards and commissions.
- b. Once the Mayor selects nominees, the nominations are submitted to the City Council for consideration. The Mayor formally submits the nominations to the Council Speaker, who then refers them to relevant Council committees for review.
- c. The relevant City Council committees hold hearings to review each nominee's qualifications, experience, and suitability for the position. These hearings provide an opportunity for Council members to ask questions and gather information about the nominees.
- d. The public may have the opportunity to provide input during the committee hearings, either through written testimony or public comment sessions. This allows for transparency and ensures that community perspectives are considered in the confirmation process.
- e. After the hearings, the committee votes on whether to recommend approval of the nominees to the full City Council. The committee's recommendation carries significant weight but is not binding on the full Council.
- f. The full City Council then votes on whether to confirm the Mayor's nominees. A simple majority vote is typically required for confirmation. If confirmed, the nominees officially assume their positions within city government.
- g. In some cases, nominees may be rejected by the City Council if they fail to secure enough votes for confirmation. Alternatively, nominees may withdraw their names from consideration if they anticipate not receiving sufficient support.
- h. Once appointed and confirmed, city officials are subject to ongoing oversight by the City Council, which may include budgetary reviews, performance evaluations, and oversight hearings to ensure accountability and transparency in government operations

6. Financial Accountability (to be further expanded by Finance Committee)

- a. Bond reform
- b. Financial reporting and accountability
- c. ARPA tracking
- d. Grants administrator
- e. Financial hearings (in addition to regular budgetary hearings)

7. Ethics Board

- a. This is hereby established a Board of Ethics for the City of Binghamton. The board should be composed of five (5) members.
 - i. Members shall be appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by the City Council. If the Mayor shall fail to appoint the members within 60 days after the establishment of the Board of Ethics or within 30 days after a vacancy occurs on the Board of Ethics, the City Council shall appoint such member or members, as the case may be.
 - ii. The members of the Board of Ethics shall serve three (3) year staggered terms of office, one such term expiring each year. In the event that a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of the three (3) year term, such a vacancy shall be filled for the

balance of such term in the same manner as members are appointed to full terms.

- iii. One (1) member of the Board shall be the Chairperson of the Rules & Special Studies Committee and One (1) member of the Board shall be a member of Corporate Counsel. The majority of such members shall not be City of Binghamton employees, officers or currently sit on any other board, committee or commission. No more than three (3) members shall be of the same political party. The remaining members must be split between the political parties, according to the New York State Board of Elections.
- iv. All members must reside in the City of Binghamton.
- v. No member shall be compensated for his/her Board-related activities.
- vi. The members shall elect a Chairperson from among themselves and such other officers as may be deemed necessary.

b) A Board of Ethics member may be removed by the Mayor with the approving consent of not less than five (5) members of City Council after a finding of substantial neglect of duty, gross misconduct in office, inability to discharge the powers or duties of the office or violation of this chapter after written notice of the charges and an opportunity for reply.

c) The City Clerk shall be the Clerk of the Board of Ethics, and all documents filed with the City Clerk shall be deemed, for the purposes of this chapter, to be filings with the Board of Ethics.

d) The Board of Ethics shall have all the powers and duties as prescribed by Article 18 of the General Municipal Law. The Board of Ethics may adopt and amend such rules or procedures as are appropriate

e) The Board of Ethics shall render advisory opinions to the officers and employees of the City of Binghamton with respect to Article 18 of the General Municipal Law and this Code of Ethics. Such advisor opinions must be rendered pursuant to the written request of such officer or employee under such rules and regulations as the Board of Ethics may prescribe. The Board of Ethics shall have the advice of legal counsel employed by the Board or, if none, the municipality's legal counsel. In addition, the Board of Ethics may make recommendations with respect to drafting and adoption of a Code of Ethics, or amendments thereto, upon request of the City Council.

f) The Board of Ethics shall adopt rules governing the conduct of adjudicatory proceedings and appeals, relating to the assessment of the civil penalties authorized by law. Assessment of civil penalty shall be final unless modified, suspended or vacated in 30 days of imposition and upon becoming final shall be subject to review at the instance of the affected reporting individual in a proceeding commenced against the appropriate body pursuant to Article 78 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules



Legislative Branch

RL Number:	55
Date Submitted:	3/19/24

City Clerk, City Hall, Binghamton, NY 13901 607-772-7005

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
 CITY OF BINGHAMTON
 MAR 19 2024
 RECEIVED

Applicant Presenting RL at Work Session

Hajra Aziz	Executive Director	607-358-3937
(Print Name)	(Title)	(Phone number)

To Be Completed By Applicant

Proposed Title: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE 2024 BUDGET TO ALLOCATE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE SOUTHERN DOOR COMMUNITY LAND TRUST.

Executive Summary (Explain why legislation is necessary): The affordable housing project at 6 Florence St is a community driven initiative to address the critical need for affordable housing. This project involves complete renovations of 6 apartment units, ensuring that low-income families have access to safe and affordable housing options. By promoting sustainable living, fostering community and creating economic opportunities, this project seeks to enhance the overall well-being and stability for our residents. (Affordable Housing ARPA)

Effective Date: (if applicable) _____

Budget transfer or amendment: RL Budget Transfer Worksheet **must** be attached w/ Dep. Head signature.

RL related to a grant: RL Grant Worksheet **must** be attached. Deadline for Council to act by: _____

RL related to previously adopted legislation: Perm. number _____, adoption date _____

Contract: Person/Company _____ Start/End Date _____

Total Cost _____ Funds available in Budget Line _____ Title _____

Public Hearing required? Yes No

SEQRA required? Yes No

Additional information related to this RL attached? Yes No

Expedition required for this RL? Yes No

Please explain why expedition is necessary:



Southern Door Community Land Trust
133 Main St, Binghamton NY, 13905
607-358-3937
www.southerndoorclt.com

Dear City Council-

I am writing to you on behalf of The Southern Door Community Land Trust to bring attention to a matter of utmost importance: **The pressing need for sustainable housing in Broome County.**

As you are aware, the shortage of affordable housing has reached critical levels, affecting countless low-income families in our area. The Southern Door Community Land Trust has been working tirelessly to address this issue, striving to provide viable housing solutions for those most in need.

To further our efforts and make a meaningful impact, we are seeking legislation allocation totaling \$1,100,000 to bolster our sustainable housing initiatives. This funding will enable us to expand our reach and create much-needed housing opportunities for low-income families who are struggling to secure safe and affordable accommodations.

The allocation we are requesting will not only benefit those individuals and families currently facing housing insecurity but will also contribute to the overall well-being and prosperity of our community. By investing in sustainable housing solutions, we can foster a more equitable and resilient society for generations to come.

We are eager to discuss this matter further and provide any additional information or clarification that may be required. Your support in this endeavor would be greatly appreciated, and we are hopeful that you will consider our request with the utmost seriousness it deserves.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue, and we look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with you in finding meaningful solutions to address the housing needs of our community.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Negin Aziz".

The Southern Door Community Land Trust



Legislative Branch

RL Number:	_____
Date Submitted:	_____

City Clerk, City Hall, Binghamton, NY 13901 607-772-7005

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION

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Applicant Presenting RL at Work Session

Dominique Rice	Managing Partner	704-593-8166
<i>(Print Name)</i>	<i>(Title)</i>	<i>(Phone number)</i>

To Be Completed By Applicant

Proposed Title: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE 2024 BUDGET TO ALLOCATE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR DAR DEVELOPERS.

Executive Summary *(Explain why legislation is necessary):* The affordable housing project at 18 Cary St. Binghamton, NY is being put forth to address the vital need for affordable housing. This project involves complete renovations of 4 apartment units, ensuring that individuals with low and extremely low income have safe, sustainable affordable housing options. (Affordable Housing ARPA)

Effective Date: (if applicable) _____

Budget transfer or amendment: RL Budget Transfer Worksheet must be attached w/ Dep. Head signature.

RL related to a grant: RL Grant Worksheet must be attached. Deadline for Council to act by: _____

RL related to previously adopted legislation: Perm. number _____, adoption date _____

Contract: Person/Company _____ Start/End Date _____

Total Cost _____ Funds available in Budget Line _____ Title _____

Public Hearing required? Yes No

SEQRA required? Yes No

Additional information related to this RL attached? Yes No

Expedition required for this RL? Yes No

Please explain why expedition is necessary:

Greetings-

My name is Dominique and I am the managing partner of DAR Developers, a black-owned, woman-owned company based in Binghamton, NY. We are thrilled to present our project for 18 Cary St. Binghamton, NY.

Our primary objective with this project is to revitalize 18 Cary St. and foster a culture of positive change within the North side community. We envision our affordable housing project as a catalyst for social and economic advancement in the area.

The proposed project will comprise four units, including three 1-bedroom units and one 3-bedroom unit. With the funding requested, we aim to make the 1-bedroom units available at the affordable rate of \$401 per month, ensuring accessibility to some of our most vulnerable neighbors.

We are committed to ensuring the longevity and sustainability of this endeavor. Our goal is to provide safe, affordable housing for the next three decades or more, thereby positively impacting the lives of numerous individuals and families within our community.

Our request to the City Council amounts to \$399,280.84. We are proud to have the YWCA as our fiscal sponsor, further solidifying our commitment to accountability and transparency in our operations.

