



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:00pm and adjourned at 6:58pm with a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Clingan, Burnley, Sait, Wilson), none opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor Scott).

Others present: Elyse Belarge – OSE, Kathryn Cole – Financial Analyst, Natasha Frazier – Assistant Clerk of Committees, Kimberley Hutter – Legislative Liaison, Alan Inacio – Director of Finance and Administration Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, Brian Postlewaite – Director of Engineering at DPW, Michael Richards – Director of Finance and Administration at Department of Infrastructure and Asset Management, Mohammed Uddin – Financial Analyst.

Roll Call

Present: City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Naima Sait, City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan
Absent: Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [24-1317](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of September 10, 2024.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Grant and Gift Acceptances

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1261](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a technical assistance grant valued at \$25,000 with no new match required, from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to the Office of Sustainability and Environment for sustainable and resilient zoning development.

Chair Wilson noted that a memo was sent to the City Council before this meeting. City staff were available to answer questions. There was not discussion on this matter. However, Chair Wilson did express his support for the inter-municipality cooperation among the MAPC.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Prior Year Invoices

- 3. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1309](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$770 using available funds in the Mayor's Office Food Supplies & Refreshments Account for food served at a Departmental Training meeting with Department Heads.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Contracts and Easements

- 4. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1228](#)) Requesting approval of a time-only contract extension for fourteen months with a new expiration date of 12/31/2025, for P Gioioso & Sons Inc for construction services for the Spring Hill Sewer Separation project.

Items 4 and 5 were taken up together. Director Richards stated that these items are extensions for the contractor and the engineer of record. Director Richards stated that the project team encountered delays in the field due to the utility contractor conducting work in the project area, which prevented the contractor from advancing with their work on time. He stated that these extensions are meant to accommodate that work to go into next year. Chair Wilson expressed that he is looking forward to seeing the completion of this project.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

- 5. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1229](#)) Requesting approval of a time-only contract extension for twelve months with a new expiration date of 12/31/2025, for Stantec Consulting Services Inc for design services for the Spring Hill Sewer Separation project.

This item was taken up with agenda item 4, ID number 24-1228. Please refer to that item for the minutes.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Appropriations

- 6. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1227](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$56,215.42 from the Bike Share Stabilization Fund for installation and startup costs for a BlueBike station at 200 Inner Belt Road.

Director Inacio stated that this is a stabilization fund to accept private contributions for a BlueBike station, which will be a 15-bike station. He stated that the Contribution Agreement and the invoice are included with the Council Order. He stated this project is ready to go once appropriations are received.

Councilor Sait inquired about the meaning of private contributions. Director Inacio stated that the primary developer of the site, the North River Development Company, made a contribution that will pay for the station, initial set of bikes, and installation cost. Councilor Sait inquired about the process for installing BlueBike stations. Director Inacio stated that the Mobility division works with BlueBike - a subsidiary of the Lyft company - to identify siting. He advised that the best route for installing a BlueBike station is to submit a request to the Mobility team.

Councilor Burnley asked if this will service the same area as the Innerbelt and Brick Bottom pedestrian crossing and Director Inacio confirmed it would service the same area. Councilor Burnley stated that he is happy to see this project as part of a larger vision for the community.

Chair Wilson noted that when looking at the Bicycle Network Plan, one will see that this location is an important link between two neighborhoods. He also stated that he is glad to see private financial support for this project.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Bonding

- 7. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1225](#)) Requesting authorization to borrow \$6,018,969 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for street and sidewalk reconstruction.

Director Postlewaite gave a presentation that provided an overview of the fiscal year 2025 streets and sidewalks reconstruction bond request. The presentation slides are attached to this meeting. Director Postlewaite noted that we are currently in fiscal year 2025 and that the contract is named for the fiscal year in which it is released. He stated that construction for the proposed projects would continue into fiscal years 2026 and 2027. Director Postlewaite's presentation included primary goals, an explanation of how street prioritization works, and the major projects for this year's contract, which are West Broadway Street, Tufts Street, and ADA upgrades. His presentation also included an overview of funding sources.

There was a discussion of the difficulty that tree roots pose to sidewalks, making them impassable. Chair Wilson raised the issue of Walnut Street heading out of Union Square. He asked if funding from this contract will be allocated towards this type of work and/or this site specifically. Director Postlewaite that that they are currently focusing on closing out items from the ADA Transition Plan, but that the funds could potentially be used in the future for this type of work. He noted that they have been doing more tree bump-outs in the past 4 to 5 years. Director Postlewaite suggested doing a 311 report for this issue.

Councilor Burnley expressed support for the ADA focus in this year's budget and making sidewalks accessible. He asked Director Postlewaite to define tree pits and speak to the difficulty of fixing them. Director Postlewaite explained how tree pits raise and lift the sidewalks, and how tree roots and trunks narrow and squish the sidewalks. Either of these issues or these issues together make sidewalks non-ADA compliant. One solution they have utilized is flexible pavement, which helps promote a compliant slope when root growth occurs. Furthermore, it decreases the likelihood of a concrete panel breaking and becoming a tripping hazard. When these issues escalate, the next step is the bump-out solution, which converts street parking spaces into sidewalk space to go around the tree. Councilor Burnley noted that it is not easy to simply move a tree, and keeping a tree alive also requires work from the City. He noted that it is important for the City to meet accessibility and green space goals.

Councilor Burnley asked why West Broadway is a major project. Director Postlewaite explained how this project timeline aligns historically with other projects as part of a 5-year plan. Councilor Sait expressed support for prioritizing safety and ADA compliant sidewalks. She asked about what stage the designs are in and if there is remaining opportunity for community involvement. Director Postlewaite stated that the designs are nearing finalization and that there has been community involvement throughout the process through public meetings, on the ground conversations, and communication with stakeholders on the West Broadway Corridor. He stated that the SomerVoice page (<https://voice.somervillema.gov/>) is the best way for the public to stay up to date and engaged with these projects.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Referenced Documents:

- Finance - 2024-09-24 FY25 WestBroad +Tufts (with 24-1225)