



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:00 p.m. and adjourned at 7:23 p.m. on a Roll Call Vote: 5 in favor (Councilors Pineda Neufeld, Clingan, Kelly, Scott, Wilson), 0 opposed, 0 absent.

Others present:

Michael Potere – Assistant Clerk of Committees; Michael Mastrobuoni – Budget Director; Hannah Carrillo – Legislative Liaison; Timothy Mitsakis – Lieutenant, Somerville Police Department; Karin Carroll – Director of Health & Human Services; Alan Inacio – Director of Finance & Community Development; Julie Spurr-Knight – Finance and Administration Director.

Roll Call

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

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-1418](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of September 26, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

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

Funds and Accounts

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1398](#)) Requesting the use of \$1,500 in available funds in the Inspectional Services Staff Development Account to establish a Food and Refreshments Account, to provide food and refreshments for staff during quarterly training sessions.

Chair Wilson noted that a memorandum regarding this Item was previously circulated to the Committee.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

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

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1407](#)) Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Section 2-373 of the Code of Ordinances, to establish a Vaccine Revolving Fund.

Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Item 4 (ID # 23-1408).

Director Carroll explained that the purpose of this request is to reinstitute a revolving account to fund free vaccines for Somerville residents, which can now be more effectively administered because a Deputy Director of Public Health has been hired. Director Carroll continued that having funds in a revolving account will allow the department to respond to unpredictable vaccination needs of the city’s residents, and would include, among other things, COVID vaccines and flu shots. Director Carroll also stated that the \$60,000 amount was selected because the cost of vaccines is rising.

Councilor Kelly asked if there is a discounted rate on these vaccines for buying in bulk, and Director Carroll replied that the state helps the city negotiate process for the vaccines, but that this is the first year that the city has to pay for its own vaccines, as opposed to the past few years where they were provided at no cost by the state or federal governments, and the final cost is still unknown.

Chair Wilson expressed concern that municipalities are now being required to fund their own vaccine programs.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked about the demand for free COVID vaccines administered by the city last year, and Director Carroll replied that the need this year will be different because, in years past, the vaccines were provided at no cost from other providers, and that there is a belief that demand will now be greater.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked if these funds could be used to purchase the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine, and Director Carroll replied that they could be, but that the RSV vaccine is much more expensive than the COVID vaccine or flu shot. Director Carroll noted that the flexibility that having a revolving account will bring will allow the department to respond dynamically when the needs of the community are better understood.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

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

- 4. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1408](#)) Requesting approval to authorize a FY 2024 expenditure limitation of \$60,000 for the Vaccine Revolving Fund.

Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Item 3 (ID # 23-1407).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

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

Transfers

- 5. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1538](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$30,020 from the Parking Department Parking Meter Receipts Account to the Capital-Building Lease Account for rental of parking spaces per the lease agreement between the Trustees of Tufts College and the City of Somerville.

Director Mastrobuoni stated that this Item is the result of a miscommunication regarding the city’s lease with Tufts, and that the lease did not include these parking spaces, adding that this Item will be included in the budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

Councilor Kelly asked about the total cost of the lease prior to this expense, and Director Mastrobuoni replied that it was just over \$1 million. Councilor Kelly asked how many parking spaces the city receives for this amount, and Director Mastrobuoni replied that this request covers 80 parking spaces at a rate of \$38 each per month.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked if these spots can be used by people to access the Council on Aging, and Director Mastrobuoni confirmed that they could, and that the Council on Aging is a party to the conversations regarding this lease.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

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

- 6. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1401](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$29,780 from the Health and Human Services Professional and Technical Services Account to the Council on Aging Professional and Technical Services Account for nutritional counseling and education at the Senior Center.

Director Carroll stated this Item will fund a consultant who does nutritional education and counseling at the Council on Aging.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

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

- 7. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1403](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$11,059.72 from the Health and Human Services Professional and Technical Account to the Department of Public Works Building Rentals Account for three additional seasonal, portable bathrooms.

Director Carroll explained that this transfer is being requested because the Department of Public Works handles the operation and maintenance of portable bathrooms more frequently and conveniently than the Department of Health and Human Services.