We believe that the 18 Cary St. Affordable Housing Project aligns closely with the values and priorities of the City Council, and we are eager to collaborate with you to make this vision a reality. We would be honored to have the opportunity to present our proposal in more detail at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to the possibility of working together for the betterment of our community.

Sincerely,

Dominique Rice
Managing Partner
DAR Developers

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: Located in the Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development, Division of Housing and HUD Administration, under the general supervision of the Planning, Housing and Community Development Director, the work involves collection of data necessary to facilitate various community development initiatives related to housing and homelessness prevention, administering sub-recipient contracts and reporting to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on federal program compliance. The incumbent assists with planning and compliance duties and identifies program development issues as related to the City's Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The incumbent provides support to HUD Administration Manager and Housing Supervisor and to the Housing Division, information to staff and the public regarding available programs, funding and federal and state regulations. This position is responsible for program specific inventory, analysis and grant administration in addition to assisting in special community development activities.

This position assists with the Housing Rehabilitation Programs, First Time Homebuyer Programs, and other Housing Programs/Grants, in terms of data management, client intake; budget management; grant support; and direct customer support.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

Assists with the preparation of reports to HUD on federal program compliance and the Consolidated Plan and CDBG Action Plan application process;

Maintains grant budgets, tracking spreadsheets, and payment request submittals; may assist with grant applications;

Provides information to staff and the public regarding federal, state and municipal housing programs, and available services;

Attends and participates in CDBG public hearings;

Attends, participates and assists with Community Development Advisory Committee meetings;

Enters and retrieves information in an automated information system;

SPECIFIC WORK ACTIVITIES:

PROGRAM BUDGET MANAGEMENT-Keeps current with HOME, CDBG, and NYS AHC fund balances. Assist Housing Supervisor with the implementation and management of Housing Programs in relationship to funding cycles for each; Draft and maintain Project Agreements for Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO); Assists with set up, maintaining, and closing out all federally funded housing projects in the Federal Integrated Disbursement and Information system (IDIS); Maintains Excel spreadsheets for Federal and NYS funded Housing related programs for Federal and State grant management and for monitoring review purposes during the affordability requirements.

CLIENT INTAKE - Manage client intake for City of Binghamton Housing CDBG and HOME rehabilitation programs and first-time homebuyer programs; Meet with applicants to finalize eligibility for subsidized housing programs assistance; Reviews participant obligations with applicant.

REGULATORY-Keeps abreast of current Federal and State Fair Housing laws; assists with Fair Housing reviews and monitoring; Coordinates HUD mandated on-site tenant records monitoring and auditing during the affordable housing development project Affordability Periods; Assists with yearly on-site review of tenant rent records for CHDO affordable housing development projects to ensure compliance with HUD mandated affordability periods; Responsible for maintaining the integrity of the program through awareness of fraud and abuse indicators.

GRANT SUPPORT- Assist Grants Administrator and Housing Supervisor in drafting future affordable housing rehabilitation grants available through state and federal agencies; Maintains Excel spreadsheets for Federal and NYS funded Housing related programs and grant management; Assists with grant requirements such as quarterly and yearly reporting requirements; disbursement of fund requests to participating agencies; formulate and submit plans to participating NYS grant agencies for MWBE and Section 3 requirements as needed. Coordinates the close out procedures set forth in the grant agreements.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT- Provides information to staff and the public regarding federal, state and municipal housing programs, and available services; Promotes and Markets availability of resources; Answers phone calls and assists walk-in visitors with information on the City of Binghamton Housing programs.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES & PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Good knowledge of financial and managerial accounting practices; Ability to utilize common office software programs including word processing, spreadsheet, and database at an acceptable rate of accuracy and speed; Skill in Micro Soft Excel mathematical applications and calculations; Knowledge of Federal Community Development Block Grant and HOME Community Entitlement; Familiarity with Federal and State housing laws, rules and regulations. Knowledge of New York State Affordable Housing and Community Renewal Agency grant opportunities; Ability to prepare oral and written reports; Ability to maintain effective working relationships with others; Good judgment, tact, and initiative; Physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- (a) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered four-year college or university with a Bachelor's Degree in Economics, Public Administration, Business Administration, Communication or a similarly related field and one year of experience in financial office work with a public or private agency adhering to acceptable standards; or
- (b) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered two-year college or university with an Associate's Degree in one of the fields in (a) above and 2 years' experience as defined in (a) above; or
- (c) Graduation from High School or possession of a High School equivalency diploma and 2 years' experience within City of Binghamton's Housing Division; or 3 years' experience as defined in (a) above.

Adopted: 7/19/2023 (Competitive)



Legislative Branch

RL Number:
57
 Date Submitted:
3/20/24

City Clerk, City Hall, Binghamton, NY 13901 607-772-7005

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION

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Applicant Presenting RL at Work Session

Drake-Deese, Kent PERSONNELL DIRECTOR 607-772-7067
 (Print Name) (Title) (Phone number)
 Signature: Kent Drake-Deese Date: 3/11/2024

To Be Completed By Applicant

Proposed Title: AMEND THE 2024 FIRE BUDGET TO PAY FIRE MECHANIC FROM FIRE BUDGET MOVING FROM CSEA UNION TO FIRE UNION EFFECTIVE 1/1/2024 ALONG WITH RETROACTIVE SALARY INCREASE.

Executive Summary (Explain why legislation is necessary): AMEND THE 2024 FIRE BUDGET TO PAY FIRE MECHANIC FROM FIRE BUDGET MOVING FROM CSEA UNION TO FIRE UNION EFFECTIVE 1/1/2024 ALONG WITH RETROACTIVE SALARY INCREASE.

Effective Date: (if applicable) _____

Budget transfer or amendment: RL Budget Transfer Worksheet **must** be attached w/ Dep. Head signature.

RL related to a grant: RL Grant Worksheet **must** be attached. Deadline for Council to act by: _____

RL related to previously adopted legislation: Perm. number _____, adoption date _____

Contract: Person/Company _____ Start/End Date _____

Total Cost _____ Funds available in Budget Line _____ Title _____

Public Hearing required? Yes No

SEQRA required? Yes No

Additional information related to this RL attached? Yes No

OFFICE USE ONLY						
Mayor:	<u>[Signature]</u>					
Comptroller:	<u>[Signature]</u>					
Corp. Counsel:	<u>[Signature]</u>					
Finance <input type="checkbox"/>	Planning <input type="checkbox"/>	MPA <input type="checkbox"/>	PW/Parks <input type="checkbox"/>	Employees <input type="checkbox"/>	Rules/Special Studies <input type="checkbox"/>	



Legislative Branch

RL Number:
62
Date Submitted:
3/20/24

City Clerk, City Hall, Binghamton, NY 13901 607-772-7005

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION

Requests for Legislation (RLs) may be submitted to the City Clerk's Office for possible consideration at City Council Work Sessions. RLs generated by City Departments must be signed by the Mayor, Comptroller, and Corporation Counsel prior to submission. Incomplete/incorrect RLs will be returned to applicant for revisions.

Applicant Presenting RL at Work Session

Kent Drake-Dreese Personnel 607-772-7067
(Print Name) (Title) (Phone number)

Signature: Date: 03/06/2024

To Be Completed By Applicant

Proposed Title: Under Chapter 644, Laws of 2023 NYS retirement is authorizing the City to re-open the twenty-five year retirement plan Section 384 of the retirement and social security law for [REDACTED]

Executive Summary (Explain why legislation is necessary): See attached copies of the resolution the state wants to see to move employee into the new category. It is estimated to have a one time cost of \$42,500 and annual cost going forward of \$5,300.

Effective Date: (if applicable) _____

Budget transfer or amendment: RL Budget Transfer Worksheet must be attached w/ Dep. Head signature.

RL related to a grant: RL Grant Worksheet must be attached. Deadline for Council to act by: _____

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Contract: Person/Company _____ Start/End Date _____

Total Cost _____ Funds available in Budget Line _____ Title _____

Public Hearing required? Yes No **SEQRA required?** Yes No

Additional information related to this RL attached? Yes No

OFFICE USE ONLY						
Mayor:						
Comptroller:						
Corp. Counsel:						
Finance <input type="checkbox"/>	Planning <input type="checkbox"/>	MPA <input type="checkbox"/>	PW/Parks <input type="checkbox"/>	Employees <input type="checkbox"/>	Rules/Special Studies <input type="checkbox"/>	

Received Date

Please type or print clearly
in blue or black ink

Employer
Location Code 20006

STATE OF NEW YORK,)
) SS:
COUNTY OF _____)

I, _____, being duly sworn, deposes and says that:

1. (S)He is the chief fiscal officer of the City of Binghamton.
2. The regular fiscal year of said employer begins on _____ and ends on _____.
3. The governing board of said participating employer has elected to reopen the Retirement Plan Section 384, as set forth in Chapter 644 of the Laws of 2023.
4. Said employer has been advised by the Retirement System of the estimated cost of Chapter 644 of the Laws of 2023.
The estimated additional annual cost will be \$ 5,300.
The past service cost will be \$ 42,500, (if) paid as one installment.
5. Said estimated additional annual cost has been appropriated in the budget for said fiscal year and is available for such payment.
6. The employer will appropriate the additional amount necessary to fund the past service cost related to Chapter 644 of the Laws of 2023 in _____ annual payment(s) as part of the Annual Invoice.
(One or Ten)

Signature of the Chief Fiscal Officer _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO BE COMPLETED BY A NOTARY PUBLIC

State of _____ County of _____ On the _____ day of _____ in the year _____
before me, the undersigned, personally appeared _____
personally known to me or proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the individual(s) whose name(s) is (are)
subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same in his/her/their capacity(ies),
and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument, the individual(s), or the person upon behalf of which the individual(s)
acted, executed the instrument.

