



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

7:00 PM

Committee of the Whole

This meeting was held in the Council Chambers and via Zoom, was called to order by Chair Wilson at 7:01 pm and adjourned at 9:02 pm with a roll call vote of 7 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Davis, McLaughlin, Clingan, Burnley, Scott, and Chair Wilson), 2 opposed (Councilor Mbah and Councilor Sait), and 2 absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo).

Others present: Brendan Salisbury – City Clerk’s Office, Stephanie Widzowski – Clerk of Committees.

Recesses were taken from 7:46 pm to 7:50 pm and from 8:00 pm to 8:20 pm. Quorum was re-established via roll call after both recesses.

Chair Wilson moved to adopt a rule for this meeting that resolutions showing shared support for budget priorities require a two-thirds vote of the membership to be approved. This motion was approved with 10 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Strezo, Mbah, Davis, McLaughlin, Clingan, Burnley, Sait, Scott and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld).

Councilors spoke briefly about their budget priorities. Chair Wilson introduced the survey that councilors would take to express support for priorities (attached to the agenda for the 3/19 Finance Committee of the Whole meeting) and gave instructions. Councilors filled out the survey and then the results were shared. The five most supported categories were: Housing Stabilization, Homeless Services, Alternative Emergency Response, Housing Affordability, and Municipal Composting.

After discussion of the most supported items, Chair Wilson moved to adjourn. The motion was not approved with a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilor Davis, Councilor McLaughlin, and Councilor Clingan), 6 opposed (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Burnley, Sait, Scott, and Chair Wilson), and 2 absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo).

Roll Call

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

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [24-0373](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of March 12, 2024.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

2. Committee Minutes (ID # [24-0404](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of March 19, 2024.
RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE
3. Committee Minutes (ID # [24-0405](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 19, 2024.
RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE
4. Committee Minutes (ID # [24-0410](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 26, 2024.
RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE
5. Communication (ID # [24-0202](#))
By Councilor Mbah
Conveying budget priorities and requests for FY 2025.
- Councilor Ewen-Campen moved **to create a resolution conveying support for Housing Stabilization as outlined in memos and budget priorities submitted by councilors**. This motion was approved with 9 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Davis, McLaughlin, Clingan, Burnley, Sait, Scott and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and 2 absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo).
- Councilor McLaughlin stated that he wanted a permanent location in the city for homeless residents to stay, in the vein of Housing for All. Chair Wilson moved **for a resolution expressing support in the FY25 budget for homeless services including all approaches listed in councilor memos, and specifically including funding for a permanent brick-and-mortar location**. This motion was approved with 9 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Davis, McLaughlin, Clingan, Burnley, Sait, Scott and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and 2 absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo).
- Councilor Burnley said that the Council's request for Alternative Emergency Response should include the language drafted by former Councilor Kelly the year prior. Councilor Burnley moved **that all items in the Alternative Emergency Response category be submitted to the Mayor to be included in the FY25 budget**. This motion was approved with 9 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Davis, McLaughlin, Clingan, Burnley, Sait, Scott and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and 2 absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo).
- Councilor Scott moved **to create a resolution conveying to the Mayor the**

importance of housing affordability, including the creation of an Acquisition Fund, as a council priority for inclusion in the FY25 budget. This motion was approved with 9 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Davis, McLaughlin, Clingan, Burnley, Sait, Scott and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and 2 absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo).

Councilor Ewen-Campen moved **to create a resolution expressing support for the inclusion of municipal composting, including all approaches listed in councilor memos, in the FY25 budget.** This motion was approved with 9 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Davis, McLaughlin, Clingan, Burnley, Sait, Scott and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and 2 absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo).

Councilor McLaughlin moved **for a resolution to include rodent mitigation in the FY25 budget as outlined in councilor memos and resolutions and to increase funding and staffing in the city for rodent mitigation.** This motion was approved with 9 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Davis, McLaughlin, Clingan, Burnley, Sait, Scott and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and 2 absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo).

Councilor Burnley expressed support for including the four categories tied for seventh place in the Council’s budget priorities for the Mayor. He moved **to include medical debt forgiveness, municipal building decarbonization, out-of-school time programming, and an overdose prevention center as outlined in councilor memos in the budget priorities for FY25.** This motion was approved with 9 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Davis, McLaughlin, Clingan, Burnley, Sait, Scott and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and 2 absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo).

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

- 6. Resolution (ID # [24-0204](#))

By Councilor Clingan
That the Administration fund the creation of an entire unit within the Department of Public Works tasked with battling the city's growing rodent infestation.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

- 7. Resolution (ID # [24-0211](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Administration include in the FY 2025 budget, additional funding for rodent mitigation efforts, including an Office of Rodent Prevention similar to the one proposed in Boston, with appropriate staffing.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

-
- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 8. | Resolution
(ID # 24-0212) | By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Administration include in the FY 2025 budget, funding for a home air filtration pilot program to address air pollution along Interstate 93.
RESULT: <u>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</u> |
| 9. | Communication
(ID # 24-0214) | By Councilor Wilson
Conveying budget priorities and requests for FY 2025.
RESULT: <u>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</u> |
| 10. | Communication
(ID # 24-0327) | By Councilor Ewen-Campen
Conveying budget priorities and requests for FY 2025.
RESULT: <u>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</u> |
| 11. | Communication
(ID # 24-0340) | By Councilor Pineda Neufeld
Conveying budget priorities and requests for FY 2025.
RESULT: <u>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</u> |
| 12. | Communication
(ID # 24-0342) | By Councilor Strezo
Conveying budget priorities and requests for FY 2025.
RESULT: <u>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</u> |
| 13. | Communication
(ID # 24-0377) | By Councilor Burnley Jr.
Conveying budget priorities and requests for FY 2025.
RESULT: <u>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</u> |
| 14. | Communication
(ID # 24-0378) | By Councilor Davis
Conveying budget priorities and requests for FY 2025.
RESULT: <u>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</u> |
| 15. | Communication
(ID # 24-0390) | By Councilor Sait
Conveying budget priorities and requests for FY 2025.
RESULT: <u>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</u> |