Chair Wilson asked how many months this amount of money would cover, and Director Carroll responded that it would cover these portable bathrooms until December of 2024.

Councilor Kelly asked where these portable bathrooms will be located, and Director Carroll responded that they are already installed and the locations are available on a map that will be provided to the Committee.

Councilor Kelly asked why this request is coming up now, and Director Carroll explained that the department intended to include this in the FY 2024 budget review process but it was inadvertently omitted.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

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

Prior Year Invoices

- 8. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1475](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$25,418.02 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Electricity Account for solar net metering.

Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Items 9 (ID # 23-1474) and 10 (ID # 23-1496).

Director Spurr-Knight explained that these Items reflect a delay from the time when the solar credits hit the electricity bill and when the department actually receives the invoices.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

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

- 9. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1474](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$44,167.81 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Electricity Account for solar net metering.

Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Items 8 (ID # 23-1475) and 10 (ID # 23-1496).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

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

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10. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1496](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$26,721.10 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Electricity Account for solar net metering.
- Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Items 8 (ID # 23-1475) and 9 (ID # 23-1474).
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
11. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1500](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$371.44 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Motor Parts & Accessories Account for pump replacement parts.
- Director Spurr-Knight explained that this Item reflects expenses that were incurred in June but did not have a corresponding purchase order, or else the purchase order was inadvertently closed early.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
12. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1499](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$280 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Employee Training Account for Construction Supervisor continuing education.
- Director Spurr-Knight explained that this Item reflects a reimbursement for classes taken by an employee who was unaware of the deadline for the request, but that an exception should be made in this case because the employee completed the class, earned a construction supervisor license, and is an asset to the city.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
13. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1498](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$1,436.40 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Grounds R&M Facility, Parks & Playgrounds for irrigation system repair and maintenance.
- Director Spurr-Knight explained that these invoices were inadvertently overlooked during year-end account reconciliation.
- Chair Wilson and Councilor Scott expressed support for this Item, noting that it allowed the Lincoln Park soccer field to be playable all season.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
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- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
14. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1497](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$4,729.64 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Natural Gas Account for natural gas supply services.
- Director Spurr-Knight explained that this reflects an invoice that is often received late due to the uncertainty in predicting what the cost of gas usage will be.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
15. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1404](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$1,625 using available funds in the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development Parks and Urban Forestry Division Account for Wedding Nook and Quincy Street open space production.
- Director Inacio stated this amount is to pay an invoice for the small business vendor who designed the Wedding Nook and Quincy Street open space, and that it was previously missed due to turnover in the department.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
16. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1419](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$2,207.50 using available funds in the Fire Department Professional & Technical Account for medical case management costs.
- Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Item 24 (ID # 23-1501) because the Committee received a memorandum from the Fire Department explaining both Items. Chair Wilson noted there were no further questions on this Item.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
17. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1427](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$2,298.83 using available funds in the Human Resources Arbitration Services Account for arbitration transcription services.
- Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Items 18 (ID

23-1425) and 19 (ID # 23-1426). Chair Wilson stated the department provided the Committee with a memorandum on these Items and noted that there were no further questions regarding them.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

- 18. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1425](#))

Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$2,250 using available funds in the Human Resources Arbitration Services Account for arbitration services.

Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Items 17 (ID # 23-1427) and 19 (ID # 23-1426). Chair Wilson stated the department provided the Committee with a memorandum on these Items and noted that there were no further questions regarding them.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

- 19. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1426](#))

Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$440 using available funds in the Human Resources Professional & Technical Services Account for language testing services.

Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Items 17 (ID # 23-1427) and 18 (ID # 23-1425). Chair Wilson stated the department provided the Committee with a memorandum on these Items and noted that there were no further questions regarding them.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

Appropriations

- 20. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1493](#))

Requesting the appropriation of \$113,440 from the Community Preservation Act Historic Preservation Reserve Fund to Just A Start for restoration and reinstallation of a historic window at 24 Webster Ave.

Director Inacio stated this Item will fund the removal and restoration of a window that has historical significance before the building it currently occupies is demolished to build affordable housing.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

21. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1492](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$67,478 from the Community Preservation Act Historic Preservation Reserve Fund to the Somerville Museum for storage area renovation.

