



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 20, 2018
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Vice Chair	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Absent	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	

Others present: Alderman Mark Niedergang, Deputy Chief Paul Trant - SPD, Michael Glavin - OSPCD, Alan Inacio - OSPCD, Brad Rawson - OSPCD, Catherine Piantigini - Libraries, Kate Vanslet - Libraries, Glen Ferdman - Libraries, Frank Golden - Assessing, Alex Nosnik and John Memory - Members of the City's Retirement Board, Michael Pasquariello, Administrator of the Retirement Board, Ed Bean - Finance, Oliver Sellers-Garcia - OSE, Rich Raiche - Engineering, John Deluca - Water & Sewer, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman White and adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Approval of the February 6, 2018 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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205120: Requesting approval to enter into a tax agreement with Sunwealth for a solar energy system at 444 Somerville Avenue.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia discussed the tax agreement and said that these types of agreements have been around for a while and are not uncommon. The proposed agreement structured the payment of property taxes for the solar energy system at the same amount every year for 20 years. Without the structuring, the owner would pay a greater amount at the start of the operation and much less in the future as the value of the equipment depreciates over time. This structure helps the owner in seeking funding because it pays level taxes instead of higher taxes during the first years of operation. Members also discussed the city's power purchase agreement.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205155: Requesting approval of a Home Rule Petition relative to Retirement Board divestment from fossil fuel companies.

The Somerville Retirement Board submitted a document into the record explaining the reasons why it is seeking the home rule petition. Basically, PERAC, which is the state agency that regulates municipal retirement boards, stated that the Retirement Board of the City of Somerville could not divest from fossil fuels under state regulations. The Home Rule Petition, if approved by the legislature, will allow the City's Retirement Board to divest from fossil fuels. Mr. Nosnik spoke about the research done on this issue and discussed fossil fuel divestment legislation. Chairman White asked whether the Retirement Board had also considered filing a lawsuit challenging PERAC's determination. Mr. Memory said that alternative had been considered but the Board believed that the Home Rule Petition was the best route.

RESULT:

APPROVED

202153: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$94,000 in a bond for additional design services for the West Branch Library Renovation Project.

The requested amount is for the completion of the design and project contract documents from the architect. Alderman Rossetti expressed concerns about whether the most recent design would ultimately be accepted by the community. Representatives of the City and the Library stated that the church that the City purchased across the street would be used for the larger community room, while the redesigned library community room would be sufficient for library related meetings and functions. The library trustees support the proposed plan.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205123: Requesting acceptance of a \$50,000 grant with no new match required, from UASI to the Police Department for purchasing maritime equipment.

The funds will be used for the city's new maritime program, in connection with improving the dock at the Boathouse.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205119: Requesting approval to establish a Consolidated Gift Account to accept donations for commemorative benches.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205121: Requesting that this Board declare a portion of the Somerville Recreation Building at 19 Walnut Street available for disposition by lease.

The Administration would like to lease space in the basement of the Recreation Building that is not currently being used, to an entity for commercial use. In order to do so, the Board of Aldermen must declare it surplus. President Ballantyne questioned whether the City can legally

lease space that is not ADA compliant and asked for a determination by the City Solicitor. Chairman White stated that in accordance with the past practice of the Board, the declaration of surplus would be conditioned upon Board approval of the request for proposal that will be issued in connection with leasing the property and with approval of the actual lease with the selected entity.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205013: Requesting the appropriation of \$29,890.97 from Free Cash to the EPA Brownfield Revolving Loan Account for payment #1 of the Conway Rink Repayment.

Mr. Inacio explained that the funds will be used to make the first payment on an interest free loan that the city issued to itself from a Brownfields Revolving Fund that was funded by HUD. HUD asked that the City begin making payments back into the Revolving Fund. The loan was used to remediate the land where the new rink is located. The committee discussed utilizing revenue sources from the rink to offset expenses and Mr. Bean said that the costs to operate the rink have always been subsidized by the City's general fund. Alderman Rossetti requested quarterly reports on the city's free cash status.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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205014: Requesting approval of a mid-year staffing request to fund construction oversight, management and associated issues.

The Board continued in its discussions of the 19 new positions sought by the Administration. A number of the original requests were placed on file because there was a calculation error in them and the Administration submitted new requests with the correct funding amount.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205029: Requesting the approval of funding to establish an Office of Housing Stability in SPCD.

