



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 26, 2025

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 7:07 PM by Ward Seven City Councilor Judy Pineda Neufeld.

The City Council entered recess at 7:25 PM and returned at 7:32 PM.

The City Council entered recess at 9:12 PM and returned at 9:40 PM.

The City Council entered recess at 10:25 PM and returned at 10:35 PM.

- 1.1. Roll Call Call of the Roll.
(ID # [25-1185](#))

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

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

- 1.2. Remembrances Remembrances.
(ID # [25-1186](#))

President Pineda Neufeld and Councilor McLaughlin requested a moment of silence in memory of Carol Patricia Raiche.

President Pineda Neufeld and Councilor McLaughlin requested a moment of silence in memory of Thomas Galligani.

Councilor Clingan requested a moment of silence in memory of Jason Laporta.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 1.3. Minutes Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 22, 2025.
(ID # [25-1187](#))

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 1.4. Minutes
(ID # [25-1188](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of May 29, 2025.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

2. CITATIONS

- 2.1. Citation
(ID # [25-1143](#)) By Councilor Davis
Commending outgoing Councilor Judy Pineda Neufeld for her outstanding service to the people of Somerville as Ward 7 City Councilor from 2022 to 2025 and her distinguished service as President of this Council in 2025.
- Vice President Davis read the Citation into the record and thanked President Pineda Neufeld for providing a calm voice on the City Council. Mayor Ballantyne recognized the President's leadership, heart and commitment to equity and noted her work with the city during the COVID pandemic on behalf of its residents. The mayor characterized her as a community organizer who showed courage, built bridges and created opportunities and thanked her on behalf of all Somerville residents.
- Councilors Clingan, Strezo, Ewen-Campen, McLaughlin, Wilson, Mbah, Sait and Scott each commented on President Pineda Neufeld's time on the City Council by noting her steady hand, commitment to public service, thoughtfulness, genuine leadership skills, ability to get things done, cooperation, doing the work without seeking accolades, willingness to step up when needed, thoughtfulness to city staff, sense of humor, passion for constituents, professionalism and hard work.
- President Pineda Neufeld thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve the city she loves and said that the city is defined by its people and that by working together, changes can be made to make the city even better. She commented on the atmosphere at last night's fireworks display, calling it magical as it showed Somerville at its best. She spoke about the pain of hearing about businesses closing, immigrant fear, and the rising cost of day care and rent. She expressed that she was leaving with a sense of gratitude, and she urged her fellow councilors not to lose sight of why they're here, saying that it's for the people who live and work in this city. She asked them to be brave enough to listen and ask hard questions. Finally, she thanked everyone for trusting and believing in her.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 2.2. Citation
(ID # [25-1151](#)) By Councilor Wilson
Commending Jason Diorio and Kevin McCormick for their actions on June 11, 2025 providing assistance to a community member in need.
- Councilor Wilson described a recent incident and spoke about these two Public Works employees, who happened to be present at the time of the event. They immediately notified 911 and remained with the injured person, offering assistance and calming reassurance until medical help arrived. DPW

Commissioner Lathan commended these employees and told them how proud she was of them.

RESULT: APPROVED

2.3. Citation
(ID # [25-1183](#))

By Councilor Wilson

Commending the Somerville Pride 7th Grade Girls Basketball Team on their win in the Metro West Youth Basketball Championship.

Councilor Wilson noted that this achievement is worth celebrating. Coach Garcia thanked the Council and the Mayor on behalf of the team for this acknowledgement and said that he wants the city to feel proud of this team.

RESULT: APPROVED

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

3.1. Grant of Location
(ID # [25-1145](#)) Cambridge Network Solutions applying for a Grant of Location to install a total of 75 feet of conduit in Meacham Road, from Utility Pole 225/9 to a point of pickup at 55 Davis Square.

Jeffrey Harrington, representing Cambridge Network Solutions, 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 # [25-1144](#)) Cambridge Network Solutions applying for a Grant of Location to install one new handhole at the Elm Street/Davis Square/Day Street intersection and a total of 128 feet of conduit in Day and Elm Street, from the proposed handhole to a point of pickup at Utility Pole 196/9.

Jeffrey Harrington, representing Cambridge Network Solutions, 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

3.3. Grant of Location
(ID # [25-1147](#)) Eversource applying for a Grant of Location to install approximately 5 feet of conduit in Herbert Street, from Utility Pole 88/0 to a point of pickup at 53 Chester 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

3.4. Grant of Location
(ID # [25-1148](#)) Eversource applying for a Grant of Location to install approximately 50 feet of conduit in Berkeley Street, from Utility Pole 30/8 to a point of pickup at 54 Berkeley 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

- 3.5. Grant of Location (ID # [25-1146](#)) Eversource applying for a Grant of Location to install approximately 236 feet of conduit in Walnut Street, 148 feet of conduit in Giles Park, and two new manholes, from Manhole 25271 to a point of pickup at 33 Bow 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. Resolution (ID # [25-1170](#)) By Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Clingan, Councilor Davis, Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Mbah, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Sait, Councilor Scott, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wilson

In support of the Climate Superfund Bill.

President Pineda Neufeld sponsored Grace Hall, a member of the Unitarian Universalist Mass Action network. Ms. Hall asked the Council to join other communities in their efforts to make utility companies mitigate some of the damage they caused to the climate. She stated that the mitigation needed to reach energy goals by 2050 would be extensive and expensive and that passage of this bill would help with funding that work.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 4.2. Communication (ID # [25-1140](#)) By Councilor Pineda Neufeld
In her capacity as President, cancelling this Council's Regular meetings scheduled for July 24 and August 14, 2025.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

- 4.3. Order (ID # [25-1171](#)) By Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Strezo, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Mbah
That the Director of Engineering update this Council and community advocates on current efforts to fix the unsafe crossing of the Community Path at School Street.

Councilor Ewen-Campen commented that the city has brought on an architectural consultant to address this matter.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION

FOLLOWUP: Traffic and Parking Committee

-
- 4.4. Order
(ID # [25-1172](#))
- By Councilor Ewen-Campen
That the Director of Mobility install WATCH FOR BICYCLES signage for each street that intersects with the two bicycle lanes on Central Street.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 4.5. Resolution
(ID # [25-1178](#))
- By Councilor Sait
That the Administration notify Magoun Square businesses of planned construction projects.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION**
FOLLOWUP: Housing and Community Development Committee
- 4.6. Resolution
(ID # [25-1177](#))
- By Councilor Sait, Councilor Wilson and Councilor Burnley Jr.
That Eversource explain the reasons behind repeated power outages in Magoun Square, and share what they have done to address them in the near term and what is being done to prevent long term recurrence.
- Councilor Sait noted that there have been repeated outages in the area during the summer months and that this ongoing problem is far from being resolved by Eversource.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION**
FOLLOWUP: Public Utilities and Public Works Committee
- 4.7. Order
(ID # [25-1180](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Davis, Councilor Mbah and Councilor Strezo
That the Director of Economic Development and City Clerk discuss with this Council policies regarding outdoor seating and how the city may make it easier and less expensive for small businesses.
- Councilor McLaughlin commented that some progress had been made on this issue in recent years, however, now the process and associated costs have become so onerous that some businesses have decided to not even apply for outdoor seating.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION**
FOLLOWUP: Public Health and Public Safety Committee
- 5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
- 5.1. Citation
(ID # [25-0991](#))
- By Councilor Pineda Neufeld
Commending the Kiwanis Club on the auspicious occasion of its 100th anniversary of support to the community.
- President Pineda Neufeld read the Citation into the record and Mayor Ballentyne congratulated the Kiwanis Club for their never-ending service to members of the community. Robert Nissenbaum, representing the Kiwanis Club, thanked the Mayor and City Council for this recognition and spoke about some of the community work done by the Kiwanis in the community,
-

from raising money for youth sports uniforms to raising funds for the libraries.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 5.2. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0898](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$100,000 from the Public Space and Urban Forestry Capital Tree Planting Account to the Street Tree Capital Stabilization Fund Account for future tree planting and maintenance activities.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 5.3. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1056](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$237,000 to fund the FY 2026 Dilboy Fields Enterprise Fund Budget.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 5.4. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1059](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$87,000 from the Dilboy Fields Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings to subsidize the FY 2026 Dilboy Fields Enterprise Fund Budget.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

- 5.5. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1078](#)) Requesting the appropriation or reserve of \$5,863,561 in estimated FY 2026 Community Preservation Act (CPA) revenue for CPA projects and expenses.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 5.6. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1079](#)) Requesting approval to repurpose \$77,000 in the Racial & Social Justice Stabilization Fund to fund two Rental Assistance Advocate positions for FY 2026.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

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

NAY: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

- 5.7. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1080](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$77,000 in re-purposed funds in the Racial & Social Justice Stabilization Fund to retain two Rental Assistance Advocate positions for Fiscal Year 2026.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

-
- | | | |
|--|-------------|---|
| | AYE: | City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Five City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld |
| | NAY: | Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. |
-
- 5.8. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1081](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$35,000 from the Department of Public Works Snow Removal Account to the Department of Public Works Grounds Division, Overtime Labor Account to remediate a year end deficit.
- RESULT: APPROVED**
-
- 5.9. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1095](#)) Requesting approval to repurpose and appropriate \$40,500 from the COVID-19 Stabilization fund to continue the Playworks Program at the Winter Hill Community School for 2025-2026 School Year.
- RESULT: APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Five City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
- NAY:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
-
- 5.10. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1097](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$2,055,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Facility Renovation and Reconstruction Stabilization Fund to support the 5-Year Capital Investment Plan.
- RESULT: APPROVED**
-
- 5.11. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1098](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$2,715,270 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Street Reconstruction and Renovation Stabilization Fund to support the 5-Year Capital Investment Plan.
- RESULT: APPROVED**
-
- 5.12. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1100](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$750,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Parks Stabilization Fund to support the 5-Year Capital Investment Plan.
- RESULT: APPROVED**
-

-
- | | |
|--|---|
| 5.13. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1101) | Requesting the appropriation of \$500,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund to support the 5-Year Capital Investment Plan. |
| | RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| | |
| 5.14. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1102) | Requesting the appropriation of \$500,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Traffic Safety Stabilization Fund for traffic safety improvements. |
| | RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| | |
| 5.15. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1104) | Requesting the appropriation of \$1,000,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Salary & Wage Stabilization Fund. |
| | RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| | |
| 5.16. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1105) | Requesting the appropriation of \$1,300,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Fund. |
| | RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| | |
| 5.17. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1114) | Requesting the appropriation of \$100,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Compensated Absence Liability Fund. |
| | RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| | |
| 5.18. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1115) | Requesting the appropriation of \$5,000,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Rainy Day Stabilization Fund. |
| | RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| | |
| 5.19. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1121) | Requesting the appropriation of \$110,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Workers Compensation Insurance Fund for workers compensation insurance settlements. |
| | RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| | |
| 5.20. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1122) | Requesting the appropriation of \$45,596 from the Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to the Mobile Farmers Market Revolving Fund for the support of a school based market. |
| | RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| | |
| 5.21. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1123) | Requesting the appropriation of \$30,245,443 to fund the FY 2026 Sewer Enterprise Fund budget. |
| | RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
-

- 5.22. Mayor's Request Requesting the appropriation of \$21,366,905 to fund the FY 2026 Water Enterprise Fund budget.
(ID # [25-1124](#))

RESULT: APPROVED

- 5.23. Mayor's Request Requesting the approval of the expenditure limitations for departmental Revolving Funds for FY 2026.
(ID # [25-1138](#))

RESULT: APPROVED

6. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

6.A. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 6.A.1. Committee Report Report of the Committee on Finance, meeting as a Committee of the Whole
(ID # [25-1048](#)) on June 3, 2025.

