



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 9, 2024

7:00 PM

NOTICE: This is NOT the official version of the City Council's minutes. While reasonable efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the data provided, do not rely on this information without first checking with the City Clerk.

1. OPENING CEREMONIES

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen.

The City Council entered recess at 7:36 PM and returned at 7:43 PM.

The City Council entered recess at 8:58 PM and returned at 9:10 PM.

- 1.1. Roll Call Call of the Roll.
(ID # [24-0675](#))

Councilor Mbah arrived at 7:09 PM.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

Present: Ward One City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin
 Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis
 City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson
 Ward Five City Councilor Naima Sait
 City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah
 City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr.
 Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan
 City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo
 Ward Seven City Councilor Judy Pineda Neufeld
 Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen

Absent: Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott

- 1.2. Remembrances Remembrances.
(ID # [24-0676](#))

Councilor Wilson requested a moment of silence in memory of Steve Albini.
Councilor Davis requested a moment of silence in memory of Ursula Chiu.
President Ewen-Campen requested a moment of silence in memory of William Conrad.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 1.3. Minutes Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 11, 2024.
(ID # [24-0677](#))

RESULT: **APPROVED**

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- 1.4. Minutes
(ID # [24-0678](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of April 11, 2024.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

2. CITATIONS

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 3.1. Grant of Location
(ID # [24-0628](#)) Eversource applying for a Grant of Location to install 7 feet of conduit in Main Street, from Utility Pole 146/5 to a point of pickup at 37-39 Main Street.

Jacqui Duffy, representing Eversource, spoke in favor of the item and explained the purpose of the request. There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 3.2. Grant of Location
(ID # [24-0639](#)) Eversource applying for a Grant of Location to install 77 feet of conduit in Clyde Street, from Utility Pole 74/2 to a point of pickup at 13-15 Clyde Street.

Jacqui Duffy, representing Eversource, spoke in favor of the item and explained the purpose of the request. There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

4. ORDERS, ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS OF MEMBERS

- 4.1. Order
(ID # [24-0662](#)) By Councilor Clingan
That the Director of Engineering assess the timing of the traffic light at Main Street and Broadway and consider lengthening the cycle time.

RESULT: **APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION**

FOLLOWUP: Traffic and Parking Committee

- 4.2. Order
(ID # [24-0663](#)) By Councilor Clingan
That the Environmental Health Coordinator appear before the Special Committee on Rodent Issues to present the 2024 Integrated Pest Management Plan.

RESULT: **APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION**

FOLLOWUP: Rodent Issues Special Committee

- 4.3. Order
(ID # [24-0664](#)) By Councilor Clingan
That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management address the structural safety and rodent issues with the city-owned building on Skilton Avenue.

See item #24-0665.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION

FOLLOWUP: Housing and Community Development Committee

4.4. Order
(ID # [24-0665](#))

By Councilor Clingan

That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management devise and share with this Council a long-term plan for the city-owned building at 10 Skilton Avenue.

Taken with item #24-0664.

Councilor Clingan stated that this city owned building is infested with rodents and has unsound structural integrity. He spoke to city staff about this building and said that the city is aware of it.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION

FOLLOWUP: Housing and Community Development Committee

4.5. Resolution
(ID # [24-0667](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Davis, Councilor Mbah, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Sait, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wilson
In Support of An Act Establishing Protections and Accountability for Transportation Network Companies (TNC) and Delivery Network Companies (DNC) Workers.

Councilor Ewen-Campen gave some history of the unfair misclassification of these workers and said that there are bills at the state house (S.627/H.1158) that would address this matter by preventing price gouging, requiring panic buttons for both driver and passenger, and provide a pathway to unionization, all while maintaining employee status. Councilor Clingan noted that current conditions benefit shareholders, not drivers.

Councilor Ewen-Campen sponsored Paul Weiskel to speak on the item. Mr. Weiskel, an organizer for the Teamsters, spoke of his experiences working for a company that had no union vs. one that did. He explained that worker misclassification allows some labor laws to be avoided. He said that the affected drivers don't have control of their days and that the history of change in industry standards is lessening goods jobs. If drivers can organize, they can build these positions into good jobs that would allow them to support their families.

RESULT: APPROVED

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

6.A. CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE

- 6.A.1. Committee Report (ID # [24-0620](#)) Report of the Committee on Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters, meeting on May 1, 2024.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld summarized the actions taken by the committee and reported that Somerville Fire Lt. Charles Richardson's promotion to Captain was recommended for approval.

Following the acceptance of the Committee Report, Captain Richardson was sworn in.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 6.A.2. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0474](#)) Requesting confirmation of the promotion of Charles D. Richardson to the position of Fire Captain.

RESULT: APPROVED

6.B. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 6.B.1. Committee Report (ID # [24-0625](#)) Report of the Committee on Finance, meeting on May 7, 2024.

Councilor Wilson summarized the actions taken by the committee and reported that the committee received an update on the bidding process for water and sewer work, approved various appropriations and funding transfers, accepted and approved expenditure of various grant funds, approved a Pedestrian Access Sidewalk Easement and Maintenance License.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 6.B.2. Order (ID # [24-0337](#)) By Councilor Wilson and Councilor Scott
That the Director of Water and Sewer and the Director of Procurement and Contracting Services update this Council on the bidding process for IFB 24-39 (Repairs to Water Main Gate Valves and Appurtenance) and IFB 24-29 (Water Distribution System Maintenance & Repairs) and ensure documentation is updated on the city's website for these bids and the previous versions of these bids (IFB 21-51 and IFB 21-52) when they were previously awarded in 2021.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

- 6.B.3. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0564](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$13,800 from the Police Salaries Account to the Police Special Items Rental Buildings Account to pay the remaining East Substation lease payments for FY 2024.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 6.B.4. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0565](#)) Requesting approval of a Pedestrian Access Sidewalk Easement and Maintenance License at 599 Somerville Avenue.

RESULT: APPROVED

AYE: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Five City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld, and Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

6.B.5. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0572](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$237,468 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Department of Public Works Buildings Interior Building Maintenance Account for repairs to the Dilboy Pool.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

6.B.6. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0573](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$1,095,000 from various Department of Public Works personal services accounts to the Department of Public Works Buildings Electricity Account to cover a deficit.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

6.B.7. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0574](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$248,111 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Department of Public Works Buildings Natural Gas Account for the remediation of an expected year end deficit.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

6.B.8. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0575](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$243,094 grant with no new match required, from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to the Office of Sustainability and Environment, for a residential decarbonization outreach campaign and two-year Energy Advisor position.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

6.B.9. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0576](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$150,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Facility Renovation and Reconstruction Stabilization Fund for building improvements at 77 Broadway for the East Somerville Police sub-station.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

6.B.10. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0577](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$2,041,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Facility Renovation and Reconstruction Stabilization Fund for continued renovations to the Edgerly School to accommodate Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms for the Winter Hill Community Innovation School students.

RESULT: APPROVED**6.B.11. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0578](#))**

Requesting approval to appropriate \$2,041,000 from the Facility Renovation and Reconstruction Stabilization Fund for continued renovations to the Edgerly School to accommodate Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms for the Winter Hill Community Innovation School students.

RESULT: APPROVED

AYE: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Five City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld, and Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

**6.B.12. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0579](#))**

Requesting the appropriation of \$400,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Emergency Response Stabilization Fund to provide temporary shelter, food, and other common necessities of life to displaced individuals and families.

RESULT: APPROVED**6.B.13. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0580](#))**

Requesting approval to appropriate \$400,000 from the Emergency Stabilization Fund to support critical emergency shelter services.

RESULT: APPROVED

AYE: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Five City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld, and Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

6.C. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**6.C.1. Committee Report
(ID # [24-0624](#))**

Report of the Committee on Housing and Community Development, meeting on May 7, 2024.

Councilor Strezo summarized the actions taken by the committee and reported that the committee discussed the possibility of implementing a density bonus program, fair housing enforcement, and the conducting of credit checks during the housing application process.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 6.C.2. Order
(ID # [24-0043](#))
- By Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Scott and Councilor Wilson
That the Director of Economic Development update this Council on the "Mitigating Commercial Displacement in Somerville" report, released in December 2023, and any action steps taken as a result of the report.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

- 6.C.3. Order
(ID # [24-0047](#))
- By Councilor Mbah
That the Director of Housing and the Director of the Office of Housing Stability report on the feasibility of fair housing enforcement.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

- 6.C.4. Order
(ID # [24-0152](#))
- By Councilor Clingan
That the Director of Housing and the Director of the Office of Housing Stability discuss the parameters of qualification used by building owners and managers in selecting lottery winners for awarding lower income units.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

6.D. LAND USE COMMITTEE

- 6.D.1. Committee Report
(ID # [24-0621](#))
- Report of the Committee on Land Use, meeting in Joint Session with the Planning Board on May 2, 2024.

Councilor McLaughlin summarized the actions taken by the committee and noted that a public hearing was held on the sole agenda item of amending Zoning Ordinances to remove conflicts with the State Building Code. Councilor McLaughlin noted that more discussion on the topic will be held.

RESULT: APPROVED

6.E. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS COMMITTEE

- 6.E.1. Committee Report
(ID # [24-0619](#))
- Report of the Committee on Legislative Matters, meeting on April 30, 2024.

Councilor Davis summarized the actions taken by the committee and reported that the committee discussed the 2023 Surveillance Technology Annual Report and the safe streets ordinance, the latter being kept in committee as there are still some unresolved issues. The committee also discussed proposed amendments that would make it easier to fulfill quorum requirements for the Wage Theft Advisory Committee, however it was decided to place that item on file and resubmit a new proposal.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 6.E.2. Mayor's
Communication
(ID # [24-0145](#))

Conveying the 2023 Surveillance Technology Annual Report.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

- 6.E.3. Ordinance
(ID # [24-0543](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.

That Section 9-35 of the Code of Ordinances be amended to fulfill quorum requirements for the Wage Theft Advisory Committee.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

6.F. LICENSES AND PERMITS COMMITTEE

- 6.F.1. Committee Report (ID # [24-0626](#)) Report of the Committee on Licenses and Permits, meeting on May 8, 2024.

Councilor Mbah summarized the actions taken by the committee and reported that the sole agenda item was for a modification to an existing license.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 6.F.2. License
(ID # [24-0549](#))

New Garage License, Mercedes Benz of Boston, 161 Linwood St, 0 vehicles inside, 25 vehicles outside for mechanical repairs, auto body work, and spray painting, Mon-Fri: 8am-6pm, Sat: 8am-2pm, Sun: closed.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

6.G. OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

- 6.G.1. Committee Report (ID # [24-0623](#)) Report of the Committee on Open Space, Environment and Energy, meeting on May 6, 2024.

Councilor Mbah summarized the actions taken by the committee and reported that an update was received regarding the delay in opening Reavis Field. Members also discussed municipal composting and a proposal for a new position to protect against invasive species.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

6.H. RULES SPECIAL COMMITTEE

- 6.H.1. Committee Report (ID # [24-0622](#)) Report of the Special Committee on Rules, meeting on May 6, 2024.

Councilor Burnley summarized the actions taken by the committee and reported that a proposed change to the Rules of the City Council was recommended for approval, as amended.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

6.H.2. Officer's
Communication
(ID # [24-0415](#))

City Clerk submitting an amendment to the Rules of the City Council to accommodate remote participation and facilitate accessibility.

Rule 5. A majority of the entire membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A member participating remotely must be visible on camera, or, if video is not reasonably practicable, able to be clearly and identifiably heard to be recognized as present for the purpose of establishing quorum. The presiding officer shall take the chair at the hour fixed or to which the city council has recessed, and shall convene the meeting. If a quorum is not present at such time, then the presiding officer shall recess such meeting until a quorum is in attendance, but if a quorum fails to materialize within thirty minutes of the time originally set forth, then the presiding officer shall adjourn such meeting forthwith.

Rule 14. The presiding officer shall declare all votes, but if any member doubts the vote, the chair, without further debate, shall require the members to vote in the affirmative or negative by roll call, and shall declare the result only after all members present have voted. No member shall be recorded on any vote unless they are ~~physically situated within the city council's chambers.~~ visible on camera, or, if video is not reasonably practicable, able to be clearly and identifiably heard if participating remotely, or voicing their vote into the microphone at their assigned seat if physically present.

