

**City of Somerville, Massachusetts**  
**Matters of Business of the City Council**

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

June 3, 2021, 6:00 PM  
 Meeting by Remote Participation  
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*NOTICE: This is NOT the official version of the City Council's minutes. While reasonable efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the data provided, do not rely on this information without first checking with the City Clerk.*

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM by Ward One City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin.

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Arrived</b>
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Kristen Strezo	City Councilor at Large	Present	
William A. White Jr.	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Ward Two City Councilor	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three City Councilor	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six City Councilor	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	

1. Roll Call                      Call of the Roll.  
     212003  
     (ID:24920)

<b>RESULT:              PLACED ON FILE</b>
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**CITATIONS**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**ORDERS, ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS OF MEMBERS**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**COMMUNICATIONS OF THE MAYOR**

2. Mayor's Request              Requesting the appropriation of \$270,088,117 to fund the FY22 General Fund Operating Budget.  
     212004  
     (ID:24913)

Mayor Curtatone presented the city's FY22 General Fund Operating Budget of \$270,088,117, which is 9% over FY21. He reflected on the city's FY21
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financial outlook and the steps taken to provide services with significantly less revenue coming in. In FY21 there has been \$10.3 million in new growth, and it's expected that this trend will continue. No free cash will be used to fund the upcoming budget.

New positions will be added in Mobility, Planning and Zoning, City Council, Inspectional Services, Libraries, Infrastructure and Asset Management, Purchasing, DPW, City Clerk's Office, Information Technology, SomerStat, Constituent Services, Finance and Grants. Also included are 2 positions for the incoming mayor funded in November and December and training for newly elected officials and new department heads.

The Mayor continued by noting that the proposed budget includes the following:

- a proposed 4% increase for non-union staff.
- a \$1 million investment in the Racial and Social Justice Office,
- \$700,000 in new investments to support equity work,
- \$1.6 million in new school investments for equity,
- \$60 million from ARPA for social and economic recovery initiatives and to invest in addressing inequities. Two positions will be created and funded to oversee how the ARPA funds are utilized. The city will need to work to fund ways to fund these programs after the ARPA funding ceases.

Councilor Rossetti asked if the FY21 budget was underspent by the amount of \$17 million and Finance Director Ed Bean replied that the exact figure won't be available until the close of FY21 and approval of free cash by the state, but he acknowledged there would be a surplus. Noting that the city will be receiving approximately \$60 million dollars in ARPA funds, Councilor Rossetti expressed her concern about coupling a 9% increase in the proposed budget with increases in water and sewer rates. She pointed out that this will be the year that homeowners feel the pain of the cost of the new high school. Mayor Curtatone responded that ARPA funds are not reflected in the budget, except for the 2 staff positions to oversee those funds. He said he would not support back-filling revenue shortfalls. He wants to use ARPA funds (about \$31 million/year for 2 years) to deliver services, not lower taxes. Mr. Bean said the funds are a grant used at the discretion of the Executive Department and would be used for community needs. The funds must be obligated by 2024 and spent by 2026. The Mayor explained the city wants to leverage the funds to take advantage of any other programs, e.g., matching funds, that might be available.

The Mayor noted that \$25,000 has been added to the Council's budget for legal services, but details still need to be worked out. President McLaughlin said he prefers allowing the Council to retain outside counsel at its discretion, not solely for current issues.

**RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**  
**FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee**

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| 3. Mayor's Request 212005 (ID:24915) | Requesting to appropriate or reserve \$3,196,123 in estimated FY22 CPA revenue for CPA projects and expenses.   |
|                                      | <p>Councilor Scott moved to waive the readings of items 3-14 and refer them to the Finance Committee.</p> <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p> |
| 4. Mayor's Request 212006 (ID:24914) | Requesting the approval of FY22 expenditure limitations for departmental Revolving Funds.   |
|                                      | <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p>   |
| 5. Mayor's Request 212007 (ID:24912) | Requesting a transfer of \$1,714 from the Salary Contingency Salaries Account to the Workers Compensation Personal Services Account to correct a year end deficit.                                    |
|                                      | <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p>   |

**COMMUNICATIONS OF CITY OFFICERS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS**

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| 6. Mayor's Request 212008 (ID:24921) | Requesting the adoption of MGL Chapter 40 Section 13A to establish a Workers Compensation Insurance Fund.                        |
|                                      | <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p>                                      |
| 7. Mayor's Request 212009 (ID:24924) | Requesting the adoption of MGL Chapter 40 Section 13C to establish a Workers Compensation Claims Reserve Fund.                   |
|                                      | <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p>                                      |
| 8. Mayor's Request 212010 (ID:24922) | Requesting the appropriation of \$435,000 to the Workers Compensation Insurance Fund to pay Workers Compensation Claims in FY22. |
|                                      | <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p>                                      |