Prior to hearing the Finance Committee reports, Mayor Ballantyne thanked the Council for their work on the FY2026 budget and said that the \$380.1 million budget represents more than just numbers and was based on core services and mobilized around shared goals. She expressed that the city's finances have been managed wisely and that difficult decisions were made to reduce costs but not services. A commitment was made to education by increasing the School Department's budget by 7.4%. and the mayor noted that the \$1.5 million that was set aside for a contract for the city's educators will be rolled into the budget. She thanked department heads and city staff for their dedication to serving the residents of Somerville.

Mayor Ballantyne spoke about a concern she has regarding a cut made to the Executive Administration budget, saying that the cut was to a specific occupied position. She told the Council that she stands for workers when they are being treated unfairly and she hopes that the City Council will reconsider its position on this cut. She noted that the Administration seeks to have funding for positions approved prior to them being advertised. She went on to say that no one should expect to be terminated in such a manner, without any notice, or subjected to having this type of discharge follow them through their career as they seek other employment and that there is no need to resort to this type of action that carries with it so many unintended consequences. Rather, she continued, this matter could have been discussed as her door is always open. Mayor Ballantyne noted that the position in question, Chief Administrative Officer, has been enshrined in the new City Charter, which is awaiting approval by the state legislature. She commented that governments face numerous challenges and that the person in this position is the one who addresses many of them and that this same person stood with her, at personal risk, when Somerville filed its lawsuit against the federal government.

Councilor Wilson summarized the actions taken by the committee during the FY 2026 budget deliberations and reported that the committee met 5 times

to deliberate the FY 2026 budget. He briefly explained the new process that was implemented this year to save time and allow councilors more time to examine the proposed budget. He thanked city staff for their assistance during the process.

Councilors Clingan, Pineda Neufeld, McLaughlin, Mbah, Sait, Burnley, Scott, and Davis thanked Councilor Wilson for his attention to detail and organization while serving as the Chair of the Finance Committee.

RESULT: APPROVED

6.B. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 6.B.1. Committee Report Report of the Committee on Finance, meeting on June 10, 2025.
(ID # [25-1126](#))

See item #25-1048.

RESULT: APPROVED

6.C. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 6.C.1. Committee Report Report of the Committee on Finance, meeting on June 16, 2025.
(ID # [25-1142](#))

See item #25-1048.

RESULT: APPROVED

6.D. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 6.D.1. Committee Report Report of the Committee on Finance, meeting on June 18, 2025.
(ID # [25-1154](#))

See item #25-1048.

RESULT: APPROVED

6.E. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 6.E.1. Committee Report Report of the Committee on Finance, meeting as a Committee of the Whole,
(ID # [25-1181](#)) on June 24, 2025.

See item #25-1048.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 6.E.2. Mayor's Request Requesting approval of a transfer of \$54,412 from the Salary Contingency
(ID # [25-1025](#)) Salaries Account to the Law Department Salaries Account to remediate a year-end deficit.

RESULT: APPROVED

-
- | | |
|---|--|
| 6.E.3. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1027) | Requesting the appropriation of \$237,000 to fund the FY 2026 Dilboy Fields Enterprise Fund Budget. RESULT: <u>WITHDRAWN</u> |
| 6.E.4. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1028) | Requesting the appropriation of \$736,080 to fund the FY 2026 Kennedy School Pool Enterprise Fund budget. RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| 6.E.5. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1030) | Requesting approval of the expenditure limitations for departmental Revolving Funds for FY 2026. RESULT: <u>WITHDRAWN</u> |
| 6.E.6. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1031) | Requesting approval of a transfer of \$37,740 from the Department of Public Works Admin Salaries Account to the Department of Public Works Grounds Salaries Account to remediate a year-end deficit. RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| 6.E.7. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1032) | Requesting approval of a transfer of \$216,000 from the Department of Public Works (DPW) Custodian Salaries Account to the DPW Electrical Other Lump Sum Account and the DPW Highway Salaries Account to remediate year-end deficits. RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| 6.E.8. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1033) | Requesting the appropriation of \$373,680 from the Kennedy School Pool Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings to support the FY 2026 Kennedy School Pool Enterprise Fund Budget. RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> |
| 6.E.9. Mayor's Request (ID # 25-1034) | Requesting approval to appropriate \$2,055,000 from the Facility Construction and Renovation Stabilization Fund to the Assembly Square Fire Station Capital Fund to reduce debt service costs for the project. RESULT: <u>APPROVED</u> AYE: City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Five City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld NAY: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. |
-

- 6.E.10. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-1035](#))
- Requesting approval to appropriate \$2,715,270 from the Street Reconstruction & Resurfacing Stabilization Fund to various capital project funds to reduce debt service costs for these projects.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

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

NAY: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

- 6.E.11. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-1040](#))
- Requesting the appropriation of \$87,000 from the Dilboy Field Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings Account to subsidize the FY 2026 Dilboy Field Enterprise Fund Budget.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 6.E.12. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-1042](#))
- Requesting the appropriation of \$362,915,509 to fund the FY 2026 General Fund Operating Budget.

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

- 6.E.13. Order
(ID # [25-1189](#))
- By Councilor Scott
That the Executive Office - Administration, Personal Services Salaries line be reduced by \$186,744 in the FY 2026 budget.

Councilor Wilson moved that this item be severed from the Committee Report. The motion was approved.

Councilor Davis stated that he felt compelled to speak on this item after hearing the remarks made by the mayor, moments ago, and said that he was not impressed with her comments and that the Administration, not the City Council, made this matter about a particular person, now as well as last year during the FY 2025 budget vote. He said that the issue is about funding and feeling whether or not the position is actually necessary, adding that he doesn't feel this is how taxpayer dollars should be spent. He went on to say that the mayor, herself, is making this about an individual and he made it clear that is not the case. He also commented that the proposed city charter includes a similar position, but it's not the same as the position being referenced by the mayor.

Other members of the Council gave their opinions on the matter with Councilor Ewen-Campen saying that there are consequences for making cuts and if the amount of the cut is exactly the amount of a particular position, then the Council should deliberate before making the cut, but he pointed out that it did not and that the vote was taken without any discussion. Councilor Clingan commented that he has never seen anything like what the mayor just

did. Councilor Wilson urged colleagues to look at this matter dispassionately and said that he doesn't want the state house to see this discord when considering the charter Home Rule Petition and asked that it be put aside. Councilor Mbah commented that the mayor called him to advocate for the position and that he plans on changing his vote only because he doesn't want to impede the process of moving the charter Home Rule Petition through the legislature. Councilor McLaughlin stated that he did not appreciate the mayor's comments and said that contrary to what she said, the door is not always open and that the lack of communication persists. Councilor Scott commented that the disrespect just expressed by the mayor is corrosive because it not only disrespects the members of the Council, it also disrespects the idea of the legislative branch of government and its responsibilities.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld noted that during the COVID pandemic, she sat on the other side as a contractor for the city and worked side by side with city staff. She said that every department feels fear and anxiety during the budget process because of the tone and tenor of the City Council and she is struggling to believe that this cut was not personal. She continued by saying that the Council is spending a lot of time on a position that it may not understand and she pointed out that it's the Council's job to ask questions and to reach out. She asked her colleagues to think about city staff as they wonder who might be next. Councilor Clingan stated that he took offense to Councilor Pineda Neufeld's remarks in that he defends this city every day. He also said that the Council respected the budget put forth by making minimal cuts. Councilor Davis agreed with Councilor Clingan's comments.

