



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

October 12, 2021
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Vice Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	City Councilor at Large	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Present	

Others present: Hannah Carrillo-Mayor's Office, Ed Bean-Auditor/Finance, Rich Raiche-IAM, Charles Breen-Somerville Fire, Tom Galligani-OSCPD, Frank Golden-Assessing, Danielle Palazzo-DPW, Jill Lathan-DPW, and Suzanne Rinfret-Traffic & Parking,

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chairperson Scott and adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

Approval of the September 21, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Accessibility Revenues Update

212400: That the Director of Finance and the Treasurer create a separate revenue account for deposit of all funds received from handicapped parking violations, and allocate said funds to the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, as authorized under MGL.

Mr. Bean stated this was discussed at the last committee meeting and will be working with Ms. Rinfret and staff to journalize the funds. They will start this process going forward on future funds from tickets. Mr. Bean estimates funds of around \$70,000 a year. Ms. Rinfret will pull out all the HP tickets that were paid to pull together the numbers.

Councilor Ballantyne asked if there are any restrictions on how the funds can be used. Mr. Bean stated there are no written for guidance from the state. The language is pretty broad and states the funds shall be used solely for persons with disabilities.

Chair Scott asked about the revolving funds and how the funds will be released. Mr. Bean stated that someone would have to work with the commission and the ADA coordinator to recommend how the funds are to be used, according to the needs of the city.

Ms. Carrillo stated they have not determined how this will operate yet.

Councilor White read language stating that the recommendation of commissioner of disabilities, the mayor and city council to approve release of the funds. The statute also requires the city auditor to report on the funds. Councilor White would like the city solicitor to review the agreement for a better understanding of the statute and the City Council's role in the process.

Ms. Carrillo will get a copy of Section 22G to the city solicitor's office to review the city councilors' role. Chair Scott would like written opinion from the city solicitor's office.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Wage Theft Advisory Committee

212478: That the administration assign staff to support the Wage Theft Advisory Committee.

Ms. Carrillo stated there would be some clarification on duties for the committee. She also stated there needs to be a support person for this role. Chair Scott suggested a part time staff member be appropriated to support this committee.

Ms. Carrillo stated there is no one with capacity to take this on at this time. It should be governed by input from the committee.

Councilor Rossetti stated that the City of Somerville is the second in the Commonwealth to have this committee. She supports for someone from purchasing department to be involved with this committee as a staff liaison.

Mr. Bean stated the purchasing department is down two staff people right now and really stressed.

Chair Scott will get some clarity of the ask from Councilor Clingan and let him know about the limited staff.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Assessor's Request for Outside Counsel

212450: Chief Assessor requesting approval to retain outside legal counsel for Appellate Tax Board Settlement matters.

Mr. Golden stated that prior to his hiring, there was an in-house attorney for the city. Mr. Golden has seen the valuable to have an expert real estate attorney to provide expert advice with such areas as Assembly Row.

Mr. Golden would like to have an attorney on retainer and for other issues needing expert attorneys to navigate channels.

Councilor Rossetti questioned who will be paying the invoices for the attorney's work. Mr. Golden stated there is a line item in his budget for \$20,000 that he has not touched yet. The attorney is preparing an invoice.

Councilor White stated it makes sense to have representation. In house handles all the residential evaluations and the experts would handle more complex real estate issues.

RESULT:

APPROVED

DPW Invoices

212418: Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$275,751.91 using available FY22 funds within various DPW accounts.

Ms. Lathan stated she has been overhauling DPW to unravel invoices and to improve other areas. She presently has only one vacancy to fill. Additionally, she is getting the department up to speed with training. Ms. Lathan stated that vendors are also short staffed and have been slow to respond to requesting invoices. Additionally, some contracts have expired and had to renew contracts and/or go out to bid for contracts. They will continue to be in catch up mood with vendors. Ms. Palazzo is acting director for A&F and the new director will be starting soon. Ms. Palazzo will help transition him into new role.

It was stated that there are some EZpass invoices that came in today from last year.

Chair Scott asked questions about the snow invoices from 2020. Ms. Palazzo stated the invoices received, did not have the correct contract pricing and were returned to be corrected.

Mr. Bean stated that departments are responsible for working with their vendor to make sure the city is billed correctly. Ms. Lathan stated they have created a snow template that all vendors for snow will have to fill out. This template should make invoicing easier in the future.

Councilor White asked where the money will come from to pay the snow invoices. Ms. Lathan stated she will take the funds out of the division that they belong to making sure the invoices are paid; in the case of the Snow fund it cannot come from there, so funds will need to be drawn from other divisions. Ms. Lathan will work with the finance department to find out how to pay some of these invoices. Ms. Lathan stated they may need to come back to the council for supplemental funds if this impairs their operational needs in 2022.

Chair Scott asked about B&G on past due gas bills for \$83k, for three plus months. Ms. Palazzo stated due to lack in staffing, the bills had not been paid for several months and exceeded the purchase order amount. Chair Scott asked if this has happened in the past; noted that if this had been caught earlier the PO could have simply been amended administratively. Ms. Lathan will look into this matter to see if this is a trend. Chair Scott also asked about the fleet division direct services for repairs and prior asset management difficulties. Ms. Lathan stated that Asset Management has been doing a wonderful job overseeing the fleet division and how they are handling inventory.

Councilor Rossetti asked about other invoices needing to be paid in 2022 and asked if the city had already paid other invoices. Ms. Lathan stated she is working with DPW as a total to redesign and revamp management philosophy and staff.

Councilor Rossetti would like to know the total amount of prior year invoices discovered approved so far. Ms. Lathan will get the total amount of invoices approved to date to send to Councilor Rossetti and committee. Councilor Rossetti also asked how many employees who are no longer with DPW vs. a year ago. Ms. Lathan will send a document to the committee with the number of employees vs. last year. Councilor Rossetti would also like to know which staff has left or relocated to other positions under Ms. Lathan's leadership in addition to the vacancy report.

RESULT:

APPROVED

Public Safety Building

212362: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$725,000 in a bond for Construction Manager at-Risk services for the pre-construction phase of the Public Safety Building .

Mr. Raiche presented slides on this request. This is for the 90 Washington Street for Public Safety Building with the councilor approving the taking of the property. The property needs construction and has a number of issues. Mr. Raiche have gone through the initial planning with an initial cost estimate. They have a building committee that was used for the high school building and thought it to useful for the public safety building. There is a rep from the neighborhood and city councilor with a number of design priorities. Mr. Raiche talked about the footprint of building to include fleet parking. He wants this building to be the most sustainable building in city of Somerville's arsenal.

Mr. Raiche would like to initiate the CM@R selection process in November. They would only bring onboard for preconstruction services and then have them price out a Guaranteed Maximum Price.

Councilor White asked about the increase in scope and what the perceived cost would be for this request. Mr. Raiche stated the cost is higher than on the CIP from 2019 estimated then at \$51M. There has been a general escalation by COVID 19 and a more complex project. Mr. Raiche does not have the numbers right now and deep in the process for value engineering.

Councilor White asked Chief Breen if he believes the company in Union Square will be sufficient or additional company in this station to support Boynton Yards and other areas.

Chief Breen stated Engine 3 will be protecting Brick Bottom and Inner Belt. USQ will be covered by Engine 3 and 1. The new Public Safety Building will have room to add another company down the road, if the data proves more resources will be needed. Councilor White asked if there is a plan to put addition on Lowell Street fire station. Chief Breen stated that can build a shelter behind the Lowell Street station for some reserve apparatus. They are exploring this option to house all reserve apparatus behind the Lowell Street fire station.

Councilor Ballantyne asked for clarity for the other area of the site under OSPCD to manage community process and when this will happen. Mr. Raiche has been in discussion with Mr. Galligani on this matter. Mr. Raiche stated there will be a tree hearing the end of this month.

Chair Scott asked if the expanded program would include the new priorities. Mr. Raiche stated the initial cost estimation is roughly doubled what was budgeted, \$102M. They are working to get the number down to be more realistic. Chair Scott will go back to look up at what price the city is selling the current Public Safety Building. There will be additional apparatus and including auxiliary in the new location. Chair Scott also asked about the accelerated schedule for the parcel currently housing the Public Safety Building. Mr. Raiche is not aware of a date from planning and OSPCD.

Chair Scott will follow up with members of building committee with additional questions including those related to parking.

Councilor Ballantyne would like the costs for selling the current public safety building. She also asked what the projection is for the new building.

Councilor White asked about the disposition of the current public safety building, voting and dispose of it by giving to the developer. He also suggested that an evaluation be done and what the potential usage the property would be used for.

Chair Scott asked Mr. Raiche about the Guaranteed Maximum Price that is held by the contractor that is negotiated with holds and allowances. The CM manages and holds all the contracts. Chair Scott also asked if all city requirements would be met. Mr. Raiche stated all requirements are controlled by state wage rates and contracts. There is an advantage for the city to use a CM@R to capture all documentation efforts and they will serve as the file keeper. The \$725,000 will take the city to three months of services.

RESULT:

APPROVED

Assembly Square Fire Lease

212265: Requesting approval of a 30-year lease for the new Assembly Square Fire Station.

Chief Breen presented slides with view on apparatus that goes to Assembly Row on a daily basis. The slides show the number of calls for fire coverage in Assembly. In 2010, there were 185 vs. 2021 projected for over 500 calls. The majority of the calls are medical related. The type of fire calls in 12 building were mainly for cooking and mulch fire.

Mr. Bean stated about the build out costs \$3.9M and the build out costs P&I \$5,242,825. The station estimates annual operating cost that will operated by a captain, 3 lieutenants and 4 firefighters \$1.8M.

Councilor Rossetti asked if we will be paying taxes to ourselves on this property. Mr. Galligani stated yes, this is set up as a commercial lease. He also stated this is a procedural matter with the net result being zero. Councilor Rossetti asked about employee parking for the departments. Mr. Galligani stated there will be parking on the street for employees. The lease does not include parking in the facility but on the street. If the employee decides to park in the garage, they would have to pay the same as anyone else using the garage. Councilor Rossetti asked Chief Breen if he is comfortable if there will be enough on street parking for all personnel. Chief Breen stated he has made that clear at many meetings they will have enough parking. Councilor Rossetti asked if the city will be responsible for the maintenance of the property in addition to paying the monthly lease.

Mr. Galligani stated the city will be leasing 10,000 sq ft and will be breaking ground some time in January. In approximately 2 years from now, could have a completed fire station.

Councilor White asked about the public benefits contributions of \$4.2M from the landlord.

Councilor White also asked about \$1.75M on an annual basis, will this facility be used for calls outside of Assembly Square. Chief Breen stated as needed, they will be able to handle calls in other areas of the city. Councilor White asked what's the response time savings. Chief Breen can easily shave off two minutes. Mr. Galligani stated when signing, they asked for voluntary contribution, transit improvement budget, \$1.60 enhancement fee, \$2.00 per sq ft infrastructure fee, and a future phase contribution. The city is paying approximately \$34.00 a sq ft which is a little below market for retail space.

Chair Rossetti asked for total operations budget for the year. She feels that the city can do a little better negotiating the lease amount. Paying the lease for the new fire station will almost double the fire department current operating budget.

Councilor White would like an analysis for the committee to better understand the ongoing cost of real estate, taking by eminent domain and construction cost by square footage, what would it cost to build our own property, the bond, principle and interest payments. This analysis would not include any salaries. He would also like the back up for the actual valuation of the land itself and construction by sq ft. This would give the city a couple of options for review. Councilor Rossetti would like to know what the SPD space cost.

Councilor Mbah wants to know the community benefits agreement summary for the committee in writing of the total that were negotiated.

Councilor White asked Mr. Galligani to do another analysis if the city decides not to use the garage, what would the developer get if the city walks away. If retail, what would be the alternative retail space and contribution to the city. What would be the benefits for developer and the rental value.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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212451: Fire Chief responding to Item 211748, providing data on calls and responses to the Assembly Square neighborhood.

This item was discussed with item 7 and the slides presented by Chief Breen.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Sewer Items

212084: Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management responding to #211944 re: coordination with the EPA and MWRA on Combined Sewer Overflows.

Mr. Raiche presented slides to answer various questions. This item was left for future city councilors to discuss and reference item 211944 as requested by Councilor White.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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212416: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,600,000 in a bond for a Sewer System Evaluation Study and Infiltration/Inflow Assessment.

Mr. Raiche presented slides for conditioning configuration. This was started in FY19. He stated the city would have to take out all of the debris in the pipes which would result in 10 truckloads. In FY20 focused on Ward 2 on Somerville Ave. and managed to get almost 25 miles inspected. Next area to target is Ward 1 by Pearl and Broadway that has had a lot of backup in the area. They did skip FY21 due to COVID-19. Mr. Raich stated they need to put out the bid in the fall to award in the winter to have the contractor start work in the spring.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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212414: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$4,400,000 in a bond for construction services as part of the MWRA Marginal Interceptor Sewer Rehabilitation.

Mr. Raiche stated this has been known to collapse for a number of years. This takes a lot of the flow from Winter Hill and connects in MWRA interceptor. Trenchless rehabilitation will spray apply a concrete inside the pipe. The cost for this is the same that has been on the CIP for a while, even though applying a new process using different technology. MWRA will contribute \$1.4M to this rehabilitation work.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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GLX Elevator

212267: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,331,543 in a bond for the construction of an outdoor elevator to improve accessibility between the High School Field Level and the new Green Line Extension Gilman Square Station.

