



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 8, 2014

REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Rebekah L. Gewirtz	Chair	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Vice Chair	Absent	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Absent	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	

The meeting was scheduled as a Committee of the Whole and changed to a regular committee meeting due to the lack of a quorum for a Committee of the Whole.

Others present: Alderman Lafuente, Alderman Niedergang, Solicitor Frank Wright, Mayor's Aide Omar Boukili.

196362 - That the City Solicitor appear before this Board to describe the process for responding to requests for public records, including fees and redactions, and how this comports with the requirements of state law, the Secretary of State's Public Records Division, and the practices of other communities.:

The discussions concerned requests for information and redactions that are made to said information. Mr. Wright explained the overall process involved in complying with state laws on the subject. Committee members raised questions about the rationale used in determining what information can and cannot be divulged as well as the methods used to determine time, cost and fee estimates for producing the material requested. Members also questioned how the public's right for information is balanced against the city's need to protect itself. Even though the city is allowed, by law, to charge for processing and provide requested information, some committee members felt it is unfair to charge the public for this service.

The City Solicitor was asked to look at how policy relates to legality.

Alderman White's motion that the City Solicitor provide the Committee on Legislative Matters with an analysis of the Law Department's support to charge for review and redaction of requested information, was approved.

Alderman White's motion that the City Solicitor provide the Committee on Legislative Matters with the good faith estimate of number of hours and the hourly rates charged for every information request this year, to date, was approved.

Alderman Gewirtz's motion that the City Solicitor research and report to the Committee on Legislative Matters on the ability of the Board of Aldermen to create guidelines regarding requests for public information on the local level, was approved.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE