



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 4, 2026

6:30 PM

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom and was called to order at 6:30pm by Chair Mbah and adjourned at 8:13pm with a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Link, Ewen-Campen and Mbah), 0 opposed, and 2 absent (Councilors McLaughlin and Hardt).

Councilor Hardt arrived at 6:34pm.

Also present: Anne Gill - Director of Human Resources, Kristen Hill - Recruitment and Retention Manager, Malik Drayton - Urban Forestry and Landscape Planner, Charles Breen - Fire Chief, Kimberly Wells - City Clerk, Delaney Fisher-Cassioli - Clerk of Committees

Roll Call

Present: Ward Seven City Councilor Emily Hardt, City Councilor At Large Jon Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah

Absent: Ward Two City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [26-0638](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee Meeting of March 30, 2026.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0380](#))

Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Logan Brill to the Conservation Commission.

Logan Brill shared that he is a Somerville resident and environmental engineer who is interested in supporting wetland and garden projects. In response to a question from Chair Mbah, Mr. Brill noted that the housing crisis is not as simple as building more units, emphasizing the need to preserve open space and account for infrastructure limits, while acknowledging the City's thoughtful zoning changes. Councilor Ewen-Campen expressed support for the candidate. In response to a question from Councilor Link, Mr. Brill highlighted the Tufts rain garden as a strong example of effective stormwater management, describing how it collects water up to a certain level before allowing it to flow out.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0381](#)) Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Valerie Locker to the Conservation Commission.

Malik Drayton, Urban Forestry and Landscape Planner, noted that Valerie Locker is familiar with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and Rivers Protection Act and has firsthand experience applying for permits. Ms. Locker shared that she has long been interested in becoming more involved with the City and expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity, citing her background in environmental science with a focus on wetlands and permitting, as well as a strong interest in infrastructure.

In response to a question from Chair Mbah, Ms. Locker explained that she typically approaches a new role by first level setting, understanding existing processes and networks, and then identifying opportunities for growth and improvement. She noted that much of the City's development from 50 to 100 years ago was done differently, which presents opportunities to make enhancements to these older structures. Councilor Hardt expressed appreciation for her experience and interest.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin

4. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0483](#)) Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Eric Weisman as Commissioner of Public Works.

Anne Gill, Director of Human Resources, noted that Eric Weisman has worked with the City for many years and has most recently served as Interim Commissioner. Mr. Weisman shared that he joined SomerStat in 2019, is a resident, and has a child in the school district.

In response to Chair Mbah, Commissioner Weisman emphasized improving responsiveness and communication through collaboration, noting that the Department of Public Works (DPW) does not operate in a vacuum and functions as part of a larger system to enhance the constituent experience. He also highlighted opportunities to modernize operations through tools such as iPads and other technology. In response to Councilor Ewen-Campen,

he identified key challenges as understanding existing processes and finding opportunities for improvement, relying on staff expertise to determine what can and cannot be changed, and noted ongoing staffing challenges, though progress has been made. In response to Councilor Hardt, Commissioner Weisman described his management growth, explaining that as Operations Director he gradually took on staff management responsibilities, views his team as partners, and maintains frequent check-ins. In response to Councilor Link regarding constituent services, he noted that while the department follows established standards and processes, additional outreach is prioritized when issues fall outside those parameters.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin

5. Resolution
(ID # [26-0239](#))

By Councilor Link, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Mbah
That the Director of Human Resources review the hiring for crossing guards, ensuring that the process and requirements are right-sized and not unnecessarily burdensome such that they deter qualified candidates.

Councilor Link raised concerns that the application requirements for crossing guards may not be appropriate for the position and noted that, given ongoing staffing shortages, any effort to streamline the process would be beneficial. Anne Gill, Director of Human Resources, emphasized the need to balance accessibility in hiring with due diligence to ensure candidates are fit to work with sensitive populations, including children.

Kristen Hill, Recruitment and Retention Manager, noted she has overseen this as a special project and was surprised by the difficulty in hiring and retaining crossing guards despite strong interest-particularly from retirees, new immigrants and refugees, and English language learners. She explained that the City works regularly with its language access team to support these applicants by explaining the recruitment process and requirements. A key challenge is limited openings in certain areas, which can result in difficult commutes; in some cases, candidates leave after trying the role for a few days.

