



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 2, 2026

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Mbah at 6:00 p.m. and adjourned at 7:38 p.m. on a Roll Call Vote: 5 in favor (Councilors McLaughlin, Hardt, Link, Ewen-Campen, Mbah), 0 opposed, 0 absent.

Councilor McLaughlin joined the meeting at 6:02 p.m.; Councilor Hardt joined the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

Others present:

Anne Gill – Director of Human Resources; Brendan Salisbury – Legislative Policy Analyst; Cindy Amara – City Solicitor; Kim Wells – City Clerk; Mayor Jake Wilson; and Shumeane Benford – Police Chief; and Michael Potere – Assistant City Clerk - Vital Records and Licensing

Roll Call

Present: City Councilor At Large Jon Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah

Absent: Ward Two City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin and Ward Seven City Councilor Emily Hardt

- Committee Minutes
(ID # [25-1858](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee Meeting of December 3, 2025.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

- Mayor's Request
(ID # [26-0074](#))

Requesting confirmation of the promotion of Diogo deOliveira to the position of Police Captain.

Chief Shumeane Benford introduced the candidate, Diogo deOliveira, and stated that the candidate has been with the Somerville Police Department for 20 years, has been promoted twice, has a Master’s Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, and is bilingual being fluent in Portuguese. Chair Mbah asked how the candidate will contribute to accountability with the Police Department, who replied that he will use the role of Captain to lead by example, and by treating everyone with fairness and integrity. The candidate added that a main goal will be to continue building trust between the department and the community. Councilor Ewen-Campen asked how many Police Captains the department

has, and Chief Benford replied that there are currently three, and that the candidate would be the fourth, and would be tasked with overseeing the Community Affairs Division. Chief Benford added that the position will have two primary goals: building community police command and ensuring that initiatives are consistent with the department's community policing program. Councilor Ewen-Campen asked the candidate about their views on the co-response model of policing, who replied that it is the future of policing, and that the best model of co-response also includes follow-up and care referrals. Councilor McLaughlin praised the candidate's commitment to the community and noted that the candidate is regularly in attendance at community programs and events. Councilor McLaughlin asked how the candidate will prepare the next generation of officers, and the candidate replied by stating they will be hands-on, work closely with officers as they rise through the ranks, and make sure the attention to the community is a focus in their training, and lead by example.

Chair Mbah moved to enter executive session at 6:53 p.m. The motion was approved on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors McLaughlin, Hardt, Link, Ewen-Campen, Mbah), 0 opposed, 0 absent. The Committee returned from executive session at 7:07 p.m. No votes were taken in executive session except the vote to adjourn.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

3. Mayor's Request
(ID # [26-0073](#))

Requesting confirmation of the promotion of Samir Messaoudi to the position of Police Lieutenant.

Chief Shumeane Benford introduced the candidate, Samir Messaoudi, and stated he speaks multiple languages, has been with the department for 13 years, was promoted to his current role in 2023, has a graduate degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Massachusetts in Lowell and a Bachelor's Degree from Northeastern University in Public Affairs, and has served in the armed services. Chair Mbah asked how the candidate views modern policing, who replied he will ensure that the officers under his supervision are held accountable and will enforce policies implemented at higher levels within the department to advance community policing. Councilor Ewen-Campen asked how the candidate's functions would change in the new role, who replied that he would go back to being on active patrol, and that doing so will allow him to bring the skills he has learned to bear on his training and oversight of his officers. Councilor McLaughlin expressed support for the candidate and asked how he will prepare the next generation of officers, and the candidate replied that he will focus on providing services over making arrests, and by ensuring that his officers always engage in

community-focused policing.

Chair Mbah moved to enter executive session at 6:53 p.m. The motion was approved on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors McLaughlin, Hardt, Link, Ewen-Campen, Mbah), 0 opposed, 0 absent. The Committee returned from executive session at 7:07 p.m. No votes were taken in executive session except the vote to adjourn.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

4. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0024](#)) Requesting confirmation of the appointment of James Plotkin as Municipal Hearing Officer.

