



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:00 p.m. and adjourned at 7:07 p.m. on a Roll Call Vote: 5 in favor (Councilors Pineda Neufeld, Clingan, Kelly, Scott, Wilson), 0 opposed, 0 absent.

Others present:

Michael Potere – Assistant Clerk of Committees; Alan Inacio – Director of Finance & Community Development; Richard Raiche – Director of IAM; Michael Richards – IAM Director of Finance Administration; Julie Spurr-Knight – Finance and Administration Director; Hannah Carrillo – Legislative Liaison; Catherine Lester Salchert – Acting Special Counsel; Emily Sullivan – Climate Change Program Manager, Office of Sustainability and Environment; and Hannah Carrillo – Legislative Liaison.

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 # [23-1122](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of June 27, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

Contracts and Easements

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0779](#)) Requesting approval of a Sidewalk Easement and Maintenance Agreement at 100 Chestnut Street.

Attorney Salchert stated that this Item reflects a typical pedestrian sidewalk easement that would give pedestrians 24-hour access, seven days per week, in perpetuity. The owner of the easement is the property owner, who would also be responsible for maintaining the street.

Chair Wilson noted that Councilor Clingan joined the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Councilor Scott asked if the property owner would also be responsible for keeping the sidewalk panels in good repair and for maintaining the trash removal, and Attorney Salchert confirmed that is correct.

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 # [23-1229](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$57,716.11 from the Veterans Department's Ordinary Maintenance - Veterans Benefits account to the Personal Services - Salaries account to fund the Veterans Project Manager position through the end of FY 2024.

Councilor Scott expressed support for the Item, noting that the city has found similar positions previously created with ARPA funds useful in the past, and correspondingly elected to make them permanent.

Chair Wilson asked if a salary ordinance would be required to reflect this position, and Legislative Liaison Carrillo responded that they did not believe so. Legislative Liaison Carrillo added that this position is currently occupied, and that this funding request is intended to make it permanent.

Councilor Kelly asked who the person currently in this position reports to, and Legislative Liaison responded that Nancy Bacci and Director Carroll are acting in that role on an interim basis until a VA Director can be hired.

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

Prior Year Invoices

- 4. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1241](#)) Requesting approval to pay a prior year invoice totaling \$31.40 using available funds in the Law Department's Ordinary Maintenance Recordings Account for public access to court electronic recordings.

Chair Wilson noted there were no questions or comments regarding this Item.

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

- 5. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1197](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$440 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Repair & Maintenance Vehicles Account for vehicle inspections.

Director Spurr-Knight stated this order invoice was from mid-June 2023, but that it was not received from the vendor until late-July 2023.

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

- 6. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1196](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$13,833.64 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Admin Professional and Technical account for FY 2022 Roca services.

Director Spurr-Knight stated that this is funding for a contractor that runs a jail diversion program, and an audit from the vendor showed that the city had missed payments reflecting this amount in FY 2022, and subsequently sent the city the bill.

Chair Wilson asked if the city still had a current contract with Roca services, and Director Spurr-Knight stated that it does.

Chair Wilson asked if the money outlined in the invoices goes directly to the individual workers or if Roca takes a portion, and Commissioner Lathan replied that the city hired Roca as a vendor and does not have insight into the further breakdown of its rates. Chair Wilson stated that his concern was that the workers receive a fair wage for their services.

Chair Wilson asked for clarification regarding the line item reflecting “Subsidized TEP Hours not included in this month’s invoice, and Director Spurr-Knight stated that the information was not readily available but could be provided to the committee.

Councilor Kelly asked how many workers report for the hours provided on the invoice, and Commissioner Lathan responded that information could be obtained and provided to the committee.

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

- 7. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1266](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$980 using available funds in the Buildings Fire Alarm Repair & Maint Account for Fire Alarm testing and services.

Director Spurr-Knight stated this invoice reflects FY 2023 services for fire alarm repair and maintenance for approximately 40 buildings around the city.

Chair Wilson asked if any of the equipment serviced could have been covered under manufacturer warranties given that some of these buildings are relatively new, and Director Spurr-Knight replied that the department always checks the warranties for items before costs are incurred to replace or repair them.

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

8. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1265](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$4,509.75 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Buildings Interior Maint Account for asbestos testing.
- Director Spurr-Knight stated this invoice reflects asbestos testing that was necessary before a broken pipe in a sewer bay could be repaired.
- Councilor Kelly asked about the reason for the delay in receiving these invoices from the company, and Spurr-Knight stated they were not received from the company until late-June 2023.
- 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
9. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1264](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$6,285 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Buildings Elevator Repair & Maint Account for repairs to the High School elevators.
- Director Spurr-Knight noted that the items that are the subject of this invoice were not covered by any warranties, and then continued that the city changed its elevator vendor last year, and that the invoices from the previous vendor reflected in this Item were not received until after June 30, 2023.
- 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
10. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1238](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$16,929.60 using available funds in the Engineering Repairs & Maintenance - Highways Account for Police details.
- Director Richards explained that these are invoices from vendor K5, which the city employs for street and pavement markings, and that each of their contracts includes \$10,000 for the vendor to use for police details. Director Richards continued that if the vendor does not use the entire \$10,000 for police details, it may request the remainder as a direct refund from the city, and that these invoices reflect those requests.
- Councilor Scott asked about the delay in receiving these invoices, and whether if someone from the city had noticed, the department could have asked the vendor to submit for these refunds earlier. Director Richards confirmed that is correct, and that is why the city did not expect to receive these submissions.
- Councilor Clingan asked about the work done at Blakeley reflected in one of

the invoices should have been covered by the state, and Director Richards replied that the city and state operate in different capacities on the same roadways.

Councilor Kelly asked about the charges to the city for “cruiser fees” and “admin fees” and what they reflect that is different from the charges on other invoices that omit them. Director Richards replied that information could be provided by the police department, which is responsible for issuing the invoices.

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

11. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1240](#)) Requesting authorization to borrow \$6,878,900 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for various sewer improvement projects as part of participation in the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) I/I Local Financial Assistance Program, Phases 9-11.

Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Item 12 (ID # 23-1239).

Director Raiche explained that this is a combination of grants and zero interest loans provided by the state to reduce inflow and infiltration water, commonly referred to as stormwater, that is collected into the system and makes its way to Deer Island. Director Raiche continued that the funds are intended to reduce the flow of that water, but that to access the funding, other projects need to be completed first, which includes the project in Item 12 that funds video surveillance footage of sewer lines and identifies where repairs need to be made. However, for those repairs to be eligible for this funding, they must directly impact stormwater flow, as opposed to general sewage flow. Director Raiche concluded that, once obtained, there is flexibility in how these funds are used, but to get any of it at all, these applications need to be presented to the state.

Chair Wilson asked if this funding would be applied to new projects or if it could be directed towards existing schedules and plans, and Director Raiche replied that it would be in keeping with existing schedules and plans. Chair Wilson expressed support for these Items and noted that constituents are increasingly reporting instances of flooding on their property during heavy rainfall.

Councilor Scott asked about which funds these bonds would apply against, and Director Raiche replied they would be applied against the Sewer Enterprise Fund, and that these bond amounts reflect 75% in nonrepayable grants and 25% in zero percent interest repayments during a 10-year period.

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

12. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1239](#)) Requesting authorization to borrow \$4,269,990 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for the recurring FY 2024 Sewer Improvements program.

Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Item 11 (ID # 23-1240).

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

Appropriations

13. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1203](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$98,053 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Historic Preservation Reserve Fund to the Somerville Museum for restoration of the collection storage area.

Chair Wilson stated that Items 13 (ID # 23-1203), 14 (ID # 23-1202), 15 (ID # 23-1201), and 16 (ID # 23-1146) would be taken together, and waived the full reading of the text of these Items.

Director Inacio stated that this Item reflects funding to repair the museum by waterproofing its basement and storage facilities, and that there has been an increase in costs due to delays in some of the work in the project.

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

14. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1202](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$411,776 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Open Space Reserve Fund to the Public Space and Urban Forestry Division for renovation of Henry Hansen Park.

Chair Wilson stated that Items 13 (ID # 23-1203), 14 (ID # 23-1202), 15 (ID # 23-1201), and 16 (ID # 23-1146) would be taken together, and waived the full reading of the text of these Items.

Director Inacio stated that this request is to help the city use and avoid losing a matching park grant that was received for the Henry Hansen Park, and that the department is hoping to get a bid out for that construction soon.

