



# CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

## CLERK OF COMMITTEES

December 1, 2021  
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

| Attendee Name                   | Title                   | Status  | Arrived |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|
| Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott | Chair                   | Present |         |
| Katjana Ballantyne              | Vice Chair              | Absent  |         |
| William A. White Jr.            | City Councilor At Large | Present |         |
| Mary Jo Rossetti                | City Councilor at Large | Present |         |
| Wilfred N. Mbah                 | City Councilor at Large | Present |         |

Others present: Michael Pasquariello - Retirement Board, John Memory - Retirement Board, Rich Raiche - Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management, Mike Mastrobuoni - Budget Director, Erik Larson - Energy Manager, Maria Teresa Nagel - Director of SomerViva, Lauren Racaniello - Director of Legislative Affairs, Hannah Carrillo - Legislative Liaison, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Scott and adjourned at 7:13 PM on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors White, Rossetti, Mbah and Scott), 0 against and 1 absent (Councilor Ballantyne).

Chair Scott reported that Councilor Ballantyne was unable to attend this meeting due to a conflict.

### Approval of the October 26, 2021 Minutes

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>ACCEPTED</b> |
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### OSE Stabilization Fund

#### **212623: Requesting approval to appropriate \$74,326.85 from the Energy Stabilization Fund for projects to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs of City operations.**

Mr. Larson explained that this is to pay for Somerville's portion of 3 new projects. Councilor Mbah asked how the numbers were calculated and if savings on past projects were realized. Mr. Larson explained the process of how heating costs would be lowered by venting heat at appropriate times.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>     |
| <b>AYES:</b>   | Scott, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |
| <b>ABSENT:</b> | Ballantyne                       |

**SHS**

**212664: Requesting an amendment to the Somerville High School Construction appropriation to a new amount of \$283,859,233 and increasing the amount of bonds, fund transfers, and other available funds of the city authorized to meet said appropriation.**

Councilor Rossetti reported that she discussed her concerns with Mr. Raiche. She pointed out that the number before the committee now, is \$5 million more than the original request. She said that the contingency line numbers don't add up and she doesn't understand why the Building Committee was given a different number than presented here. Mr. Raiche said that the difference of \$5 million between the numbers is due to a reduction in anticipated funding. He spoke about the possibility of additional asbestos remediation and said that the thought was to request enough funds to complete the project at one time, rather than piecemeal. He also noted that a request was entered into MinuteTraq in error, causing more confusion about the numbers. Councilor Rossetti commented that other Building Committee members were confused, as well, and she hopes that this new amount is going to be the actual number, however, she is concerned that more contamination will be found, increasing the overall cost again. She said that the companies hired to work on this project need to be held accountable for there work. Councilor Mbah asked if the project is maxed out from the state and Mr. Raiche said that the city has. Mr. Raiche said that by making a deal with Suffolk Construction, the city would be better insulated against claims. \$1.4 million was received from the CARES act and applied to direct costs of the project. Mr. Mastrobuoni explained that funds from the Assembly Sq. sale of D2 parcels were used to reduce debt cost.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>     |
| <b>AYES:</b>   | Scott, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |
| <b>ABSENT:</b> | Ballantyne                       |

**SOIA Expansion**

**212665: Requesting the appropriation of \$148,950 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Communications-Office of Immigrant Affairs Salaries Account to establish several new positions.**

Items 212665, 212666 and 212667 were discussed together.

Director Nagel presented a mid-year appropriation request and spoke about community assessment and why the request was being made at this time. Six new positions are included in this request (5 full time and 1 part time) and two title changes are being proposed for existing positions to better reflect their responsibilities. Ms. Nagel reviewed both the department's current and proposed organizational charts. Explanations were given for the proposed increase funding allocations for asylum case support as well as staff development & supplies. Finally, Ms. Nagel reviewed the department's revised pro-rated FY-22 budget.

Councilor Mbah asked how decisions are made to dedicate resources and Ms. Nagel siad that they were made by interpreting the data collected and by assessing the needs of the community. She

commented that the community wants to be engaged in Somerville. Councilor Mbah asked if it would be nice to translate the City Council meetings and Ms. Nagel replied that a conversation should be held to ensure that adequate staffing and resources could be provided to accomplish this. Chair Scott asked if councilors could have access to the link to request translation services and Ms. Nagel again said that she would love to have a conversation about this to ensure that the demand for services could be accommodated.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>     |
| <b>AYES:</b>   | Scott, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |
| <b>ABSENT:</b> | Ballantyne                       |

**212666: Requesting the appropriation of \$52,050 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to various Ordinary Maintenance Accounts in the Communications-Office of Immigrant Affairs Department.**

Items 212665, 212666 and 212667 were discussed together.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>     |
| <b>AYES:</b>   | Scott, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |
| <b>ABSENT:</b> | Ballantyne                       |

**212667: Requesting the appropriation of \$22,988 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to Communications-Office of Immigrant Affairs Salaries for salary adjustments.**

Items 212665, 212666 and 212667 were discussed together.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>     |
| <b>AYES:</b>   | Scott, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |
| <b>ABSENT:</b> | Ballantyne                       |

**COLA Retirement Adjustment**

**212612: Somerville Retirement Board requesting approval to increase the Cost of Living Adjustment Base for retirees from \$14,000 to \$15,000**

Mr. Pasquariello reported that the Retirement Board voted to increase the base to \$15,000. Councilor Mbah asked what the impact would be for the typical teacher or police officer. Mr. Pasquariello explained that each retiree would see an increase in benefits of about \$30. Mr. Memory said that Somerville's base is in range with surrounding communities at \$15,000, however Cambridge, Malden and Medford are at \$16,000.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>     |
| <b>AYES:</b>   | Scott, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |
| <b>ABSENT:</b> | Ballantyne                       |

**Beacon St. Contract Extension**

**211851: Requesting approval to amend a contract with Design Consultants for an additional 2 years and \$53,146.25, for final work related to the Beacon St. Roadway construction project.**

City staff was not available to discuss this item.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**Treasury Bond Counsel**

**212528: Treasurer/Collector requesting approval to retain Hinckley Allen as bond counsel.**

Ms. Racaniello requested that this item be kept in committee pending further discussion.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**Police Staffing Study**

**212571: That the Administration update this Council on the status of the Police Staffing Study which was included in the FY2022 budget and estimated to take 2-4 months.**

Ms. Racaniello reported that an RFP is expected to be released next week. Chair Scott asked for an update on the scope of the study.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**Housekeeping - To Be Placed On File**

**206099: City Solicitor submitting an Ordinance to replace Ordinance 5-32 regarding Fire Department salaries.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>PLACED ON FILE</b> |
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**207740: Proposing an amendment to Ordinance 2-124 to permit the City Solicitor to settle legal actions of up to \$5,000 against the City.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>PLACED ON FILE</b> |
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**209826: Requesting the appropriation of \$486,805 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for heavy equipment/vehicles for the Parks and Recreation Department to manage the city's athletic fields and facilities.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>PLACED ON FILE</b> |
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**212448: Requesting an opportunity for the ARPA Director and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to provide this Council with an overview of ARPA.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>PLACED ON FILE</b> |
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**212451: Fire Chief responding to Item 211748, providing data on calls and responses to the Assembly Square neighborhood.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>PLACED ON FILE</b> |
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**212517: Requesting approval to appropriate and transfer \$8,796,290 from the Facility Construction and Renovation Stabilization Fund to the Somerville High School Construction Fund.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>PLACED ON FILE</b> |
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**212548: Requesting an amendment to the Somerville High School Construction appropriation to a new amount of \$278,790,633 and increasing the amount of bonds, fund transfers, and other available funds of the city authorized to meet said appropriation.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>PLACED ON FILE</b> |
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**212635: Chief Assessor requesting to appear before the City Council for the tax classification hearing on November 23, 2021.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>PLACED ON FILE</b> |
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**Reference Material:**

- SOIA Expansion Presentation (with 212665, 212666, 212667)