Mr. Raiche showed slides from 2016 parking and the overall accessibility solution as a sketch. The plan does show a future elevator as a free-standing building.

Councilor Rossetti stated after the last meeting, they received many calls from the Gilman Square area residents to not approve this plan. Councilor Rossetti stated she is not comfortable voting at this time and would like to see parking in this area.

Councilor Mbah shared Rossetti's sentiments. There were discussions about Richdale and Perry Street residents having floods in that area.

Councilor White raised concerns about the comments made at the last city council meeting. Mr. Raiche did meet with Ward 3 Councilor Ewen-Campen to address a number of questions. Mr. Raiche stated at this time there is no intention to move forward with the parking deck but need to decide on the elevator.

Chair Scott stated he had not heard any opinion from Councilor Ewen-Campen and suggests the finance committee vote today based upon what they know about this request.

RESULT:	NOT APPROVED. [0 TO 4]
NAYS:	Scott, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah
ABSENT:	Ballantyne

212268: Requesting approval to re-purpose the Green Line Extension Stabilization Fund and appropriate \$7,668,457 from said fund for the construction of an elevator between the High School Field and the new Green Line Gilman Square Station.

RESULT:	NOT APPROVED. [0 TO 4]
NAYS:	Scott, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah
ABSENT:	Ballantyne

212269: Requesting approval to appropriate \$151,000 from the Facility Construction and Renovation Stabilization Fund for additional design and electrical conduit work related to the Gilman Station elevator and GLX platform.

RESULT:	NOT APPROVED. [0 TO 4]
NAYS:	Scott, White Jr., Rossetti, Mbah
ABSENT:	Ballantyne

Grants, Restrictions, Easements

212474: Requesting approval of a grant of easement in Inner Belt Road for Fiber Optic Communications Equipment.

No one from the administration was available to discuss at tonight's meeting.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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212480: Requesting approval of the Land Disposition Agreement for the property at 31 Tufts Street.

No one from the administration was available to discuss at tonight's meeting.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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212413: Requesting acceptance of a preservation restriction for 59 Cross Street.

No one from the administration was available to discuss at tonight's meeting.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Housekeeping

207285: Requesting the appropriation of \$542,675 from the CPA Fund Open Space/Recreational Land and Budgeted Reserve Accounts to the City for the ArtFarm

project.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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207342: Director of Capital Projects conveying the Departmental Relocation Strategy and Implementation Plan.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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207478: That the Director of Finance provide this Council with a written report of bond requests for the next 3 years along with corresponding revenue stream projections.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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208460: Conveying the June 2019 General Fund Capital Investment Plan.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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208630: Requesting the appropriation of \$376,820 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purchase of vehicles for the Parks & Recreation Department.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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211224: Requesting the appropriation of \$36,720 from the Salary and Wage Stabilization Fund to the Executive Office Salaries Account to establish two new Racial & Social Justice staff positions.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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211257: Submitting questions, concerns, comments and ideas regarding Police staffing, in response to Chief Charles Femino's memo of January 31, 2021, for the February 1 Public Health and Public Safety Committee.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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211258: That this Council discuss FY22 funding and organizational priorities for the Mobility Department.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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211382: That this Council consider advocating for an additional \$750,000 in the FY22 budget, as attached, for safe streets and equitable mobility.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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211429: That the Mayor allocate funding for two dual diagnosis and social work clinical

outreach positions in the Community Outreach Help and Recovery Department in the FY22 budget.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

211446: That this Council's Committee on Finance discuss with appropriate staff, anticipated funding from the recently authorized American Rescue Plan Act.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

211600: That the Administration include a sidewalk snow shoveling program in the FY22 budget focused on pedestrian streets, major north-south and east-west routes, sidewalk corners and crosswalks with piles of snow, MBTA bus stops, and senior buildings.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

211826: That this Council review the past 20 years of the city's Police Department reform recommendations and the resultant changes.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

212086: Director of Racial and Social Justice conveying a letter regarding the June 7 Finance Committee budget hearing.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

212257: That the Director of Economic Development provide an update regarding the leases at the Armory building and the plan for tenancy and uses moving forward.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

Referenced Material:

- Presentation_SFD Assembly Station Planning_Oct21v03 (with 212451)
- FinCom FY22 CIP Bond Reqs 2021Oct12 (with 212362, 212416, 212414, 212226, 212268, 212269)