Rule 27. A majority of a committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A member participating remotely must be visible on camera, or, if video is not reasonably practicable, able to be clearly and identifiably heard to be recognized as present for the purpose of establishing quorum. The chair shall take the chair at the hour fixed or to which the committee has recessed, and shall convene the meeting. The chair shall preserve decorum and order. If a quorum is not present at such time, then the chair shall recess such meeting until a quorum is in attendance, but if a quorum fails to materialize within thirty minutes of the time originally set forth, then the chair shall adjourn such meeting forthwith, and shall prepare a report of the committee indicating such.

RESULT: **APPROVED AS AMENDED**

AYE: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Five City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld, and Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

6.I. TRAFFIC AND PARKING COMMITTEE

- 6.I.1. Committee Report Report of the Committee on Traffic and Parking, meeting on April 29, 2024.
(ID # [24-0618](#))

Councilor Sait summarized the actions taken by the committee and reported that members discussed speed humps, large curb extensions, the McGrath Hwy foot bridge, pedestrian crosswalk markings, cut through traffic and safety sticks.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 6.I.2. Order
(ID # [24-0339](#))

By Councilor Wilson and Councilor Scott

That the Director of Engineering update this Council on any plans to refresh worn and missing pedestrian crosswalk pavement markings on South Street, between Medford Street and Windsor Street.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

- 6.I.3. Order
(ID # [24-0467](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Clingan

That the Director of Mobility work with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to preserve the pedestrian footbridge on McGrath Highway as part of the grounding McGrath project.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

- 6.I.4. Order
(ID # [24-0468](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

That the Director of Mobility return the TEMPORARY PARKING sign, that serves local businesses, to the corner of Washington and Myrtle Streets.

AMENDMENT: Replace "Myrtle Street" with "Florence Street".

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

- 6.I.5. Order
(ID # [24-0470](#))

By Councilor Wilson and Councilor Clingan

That the Director of Mobility update this Council on plans to address increased cut-through commuter traffic on Temple Street and Fellsway West on weekday mornings, including any plans to prohibit right turns onto Temple Street and Fellsway West from 7 AM to 9 AM on weekdays.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

- 6.I.6. Order
(ID # [24-0544](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Mbah, Councilor Wilson and Councilor Davis

That the Director of Parking update this Council on the timeline for citywide rollout of Safety Sticks, including which areas will be prioritized for enforcement.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

7. COMMUNICATIONS OF THE MAYOR

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- 7.1. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0644](#)) Requesting authorization to borrow \$3,010,000 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for the recurring FY 2024 Building Improvements program.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.10 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 7.2. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0655](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$250,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Law Department Legal Services Account for anticipated outside legal counsel invoices.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.10 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 7.3. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0668](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$80,000 from the Department of Public Works (DPW) Lights & Lines accounts to the DPW Grounds Professional and Technical account to cover year-end grounds maintenance expenses.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.10 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 7.4. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0654](#)) Requesting approval to use available funds in the City Clerk Salaries account in the amount of \$1,913.40 to fund a Legislative Services Manager position.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.10 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 7.5. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0669](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend an up to \$60,000 grant with no new match required, from the Low Income Housing Water Assistance Program through the City of Cambridge to the Water and Sewer Department for income eligible ratepayers who are directly billed for their service(s) and who have an arrearage.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.10 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
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- 7.6. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0643](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$50,000 grant with no new match required from Home Energy Efficiency Team, Inc. to the Office of Sustainability and Environment for a feasibility study to identify potential locations for geothermal networks.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.10 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 7.7. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0666](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$28,000 grant with no new match required, from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to the Department of Public Works for the Recycle Dividend Program.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.10 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 7.8. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0627](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$32,695 using available funds in the Parks and Recreation Building Rental account for portable invoices.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.10 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 7.9. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0661](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$7,075 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Buildings Division Rental Buildings account for portable restroom rental services.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.10 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 7.10. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0660](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$70 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Fleet Division R&M Vehicles account for vehicle inspection invoices.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.10 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee

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- 7.11. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0636](#)) Requesting approval of the proposed 2024-2028 Department of Housing and Urban Development 5-Year Consolidated Plan, One Year Action Plan, and Community Participation Plan for Community Development Block Grant, Home Investment Partnership, and Emergency Solutions Grant programming.
- RESULT:** **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
FOLLOWUP: Housing and Community Development Committee
- 7.12. Mayor's Communication (ID # [24-0657](#)) Proclaiming that the City of Somerville recognizes the month of May, 2024 as Older Americans Month.
- RESULT:** **PLACED ON FILE**
- 7.13. Mayor's Communication (ID # [24-0658](#)) Proclaiming that the City of Somerville recognizes the week of May 5-11, 2024 as Drinking Water Week.
- RESULT:** **PLACED ON FILE**
- 7.14. Mayor's Communication (ID # [24-0659](#)) Conveying information related to item #24-0455: an update on Police and Fire hiring.
- RESULT:** **PLACED ON FILE**
- 7.15. Mayor's Communication (ID # [24-0674](#)) Conveying an update on the development of a water bill ratepayer assistance program.
- Director Vidalis gave an update of the program and some background of what precipitated this situation. The rate increases discussed tonight resulted from Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) costs and the city's updating of the water and sewer infrastructure. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was put out and the consulting firm Raftelis was awarded the contract to develop a program. Raftelis Vice President Dave Fox gave a presentation and said that a standard customer assistance program would not be right for Somerville. He gave an overview of the program which includes evaluating the situation, getting feedback and input, determining what programs are available today, and designing and implementing a program. The common issue was the rise in water/sewer bills over time, which impacted property owners and some tenants. The study showed that there is little to no awareness of available programs to help. Mr. Fox spoke about different billing cycles and stressed that communication is critical in multiple modes. He compared what the city asked for vs. what the research determined and the resulting 4 recommendations: 1) make equitable rate structure changes;
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2) diversify revenue sources; 3) formulate new policies and practices; 4) enhance communication. Various methods were mentioned as ways to ensure that all bill payers are billed equitably. Mr. Fox also spoke about potential new revenue streams, e.g., fire protection fees, separate stormwater fees, and miscellaneous fee adjustments, potential policy changes including monthly billing, partial payments, grants for water efficiency investments, and a formal written communications plan. The goal is to go live with a program by January 1, 2025. The City Council will be given updates on progress.

Councilor Wilson commented that there could be a shift of burden if rates were charged by type and he asked if the city is trying to get more from ratepayers. Mr. Fox responded that the question was not in the scope of the consulting contract. Councilor Wilson asked if the revenue received from the back water/sewer charges aligned with expectations and Director Vidalis said that staff is still finalizing the numbers. Councilor Strezo commented that she has been hearing from constituents that some of them will be responsible for water usage in their new leases. Director Vidalis said that part of the communication effort is to let tenants know what can and can't be done, but there is no definitive timeline for the communication. Mr. Fox explained that if a property is sub metered, the tenant can be billed for water usage. Councilor Strezo asked if inclusionary units were included in the study and Mr. Fox replied that they are aware that some of that group pay their own water bills and meetings are being scheduled with inclusionary residents to get their input.

Councilor Burnley asked for an explanation of stormwater fees and Mr. Fox stated that he is not involved in that, but fees are usually fixed and based on the square footage of impervious area. Director Vidalis said that the city is in the early stages of looking into this as it reduces sewage fees ensuring more equity. Councilor Burnley asked about the fire protection fee and Mr. Fox replied that locations where fire suppression systems exist will be examined. Councilor Burnley inquired if billing systems will be compatible with other city systems, how long it would take to switch over and how much it would cost. Mr. Fox stated that an upgrade is not needed, but that categorizing needs to be corrected and that it could be doable in the next 6 months. He went on to say that there are funds that the city could apply to property owners, at no cost to the property owners, to retrofit fixtures to lessen consumption. Director Vidalis told the members that most of the changes are administrative changes.

Councilor Clingan inquired about partial payments and Mr. Fox explained that, currently, ratepayers are able to pay bills over time, with interest, and he wants to make that known. Councilor Pineda Neufeld noted that the information on the department's website about submetering is only in English and Director Vidalis commented that staff is aware of that and was planning to update the site. President Ewen-Campen noted that much of the issue is water meter replacements and Mr. Fox again stated that this was outside the scope of the contract.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION

FOLLOWUP: Equity, Gender, Seniors, Families and Vulnerable Populations Committee

8. COMMUNICATIONS OF CITY OFFICERS

- 8.1. Officer's Communication (ID # [24-0670](#)) City Clerk requesting confirmation of the appointment of Melissa Ripley to the position of Assistant City Clerk.

Councilor Mbah moved to approve this item this evening. The motion was approved and the Assistant City Clerk was sworn in.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

9. NEW BUSINESS

- 9.1. License (ID # [24-0672](#)) New Drainlayer's License, A&D Services Inc.

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 9.2. License (ID # [24-0629](#)) Renewing Drainlayer's License, New England Construction Managers Inc.

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 9.3. License (ID # [24-0630](#)) Renewing Drainlayer's License, Super Service Today Inc.

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 9.4. License (ID # [24-0631](#)) Renewing Drainlayer's License, W.L. French Excavating.

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

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- 9.5. License
(ID # [24-0635](#))
- New Extended Operating Hours License, Papa John's, 622 Somerville Ave, opening Sun-Thur until 1am, Fri-Sat until 2am for takeout and delivery services.
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the reading of items 9.5 and 10.6 and refer them to the Licenses and Permits Committee.
- RESULT:** **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Licenses and Permits Committee
- 9.6. License
(ID # [24-0632](#))
- Renewing Garage License, K Professional Auto Detailing, 682 Mystic Ave.
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 9.7. License
(ID # [24-0633](#))
- Renewing Second Hand Dealer's License, Luce Boutique, 56 Union Square.
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 9.8. License
(ID # [24-0634](#))
- Renewing Taxi Medallion License, Yolande Trans., Inc., Med. #15.
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 9.9. Public Event
(ID # [24-0671](#))
- Abbey Judd applying for a Public Event License for Joy Fest on May 18 from 10am to 8pm (raindate May 19).
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 9.10. Public Event
(ID # [24-0673](#))
- Mass Farmers Market applying for a Public Event License for Davis Square Farmer's Market on every Wednesday May 22 through November 27 from 9:30am to 6:30pm.
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.
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RESULT: APPROVED

- 9.11. Public Communication (ID # [24-0641](#)) 14 registered voters requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning district of 136 School Street from Urban Residence (UR) to Mid-Rise 6 (MR6), 95 Highland Avenue from Neighborhood Residence (NR) to MR6, and 97, 99-99A, 101-103, and 107 Highland Avenue from Mid-Rise 5 (MR5) to MR6.

RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION
FOLLOWUP: Land Use Committee

- 9.12. Public Communication (ID # [24-0642](#)) 14 registered voters requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning district of 228, 230, 232, 234, 236 Pearl Street from Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) to Mid-Rise 6 (MR6).

RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION
FOLLOWUP: Land Use Committee

- 9.13. Public Communication (ID # [24-0637](#)) Leah and Jeff Byrnes submitting comments re: School budget.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

- 9.14. Public Communication (ID # [24-0638](#)) Edward Woll submitting comments re: item #24-0583, a resolution in support of An Act Relative to the Future of Clean Heat in the Commonwealth and An Act Establishing a Moratorium on New Gas System Expansion.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

- 9.15. Public Communication (ID # [24-0640](#)) New England Convenience Store and Energy Marketers Association (NECSEMA) submitting comments re: Nicotine Free Generation.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

10. SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS

- 10.1. Resolution (ID # [24-0682](#)) By Councilor Sait, Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Clingan, Councilor Davis, Councilor Mbah, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo On actions to promote students and community health and resilience in the era of climate change.

Councilor Sait commented that it is our duty to mitigate the impacts of climate change and noted that the city has no plan as to how it would reduce carbon emissions in schools. This resolution calls for 3 actions to be taken

by city:

1. convene an interdisciplinary team to conduct a comprehensive study of all Somerville municipal buildings used by Somerville Public Schools,
2. adopt appropriate measures and practices to assess, monitor, and maintain the healthfulness of each school's physical environment, and
3. report annually to the City Council any updates on measures and practices taken.