Director Inacio stated this Item reflects the final piece of a larger project to revitalize the Somerville Museum and accounts for improving the basement of the building to help preserve the historic artifacts stored there.

Councilor Kelly asked how much in total has been allocated to renovate the Somerville Museum, and Director Inacio replied that it was approximately \$800,000 and that the precise amount could be provided to the Committee.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

Grant Acceptances

22. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1402](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$75,000 grant with no new match required, from MA Department of Housing and Community Development to the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development Administration Division for a partnership with the City of Medford to examine the zoning and economic development potential of the parcels along Broadway that are split by the municipal boundary.

Director Inacio and Chair Wilson explained that this grant will allow the city to explore the possibility of development along the Broadway corridor, which is currently very challenging because the properties are located precisely on the Somerville's border with Medford, resulting in zoning conflicts.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

23. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1424](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend an \$18,400 grant with no new match required, from Mass Cultural Council to the Arts Council for unrestricted operating support.

Chair Wilson stated that the Committee received a memorandum on this Item and noted that there were no further questions regarding it.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

24. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1501](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a grant with no new match required, from the Department of Fire Services to the Fire Department for the reimbursement of Hazardous Material Response Team members.
- Chair Wilson stated that this Item would be taken together with Item 16 (ID # 23-1419) because the Committee received a memorandum from the Fire Department explaining both Items. Chair Wilson noted there were no further questions on this Item.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
25. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1341](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$220,560 grant with no new match required, from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to the Health and Human Services Department for Tobacco Control Prevention.
- Director Carroll explained that this Item will largely fund the compensation for the city's Regional Program Director for its Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program, and that it reflects funding for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025 in the amount of \$110,280 for each year.
- Councilor Kelly asked how the resources provided for in the grant are allocated in the city and more widely in the region, and Director Carroll explained that money primarily funds the program director's compensation, who then allocates program resources based upon, for example, the number of establishments that sell tobacco products.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
26. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1263](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$75,000 grant with no new match required, from the Boston Mayor's Office of Emergency Management to the Police Department to support the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) sustainability and upgrades.
- Councilor Scott asked if this reflects a \$75,000 grant, and Lieutenant Mitsakis confirmed that it does, and that it will be used to fund accommodations such as furniture and a refrigerator for the Public Safety Building. Councilor Scott asked if there was a document that specified what can and cannot be used with this grant money, and Lieutenant Mitsakis stated that there is and that it would be provided to the Committee in the morning.
- Councilor Kelly expressed support for this Item, noting that the memorandum provided in support sufficiently explained how the money would be used.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

Orders

27. Order
 (ID # [23-1480](#))

By Councilor Scott

That the Chief of Police provide a written explanation, and any accompanying documentation, of the Police Department’s receipt of GrayKey surveillance technology from Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI)/Boston without requiring a grant acceptance from the City Council.

Councilor Scott expressed concern that this reflects an unmonitored transfer of money and resources by the Police Department, expressed further concern that other resources could also be surreptitiously transferred by the Department, and concluded that the outcome of this Item would inform his intent to support future legislation preventing the same.

Councilor Kelly asked about how this grant is structured, and Lieutenant Mitsakis explained that the City of Boston’s Office of Emergency Management contracts with the software company, and then Somerville’s mayor signs a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the City of Boston to use the technology. Councilor Kelly requested a copy of that MOA, and Lieutenant Mitsakis said that one could be provided.

Chair Wilson clarified that this topic is important because the technology at issue can be used to “crack” or unlock a locked mobile communication device.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

Referenced Documents:

- Finance - 2023-10-24 Arts Council (with 23-1424)
- Finance - 2023-10-24 EOC furniture (with 23-1263)
- Finance - 2023-10-24 Fire Sharp (with 23-1419, 23-1501)
- Finance - 2023-10-24 ISD Finance Request Memo (with 23-1398)
- Finance - 2023-10-24 PPZ-GrantAcceptanceMemo (with 23-1402)
- Finance - 2023-10-24 Graykey UASI funds (with 23-1263, 23-1480)
- Finance - 2023-10-24 HRDept PriorYearInvoices (with 23-1425, 23-1426, 23-1427)