



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Legislative Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

6:00 PM

This meeting was held in the City Council Chamber and via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Scott at 6:01pm and adjourned at 8:08 pm on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Davis, Mbah, Ewen-Campen, Strezo, Scott), 0 absent.

Others present: Shumeane Benford - Police Chief, Sean Sheehan - Police Captain, Kevin Shackelford - Police Lieutenant, Yasmine Raddassi - Legislative Liaison, Madalyn Letellier - Assistant City Clerk.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott

Remote: Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis and City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [26-0500](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Legislative Matters Committee Meeting of March 17, 2026.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Mbah, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

2. Mayor's Communication (ID # [26-0302](#)) Conveying the 2025 Surveillance Technology Annual Report.

Legislative Liaison Raddassi stated commitment to collaboration on these reports from the Administration, and Councilor Ewen-Campen highlighted that these documents are essential for public viewing and transparency. Chair Scott asked if there is continued training to utilize Grey Key and if the training material could be shared with the Council, Captain Sean Sheehan stated one officer and detective are trained during work hours and can get more information on how many training hours are completed and the content of the training. The Chair went on to ask about reports from ShotSpotter around false positives and if that data is available. Captain Sheehan shared the number of alerts received can be shared but also highlighted just because the Police do not find holistic evidence does not mean that it is a false alarm. The Chair asked if the placement of the ShotSpotter's disproportionately affects lower income and more diverse communities. Captain Sheehan stated

data was used on where to place the devices. Police Chief Benford was present and shared payment for ShotSpotter is through Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grants. Chair Scott requested future amendments to the report that clarify where funding sources are from for the various surveillance technology being used in the city.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0485](#)) Requesting approval of the Surveillance Technology Impact Report for Crime Tracer.

Lieutenant Kevin Shackelford appeared to share the functions of Crime Tracer and how it serves as a tool during investigations and hiring processes. The discussion was heavily shaped by a line of questioning from Councilor Ewen-Campen, who wants more clarity on the transition from a standard database to a more advanced surveillance tool. Specifically, the Councilor expressed a need for more documentation regarding the integration of AI in the software. The Councilor had questions around how AI is used in practice to synthesize data and present information to officers across various investigative scenarios, requesting that these technical nuances be formally documented in a resubmitted report to ensure the city understands the extent of automated analysis being used. Councilors Ewen-Campen and Chair Scott requested a new report be submitted with more information to share before the committee.

The committee also discussed the broader risks associated with database surveillance and information sharing. Councilor Mbah raised concerns about how sensitive data is disseminated throughout different communities and the privacy risks of such a wide-reaching network. Councilor Scott echoed this need for transparency, asking for a more comprehensive breakdown of the system's scope to better define exactly what the technology is and how it is utilized in the day for the police. Lieutenant Shckelford stated participation in the database is a requirement under POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) for investigations and hiring practices.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

4. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0484](#)) Requesting approval of the Surveillance Technology Impact Report for Body Worn Cameras.

Police Chief Benford advocated for the implementation of Body Worn Cameras (BWC), emphasizing their role in transparency, accountability, and stronger community relations. He shared neighboring cities like Boston and Cambridge already utilize this technology, he also highlighted BWCs as a

tool to hold ICE agents accountable within the community. Councilor Strezo sponsored Ben Struhl, who worked on the Public Safety For All Task Force, to present on BWCs consistently reduce officer complaints and use-of-force incidents, leading to more just outcomes. Mr. Struhl noted that cameras could eventually pay for themselves through cost benefits, he stressed that the technology must be paired with robust policy to remain effective and prevent officers from circumventing their purpose.

The discussion then shifted to specific policy concerns and administrative hurdles. Chair Scott then sponsored resident Derrick Rice to speak to a presentation on BWC policies, *Legislative Matters - 2026-04-28 BWC-presentation-final (with 26-0484)*, sparking a debate led by Councilor Ewen-Campen regarding public record status. Mr. Rice argued for clearer request processes and timelines for those seeking footage. Concerns regarding oversight were also prominent, Liaison Raddassi noting the Mayor's interest in a civilian oversight body, though specific details have not been shared. Councilor Scott further pointed out that the current report still lacks the baseline oversight and access requirements requested back in 2022, in a memo that was submitted by Councilor Ewen-Campen to the full Council.

Financial and legal constraints emerged as significant barriers to immediate adoption. Councilor Ewen-Campen expressed apprehension regarding the \$215k in associated salary increases and additional staffing costs, especially around the city's budget deficit. Liaison Raddassi clarified that the final use policy is heavily dependent on collective bargaining agreements, which limits what can be currently codified. The committee concluded that ongoing conversations are necessary to align the administration's proposal with the community's requirements for transparency and fiscal responsibility before moving forward.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

5. Public Communication
(ID # [26-0475](#))

Digital Fourth submitting comments re: Surveillance Technology Annual Report.

This item was discussed with agenda item #26-0302.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

6. Public Communication
(ID # [26-0495](#))

Hala Jadallah submitting comments re: surveillance.

This item was discussed with agenda item #26-0484.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

7. Public
Communication
(ID # [26-0496](#))

Three residents submitting comments re: item #26-0485, Surveillance Technology Impact Report for Crime Tracer.

This item was discussed with agenda item #26-0484.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

8. Public
Communication
(ID # [26-0607](#))

Tamara Grasty and Emma Rybeck submitting comments re: item #26-0485, Surveillance Technology Impact Report for Crime Tracer.

This item was discussed with agenda item #26-0484.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Referenced Documents:

- Legislative Matters - 2026-04-28 BWC-presentation-final (with 26-0484)
- Legislative Matters - 2026-04-28 BWC-presentation-final-handout (with 26-0484)