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| <p>9. Mayor's Request 212011 (ID:24923)</p>  | <p>Requesting the appropriation of \$300,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Workers Compensation Insurance Fund in order to fund Workers Compensation Claims and Payments in FY22.</p>  |
| <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b><br/><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p> |  |
| <p>10. Mayor's Request 212012 (ID:24928)</p>   | <p>Requesting an appropriation of \$810,262 to fund the FY22 Veterans Memorial &amp; Founders Ice Rink Enterprise Fund Budget.</p>   |
| <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b><br/><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p> |  |
| <p>11. Mayor's Request 212013 (ID:24925)</p>   | <p>Requesting the appropriation of \$521,008 to fund the FY22 Kennedy School Pool Enterprise Fund Budget.</p>  |
| <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b><br/><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p> |  |
| <p>12. Mayor's Request 212014 (ID:24927)</p>   | <p>Requesting the appropriation of \$164,976 from the Kennedy School Pool Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings Account to subsidize the FY22 Kennedy School Pool Enterprise Fund Budget.</p>  |
| <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b><br/><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p> |  |
| <p>13. Mayor's Request 212015 (ID:24929)</p>   | <p>Requesting the appropriation of \$156,500 to fund the FY22 Dilboy Field Enterprise Fund Budget.</p>   |
| <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b><br/><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p> |  |
| <p>14. Mayor's Request 212016 (ID:24942)</p>   | <p>Requesting the appropriation of \$76,500 from the Dilboy Field Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings Account to subsidize the FY22 Dilboy Field Enterprise Fund Budget.</p>   |
| <p><b>RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION</b><br/><b>FOLLOWUP:</b> Finance Committee</p> |  |
| <p>15. Officer's Communication 212017 (ID:24947)</p>                                     | <p>School Committee requesting the appropriation of \$84,267,002 to fund the FY22 School Committee Budget.</p> <p>Councilor Davis was recused from this item.<br/>School Committee Chair Andre Green opened discussion, and Superintendent Mary Skipper and Finance Director Fran Gorski presented the FY22 School Department budget, which is 8.13% higher than the FY21 budget. It includes:</p> |

- Diversifying curricular materials, anti-racism training and curriculum, 2nd Step/Restorative Justice/Responsive, expanding Becoming a Man and Build initiatives, increasing Enroot and High School tutoring, funding the Community Design Lab and Middle Grades Robotics League, and continuing partnerships to support project-based learning.
- Securing two new Out-of-School Time Administrators to coordinate community-based afterschool and summer programs.
- Renewing the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative Grant/Somerville Partnership for Young Children.
- Reorganizing MLE and expanding MLE PAC, supporting SLIFE, building trauma-informed practices, and focusing on ESL Instruction: equity, access, and inclusion.
- Supporting teaching and learning through a social-emotional and wellness lens.
- Implementing a new Human Resources Information System.

22 new FTEs are not funded from the general operating budget, and 13.7 new FTEs are. Salaries increase \$5,933,571 over FY21, and that includes the School Nurses.

Councilor Strezo asked about teacher burnout and Superintendent Skipper spoke of taking pressure off teachers this summer and helping them to return to a safe, supportive workplace in the fall. Councilor White commented that in 2002 there were 1,000 more students and Superintendent Skipper said schools are on an upward trend and they will have a better sense in the fall. She said a bus pass program will begin with a study to determine need, then move to the assignment phase. Currently students aren't bussed except for special programs. Councilor Scott inquired about capacity to add students and Superintendent Skipper replied that the schools are pretty full but there is capacity. Chair Green said the School Committee needs more direct oversight of the school buildings going forward. Councilor Scott asked about gender neutral facilities at the new high school and Chair Green said the rush to make the building occupiable stalled this initiative and it should improve by the fall. Councilor Scott said this matter is being passed around and he wonders where the buck stops. Superintendent Skipper said once school is out, they can speak to interested students and follow up with Project Manager Rich Raiche.

Councilor Scott closed the meeting by noting that budget information may be found at [www.somervillema.gov/fy22budget](http://www.somervillema.gov/fy22budget).

**RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**

**FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee**

## LATE ITEMS

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was Adjourned at 9:25 PM.