



# City of Somerville, Massachusetts

## City Council Finance Committee

### Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, March 21, 2023**

**6:00 PM**

This meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:00 p.m. and adjourned at 8:37 p.m. on a Roll Call Vote: 5 in favor (Councilors Pineda Neufeld, Clingan, Scott, Wilson), 0 opposed, 1 absent (Councilor Kelly).

Others present:

Michael Potere – Assistant Clerk of Committees; Edward Bean – Finance Director; Michael Mastrobuoni – Budget Director; Melissa Woods – Director of Capital Projects; Alan Inacio – Senior Accountant (OSPCD); Hannah Carrillo – Legislative Liaison, Mayor’s Office; Catherine Lester Salchert – Acting Special Counsel, Law Office; Melissa Woods – Director of Capital Projects, Capital Projects and Planning; David Goodridge – Chief Information Officer, Information Technology; Gregory Jenkins – Director of the Arts Council; Brad Rawson – Director of Transportation & Infrastructure (OSPCD); Jill Lathan – DPW Commissioner; Eric Weisman – Director of Operations (DPW); and Waleska Alves – Recruitment Manager.

#### Roll Call

**Present:** Chairperson Jake Wilson, Vice Chair Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, Jesse Clingan and Judy Pineda Neufeld  
**Absent:** Charlotte Kelly

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-0341](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of March 7, 2023.

**RESULT:** ACCEPTED  
**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld  
**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

#### Appropriations

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0180](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$400,000 from the Community Preservation Act Fund for the construction of Junction Park.

Chair Wilson stated that Items 2 (ID # 23-0180), 3 (ID # 23-0179), 4 (ID # 23-0177), 5 (ID # 23-0176), 6 (ID # 23-0312), and 7 (ID # 23-0310) are requests for appropriations of Community Preservation Act funds and would be taken together.

Alan Inacio, Senior Accountant (OSPCD), stated that these are great projects that have been previously approved by the committee. Chair Wilson indicated that there were no further questions from the committee.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld  
**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0179](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$350,000 from the Community Preservation Act Fund for the construction of Henry Hansen Park.

Chair Wilson stated that Items 2 (ID # 23-0180), 3 (ID # 23-0179), 4 (ID # 23-0177), 5 (ID # 23-0176), 6 (ID # 23-0312), and 7 (ID # 23-0310) are requests for appropriations of Community Preservation Act funds and would be taken together.

Alan Inacio, Senior Accountant (OSPCD), stated that these are great projects that have been previously approved by the committee. Chair Wilson indicated that there were no further questions from the committee.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld  
**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

4. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0177](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$250,000 from the Community Preservation Act Fund to the Mystic River Watershed Association to design a shared use community path at Blessing of the Bay Park.

Chair Wilson stated that Items 2 (ID # 23-0180), 3 (ID # 23-0179), 4 (ID # 23-0177), 5 (ID # 23-0176), 6 (ID # 23-0312), and 7 (ID # 23-0310) are requests for appropriations of Community Preservation Act funds and would be taken together.

Alan Inacio, Senior Accountant (OSPCD), stated that these are great projects that have been previously approved by the committee. Chair Wilson indicated that there were no further questions from the committee.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**  
**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld  
**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

5. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0176](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$100,000 from the Community Preservation Act Fund for design of a park at 217 Somerville Ave.

Chair Wilson stated that Items 2 (ID # 23-0180), 3 (ID # 23-0179), 4 (ID # 23-0177), 5 (ID # 23-0176), 6 (ID # 23-0312), and 7 (ID # 23-0310) are

requests for appropriations of Community Preservation Act funds and would be taken together.

Alan Inacio, Senior Accountant (OSPCD), stated that these are great projects that have been previously approved by the committee. Chair Wilson indicated that there were no further questions from the committee.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

6. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0312](#))

Requesting the appropriation of \$425,000 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund to the Somerville Hispanic Association for community development for continued historic preservation of Grace Baptist Church.

Chair Wilson stated that Items 2 (ID # 23-0180), 3 (ID # 23-0179), 4 (ID # 23-0177), 5 (ID # 23-0176), 6 (ID # 23-0312), and 7 (ID # 23-0310) are requests for appropriations of Community Preservation Act funds and would be taken together.

Alan Inacio, Senior Accountant (OSPCD), stated that these are great projects that have been previously approved by the committee. Chair Wilson indicated that there were no further questions from the committee.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

7. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0310](#))

Requesting the appropriation of \$151,000 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund to the Somerville Museum for collections conservation.

Chair Wilson stated that Items 2 (ID # 23-0180), 3 (ID # 23-0179), 4 (ID # 23-0177), 5 (ID # 23-0176), 6 (ID # 23-0312), and 7 (ID # 23-0310) are requests for appropriations of Community Preservation Act funds and would be taken together.

Alan Inacio, Senior Accountant (OSPCD), stated that these are great projects that have been previously approved by the committee. Chair Wilson indicated that there were no further questions from the committee.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

8. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0325](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$827,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Capital Stabilization Fund for site preparation, construction, and furnishing of a safe consumption site.
- Melissa Woods, Director of Capital Projects, Capital Projects and Planning, stated that this request was related to the installation of a modular safe consumption site.
- Councilor Scott asked about the design services being the predominant outlay for this request.
- Director Woods stated that a location has not yet been selected, but the one chosen would need to be flat and have access to the city's utility and sewer system. Director Woods added that the design services are for the drawings that will aid in the installation of the utility connections, but that the city's engineering department would not be involved with drawing those.
- Councilor Scott asked about the timeline for the installation of the facility, and Director Woods indicated that it was a cross-departmental group that was involved in the planned; Legislative Liaison Hannah Carrillo added that it would be installed as soon as possible, but not before an informed and thoughtful discussion among the cross-departmental group regarding the location and other logistics.
- Chair Wilson noted that the preference would be for a brick-and-mortar location, but that the urgency for this installation merits a modular approach at this stage.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

### Contracts & Easements

9. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0332](#)) Requesting approval of a grant of easement and maintenance agreement for BRE-BMR Assembly I Innovation LLC and BRE-BMR Middlesex LLC.
- Catherine Lester Salchert, Acting Special Counsel, Law Office, stated that the developer requires an easement to create sidewalks, that some of the sidewalks will be open to the public but will be on the developer's property, that the easement would also apply to an area where the city will have access to a utility area for maintenance, and that the sidewalk itself would be five feet in width.
- Chair Wilson stated that the city is agreeing to maintain those public ways, including the bike lanes on Fully Street and Middlesex Ave, but noted that there is a lack of markings on the public ways currently at issue and requested that the city look into adding those markings as soon as possible.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b><u>RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED</u></b>
<b>AYE:</b>	Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
<b>ABSENT:</b>	City Councilor At Large Kelly

### Transfers

10. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0311](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$20,125 from the Information Technology Department Salaries Account to the Information Technology Department Maintenance Software Account to procure and standardize on the Zoom platform for remote meetings.

David Goodridge, Chief Information Officer, Information Technology, stated that these funds are to acquire a license to employ the Zoom webinar platform for official city business and public meetings. Chair Wilson and Councilor Clingan expressed strong support for the change to the Zoom platform.

Councilor Clingan asked about how the individual licensing would work for city employees who will require access to the platform. Director Goodridge stated that the current plan is to mirror the licensing for the existing GoToWebinar platform and issue licenses based on what is currently in place, and added that the current acquisition will be for 70 licenses. Councilor Scott expressed concern that there would be sufficient licenses, and then asked about how long the GoToWebinar licenses would last because they host meetings with that platform for constituent services that would need to be cancelled or rescheduled if access to that platform is withdrawn. Director Goodridge responded that the GoToWebinar license would last through September.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked if the license would include closed-captioning and translation features, and Director Goodridge indicated that they are. Legislative Liaison Carrillo added that the license would include translation for approximately four languages, and that closed-captioning will be available as well. Councilor Scott asked if the translation would be in real-time, and Chair Wilson indicated that they would be.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked if there was a maximum capacity for attendees of the Zoom meetings in this license, and Director Goodridge stated that he believes it is at least 500 participants.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked about the timeline for the rollout of the Zoom platform, and Director Goodridge responded that the goal is for an early- to mid-April rollout. Chair Wilson stated that the city clerks should have sufficient time to prepare to implement the software to run meetings like this.

Councilor Scott asked about the archival of existing videos of committee meetings, and Director Goodridge indicated that the city is working with the Communications Department to ensure those recordings are preserved and publicly available after the platform switch.

Chair Wilson asked if the quality of the video broadcast would be improved, particularly with regard to meetings conducted in the City Council chamber, and Director Goodridge indicated that it would be a more efficiently run platform.

Councilor Clingan asked if the Zoom platform had a feature to automatically upload the recordings of the committee meetings to the city’s website shortly after the conclusion of the meeting, and Director Goodridge responded that he was not sure of the answer to that question.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

- 11. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0243](#))

Requesting approval of a transfer of \$306.05 from the IAM-Engineering Personal Services-Overtime Account to the Department of Public Works Custodians Personal Services-Overtime Account for DPW staff time related to Engineering work.

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

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

Lease Agreements

- 12. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0268](#))

Requesting approval of a three-year extension to the lease with BwB-Square LLC for Nibble Community Kitchen.

Gregory Jenkins, Director of the Arts Council, indicated that this was for a three-year extension of an existing lease, with an increase in cost of 10% for the first year and an increase of 5% for the second and third years. Chair Wilson asked Director Jenkins to discuss the benefits of the Nibble Community Kitchen, who responded that it benefits the arts community and the immigrant community in the city by providing people with opportunities to learn how to cook and develop incubator kitchens that can lead residents to establish their own restaurants. Director Jenkins added that the project is mostly self-sufficient and that there is very little cost to the taxpayer.

Councilor Scott expressed support for the item.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

Grant Acceptances

- 13. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0195](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$67,050 grant with no new match required, from the Mass Cultural Council to the Arts Council for unrestricted operational support.

Director Jenkins indicated that this was among the last of the state’s COVID Recovery grants, and indicated that the funds were unrestricted but that they will likely be used to provide for a studio/rehearsal space for the city’s residents. Councilor Scott expressed support for the item, and reiterated the need for public rehearsal space for the city’s artistic and creative communities.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

- 14. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0198](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$100,000 grant with no new match required, from the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation to the Mobility Division for traffic engineering design and related implementation at the intersection of Alewife Brook Parkway and Broadway.

Brad Rawson, Director of Transportation & Infrastructure (OSPCD), indicated that this grant was to fund planning and design efforts at a high-crash area at the intersection of Route 16 and Broadway, and that the work will take place during the Fall 2023 and run through Spring 2024.

Chair Wilson and Councilor Pineda Neufeld expressed strong support for the item.

Councilor Clingan asked about the relationship between this project and the project regarding Route 38 at Shore Drive. Director Rawson clarified that this grant is for design and study work, and that it is similar in structure to the project at Route 38 and Shore Drive, and that the construction for the latter is expected to begin this year.

Chair Wilson added that this project refers to Route 16 is Alewife Brook Parkway, and that is why it is why it is DCR land and is being handled by that department as opposed to the Massachusetts Department of

Transportation. Chair Wilson expressed support for the item and requested consideration of dedicated left-turn lanes at that intersection as a way to make it safer, and then asked Director Rawson if there were any additional considerations being explored. Director Rawson stated that the current plan is to study the installation of dedicated bus lanes, as well as pedestrian refuges and crossing islands.

**RESULT:** RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

- 15. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0190](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$79,500 grant with no new match required, from the MA Executive Office of Public Safety to the Police Department for staffing costs.

Legislative Liaison Carrillo stated that a recent staff departure required tabling this item for discussion on a future date.

Councilor Scott stated two questions for the record: (1) how many staff hours were spent on traffic management for the GLX project construction site; (2) what requirements have to be factually correct in grant applications, because the grant application reviewed appears to cover positions that do not actually exist?

**RESULT:** KEPT IN COMMITTEE

- 16. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0184](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$17,821.96 grant with no new match required, from the MA Department of Fire Services to the Fire Department for the purchase of ballistic vests, helmets and medical equipment.

Chair Wilson indicated that items 16 (ID # 23-0184), 17 (ID # 23-0315), 18 (ID # 23-0297), and 19 (ID # 23-0296) would be taken together, and noted that there were no questions or comments on these items.

**RESULT:** RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

- 17. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0315](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$5,234.59 grant with no new match required, from the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to the Fire Department for the purchase of protective equipment to support active threat preparedness initiatives.

Chair Wilson indicated that items 16 (ID # 23-0184), 17 (ID # 23-0315), 18 (ID # 23-0297), and 19 (ID # 23-0296) would be taken together, and noted



that there were no questions or comments on these items.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

18. Mayor's Request  
(ID # [23-0297](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$2,982.40 grant with no new match required, from the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to the Fire Department for equipment to develop emergency operations capacity.

Chair Wilson indicated that items 16 (ID # 23-0184), 17 (ID # 23-0315), 18 (ID # 23-0297), and 19 (ID # 23-0296) would be taken together, and noted that there were no questions or comments on these items.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

19. Mayor's Request  
(ID # [23-0296](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$5,761.47 grant with no new match required, from the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to the Fire Department for equipment to develop emergency operations capacity.

Chair Wilson indicated that items 16 (ID # 23-0184), 17 (ID # 23-0315), 18 (ID # 23-0297), and 19 (ID # 23-0296) would be taken together, and noted that there were no questions or comments on these items.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

Prior Year Invoices

20. Mayor's Request  
(ID # [23-0301](#))

Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$65,686.35 using available funds various Public Works Ordinary Maintenance accounts for various services.

Jill Lathan, DPW Commissioner, explained that these outstanding invoices were discovered as part of the DPW's usual due diligence to make sure its vendors are being paid appropriately and in accordance with their related contracts. Commissioner Lathan reiterated some of the expenses that are listed on the attached file, "Invoices for CC Approval List 3-1-23.pdf," and added that once the DPW is fully staffed there would be fewer instances of late payments on invoices like these.

Councilor Scott asked about the Eversource invoices regarding 238 Somerville Ave, and Eric Weisman, Director of Operations (DPW), indicated that it is for an irrigation cabinet across from that address.

Councilor Scott asked about the LAN-TEL invoice for camera coverage for emergency elections voting, and Director Weisman responded that it was an invoice for a camera that was installed to monitor the security of election ballots at their storage location.

Councilor Scott about an invoice for Winterberry Landscaping from 2020, and Commissioner Lathan responded that it was for irrigation work at Lincoln Park.

Councilor Scott asked about the invoices from Dagle Electrical, and specifically why the work was performed by a third-party at \$100 per hour as opposed to electricians employed by the city at \$30 or \$35 per hour. Director Weisman responded that the city’s vacancies were open at that point, but that the city has since hired a new electrician and the expectation is that more work will be done by city employees moving forward. Councilor Scott asked for an accounting of what Dagle billed the city in 2022 and Director Weisman said that number would be provided.

**RESULT:** RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

- 21. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0313](#))

Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$480 using available funds in the Engineering Capital Outlay Engineering/Architecture Account for the FY22 Pavement & Sidewalk Assessment.

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

**RESULT:** RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

- 22. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0290](#))

Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$289.68 using available funds in the Elections Department Office Supplies Account for index dividers, ledger paper, and water.

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

**RESULT:** RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

### Communications

23. Officer's  
Communication  
(ID # [23-0283](#))

Finance Director conveying the FY 2023 Mid-Year Financial Report in accordance with Section 2-48 of the Code of Ordinances.

Finance Director Edward Bean and Recruitment Manager Waleska Alves presented a series of slides regarding the Mid-Year Fiscal Report.

Councilor Scott asked about the school personal services turnback, and Director Bean confirmed that it was \$174,629. Councilor Scott indicated that the general city government has not been filling its vacant positions, and asked if it was correct that the turnback does not account for money that was transferred from personal services lines to OEN loans during the year to pay for professional and technical services contracts. Director Bean confirmed that was correct. Councilor Scott asked how much was actually underspent on personal services in 2022, and Director Bean indicated that he would have to look into that separately.

Councilor Scott asked about the 40% budget deficit for snow removal and noted that it has been a historically low snow year. Budget Director Michael Mastrobuoni responded that the cost of snow removal is not necessarily based on how much snow falls, but rather on when it falls, and explained that snow removal on weekends and overnight is more expensive than daytime removal during the week.

Councilor Scott asked about the \$7 million overrun on building permit revenue this year and asked why the budget only calls for \$8.5 million, and Director Bean responded that building permit revenue fluctuates and the conservative budget estimate is to avoid creating a structural deficit in the budget. Director Bean continued that the excess revenue is then transferred to free cash. Chair Wilson asked for clarification regarding the underbudgeting of the building permit revenue, and for confirmation that the figure is intentionally set at a conservative point to protect against downward fluctuations in the future. Director Bean confirmed that understanding as correct, and reiterated that the building permit revenue can be highly variable.

Councilor Scott about the short-term borrowing rate of 3% and indicated that it was a higher figure than it had been in the past. Director Bean replied that the previous federal interest rates of 1% or less were historically low, and the current higher rate of 3% will make the city more conservative regarding borrowing on that line of credit. Director Bean also reiterated that

the surplus in building permit revenue could be used in lieu of short-term credit while the interest rate is at the unattractive 3% rate.

Councilor Scott asked about recruitment rates and whether the figures discussed differentiated between union and non-union positions. Manager Alves responded that the data was not broken down in that manner but that the information could be produced if desired.

Councilor Scott asked about vacant positions for DPW and ISD that have been vacant for multiple years and have not been advertised, and Manager Alves responded that there are three different hiring processes for the city: civil service hiring, external hiring, and the union bid process. Manager Alves continued that many of the DPW positions are union and require a longer process that includes advertisement within the union prior to public advertisement, for example. Manager Alves also indicated that the data presented for this item was based on external advertisement and hiring, not union hiring. Manager Alves continued that an applicant tracking system has recently been implemented and will strengthen the data moving forward.

Councilor Scott asked about the vacant positions labeled “specialty” and noted that most of them are union positions, and asked if the city had more difficulty filling union jobs. Manager Alves replied that the data did not intentionally distinguish between union and non-union jobs, and that instead focused on positions that were open for more than 150 days. Manager Alves added that some positions, like crossing guards, are difficult to fill because of the specialized hours, for example.

Chair Wilson asked about the city’s investment income and whether the amount of free cash impacts that amount because interest rates are currently going up. Director Bean responded that free cash is a factor, and that the city needs to be careful in this area because it cannot make money on borrowing due to federal arbitrage requirements.

Chair Wilson commented about the state aid the city receives, indicating that the austerity budget mode through which the state provides funding to municipalities is offensive and harmful to Somerville residents, particularly in light of the \$3 billion the state returned to taxpayers last year. Director Bean replied that state aid correspondingly has only a small impact on the city’s budget, but that there may be changes under the new administration.

Councilor Scott mentioned about the city’s personal services budget and the figure that 58.3% of it had been used year-to-date, and asked if that figure includes overtime, the fire department, E911, and the police departments. Director Bean responded that overtime and union benefits get paid out throughout the year.

Councilor Scott noted the lag in spending and personal services than Racial

and Social Justice, and requested an update on that figure and the reasons behind that lag.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE PLACED ON FILE**

**AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

**ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Kelly

Referenced Documents:

- Finance 2023-03-21 Response (with 23-0176, 23-0177, 23-0179, 23-0180, 23-0310, 23-0312)
- Finance 2023-03-21 Responses (with 23-0184, 23-0926, 23-0927, 23-0315)
- Finance 2023-03-21 Response (with 23-0243)
- Finance 2023-03-21 Response (with 23-0290)
- Finance 2023-03-21 Response (with 23-0313)
- Finance 2023-03-21 FY23 Mid Fiscal March 21 (with 23-2083)
- Finance 2023-03-21 FY24 Debt Service Breakdown (with 23-2083)
- Finance 2023-03-21 YTD Revenue budget report as of 3.19.23 (with 23-2083)
- Finance 2023-03-21 Feb 23 YTD Revenue budget report (with 23-2083)
- Finance 2023-03-21 Feb 23 YTD Expense budget report (with 23-2083)
- Finance 2023-03-21 School Gen Fund Feb 23 YTD budget (with 23-2083)