



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:00 pm and adjourned at 8:44 pm on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Burnley, Jr, Scott, Wilson), 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor Sait).

The committee went into recess from 8:06pm-8:12pm and readjoined with a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Burnley, Jr, Scott, Wilson and 1 absent (Councilor Sait)).

Others present: Fire Chief - Charles Breen, Director of Human Resources - Anne Gill, Director of Arts Council - Gregory Jenkins, Sustainability and Resiliency Planner - Elyse Belarge, Director of Economic Development - Rachel Nadkarni, Director of Police Finance - Anthony Delmonaco, Deputy IT Director - David Slonina, Director of Housing Stability - Ellen Shachter, Director of Administration and Finance of OSPCD - Alan Inacio, Program Manager - Jeremy Vallesio, Sargent - Michael McCarey, Legislative Liaison - Kimberley Hutter, Legislative Services Manager - Madalyn Letellier.

Roll Call

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

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [24-1769](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of December 10, 2024.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

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

ABSENT: Sait

Grant and Gift Acceptances

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0021](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$100,000 grant with no new match required, from Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities to the Office of Housing Stability for a Senior Housing Bridge pilot program.

Director of Housing Stability Ellen Shachter spoke to statewide legislation that works to keep aging seniors in their homes until other affordable housing becomes available. This money will be used for a pilot program, SHATF Flex program will work in conjunction with this money and aims to showcase how successful this program can be in the next six-months before

the end of the fiscal year. Councilor Burnley asked for a specific breakdown of where the funding is being allocated and how Somerville Cambridge elder services will be collaborated with. Director Shachter confirmed 100% of this money will go to rent and up to 15% (\$15,000) can be billed towards administrative costs. Director Shachter went on to clarify as it is a pilot amount of money the plan is to serve between 5-10 people and are unable to open it up to a larger group of participants.

Councilor Wilson inquired about the likelihood the state will renew or expand funding; Director Shachter shared that services to seniors is a trending topic and is hopeful the political and legislative environment will look to support the ongoing homelessness within seniors and the future rise in numbers.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

ABSENT: Sait

3. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-0018](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$100,000 grant with no new match required, from the Barr Foundation to the Office of Sustainability and Environment for a Community Heat Resilience Pilot Grant Program.

Sustainability and Resiliency Planner Elyse Belarge spoke to using this money to add to the portfolio of heat resiliency in the city.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

ABSENT: Sait

4. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-1659](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$60,000 grant with no new match required, from Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to the Police Department for traffic safety enforcement.

Sargent Michael McCarey explained that the grant is designed to enhance traffic and safety enforcement through visibility, equipment, and non-enforcement activities. The funding will focus on targeted enforcement in high-traffic and accident-prone areas, as well as community engagement without direct enforcement. The grant's emphasis is on road user safety, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. In response to questions from Councilor Wilson and Scott, Sargent McCarey confirmed that the initiative aims to enforce pedestrian crossing violations but noted that mandatory stop enforcement was excluded from the application. Councilor Burnley asked for a summary of the grant's objectives, and Sargent McCarey outlined plans for educational pamphlet distribution, providing cyclists with visibility

equipment, and installing a radar speed sign on College Avenue to alert drivers of their speed in high pedestrian areas, all with the goal of reducing incidents and accidents. Additionally, Councilor Burnley inquired about the involvement of the Pedestrian Transit Advisory Committee, and Sargent McCarey confirmed that the committee will have an ongoing role in identifying the best locations for distributing materials and equipment.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE DISCHARGED WITH NO RECOMMENDATION**

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

ABSENT: Sait

5. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1660](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$40,021 grant with no new match required, from Department of Mental Health to the Police Department for the continuation of partial funding for the Jail Diversion Coordinator position.

Director of Finance for Police Anthony Delmonaco spoke to the request that covers half the salary of the full time Jail Diversion Coordinator position, office supplies, and meeting expenses.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

ABSENT: Sait

6. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1727](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$295,463 grant with no new match required, from Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to the Police Department for 911 personnel costs.

Director of Finance for Police Anthony Delmonaco shared the grant off sets the salary costs for 911 operators. Councilor Wilson asked what is driving the cost and Director stated this does not go into overtime lines but to supplement the 14 individuals salaries, which is fully staffed team of operators.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

ABSENT: Sait

-
7. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1728](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$133,427.11 grant with no new match required, from Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to the Police Department for training and recertification and additional staffing support.
- Director of Finance for Police Anthony Delmonaco stated this is to re-certify and meet the training requirements for E911 operators and cover vendor costs for the training.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and City Councilor At Large Mbah
- ABSENT:** Sait
8. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1729](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$24,500 grant with no new match required, from Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to the Police Department for ambulance service.
- Director of Finance for Police Anthony Delmonaco shared this grant pays for ambulance services used by Police and Fire.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and City Councilor At Large Mbah
- ABSENT:** Sait
9. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0016](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$109,296 grant with no new match required, from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to the Fire Department for staffing costs.
- Chief Charles Breen shared this grant is to cover overtime costs due to injury, sick leave, and vacation times. Chief provided an update that there are three vacancies due to retirement and hopes to have names for the Council soon.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and City Councilor At Large Mbah
- ABSENT:** Sait
-

10. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0020](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$100,000 grant with no new match required, from the Executive Office of Economic Development to the Economic Development Division for a Small Business Success Technical Assistance program.
- Director Alan Inacio shared this grant is for technical assistant and consulting for small businesses provided in workshops, 1:1 consultation, and office hours being administered in Spanish and Portuguese. Director Rachel Nadkarni further clarified this grant is building off previous programming. In response to questions from Councilor Mbah Director Nadkarni shared municipal funding cannot be spent widely on technical assistance and this is aiming to replace funding that was previously fulfilled by ARPA.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and City Councilor At Large Mbah
- ABSENT:** Sait

Communications and Discussions

11. Officer's Communication (ID # [25-0019](#)) Director of Economic Development and Director of the Arts Council conveying an updated draft Armory Master Plan.
- Director Nadkarni spoke through the highlights and updates to the master plan laid out in the slideshow handout entitled, *Finance 2025-01-21 Updated Armory Draft Master Plan Slides (with 25-0091)*. Councilor Sait reiterated the timeline on working with The Armory and the Administration since December and highlighted the close collaboration that is ongoing from every party. Councilor Sait asked if the city staff in the Draft to work with the Armory have been outlined or if these will be new positions added into the budget. Director Nadkarni outlined the ongoing conversation on the level of support that is being requested and what degree can be provided is not an individual for all scenarios, but it will be a team to address any problems, and the conversation is ongoing. Councilor Burnley asked what the roles in the Advisory Board are, Director Nadkarni shared there are two avenues to be involved in the tenant selection process which is a more sensitive discussion dealing with business operations and secondly utilizing funds raised by the tenants to invest in the building. Ongoing discussion spoke to the decision of what level tenants should be involved in the advisory board and the goal for future work and decisions to made with the City, staff, and tenants. Councilor Mbah asked what funding avenues to have been explored, Director Nadkarni and Director Jenkins highlighted the flow of money will come into account when selecting what businesses should be selected to rent out space and allow for some of that money to subsidies to other programming and what are the operating costs.

RESULT:	<u>RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED</u>
AYE:	City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and City Councilor At Large Mbah
ABSENT:	Sait

Transfers

12. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1718](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$60,159 from the Public Space and Urban Forestry Capital Account to the Public Space and Urban Forestry Ordinary Maintenance Account for Tree Keeper/311 Integration expenses.
- Director Alan Inacio shared there were delays in the request for proposal and contracting and were not able to utilize the full budget in FY24 and need to shift funding to fulfill the contract.
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| RESULT: | <u>RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED</u> |
| AYE: | City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and City Councilor At Large Mbah |
| ABSENT: | Sait |

Appropriations

13. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1713](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$110,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the 90 Washington Demonstration Project Account for ongoing litigation costs.
- Director Alan Inacio shared this request is to fund the associated costs with these ongoing discussions.
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| RESULT: | <u>RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED</u> |
| AYE: | City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and City Councilor At Large Mbah |
| ABSENT: | Sait |
14. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0047](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$100,000 from Water Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings to satisfy a court judgment.
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| RESULT: | <u>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</u> |
| AYE: | City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and City Councilor At Large Mbah |
| ABSENT: | Sait |

Bonding

15. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1694](#)) Requesting authorization to borrow \$4,757,000 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for the recurring FY 2025 Sewer Improvements program.

The Committee discussed the handout entitled, *Finance - 2025-01-21 Memo - Sewer Improvement Bond, IAM (with 24-1694)*, which lays out the ongoing work.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

ABSENT: Sait

Prior Year Invoices

16. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1642](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$1,725.65 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Administration In State Travel Account for EZ pass.

The Committee discussed the handout entitled, *Finance - 2025-01-21 Memo Prior Year Invoices, DPW (with 24-1642, 24-1643)*.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

ABSENT: Sait

17. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1643](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$2,063.40 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Buildings Fire Alarm R&M Account for fire alarm equipment programming.

This item was discussed with item #24-1642.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

ABSENT: Sait

18. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1725](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$545.03 using available funds in the Human Resources Professional & Technical Services for reimbursement of expenses relating to the Chief of Police interview process.

Director Anne Gill outlined the miscommunication in paying and

reimbursing a candidate for traveling for the interview process.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

ABSENT: Sait

19. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-0017](#))

Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$15,764.40 using available funds in the Information Technology Maintenance Software Account for voice maintenance, and in the Information Technology Computer Hardware Account for laptop accessories.

Deputy Director David Slonina updated the item is incorrect and will be resubmitted to the Council with the correct invoice total. The prior year invoices are a result from change in price and missing items on invoices.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE WITHDRAWN**

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

ABSENT: Sait

Orders and Resolutions

20. 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.

Recreation Manager Jeremy Vallesio provided an update on what the department hopes to bring to the rink include an after schools' programs, growth for female sports programming, ongoing summer programming for participants aged 5-10, and additional community events. Councilor Scott posed the question as to if the rink had been privatized and Councilor Wilson responded the private organization was not offered the ability to put ice down in the winter. Legislative Liaison Kimberley Hutter added the Director is not available to answer specific questions at this time.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

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

ABSENT: Sait

Referenced Documents:

- Finance 2025-01-21 Updated Armory Draft Master Plan (with 25-0091).pdf
- Finance 2025-01-21 Updated Armory Draft Master Plan Slides (with 25-0091)
- Finance - 2025-01-21 Memo - Sewer Improvement Bond, IAM (with 24-1694)
- Finance - 2025-01-21 Memo Prior Year Invoices, DPW (with 24-1642, 24-1643)