



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 20, 2022

6:00 PM

Others present: Danielle Palazo – Executive Administrator DPW, Jill Lathan – Commissioner DPW, Eric Weisman – Director of Operations DPW, Ben Bloomenthal – Director of Administration and Finance DPW, Chris Major – Assistant Chief SFD, Tim Mitsakis – Lieutenant SPD, Demetrios Vidalis – Superintendent of Water and Sewer, Jason Piques – Law, David Shapiro – Law, Catherine Lester Saichert – Law, Alan Inacio – OSPCD, Ed Bean – Auditor, Rich Raiche – Director of Capital Projects, Vithal Deshpande – Environmental Coordinator OSE, Meredith Gamble – Deputy Director SomerViva, Richelle Embree, Aneesh Sahni – Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Wilson and adjourned at 7:53 PM on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Kelly, Pineda Neufeld, Scott, Wilson), none against and 1 absent (Councilor McLaughlin).

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Jake Wilson, Vice Chair Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, Matthew McLaughlin, Judy Pineda Neufeld and Charlotte Kelly

1. Mayor's Request
(ID # [22-1667](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$200,000 grant with no new match required, from the City of Boston Office of Emergency Management to the Police Department for First Responder portable radios.

Richelle Embree informed the committee that the funds from this grant will be used to purchase 12 dual band radios for the Fire Department and 11 for the Police Department. Assistant Chief Chris Major explained that 2 of Somerville's companies are emergency rescue teams that may be called on to respond anywhere in the commonwealth and the new radios will allow them to have the necessary communication abilities that they need. He told the members that the Fire Department was trying to secure 30 single band radios but was unable to get approval from the Boston Office of Emergency Management, so the department had to opt for a smaller number of dual band radios. Assistant Chief Major said that 4 radios will be assigned to Tower 1, 4 will be assigned to Headquarters, 2 will be assigned to the Command Team and 2 will be assigned to Search and Rescue. In the Police Department, 5 radios will be assigned to the last group of new hires and the remaining radios will be used as backups or assigned to additional personnel joining the department. Lieutenant Mitsakis explained that Motorola has been very responsive to maintenance issues but with the older radios, there was some cost due to their age, e.g., finding parts for them and Assistant Chief Major noted that it costs at least \$700 to send out a radio for repair.

These new radios will be under warranty. Ms. Embree said that these radios do not have the technology to retain, share or distribute information needed for information sharing. Councilor Scott stated that he had concerns about Section 2-369 of Somerville’s Municipal Code and he would like these types of rolling contracts examined.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 2. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1538](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$16,900 grant with no new match required, from Mass Cultural Council to the Arts Council for unrestricted operating support.

A written response has been attached to the item.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 3. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1637](#))

Requesting the appropriation of \$60,155 from the CPA Undesignated Fund Balance for restoration of 181 Broadway.

Director Inacio explained that this is an off-cycle request made by the requestor to cover a funding gap. Councilor Kelly asked if this is an additional request for windows and Director Inacio said that it is not, rather it’s to cover some exterior work that was needed. With these funds, the requestor should be able to lock in their pricing for the project.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 4. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1671](#))

Requesting approval to create the Immigrant Legal Services Stabilization Fund.

Discussed with 22-1672, 22-1670.
 Deputy Director Gamble explained that the department is seeking to transfer funds to make them available for use for legal services. Councilor Kelly asked how much spent on legal services this fiscal year and Deputy Director

Gamble replied that \$20,000 has been spent to date. Auditor Bean said that expenses and budgetary operations will be moved to the stabilization fund. Deputy Director Gamble said services are supplied to immigrants after an intake process and after taking advantage of any other services that may be available, thus allowing the funds to be retained for more difficult cases. Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked if the \$60,000 request was enough and Deputy Director Gamble replied that the department will examine what is spent this fiscal year and will request additional funds, if needed.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

5. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1672](#))

Requesting approval to appropriate \$60,000 from the Immigrant Legal Services Stabilization Fund to fund legal services for immigrants seeking permanent residency.

Discussed with 22-1671, 22-1670.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

6. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1670](#))

Requesting approval of a transfer of \$60,000 from the SomerViva Professional & Technical Services Account to the Immigrant Legal Services Stabilization Fund to provide funding for immigrant legal defense services.

Discussed with 22-1671, 22-1672.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

7. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1674](#))

Requesting approval to establish a Consolidated Gift Account to accept donations for the Vietnam Moving Wall event on Veterans Day Weekend.