Councilor Kelly asked how much funding Henry Hansen Park has already received, and Director Inacio replied that although funds had previously been allocated to the park, they had not been used due to delays, so some of

this funding request reflects recycled money. Councilor Kelly asked if the \$400,000 figure is intended to fund actual construction, and Director Inacio stated that most of it would be used for that purpose.

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

- 15. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1201](#))

Requesting approval to appropriate \$97,000 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Open Space Reserve Fund to the Public Space and Urban Forestry Division for renovation of the Brown Schoolyard.

Chair Wilson stated that Items 13 (ID # 23-1203), 14 (ID # 23-1202), 15 (ID # 23-1201), and 16 (ID # 23-1146) would be taken together, and waived the full reading of the text of these Items.

Director Inacio stated this Item reflects work that was funded through ARPA that has run into unexpected delays due to subsurface flaws at the site, including the prior improper application of layers of asphalt and tar.

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

Grant Acceptances

- 16. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1146](#))

Requesting approval to re-purpose \$100,000 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds awarded to the Parks and Urban Forestry Division for the design of Junction Park, to be used for construction.

Chair Wilson stated that Items 13 (ID # 23-1203), 14 (ID # 23-1202), 15 (ID # 23-1201), and 16 (ID # 23-1146) would be taken together, and waived the full reading of the text of these Items.

Director Inacio explained that this Item is not a request for new funding, but rather a reallocation of funds to facilitate the commencement of construction on Junction Park.

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

- 17. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1050](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$48,612.38 grant that requires a match, from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to the Fire Department for the purchase of high visibility jackets.

Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Item 18 (ID # 23-1255).

Chair Wilson noted that this Item will likely see a future request for a match for the grant, and that there were no further questions or comments on this Item.

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

- 18. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1255](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$4,980 grant with no new match required, from Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to the Fire Department for the purchase of emergency response equipment.

Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Item 17 (ID # 23-1050).

Chair Wilson noted there were no questions or comments on this Item.

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

- 19. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1208](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$100,000 grant with no new match required, from MA Department of Housing and Community Development to the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development Administration Division for focus groups and a feasibility study related to the development of a rental registry and energy retrofitting housing.

Chair Wilson stated this Item would be taken together with Item 20 (ID # 23-1207).

Director Inacio explained that this grant reflects the city's successful application for ARPA funding, and that the grants would be co-organized by the department in conjunction with the Department of Sustainability & Environment.

Councilor Kelly asked about a timeline for this feasibility study, and Director Inacio replied these funds have an expiration date of June 30, 2024, so there is an incentive to speed up the process.

Chair Wilson asked if this feasibility study is for the rental registry more generally or for the application of the rental registry in the narrower area of energy retrofitting. Director Inacio replied that Item 19 is more about the creation of a rental registry focused on tenants, landlords, and large property owners in the city, and that Item 20 is more about working with partners to identify affordable housing owners and target retrofit opportunities for

energy efficiency, such as the installation of solar panels and heat pumps, for example.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked if these grants would be interrelated and overlapping, and Director Inacio indicated they likely would be.

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

20. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1207](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$100,000 grant with no new match required, from MA Department of Housing and Community Development to the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development Administration Division for the study of energy efficiency opportunities in affordable housing for low and moderate income households.

Chair Wilson stated this Item would be taken together with Item 19 (ID # 23-1208).

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

21. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1261](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$95,000 grant with no new match required, from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to the Office of Sustainability and Environment for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program 2.0 Planning Grant.

Manager Sullivan explained that this grant is intended to provide communities with support for social resilience work. Specifically, it would fund an implementation committee for climate action planning that would include community liaisons and city staff, and that \$45,000 of this grant would be directed towards a professionally facilitated implementation committee, and \$50,000 would be used to fund a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program seed project. Manager Sullivan concluded by stating that this is an upfront grant with no repayment requirement to the state.

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

Referenced Documents:

- Finance - 2023-09-12 Memo re prior fiscal year invoice (with 23-1241)
- Finance - 2023-09-12 New Position Memo HHS 8.23 (with 23-1229)
- Finance - 2023-09-12 Fire Memo FinCom (with 23-1050, 23-1255)

