



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

6:00 PM

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom and was called to order at 6:07 pm by Chair Wheeler and adjourned at 7:23 pm with a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Link, Strezo, Hardt, Scott and Wheeler), none opposed, and none absent.

Also present: Yasmine Raddassi - Legislative Liaison, Richard Raiche - Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management, Charles Breen - Somerville Fire Chief, Alan Inacio - Director of Finance and Administration, Edward Bean - Director of Finance, Anoop Malik - Health and Human Services Finance Manager, Eric Weisman - Department of Public Works Commissioner, Thomas Galligani - OSPCD Executive Director, Rachel Strutt - Interim Director of Arts Council and Delaney Fisher-Cassiol - Clerk of Committees

Roll Call

Present: City Councilor At Large Jon Link, City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Emily Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott and City Councilor At Large Ben Wheeler

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [26-0724](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of April 21, 2026.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Appropriations

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0803](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$182,469 from the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Stabilization fund for the Healthcare for the Homeless program.

Anoop Malik, Health and Human Services (HHS) Finance Manager, reviewed the memo "*Finance - 2026-05-26 Memo (with 26-0803)*" and noted that the Healthcare for the Homeless program is a critical service that has been operating since 2020.

Councilor Link asked for clarification on the vendor, and Manager Malik explained that no vendor has been formally identified, though Cambridge Health Alliance is a prospective provider. He also confirmed that HHS has spent the past two months reviewing the eligibility and restriction requirements of the Opioid Recovery Fund. In response to questions from

Councilor Hardt, Manager Malik said he believed Cambridge Health Alliance has been providing similar care over the past year and noted that he would confirm this information, along with providing additional clarification on how care is coordinated among service providers.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Arts

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0738](#)) Requesting approval to establish an Arts Council Furniture Account and to use \$2,000 in available funds from the Arts Council Professional & Technical Services Account to purchase new desks and chairs for staff.

Rachel Strutt, Interim Director of the Arts Council, noted that due to limited office space and multiple staff sharing workstations, the department is seeking to purchase additional desks that can be configured back-to-back and moved as needed to better accommodate staff and improve workspace flexibility.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Community Preservation Act Appropriations

4. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0733](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$4,000 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Undesignated Fund Balance to the CPA Historic Preservation Reserve.

Alan Inacio, Director of Finance and Administration, shared that this is a minor budget correction from a few years ago when they underestimated their debt service payment on the historical reserve account.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Contracts and Agreements

5. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0763](#)) Requesting approval to enter into a 60-month contract renewal term with Waste Management of Massachusetts Inc. for solid waste disposal.

Eric Weisman, DPW Commissioner, noted that the City is approaching the end of its disposal contract with Waste Management, which covers tipping of solid municipal waste only. Commissioner Weisman reviewed the attachment "*WM Solid Waste 5 Year Contract Memo*" and highlighted the cost savings associated with entering into a new five-year agreement.

In response to Councilor Hardt, Commissioner Weisman explained that composting would help reduce overall disposal weight, potentially generating additional cost savings. In response to Councilor Scott's concerns, Commissioner Weisman noted that he would confirm whether the disposal sites have active union contracts.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

6. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0740](#)) Requesting approval of a time-only contract extension until 5/22/2027 for the contract with UELContractors Inc. for the completion of improvements at Junction Park.

Alan Inacio, Director of Finance and Administration, noted that the item is a routine extension for this project intended to allow time to complete remaining punch list and closeout items.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Financial Districting

7. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0745](#)) Requesting approval of an amendment to the Assembly Square District Improvement Financing District Map and Program to include the Assembly Square Fire Station, 45 Middlesex Avenue, and improvements to the intersection of Middlesex Avenue and Mystic Avenue.

Thomas Galligani, Executive Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, explained that the Assembly Square District Improvement Financing (DIF) Program and Plan, originally approved in 2010, is being amended to include two major infrastructure projects: the acquisition of the new Assembly Square Fire Station at 45 Middlesex Avenue and planned safety improvements at the Middlesex and Mystic Avenue intersection. Director Galligani noted that incorporating these projects into the DIF district would allow the City to access more favorable financing tools, helping reduce long-term costs while supporting critical infrastructure investments in one of Somerville's fastest growing areas.