Discussed with 22-1673

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 8. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1673](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$1,000 donation from Iron Workers Local 7 Union to fund the Vietnam Moving Wall event November 10-14.

Discussed with 22-1674
 Written response was submitted and attached.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 9. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1557](#)) Requesting approval to create the BikeShare Stabilization Fund and accept a payment to the Fund of \$75,000 from developer contributions to sponsor new Bike Share Stations.

Discussed with 22-1559
 Director Inacio explained that this is a condition of the Planning Board's approval and will be subsidized by the developer.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 10. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1559](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$75,000 from the Bike Share Stabilization Fund for installation and startup costs of a BlueBike station at the 100 Chestnut Development site.

Discussed with 22-1557

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 11. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1666](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$255,097.62 using available funds in various Department of Public Works Accounts.

Discussed with 22-1677

Director Lathan and her team were on hand to address this item. Director Blumenthal spoke about the continued efforts expended by DPW staff to clear up the backlog of unpaid invoices, several of which were for emergency work. Councilor Kelly asked about the increase in heat and electric bills and Director Weisman clarified that the invoices were from the net metering process and not from higher rates being charged. He also explained that at the end of the fiscal year, the books are closed, however, 4 purchase orders were carried over in error. Councilor Scott asked for an explanation of the net metering credit (NMC) and Director Weisman explained the city paid a company in East Boston for electricity and then received credits from its utility company. Councilor Scott also asked about concrete and sidewalk repair invoices that referenced TZE as a vendor performing the work and Director Weisman explained that the vendor was awarded a contract since the DPW didn't have the expertise to perform some of the work. Director Blumenthal explained that the DPW is working with its vendors to try to get invoices delivered in a more timely fashion. Director Lathan noted that what a vendor tells the city regarding outstanding invoices is taken at face value. Councilor Scott inquired about invoices from Northeast Tree and asked why the work was not done by DPW staff and Director Weisman explained that these were for a mix of work, including some specialty work.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 12. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1677](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$62,020 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Grounds Account for tree services.

Discussed with 22-1666

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 13. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1535](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$36,000 grant with no new match required, from the MA Department of Environmental Protection to the Department of Public Works for the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program.

Environmental Coordinator Deshpande explained that this is a new grant and funds will be used to offset some of the department’s printing and stationary costs, as well as, to purchase recycling carts and containers. He also commented that the department is exploring the possibility of using grant funding for a composting program and he hopes to have updates around the beginning of the year.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin
- 14. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1678](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$121,500 from the Salary Contingency, Salaries Account to the DPW Highway, Other Lump Sum Benefits account to fund an agreement with the Somerville Municipal Employees Association.

Discussed with 22-1679
 Chair Wilson noted that this may have to move into Executive Session. Assistant City Solicitor Jason Piques explained that this relates to an arbitrator’s award, ordering reinstatement and back pay, etc., and that the city has an obligation to make the employee whole as a result of the award. Councilor Scott asked about the source for the funds and if their use is acceptable. Auditor Bean explained that there is not enough lag money in the DPW budget and said that the funds may be used without any problem. Councilor Scott stated that he was shocked that there’s insufficient lag funds, given the vacancies in the department and Auditor Bean said he’s not concerned about running the fund dry. Councilor Scott queried whether this might affect future contract negotiations and Auditor Bean said city wants to settle this matter as soon as possible.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin
- 15. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1679](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$15,000 from the Salary Contingency, Salaries Account to the Law Department Judgments & Settlements Account to fund an Agreement with the Somerville Municipal Employees Association.

Discussed with 22-1678

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 16. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1563](#))

Requesting a supplemental appropriation of \$24,000 to the Law Department Salaries Account to fund an anticipated deficit.

City Solicitor Shapiro explained there was an oversight in not funding the paralegal position and based on open positions and lag funds, the problem can be rectified with the approval of this item. He also stated that this amount would ensure a level budget allowing the paralegal to be paid. Director Sahni said that there have been 2 recent additions to the Law Department, however 2 vacant positions remain.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 17. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1639](#))

Requesting approval of the termination of the London Street easement.

Director Raiche explained this is a quid pro quo associated with the development at 100 Chestnut. There was an easement that was unutilized and it was traded for another easement on Poplar Street which will be useful to the city. The Council has already approved the Poplar Street portion of the swap.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 18. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1662](#))

Requesting authorization to borrow \$4,390,000 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for the recurring FY23 Sewer Improvements program.

