



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 1, 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 7:22 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:

Charles Breen – Chief Fire Engineer, Ann Gill – Director of Human Resources, 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 # [24-0483](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee Meeting of April 3, 2024.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

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

2. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0581](#))

Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Alyssa DuBois to the Board of Health.

This item was kept in committee due to a scheduling conflict.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

3. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0582](#))

Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Margaret H. Coit to the Board of Health.

This item was kept in committee due to a scheduling conflict.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

4. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0474](#))

Requesting confirmation of the promotion of Charles D. Richardson to the position of Fire Captain.

Chief Breen introduced the candidate, Lt. Charles Richardson, to the committee. Lt. Richardson has been in the department for 22 years and holds several rescue certifications. He is currently serving as Acting Captain in Fire Prevention.

Councilor Burnley asked the candidate what he has learned in the role as Acting Captain and what the city can do to improve supporting fire fighters. Lt. Richardson responded by saying that he learned to interact with various departments and he's learning the rules for different types of lab facilities. He said it would be helpful if there was more time to learn how to do specific paperwork tasks associated with the position and perhaps some additional training on the codes used by some companies.

Councilor Mbah asked Lt. Richardson how he would handle his role with respect to discipline and the candidate explained that fire fighters work in small groups and that allows for an immediate correction of unwanted actions. He noted that, under normal circumstances, discipline is progressive, but depending on the severity of the incident, the matter could go right up the chain of command. The ranking officer in charge should require that the work be done properly.

Councilor Sait asked Lt. Richardson if there is anything he wants to prioritize and he replied that he is working with a team of Fire Prevention personnel on ways to modernize the permitting process, which when complete will be very beneficial to the department. He would like to see the notification process automated to send advance notices to businesses advising them of upcoming inspections. Additionally, the team is meeting with CitizenServe staff to explore online permit payments.

Chair Pineda Neufeld asked the candidate what he's looking forward to in this new role and also what concerns he may have about it. Lt. Richardson reflected on his time serving in a company and said that he's learned that the smallest things he might have done for someone made a big difference to them. Chair Pineda Neufeld asked the candidate if he received the notice of a possible Executive Session and he replied that he did receive it. None of the committee members had any questions for the candidate that would require moving into an Executive Session.

Chair Pineda Neufeld explained that the appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council at its next meeting on May 9, 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