Councilor Link noted that the intersection has already undergone several improvements, and Director Galligani explained that the proposed project would further improve safety by realigning the intersection into a right-angle configuration. Edward Bean, Director of Finance, added that including the new fire station within the DIF district provides the City with greater flexibility under state borrowing laws, allowing for lower-rate short-term borrowing over a longer period than is typically permitted under standard municipal financing rules.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Bond Servicing

8. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0818](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$3,940,905 from the Street Reconstruction and Resurfacing Stabilization Fund to the Street Resurfacing Bond Fund to pay down street reconstruction and resurfacing expenses.

This item was discussed with item #26-0807.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

9. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0808](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$2,381,625 from the Street Reconstruction and Resurfacing Stabilization Fund to the Somerville Avenue Streetscape Bond Fund to pay down capital expenses.

This item was discussed with item #26-0807.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

10. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0810](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$320,000 from the Street Reconstruction and Resurfacing Stabilization Fund to the Union Square Streetscape and Plaza Bond Fund to pay down streetscape improvement expenses.

This item was discussed with item #26-0807.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

11. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0807](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$999,000 from the Facility Construction and Renovation Stabilization Fund to the Building Improvements Bond Fund to pay down building renovation expenses.

Edward Bean, Director of Finance, explained that the City is currently facing a budget deficit but expects to close the gap and submit a balanced budget on June 4. Director Bean stated that part of the City's strategy is to use stabilization funds to pay for several previously approved capital projects rather than borrowing for them later in June. He noted that the projects represent expenses that have already been incurred and paid out, and that the

total amount under consideration across all related items is approximately \$8.7 million.

Director Bean explained that borrowing the full amount would add more than \$751,000 to next year's budget. By using stabilization funds instead, the City would avoid additional borrowing costs in the next fiscal year and realize greater long-term savings over the life of the loans. He added that the City expects to draw additional stabilization funds during the budget process for other capital projects.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Fire Department Grant and Gift Acceptances and Transfers

12. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0819](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$545,985 from the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund to Fire Pumper Bond Fund 51855 for the purposes of funding a new fire pumper.

This item was discussed with item #26-0820.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

13. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0820](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$532,449 from the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund to the Fire Pumper Bond Fund 5187 for the purpose of funding a new fire pumper.

Edward Bean, Director of Finance, explained that the City would otherwise need to borrow for these pumpers in the coming weeks and is proposing to use stabilization funds to help reduce overall costs.

Charles Breen, Somerville Fire Chief, noted that several fire trucks have experienced ongoing mechanical issues and require replacement. Chief Breen explained that replacement parts ordered in October 2023 and June 2024 are expected to arrive by the end of the year, reflecting longer-than-usual supply delays. He added that pumpers are responsible for carrying water and stated that the department will likely need to begin ordering trucks earlier moving forward to account for extended delivery timelines.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

14. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0732](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend an \$11,000 grant and a \$4,200 grant with no new match required, from the Department of Fire Services to the Fire Department for fire safety education and supplies for school children and senior citizens.
- Chief Breen explained that the first grant is the SAFE grant, which is awarded annually by the state and supports fire safety education for school-aged children, including educational materials and overtime costs associated with the program.
- The second grant is the SAFER grant, which supports fire and safety outreach for senior residents in coordination with the Council on Aging. He added that the program also funds the purchase and installation of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors for residents.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Police Department Prior Year Invoices

15. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0707](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$6,660 using available funds in the Police Department Maintenance Software Account for fingerprinting machine software.
- Yasmine Raddassi, Legislative Liaison, reviewed the attachment "*Finance - 2026-05-26 Memo (with 26-0707)*" and explained that the software is used to conduct background checks for firearm licenses as well as private sector employment background checks upon request. Liaison Raddassi noted that invoices had previously been sent to a former employee and were missed, resulting in an outstanding balance.
- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Police Department Grants

16. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0378](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$231,635 grant with no new match required, from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to the Police Department for a body-worn camera program.
- Yasmine Raddassi, Legislative Liaison, noted that the appropriation for ratification of the collective bargaining agreement should be on the agenda for Thursday, so the full City Council can have an open discussion, share information that has been discussed in executive session, and provide additional context ahead of the decision.
- Councilor Scott raised concern about voting on the item the same day it is introduced, but Liaison Raddassi clarified that the intention is not to take a

vote at that meeting. Instead, the item would be introduced and laid on the table to allow time for public comment, with further discussion expected at the June 11 meeting.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- Finance - 2026-05-26 Memo (with 26-0803)
- Finance - 2026-05-26 Memo (with 26-0707)