Items 22-1662, 22-1663, 22-1664, 22-1665 were discussed together. Director Raiche gave a presentation and noted the following highlights:

FY22 Update

- Ward 2 Sewer Rehab
 - 14 point-repairs completed; 3 point-repairs remaining.
 - 182 LF of 10-inch and 215 LF of 8-inch gravity sewer pipe replaced; 50 LF of gravity sewer replacement remaining.
 - 150 LF of water main relocated
 - 6,250 LF of cured-in-place sewer pipe lining; early November through January 2023

FY23 Intended Use

- Winter Hill and East Somerville Sewer Rehabilitation
- Target infiltration removal and highest severity structural defects
- Planned Scope of Work:
 - Trenchless Rehabilitation: 10,000 LF
 - Full-Length Dig Replacement: 3,000 LF
- Design complete early 2023
- Bidding Spring 2023

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

19. Mayor's Request
 (ID # [22-1663](#))

Requesting authorization to borrow \$7,110,000 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for the recurring FY23 Water Main Rehabilitation program.

Items 22-1662, 22-1663, 22-1664, 22-1665 were discussed together. Director Raiche gave a presentation and noted the following highlights:

FY21 Work completed

- Holland and Broadway Water Main Rehabilitations
 - 1,653 LF cleaned and lined
 - 695 LF completed on Holland Street
 - 958 LF completed on Broadway
 - 64 water gate valves were replaced
 - 28 valves replaced on Holland Street water main
 - 36 valves replaced on Broadway
 - 3 Lead service replacements completed

FY2023 Intended Use

- Central Broadway
 - High likelihood and consequence of failure based on 2020 risk-based plan.
 - Connects to primary source of water (MWRA) for this area of the City.
 - Remove debris accumulation (tuberculation) and install cementitious

liner to protect existing pipe.

- Planned Scope:
 - 2,800 LF of 14-inch water main,
 - 4,050 LF of 12-inch water main and
 - 450 LF of 10-inch water main.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

20. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1664](#))

Requesting authorization to borrow \$1,730,000 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for the annual recurring FY23 Sewer System Evaluation and Infiltration/Inflow Assessment.

Items 22-1662, 22-1663, 22-1664, 22-1665 were discussed together. Director Raiche said this request is to allow the annual inspection of the sewer system, which began in FY-19, to continue. The program expanded in FY-20, however, no funds were requested for FY-21. He gave a presentation and noted the following highlights:

FY19 / Greater DSQ condition assessment results

- 6.8 miles inspected (4% of system)
 - 2.2 miles require heavy cleaning (33% of inspected)
 - 123 cubic yards debris estimated (approx. 10 truck loads)
 - 18 locations require dig-and-replace spot repairs
 - 7 locations require trenchless spot repairs
 - 0.8 miles require full trenchless structural rehabilitation (12% of inspected)
 - 1.1 miles require trenchless lining to eliminate I/I (16% of inspected)

FY20 / Ward 2 Condition assessment results

- 24.7 miles inspected (14.5% of system)
 - 8 miles heavy cleaning (33% of inspected)
 - 280 tons of debris removed (24 truckloads)
 - 45 pipes require full-length dig replacement / 110 spot repairs
 - 4 miles require trenchless rehabilitation / 36 spot repairs (16% of inspected)
 - 5.3 miles could not access
 - Percentages similar to Greater DSQ area

FY22 / Lower Broadway assessment results

Ongoing Project

Complete Through 9/30/22 | At Project's Completion (Estimated)

- 16.0 miles inspected (44% of project) | 36.4 miles (21% of system)

- 58 tons of debris removed | 132 tons
- 0.9 miles require full-length dig replacement (6% of inspected) | 2.1 miles
- 2.4 miles require trenchless rehab. & 28 spot repairs (15% of inspected) | 5.5 miles & 64 spot repairs
- 38,000 gal. per day of infiltration from 2300 observed defects | 86,000 gpd / 5200 defects
- Field observations and findings similar to Greater DSQ and Ward 2

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

21. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1665](#))

Requesting authorization to borrow \$1,477,738 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for participation in the FY23 MWRA Lead Line Replacement Program.

Items 22-1662, 22-1663, 22-1664, 22-1665 were discussed together. Director Raiche gave a presentation and noted the following highlights:

Lead water service replacement program

- Entering third year of construction
- 194 services replaced to date
- 30 services confirmed non-lead containing
- 100 service replacements planned for Phase 3
- Brochures mailed and information available at:

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/programs/lead-service-line-replacementprogram>

Director Raiche noted that about 450 homes may have lead pipes and Superintendent Vidalis said that further inspection of pipes will continue when work is being performed in the house.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Kelly
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin