



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 23, 2025

6:30 PM

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom and was called to order at 6:32 pm by Chair Wilson and adjourned at 7:27 pm with a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Burnley, Clingan, Scott and Wilson), none opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor Mbah).

Others present: Michael Richards - IAM Director of Finance and Administration, Neha Singh - Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Catherine Lester Salchert - Assistant City Solicitor, Brian Postlewaite IAM Director of Engineering, Christine Blais - Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment, Delaney Fisher-Cassiol - Clerk of Committees

Roll Call

Present: City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan and City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr.

Absent: City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-1443](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of September 9, 2025.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Mbah

Grant and Gift Acceptances

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1295](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$50,000 grant with no new match required, from Commonwealth of MA Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to the Office of Sustainability and Environment for a study investigating possible zoning incentives to increase the ability to comply with the Fossil Fuel Free Ordinance.

Christine Blais, Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment, explained that this grant focuses on ensuring compliance with the fossil fuel-free program. The project will specifically examine transformers and explore how to generate community benefits for neighborhoods and buildings pursuing electrification. The ultimate goal is to develop recommendations for zoning.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Mbah

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1418](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$10,000 grant with no new match required, from the Fenway Community Health Center to the Police Department for post-overdose support.

This item was taken up with item 25-1410.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

4. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1408](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$155,271.38 grant with no new match required, from the Massachusetts State 911 Department to the Police Department for training costs for 911 certification.

This item was taken up with item 25-1410.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

5. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1409](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$295,463 grant with no new match required, from the Massachusetts State 911 Department to the Police Department for enhanced 911 telecommunicator personnel costs.

This item was taken up with item 25-1410.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

6. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1410](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$24,500 grant with no new match required, from the Massachusetts State 911 Department to the Police Department for emergency medical dispatch.

These items were left in committee in the absence of Somerville Police Director of Finance and Administration, Emily Wisdom.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

Prior Year Invoices

7. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1387](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$545.31 using available funds in the Police Department Equipment Maintenance Account for electronic access door service.

This item was taken up with item 25-1417.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Mbah

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8. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1294](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$330 using available funds in the Office of Sustainability and Environment Professional and Technical Services Account for monitoring the Argenziano School solar array.
- This item was taken up with item 25-1417.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Mbah
9. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1414](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$596.25 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Repairs-Comm Equipment, Repairs-Fire Alarm, and Reimbursement of Licenses Accounts.
- This item was taken up with item 25-1417.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Mbah
10. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1415](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$23.41 using available funds in the Emergency Management Public Safety Supplies Account for public safety supplies.
- This item was taken up with item 25-1417.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Mbah
11. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1416](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$137.77 using available funds in the Emergency Management Office Supplies Account for office supplies.
- This item was taken up with item 25-1417.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Mbah
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12. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1417](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$71.88 using available funds in the Emergency Management Office Supplies Account for office supplies.
- These items involved minor expenditures and did not require further discussion.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Mbah
13. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1413](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$10,452.22 using available funds in the Department of Infrastructure & Asset Management Ordinary Maintenance Professional & Technical Account for Strategic Asset Management Plan.
- This item was taken up with item 25-1412.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Mbah

Transfers

14. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1412](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$350,048 from the Department of Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM) Ordinary Maintenance Professional & Technical Services Account to the IAM Capital Outlay Professional & Technical Services Account.
- Michael Richards, IAM Director of Finance and Administration, presented a proposal for a three-year project. He noted that the project team approved the invoice on June 20th, but it was initially charged to the wrong budget line. The expense should have come from the capital outlay line. Because this is a longitudinal study, and the funds were in a maintenance account, they could not be transferred to a stabilization fund, resulting in a loss of money. The request is to move the FY26 allocation to the IAM capital outlay professional and technical services account.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Mbah

Bonding

15. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1411](#)) Requesting authorization to borrow \$4,300,000 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for the design of the Morrison Avenue Linear Storage Sewer Separation project.
- Michael Richards, IAM Director of Finance and Administration, presented a Phase II funding request. The project previously received \$2 million through a bond for the initial design phase. This request covers the final design phase as part of the capital plan for the water and rate study.
- Councilor Burnley requested clarification on the linear storage component. Director Richards explained that this is a large sewer separation project intended to help mitigate flooding in the area. Brian Postlewaite, IAM Director of Engineering, further clarified that the plan is to preload stormwater in Davis Square to reduce flooding. Since Morrison Street is a long corridor that channels stormwater through Davis Square, where there is no space for a tank, the project will install a large-diameter pipe to store excess water within the pipe itself. This pipe, serving as the linear storage system, will extend from Cedar Street to Grove Street.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Mbah

Contracts and Agreements

16. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1384](#)) Requesting approval to extend and amend a contract with Eastern Bank for an additional year until 8/31/2026, for the banking services of the Treasury Department.
- Chair Wilson reviewed the attachment Finance 2025-09-23 - Eastern Bank City Council Extension (with 25-1384).pdf
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Mbah
17. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1383](#)) Requesting approval of the partial termination of the City Utility Easement on Sewall Court.
- This item was taken up with item 24-1400.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- ABSENT:** City Councilor At Large Mbah

18. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1433](#)) Requesting approval of temporary and permanent easements over Lot 3 of 299 Broadway in favor of 299 Broadway Property Owner, LLC.

This item was taken up with item 24-1400.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Mbah

Property/Land Transactions

19. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1382](#)) Requesting approval of the discontinuance of a portion of Sewall Court.

This item was taken up with item 24-1400.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Mbah

20. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1400](#)) Requesting the adoption of an Order of Taking for the acquisition of Lot 3 at 299 Broadway for municipal purposes including parking.

Brian Postlewaite, IAM Director of Engineering, explained that a private way existed within the Star Market parking lot, along with an old utility easement that allowed the City to maintain utilities in that area. When Sewall Court was originally constructed, there were houses on either side, which have since been replaced by the Star Market and its parking lot. With redevelopment now planned for the site, it is important to resolve the shared deed issues. The recommendation is to discontinue a portion of Sewall Court and the associated easement, aligning with the planned discontinuance. The private way and easement no longer hold value to the City and may have greater value if returned to the property owner.

Catherine Lester Salchert, Assistant City Solicitor, added that Lot 3 has been taken for use as an access driveway. A temporary easement will be granted for construction purposes.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Mbah

Orders and Resolutions

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21. Order
(ID # [25-1445](#))
- By Councilor Burnley Jr.
That the City Solicitor update this Council on the new Immigration and Customs Enforcement cooperation requirements attached to forthcoming Urban Area Security Initiative grants.
- This item was taken up with item 25-1446.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
22. Order
(ID # [25-1446](#))
- By Councilor Burnley Jr.
That the Chief of Police or the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region representative update this Council on the strategy for applying for Urban Area Security Initiative or any other federal grants that require Immigration and Customs Enforcement cooperation.
- Councilor Burnley stated that the City has been under siege, creating fear for many community members. As a sanctuary city, the City has a responsibility to comply with its own laws to protect residents. He noted that new requirements have been added to the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grants that the City regularly receives and reviewed the attachment Finance - 2025-09-23 Letter to FINCOM re FY25 UASI NOFO (with 25-1445). Councilor Burnley also highlighted that Somerville participates in BRIC, the Boston Regional Intelligence Center.
- Neha Singh, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, reported that the City is closely monitoring the situation and coordinating with the state and other UASI communities, particularly sanctuary cities. She clarified that the state has not agreed to the new terms and conditions and still intends to pursue the grants. Councilor Clingan expressed hope the City could receive funding without putting residents at risk, and Councilor Scott noted that any acceptance of future grants with new conditions would come before the Council for approval. Councilor Burnley and Chair Wilson emphasized that the current UASI grants before the Council are from prior fiscal years and are not subject to the new requirements.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
23. Order
(ID # [25-1344](#))
- By Councilor Mbah
That the Director of Finance provide a comprehensive accounting of all stabilization accounts that have remained unspent for three or more fiscal years and provide a report for each fund.
- Chair Wilson reviewed the attachment Finance 2025-09-23 - Stabilization Fund Balances (with 25-1344).pdf and Finance 2025-09-23 - Stabilization Memo (with 25-1344). Councilor Burnley stated that the document serves as a valuable resource for the public by providing clarity on how funds are allocated and transparency regarding the balances maintained across various accounts. Councilor Mbah submitted this order and was absent, so the item was left in committee.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
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Referenced Documents:

- Finance 2025-09-23 - Stabilization Memo (with 25-1344)
- Finance 2025-09-23 - Stabilization Fund Balances (with 25-1344)
- Finance 2025-09-23 - Eastern Bank City Council Extension (with 25-1384)
- Finance 2025-09-23 Letter to FINCOM re FY25 UASI NOFO (with 25-1445)