NOTARY PUBLIC (Please sign and affix stamp)

Office of the New York State Comptroller



New York State and Local Retirement System
110 State Street, Albany, New York 12244-0001

Please type or print clearly
in blue or black ink

Received Date

Certification of Member Eligibility under
Chapter 644, Laws of 2023

Employer
Location Code 20006

Employer Name: City of Binghamton

Plan Reopened: 384

MEMBER NAME NYSLRS ID
[Redacted]

I certify that the member's previous failure to timely elect to participate in Section 384 of the Retirement and Social Security Law was not ascribable to his/her own negligence.

(Signature)

(Title)

(Date)



Legislative Branch

RL Number: 56
 Date Submitted: 3/20/24

City Clerk, City Hall, Binghamton, NY 13901 607-772-7005

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION

Requests for Legislation (RLs) may be submitted to the City Clerk's Office for possible consideration at City Council Work Sessions. RLs generated by City Departments must be signed by the Mayor, Comptroller, and Corporation Counsel prior to submission. Incomplete/incorrect RLs will be returned to applicant for revisions.

Applicant Presenting RL at Work Session

Kent Drake-Dreese Personnel 607-772-7067
 (Print Name) (Title) (Phone number)

Signature: _____ Date: 03/12/2024

To Be Completed By Applicant

Proposed Title: Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Harding Brooks Agency to be broker of record for the City for Workers Compensation Insurance.

Executive Summary (*Explain why legislation is necessary*): Term will be for three years with 2 one year optional renewal

Effective Date: (if applicable) _____

Budget transfer or amendment: RL Budget Transfer Worksheet **must** be attached w/ Dep. Head signature.

RL related to a grant: RL Grant Worksheet **must** be attached. Deadline for Council to act by: _____

RL related to previously adopted legislation: Perm. number _____, adoption date _____

Contract: Person/Company _____ Start/End Date _____

Total Cost _____ Funds available in Budget Line _____ Title _____

Public Hearing required? Yes No

SEQRA required? Yes No

Additional information related to this RL attached? Yes No

OFFICE USE ONLY

Mayor: _____

Comptroller: _____

Corp. Counsel: _____

Finance Planning MPA PW/Parks Employees Rules/Special Studies



Harding Brooks
Insurance Agency
ROOTED IN THE COMMUNITY

Account Services



Our Profile and Company History - In 1956, Paul J Brooks founded Paul J Brooks Insurance Agency with the focus of offering extensive expertise of the insurance industry, along with superior service, to better meet the client's needs. Larry Brooks and Bob Lacey purchased the agency in 1978 and continued with Paul's vision. The agency was acquired by a regional operation in 2000.

With the focus of getting back to the principles Paul Brooks founded the agency on, Tom Harding and Larry Brooks partnered in 2009 to purchase back the operation and combine it with Tom's book of business; thus, forming Harding Brooks Insurance Agency.

2014 saw us expand operations into Syracuse, NY. Mike Peplinski leads our team in Syracuse. The focus of that location is an exclusive national insurance program specifically customized for the Collateral Recovery/Repossession industry. Mike Peplinski became partners with Tom Harding in Harding Brooks Insurance Agency in 2020. To continue to expand our current offerings to our clients, in 2021 we opened an office in Scranton, Pennsylvania and partnered with The C3 Group, Cost Control Consultants.

Servicing location for City of Binghamton

**Headquarters
Vestal, NY**



Harding Brooks
Insurance Agency
ROOTED IN THE COMMUNITY

Similar Accounts

- Village of Johnson City
- Village of Port Dickinson
- City of Scranton
- Lackawanna County

Reference List

Village of Johnson City

- 243 Main St Johnson City NY 13790
- Contact: Martin Meaney (607-798-9803)
- Employees – 165
- Length of Time Insured – 6 years
- Benefits, Property & Casualty Lines

Village of Port Dickinson

- 786 Chenango Street Binghamton NY 13901
- Contact: Rob Warholic (607-771-8233)
- Employees – 10
- Length of Time Insured – 1 year
- Property & Casualty Lines

City of Scranton

- 340 N Washington Ave Scranton PA 18503
- Contact: Matthew Domines - Finance Director
- (570-348-4118)
- mdomines@scrantonpa.gov

Lackawanna County

- 123 Wyoming Ave Scranton PA 18503
- Contact: Dave Bulzoni - Chief Financial Officer
- (570-963-6473 Ext. 1818)
- bulzonid@lackawannacounty.org

YMCA

- 61 Susquehanna St Binghamton NY 13901-3705
- Contact: Gareth Sansom (607-772-0560)
- Employees – 110
- Length of Time Insured – 4 years
- Benefits, Property & Casualty Lines



Harding Brooks
Insurance Agency
ROOTED IN THE COMMUNITY

Value Added Services

Compliance

- Partnership with C3 Group – full HR consulting access and risk management services to supplement your HR department.
- Zywave Client Portal
 - Access to searchable state specific compliance content and resource libraries.
 - Apps for both HR and compliance provide tools to supplement HR offices and will help ensure compliance.
 - Handbook Builder – tool to allow you to build a customizable handbook including Federal and State specific content.
 - Learning Management System – over 200 online training courses available for employees and managers on topics of workplace safety, specific industry topics, sexual harassment prevention and management practices.
 - Monthly HR Brief Newsletter – which provides you monthly notice of compliance and HR related topics early in every month.
- Review of the HR/Compliance tools available to the HR Teams from the current HRIS/Ben Admin system of choice as well as HR and Compliance tools with in the companies chosen payroll vendor to ensure compliance – especially surrounding ACA/HCR and Welfare Benefit plan / ERISA Compliance. NOTE: Harding Brooks personnel are licensed benefit/HR consultants, we do not have in house attorneys on staff. Best practice when it comes to compliance and labor law issues to consult a licensed attorney. We do have relationships with appropriate types of attorneys, if needed.

Client Portal

- Using our 24/7 Access, you can:
 - Issue standard Certificates of Insurance
 - Reprint Certificates that have previously been issued
 - Reprint ID cards that have previously been issued
 - Report a Claim

Example

New York State Municipal Workers Compensation Alliance
Wright Risk Management

RE: Member – City of Binghamton
Broker of Record – Workers Compensation

This confirms that as of 4/1/2024, we have appointed and authorize you to recognize Harding Brooks Insurance Agency 441 Commerce Rd Vestal NY 13850 as our exclusive insurance representative for the above policy. Please waive your standard waiting period for clearance authorization. The appointment of Harding Brooks Insurance Agency and this authorization rescinds all previous appointments and the authority contained herein shall remain in full force until cancelled in writing.

Harding Brooks Insurance Agency is authorized to act on our behalf and negotiate directly with any insurer with respect to changes in our current insurance policies, and in closing, changing, or canceling insurance carried under any temporary binders or cover notes.

This letter also constitutes your authority to furnish Harding Brooks Insurance Agency 's representatives with any and all information they may request as it pertains to our insurance contracts, including but not limited to: rates, schedules, surveys, claim file and loss information, and any and all other data they may wish to obtain for their evaluation of our present and/or future insurance requirements.

We understand, however, that Harding Brooks Insurance Agency will not share responsibility for any deficiencies in the current insurance program to which this letter applies. We grant and ask that you afford Harding Brooks Insurance Agency the opportunity and cooperation necessary to provide us a review of our current insurance program, and provide us; in reasonable time, with their recommendations. Additionally, Harding Brooks Insurance Agency is not responsible for the billing of any return premium bearing endorsements and/or audit return premiums.

Sincerely,

Signature

Date

Print Name

Title



Legislative Branch

RL Number:	61
Date Submitted:	3/20/24

City Clerk, City Hall, Binghamton, NY 13901 607-772-7005

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION

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Applicant Presenting RL at Work Session

Megan J. Heiman Deputy Mayor (607) 772-7001
 (Print Name) (Title) (Phone number)

Signature: Megan J. Heiman Date: 03/19/2024

To Be Completed By Applicant

Proposed Title: An Ordinance to amend the 2024 Budget for the demolition of a fire-damaged property at 122 Henry St.

Executive Summary (Explain why legislation is necessary): A transfer of of funds is needed to pay for the emergency demolition of 122 Henry St. following a fire at the property in February 2024.

Effective Date: (if applicable) _____

Budget transfer or amendment: RL Budget Transfer Worksheet **must** be attached w/ Dep. Head signature.

RL related to a grant: RL Grant Worksheet **must** be attached. Deadline for Council to act by: _____

RL related to previously adopted legislation: Perm. number _____, adoption date _____

Contract: Person/Company _____ Start/End Date _____

Total Cost \$37,500 Funds available in Budget Line Attached _____ Title _____

Public Hearing required? Yes No SEQRA required? Yes No

Additional information related to this RL attached? Yes No

OFFICE USE ONLY						
Mayor:						
Comptroller:						
Corp. Counsel:						
Finance <input type="checkbox"/>	Planning <input type="checkbox"/>	MPA <input type="checkbox"/>	PW/Parks <input type="checkbox"/>	Employees <input type="checkbox"/>	Rules/Special Studies <input type="checkbox"/>	



CITY OF BINGHAMTON

Request for Transfer of Funds

Transfer requests of \$2500 or less must be approved by the Comptroller.
 Transfer requests over \$2500 and not in excess of \$10,000 must be approved by Board of E&A and Chair of Finance Committee.
 Transfer requests in excess of \$10,000 must be approved by City Council.

