

Madalyn Letellier

From: Nathanael Clauser [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 21, 2023 3:55 PM
To: Mayor
Cc: All City Council; City Clerk Contact
Subject: 2024 Budget

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Hello Mayor Ballantyne,

My name is Nate Clauser, and I am a Somerville resident at [REDACTED] in Ward 5.

I am reaching out to ask you to amend your Fiscal Year 2024 budget proposal. Specifically, please add \$1.5 million for a true alternative emergency response that is housed outside of the Somerville Police Department; an additional \$8 million for the Affordable Housing Acquisition Fund; and all funds necessary for the WHCIS community to have a single, new location for the 2023-2024 school year — and for any funds necessary to transport students there.

Thank you for considering these requests. I look forward to hearing back from you and seeing how the rest of the city's budget process unfolds.

Sincerely,
Nate Clauser

Madalyn Letellier

From: Sherry Romanzi <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, June 21, 2023 4:27 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Fund an Alternative Emergency Response in Somerville

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

To Whom It May Concern,

I hope this finds you well. I am a concerned Somerville resident who has been following the FY'24 City Budget process and I am writing to advocate for resources that benefit this wonderful community I love so well.

Three and a half years into the COVID-19 emergency, we find ourselves in a housing crisis, with inflation at a record-breaking high, leaving our neighbors without homes or options. I have seen too many people forced to leave Somerville because they can no longer afford to live here.

Our safety, security, and mental health are at risk.

We need to establish better mental health resources. The opioid crisis and the massive toll of the pandemic have left us in an especially vulnerable state. I live in Davis Square, which, as I'm sure you know, is a major hub for our unhoused neighbors and people who use dangerous drugs, and the number of folks affected seems to be growing each day. I watch people's mental and physical health deteriorating before my eyes every time I walk outside my door.

When these neighbors are in conflict or in crisis, be it a violent argument or a drug overdose, the current solution is for people to call the police. But police are not trained to answer mental health-related calls. Police are trained to escalate these situations and punish the "offenders" -- not to save people who are in crisis. Police cause unnecessary harm in these cases, especially if those in crisis are Black and/or unhoused and/or part of any number of other marginalized communities.

In school, I watched a loved one in crisis retraumatized by police showing up for a "wellness check." It made their already fragile state much, much worse; they slipped into a life-threatening paranoia that could have been avoided if they had been dealing with a trained healthcare professional instead of police.

The City must invest in a holistic Alternative Emergency Response team outside Somerville Police Dept. that can properly answer mental health-related calls.

The City Council reallocated \$200,000 for this Response last year, but we have yet to put it into effect. If you care about the wellbeing of Somerville residents, please allocate funds from the upcoming FY'24 City Budget to this crucial public safety need.

Thank you for your time.

Best,

SHERRY ROMANZI
she/they



Good morning, my name is Yolanda Montiel. I have lived in Somerville for 15 years and I am supporting the budget campaign organized by CAAS. I am also a volunteer for the Somerville Tenant Committee Group of that organization, we are concerned about the increase in evictions and 🤝 about the increased cost of housing in recent years.

We need this topic to have priority in discussions; families being forced out from their homes is a topic that can't be ignored 🏠.

If we want a better Somerville, we should talk about the situation of low-income families. If high cost and evictions can't be stopped 🚫, maybe they could be mitigated creating a housing fund for low-income families or facilitating the work of organizations that are preventing low-income families from losing their homes. This is a community with many lower income people that are having a hard time to rent an apartment or a house. 🏠 Single mothers with two children are rejected from renting a room because landlords do not want children at home. It is really a housing crisis what we have been experiencing in recent years.

Sincerely, Yolanda Montiel.