



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 9, 2025

6:00 PM

The meeting took place remotely via Zoom and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Wilson and adjourned at 6:54 PM on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Burnley, Clingan and Wilson), none against and 1 absent (Councilor Scott).

Others present:

Charles Breen - Somerville Fire Department Chief, Neha Singh - Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Brian Postlewaite - Director of Engineering, Michael Richards - Director of Finance, Catherine Lester Salchert - Special Counsel, Delaney Fisher-Cassiol - Clerk of Committees

Roll Call

Present: City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan, City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr. and City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-1021](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of May 20, 2025.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

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

Grants and Gift Acceptances

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0848](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$38,500 grant with no new match required, from the Boston Office of Emergency Management to the Police Department for Special Response Team equipment.

This item was taken up with # 25-0849.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0849](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$127,000 grant with no new match required, from the Boston Office of Emergency Management to the Police Department for Special Response Team equipment and training.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

4. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0903](#)) Requesting approval to accept and use a gift with an approximate value of \$5,399 from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to the Fire Department for improving rescue capabilities during a rail incident.

Somerville Fire Department Chief Charles Breen shared that the Nolan rail cart is designed to operate on the Red, Orange, and Green Lines. In the event of a railway incident, the cart allows responders to load and transport equipment along the tracks, making it significantly easier than carrying gear by hand. Some sections of the train lines are difficult to access on foot, and the cart helps personnel reach these areas more efficiently. The MBTA initially approached the Fire Department with the offer of one cart; in response, the department requested and received approval for two additional carts to further support emergency operations.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

5. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-0948](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$257,540 grant with no new match required, from Eversource Energy to the Engineering Division for permanent resurfacing and restoration of various streets.

Eversource will pay the City to combine their trench restoration work with the City's larger paving projects. This avoids duplicating efforts and helps pave more streets by combining work where possible. The City will only collaborate with Eversource when their planned work overlaps with streets identified in the pavement management plan. This arrangement allows for full street resurfacing, including both the trench areas and the remaining portions of the roadway.

Councilor Burnley asked if the amount Eversource plans to spend is similar to what the City would have spent. Director Postlewaite confirmed that the costs are comparable and he added that this coordination will result in a better final product and helps strengthen partnerships with utility providers. Eversource will continue to handle other restoration work separately.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

6. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-0971](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend an \$82,357.50 grant with no new match required, from the Executive Office of Aging and Independence to the Council on Aging for social, educational, and physical wellness programming.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

Prior Year Invoices

7. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0785](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$575.16 using available funds in the Parks & Recreation Department Office Supplies Account for cork boards.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

Contracts and Easements

8. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0967](#)) Requesting approval of a Substation Easement near 51 Prospect Street for NStar Electric Company.

Councilor Scott indicated that he was recused from participating in discussion on this item.

As part of the property expansion of Station 402 in Union Square, Eversource identified the need to run underground utilities through a private way owned by the City. This portion of land is surrounded by private property and is primarily useful to Eversource as part of their driveway to access the site. The area remains publicly accessible and is not enclosed. Because utilities need to be run under this City-owned land, an easement is required to grant Eversource the right to install underground utilities, including a manhole.

Councilor Mbah asked Attorney Salchert who would be liable for any accidents on the property. Attorney Salchert confirmed that the City can be added to the construction contractor's insurance policy to ensure coverage. Director Postlewaite noted that the area falls within the projected 10-year flood zone for 2030, with the potential for up to two feet of flooding. However, the systems being installed are designed to operate in flood conditions and can function even if submerged.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

RECUSED: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Referenced Documents:

- Finance - 2025-06-09 P&R PYI Memo (with 25-0785)
- Finance - 2025-06-09 COA Grant Memo (with 25-0971)
- Finance - 2025-06-09 Prospect Place Easement NSTAR (with 25-0967)