This worksheet must be attached to any RL submitted to the Clerk's Office that includes a budget funding transfer or amendment. For additional instructions, see 'RL Instructions' document.
 Incomplete/incorrect RLs to be returned to applicant for revisions. Additional transfer lines in the same format may be attached.

Adopted Budget Year Amended: 2024 Department: Mayor's Office

Department Head Signature: Megan J. Heiman

Transfer From (Decrease)		Transfers		Transfer To (Increase)	
Amount	Budget Line	Budget Line Title	Amount	Budget Line	Budget Line Title
\$37,500	M1910.54470	Demolition	\$37,500	M.42680	Insurance Recovery
\$37,500.00			\$37,500.00		

Revenue & Fund Balance Amendments	
Amount	Revenue/Expense / Fund Balance

Office Use Only for Transfers Under \$10,000

I hereby certify that the above funds are unencumbered and available for Transfer. Certified by the Comptroller. Signature: _____ Date: _____

I hereby certify that the above described funds have been transferred, in accordance with the Code of the City of Binghamton Chapter's Appropriations. Certified by the Treasurer. Signature: _____ Date: _____

Transfer of funds Approved ____ / Denied ____ on ____ / ____ / ____ . Certified by the Secretary of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. Signature: _____ Date: _____

Transfer of funds reviewed by the Binghamton City Council Finance Chair. Recommendations to be attached. Signature: _____ Date: _____

GORICK CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.

27 TRACK DRIVE
BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK 13904

PHONE
(607) 775-1765

FAX
(607) 775-1608



INVOICE

INVOICE DATE	CUSTOMER NO.	INVOICE NUMBER
03-11-2024	13550	22965
P. O. NUMBER	JOB NUMBER	
	24-002	

TO:

CITY OF BINGHAMTON
DEPARTMENT OF PURCHASING
38 HAWLEY STREET
BINGHAMTON, NY 13901

JOB LOCATION:

COB 122 HENRY ST

ATTN:

DESCRIPTION	UNITS	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
DEMO COMPLETED AS REQUESTED	LS		23,000.00
DISPOSAL FEES	LS		11,700.00
BACKFILL	LS		2,800.00
		AMOUNT BILLED	\$37,500.00
		TOTAL EXEMPT TAX	
		TOTAL DUE	\$37,500.00

TERMS: NET 1 1/2% INTEREST AFTER 30 DAYS, 18% PER ANNUM.



Legislative Branch

RL Number:	_____
Date Submitted:	_____

City Clerk, City Hall, Binghamton, NY 13901 607-772-7005

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION

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Applicant Presenting RL at Work Session

Megan J. Heiman Deputy Mayor 607-772-7001
 (Print Name) (Title) (Phone number)

Signature: Megan J. Heiman Date: 02/15/2024

To Be Completed By Applicant

Proposed Title: A Local Law amending Chapter 400 of the City Charter, Vehicles and Traffic, adding the
 PROHIBITION OF OPERATION OF OFF-ROAD VEHICLES IN THE CITY OF BINGHAMTON

Executive Summary (Explain why legislation is necessary): Draft amendment attached.

Effective Date: (if applicable) _____

Budget transfer or amendment: RL Budget Transfer Worksheet **must** be attached w/ Dep. Head signature.

RL related to a grant: RL Grant Worksheet **must** be attached. Deadline for Council to act by: _____

RL related to previously adopted legislation: Perm. number _____, adoption date _____

Contract: Person/Company _____ Start/End Date _____

Total Cost _____ Funds available in Budget Line _____ Title _____

Public Hearing required? Yes No **SEQRA required?** Yes No

Additional information related to this RL attached? Yes No

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Mayor:	<u>[Signature]</u>
Comptroller:	<u>[Signature]</u>
Corp. Counsel:	<u>[Signature]</u>
Finance <input type="checkbox"/>	Planning <input type="checkbox"/>
MPA <input type="checkbox"/>	PW/Parks <input type="checkbox"/>
Employees <input type="checkbox"/>	Rules/Special Studies <input type="checkbox"/>

Article XII

PROHIBITION OF OPERATION OF OFF-ROAD VEHICLES IN THE CITY OF BINGHAMTON

§ 400-115. Legislative findings, intent and purpose.

The Mayor and City Council find that despite the clear prohibition in Section 2403 of Article 48-c of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law "Rules for Operation of All Terrain Vehicles," the number of incidents involving the illegal operation of ATVs and dirt bikes in the City of Binghamton and across New York State have steadily increased. The operation of illegal, unregistered dirt bikes, ATVs, and other non-street legal vehicles on the streets and parks in the City of Binghamton impact the public safety and quality of life of those who live and work in the City of Binghamton. These off-road vehicles pose a danger to the drivers and passengers of the legal vehicles operating on City streets, the public at large, and the patrons of City parks. Furthermore, the excessive noise created by the operation of these vehicles, which are not designed for use within city limits, often occurs late at night, disturbing the peace and quiet of City neighborhoods.

The purpose of this legislation is to strengthen the ability of the Binghamton Police Department to ensure public safety and the general welfare of the City of Binghamton and its citizens by providing a local law to deter the illegal operation of off-road vehicles in the City of Binghamton and in City parks by imposing a fine or imprisonment, impoundment of the off-road vehicle being operated illegally, and allowing for a redemption fee to be charged by the Binghamton Police Department in addition to the separate fees to be paid to the towing company who stores the impounded vehicle for the Binghamton Police Department.

§ 400-116. Definitions.

For purposes of this article, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

Off-road vehicles: All-terrain vehicles (sometimes referred to as ATVs) as that term is defined in Section 2281(1) of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law; Off-highway motorcycles as that term is defined in Section 125-a of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law; Motocross or dirt bikes; dune buggies; go-carts; and any and all other types of motorized trail bikes or vehicles that are manufactured for sale or operation primarily on off-highway trails or for off-highway competitions and are only incidentally operated on public highways. Nothing contained herein, however, shall be deemed to apply to or prohibit the use of bicycles.

Operate: To ride in or on, other than as a passenger, or use or control the operation of an off-road vehicle in any manner, whether or not said off-road vehicle is under way.

Operator: Every person who operates or is in actual physical control of an off-road vehicle.

Public highway: Any highway, road, alley, street, avenue, public place, public driveway, or any other public way.

§ 400-117. Restrictions.

(a) *Public property.* No person shall operate an off-road vehicle on a public highway or on any public property in the City of Binghamton. Use of off-road vehicles is also prohibited in all City parks pursuant to section §301-4 of the Code of the City of Binghamton.

(b) *Private property.* No person shall operate an off-road vehicle off a public highway on private property in the City of Binghamton unless such person has first obtained the express consent of the owner or occupant of such property to operate the off-road vehicle on the property. There shall be a rebuttable presumption that the operator of an off-road vehicle on private property in the City of Binghamton lacks consent to operate the off-road vehicle on private property.

§ 400-118. Penalties for offenses, impoundment and redemption.

(a) The first time any person is found to be operating an off-road vehicle in violation of the provisions of §400-117 (a) or (b) or in violation of §301-4 of the Code of the City of Binghamton, it shall be punishable as a violation with a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or imprisonment not to exceed fifteen (15) days or both. The second time any person is found to be operating an off-road vehicle in violation of the provisions of §400-117 (a) or (b) or §301-4 of the Code of the City of Binghamton, it shall be punishable as a violation with a fine not to exceed seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00) or imprisonment not to exceed fifteen (15) days or both. For the third and all subsequent violations of the provisions of §400-117 (a) or (b) or §301-4 of the Code of the City of Binghamton, the person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisonment not to exceed one year or both.

(b) Any violation of the provisions of §400-117(a) or (b) or of §301-4 of the Code of the City of Binghamton shall apply towards the escalation of penalties for any future violations of either this article or §301-4.

(c) In addition to the penalties set forth in subsection (a) of this section, a police officer may immediately impound an off-road vehicle that has been operated in violation of §400-117 (a) or (b) or of §301-4 of the Code of the City of Binghamton. The City of Binghamton utilizes various towing companies to assist with the towing and storage of vehicles seized and impounded by the Binghamton Police Department. Off-road vehicles impounded pursuant to this subsection shall be stored at the Binghamton Police Department impound, pending the identification of the owner of such off-road vehicle as registered with the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. Such title owner shall be sent a notice of impoundment at the address on file with the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles by certified mail within five (5) days after the impoundment. Neither the police department impounding such off-road vehicle, nor the City of Binghamton, nor any agent nor any employee thereof, shall be liable for any damages arising out of the provision of an erroneous name or address of such owner. The owner of the off-road vehicle operated in violation of §400-117(a) or (b) or of §301-4 of the Code of the City of Binghamton may redeem

such off-road vehicle upon satisfactory proof of ownership and payment of a redemption fee of two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00). Satisfactory proof of ownership shall be consistent with the documentation that is required by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles to register the off-road vehicle. An off-road vehicle impounded under this subsection shall only be released to the owner of such off-road vehicle, or to such owner's agent as evidenced by a written, notarized proof of agency, or duly executed power of attorney.

