



# City of Somerville, Massachusetts

## City Council Finance Committee

### Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, February 11, 2025**

**6:00 PM**

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:00pm and adjourned at 7:45pm on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Burnley, Jr, Clingan, Wilson), 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor Scott and Councilor Strezo). Councilor Strezo joined the meeting at 7:10pm and left at 7:40pm.

President Pineda Neufeld appointed Councilor at Large Strezo to replace Councilor at Large Mbah for this meeting only.

Others present: Mohammed Uddin - City Council Finance Analyst, Kimberley Hutter - Legislative Liaison, Alan Inacio - Director of Administration and Finance of OSPCD, Michael Richards - Director of Finance DPW Infrastructure and Asset Management, Charles Breen - Fire Chief, Garrett Anderson - Residential Decarbonization Program Manager, David Shapiro - Deputy City Solicitor, Jill Lathan - DPW Commissioner, Madalyn Letellier - Legislative Services Manager.

#### Roll Call

**Present:** City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan and City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr.  
**Absent:** Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott and Kristen Strezo

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-0151](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of January 21, 2025.

**RESULT:** **ACCEPTED**  
**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo
2. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-0167](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 30, 2025.

**RESULT:** **ACCEPTED**  
**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

#### Contracts and Easements

- 3. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0078](#)) Requesting approval of a time-only contract extension until 12/31/2025 for Crowley Cottrell LLC to complete additional services for re-design and construction administrations fees.

Director Inacio shared this request is for the Junction Park project parallel to the Community path, there were delays so this is to fund the services through the remainder of the project.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:**        City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

**ABSENT:**     Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo
- 4. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0096](#)) Requesting approval of a time-only contract extension of three years for Stantec Consulting Services Inc. for Poplar Street Pump Station Design Services.

Director Richards shared the contract has reached the three-year cap and are looking to continue the services through the end of the project schedule.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:**        City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

**ABSENT:**     Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo
- 5. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0097](#)) Requesting approval of a time-only contract extension of three years for PMA LLC for owners project manager services on the Poplar Street Pump Station project.

This item was discussed with ID # 25-0096.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:**        City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

**ABSENT:**     Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo
- 6. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0098](#)) Requesting approval of a time-only contract extension of three years for MWH Contractors Inc. for construction manager at risk services on the Poplar Street Pump Station project.

This item was discussed with ID # 25-0096.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:**        City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

**ABSENT:**     Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

Grant and Gift Acceptances

- 7. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0099](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$2,500,000 grant that requires a 20% match, from the Environmental Protection Agency to the Infrastructure and Asset Management Engineering Division for the Poplar Street Pump Station.

Director Richards shared this money is to defray 2.5 million of project costs. It took a few years to identify a sub-project within the larger scope that would not increase overall costs to maximize the funds. Chair Wilson asked if federal grants could change this, in response there is no suggestion of delays, but the City is aware of the federal funding for the project and expects to move forward either way as these costs are allocated through bonds already.

**RESULT:** RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED  
**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

- 8. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0102](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$33,550 grant with no new match required, from the Department of Fire Services to the Fire Department for the purchase of firefighter safety equipment.

Chief Breen shared this is the last year able to receive the grant and this will help defray the cost of uniforms for new firefighters being hired. Councilor Burnley asked how many people this will service, Chief Breen responded this money services 11 sets of gear.

**RESULT:** RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED  
**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

- 9. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0100](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$2,400,000 grant with no new match required, from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development for infrastructure and open space improvements on the Clarendon Phase II project.

Director Inacio shared this is earmarked for the second phase of the Clarendon project development. Chair Wilson asked if federal grants could change this, Director Inacio shared the city is working closely with federal partners and the team is actively working to ensure funds are available to complete this project. Councilor Burnley asked about the expected timeline for completion, Director responded 2031 is the end of the life of the grant if not all funds were committed and expended HUD can take back any of those

funds. Councilor Burnley went on to ask how many phases there are. The Director clarified there were originally three phases and there have been delays but work is in progress to get a package together with involvement from state and private funds to fund phase three after the completion of phase two that is currently ongoing.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

Prior Year Invoices

- 10. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0079](#))

Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$4,400 using available funds in the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development Economic Development Division account for 9 Aldersey Street appraisal report.

Director Inacio stated a vendor had not sent the invoice for an appraisal and now are requesting funds to pay prior obligations.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

- 11. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0103](#))

Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$486 using available funds in the City Clerk Advertising account for legal hearing notices.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

Transfers

- 12. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0051](#))

Requesting the transfer of \$346,492 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Undesignated Fund Balance to the CPA Community Housing Reserve.

Director Inacio shared every fiscal year the CPA has a commitment to allocate 50% of their revenues to the Affordable Housing Trust. Any lingering balances go into reserve accounts and these funds need to be transferred to the CPA Housing Reserve Trust and then they can appropriate the entire amount. He further elaborated that the CPA project evaluation is almost complete awaiting two decisions, all following projects have been voted on and approved to receive the CPA funds.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:**           City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor  
                          Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:**       Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

Appropriations

13.     Mayor's Request     Requesting the appropriation of \$365,000 from the Community Preservation  
          (ID # [25-0049](#))       Act Fund to the Somerville Community Land Trust for restoration of 12  
                                  Pleasant Avenue.

This item was discussed with ID # 25-0051.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:**           City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor  
                          Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:**       Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

14.     Mayor's Request     Requesting the appropriation of \$1,475,428 from the Community  
          (ID # [25-0053](#))       Preservation Act Affordable Housing Reserve to the Affordable Housing  
                                  Trust.

