



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES**

April 22, 2020
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

| Attendee Name | Title | Status | Arrived |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott | Chair | Present | |
| Katjana Ballantyne | Vice Chair | Present | |
| 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: Mayor Joseph Curtatone, Annie Connor-Mayor's Office, Khushbu Webber-Mayor's Office, Mike Mastrobuoni-SomerStat, Ed Bean-City Auditor-Finance Department, Richard Raiche-Capital Projects, Kate Hartke-Grants Development and Omar Boukili-Incident Commander

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Scott and adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Approval of the March 25, 2020 Minutes

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| RESULT: | ACCEPTED |
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208709: Requesting the appropriation of \$36,000 from the Receipts Reserved for Appropriation- Parking Meter Receipts Account to the Parking Department Rentals Account, to lease temporary parking spaces resulting from the High School construction project.

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| RESULT: | PLACED ON FILE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

208856: Requesting the repurposing of \$200,000 in CPA funds awarded to the City's Capital Project Division for the rehabilitation of City Hall.

Mr. Raiche stated the funds were awarded to the city some time ago. The City Council approved the funds to be used for design phase and would like to rededicate the funds. Mr. Raiche stated that the design is considered essential and there are a number of buildings in the city that are in poor condition. Councilor Ballantyne asked how much was appropriated previously in the first

request. There original request was for \$2M for city-wide phase. Mr. Raiche stated that five years ago Capital Projects went to CPA who approved the funding for the City Hall projects. Mr. Raiche has selected an OPM to assist with the design selection to bring on an architect by the summer. There are a number of buildings that are in backlog with code compliance, with the SCAT building being one of the buildings. Most of the committee members were not comfortable with this request, but it was restated that the funds will not come out the city's general funds. The funds cannot be reverted back to general funds and have to be used by CPA.

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| RESULT: | KEPT IN COMMITTEE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

209742: Requesting a transfer of \$49,431 from the E-911 Salaries Account to the Department of Transportation Salaries Account, to establish new positions in the Department.

Items 2097420, 209744 and 209743 were discussed together and included mid-year staffing requests.

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| RESULT: | PLACED ON FILE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

209744: Requesting a transfer of \$10,592 from the E-911 Salaries Account to the Constituent Services Salaries Account to establish the position of Quality Assurance and Improvement Manager.

Items 2097420, 209744 and 209743 were discussed together and included mid-year staffing requests.

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| RESULT: | PLACED ON FILE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

209743: Requesting a transfer of \$30,000 from the E-911 Salaries Account to Department of Transportation Office Equipment and Professional and Technical Services Accounts.

Items 2097420, 209744 and 209743 were discussed together and included mid-year staffing requests.

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| RESULT: | PLACED ON FILE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

209827: Requesting an appropriation of \$200,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Capital Projects Division Capital Outlay Engineering/Architectural Services Account to design an elevator from the High School field level to the Community Path being constructed by the MBTA GLX project.

Mr. Raiche stated the funding source needs to be changed and this request is time sensitive relating to the elevator request for the high school and GLX. It was stated that the current wall

configuration from the GLX path and stairwell will preclude putting an elevator in at a later time. The retaining wall will be starting soon and need to redesign the area soon. The funding will come out of the city's Stabilization Fund, not Free Cash. The construction timeline for this project will depend upon when the construction ban is lifted. It was stated that it will take 3-4 months for full design, redesign of retaining wall to put in elevator and will need a change order ready for Suffolk Construction. The preliminary cost for the elevator is \$1.5M.

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| RESULT: | PLACED ON FILE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

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.

Councilor White would like Mr. Bean to weigh in next time, with maybe some items removed to reduce the requested amount. The chair JT Scott will follow up with Ms. Lathan and Mr. Bean on this item.

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| RESULT: | KEPT IN COMMITTEE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

209980: Requesting the acceptance of the First Amendment to the Sanitary Sewer Easement Agreement with the City of Cambridge for work in Medford Street.