§ 400-119. Enforcement.

The Chief of Police is charged with the enforcement of the provisions of this article.

§ 400-120. Severability.

If any clause, sentence, paragraph or part of this article or application thereof to any person or circumstances shall be judged by any court to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder thereof or the application thereof to other persons or circumstances but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph or part thereof and the persons or circumstances directly involved in the controversy in which the judgment shall be rendered.

CHAPTER 301 PARKS AND RECREATION

§301-4 Prohibition of operation of off-road vehicles in City parks.

No person shall operate or drive or cause to be operated or driven upon, within any of the City parks or playgrounds an off-road vehicle.

For purposes of this section an off-road vehicle shall be defined as: All-terrain vehicles (sometimes referred to as ATVs) as that term is defined in Section 2281(1) of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law; Off-highway motorcycles as that term is defined in Section 125-a of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law; motocross or dirt bikes; dune buggies; go-carts; and any and all other types of motorized trail bikes or vehicles that are manufactured for sale or operation primarily on off-highway trails or for off-highway competitions and are only incidentally operated on public highways. Nothing contained herein, however, shall be deemed to apply to or prohibit the use of bicycles.

Persons found to be operating off-road vehicles in City parks in violation of this section shall be subject to the same penalties as listed in §400-118 of the Code of the City of Binghamton. A violation of this section shall apply towards the escalation of penalties set forth in §400-118 for any future violations of either this section or §400-117(a) or (b).



Legislative Branch

RL Number:	54
Date Submitted:	3/19/2024

City Clerk, City Hall, Binghamton, NY 13901 607-772-7005

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION

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Applicant Presenting RL at Work Session

Amari Pavati		737-222-0343
(Print Name)	(Title)	(Phone number)

To Be Completed By Applicant

Proposed Title: A Resolution Calling for a Cease-Fire in Gaza, the Release of Hostages, and Increased Humanitarian Aid

Executive Summary (Explain why legislation is necessary): A cease-fire resolution from the Binghamton City Council and sent to our Federal representatives amplifies Binghamton voices that have been concerned for months. Binghamton's contribution to the military via local contractors and manufacturers, as well as the importance to residents give the City Council the right and responsibility to pass the Resolution Calling for a Cease-Fire.

Effective Date: (if applicable) _____

Budget transfer or amendment: RL Budget Transfer Worksheet **must** be attached w/ Dep. Head signature.

RL related to a grant: RL Grant Worksheet **must** be attached. Deadline for Council to act by: _____

RL related to previously adopted legislation: Perm. number _____, adoption date _____

Contract: Person/Company _____ Start/End Date _____

Total Cost _____ Funds available in Budget Line _____ Title _____

Public Hearing required? Yes No

SEQRA required? Yes No

Additional information related to this RL attached? Yes No

Expedition required for this RL? Yes No

Please explain why expedition is necessary: Cost of human life and community outcry necessitates urgency.

The resolution has also been discussed already at multiple City Council Business Meetings.

A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A CEASE-FIRE IN GAZA, THE RELEASE OF HOSTAGES, AND INCREASED HUMANITARIAN AID

WHEREAS, All human life is precious, and the targeting of civilians, no matter their faith or ethnicity, is a violation of international humanitarian law; and

WHEREAS, The Binghamton City Council expresses its unwavering support for all Arab, Israeli, Palestinian, Jewish, Muslim, and all other members of the community who are impacted, each of whom has the right to learn, work, worship, gather, advocate, mourn, and celebrate free from intimidation and harassment; and

WHEREAS, The Binghamton City Council condemns all forms of anti-Arab racism, anti-Palestinian racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia; and

WHEREAS, Between October 7 and March 13, armed violence has claimed the lives of over 1,300 Israelis and over 31,000 Palestinians, including Americans, and wounded tens of thousands more; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of thousands of lives are at imminent risk of bombing and starvations if a permanent cease-fire is not achieved and humanitarian aid is not delivered without delay; and

WHEREAS, All members of the New York congressional delegation must use the platform provided by their office to advocate for measures that will result in the least amount of death and violence and amplify the voices of their constituents; and

WHEREAS, The United States must support a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that respects the human rights and dignities of both peoples; and

WHEREAS, The Federal Government holds immense diplomatic power to save Israeli and Palestinian lives.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Binghamton

(1) Calls upon the Biden administration to immediately call for and facilitate de-escalation, the return of hostages, and a permanent cease-fire to prevent further death and humanitarian catastrophe; and

(2) Calls upon the Biden administration to immediately reinstate funding to UNRWA and to send and facilitate unrestricted humanitarian aid at the levels recommended by the United Nations for the Palestinian people

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon passage a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Office of U.S. President Joe Biden, the Office of U.S. House Representative Marc Molinaro, the Office of U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer, the Office of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, the Office of New York State Senator Lea Webb, the Office of NYS Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, the Office of New York State Governor Kathy Hochul.

Amari Pavati - Notes on the Cease-Fire Resolution - 3/14/2024

The goal of the WHEREAS clauses is to clarify the goal of this resolution is to create a better future for Palestinians and Israelis. The context provided about our community helps affirm City Council's commitment to diversity and free expression, especially when hate for Muslims and Jews has risen immensely. No specific solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or a specific path forward is laid out since the resolution is focused specifically on imminent policy changes the US must take, but the insistence that the US must support a solution that protects both Israelis and Palestinians is included.

Numerous humanitarian aid organizations have insisted that a cease-fire is the only way to insure lives are saved in Gaza from the imminent famine. Similarly, a cease-fire without ensuring the US reinstates its funding for the United Nations Relief and Work Agency and continual funding to other organizations will not avert disaster either. Both are needed to save Palestinian lives in Gaza.

A more detailed supporting document covering the arguments for the cease-fire resolution will be submitted in the following days. These will cover, among other things, why a cease-fire is the only way to insure the safety and return of Israeli hostages, why UNRWA was defunded and why this was the wrong choice, and what the context and consequences of Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza.

Thank you so much for your time.

Supporting Information Regarding the Binghamton City Council Cease-Fire Resolution

[Introduction](#)

[Precedent](#)

[The Binghamton City Council “Welcoming City” Resolution](#)

[City Councils Against Apartheid](#)

[City Councils Against War in Iraq](#)

[City Councils for a Cease-Fire in Gaza](#)

[Local Issues](#)

[Military Contractors](#)

[Local Outcry](#)

[Context](#)

[Hamas](#)

[Leadership in Israel](#)

[Israel and Hamas](#)

[October 7th](#)

[A Cease-Fire After October 7th](#)

[Life in Gaza](#)

[Amnesty International](#)

[Human Rights Watch](#)

[The International Court of Justice](#)

[Ignoring Provisional Measures](#)

[Going Forward](#)

[A Concluding Personal Statement from Professor Lubna Omar](#)

Introduction

On October 7th, 2023, Hamas and other militant groups [attacked](#) southern Israel, killing 1,200, mostly civilians, and taking around 250 hostages, beginning the most recent episode in a long history of violence between Israelis and Palestinians. In response, Israel has killed over 30,000 Palestinians, about 70% women and children. Four out of five Palestinians have been displaced, with many [without homes](#) to return to. Millions of civilians are on the brink of [famine](#) as Israel's genocidal assault continues.

Binghamton City Council, as a representative body pledge to serve our community, has a responsibility to amplify our voices. As the [majority of Americans](#) across party lines and ages support a ceasefire in Gaza, the US refuses to call for one. We have taken to the streets all across the country, we have bombarded our representatives with messages, and hundreds of thousands have voted "[uncommitted](#)" in the democratic primaries. Still, the US has used its immense influence to work towards a ceasefire, to negotiate the release of Israeli hostages, or to increase humanitarian aid to levels recommended by the UN.

We are turning to the city council out of desperation as so many other means of protest are continually ignored. Here in Binghamton, students and residents have been protesting and holding vigils on [October 12](#), [October 25](#), [November 4](#), [November 15](#), [December 7](#), and [February 14](#), with even more upcoming.

This effort had been led in part by The Yiddish Bund, a Jewish group at Binghamton University, along with Veterans for Peace and Peace action. Help and support has come from countless community members, professors, and students at every step of the way.

Precedent

There are numerous other examples of City Councils reacting to and participating in national politics, including the Binghamton City Council. Specifically in instances where the federal government is working in direct opposition to the will of the people, locals have turned to their closest representatives to speak out.

The Binghamton City Council “Welcoming City” Resolution

In February of 2017 the Binghamton City Council passed a symbolic resolution declaring Binghamton [welcoming to immigrants](#). This was in [response](#) to President Trump’s [“Muslim Bans.”](#) a series of executive orders suspending the entire Syrian refugee program and banning travel of immigrants and dual nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries. Hundreds of thousands were at risk of being separated from their families, there was chaos at entry points to the US where people entering the country legally were suddenly turned away.

These bans helped build an atmosphere of xenophobia that led to a horrific rise in anti-muslim [hate crimes](#) and [hate groups](#). The City Council has no power over US refugee and immigration policy, but it was still able to take a stand against hate with a similar type of resolution. Today, antisemitic and Islamophobic hate is [rising](#) ever since October 7th, including in our community. The cease-fire resolution includes condemnation all forms of antisemitism and Islamophobia and recognizes the rights of all community members to “learn, work, worship, gather, advocate, mourn, and celebrate free from intimidation and harassment.”