RESULT: **NOT APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

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

6.F. LAND USE COMMITTEE

6.F.1. Committee Report Report of the Committee on Land Use, meeting on June 17, 2025. (ID # [25-1149](#))

Councilor McLaughlin summarized the actions taken by the committee and reported that during the discussion of the SomerNova amendments, traffic and parking concerns were raised, but ultimately, the vote on the item was based on its merits. The committee also received an update on citywide zoning proposals and discussed an amendment to waive dimensions of egress.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 6.F.2. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0128](#)) Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Articles 6, 9, and 10 of the Zoning Ordinance to establish a new Research & Development zoning district.

RESULT: **ORDINANCE ORDAINED**

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

- 6.F.3. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0129](#)) Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Articles 2, 3-6, and 9 of the Zoning Ordinance to revise the regulations for arts and creative enterprise, office, and residential uses.

RESULT: **ORDINANCE ORDAINED**

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

- 6.F.4. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-0131](#)) Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Articles 8 and 12 of the Zoning Ordinance to establish a new Arts & Innovation sub-area of the Master Planned Development Overlay District.

Councilor Davis noted that communications still coming in regarding this item and said that the overlay is the key to it as it changes zoning to enable something that came from neighborhood negotiations. Councilor Ewen-Campen spoke about this being a tough vote on something that started two years ago and that many people wanted a greater commitment to traffic and parking issues. He explained that the project is for four buildings to be built, with a pause between development of each, to allow for traffic and parking issues to be reviewed in case those situations get worse. He noted some of the benefits negotiated by the Union Square Neighborhood Council (USNC), e.g., art space, youth space, funding to non-profits, and the ability to regulate traffic issues independent of the city's process. He also commented that he fears that unfair shade was cast upon the USNC when it should have been cast on the City Council.

Councilors Wilson, Mbah, Scott, McLaughlin, Clingan, Sait and Burnley all commented on the item and work of the USNC. Councilor Strezo asked, for

confirmation on the record, if any Somerville resident or person who works in the city would be able to utilize the transportation that will be provided by the developer and a representative of the developer, Rafi Properties, through OSPCD Director Galligani, said that they would.

RESULT: **ORDINANCE ORDAINED**

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

6.F.5. Public
Communication
(ID # [25-0200](#))

15 registered voters requesting a Zoning Text Amendment to amend the Zoning Ordinance sections 3.1.8c, 3.1.9c, 3.1.10c, 3.1.13k, 3.1.13l, 3.2.12l and 3.2.12m.

Councilor McLaughlin moved that this item be severed from the Committee Report and referred back to the Committee on Land Use. The motion was approved.

RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**

FOLLOWUP: Land Use Committee

6.F.6. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-0590](#))

Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Article 2 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow the Building Official to waive certain dimensional standards for means of egress.

RESULT: **ORDINANCE ORDAINED**

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

6.G. LICENSES AND PERMITS COMMITTEE

6.G.1. Committee Report (ID # [25-1182](#)) Report of the Committee on Licenses and Permits, meeting on June 25, 2025.

Councilor Burnley summarized the actions taken by the committee and reported that the matter of double poles was discussed with representatives from the utility companies. Presently, there are 110 double poles in the city and some progress has been made to reduce that number. The committee

will plan on meeting with the parties, bi-annually, to gauge the progress being made to address the situation. Also two public hearings were held on license items and the Closed Captioning Ordinance was also discussed.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

6.G.2. Order
(ID # [24-0107](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.

That the Director of Economic Development update this Council on efforts taken to inform relevant business owners about the newly implemented closed captioning ordinance.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

6.G.3. License
(ID # [25-1006](#))

New Garage License, 599 Somerville Ventures LLC, 599 Somerville Avenue, 33 vehicles inside, 0 vehicles outside, Mon-Fri: 8am-6pm, Sat: 8am-2pm, Sun: closed.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

6.G.4. License
(ID # [25-0500](#))

New Flammables License, POAH Clarendon LLC, 20 Stephenson Aman Street, storing 1,000 gallons.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

7. COMMUNICATIONS OF THE MAYOR

7.1. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-1176](#))

Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Section 2-323 of the Code of Ordinances to update categories and associated salaries for non-union positions.

