



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 22, 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	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Ward Two Alderman	Absent	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Alderman At Large	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	Alderman at Large	Absent	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	

Others present: School Committeeman Andre Green, Michael Glavin - OSPCD, Frank Wright - Law, Candace Cooper - Personnel, Doug Kress - HHS, John Rattigan - US2, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Aldermen's Chamber and was called to order at 6:10 PM by Chairman White and adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Approval of the May 8, 2018 Minutes

RESULT:	TABLED
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Public Hearing: 205501 - a request for approval of an Administrative Order providing for the appointment of school physicians and nurses by the School Committee.

205501: Requesting approval of an Administrative Order providing for the appointment of school physicians and nurses by the School Committee.

Each speaker was given five minutes. Eleven of the 13 school nurses were present at tonight's public hearing and Ms. Maria Tully spoke on their behalf, reading a statement against realigning the School Nurse position as part of the Somerville Public Schools' Student Services Department. Mr. Ed Halloran, President of the SMEA, stated that the nurses do not want to be

transferred nor does SMEA want to transfer them. The city has allowed the nurses salaries to fall short of other communities. The committee was told that there are concerns from the nurses that have not been addressed by the city.

Mr. Kress said that the Personnel Department has been unable to fill nursing positions due to low wages. The city has been using temporary nursing staff and has been unable to gain enough support for the city's needs. School nurses are usually organized under the school superintendent in other communities and employed according to the academic calendar year. Mr. Kress is in full support of shifting the nurses to the school system. The committee was informed that the Mayor has the administrative authority to make such transfers internally but would need the approval of eight aldermen. Mr. Kress considers the loss of so many school nurses to be a public health crisis. Five staff members have left the city employment to go to other schools. School nurses are more than just nurses to the students, they are trusted members of the community, and they identify barriers and challenges with students and develop strong family relationships. Ms. Cooper, Director of Personnel stated that the city recognizes and supports the nurses and said that a couple of proposals to increase their wages were submitted to them.

There were questions on whether the nurses would remain unionized even if they are reassigned under the School Department and how the salary would be brought up to the level to attract and maintain nurses. There was also a conversation about splitting the existing relationship of the nurses currently in Unit A and if it would be legal to split them from the existing bargaining unit. A document was distributed that compared the city's nurses to those in other communities and the administration told the committee that they had not seen this document before and will need time to evaluate it before commenting on it. It was also stated that the nurses were transferred from Unit B to A, which is a smaller unit, back in 2013. The nurses work hours are school days 7:50 a.m. to 2:50 p.m.

The committee inquired how the nurses would be supervised if they are transferred to the School Department and what would happen to Ms. Koty, who is their current supervisor? Ms. Tully responded by saying that the state mandates that the supervisor must be a nurse and someone with clinical background. The department head must be in a clinical position to evaluate the nurses. The nurses only recently found out about the possibility of moving to the school department and they have many questions about the move.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205477: That the Administration report to this Board when the city will receive payment installments from Federal Realty Investment Trust relevant to the affordable housing waiver.

Ms. Connor stated that the response to this request is on the agenda for the May 24, 2018 BOA meeting. Chairman White asked that documents be sent to committee members prior to a meeting where they may be discussed.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205478: That the Director of Purchasing, with the Administration, provide this Board with an analysis of the cost of raising the living wage to \$15.00 per hour, and determine if a

more appropriate inflation adjuster may be used.

Ms. Connor said that the Purchasing Department is working on this matter with the City Auditor, as city contracts are more complicated.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205663: That the Administration consider adopting MGL c58 s8(c), which would allow the city to abate a portion of outstanding property taxes to create affordable housing.

Ms. Connor requested additional time to review this request and will come back to the committee when a response is ready. Alderman Rossetti said the city should consider adopting this ordinance as an opportunity to advance affordable housing goals. The committee will continue to review this matter.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205816: That the Director of SPCD provide to this Board before the submission of the FY19 budget, a description and status of each major commercial development that has applied to, or been permitted by, the Planning Board in FY17 and FY18.

Mr. Glavin distributed a document for the committee to review.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205905: That the Director of SPCD provide to this Board, in conjunction with its FY19 budget review, a list of upcoming commercial development and include the square footage and linkage payment projections, with corresponding payment dates.

Mr. Glavin informed the committee that the information is being compiled and will be delivered to the committee when completed.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204755: Requesting the transfer of a City-owned parcel (82-D-1) in the North Prospect Block to the Redevelopment Authority.

Mr. Glavin informed the committee that the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (“SRA”) currently controls the remainder of the site that is to be sold to US2 as part of the Land Disposition Agreement between US2 and the SRA for the D2 block. Tonight’s request involves a 7,475 sq. ft. parking lot that is owned by the City and needs to be conveyed to the SRA. Under the Master Land Disposition Agreement, this parcel is included in the D2 block that the SRA is to convey to US2. The value of the parking lot will be appraised and US2 will pay that price in addition to the price that they will pay to the Redevelopment Authority for the remainder of the site that has an estimated value of \$9.3 million. Mr. Glavin stated the funds from the sale of the land would go to the city. John Rattigan, from US2, distributed a fact sheet showing the overall US2 development and project implementation timeline.

The purchase price that US2 will pay for the D2 block also will include reimbursements to the City for expenses, including eminent domain costs and the remediation of environmental

contamination on the site. There were questions about a biotech lab that will probably open in Q1 of 2021 in time for the Green Line opening. Committee members stated they had received comments from some residents who had just learned about this matter and raised a number of questions about the proposed transfer. Members stated that they were not prepared to vote on the item yet and mentioned the need for a public hearing. There were more conversations about putting an athletic field on the roof of the parking garage for D2, which US2 said would be problematic.

The next meeting on this matter will be in July.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205843: Requesting acceptance of a \$32,000 grant with no new match required, from the Metro North Regional Employment Board Summer Youth Works Grant to the Health & Human Services Department for youth employment programming.

Alderman Niedergang recused himself from this item.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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205907: Requesting the appropriation of \$200,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance to the Law Department's Legal Services Account to fund anticipated outside legal counsel invoices.

Mr. Wright explained that there are other legal matters pending and that the requested amount is needed to cover expenses for this fiscal year. There are outstanding invoices of \$37,000 that the department would be able to cover, but any billing for the months of May and June would need the funding.

Alderman Rossetti asked for a sheet, line by line, on how many times they have come before the BOA requesting funds with full details, dates and amounts. This information will be needed for the budget hearing in a couple of weeks. Chairman White suggested Mr. Wright work with the city auditor to obtain this information and to state why the city solicitor did not anticipate these needs.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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Handouts:

- Wage Comparison (with 205501)
- Student Services Letter (with 205501)
- SMEA School Nurses Statement (with 205501)
- Major Commercial Development Update (with 205816)
- D2 Project Fact Sheet (with 204755)