City Councils Against Apartheid

Beginning in the city council of Berkeley California, lower rungs of government began a campaign of [divestment](#) from apartheid South Africa. The effort expanded rapidly, with companies, colleges, and states joining in. A total of [90 cities](#) divested, taking foreign policy into their own hands when the federal government failed to represent its people. Like today with

support for a cease-fire, popular opinion was strongly against apartheid while the federal government entirely failed to act.

City Councils Against War in Iraq

The clearest historical precedent were city council resolutions [denouncing](#) the Iraq war. Dozens adopted antiwar resolutions all across the country, opposing President Bush's campaign that would take the lives of [hundreds of thousands](#) of Iraqi civilians.

City Councils for a Cease-Fire in Gaza

In New York alone [Albany](#), [Ithaca](#), [Newburgh](#), and [Beacon](#) all have passed a cease-fire resolution. As of February 2nd, [Reuters](#) counted at least 70 cities speaking out about the war, with 48 specifically calling for a cease-fire. Since then, more than a [dozen other cities](#) have amplified the call. Many other cities are in the process of drafting, reviewing, and hearing comments on their own resolutions. As with Binghamton, these efforts are often spearheaded by local Jews and Muslims.

The question is not if city councils speak out on foreign policy issues, but when. In situations when the moral stakes are high, protests for change are constant, and the federal government is refusing to reflect the will of the people, people turn to city council. When marching in the streets and messaging representatives fail, city councils can use their power to amplify our voices. The better question to ask is whether the genocide in Gaza is a morally urgent enough to warrant a city council resolution.

Local Issues

For an issue to deserve the time and attention of the local city council, it is helpful to have immediate local relevance. While many clear examples of city councils speaking out on issues not directly within their city bounds exist, the war in Gaza is still a local issue. Binghamton residents are helping pay for it. Every dollar paid in federal taxes saw [\\$0.24](#) going to the military. That's a total of \$179.4 million from the City of Binghamton, assuming Binghamton residents are average taxpayers. Binghamton residents have also been subjected to increased antisemitism and Islamophobia in the wake of the war, and have shown a constant concern for Palestinian lives in Gaza that warrants City Council's attention.

Military Contractors

The economy of the Greater Binghamton area is deeply involved with the military. In numerous cases, the same contractors and subcontractors can be linked directly to weapons and equipment used in Gaza, including fighters, artillery, bombs, and bombing systems. While most of the companies discussed call their local branches "Binghamton locations," all are a couple miles outside of the Binghamton city limits, though they employ Binghamton residents and are undoubtedly a part of the Greater Binghamton interconnected economy and community.

BAE Systems in Endicott, 6 miles from the Binghamton City Hall, is a 500,000 square foot campus for research and development as well as manufacturing military equipment. They are the largest military contractor in the area and employ [over 1,400 community members](#).

Lockheed-Martin in Owego—under 20 miles from City Hall—houses [120,000 square feet](#) of manufacturing and assembly facilities for the [largest military contractor](#) in the US.

[B W Elliott Manufacturing](#) (EM) is a [subcontractor](#) of Boeing four miles from city hall. They do not describe what projects their parts (mainly flexible shafts) are used on, but describe applications in military aircrafts, rockets, ships, and vehicles.

[Ametek Aerospace](#) is a massive compound in the Airport Corporate Center three miles from city hall where they do research and development for aerospace and defense as well as manufacturing and repairing.

The Airport Corporate Center also houses a two-story, several thousand square foot facility of [Rockwell Collins](#) where training simulations for military and commercial use are designed.

[Twin Cities Metal Finishing](#) (TCMF) is a 125,000 square foot facility located five miles from the Binghamton City Council. The majority of the partners they advertise working with are military companies, such as Oshkosh Defense, L3 Communications, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Ralmark, and General Dynamics. TCMF also lists several diversified companies that work on defense but are not exclusively focused on it such as IBM, Ford, GM, and John Deere.

Right beside TCMF along Industrial Park Dr. is the [Harris Assembly Group](#), a 28,000 square foot manufacturing facility producing parts for commercial and military uses.

Binghamton University frequently hosts Lockheed Martin and BAE Systems at career fairs, and both donate large amounts of money to the University. Both recently [sponsored](#) the Watson College of Engineering's Senior Projects programs. On LinkedIn, Lockheed Martin recruits the [most Binghamton Alumni](#) outside the university and other NYC educators, with BAE systems also high on the list. This relationship is so close that a branch of the organization [Dissenters](#) has been established by students to investigate and oppose the relationship.

Trying to cover the full extent of the local connection to Israel's army is an enormous task, but the F-35 is a valuable case study. Israel has [75](#) and uses them extensively to bomb Gaza, so much so that the [Netherlands has stopped exporting parts](#) for it due to Israel's continual violations of humanitarian law. Binghamton-area manufacturers sell to numerous companies that [have worked on the F-35](#) including:

- Boeing which produces JDAM Bombs.
- L3 Communications which produces radio communications equipment, aviation management systems, and navigation antennas.
- General Dynamics which produces gun integration & the gatling gun.

- Goodrich which produces landing gear.
- Raytheon which produces missiles, airborne reconnaissance infrared, GPS.

Local companies that have worked directly on the f-35 directly include:

- Lockheed-Martin led the development and manufacturing of the F-35 and manufactured the wings, sections of the fuselage, windshield, ejection pyrotechnics, JASSMs (joint air surface standoff missiles), infrared and electro-optical targeting systems, onboard computers, and all engines.
- [Ametek](#) worked with Pratt & Whitney on the F135 engine, one of the F-35's three main engines.
- Rockwell Collins created the helmet-mounted displays (Collins has worked on numerous other parts, but this is the most likely to have a local connection based on their focus).
- BAE Systems created electronic warfare systems, ducts, sensors/transducers, rear fuselage packer, aircraft & helicopter controllers, the aft fuselage, vertical tail skins, evacuation systems, weapons countermeasures. BAE Endicott's [promotional video](#) also include that they have worked directly on the F-35 here.

The contribution the Triple Cities has made to Israel's campaign and the cost felt by Palestinians is undeniable. Across the section *Life in Gaza*, the focus is on the experiences of Palestinians and the reports of human rights groups, but the local monetary and material contributions to the technology destroying lives should be continually remembered. The F-35 undoubtedly played a major role in the vast destruction, and may have even dropped some of the specific bombs indiscriminately or intentionally targeting civilians as alleged by Amnesty International.

Actions that may seem distant are directly tied to operations only a few miles away from the Binghamton City Council. If components can feasibly be traced from local factories to destruction in Gaza, it must be considered a local issue. This makes a resolution of the Binghamton City Council not only appropriate, but urgently needed.

Local Outcry

All constituents of the Binghamton City Council are deeply aware of Israel's campaign in Gaza through the news and through social media. Uniquely now, not only do people hear about

violence overseas, but they can see it happening to ordinary people through videos they post. At the same time, Binghamton residents are acutely aware of the role of the United States. The US has given constant political support to Israel, provided [hundreds of millions of dollars](#) in lethal aid, and blocked [3 ceasefire resolutions](#) in the UN security council. President Biden is working with congressional democrats to give an additional [\\$14.3 to Israel](#), a far more than the already staggering [\\$3.6 billion](#) the US gave last year.

In addition to the six protests and vigils listed already, Binghamton University has seen a long list of related events. Multi-part [peace discussions](#), [Shabbats for Ceasefires](#), and [educational events](#) are held regularly. Binghamton residents off campus [organized a rally downtown](#), drawing hundreds.

On and off campus, the Jewish and Muslim local communities are uniquely affected by shockwaves of the conflict, with antisemitism and Islamophobia [rising significantly](#). Many have loved ones in the region as well.

Context

While the historical context is crucial for understanding the conflict as a whole and working towards a solution of equality for Israelis and Palestinians, this only highlights the immediate background and main players today.

Hamas

Hamas was [founded](#) in 1987, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood and a response to the First Intifada (“uprising”). The next year, they published their [charter](#) claiming the entirety of historic

Palestine and citing the debunked and antisemitic “Protocols of the Elders of Zions.” This complicated context around the first charter—and Hamas’ appeal as the PLO’s violent and peaceful attempts to get a Palestinian state—is covered in detail by [NPR](#). In 2017 they released a [new charter](#) saying they would accept a temporary Palestine within the borders of the 1967 “green line” meaning the West Bank and Gaza. They did not recognize the State of Israel in either.

Hamas is an Islamist group, with an ideology that centers violent resistance to Israel. They opposed the Oslo peace process and were a main participant in the Second Intifada. They are designated a terrorist organization by the United States, the EU, and others.

Hamas [won control](#) of Gaza in 2006 by plurality. They appealed to voters frustrated by corruption of Fatah, the other major party on the ballot. Hamas and Fatah attempt to form a unity government, but Israel and the US reject their proposal as Hamas only recognized Israel. Violence quickly [broke out](#) and Hamas won the Gaza strip.

Israel had unilaterally withdrawn troops and settlements in 2005, but they continued to occupy the territory by severely restricting the movement of people in what Human Rights Watch dubbed an [“open air prison.”](#) Israel said these were necessary for security, but Hamas was able to weather the restrictions by taxing [smuggled items](#) coming through Egypt and by receiving [money and supplies](#) from Iran. Its largest source of money came from [Qatar facilitated by Israel](#).

