



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 24, 2022
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jake Wilson	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Beatriz GomezMouakad	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Judy PinedaNeufeld	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	
Charlotte Kelly	City Councilor At Large	Present	

This meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:32 pm and adjourned at 7:06 pm. Councilor Scott moved to adjourn, and the motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Others present: Hannah Carrillo - Mayor's Office, Anne Gill - Personnel, Erik Larson - OSE, James Donovan - SPD, Alan Inacio - OSPCD, Roberta Cameron - OSPCD, Stephanie Widzowski - Assistant Clerk of Committees.

Approval of the May 10, 2022 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Prior Year Invoice Items

213755: Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$13,120 using available funds in the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development-Planning and Zoning Ordinary Maintenance Account for Gilman Square planning work.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad recused herself from this item.

Dir. Inacio explained that the vendor NBJJ was contracted to help with community engagement at Gilman Square, but there were miscommunications between the planning and consulting teams on when invoices were due. Dir. Inacio's team realized this around October, and Dir. Inacio apologized for not putting this item in sooner.

Councilor Kelly asked what the study work referred to in the memo entailed. Dir. Inacio replied that the work referred to hosting community meetings and a synthesis report from those meetings. He said that the planning team provided links that he can share with the committee. Councilor Kelly also asked if OSPCD keeps track of the number of consultants doing work for

the city, explaining that constituents sometimes ask how often work happens in-house. Dir. Inacio said that those numbers could be gathered from across OSCPD - and for the most part, Planning and Zoning has a set team of consultants - but sometimes specific projects require a separate bid or engagement with the consultant.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [4 TO 0]
AYES:	Wilson, Scott, PinedaNeufeld, Kelly
RECUSED:	GomezMouakad

213816: Requesting approval to pay a prior year invoice totaling \$4,500 using available funds in the Human Resources Department Arbitration Services Account for arbitration services rendered.

Dir. Gill explained that this expense was incurred prior to her arrival. Councilor Kelly asked with whom the city is in arbitrations, but Dir. Gill said she could not disclose that. Councilor Scott pointed out the name of the unit listed on the invoice, and Dir. Gill confirmed that the invoice would list a unit but not the name of the grievant. Councilor Scott noted that this would indicate a personal arbitration.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Wilson, Scott, GomezMouakad, PinedaNeufeld, Kelly

Contract Items

213752: Requesting approval to extend the contract with the Mystic River Watershed Association for the Blessing of the Bay Park Revitalization Phase 2 for an additional 12 months.

Dir. Cameron explained that the Mystic River Watershed Association had requested a one-year contract extension to undertake plantings at their meadow restoration for 2021, but due to the nature of the plantings agreed upon with DCR, there was delay in the planting schedule. Therefore, it will be completed this year and MRWA is requesting another year extension.

Councilor Kelly noted in the attached memo that planting and other work has happened, but the status of year two meadow growth will be updated in 2023. She asked if the purpose of the extension is to wait for that status update, or if labor is still needed. Dir. Cameron answered that there is ongoing labor for the first year of meadow planting due to the method of installation. The work has been started, but requires more than one season to complete. Chair Wilson commented that this is a good use of funds and is in an area of the city that could use more park revitalization.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Wilson, Scott, GomezMouakad, PinedaNeufeld, Kelly

213815: Requesting approval of a lease for the Lower Broadway Police Substation at 79-83 Broadway, from 7/01/22 through 6/30/23, for \$2,000.00 per month.

Capt. Donovan explained that SPD is looking to continue its lease on the east substation. Substations allow access to services for those unable to drive and also allows officers to do administrative work in the field. He said that the substations are used sometimes to meet with victims or members of the community to take reports.

Councilor Scott asked why SPD has not established more substations. Capt. Donovan said that they have not given it much thought yet, as the community did not use substations much at first. However, now the public knows about the substations, and they now get a lot of traffic. There is an office in Assembly Row, but it is out of the way. Capt. Donovan said they would like to have a closer location, as well as seeing substations used for office hours, and may look into that in the future.

Councilor Scott asked when the east and west substations opened. Capt. Donovan said he could fetch that information, and Councilor Kelly noted in the attached memo that the east substation has been used since April 2008.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Wilson, Scott, GomezMouakad, PinedaNeufeld, Kelly

Appropriation Items

213753: Requesting the appropriation of \$243,471 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") Account to the Energy Stabilization Fund.

Mr. Larson explained that the energy stabilization fund is accrued through savings from conservation projects completed through OSE. The fund started in April 2001, and this is the second time that OSE will be putting additional funds in from project savings.

Chair Wilson commented that these savings indicate that a green economy is not only a moral choice, but a financial one. Councilor Kelly noted recurring savings listed from 2019 and 2020. She asked if they are listed in 2019 because of when they started, or if those savings are being reported from the 2019 fiscal year. Mr. Larson replied that the date at the top of the column is when the projects were installed, and the first and second sections of the spreadsheet denote perennial savings. The only project not ongoing is the solar net metering, where panels installed outside municipal buildings generate energy that is sold back to the city at a reduced rate. Mr. Larson said that none of these projects were installed in FY2022, but they have several on the docket for this year.

Councilor Kelly asked for confirmation that the annual dollar amount on this spreadsheet is what is being collected this fiscal year. Mr. Larson said yes, and the previous years' savings are already in the fund. He said that the current fund balance is \$241,335. OSE already added \$294,339 in this fiscal year and some was used for projects. Mr. Larson said he believed OSE would be able to fund \$400,000-\$500,000 next year due to their upcoming projects.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Wilson, Scott, GomezMouakad, PinedaNeufeld, Kelly

213582: Requesting an amendment to the Somerville High School Construction appropriation to a new amount of \$284,659,233 and increasing the amount of bonds, fund

transfers, and other available funds of the city authorized to meet said appropriation.

Chair Wilson said that the committee will wait to discuss the Somerville High School items at the Administration's request. They will most likely need to be discussed during budget season.

Councilor Scott expressed some of his thoughts and concerns going into this discussion. He said that there is an extension of the appropriation order - increasing the ability to borrow by about \$1 million - but it looks like this project is asking for about \$30 million in transfers from what the city has available. He commented that he hopes to talk about what is being done with the funds during the discussion, and that he knows the cost of borrowing is going up, but there are a lot of pressing needs in the city. He referred to the most recent City Council meeting in which the Proposition 2 ½ limit was discussed and how this puts constraints on funding new projects. He said that he feels this may take away short-term flexibility and opportunity, but expressed his appreciation at the undertaking required to balance the long-term debt of the city. He said that he had already reached out to Dir. Bean and hopefully will be having a conversation with him on this as well.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad asked if councilors will get more details on the fund and said she would like to know why the city is going over-budget in some places. Chair Wilson said he will make sure to include more details and coordinate with Ms. Carrillo and Dir. Bean as necessary.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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213623: Requesting the appropriation and transfer of \$10,827,440.61 from various available proceeds to the Somerville High School Construction Project thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed for the project by a like amount.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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213624: Requesting approval to appropriate and transfer \$8,964,735 from the Facility Construction Stabilization Fund to the Somerville High School Construction fund to pay costs of the construction of Somerville High School, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed for the project by a like amount.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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213625: Requesting the appropriation of \$7,080,519 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Somerville High School Construction Fund in order to pay costs of the construction of Somerville High School, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed for the project by a like amount.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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213626: Requesting approval to appropriate and transfer \$5,335,164 in unallocated COVID-19 monies from the COVID-19 Stabilization Fund to the Somerville High School Construction Fund to pay costs of the construction of the Somerville High School, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed for the project by a like amount.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE