



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

7:00 PM

The meeting took place virtually via Zoom and was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Pineda Neufeld and adjourned at 8:02 PM on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Sait, Burnley, McLaughlin and Pineda Neufeld), none against and none absent.

Others present:

Chief Fire Engineer Charles Breen, SFD Deputy Chief Sean Tierney, Director of Human Resources Anne Gill, Hannah Carrillo – Legislative Liaison, Peter Forcellese – Legislative Clerk.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Judy Pineda Neufeld, Ward One City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin, City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr., Ward Five City Councilor Naima Sait and Ward One City Councilor Wilfred N. Mbah

1. Committee Minutes
(ID # [24-0138](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee Meeting of January 31, 2024.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

AYE: Chairperson Pineda Neufeld, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward One City Councilor Mbah

ABSENT: Ward Five City Councilor Sait

2. Officer's Communication
(ID # [24-0190](#))

City Clerk requesting confirmation of the appointment of Natasha Frazier to the position of Assistant Clerk of Committees.

City Clerk Wells introduced candidate Natasha Frazier and gave a brief summary of her experience. Councilor Mbah gave a glowing endorsement of the candidate based on her performance in the position, so far.

Chair Pineda Neufeld explained that the appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council at its next meeting on April 11, 2024.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Chairperson Pineda Neufeld, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward One City Councilor Mbah

ABSENT: Ward Five City Councilor Sait

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0393](#)) Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Sergio Rodriguez to the position of Firefighter.

Chief Breen presented the candidate, Sergio Rodriguez and said that he was a graduate of Somerville High School and holds an associate degree from Bunker Hill Community College.

Councilor Mbah asked the candidate why he wanted to be a fire fighter and Mr. Rodriguez replied that it's what he's always wanted to do.

Chair Pineda Neufeld asked what the candidate is looking forward to and what he sees as being a challenge. Mr. Rodriguez replied that he looks forward to helping people and gaining experience in the position.

Chair Pineda Neufeld explained that the appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council at its next meeting on April 11, 2024.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Pineda Neufeld, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Five City Councilor Sait and Ward One City Councilor Mbah

4. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0365](#)) Requesting confirmation of the appointment of William Deeks to the position of Firefighter.

Chief Breen presented the candidate, William Deeks and said that he holds a bachelor's degree from Lesley College.

Councilor Mbah asked the candidate why he wanted to be a fire fighter and Mr. Deeks said that he met many people from the city while working as a chef in Davis Square and he wanted to do more for them and the city.

Chair Pineda Neufeld asked what the candidate is looking forward to and what he sees as being a challenge. Mr. Deeks responded by saying that he's looking forward to serving the community and making a difference.

Chair Pineda Neufeld explained that the appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council at its next meeting on April 11, 2024.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Pineda Neufeld, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Five City Councilor Sait and Ward One City Councilor Mbah

5. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0364](#)) Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Nicholas Cantone to the position of Firefighter.

Chief Breen presented the candidate, Nicholas Cantone and said that he is a licensed construction supervisor and that will be helpful in the performance of his duties.

Councilor Mbah asked the candidate why he wanted to be a fire fighter and Mr. Cantone replied that he wants to serve and give back to the community.

Chair Pineda Neufeld asked what the candidate is looking forward to and what he sees as being a challenge. Mr. Cantone said that he's a 'hands on' person and he thinks that his construction background will help him to perform the challenging job of a fire fighter.

Chair Pineda Neufeld explained that the appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council at its next meeting on April 11, 2024.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Pineda Neufeld, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Five City Councilor Sait and Ward One City Councilor Mbah

6. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0362](#))

Requesting confirmation of the appointment of John Tivinis to the position of Firefighter.

Chief Breen presented the candidate, Tivinis who is an auto mechanic in a family business in the city and who is also pursuing a degree in Fire Science. Councilor Mbah asked the candidate why he wanted to be a fire fighter and Mr. Tivinis said it was his dream job and having grown up in Somerville, he wanted to serve the Somerville community and give back to it.