RESULT: **ORDINANCE ORDAINED**

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

7.2. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-1153](#))

Requesting approval of early voting dates for the September 16, 2025 Preliminary Election and the November 4, 2025 City Election.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

7.3. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-1160](#))

Requesting approval of the final Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing (UCH-TIF) Agreement for the 299 Broadway project.

Councilor Wilson moved to waive the reading and refer this item to the

Finance Committee.

RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**

FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee

- 7.4. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1163](#)) Requesting approval of a Public Access and Maintenance Access Easement for 299 Broadway Property Owner LLC.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the reading and refer this item to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT:** **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 7.5. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1164](#)) Requesting approval of a Maintenance Access Easement and Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan for 299 Broadway Property Owner LLC for the future Sewall Park at the 299 Broadway development.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the reading and refer this item to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT:** **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 7.6. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1173](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$3,346,101 from the Salary Contingency Account-Salaries to the Salary & Wage Stabilization Fund.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 7.7. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1165](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$606,501 from the Infrastructure and Asset Management-Capital Projects Engineering & Architecture Account to the Facility Renovation Stabilization Fund for continuing building design services.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 7.8. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1169](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$410,005.90 from the Infrastructure and Asset Management-Capital Projects Building Improvements Account to the Facility Renovation Stabilization Fund for continuing building design and construction services.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 7.9. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1158](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$150,955.61 from the Infrastructure and Asset Management-Capital Projects Engineering & Architecture Account to the Street Reconstruction Stabilization Fund for continuing street, sidewalk, and pavement condition assessment and design services.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**

-
- 7.10. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1167](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$109,982.41 from the Infrastructure and Asset Management-Capital Projects Professional & Technical Account to the Facility Renovation Stabilization Fund for continuing building design services.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 7.11. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1141](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$15,400 from the Salary Contingency Salaries Account to the Council on Aging Salaries Account to fund an expected year-end deficit.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- 7.12. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1155](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$1,126,489.31 from the Facility Renovation Stabilization Fund for continuing building design and construction services.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Five City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
- NAY:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- 7.13. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1156](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$150,955.61 from the Street Reconstruction Stabilization Fund for continuing street, sidewalk, and pavement condition assessment and design services.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Five City Councilor Sait, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
- NAY:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
- 7.14. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1161](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$119,095.58 grant with no new match required, from the MA Department of Public Health to the Health and Human Services Department for public health services.
- RESULT:** **APPROVED**
-

- 7.15. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1162](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$110,280 grant with no new match required, from the MA Department of Public Health, Bureau of Community Health and Prevention to the Health and Human Services Department for tobacco control and cessation.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 7.16. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1159](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$10,000 grant with no new match required, from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to the Department of Public Works and Department of Infrastructure and Asset Management for reconstruction of a sidewalk and landscape area to facilitate relocation of an MBTA bus stop.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 7.17. Withdrawn (ID # [25-1157](#)) Withdrawn.

RESULT: WITHDRAWN

- 7.18. Withdrawn (ID # [25-0876](#)) Withdrawn.

RESULT: WITHDRAWN

8. COMMUNICATIONS OF CITY OFFICERS

- 8.1. Officer's Communication (ID # [25-1152](#)) Director of Human Resources and Chief of Police conveying information on entry level police officer hiring practices.

Councilor Wilson commented that he's interested to learn how this is working and said that it would have been nice to learn about this before it happened. Councilor Ewen-Campen noted that there will police candidates on the next Council agenda.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

- 8.2. Officer's Communication (ID # [25-1168](#)) Director of Economic Development requesting that this Council convene in Executive Session to discuss strategy regarding the disposition of 90 Washington Street.

RESULT: LAIID ON THE TABLE

9. NEW BUSINESS

- 9.1. Public Communication (ID # [25-1179](#)) Patrick Conte and Bill Shelton submitting comments re: items #24-1460, #25-0128, #25-0129, and #25-0131, amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for laboratory, research and development, and arts uses.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

10. SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS**10.1. Order
(ID # [25-1200](#))**

By Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Davis

That the Director of Economic Development provide an update to this Council on efforts to mitigate construction impacts on small businesses in the city, what resources are available to small business affected by construction, and what additional support can be made available.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld spoke about a possible construction mitigation fund to assist businesses affected by construction and she wants to start efforts to see what can be done.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION

FOLLOWUP: Housing and Community Development Committee

**10.2. Order
(ID # [25-1201](#))**

By Councilor Pineda Neufeld

That the Director of Housing discuss with this Council ways to inform tenants, landlords, and real estate professionals in Somerville of the Fair Housing laws.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld spoke about the state's lead paint laws and strong laws against housing discrimination, noting that real estate brokers are often a key part of puzzle. She commented that parents with children under the age of six are being squeezed out of the rental market, however it's hard to prove and she thinks that if people have a better understanding of the laws, it would help. Councilor Strezo encouraged people to report violations to Somerville's Fair Housing Commission so that they get reported to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. She would like the city to be able to directly address complaints, however, that would require a Home Rule Petition. Councilor Burnley commented that it's important to conduct fair housing checks to collect data about housing discrimination.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION

FOLLOWUP: Housing and Community Development Committee

**10.3. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-1204](#))**

Requesting the appropriation of \$362,915,509 to fund the FY 2026 General Fund Operating Budget.

Director Mastrobuoni explained that the total FY 2026 budget amount remained the same, but the proportions are different. He thanked his colleagues and city staff for their work on the budget.

RESULT: APPROVED

**10.4. License
(ID # [25-1192](#))**

Renewing Extended Operating Hours License, Falafel Place, 1 Main Street.

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the reading and approve this item.

RESULT: APPROVED10.5. License
(ID # [25-1193](#))

Renewing Flammables License, Silicon PropCo 2021, LLC, 101 South Street.

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the reading and approve this item.

RESULT: APPROVED10.6. Public Event
(ID # [25-1196](#))

St. Benedict Parish applying for a Public Event License for A Mile with Jesus on July 6 from 9:30am to 11am.

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the reading and approve this item.

RESULT: APPROVED10.7. Public Event
(ID # [25-1198](#))

Peter Jehlen applying for a Public Event License for OPENAIR Circus on August 1-3 from 12pm to 9:30pm.

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the reading and approve this item.

RESULT: APPROVED10.8. Public Event
(ID # [25-1199](#))

Arts Council applying for a Public Event License for Somer Fest on August 2 from 10am to 9pm (raindate August 3).

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the reading and approve this item.

RESULT: APPROVED10.9. Public Event
(ID # [25-1197](#))

Priscilla Ribeiro applying for a Public Event License for National Night Out on August 5 from 8am to 10pm (raindate August 6).

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the reading and approve this item.

RESULT: APPROVED10.10. Public Event
(ID # [25-1194](#))

Arts Council applying for a Public Event License for 24 Hours of Culture on August 16 from 2pm to 11pm (raindate August 17).

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the reading and approve this item.

RESULT: APPROVED10.11. Public Event
(ID # [25-1195](#))

Arts Council applying for a Public Event License for Evolution of Hip Hop Festival on August 23 from 2pm to 9pm (raindate August 24).

Councilor Burnley moved to waive the reading and approve this item.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 10.12. Public Communication (ID # [25-1190](#)) 12 residents submitting comments re: Somernova Community Benefits Agreement.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

- 10.13. Public Communication (ID # [25-1191](#)) Enrique Monge Navarro submitting comments re: pedestrian signal.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was Adjourned at 11:08 PM.