Mr. Raiche discussed enabling Cambridge crossing to grant easement for pipe route change needed which was vetted by the city's engineering department. As per the city's engineering department, they do not see any issues with reconfiguring the approach.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

210004: That the Administration update this Council on opportunities to provide universal broadband internet access in Somerville.

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| RESULT: | KEPT IN COMMITTEE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

210035: That the Director of Finance update this Council on all money received to date related to the COVID-19 situation.

Mr. Bean discussed items 11 and 12 together. Mr. Bean previously sent three documents to the committee members on the Covid-19 account which is attached in the committee agenda. There were discussions about Mt. Pleasant Senior Apartment quarantine, distributing hot lunch program to needy residents and Omar Boukili as Incident Commander which is funded out the Mayor's Personal Services account. The document distributed by Mr. Bean provides a summary of ledger for Covid-19 current spend patterns. The chair inquired about diapers and meals not in

general funds and waiver for expenses. DPH grants have already been received by the city. Councilor Rossetti requested a Covid-19 account summary update twice a month.

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| RESULT: | KEPT IN COMMITTEE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

210036: That the Director of Finance update this Council on all expenditures, encumbrances and anticipated expenses to date related to the COVID-19 situation.

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| RESULT: | KEPT IN COMMITTEE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

201740: Proposing an ordinance relative to a mid-fiscal year report of municipal finances, with next-fiscal year budget projections.

Mayor Curtatone, Ed Bean and Mike Mastrobuoni spoke on this item. The Mayor stating there is a hiring freeze and the city administration is reprioritizing how to project next year's budget. It was also stated that this fiscal year's challenge is not the same as the recession and trying to maintain integrity of city services. The Administration is listening to all ideas which could include early retirement incentive and that next year could be more challenging. Councilor Rossetti suggested weekly finance committee meeting updates, very similar to the Public Health and Public Safety meetings relating to the meetings with the Baker administration to address budget gaps, liquidity issues and pension. Mr. Bean stated not sure how much funding would be coming from the Feds and how it will be distributed which will impact the city's decisions. Mr. Bean is also working with the city's financial advisor, First Southwest on how much could be borrowed in May. The Mayor stated the city will recalibrate some projects. There were discussions about basis points and long and short-term bonding rates. Mr. Bean also discussed the possibility of paying off DPW equipment. Councilor White inquired about the city's meals tax status; the city had already received three-quarters of the motel/hotel taxes as of March. At the current moment Dir Bean's best estimate is that our general fund revenue could be anywhere from a \$500k deficit or surplus.

Funds have already come in from the Wynn Casino in the amount of \$250,000 for the general fund. Ms. Hartke discussed FEMA and CARES funds and how FEMA will want to look closely at how the funds will be used, management control, emergency operation costs, training, disinfecting and medical care. Councilor Rossetti asked Mr. Bean about Free Cash and how much was received and how much remains. Mr. Bean stated there was \$19.6M this year in Free Cash and there is \$4.1M in the city's rainy-day fund. Some funds may be needed for collective bargaining as well as vehicles for parks and recreation positions. Mr. Mastrobuoni stated the department heads are working to detail essential vs. non-essential items for the upcoming budget hearing. Councilor Ballantyne requested that the upcoming budget documents be clear and concise and provide details for payroll/salaries and professional expenses. Ms. Hartke provided a slide presentation on meeting with MEMA and FEMA Public Assistance Program.

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| RESULT: | KEPT IN COMMITTEE. [UNANIMOUS] |
| AYES: | Scott, Ballantyne, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah |

Handouts:

- COVID SUMMARY 4.20.2020 (Formatted) (with 210035, 210036)
- COVID19 Grant costs (Formatted) (with 210035, 210036)
- COVID19 YTD BUDGET REPORT 42220 Presentation (Formatted) (with 210035, 210036)
- Finance Committee_funding update 4.22.20 (with 210035, 210036)