This item was discussed with ID # 25-0051.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:**           City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor  
                          Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:**       Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

15.     Mayor's Request     Requesting the appropriation of \$172,000 from the Community Preservation  
          (ID # [25-0055](#))       Act Fund Historic Preservation Reserve to the Elizabeth Peabody House for  
                                  exterior restoration of 277 Broadway.

This item was discussed with ID # 25-0051.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:**           City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor  
                          Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:**       Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

16.     Mayor's Request     Requesting the appropriation of \$200,000 from the Community Preservation  
          (ID # [25-0056](#))       Act Fund Open Space Reserve for the installation of water fountains at  
                                  Nunziato Park.

This item was discussed with ID # 25-0051.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

17. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0057](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$300,000 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund to the CPA Open Space Land Acquisition Fund.

This item was discussed with ID # 25-0051.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

18. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0058](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$114,259 from the Community Preservation Act Fund Historic Preservation Reserve to the Somerville Museum for preservation of artifacts in its collection.

This item was discussed with ID # 25-0051.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

19. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0059](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$18,500 from the Community Preservation Act Fund Historic Preservation Reserve for a condition assessment of the Veterans Cemetery and other historic monuments.

This item was discussed with ID # 25-0051.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

20. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1712](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$20,900 from the Energy Stabilization Fund to add attic insulation to the Recreation Department at 16 Walnut Street.

Program Manager Anderson clarified it is for 19 Walnut Street and is one of the various project funds that have been requested for in a series of installation projects to identify energy saving projects. The savings from these projects get put into the fund to assist in the future funding of energy saving projects

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

21. Mayor's Request  
 (ID # [25-0047](#))

Requesting the appropriation of \$100,000 from Water Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings to satisfy a court judgment.

Deputy City Solicitor David Shapiro shared this is to pay off a claim made about negligent installation of a water meter from 2018, and this request is to receive the funds to pay off the case. Following a question from Chair Wilson, Deputy Solicitor Shapiro shared the question before the jury was where a document reflected that a City employee installed the water meter theory was that the plumber installed it, and it is hard to discredit the city's own document in front of a jury. Councilor Burnley asked if there could be additional claims of this nature made against Somerville, Deputy Solicitor Shapiro said it is most likely that this negligent incident of a water meter installation will not come in front of him again. Shapiro went on to clarify the statute of limitations is three years but can be delayed due to when the damage should have been discovered.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Strezo

Communications and Discussions

22. Officer's  
 Communication  
 (ID # [25-0023](#))

City Council Finance Analyst conveying FY 2025 second quarter spending update.

Mohammed Uddin the City Councilor Financial Analyst spoke to the memo attached to the item in legistar that presents the summary of findings. The findings are to provide the Council with a quarterly budget update on a surplus projection using the year's first 6 months of spending to project the remaining 6 months of the fiscal year. Councilor Burnley asked if Analyst Mohammed could speak to how he arrived at the surplus number for Board of Health. Analyst Uddin elaborated on the mentioned limitations to the study and a big reason could be seasonal and a greater level of spending, specific details on a department would require more research.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

Orders and Resolutions

23. Order  
(ID # [25-0068](#))
- By Councilor Wilson and Councilor Scott  
That the Director of Parks and Recreation and the Commissioner of Public Works update this Council on short- and long-term plans for the Founders Memorial Skating Rink.

Chair Wilson raised questions about why ice isn't being used at the rink and why the building isn't utilized in winter. DPW Commissioner Jill Lathan explained that the rink is used for various city programs, and the focus is on those activities rather than just being an ice rink. Wilson asked about potential revenue from using it as an ice rink, and Lathan responded that the revenue from the Founders Rink is limited. She also mentioned the high costs and effort involved in preparing and maintaining the rink, making it financially unfeasible. Wilson highlighted the community's demand for ice time, and Lathan acknowledged the fiscal responsibility involved, but expressed support for reconsidering the use of the rink for ice in future winters, pending further discussion with the administration.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

24. Order  
(ID # [25-0036](#))
- By Councilor Strezo  
That the Director of Finance discuss the path for City Councilors to receive administrative support staff to assist with City Council work and communication with constituents.

Councilor Strezo discussed her decision to propose two items aimed at addressing constituents' concerns more efficiently. Legislative Liaison Hutter, after consulting with the Budget Director and Director of Finance, explained that Councilors can use their stipends to pay for interns or work with the City Clerk's Office to accommodate staff needs. Councilors are asked to provide the scope, estimated hours, and justification for support, like how departments request additional staff. Councilor Clingan supported the proposal and emphasized that paid interns should receive a livable wage. Councilor Burnley and Chair Wilson had detailed discussions on the need for support for staff to manage the high volume of daily communication. Chair Wilson asked if this could still be addressed in the current budget, and Hutter confirmed it could be included in budget priorities or coordinated with Clerk staff before budget meetings.

**RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

25. Order  
(ID # [25-0037](#))
- By Councilor Strezo  
That the Director of Finance discuss the path for City Councilors to receive administrative support staff in the form of paid internships to assist City Councilors with City Council work and communication with constituents.

This item was discussed with ID # 25-0036.

**RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

- 26. Resolution  
(ID # [25-0060](#))

By Councilor Clingan, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Davis, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Sait  
That the Administration discuss the decision to stop the annual employee holiday breakfast at the Department of Public Works building.

Liaison Hutter responded there were no plans from administration to cancel the event and there is guidance from the Department of Revenue about how to fund such events, the administration would like to continue to carry out the tradition moving forward. Councilor Clingan asked a follow up if the funding in the past was incorrect, Liaison Hutter shared there were varied funding sources in the past and it was flagged that the funds that may have been used would have been inappropriate but appropriate funds have since been identified to utilize moving forward.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**