Councilor Sait sponsored Courtney Koslow to address the Council. Ms. Koslow said that when the new Winter Hill school is built, it will serve as an inspiration and learning tool. Other schools in the city are having mechanical failures and being repaired without thought to energy reduction the harm being done to the climate. Ms. Koslow said that Somerville has set a goal to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and she pointed out that two thirds of the city's carbon emissions come from its schools. If the schools are addressed, the city goal would be more achievable, yet there is no concrete capital plan for the schools.

Councilor Sait sponsored Kay Mammo who spoke on behalf of the Somerville Educators Union and said that the union endorses this resolution.

RESULT: APPROVED

10.2. Communication
(ID # [24-0683](#))

By Councilor Wilson

Conveying a report of the Police Chief Selection Committee.

Councilor Wilson reported that the Police Chief Selection Committee (PCSC) finished its work and conducted finalist interviews. He urged residents to go online to view the interviews and submit feedback. Details of any contract will be provided to the City Council for approval.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

10.3. Communication
(ID # [24-0684](#))

By Councilor Wilson

In his capacity as Chair of the Finance Committee, conveying an outline of the FY 2025 Budget Review process.

Councilor Wilson informed the Council that the FY 2025 budget process will be similar to last year's process and that pre-submitted questions from Councilors will be permitted.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

10.4. License
(ID # [24-0690](#))

Renewing Drainlayer's License, The Welch Corp.

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: APPROVED

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- 10.5. License
(ID # [24-0691](#))
- Renewing Flammables License, Teele Square Auto, 1284 Broadway.
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 10.6. License
(ID # [24-0692](#))
- New Garage License, BRE-BMR Assembly Innovation I LLC, 122 Assembly Park Drive, 306 vehicles inside, 0 vehicles outside for charging money to store vehicles and operating a tow, operating 7 days a week 24 hours.
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the reading of items 9.5 and 10.6 and refer them to the Licenses and Permits Committee.
- RESULT:** **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Licenses and Permits Committee
- 10.7. Public Event
(ID # [24-0689](#))
- Reena Freedman applying for a Public Event License for Porchfest on Francesca on May 11 from 11:30am to 2:30pm (raindate May 12).
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 10.8. Public Event
(ID # [24-0685](#))
- Yi Lam applying for a Public Event License for Cambridge Somerville Asian Festival on May 11 from 12pm to 5pm.
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 10.9. Public Event
(ID # [24-0694](#))
- Leigh Meunier applying for a Public Event License for Porchfest on Hancock on May 11 from 1pm to 4:30pm (raindate May 12).
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 10.10. Public Event
(ID # [24-0688](#))
- Roberto Fischer applying for a Public Event License for Porchfest on Beech on May 11 from 1:30pm to 4:30pm (raindate May 12).
- Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them
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this evening.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

10.11. Public Event
(ID # [24-0686](#))

Jacob Engelstad applying for a Public Event License for Remembering Bill Conrad on May 18 from 1:30pm to 7pm (raindate May 25).

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

10.12. Public Event
(ID # [24-0687](#))

Kate Ryan applying for a Public Event License for Brown School Fun Run on May 24 from 8am to 3pm (raindate May 23 and May 31).

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the readings of items 9.1 through 9.4, 9.6 through 9.10, 10.4 through 10.5, and 10.7 through 10.12 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

10.13. Public
Communication
(ID # [24-0679](#))

14 registered voters requesting a Zoning Text Amendment to amend the Zoning Ordinances to add section 8.4.19, Somernova Innovation Sub-Area.

RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**

FOLLOWUP: Land Use Committee

10.14. Public
Communication
(ID # [24-0680](#))

15 registered voters requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to include 8 Park Street, 10 Park Street, 504 Somerville Avenue, 7-9 Properzi Way, 15-27 Properzi Way, 29 Properzi Way, 26-32 Park Street, 8-14 Tyler Street, 40 Park Street, 15 Dane Street, 7-9 Tyler Street, 30 Dane Street, 24-28 Dane Street, 460 Somerville Avenue, 444 Somerville Avenue, 440 Somerville Avenue, and 502 Somerville Avenue in the Somernova Innovation Sub-Area.

RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**

FOLLOWUP: Land Use Committee

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was Adjourned at 9:51 PM.