Meanwhile the people in Gaza mistreated systematically. [4%](#) of the population had access to clean water, 35% of agricultural land and 85% of fishing zones were [designated](#) Access Restricted Areas by Israel. According to [UNRWA](#) in 2021 unemployment was at 47%, 81.5% were below the poverty line, and 64.4% experienced food insecurity. Food was calculated, letting in the [caloric minimum](#) for Gaza and blocking “luxury” items such as coriander and instant coffee. Critics viewed these policies as collective punishment of Gaza.

Leadership in Israel

Benjamin Netanyahu has had a long and controversial career as a member of the Knesset and as prime minister. He is part of the far-right Likud party which [declares](#) in its original charter “between the Sea and the Jordan there will only be Israeli sovereignty.” Sometimes in his career he has supported versions of a two-state solution involving a ["demilitarized" Palestine](#), a condition imposed on no other state. At [the beginning of his career](#), after the [most recent election](#), and [since October 7th](#) he has unilaterally opposed any Palestinian state. He also has a long history of [racist comments](#).

While Netanyahu is Israel’s [farthest right prime minister](#) in the country’s history, his allies include extremists from parties even further right than his own. Before entering politics, Itamar Ben-Gvir had a portrait of Baruch Goldstien in his living room, the mass shooter behind the horrific “Cave of the Patriarchs” anti-Arab massacre. He openly supports deporting all Arab-Israelis deemed disloyal of Israel and annexing the entire West Bank—which would require the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the area. He has been [convicted](#) of incitement to racism and supporting a terrorist organization among other charges.

Ben-Gvir is a member of the Knesset under the far-right Jewish Power party. He was chosen by Netanyahu to act as the Minister of National Security.

Bezalel Smotrich was [arrested](#) in 2005 on terrorism charges after he and four other Israeli settlers were found with 700 liters of gasoline and oil. Smotrich has made a career out of extremist anti-gay rallies and anti-Palestinian stances. He proudly has [said](#) “there is no such thing as the Palestinian people,” and that they are “an invention that is less than 100 years old.”

Smotrich is a member of the Religious Zionist party, serving as the Finance Minister under Netanyahu with special powers granted over the [illegal settlements](#) in the West Bank.

Israel and Hamas

Publically, Netanyahu has centered his political career on security concerns and a harsh stance against terrorism, but privately this was only half the picture.

Israel intelligence officers escorted Qatari shipments of millions of dollars in suitcases as part of a strategy of “[buying quiet](#)” according to the New York Times. The money acted as a carrot while airstrikes and the blockade acted as a stick to diminish Hamas’ military capabilities, a strategy referred to by Israeli officials as “[moving the grass](#).” Netanyahu also [withdrew](#) troops in the south of Israel which was one of the factors leading to Israel’s unpreparedness on October 7th.

There was another advantage to his approach with Hamas. “Anyone who wants to thwart the establishment of a Palestinian state has to support bolstering Hamas and transferring money to Hamas,” Netanyahu [reportedly](#) told the Likud party. If the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas were kept separate, there would be no unified Palestinian voice for statehood.

October 7th

Early in the morning on October 7th, 2024, Hamas [broke through](#) Israel’s defenses. They filmed and posted their attack. More than 20 towns and Kibbutzim were hit. A music festival was massacred. Personal stories from the day collected by journalists are harrowing.

The attack was [designed](#) to take hostages, and there is widespread evidence that civilians were [deliberately targeted](#), both war crimes. [Reports show](#) that widespread sexual violence against women was committed by militants.

In total about 1,200 were [killed](#) by Hamas and other militants. 695—the majority—were civilians. Every one of these war crimes and atrocities are worthy of the strongest condemnation.

A Cease-Fire After October 7th

One atrocity can never be used to justify another. The fact that Hamas broke a cease-fire agreement on October 7th is often used to argue against another cease-fire, and a return to the status quo before the war would be a mistake, but this campaign, and especially its unprecedented cost to civilians, moves the region further from peace.

Hamas is [incredibly popular](#) in the West Bank ever since October 7th and they are [expanding](#) in Lebanon. Even in Gaza, experts warn [Israel could lose](#) the strategic war despite tactical successes so far.

A cease-fire also remains the most feasible way to return the Israeli hostages to their families. [Over 100 hostages](#) were freed during the first temporary cease-fire agreement. Families in Israel are [protesting](#) Israel's continued opposition to a ceasefire. At least 31 hostages have [been killed](#), many likely by airstrikes and 3 by the IDF soldiers while [waving a white flag](#).

Without a cease-fire as well, a full regional war [remains a possible threat](#), which would devastate the region including Israel. Within Gaza, the war feeds into more war, with Hamas [using undetonated Israeli bombs](#) to build its own missiles. [Experts warn](#) mass suffering can act as a recruitment tool for Hamas, or even create more radical Hamas-like groups in the future.

To call for a cease-fire is to acknowledge that the cycle of violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not be solved by further violence. Instead, the root causes of the conflict have to be addressed—the Nakba or mass expulsion and flight of Palestinians beginning in 1948, fears about Jewish safety after centuries of persecution and the Holocaust.

Not only is a cease-fire the only way towards a better future, but it is also an urgent necessity to save lives in Gaza.

Life in Gaza

By October 9th, hundreds in Gaza had been killed and thousands wounded. Israeli airstrikes had [destroyed](#) 790 housing units, damaging 5,330 more. Water and sanitation sites were damaged, cutting off, leaving 400,000 without service.

The Defense Minister Yoav Gallant gave a [statement](#) on that day explaining Israel's strategy going forward. "I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed," Gallant said. "We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly." This quote would later be [cited](#) by South Africa as an example of incitement to genocide in their case at the International Court of Justice. It was United States pressure that [forced](#) Israel to open—with severe restrictions—the Kerem Shalom crossing.

This would set Israel's tone going forward, blurring the line between *Hamas* and *Gaza* to justify systematic destruction of the entire strip and creating a devastating humanitarian catastrophe.

Both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in their reports below, as well as [the International Committee of the Red Cross](#), the [World Food Program](#), and many others operating in Gaza are urgently calling for an immediate and sustained cease-fire.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is one of the most widely respected human rights groups, focused on documenting and publicizing violations of international law. They have released several relevant reports since October 7th covering a range of topics, but the three most relevant to Israel's campaign on Gaza cover several closely-investigated incidents of alleged war crimes. While these summaries focus on Israel and its actions, all the reports condemn Hamas' atrocities on October 7th and call for the release of hostages as well as an end to Hamas' indiscriminate missile attacks.

In a report made on October 20, 2023, titled [Damning Evidence of War Crimes as Israeli Attacks Wipe Out Entire Families in Gaza](#), Amnesty International investigated five Israeli bombings which indiscriminately targeted civilians. Israel has not allowed Amnesty International's

attempts to access Gaza so these reports rely on local field workers, in-person and phone interviews as well as videos and satellite photos of the attacks. In two cases, the attacks were on residential buildings without prior warning or evidence of nearby military activity. In one case, five hours after an unclear warning, a family attempted to retrieve their belongings only for the neighboring building to be bombed, killing those in their home and in the courtyard. The most lethal strike covered, killing 69 Palestinians at a market, was said to be targeting a mosque where Hamas members were present but Amnesty found no mosque in the immediate vicinity. Another residential strike, this one maybe targeting a Hamas member who lived in the building but was not present, killed at least 40 civilians. Amnesty makes clear these are not the only examples of violations of international law, just some of the most blatant.

On November 20, 2023, Amnesty released another report from their ongoing investigation titled [*'Nowhere Safe in Gaza': Unlawful Israeli Strikes Illustrate Callous Disregard for Palestinian Lives*](#) covering two attacks on a church compound where hundreds of civilians were known to be sheltering. The IDF published a video of the attack along with the claim they were targeting a Hamas command and control center, then quickly deleted the video and offered no further explanation. Amnesty found no evidence of military activity, but clarified that even if there were nearby targets, these attacks failed to discriminate between potential military objectives and civilian losses. Amnesty again clarified this case was emblematic of the larger issue of intentional or indiscriminate civilian attacks.

Amnesty also provides quotes from the interviews, giving a glimpse at the lived experiences of victims. "I wish I could turn the clock back. I'd rather we all died together than losing my family," Hazem Abu Shehada said after losing his wife and his three daughters. Another father, displaced in an UNWRA school, broke down during his interview with Amnesty about his son's death. "To lose my son, to lose my house, to sleep on the floor of a classroom? My children are wetting themselves, of panic, of fear, of cold. We have nothing to do with this. What fault did we commit? I raised my child, my entire life, for what? To see him die while buying bread."

Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch is a New York based human rights research and advocacy group. In a December 18th report of Israel's campaign they conclude that Israel has intentionally violated international law by using [starvation as a weapon of war](#). Before October 7th, Israel maintained overarching control of Gaza, leading to reliance on Israel for fuel, electricity, and medicine and over half the population faced acute food insecurity. HRW alleges that Israel's actions on the ground created the conditions for mass starvation and suffering, and that statements from Israeli officials show intent to create humanitarian catastrophe.

