



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 12, 2022  
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jake Wilson	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Beatriz GomezMouakad	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Judy PinedaNeufeld	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	
Charlotte Kelly	City Councilor At Large	Present	

This meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 7:00 pm and adjourned at 7:34 pm. Councilor Kelly moved to adjourn, and the motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Others present: Aneesh Sahni - Mayor's Office, Hannah Carrillo, Morena Zelaya - OSPCD, Alan Inacio - OSPCD, Erik Larson - OSE, Stephanie Widzowski - Assistant Clerk of Committees.

**Approval of the March 22, 2022 Minutes**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED</b>
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**Community Preservation Act**

**213383: Requesting acceptance of a Preservation Restriction for 83 Belmont Street.**

Dir. Inacio explained that this item is from two or three years ago and was one of their first Historic Preservation CPA projects with a preservation restriction. He said that Preservation Act Manager Roberta Cameron could not attend the meeting, but has been working hard to finish preservation restrictions for the accumulation of past projects.

Councilor Scott commented that the purpose of preservation restrictions is to ensure public funds are retained as public goods, and talked about the historic mural in the post office building at Union Square as an example. He moved to approve the item.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Wilson, Scott, GomezMouakad, PinedaNeufeld, Kelly

**Grant Acceptance**

**213387: Requesting acceptance of, and approval to expend, an \$84,802 grant with no new match required, from the MA Department of Energy Resources to the Office of Sustainability and Environment for four energy conservation projects in city-owned buildings.**

Energy Manager Erik Larson explained that this is a Green Community grant, which allows a maximum of \$100,000 for submission each year. Four projects were identified for this year: the East Somerville Community School and the Capuano Early Childhood Center are in the last phase of converting to LEDs; Capuano is also replacing its diesel-powered generator heater with a more efficient heat pump; and controls will be installed on the kitchen hood at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School. Currently, that hood is on constantly, but the new controls will allow it to run only when it detects smoke or heat.

Councilor Kelly asked how much maintenance will be required going forward once the updates are installed. Mr. Larson said that the only maintenance for the LED lighting would be replacing bulbs, but does not expect needing to come before the Council to do that. The heat pump will require much less maintenance than the diesel heater. The kitchen hood controls at Winter Hill might have more work in the form of VFD maintenance - there are more moving parts than to the previous motor - but the aggregate of the four projects are expected to require less maintenance than currently.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad asked if the hood’s grease deck will be cleaned thoroughly before maintenance. Mr. Larson replied that the motors that run the fans need to be replaced with inverter-ready motors that can be turned on or off; during that process, the hood will be cleaned.

Councilor Scott said that an exciting facet of OSE’s work is the plan to pay forward energy savings into the stabilization fund. He asked if the energy savings from these projects will also be allocated into the fund, to which Mr. Larson said they would.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Wilson, Scott, GomezMouakad, PinedaNeufeld, Kelly

**ARPA**

**213397: Requesting to appear before this Council with an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) progress update.**

Ms. Carrillo said that she did not have an update for the Council, but would forward comments and questions to an ARPA specialist. Chair Wilson noted that the previous Council approved the first payment of ARPA funds in May 2021 to the effect of \$31 million, and he expects a subsequent grant of \$47 million next month. He said he would enthusiastically vote to approve that grant, provided that there is Council input into where those funds are allocated. He also said that he would like to commit ARPA funds toward a community center, which is a top Council budget priority.

Councilor Kelly referred to the section titled Representative Sample of ARPA Projects To Date. No dollar amount was listed as being allocated to public health efforts, but adding the other amounts, she said it seemed like less than a million dollars were being spent on public health

efforts. In light of federal COVID relief funds running dry, Councilor Kelly asked what Somerville will do going forward. She also echoed Councilor Pineda Neufeld's previous statements about the mental health crisis within the pandemic, and how it especially affects the city's youth, and asked about plans to address that. Then, she asked if the Administration had comments about the federal infrastructure bill and how it overlaps with ARPA. Lastly, she asked about specific plans for broadband infrastructure and cited Cambridge as a neighboring community investigating options to expand using the existing university network.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld expressed excitement about the Mayor's Advisory committee and requested Council representation on the committee.

Councilor Scott requested an update on the childcare tuition assistance program. He also mentioned ways the Boston City Council is requiring more participation than seats on their advisory committee, and asked how Somerville City Council could also be more directly involved. Chair Wilson said that he did speak with a Boston city councilor about this, and added that because this grant is so large, he wants to ensure that there is oversight for the allocations. Councilor Scott asked if there is an action or document in place for Boston's system, but Chair Wilson was unsure. He asked Councilor Scott how he would advise going forward, to which Councilor Scott suggested providing a set of conditions or stipulations prior to acceptance: for example, creating an ordinance requiring Council approval for grant appropriations above a certain dollar amount. He added that most grants are purpose-focused, but ARPA is much more at the discretion of the city. ARPA distributions might require a two-stage process.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad requested that the advisory committee foremost represent those most impacted by the pandemic. She stated that the Council is just one part of the solution and does not have the full picture. She emphasized the need for expansion in youth services and for social workers who understand the cultures and languages of the people they serve. She described factors that cause people to be more affected by the crisis. She noted that she has attended ARPA meetings, and they are reaching out to the Latino community - a good step to encourage more of.

This item was kept in committee in anticipation of future discussion with ARPA staff.

<b>RESULT:</b>
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<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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### Boards and Commissions

#### **212849: That the administration assign staff to support the Wage Theft Advisory Committee.**

Councilor Gomez Mouakad said that she asked for updates on enforcement at the last City Council meeting. She met with people working on contracts and inspectional services, but because of COVID, wage theft language has not been implemented into contracts yet. She plans to talk to the City Solicitor about the item as well as GBLC and the Painters Union. She also said that ISD has been requiring some provisions but not others, and plans to meet with them in two weeks to discuss that. She praised Councilor Scott's work on the item and the community effort behind it.

Chair Wilson happily noted that there are a few nominations for the committee on this week's City Council agenda from the Brazilian Workers Center and Carpenters Union.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**