

John Long

From: K Molloy [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 21, 2021 1:10 AM
To: All City Council; Mayor; City Clerk Contact
Subject: My comments on the proposed FY2022 City Budget

Greetings City Councilors and Mayor Joe,

I'm writing to express my comments on the proposed FY2022 City Budget.

I do not approve of increasing the police department budget, and in fact I suggest that that budget be reduced in order to fund some other departments that badly need more funding. My impression from the Chief's presentation last week and this proposed budget is that it represents maintaining the status quo, not a reimagining effort in any way.

Instead I would like to see that funding go to:

-- Two ADA compliance positions.

-- Mobility and Engineering department to increase whatever is needed to make Somerville's streets safe and accessible.

-- Affordable housing initiatives. And please fund some housing for teachers and staff in our schools. It's really alarming that teachers in our schools cannot afford to live in Somerville (a topic related to my next item).

-- Parking for teachers and staff at the new SHS. As a resident/tax payer, I voted for Question 5 back in 2016 to approve the tax increase for funding SHS. At that time, the construction plan included a parking facility. Subsequently, that parking plan was removed, and not replaced with any parking plan. I never would have approved my taxes going toward funding a new high school with no parking. I've been a strong advocate for car-free transportation options in this city for many years, but it makes no sense to assume so many many teachers/staff from out-of-town are all going to commute to SHS by GLX or bike. Instead, many are facing unsecured/unpredictable parking on a daily basis, and this situation will get worse during the several months of crappy New England weather. Please fund and fix this problem before September.

Best regards,

Karen Molloy

[REDACTED]
Somerville, 02143

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [All City Council](#); [City Clerk Contact](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: FY22 Budget
Date: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 7:09:52 AM

Mr Mayor and Honorable Councilors,

There is an old quote, usually attributed to Upton Sinclair: "It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on not understanding it." H.L. Mencken paraphrased this as "**Never argue with a man whose job depends on not being convinced.**"

These quotes have been on my mind as I have watched the City grapple with the question of the Police budget.

The Mayor's job, through his staff, is to prepare what they believe to be a fair, legal, and workable budget. The City Council's job is to review and understand the budget, and to make cuts to steer the city in the direction of our shared priorities and ethics.

I respect the dutiful, process-oriented approach that the Mayor and the Police Chief have taken. I also see how they are bound by a web of negotiated commitments, obligations, longstanding practices, career identities, and self-interests. Bureaucracies do not shrink of their own accord. Organizations do not transform themselves. The arguments of the Chief and the Mayor are the arguments of men whose jobs depend on not being convinced.

This year's budget proposal from the Mayor and the Chief is for cautious and incremental growth in our police department - as if the events of 2020 never happened.

It falls to the city council to create urgency and force change.

Councilor Niedergang's detailed proposal for \$2M in reductions strikes me as a cautious, well reasoned, and frankly conservative starting point.

The council has exceedingly limited power in this process - I urge you to use it.

I will close by thanking everybody involved: Thanks to all of you, including the City Clerk and the finance / budget staff, for running a transparent, comprehensible, and high minded process. I have lived in many cities, and I have never felt so directly connected to any city as I do to Somerville.

Good luck with these decisions, and thank you all for your service.

-Chris Dwan
Ward 2 Resident