

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Alexandra Thorn [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2026 3:25 PM  
**To:** Ben Wheeler  
**Cc:** JT Scott; Emily Hardt; [REDACTED] Jon Link; Public Comments  
**Subject:** please defer Finance Committee item (26-0378)

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Dear Finance Chair Ben Wheeler and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Alexandra Thorn and I'm a Somerville resident living in Ward 5 [REDACTED]

I am writing to request that the finance committee defer discussion of the Mayor's request to accept and expend a \$231,635 grant for body-worn police cameras until after the body-worn cameras proposal has been reviewed by Legislative Matters. The issue will be discussed by Legislative Matters at the meeting on April 28th, including a presentation by Somerville residents who would like to ensure that, if deployed, body-worn cameras will be best used for police accountability.

Here are three specific pieces of information that I believe require additional review before the Finance Committee makes its decision:

- Release of the full information on Somerville's body-worn camera policy to the public, including documents referred to in the grant application but not included in the Finance Committee agenda item (26-0378) so that there is time for public review
- What policies will need to be in place in order to ensure that the cameras are used for police accountability
- What future costs Somerville may be on the hook for in terms of training, personnel, and upkeep if we accept and expend this grant

We know from deployment of body cameras in other municipalities that even where the intention of the cameras has been police accountability, police are often the ones controlling how and when cameras are used, and there are often significant barriers to the community being able to access the footage to review police behavior. Care must be taken to ensure that the cameras provide the intended benefits, and many of these considerations may influence ongoing costs to the city.

We also know from previous UASI grants that the acceptance of "free money" can often end up costing Somerville much more in the long run.

This consideration is further complicated by the open question of whether future DHS grants to help fund the body cameras program might be conditional on Somerville law enforcement collaborating with ICE. I believe that the Finance Committee will make the best-informed choice about this grant after review by Legislative Matters.

Thank you for your attention,  
Alexandra Thorn

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Daniel Wong [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2026 4:54 PM  
**To:** Public Comments; Ben Wheeler; Emily Hardt [REDACTED]; Jon Link; Kristen Strezo  
**Subject:** Postpone discussing buying body-cams

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Dear Finance Chair Ben Wheeler and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Daniel Wong, and I live in Ward 2.

I respectfully ask the Finance Committee to defer discussion of the [Mayor's request 26-0378](#) – to accept and expend a \$231,635 grant for body-worn police cameras until after Legislative Matters Committee finalizes policies regarding body-worn cameras.

The city should have policies regarding body-worn camera's before even considering buying them. Such policies should prioritize enabling the public and city to use footage for police accountability, while protecting the privacy of constituents who happen to be recorded. This includes making it easy for constituents to request footage, rapid response to requests, rapid access to the requested footage, and clear reasons why footage may be withheld, with high standards for doing so.

Additionally, the finance committee should create 10-year estimates of using body-cameras, such as as training, additional personnel, increased police salaries, ongoing maintenance, and processing more constituent requests for documents to appropriately decide on this grant.

Thank you for your consideration,

Daniel Wong