

Massachusetts House of Representatives Draft Bill Summary

- Bill #:** H.5448
- Title:** An Act modernizing financial departments in the city of Holyoke
- Sponsor:** Rep. Patricia Duffy
- Committee:** Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government
- Hearing Date:** June 23, 2026
- Current Law:** Chapter 438 of the Acts of 1896 revised the charter of the city of Holyoke. Section 6 provides for the election of a city treasurer. Section 16 provided for the board of aldermen (city council) to approve a city budget. Section 36 provides for a city auditor. Section 38 outlines the powers and duties of the city treasurer. Sections 49, 51, 52, and 53 contain provisions related to financial procedures, procurement, and the payment of loans.
- Chapter 327 of the Acts of 1936 established biennial municipal elections in the city of Holyoke. Beginning in 1937, the mayor, aldermen (councilors), city clerk, city treasurer, and school committee were to be elected for specified terms of office.
- Section 15 of the Holyoke City Charter (as amended by Acts 1992, c. 189; Acts 1996, c. 190; Acts 2024, c. 265) governs the election, term and removal of certain officers, and the filling of certain vacancies.
- Summary:** Section 1 of the bill replaces section 15 of the charter with updated, gender-neutral language which includes the following provisions:
- (a) The city council annually elects an administrative assistant to serve a 2-year term starting the first Monday in February in the year of election, to serve until their successor is elected and qualified, unless they're removed sooner.
 - (b) Every 3 years in January, the city council appoints a director of internal audit, to serve a term of 3 years beginning the first Monday in February, also until they are either removed or their successor is elected and qualified.
 - (c) The city council to annually in January elect one tax assessor and one water commissioner, each to serve 3-year terms starting on the

first Monday in February of the year they are elected, and until their successors are elected and qualified unless sooner removed.

(d) This language provides that any of the officers so elected may be removed at any time by the city council for sufficient cause. The incumbent tax assessors and water commissioners would continue to hold their respective offices, unless removed earlier, for 3-year terms starting the first Monday in February in the year after their election. Unless otherwise provided for, vacancies in city offices would be filled by the election or appointment of a successor in the same manner as the previous incumbent was elected or appointed, and that person would serve out the remainder of the term of office that their predecessor would have been entitled to hold the same office.

Section 2 repeals any language contained in the 1896 and 1936 special acts, as amended, that may be inconsistent with the provisions of this new special act.

Section 3 contains superfluous language from the local approval document which accompanied the bill.

Section 4 provides for the act to take effect immediately.

Notes:

Language approved by Holyoke City Council on April 21, 2026 by a vote of 9 yeas and 2 nays, with 2 absent. Approved by Mayor Joshua Garcia on April 22, 2026.