



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

CLERK OF COMMITTEES

March 30, 2022
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jake Wilson	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Beatriz GomezMouakad	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Judy PinedaNeufeld	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	
Charlotte Kelly	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three City Councilor	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six City Councilor	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Present	
Willie BurnleyJr.	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Kristen Strezo	City Councilor at Large	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Brendan Salisbury - Legislative & Policy Analyst, Stephanie Widzowski - Assistant Clerk of Committees.

This meeting was held in the City Council Chamber and via GoTo Webinar, and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:25 pm and adjourned at 11:28 pm. Councilor McLaughlin moved to adjourn. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Due to issues transmitting audio of discussion in the Chamber to GoTo Webinar, councilors participated remotely.

A recess was called at 6:25 pm and ended at 6:43 pm.

A recess was called at 8:20 pm and ended at 8:45 pm. A roll call to establish quorum was called; everyone was present.

A recess was called at 8:54 pm and ended at 9:20 pm. A roll call to establish quorum was called; everyone was present.

Chair Wilson moved to waive the reading of each item and mark each item as Work Complete. All items will still be communicated to the Mayor.

Councilor Strezo said that a lot of the work for these items can be done through community partnerships, whether or not they become top budget priorities. She also suggested grants to obtain funding and asked about the possibility of hiring more grant writers.

The Council took a virtual survey to informally rank support for items 1-179; then, the most supported items were used in discussion to create new budget item resolutions. Councilor Davis asked for private

access to the survey and asked for a recess to check the results from the survey. He then called attention to similar items of increasing funding for OHS that have different mechanisms.

Arts

213192: That the FY 2023 budget include additional funding for the Arts Council to commission murals celebrating our city’s diverse history.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213147: That the FY 2023 budget include meaningful investment towards procuring publicly accessible studio space for artists.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213274: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for staff to oversee the implementation of the recommendations around arts space.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213146: That the FY 2023 budget establish a Vulnerable Artists Stabilization Fund.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213435: That the FY 2023 budget include funds for the Arts Council for an RFP to create community organizing capacity for artists.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213219: That the FY 2023 budget include increased funding for the Arts Council Ordinary Maintenance account to support artists, fund assistance programs, and assist in creation of a Somerville Artists Union.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Boards, Commissions and Committees

213159: That the FY 2023 budget provide funding for commissions to conduct assessments of their administrative needs.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213296: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to offer an optional stipend to all members of boards and commissions.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213222: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for stipends for members serving on the Commission for Women, Fair Housing Commission, Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and similar appointed commissions.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213209: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funds for an independent staff position for the Wage Theft Advisory Committee.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213130: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to add staff to support the Wage Theft Advisory Committee.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213409: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for a consultant for the Commission for Women in anticipation of hiring an Executive Director.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

City Council

213225: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for an additional full-time position in the Office of Immigrant Affairs, or the City Clerk's Office, to manage language support and immigrant outreach for City Council meetings and councilor-hosted neighborhood meetings.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213196: That the FY 2023 budget, and subsequent budgets, include additional funding for the City Council, so that its elected members make at least 50% of Area Median Income.

For this and item 213210: Councilor Scott said he was not in favor of “setting yourself on fire to keep others warm”, and feels this reflects the councilors’ situation. He cited that the Massachusetts living wage standard for a single parent with two children is \$103,505 before taxes, and \$77,000 for a two-adult, two-child household with one working parent. He stated that it is outrageous to pay a diverse group of representatives from the city, possibly the most diverse group yet, less than half the cost of living in the city.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213210: That the FY 2023 budget allocate additional funds to the City Council’s Personal Services account to create staff positions for each City Councilor and pay each City

Councilor according to the Middlesex County Living Wage standard.

For this and item 213196: Councilor Scott said he was not in favor of “setting yourself on fire to keep others warm”, and feels this reflects the councilors’ situation. He cited that the Massachusetts living wage standard for a single parent with two children is \$103,505 before taxes, and \$77,000 for a two-adult, two-child household with one working parent. He stated that it is outrageous to pay a diverse group of representatives from the city, possibly the most diverse group yet, less than half the cost of living in the city.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213211: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding to be dispersed at the City Council’s discretion for legal opinions from outside counsel.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213297: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to hire support staff for City Council committees.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213362: That the FY 2023 budget allocate additional funding to increase City Council committee support staffing.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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City Clerk

213232: That the FY 2023 budget include funds for additional resources for the City Archives, to support the increased physical and digital storage needs for a growing city government.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Communications

213128: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to increase resources to expand outreach to and engagement with under-represented communities on mobility and street safety.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213305: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for public information campaigns around safer driving and using the forthcoming Green Line Extension.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213348: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for a newcomer center.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213422: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for the redesign of the city’s website.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

Finance

213298: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for staff and technology support for a participatory budgeting (“People’s Budget”) process for FY 2024.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

Health & Human Services

213368: That the FY 2023 budget establish a mobile COVID-19 vaccine and testing clinic.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213423: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for the creation of a Mental Health Unit within the Health and Human Services Department.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213295: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to create additional social worker and counselor positions.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213353: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for new social workers and other mental health professionals to respond to mental health and substance use emergencies.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213215: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for Health and Human Services to provide more comprehensive support for residents facing food and/or housing insecurity after events which cause displacement.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213354: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding to support community organizations providing housing, mental health, and substance abuse services.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213365: That the FY 2023 budget establish a fund to secure hotel rooms for unsheltered people in adverse and seasonally severe weather.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213355: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding to create at least two engagement centers to provide basic facilities and services for unhoused people.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213366: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funds for transitional living community resources and expanded shelter access for unhoused people.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213144: That the FY 2023 budget establish an 18-month Universal Basic Income food program that would benefit no fewer than 5,000 households by providing \$400 per month on debit cards.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213155: That the FY 2023 budget establish a \$500,000 fund to support Community Mental Health Service providers and build sustainable accessible mental health services.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213229: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for a pilot program to install air filtration systems in homes that suffer from air pollution due to proximity to highways.

Councilor McLaughlin said that the air and sound pollution from I-93 has been an ongoing problem for decades while Somerville has waited for the state to address. He said that a solution better than sound barriers is installing air filtration systems in adjacent homes, which already has a pilot program.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213153: That the FY 2023 budget include the creation of a division within the Health and Human Services Department to connect residents with short-term and long-term social, emotional, and mental health services, and to enact policies to eliminate structural barriers to receiving social, emotional, and mental health care.

Councilor Kelly said that this item was inspired by the Office of Housing Stability, and that this could become the first program in the nation to use municipal funds to connect people to mental health services. She called attention to items assigning responsibility to other groups for providing mental health care, especially concerning immigrant residents, queer and trans

residents, and youth, and said that this item could act as a hub for a variety of mental health services.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213125: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to respond to the current mental health crisis by significantly increasing access to mental health and wellness services.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld stated that mental health is a crisis both in Somerville and nationwide, with depression rates three times as high as before the pandemic. She cited data the most recent Somerville Youth Risk Behavior Study showing significant increases in middle-school and high-school students for self-harm and suicidal ideation. It also affects children and teenagers and must be addressed both with proactive and reactive care.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213216: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for substance use treatment programs.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213152: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to lease a location for a Safe Consumption Site.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213197: That the FY 2023 budget include meaningful investment toward the establishment of a Supervised Consumption Site.

Councilor Burnley said that for too long, too many people in Somerville have lost their lives due to government inaction on this issue. In the spirit of showing up for residents experiencing health crises, he asked for support on this item as a way of providing community care and harm reduction.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213199: That the FY 2023 budget include funding within the Health and Human Services Department, for a restorative justice practitioner to provide conflict mediation and support for those experiencing trauma.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213158: That the FY 2023 budget provide funds to investigate establishing a free clinic in Somerville that will provide walk-in STI screenings.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Housing Affordability & Sustainability

213264: That the FY 2023 budget include \$150,000 in funding for staff to maintain the upkeep of the 100 Homes Properties.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213263: That the FY 2023 budget include a \$75,000 building conditions assessment study for the 100 Homes program.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213252: That the Administration distribute \$2 million in ARPA funds to 100% AMI units of 100 Homes purchased by Somerville Community Corporation (SCC) to reduce the level of affordability to assist families at 60% AMI or below.

Councilor Strezo said that this item would help housing affordability in Somerville and by extension help the most housing-insecure residents.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213282: That the FY 2023 budget include additional funding for the renovation of historic buildings to create new affordable housing.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213160: That the FY 2023 budget establish a \$10M trust for the Somerville Community Land Trust, in order to provide and expand affordable, community-owned property and homeownership and rental units in perpetuity.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213031: That the FY 2023 Budget establish and fund an affordable housing acquisition fund for development opportunities.

Councilor Ewen-Campen said that for his items, the ideas came from organized community groups doing hard work. He said that housing affordability is the largest issue in Somerville and that an acquisition fund would be the most efficient way to address the problem. It would be differentiated from the 100 Homes program, which acquires existing units, in that it would acquire property and work with affordable housing developers to create new units.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213356: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding to acquire and create new affordable housing.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213205: That the Administration establish a requirement that capital debt service for police equipment and facilities not exceed the amount of capital debt service for affordable

housing creation.

Councilor Scott said this item and item 213204 are reflective of his view of how to allocate funds. He stated that housing, food insecurities, poverty and addiction are root causes of crime, insecurity, and displacement, and that fixing those root causes is much more important than spending what Somerville allocates on enforcement and criminalization. This item would create a cap to force the reconsideration of priorities.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213032: That the FY 2023 Budget establish a modernized mortgage assistance program to support first-time and first-generation homebuyers.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213200: That the FY 2023 budget include funds for a municipal employee housing program.

Councilor Burnley said that there are far too many municipal employees who cannot afford to live in Somerville. He said that people who work here and improve the city should be able to reap the benefits they helped achieve.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213258: That the FY 2023 budget include expanded incentive funds for the SomerVIP program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213148: That the FY 2023 budget establish funding for a Somerville Rental Relief Fund for tenants who are at or below 80% of the Area Median Income.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213149: That the FY 2023 budget establish sustained funding for a municipal housing voucher program that will provide permanently subsidized housing for no fewer than 40 low-income households per year, regardless of immigration status.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213204: That the Administration establish a requirement that general fund obligations for the Police Department not exceed the combined general fund obligations for the Office of Housing Stability and the Housing Division.

Councilor Scott said this item and item 213205 are reflective of his view of how to allocate funds. He stated that housing, food insecurities, poverty and addiction are root causes of crime, insecurity, and displacement, and that fixing those root causes is much more important than spending what Somerville

does on enforcement and criminalization. This item would create a cap to force the reconsideration of priorities.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213218: That the FY 2023 budget include increased funding for the Ordinary Maintenance and Personal Services accounts for the Office of Housing Stability.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213163: That the FY 2023 budget include a Data Manager position within the Office of Housing Stability.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213162: That the FY 2023 budget include two full-time management positions within the Office of Housing Stability.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213203: That the FY 2023 budget include additional funding for the Office of Housing Stability to fund translation services and additional staffing.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213151: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for two multi-lingual staff positions within the Office of Housing Stability to provide housing legal advisory services for tenants.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213150: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for four multi-lingual staff positions within the Office of Housing Stability to review and assess the legality of leases for tenants.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213420: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding to create a Section 8 incentive program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Human Resources

213367: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funds to build a public dashboard for staffing demographics.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213412: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for an interdepartmental role to report on contracted work that could be performed by municipal employees.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213415: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for the Human Resources Department to transition to digital systems.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

Infrastructure & Asset Management

213273: That the FY 2023 budget include \$150,000 in funding for an on-call building envelope consultant.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213272: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to implement the Building Master Plan.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213271: That the FY 2023 budget include a building assessment study for the Winter Hill and Brown Schools.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213306: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for drainage infrastructure improvements to address flooding on private property in the neighborhood around Foss Park.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213349: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding to address sidewalk and crosswalk safety hazards in Davis Square.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213351: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for a public process to create a four-season public market hall at the Day and Herbert Streets parking lot.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

Inspectional Services

213294: That the FY 2023 budget include a funding increase for the Inspectional Services Department to hire inspectors to increase enforcement and ensure coverage on evenings,

weekends, and holidays.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213223: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for at least eight new Inspector positions in the Inspectional Services Department, including two positions for after-hours and weekend coverage.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213418: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for hiring additional inspectors in the Inspectional Services Department.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213361: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for additional inspector positions within the Inspectional Services Department.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213157: That the FY 2023 budget provide funds to create three additional rodent management positions in the Inspectional Services Department to expand rodent mitigation measures.

Councilor Kelly stressed that the nuance in these items is important, as they were largely informed by residents. She said that the rodent problem is a systematic issue, like many others in the agenda, and that staff needs to be doubled or tripled to solve this issue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213198: That the FY 2023 budget include additional funding for the Inspectional Services Department, to secure staff for building inspections and accessibility reviews.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213228: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for code enforcement personnel on weekends and holidays.

Councilor McLaughlin stressed the need for this item to include weekends and holidays.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213293: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to implement widespread use of rodent hormonal birth control.

Chair Wilson said that there have been limited pilot programs in the past for rodent birth control and that it seems to get results. He would like to see it used on a widespread basis.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Job Training & Services

213217: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for the creation of a municipal trade apprenticeship program.

Councilor Scott spoke to the importance of stewardship and preservation of not just buildings, but the community, and said that partly that requires maintenance, but also requires training people from within the community for desired positions. He said that this mentorship program could develop skills for many professional capacities asked for tonight.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213424: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for a young adult apprenticeship program.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213265: That the FY 2023 budget include scholarship funds to ensure that residents benefit from the development of a Life Sciences industry.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213266: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for a program to help local residents become licensed and certified for home daycare.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad said that the pandemic has set women back decades, especially women of color. She talked about what is required to allow women to return to work, including training, daycare, and after-school programs, and described barriers to entry at each step.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213267: That the FY 2023 budget include scholarships and opportunities for employment development for women adversely impacted by the COVID pandemic.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213364: That the FY 2023 budget establish a multi-lingual Employment Connection Center.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213410: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for job fairs for vulnerable and marginalized community members, to fill vacant municipal positions.

Councilor Burnley said that this item brings together many topics already discussed. He said that essential services are not being provided, and that City Council should be going out of its way to help community members who are suffering.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Library

213220: That the FY 2023 budget include increased funding for the Libraries Ordinary Maintenance account to allow more services for residents.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213193: That the FY 2023 budget include additional funding for the Somerville Public Library to purchase and loan mobile hotspots in order to reduce barriers for those impacted by the digital divide.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Mobility

213201: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for fare-free bus routes.

Councilor Ewen-Campen expressed strong support for a fare-free bus program. He noted that the city recently invested billions of dollars and decades of time into a train line, and said that the next step for improving public transportation is to make buses more accessible. He called for a free bus trial program immediately.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213224: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for a pilot program to make the 86, 87, CT2, and other MBTA bus lines fare-free.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213145: That the FY 2023 budget fund a pilot for no fewer than three fare-free bus routes.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213289: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to create a fare-free bus pilot program for at least two MBTA bus lines for two years.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213357: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for a fare-free bus pilot.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213124: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to develop and implement a pilot of fare-free bus routes and/or vouchers for youth and income-eligible residents for MBTA buses and bikeshare services.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213290: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to provide free MBTA bus and subway passes and bikeshare memberships for youth and income-eligible residents.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213230: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for Neighborways traffic mitigation plans, which are proven to reduce car accidents at a low cost.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213038: That the FY 2023 Budget continue the recent trend of significantly increasing capacity to implement street safety redesigns.

Councilor Ewen-Campen said that item 213038 came out of conversations with the Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets. He praised their work and commitment to creating long-lasting change and encouraged the Council to look at their example.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213118: That the FY 2023 Budget expand funding for additional quick-build safety and accessibility improvements at critical intersections, high-crash corridors, and other high-priority locations as identified in the Vision Zero Action Plan.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213421: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for quick build traffic calming measures.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213300: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for quick-build daylighting solutions for intersections and begin installing infiltration bump-outs as a long-term solution.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213359: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for quick build and permanent improvements consistent with the Vision Zero Action Plan.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

213119: That the FY 2023 Budget expand funding for additional permanent safety and

accessibility improvements at critical intersections, high-crash corridors, and other high-priority locations, as identified in the Vision Zero Action Plan.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213373: That the FY 2023 budget increase funding for permanent traffic calming measures.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213374: That the FY 2023 budget increase funding for traffic calming signage.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213301: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to create a streamlined program to install speed humps on neighborhood residential streets identified as having a high incidence of cut-through vehicle traffic.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213413: That the FY 2023 budget allocate additional funding for the installation of audible crosswalks.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213276: That the FY 2023 budget include a position in the Department of Mobility to focus on commercial and business transport and parking needs.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213191: That the FY 2023 budget include additional funding for the installation of bike racks and community bulletin boards in high-traffic areas.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213037: That the FY 2023 Budget include an investment in finding physical storage space and programmatic support for a program to teach youth and other residents to fix donated bicycles.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213419: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for hiring additional planners in the Mobility Division.

Councilor Clingan said that his item to increase funding for additional planners would help with many other items on the agenda. He commented that what seems like an easy repair requires planning, and that the Mobility Division needs more staff to accomplish other items.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213299: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for city-wide studies required to accelerate the systemic and systematic approach to safe and accessible streets and equitable mobility.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213350: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for a public process for a re-engineering of Elm Street, in Davis Square.

Councilor Davis stated the importance of this item to Ward 6, and that this has been a long-standing topic of discussion. He said that all of these items relate to making streets safer and moving away from car-centric designs.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Parks & Recreation

213309: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for expanded Parks and Recreation programming.

Chair Wilson said that there is a lot of potential for Parks & Recreation, given the new director, and that they should also be given the staff and programming that the city and its youth deserve.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213358: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for Parks and Recreation programs.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213161: That the FY 2023 budget include funds to increase staff within the Recreation Department, to serve more residents ages 2 to 18 and their parents and guardians.

Councilor Strezio said that this item will serve a large part of the population and encouraged councilors to support it.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Planning

213408: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for hiring additional staff in the Planning Department.

Councilor Ewen-Campen expressed his strong support for this item, even if not a top priority for this meeting.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Public Safety

213375: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for a study of the condition of all Fire Department facilities.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213127: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for an assessment of urgent repairs needed at all fire stations.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld noted that many fire buildings were built more than 100 years ago. She described potential issues with the buildings, such as mold and rodents, and said these are not acceptable conditions for firefighters, who work in these buildings and often call them home.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213116: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for a study to identify an equitable way to implement automated traffic enforcement.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213303: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to purchase required equipment and allocate the Somerville Police Department budget in such a way to enable bulk mailing of warnings and citations for speeding.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213302: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to purchase and install automated enforcement equipment for traffic signals and create the infrastructure within Somerville Police Department for mailing warnings and citations.

Chair Wilson referred to previous discussions about enforcement and said that if the state does not create traffic calming provisions, then enforcement is the next step. However, in-person traffic enforcement can be problematic. He said that enforcement by mail would eliminate the need for traffic stops.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213154: That the FY 2023 budget include the creation of restorative justice facilitation services and staff specializing in intimate partner violence and sexual violence.

Councilor Kelly referred to the citywide conversation in the past three years around policing, public safety, and wellness. She said that the criminal legal system is often a traumatic place for survivors, and often does not serve justice. She called for swift action to come up with alternatives to harm and urged Somerville not to treat its residents, even ones who had done harm, as disposable. She stated that centering healing is more powerful than centering retribution.

Councilor Davis said that this suite of items is related to the Health and Human Services items discussed earlier and that the Council should consider discussing them together.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213156: That the FY 2023 budget include meaningful investment towards establishing a municipal ambulance service within the Fire Department that is free at point-of-care, providing medical care to residents who may otherwise be dissuaded by cost.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213131: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to establish a program to divert emergency calls for non-violent situations involving mental health and substance abuse to social workers and health providers.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213231: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for additional staff positions for the Community Outreach, Help and Recovery (COHR) program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213033: That the FY 2023 Budget include meaningful investment towards establishing non-police first responder programs for non-criminal emergencies.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213206: That the Administration consider transferring Community Outreach, Help and Recovery Program (COHR) functions from the Police Department to Health and Human Services (HHS) and expand HHS funding to create an unarmed crisis response program for domestic violence, sexual assault and mental health calls.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213189: That the Administration move the Community Outreach, Help and Recovery (COHR) program to the Health and Human Services Department.

Councilor Burnley said that Somerville needs to live up to its goals of reimagining policing, justice, and safety, and he said he does not believe that can happen with the current organization of services. He talked about the benefits of moving COHR to Human Services and the history of some residents' mistrust of policing, based in centuries of violence.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213208: That the Administration consider removing Crossing Guards from the Police Department's budget and supervision and transferring them to the Parking Department.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213411: That the FY 2023 budget allocate additional funding for crossing guards in the Parking Department.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213207: That the Administration consider removing Animal Control Officers from the Police Department's budget and supervision.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

Public Space & Urban Forestry

213436: That the FY 2023 budget include a new staff position dedicated to identifying and purchasing land for publicly-owned Open Space creation.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213202: That the FY 2023 budget include \$250,000 to repair the Brown School playground.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213347: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for the construction of the West Somerville Neighborhood School yard.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213308: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to prioritize the delayed grass athletic field renovation projects at Dilboy Auxiliary Field and Nunziato Field.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213307: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to plant a Miyawaki forest (a dense, biodiverse pocket forest) on city-owned land.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

213281: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for soil remediation at the Concord Avenue Community Garden.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

Public Utilities

213194: That the FY 2023 budget include additional funding for tree planting, and that

such planting be prioritized in areas most impacted by the urban heat island effect.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213255: That the FY 2023 budget include a Gas Infrastructure Liaison.

Councilor Strezo said that gas leaks are critical and are not being addressed properly. She urged the city to hold gas companies accountable for potential negligence, and that this item would be the most direct solution.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213256: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for an independent contractor to survey for gas leaks, grade them, and estimate their emission volumes.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213257: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to purchase gas leak detection equipment and to train designated staff to utilize.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Public Works

213291: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to create a curbside municipal composting pilot program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213129: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to establish a municipal composting program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213035: That the FY 2023 Budget include a citywide residential composting program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213259: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to continue the implementation, assessment and expansion of the snow-clearing pilot program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213360: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for snow clearing along pedestrian routes to and from schools and squares.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213414: That the FY 2023 budget allocate additional funding for the repair of potholes and damaged sidewalks.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213416: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for the street paving program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213213: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for new positions in The Department of Public Works to restore paving and waste removal to full-time municipal employees.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213214: That the FY 2023 budget increase funding to fill long-vacant union positions in the Public Works and Water & Sewer Departments.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Purchasing

213417: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for upgrading and streamlining internal purchasing, contracting and vendor payment systems.

Councilor Clingan said that he hears from vendors that the payment systems are cumbersome. Some of it is under the State's jurisdiction, but there is a lot that Somerville can do to make the process more equitable so that the city can have a more diverse group of contractors.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213036: That the FY 2023 Budget include funding for a historical Disparity Study in Purchasing and goals for purchasing from local women and minority owned businesses.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213304: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for a procurement disparity study.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Schools

213254: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for additional staff within the Parks and Recreation Department to increase the programs and classes available for after school hours and out of school time.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213268: That the FY 2023 budget include additional funds to expand the after school program and create a before school program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Seniors

213212: That the FY 2023 budget allocate additional Ordinary Maintenance funding for the Council on Aging to provide programming and services for residents aging in place.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213253: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to implement the Senior Transportation program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213434: That the FY 2023 budget include creation of a new position focused on policy advocacy for seniors.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213132: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for a community needs assessment for seniors.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213133: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for technology resources to allow the Council on Aging to increase its learning programs.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs

213249: That the FY 2023 budget include resources to implement a comprehensive language justice and language access plan, led by the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld stated that language inequities have never been so visible as in the pandemic. She saw the commonwealth provide critical information and services only in English. She cited that 30% of Somerville residents do not speak English at home, and called attention to the large inequity.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213248: That the FY 2023 budget include funds for permanent outreach staff and

increased staff training and development for the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld said that many outreach workers were paid through FEMA funds during the height of COVID. She said that those staff did amazing work making connections, and that this item ensures that they can continue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213270: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for a feasibility study for an immigrant center, with extended hours, providing direct support and a gathering place.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad said that this item was a direct request from a community group. She said that many immigrants do not know what resources are available or how to access them. She spoke to the importance of gathering and connection.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Strategic Planning & Community Development

213269: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for a study to assess the needs for a recreational and cultural center.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad spoke on behalf of Latino and immigrant communities, and to the importance of making recreational equipment available for those who did not grow up with it. She also stressed the importance of diversity and the need for affordable housing to stop gentrification. She called attention to the fact that Somerville does not have a Community Development Corporation, while other municipalities have multiple.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213190: That the FY 2023 budget include meaningful investment toward the establishment of a community center.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213433: That the FY 2023 budget include meaningful investment toward the establishment of a community center.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213425: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for a community center.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213034: That the FY 2023 Budget include meaningful investment towards establishing a community engagement center and meeting center that is not part of a police station.

