



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

July 12, 2022
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jake Wilson	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Present	
Judy PinedaNeufeld	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	
Charlotte Kelly	City Councilor At Large	Present	

This meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:00 pm and adjourned at 8:00 pm. Councilor McLaughlin moved to adjourn, and the motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Others present: Aneesh Sahni - Mayor's Office, Edward Bean - Auditing, Tom Galligani - OSPCD, Michael Feloney - OSPCD, Alan Inacio - OSPCD, Charles Femino - SPD, Richelle Embree - SPD, Sean Sheehan - SPD, Sean Sylvester - SPD, James Donovan - SPD, Stephanie Widzowski - Assistant Clerk of Committees.

Approval of the June 22, 2022 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Transfers and Appropriations

213896: That the Director of Finance report on the process to reallocate funds reimbursed from the Green Line Extension Project.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213940: Requesting approval to re-purpose the Green Line Extension (GLX) Stabilization Fund to create an "Early Action" Affordable Housing Program and transfer the balance of the GLX Stabilization Fund to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Dir. Bean explained that Somerville no longer needs the money in the stabilization fund, and the city has also been absolved of debt accrued from the GLX project. He said that repurposing the fund requires a two-thirds vote of the full council. Dir. Feloney said that they have not been able to provide early action funding to enable third parties - usually nonprofits - to secure sites for

new affordable housing. Reallocation would allow the city to ramp up affordable housing quickly in the face of increasing displacement.

Councilor Kelly asked about the intended use for the early action fund. Dir. Galligani said that the fund would give them the flexibility to address needs as they arise, and may allow the city to bid on properties before developers. Councilor Scott asked if the funds were used to pay off accrued interest. Dir. Bean said that the total interest paid on the \$30 million principle was \$638,594. He said that the state committed to giving Somerville back the interest, but it still will not make the city whole.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Wilson, Scott, McLaughlin, PinedaNeufeld, Kelly

213854: Requesting approval of a transfer of \$7,076 from the Police Overtime Account to the Grant Match Account for the Metro Mayors Coalition Shannon Grant match requirement.

Taken together with item 213856.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [3 TO 2]
AYES:	Wilson, McLaughlin, PinedaNeufeld
NAYS:	Scott, Kelly

Grant Acceptances

213856: Requesting acceptance of a \$22,692 grant, with required match, from the Metro Mayors Coalition Shannon Initiative to the Police Department for youth violence prevention.

Taken together with item 213854. Chief Femino explained that the grant would allow SPD more time to engage the community about gang and gun violence. He said that the initiative takes a data-driven approach on crime analysis, and that through this grant SPD has engaged with youth in the Mystic River Development area through games, but also do outreach in the city more generally.

Councilor Kelly asked questions about the grant application. The conversation focused on demographic information being collected from arrests or citations, plain clothes officers, and the role of hot-spot patrolling versus engagement. Councilor Kelly expressed concern that of the five strategies the Shannon Initiative had suggested for curbing gang and gun violence, SPD appeared to focus solely on hot-spot patrolling in its application. Chief Femino responded that prevention and community awareness were highlighted in their letter of collaboration and reassured Councilor Kelly that SPD has been working on engagement since the application was submitted. Councilor Kelly requested a written follow-up on how demographic information of suspected gang members is being kept.

Councilor Scott referred to the grant conditions attachment that said one requirement is to submit information to the crime reporting unit at the Commonwealth Fusion Center. He asked if that

was Coplink and expressed concerns in using that program. Chief Femino said that SPD is no longer submitting identifiable information on juveniles to Coplink after last year's discussion.

Chair Wilson asked how this approach to curbing gang and gun violence differs from the anti-gang ordinance in the 2000s. Chief Femino described the ordinance, which has since been repealed, and restated the data-driven aspect of this initiative.

Chair Wilson moved to recommend approval of items 213854 and 213856 conditional upon having councilors' questions answered in writing before the Council meeting. Councilor McLaughlin spoke in favor of the initiative and said that everyone he has spoken to in the Mystic River Development wants more policing. Councilor Kelly said that she would be more in favor of supporting the item if the grant application had accounted for other tactics besides hot-spot patrol, but as is will not support the item. Councilor Pineda Neufeld expressed support, describing her experiences seeing community members confide in and share their concerns with officers.