Chief Administrative Officer Wells stated that she has an introduction prepared for this candidate, but that they are not present at the meeting. Chair Mbah asked if Chief Administrative Officer Wells knew why the candidate is absent, who replied she did not. Chair Mbah stated that he would prefer to speak with the candidate before making a recommendation, and kept this item in committee.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

5. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0021](#)) Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Ohemeng Kyeremateng as Director of Parks and Recreation.

Chief Administrative Officer Wells introduced the candidate, Ohemeng Kyeremateng, and stated they have a deep background in recreation and community services, including experience as the Deputy Director of Recreation for the City of Hartford, Connecticut, as well as with strategic planning, budgeting, capital improvements, and grant funding. Candidate Kyeremateng stated that they have spent their entire career working in public recreation and has an MBA with a specialization in recreation. Chair Mbah asked how the candidate will allocate limited city recreation resources, who replied that although they are not from Somerville, they will collaborate with other departments to ensure that programming and resources are allocated as fairly as possible. Councilor Link asked if there are any short-term projects that the candidate believes could be completed quickly, who replied that they have had meetings with their team recently to plan out both short- and long-term plans, and added that one area of focus will be communication with the public and a review of the current department website and reservation platform. Councilor Ewen-Campen expressed support for the candidate and requested that they consider adding regularly scheduled indoor recreational activities for children on nights and weekends, adding that this is a priority for many Somerville families. Councilor McLaughlin asked if the candidate has any experience with pools, who replied that they

have prior experience as a certified pool operator, and that if any issues arise with city pools, they will work quickly and closely with DPW to remedy them.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

6. Mayor's Request
(ID # [26-0016](#))

Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Kimberly Wells as Chief Administrative Officer.

Mayor Jake Wilson introduced the candidate, Kimberly Wells, and highlighted their 4.5 years of experience with the city as its City Clerk and noted that she has extensive and in-depth knowledge regarding municipal government structure and operations. Chair Mbah reiterated the Mayor's introduction and praised the candidate on the lasting impact her time as City Clerk has made on the city.

Kimberly Wells stated that although she will miss serving as City Clerk, she is enthusiastic about taking on the challenge of building the role of Chief Administrative Officer into a true operational arm of the city, and to collaborate with other departments to improve the systems that underlie our city government. Councilor Ewen-Campen stated that he has worked with the candidate for many years and has confidence in her integrity and passion for public service, and that he strongly supports her candidacy. Chair Mbah asked how the candidate would transition from a procedural role into an operational role, and the candidate replied that the City Clerk in the City of Somerville has an extended administrative role, and that this has allowed her to work with other departments throughout the city to move strategic initiatives forward. The candidate added that her experience working for the Collins Center has also given her insight into other operational components of the role of Chief Administrative Officer, including document management, software implementation, and strategic planning. Councilor Hardt expressed strong support for the candidate and emphasized her leadership abilities and integrity. Councilor McLaughlin asked how the candidate views the relationship between the City Council and the executive office, and the candidate replied that a primary goal of the administration is to strengthen its relationship with the City Council, and that she will work to bring Councilors to the table to work through cross-departmental projects.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

7. Order (ID # [25-1423](#)) By Councilor Mbah
That the City Clerk implement the hiring practices detailed within for positions in the City Council and City Clerk Departments.

Clerk Wells explained that the hiring practices for the City Council and City Clerk departments have multiple components, which include having a representative of the City Council on hiring panels. Clerk Wells added that having a member of the public on city hiring panels is not recommended because the hiring process itself involves the handling of confidential and sensitive information that is not suitable for release to members of the public. Clerk Wells also noted that recruitment practices seek a broad spectrum of candidates without consideration of demographics because the city does not want to favor a specific candidate because of their demographic classification, and that collecting and publicly releasing data regarding demographic characteristics would have a chilling effect and reduce the amount of quality applications received. Chair Mbah stated that the process may change under a new City Clerk, and Clerk Wells replied that such a change is unlikely because the hiring process as described is applied uniformly throughout the city.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- CAPM - 2026-02-02 Hearing Officer (with 26-0024)
- CAPM - 2026-02-02 Executive Office-VI-Chief Administrative Officer (with 256-0016)
- CAPM - 2026-02-02 Parks & Recreation-V-Director of Parks and Recreation (with 26-0021)