In response to Councilor Link's concerns about requiring a cover letter, three references, and conflict of interest (COI) training, Manager Hill clarified that while the online application includes a resume field, applicants may instead type a brief explanation, and cover letters are optional. Paper applications are also available at City Hall or by mail, and the City aims to meet candidates where they are by accepting what they can provide. She added that new reference checking software has been implemented to

simplify and expedite the process and that fewer references may be accepted if needed. COI training is required for all municipal employees, but paper copies of the law and an explanation can be provided for those unable to complete it online.

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

6. Mayor's Request
(ID # [26-0698](#))

Requesting confirmation of the promotion of Dennis Sullivan to the position of Fire District Chief.

Charles Breen, Fire Chief, shared that Dennis Sullivan was appointed to the Somerville Fire Department in 2011 and has been promoted multiple times since, noting his background in chemistry and fire service as well as his certification as an EMT.

Mr. Sullivan expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity and, in response to Chair Mbah, stated that he takes every opportunity to teach and train others. In response to Councilor Ewen-Campen, he noted that the key issue areas for the position are largely determined by the assigned geographic region.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin

7. Mayor's Request
(ID # [26-0701](#))

Requesting confirmation of the promotion of Sean Marquis to the position of Fire Lieutenant.

Charles Breen, Fire Chief, noted that Sean Marquis has been a member of the department since 2021, is an EMT, and has served as Acting Lieutenant for a period of time.

Mr. Marquis shared that he has lived in Somerville for over 10 years, has a strong commitment to giving back to the community, and is eager to take the next step within the department. In response to Chair Mbah, he stated that he believes he is ready for the role based on the experience he has gained from learning from senior staff over the past five years, as well as his time serving as Acting Lieutenant since September and the training he has received in that capacity.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin

8. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0702](#)) Requesting confirmation of the promotion of Michael J. Marino to the position of Fire Captain.

Chief Breen noted that Michael Marino is a U.S. Navy veteran, a registered nurse, and serves as the Somerville Fire Department's infection control officer. He added that during the COVID-19 pandemic, he relied heavily on Mr. Marino's expertise and that his medical knowledge was critical to the department's response.

Mr. Marino shared that he has been with the Fire Department for 20 years and is looking forward to the next step in his service to the community. In response to Chair Mbah, he described his background working as an emergency room nurse and serving in the Navy in bomb disposal and counterterrorism roles. He emphasized that he prioritizes clear communication and understanding the individuals he works with, including how they learn and respond, and noted that he values hands-on training to ensure preparedness during emergencies. He also highlighted cross-department collaboration, including work with the Department of Public Works (DPW) on bloodborne pathogen protocols, and noted that he started the City's Narcan program in 2013. He explained that at the time the City did not qualify for a state-funded program, so he partnered with Cambridge Health Alliance to establish it as an independent program.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin

9. Order (ID # [26-0713](#)) By Councilor Davis
In his capacity as President, recommending the appointment of Courtney Henderson to the position of City Clerk.

Kimberly Wells, City Clerk, shared the appointment of Courtney Henderson following several rounds of interviews. She noted that Ms. Henderson served as the inaugural Multilingual Public Information Officer and later as the inaugural Director of Immigrant Affairs in Brockton before moving on to the Sheriff's Office. Clerk Wells highlighted that Ms. Henderson has experience building systems from the ground up and managing teams, and emphasized that the role requires strong attention to detail, which Ms. Henderson demonstrates.

Chair Mbah noted his involvement in the process and described it as very thorough, adding that Ms. Henderson received unanimous approval from the panel and demonstrated a strong understanding of the role, particularly around maintaining transparency and accurate public records. Ms. Henderson shared that she is passionate about civic engagement and currently serves as Co-President of the League of Women Voters, adding

that she is excited to return to the City of Somerville.

In response to Councilor Ewen-Campen, she described extensive experience working with legislative bodies, including close collaboration with the Brockton City Council, where she regularly presented updates on immigration enforcement, as well as work with the school committee. She characterized her past work with city councils as highly collaborative and views them as strong sounding boards. In response to Councilor Hardt, Ms. Henderson discussed her broader local government and civic engagement experience, including consulting work and efforts with the Mayor of Nashville to engage and mobilize minority voters. She outlined her approach to the role, including using the first 30 days to understand office culture, conduct workflow mapping, complete a resource audit, and establish a compliance baseline, followed by analysis and priority alignment and meetings with councilors, with a long-term goal of shifting from reactive to proactive service delivery. In response to Councilor Link regarding transparency, Ms. Henderson stated that she is direct and straightforward in her communication and aims to build strong individual relationships with councilors.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, City Councilor At Large Link, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Mbah

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor McLaughlin