



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

January 26, 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: Khushbu Webber-Mayor's Office, Alex Lessin-Water & Sewer, Luisa Oliveira-OSPCD, Chief Charles Breen-Fire Department, Andrew Louw-OSPCD, Frank Wright-City Solicitor, Asst Chief Chris Major-Fire Department and Mike Mastrobuoni-SomerStat.

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chairperson Scott and adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Approval of the December 14, 2020 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Discussion Items

211011: Requesting acceptance of a \$25,495.51 grant with no new match required, from the Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to the Fire Department for the purchase of thermal imaging cameras.

Chair Scott consulted with Councilor Ewen Campen on this matter, who had concerns. It was stated that the city must notify the city council and include certain information.

Ms. Webber stated the fire department is working to get additional information to the city council for this Thursday's meeting or it may be discussed in the Legislative Matters committee. Councilor Mbah asked if there have been any cases when the cameras have been misused. The committee's concern is to make sure there is a policy in place to make sure the cameras are used appropriately. Ms. Webber believes that many of the department heads may have forgotten to let the city council know prior to applying to grants.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

211033: City Solicitor requesting approval to settle a claim in connection with expenses incurred by the owner of 80 Irving Street.

Mr. Wright appeared to speak on this item regarding sewer repair last year. This item was filed together with 211009 on December 10th. The items were deferred to committee and \$9,900 was to be removed from Sewer Enterprise account. This request was approved by Mr. Lessin as well city approved on 12/17. Mr. Wright stated the backup created a substantial blockage that went out to main and the city approved excavating to the main. The city approved for contractor CJ Doherty to perform the work. Mr. Wright stated a claim was filed but delayed due to personnel leaving last year.

RESULT:

APPROVED

209789: That this Council's Committee on Finance discuss the peoples' budget and priorities for FY21.

Mr. Mastrobuoni stated he is putting together the schedule for FY22 and the administration is happy to hear any input from city council. It was stated that the best time is for March or early April to start with fixed costs. Chair Scott stated the councilor feedback should be early in the process. He also stated that the priorities expressed for councilors should be packaged early for the councilors to review. Mr. Mastrobuoni stated that usually fixed costs are worked on first, followed by programs. He also stated that program improvement requests will come in two parts, in late February like last year.

Councilor Mbah asked if there is a way for departments to send their priorities to see where the orders are for the city. Mr. Mastrobuoni proposed to present this in the early timeframe to show prioritization from the departments.

Councilor Rossetti requested to see COVID costs to-date, the amount of federal or state funding still not received, but promised and the potential to reply for more funding. Councilor Rossetti stated she put through an order to know the updated numbers for COVID actuals that the city has already received. She is concerned that FY22 budget will still be COVID impacted.

Mr. Mastrobuoni stated there are 2 budget tracks going on. Ms. Hartke is taking lead on COVID grants while his priority is the operating budget.

Chair Scott asked if it would be helpful to have Ms. Hartke and/or Mr. Bean attend a future meeting. Mr. Mastrobuoni will talk to Mr. Bean and have him reach out to Chair Scott.

Councilor Ballantyne asked about the staffing plan for the city. Does everyone have a job? How is the city approaching that? Will the city adjust people in different positions? Is there a chance to increase positions? Additionally, Councilor Ballantyne asked about the current workforce structure.

Councilor White asked if the administration intends to follow the same structure for next year's budget? He asked about 2 ½ levy and new growth for the city. Mr. Mastrobuoni stated that any new growth is eligible up until June. He also stated these are critical items for the city with new

growth and state aid. The assessor is out there looking at construction to determine how much growth. It appears that there may not be a state aid cut next year, which is the bulk of the revenue for the city. Councilor White asked about department expenditures, operating budget, and if they will be seeing less or more expenditures. Councilor White inquired about free cash and if the city will be generating more or less. Mr. Mastrobuoni stated there are emerging needs during the pandemic and there are some items the city wanted to do that they could not get to it. Some departments funding looks like they are not spending money, but the overtime comes out of the COVID funding.

Chair Scott requested that the finance committee receive a MUNIS spending document before the next finance meeting.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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211148: Requesting authorization to seek funding and enter into related agreements for Conway Park from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and rededicate Conway Park to open space and recreational use in perpetuity.

Councilor Mbah recused himself from this item.

Ms. Oliveira stated this opportunity came up a couple of weeks ago for a grant. The city will not need to bond the money and will require a rededication. They are hoping this will pass before the February 1st due date.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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Items to be Placed on File

210834: That the Commissioner of Public Works provide this Council's Finance Committee with every invoice from the Fleet Division's Ordinary Maintenance budget for FY21 year to date, including documentation supporting encumbrance figures listed in the current Munis report.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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210915: DPW Director of Administration and Finance responding to #210748 with DPW expenses since FY19.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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211034: DPW Commissioner responding to #210834 re: Fleet Division invoices.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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