Councilor Scott said it felt like more information was needed before taking action on this item, but multiple councilors had concerns about not approving this funding before the recess, seeing as crime increases during the summer. Chief Femino said that he would provide answers to councilors' questions in time for this week's City Council meeting. Councilor McLaughlin requested a breakdown of non-patrol items that can be funded through this grant. Councilor Pineda Neufeld requested updated statistics on gun violence in Somerville since the submission of the grant application.

RESULT:	APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS. [3 TO 2]
AYES:	Wilson, McLaughlin, PinedaNeufeld
NAYS:	Scott, Kelly

213493: Requesting acceptance of a \$45,904.98 grant with no new match required, from the Boston Mayor's Office of Emergency Management to the Police Department for the purchase of security software and equipment to enhance physical security for city property and buildings.

Chair Wilson explained that this is related to item 213489, which was discussed in the Legislative Matters committee and unanimously recommended for approval, subject to conditions of providing written information. Dir. Sahni said that information will be provided to the full Council before their meeting and that he has been working with the company that makes this technology to make that information available. He explained that the school department voted unanimously for this technology, and the cost of installation for the Guardian shooter detection system - the same product used in the old high school - exceeds the amount asked for here by a few thousand. The technology comes with five years of free maintenance, and then the school department is willing to budget annually for maintenance.

Councilor Kelly asked if the \$75,000 coming from the same fund could be used to cover some equipment costs. Dir. Sahni said that the extra few thousand dollars not covered in this grant are covered by the school department.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Wilson, Scott, McLaughlin, PinedaNeufeld, Kelly

213857: Requesting acceptance of, and approval to expend, a \$75,000 grant with no new match required, from the Boston Mayor's Office of Emergency Management to the Police Department for Special Response Team expenditures and overtime.

Captain Donovan explained that the grant supporting the Special Response Team allows funds to be split equally between equipment and training. Equipment is strictly regulated by Homeland Security and does not include weapons. Captain Donovan spoke to the response team's capabilities and successes resolving tense situations non-lethally.

Chair Wilson asked what percentage of SRT members have done CIT training. Captain Donovan said he could provide that information for the Council meeting. Councilor Kelly also requested a specific breakdown of how hours are spent. She also asked if there is record of SRT officers being used in a "gray zone" situation that may require a tactical response. Captain Donovan said he would look up that information. Councilor Scott asked for clarification that SRT is not part of NEMLEC, which turned into a discussion of the use of the NEMLEC team versus SRT officers.

Councilor Scott requested a written response on the permitted equipment to be purchased with the grant. Chief Femino said that equipment earmarked for this grant includes nightvision goggles and a replacement for their current supply of gas masks.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [4 TO 1]
AYES:	Wilson, McLaughlin, PinedaNeufeld, Kelly
NAYS:	Scott

Unfinished Business

213818: Director of Infrastructure & Asset Management conveying the Water & Sewer Capital Investment Plan update for May 2022.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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213626: Requesting approval to appropriate and transfer \$5,335,164 in unallocated COVID-19 monies from the COVID-19 Stabilization Fund to the Somerville High School Construction Fund to pay costs of the construction of the Somerville High School, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed for the project by a like amount.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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212987: That the Director of Economic Development and the Director of Procurement and Contracting Services work with community partners to assess, report, and provide recommendations for improving the city's procurement rates in order to support local businesses.

Chair Wilson expressed his support for the inclusion of the disparity study in goals for FY23 and said that Councilor Burnley was satisfied with the work on this item. Dir. Sahni said that the Administration has started to work on the vendor management system through a combination of ARPA and procurement funds. The system will be staffed by OSPCD.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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212849: That the administration assign staff to support the Wage Theft Advisory Committee.

Chair Wilson said that Councilor Gomez Mouakad had planned to write a memo for this item, and that he wants to keep this item in committee until that memo is ready. Dir. Sahni summarized his conversations with Councilor Gomez Mouakad, in which there was a focus on the implementation of the ordinance.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Reference Material:

- 2022.07.13 SPD Response Agenda Item 213857_final (with 213857)
- 2022.07.14 SPD Response Agenda Items 213856 & 213854_final (with 213856, 213854)