“For years, we have given Gaza electricity, water, and fuel,” Israeli Energy Minister Israel Katz, who ordered the cuts to electricity and water, said. “Instead of a thank you, they sent thousands of human animals to butcher, murder, rape and kidnap babies, women and elderly people. This is why we have decided to cut off the supply of water, electricity and fuel, and now, the local power plant has collapsed, and there is no electricity in Gaza. We will keep holding a tight siege until the Hamas threat is lifted from Israel and the world. What has been will be no more.”

Many other similar sentiments were expressed by decision makers in Israel, and when a small amount of aid was eventually let in, it was understood as the bare necessity for Israel to continue its military campaign. The Prime Minister stated “In light of President Biden's demand, Israel will not thwart humanitarian supplies from Egypt as long as it is only food, water and medicine for the civilian population in the southern Gaza Strip.”

But calls for starvation and destruction continued from decision makers. Some examples include Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich calling on the Israeli war cabinet to “prevent fuel from coming into the strip” and others continued to contextualize civilian aid as part of the war effort. Maj. Gen. Ghassan Alian said fuel and aid was halted due to Hamas' violation of the ceasefire agreement. Col. Yogev Bar-Shesht said in an interview “whoever returns here, if they return here after, will find scorched earth. No houses, no agriculture, no nothing. They have no future.”

This is reflected on the ground in Gaza. “Israeli forces are deliberately blocking the delivery of water, food, and fuel, while willfully impeding humanitarian assistance, apparently razing agricultural areas, and depriving the civilian population of objects indispensable to their

survival.” When HRW published their report in December, they expressed serious concerns that the desperate conditions Palestinians were living in could worsen significantly, with an immediate possibility of widespread starvation and a high risk of famine.

The International Court of Justice

[South Africa’s application](#) to the International Court of Justice is an 84-page overview of the historical context, the current Palestinian experience, and the Israeli strategy in Gaza. It is too large to summarize in detail, but incredibly easily readable and highly relevant.

South Africa alleges that Israel’s systematic mistreatment of Palestinians in Gaza goes back decades. Four previous wars had been fought between Israel and Hamas saw numerous likely war Israeli crimes against Palestinians according to the UN human rights reports cited.. After Israel’s disengagement from the strip, their blockade of the Gaza strip caused what the World Bank calls dedevelopment and deindustrialization, leading to a 60% poverty rate. During the 18 months of weekly peaceful protests called ‘the Great March of Return,’ Israeli soldiers killed 214 Palestinians, injuring a total of 36,100 and 2,800 children.

South Africa makes argument is that lived experiences of people in Gaza and public statements made by officials constitute genocide.

According to South Africa, Palestinians have been killed sheltering in UNRWA schools, churches, mosques, and hospitals, while flying on designated safe routes, or in summary executions. Israel has used unguided “dumb” bombs with wide impact ranges in dense areas and targeted strikes on homes and refugee camps. Hundreds of aid workers, journalists, and doctors have been killed as well. Palestinians also face displacement, psychological harm, and ill-treatment in detentions. Healthcare in Gaza has collapsed. Destruction of hundreds of thousands of homes as well as ecological effects of plans to flood Hamas’ tunnels with sea water threaten to make Gaza uninhabitable. There is much more, but this covers some of the main points.

South Africa compiles statements from over a dozen decision makers calling for widespread destruction, civilian death, and genocide. This is part of systematically dehumanizing language

used to blur the lines between Hamas combatants and uninvolved civilians, as well as calls to flatten, destroy, and erase Gaza. South Africa also confirms they are not the first to condemn genocide specifically, with many UN Special Rapporteurs and human rights commissioners warning as well. (Additionally it is worth noting over [4,100 scholars](#) in the United States, including seven from Binghamton University, have raised the alarm in an open letter to President Biden).

The final ruling of the ICJ is years away and the [ruling on January 26, 2024](#) is limited, but still the case was not thrown out as Israel requested and many of the provisional measures requested by South Africa were found to be urgently needed to avoid potential acts of genocide. The court ordered Israel to prevent acts of genocide, to punish incitements to genocide, and to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance. Expert reactions varied on the scope and impact of the ruling, but human rights groups observed that Israel ignored all the provisional rulings.

Ignoring Provisional Measures

According to Amnesty International's report [New Evidence of Unlawful Israeli Attacks in Gaza Causing Mass Civilian Casualties Amid Real Risk of Genocide](#) from covers four strikes on seemingly non-military residential targets Rafah, a 24.3 square mile area (just over twice the size of Binghamton), the last safe zone where over a million displaced refugees have fled to. 95 civilians and 42 children were killed.

According to a [report from HRW](#), in the month following the ICJ's provisional measures Israel had failed to comply with at least one provisional measure, with less total aid getting into Gaza. Israel blamed the UN's failure to facilitate aid but under international law HRW alleges Israel is required to ensure basic needs are met. Additionally, beyond Rafah virtually no aid is being delivered due to a lack of security and a bombing of an aid truck by Israeli forces which stopped the World Food Program's deliveries. Israel has also taken massive steps to undermine the UNRWA, the largest provider of aid in Gaza and the a main facilitator for other organizations. Israel accused 12 of UNRWA's 13,000 employees of participating in the October 7th attacks and, while all 12 were immediately fired, [the US chose to suspend all funding](#).

In Gaza, severe food poverty is documented among 90% of children under the age of 2 and 95% of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and all 1.1 million children in Gaza are facing starvation.

Interviews by Amnesty International [tell the same story](#), with 10 humanitarian interviewees describing no improvement since the ICJ measures, or even a decline. Amnesty also points out that other crossing points in the north of Gaza could be opened as an obvious step to combat the crisis.

Going Forward

All the earlier-mentioned human rights groups and aid distributors call for an immediate and sustained cease-fire to save lives. According to the most recent report from the [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#), 31,490 Palestinians are reported dead (the Gaza Health Ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants, but says 9,000 are women and 13,000 are children). 73,000 are injured and another 7,000 are missing.

60% of homes have been damaged or destroyed. 155 health facilities and 126 ambulances report damage. There are half a million cases of infectious disease and diarrhea. Virtually everyone is facing crisis levels of food insecurity, and more than half a million are at the catastrophic levels of food insecurity, the highest level. 31 people including 27 children have died of starvation or thirst. 40% of aid missions to Gaza are denied or impeded. The US has begun airdrops and plans to [build a temporary pier](#) over the next two months to get in more aid after failing to persuade Israel, but these are widely considered insufficient.

Israel is [threatening an imminent](#) Rafah invasion with no plan to protect civilians other than unspecified humanitarian islands that people will be moved to during the invasion. This invasion ignored international pressure and serious human rights concerns that fighting in such a dense area will inevitably lead to massacre. A brand-new report from the [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification global initiative](#) shows that famine, the highest possible hunger crisis categorized by mass starvation and death, is imminent.

Aid groups on the group say a [cease-fire](#) is the only way to recover from the crisis, repeating and reaffirming this call [constantly](#).

A Concluding Personal Statement from Professor Lubna Omar

Dear Members of the Binghamton City Council,

As a faculty member at Binghamton University, I am compelled to address the dire situation unfolding in Palestine, particularly as a Palestinian refugee deeply affected by these events. Over the past five months, we have borne witness to unspeakable atrocities perpetrated against innocent civilians in Gaza. Furthermore, there has been a disturbing surge in attacks by settlers and the IDF in Palestinian territories of the West Bank, areas not under Hamas control. Lives have been lost, and thousands have been unjustly detained without due process or legal recourse.

The history of my family serves as a poignant example of the enduring tragedy of Palestinian displacement. Since the ethnic cleansing of my father's family in 1948, we have been unable to return to our ancestral homeland. Although my mother currently resides in the West Bank, I am unable to visit or see her since I don't have the right to return or even visit my ancestral homeland. Through her firsthand accounts, I have come to understand the daily terror endured by Palestinians, which has only intensified with the recent escalation of violence and the egregious violations of Palestinian rights.

The magnitude of suffering endured by Palestinians, particularly women and children, both within and beyond Palestine's borders, is staggering. Shockingly, statistics reveal that over 80% of the casualties in Gaza are civilians, with women and children constituting the vast majority of these innocent victims. My brother-in-law, a Gazan, has tragically lost over 200 family members to IDF attacks that targeted their homes. Those who survive now find themselves displaced, living in makeshift tents in the southern regions of Gaza, struggling not only with the loss of loved ones but also with the looming danger of famine, disease, and the ever-present threat of further IDF attacks.

In addition to the immediate dangers of violence, children are dying in front of our eyes from starvation, exacerbated by the blockade and destruction of infrastructure in Gaza. It is a heart-wrenching reality that amidst the bombings and gunfire, innocent families are also facing the slow agony of hunger and malnutrition, with reports indicating that over 500 children have died from starvation-related causes.

In light of these harrowing realities, it is imperative for the US government to reassess its support of Israel, particularly in the form of unrestricted military aid funded by taxpayer dollars. It is deeply troubling to know that Binghamton tax dollars are contributing to the perpetration of such atrocities against innocent civilians in Palestine. This assistance, provided without adequate oversight or accountability, only serves to perpetuate the cycle of violence and suffering. Therefore, I implore the city council to acknowledge our profound distress over the ongoing crisis and to advocate vigorously for a ceasefire resolution. It is only through concerted international action and a commitment to justice that we can hope to bring an end to this humanitarian catastrophe. Local communities, such as ours here in Binghamton, must also play a role in pressuring our government to uphold human rights and support efforts for peace and justice in Palestine.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]