Chair Pineda Neufeld asked what the candidate is looking forward to and what he sees as being a challenge and Mr. Tivinis replied that he's excited to be going into the field and learning more about the city and 'learning the ropes' of the job.

Chair Pineda Neufeld explained that the appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council at its next meeting on April 11, 2024.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Pineda Neufeld, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Five City Councilor Sait and Ward One City Councilor Mbah

7. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0358](#))

Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Jack Haigis to the position of Firefighter.

Chief Breen presented the candidate, Jack Haigis who holds a master's degree in Fire Rescue Executive Leadership and who served as a fire fighter

in Arlington ,VA.

Councilor Mbah asked the candidate why he wanted to be a fire fighter and Mr. Haigis replied that his father was a fire fighter. He went on to say that he likes working with hands so he got a degree in Mechanical Engineering and then secured a fire fighting position in the small town where he grew up. He said that he moved to Somerville and fell in love with the community.

Chair Pineda Neufeld asked what the candidate is looking forward to and what he sees as a challenge. Mr. Haigis replied that he's eager to learn more about fire fighting in a densely populated city with older houses.

Chair Pineda Neufeld explained that the appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council at its next meeting on April 11, 2024.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Pineda Neufeld, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Five City Councilor Sait and Ward One City Councilor Mbah

8. Mayor's Request Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Derek Doane to the position
(ID # [24-0357](#)) of Firefighter.

Chief Breen presented the candidate, Derek Doane who is a graduate of Somerville High School, served in the U.S. Army and works as an electrical apprentice.

Councilor Mbah asked the candidate why he wanted to be a fire fighter. Mr. Doane said that he grew up in Somerville, as did his parents and grandparents and always wanted to be a fire fighter and help people.

Chair Pineda Neufeld asked what the candidate is looking forward to and what he sees as a challenge and Mr. Doane said that he's looking forward to learning new things and ways to help people.

Chair Pineda Neufeld explained that the appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council at its next meeting on April 11, 2024.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Pineda Neufeld, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Five City Councilor Sait and Ward One City Councilor Mbah

9. Mayor's Request Requesting confirmation of the promotion of Kenneth Silva to the position
(ID # [24-0215](#)) of Fire Deputy Chief.

Chief Breen presented the candidate, District Chief Kenneth Silva, who joined the department in 2006 and is currently serving as Acting Deputy

Chief. D.C. Silva is an Air Force veteran, a registered nurse, and holds a master's degree in Public Administration Emergency Services.

Councilor Mbah asked the candidate what some of the things are he would change and where he sees the department going and how he would bring it to that next level. D.C. Silva explained that serving in his current position has presented a higher level of challenges. Now, he deals with the variety of development being built in the city and is trying to add technological changes in the fire safety office. Additionally, being a senior officer, he looks forward to taking on more responsibility. Councilor Mbah asked about his leadership style and D.C. Silva said he tries to be a hybrid leader, i.e., not an autocrat, but not a pushover either. He likes to be charismatic and get people to work for him because they want to, not because he told them to. He gave credit to the people in his office for the amount of work that is getting done, rather than to himself.

Chair Pineda Neufeld asked what challenges might be ahead for him and the department and D.C. Silva said that it's important to be competent by keeping up with the latest developments in fire fighting, e.g., lithium ion batteries, and to be calm and when directing fire fighters on scene. He said that there's a lot of homework to do to keep up as a student of the city in order to be aware of what's going on. He said that he's excited about taking on more responsibility.

Chair Pineda Neufeld explained that the appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council at its next meeting on April 11, 2024.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Chairperson Pineda Neufeld, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Five City Councilor Sait and Ward One City Councilor Mbah

10. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0016](#))

Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Anandavalli Thiagarajan to the Public Library Board of Trustees.

Chair Pineda Neufeld explained that there will not be an interview for this position and that the item will be reported out without a recommendation so that the full Council may vote on it.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE DISCHARGED WITH NO RECOMMENDATION