



# City of Somerville, Massachusetts

## City Council Finance Committee

### Meeting Minutes

**Monday, November 6, 2023**

**6:00 PM**

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:00 pm and adjourned at 6:58 pm with a roll call vote of all in favor (Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Kelly, Councilor Scott, and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and none absent.

Others present: Hannah Carrillo – Mayor’s Office, Karin Carroll – HHS, Michael Richards – IAM, Anoop Malik – HHS, Brian Postlewaite – DPW Engineering, Christine Blais – OSE, Alan Inacio – OSPCD, Stephanie Widzowski – Clerk of Committees.

#### Roll Call

**Present:** Chairperson Jake Wilson, Vice Chair Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, Charlotte Kelly, Jesse Clingan and Judy Pineda Neufeld

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-1583](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of October 24, 2023.

**RESULT:** ACCEPTED

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

#### Grant Acceptances

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1550](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$108,226.70 grant with no new match required from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to the Health and Human Services Department to support implementation of the Somerville-Cambridge Shared Public Health Service Initiative.

Dir. Carroll introduced Anoop Malik as the new Finance Manager. She explained that the grant comes from the Department of Public Health and largely covers the salary for the service coordinator, who handles grant activities between Cambridge and Somerville. Dir. Carroll also described the target areas of the grant series, which include data collection and sharing, standardization of complaint intake, and rodent control. Councilor Kelly asked for clarification on the scope of the service coordinator’s work, and why the grant goes through HHS rather than ISD, since it involves inspections and training. Dir. Carroll explained how the grants are distributed at the state level and how, regionally, inspectional services departments work closely with or report to the state through health departments.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:**           Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Transfers

- 3.     Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1517](#))     Requesting approval of a transfer of \$32,000 from the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development Housing Division Personal Services Account to the Office of Sustainability and Environment Personal Services Account to transfer the clean green program manager position to the Office of Sustainability and Environment.

Dir. Blais explained that the position approved in FY23 that would become the “Clean Green Somerville Program Manager” was unable to be filled. At the same time, OSE was taking in new data on 2050 residential housing sector goals for Somerville Climate Forward. Dir. Blais said that OSE wanted to set interim goals and that with the scale of the action needed, it felt like the program manager position would work better in OSE with a new job description and title. The new title for the position will be the “Residential Decarbonization Program Manager”.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:**           Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

- 4.     Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1554](#))     Requesting approval of a transfer of \$5,925.42 from the Infrastructure & Asset Management Personal Services Account to the Engineering Personal Services Account to fund an existing position.

Taken together with item 23-1555. Dir. Richards explained that an administrative error occurred when budgeting for the existing position, which is funded through multiple sources. There was an oversight for item 23-1555 as well, which is for a new senior project manager position funded through Water and Sewer but managed by Engineering.

**RESULT:**     **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:**           Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Personnel Requests

- 5.     Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1555](#))     Requesting approval to create a Senior Project Manager position in the Department of Infrastructure and Asset Management - Engineering Division.

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

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Bonding

- 6. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1585](#)) Requesting authorization to borrow \$5,561,768 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for street and sidewalk reconstruction.

Dir. Postlewaite shared a presentation that covered primary goals such as safety and accessibility, the scope of work - which includes measures to improve street tree health - and a review of FY2024 proposed funding.

Chair Wilson noted the recent announcement of a \$4 million federal grant that will go towards the Somerville Bike Network Plan, and asked how the grant may interact with funding for annual reconstruction. Dir. Postlewaite described how the city tries to meet bike plan expectations when working on the annual streetscape plan. He also talked about a “quick build” component to construction, mostly paint and signage, to implement the bike plan more quickly while working towards hard construction solutions in other areas. He said that the federal grant will likely go towards streets that are not in the five-year plan to maximize the impact of quick build efforts.

Chair Wilson also asked what to expect in FY24 for sidewalk bump-outs, and how street resurfacing works on streets with speed humps. Councilor Clingan asked how ADA improvements interact with the 2013 pedestrian accessibility study. Dir. Postlewaite said that they are cross-checking with the 2013 study to make sure all locations of concern are addressed. He also talked about how ADA complaints can be incorporated into contracts.

Councilor Scott asked what the ideal balance would be between using the general fund and putting the project out to bond. Dir. Postlewaite said he generally thinks there should be a focus on the general fund to avoid paying recurring interest, but his department is working to find a balance.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Public Communications

- 7. Public Communication (ID # [23-1552](#)) David Thorpe submitting comments re: Somerville High School Scholarship Foundation.

Liaison Carrillo summarized information that City Treasurer Linda Dubuque conveyed to the Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee meeting on November 1, 2023, and she shared a note from Dir.

Bean that explained that funds can only go to either students or colleges, not another foundation. Liaison Carrillo said that the Administration is looking to resolve this quickly.

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

Referenced Documents:

- Finance - 2023-11-06 FY24 Roads+Sidewalks+5 (with 23-1585)