



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Public Health and Public Safety Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 11, 2023

6:00 PM

The meeting took place virtually via Zoom and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Kelly and adjourned at 6:44 PM on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors McLaughlin, Davis and Kelly), none against and none absent.

Others present:

Karin Carroll – HHS Director, Neha Singh – Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Peter Forcellese – Legislative Clerk.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Charlotte Kelly, Vice Chair Lance L. Davis and Matthew McLaughlin

1. Committee Minutes
(ID # [23-1649](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Public Health and Public Safety Committee Meeting of November 2, 2023.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: Chairperson Kelly and Vice Chair Davis

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

2. Order
(ID # [23-1758](#)) By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Director of Health and Human Services provide the Ward 1 City Councilor with monthly updates on efforts to address homelessness in East Somerville.

This item was discussed with #23-1283

Director Carroll gave a summary of the actions being taken to address homelessness issues, as follows:

- The Health and Human Services Department (HHS) is working with the Somerville Homeless Coalition (SHC) and will be adding mobile outreach workers to their team to help with the effort of securing a shower van,
- The division of community health workers in HHS now has a director, an Advisory Board, policies, and it's first community health worker on board, with two more to be hired this winter,
- A demonstration is scheduled for tomorrow for a hand held referral platform application (used in VT),
- The Public Health Nursing team will be convening a regional group to address a recent Hep A outbreak in the homeless population and will be estimating the cost to supply vaccinations throughout the city

in conjunction with outreach teams and the Cambridge Health Alliance,

- Plans for emergency warming centers are coming together and HHS is trying to get a contract with an operator in place, while also exploring a fall back position to provide some services if an operator can't be found,
- Next week, the City will be hosting a regional informational recruitment event in City Hall to get volunteers for the Medical Reserve Corps,
- The Administration has begun a "weekly huddle" to run through any key issues facing city departments that deal with the homelessness situation,
- Discussions were held with MA DOT to come up with protocols to deal with issues occurring under Route 93.

Councilor McLaughlin stated that he's interested in the weekly meeting information and what specifically is being done, adding that he would like monthly updates of those weekly meetings and monthly updates of the resources provided to people in East Somerville and the number of interactions with homeless persons and the results of those interactions.

Director Carroll explained that most operators are non profit and their numbers are few. Most don't have the resources to flex up for 3 months of winter. Specifics will be worked out with operators tomorrow, but there is a defined scope of what needs to be in place. The city is looking for the capacity to accommodate twenty people per night. Director Carroll noted that space has been identified already.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

3. Resolution
(ID # [23-1283](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

That the Administration update this Council on the progress toward providing direct homeless services to East Somerville residents in temporary and permanent locations within Ward 1.

This item was discussed with #23-1758

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Order
(ID # [22-2111](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen and Councilor Wilson

That the Chief of Police report to this Council, the percentage of requested traffic details for construction projects that have been filled by Somerville Police Department officers, filled by non-Somerville police officers, and unfilled, for the past three years.

Chair Kelly noted that this item was dealt with this past fall. Councilor

Davis commented that the question was asked because some details were not being filled. He noted that some other municipalities are now using use non-police personnel to assist with traffic flow and pedestrian safety and he would like to see some flexibility with this in future contracts.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Resolution
 (ID # [23-1393](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin and Councilor Wilson
That the Administration update the City Council on the status of body cameras for police officers.

Director Singh told the committee that the Administration is reviewing the information, adding that some of the language will have to be negotiated with the unions. Discussions are ongoing and the Administration will be back to the Council on this matter. Councilor Davis stated that there is a proposal by Councilor Ewen-Campen (Item #22-1428) in the Legislative Matters Committee that also deals with body worn cameras. Councilor Davis also noted that Deputy Chief Ward told him he had a draft of a possible policy which might be helpful. Chair Kelly acknowledged that parts of an agreement would have to be negotiated, but policies and procedures may be set under management discretion.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED