
From: Denise Lauers
Sent: Tuesday, June 21, 2022 11:27 PM
To: City Clerk Contact; All City Council; Mayor
Subject: FY23 Budget Testimony - Affordable Housing

Honorable Madam Mayor Ballantyne and City Council Members,

My name is Denise Lauers. I live in the Winter Hill neighborhood at 422 Mystic Avenue, Apt. 505. I am a board member of the Community Action Agency of Somerville and also a member of the Somerville Renters Committee.

First, I'd like to thank Madam Mayor for your thoughtful proposed budget for the fiscal year 2023. I also would like to thank the city councilors for raising questions and sharing some of their concerns around that.

Somerville has become a desirable place to live in, and with that, our city became unaffordable to many, causing displacement to the most vulnerable in our community. This crisis has been present in our population before COVID, however, the pandemic made it worse.

On June 2nd, during the Finance Committee Meeting, the Director of Finance, Mr. Bean made a statement saying the city will have a **very strong FREE CASH this Fall after certification**. Last year, during the 2021 election campaign, each one of you shared your concerns on the housing crisis that we have been facing and vowed to work on better policies - city and state-wise and to make sure the voices of the most vulnerable in our community were heard.

I am part of the most vulnerable in our community and I am here to **urge** you, Madam Mayor and City Councilors, to use this giant budget surplus that the City is about to have on affordable housing, and when I say affordable housing, I mean the type that is affordable to the low-income/immigrant community, not the one we have in place right now. The 8.3 million from the GLX is a good start but not enough.

I also would like to ask you to invest in the OHS' Tenant Organizing grant and support hiring 3 bilingual tenant organizers.

Thank you for your time,

Denise Lauers