Mr. Glavin stated that Somerville has a crisis that must be dealt with. The proposal calls for having a 5-member office, with the director being hired first to collect data that will be helpful in the hiring of the remaining 4 staff members (during the budget process). Chairman White commented on the problem of tenants being evicted before properties are sold. Alderman Ewen-Campen expressed his support of this item, adding that if the BOA doesn't approve this, it is hypocritical. He stated that things are out of control and many people are being evicted, adding that the city doesn't have the data for the BOA to do their part in dealing with this. Alderman Ballantyne inquired about the amount of time spent by the Housing Department dealing with evictions. Members were told that the city will refer legal services to people but will need legal advice to ensure that the city is not crossing the line in representing individuals.

Alderman Rossetti's motion that *the grant manager investigate opportunities for grants available for the Office of Housing Stability*, was approved.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

205015: Requesting the appropriation of \$20,750 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Engineering Division Salaries Account to fund a Construction Liaison and Compliance Manager.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205016: Requesting the appropriation of \$24,500 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Engineering Division Salaries Account to fund a Construction Project Manager.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205017: Requesting the appropriation of \$20,750 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Communications Department Salaries Account to fund a Construction Information Officer.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205018: Requesting the appropriation of \$10,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Communications Department Professional and Technical Services Account to fund construction translation services.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

205019: Requesting the appropriation of \$23,250 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to SPCD's Transportation & Infrastructure Division Salaries Account to fund a GLX Project Liaison.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205020: Requesting the appropriation of \$25,750 from Unreserved Fund Balance to the Capital Projects Department Salaries Account to fund a Project Manager.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205021: Requesting the appropriation of \$23,250 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to SPCD's Transportation & Infrastructure Division Salaries Account to fund a Streetscape and Public Space Planner.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205022: Requesting the appropriation of \$25,750 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Engineering Department Salaries Account to fund a Project Manager.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205023: Requesting the appropriation of \$24,500 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Engineering Department Salaries Account to fund a Junior Project Manager.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205024: Requesting the appropriation of \$25,750 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to SPCD's Transportation & Infrastructure Division Salaries Account to fund a Senior Urban Forestry & Landscape Planner.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205025: Requesting the appropriation of \$25,250 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to SPCD's Transportation & Infrastructure Division Salaries Account to fund a Transportation Planner.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205026: Requesting the appropriation of \$25,750 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Inspectional Services Department Salaries Account to fund a Senior Zoning Review Planner.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205027: Requesting the appropriation of \$27,000 from Water Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings to the Water Enterprise Fund Salaries Account to fund a Director of Finance & Administration.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205028: Requesting the appropriation of \$32,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Capital Projects Department Salaries Account to fund a Capital Projects Assistant Director.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205030: Requesting the appropriation of \$29,500 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the SPCD Office of Housing Stability Salaries Account to fund a Director of Housing Stability.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

205031: Requesting the appropriation of \$24,500 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the SPCD Office of Housing Stability Salaries Account to fund a Deputy Director

of Housing Stability/Program Development.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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205032: Requesting the appropriation of \$19,500 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the SPCD Office of Housing Stability Salaries Account to fund a Housing Counselor/Case Manager.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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205033: Requesting the appropriation of \$19,500 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the SPCD Office of Housing Stability Salaries Account to fund a Housing Counselor/Case Manager.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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205034: Requesting the appropriation of \$17,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the SPCD Office of Housing Stability Salaries Account to fund a Housing Intake Specialist.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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205157: Requesting the appropriation of \$16,250 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Engineering Division Salaries Account to fund a Construction Liaison and Compliance Manager.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205158: Requesting the appropriation of \$20,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Engineering Division Salaries Account to fund a Construction Project Manager.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205159: Requesting the appropriation of \$16,250 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Communications Department Salaries Account to fund a Construction Information Officer.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205160: Requesting the appropriation of \$18,750 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to SPCD's Transportation & Infrastructure Division Salaries Account to fund a GLX Project Liaison.

Mr. Rawson discussed the magnitude of the project and the need and skill set for the person filling this position.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205161: Requesting the appropriation of \$21,250 from Unreserved Fund Balance to the Capital Projects Department Salaries Account to fund a Project Manager.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205162: Requesting the appropriation of \$18,750 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to SPCD's Transportation & Infrastructure Division Salaries Account to fund a Streetscape and Public Space Planner.

Mr. Rawson discussed new projects that will create a need for this position and said that residents are concerned with design and have high expectations. Alderman Rossetti is concerned about the 19 new positions being requested and she asked why this wasn't brought during the budget meetings, adding that she can't vote to approve all of these positions. Chairman White commented that he has never seen \$2 million requested for personnel at mid-term in a budget cycle and he asked for a condition that there would be no additional hires this year. Chairman White spoke about the \$7 million increase in last year's budget and said that the Board has to be careful about continuing to increase property taxes at 5% per year because in about three years, the major bonding items such as the DIF, the Green Line Extension payment and the High School will all hit the budget. Unless commercial revenue comes in, these increases in property taxes could cause a lot of existing Somerville homeowners to sell their homes and ownership by absentee landlords would increase. Alderman Ballantyne stated that she would like to see these positions generally included as part of the annual budget process to see what the revenue projections are to fund these added expenses.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205163: Requesting the appropriation of \$21,250 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Engineering Department Salaries Account to fund a Project Manager.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205164: Requesting the appropriation of \$20,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Engineering Department Salaries Account to fund a Junior Project Manager.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205165: Requesting the appropriation of \$21,250 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to SPCD's Transportation & Infrastructure Division Salaries Account to fund a Senior Urban Forestry & Landscape Planner.

Mr. Rawson discussed the need and necessary skill set for this position and explained the duties of the duties of the city arborist.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205166: Requesting the appropriation of \$18,750 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to SPCD's Transportation & Infrastructure Division Salaries Account to fund a Transportation Planner.

Alderman Rossetti questioned why the staff in current positions can't take on these duties and Mr. Rawson spoke about the workload of the staff, commenting on various projects, including traffic calming and pedestrian crossings.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205167: Requesting the appropriation of \$21,250 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Inspectional Services Department Salaries Account to fund a Senior Zoning Review Planner.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205168: Requesting the appropriation of \$27,500 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Capital Projects Department Salaries Account to fund a Capital Projects Assistant Director.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205169: Requesting the appropriation of \$7,200 from Water Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings to the Water Enterprise Fund Salaries Account to fund a Director of Finance & Administration.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205170: Requesting the appropriation of \$15,300 from Sewer Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings to the Sewer Enterprise Fund Salaries Account to fund a Director of Finance & Administration.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205171: Requesting the appropriation of \$32,692 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the SPCD Office of Housing Stability Salaries Account to fund a Director of Housing Stability.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205172: Requesting the appropriation of \$20,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the SPCD Office of Housing Stability Salaries Account to fund a Deputy Director of Housing Stability/Program Development.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205173: Requesting the appropriation of \$15,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the SPCD Office of Housing Stability Salaries Account to fund a Housing Counselor/Case Manager.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

205174: Requesting the appropriation of \$15,000 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the SPCD Office of Housing Stability Salaries Account to fund a Housing Counselor/Case Manager.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

205175: Requesting the appropriation of \$12,500 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the SPCD Office of Housing Stability Salaries Account to fund a Housing Intake Specialist.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

204518: Requesting a transfer of \$32,500 from the Salary Contingency Account to the Health & Human Services Personal Services Salaries Account to fund an Environmental Health Liaison.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

205156: Requesting a transfer of \$16,250 from the Salary Contingency Account to the Health & Human Services Personal Services Salaries Account to fund an Environmental Health Liaison.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

205011: Requesting acceptance of a 36 month lease of the West Somerville Police Substation and office space at 1112-1114 Broadway.

The lease that just ended had a 2-year optional renewal period built in. Prior to entering into this new lease, the City issued a request for proposals and this was the best submittal. There was a \$200 increase in the rent, bringing the amount to \$2,000 per month.

RESULT: APPROVED

Note: At the conclusion of the meeting, Chairman White stated that the Committee would begin deliberations on these new positions at the next Committee meeting and asked that if members had any requests for additional information with regard to these positions, that members contact him so he could contact the Administration.

Handouts:

- Retirement Info (with 205155)
- Request (with 205014)
- Job Descriptions
- OSPCD Data