Councilor Ewen-Campen said that this is a critical time to act because developers are legally required to provide and contribute to a community space. He encouraged the Council to come up with specifics.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213275: That the FY 2023 budget include funds for a plan to support a new YMCA facility.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213372: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for a new site selection study for a Public Safety Building.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213352: That the FY 2023 budget allocate funding for a public process regarding the development of 45 College Avenue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Sustainability & Environment

213195: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to create an environmental incentive program to encourage residents to move away from fossil fuels.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213262: That the FY 2023 budget include a position to support a Residential Electrification and Weatherization Resource Center under the Office of Sustainability and Environment.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad noted that two thirds of carbon emissions come from buildings, and that if this is not addressed, the world will never reach its 2050 targets. She cited data that projected how many homes would need to be retrofitted to meet 2030 state goals, and described difficulties with retrofitting. She said that a resource center could help homeowners through the work.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Technology

213292: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to create a municipal broadband pilot program in the 02145 zip code.

Chair Wilson called attention to the large disparity between economic classes during online schooling because of broadband inadequacies.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Treasury

213221: That the FY 2023 budget include funding for an additional position in Treasury to resolve long-standing understaffing issues.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Youth

213126: That the FY 2023 budget include funding to establish a youth arts and wellness center.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213426: That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for a citywide youth program.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

General Discussion

1. Chair Wilson introduced a resolution: That the FY 2023 Budget include a community center.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad introduced a motion to amend: That the FY 2023 Budget include a community center created with community input. This amendment was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

There was discussion for whether to include specific actions such as a feasibility study.

Councilor Kelly said she does not want to include a feasibility study in this resolution because, in her experience, such studies cause items to stagnate.

Final resolution text: **“That the FY 2023 Budget include a community center created with community input.”**

RESULT: Approved by unanimous roll call vote

2. Chair Wilson introduced a resolution: That the FY 2023 budget include an acquisition fund for affordable housing development opportunities.

Councilor Burnley introduced and then withdrew a motion to amend to include that a portion of the portfolio consist of housing with AMI below 50%.

There was discussion of whether to specifically call for the creation of an acquisition fund or to ask for more general opportunities for affordable housing. Councilor Strezo said that an acquisition fund is one of multiple mechanisms for affordable housing. Multiple councilors proposed and discussed amendments before voting on one by Councilor Strezo: “That the FY 2023 Budget create an affordable housing acquisition fund, and also pursue each of the affordable housing strategies discussed by the Finance Committee of March 30, 2022”. This amendment was accepted by roll call vote: 10 Yes and 1 No (Councilor Clingan)

After this item, the Council did not hold votes for friendly amendments, instead allowing the original mover to add the amendment text to the resolution to save time.

Final resolution text: **“That the FY 2023 Budget create an affordable housing acquisition fund, and also pursue each of the affordable housing strategies discussed by the Finance Committee of March 30, 2022.”**

RESULT: Approved by unanimous roll call vote

3. **Chair Wilson introduced a resolution:** That the FY 2023 Budget contain additional funding for a crisis response program.

Councilor Burnley introduced a friendly amendment that alternative crisis response be located in Health and Human Services. Chair Wilson was doubtful that the entire Council would be able to agree on a specific department that should house the crisis response program and suggested a more general resolution. Councilor Kelly brought attention to the text of item 213033, which had received wide support on the survey, that called for non-police programs. There was further discussion on what level of specificity councilors thought was best for this resolution and the definition of “non-police”. Councilor Burnley said that he felt a resolution without specificity would be harmful and as such, would have difficulty supporting a broad-strokes resolution.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld drew attention to the difference between proactive and reactive care, and said that she would like to make sure people can get care before, as well as during, crisis.

Councilor Kelly moved to amend the resolution to read: That the FY 2023 Budget include meaningful investment towards establishing non-police first responder programs for non-criminal emergencies. The amendment was accepted by unanimous roll call vote.

Final resolution text: **“That the FY 2023 Budget include meaningful investment towards establishing non-police first responder programs for non-criminal emergencies.”**

RESULT: Approved by unanimous roll call vote

4. **Councilor Kelly introduced a resolution:** That the FY 2023 Budget allocate increased funding for creation of a Mental Health Unit within the Health and Human Services Department, as well as increased funding for other mental health professionals and services to respond to mental health crisis.

Councilor Clingan suggested allocating funding for mental health services without calling for the creation of a unit. Councilor Strezo said that she wanted a broader definition of mental health services in this item. Councilor Kelly said she thinks specificity is important. Councilor Gomez Mouakad said that they need flexibility - counselors and social workers where each are needed. She said that there is a need for social workers in the Latino community, and that they could be placed in immigrant services as well.

There was discussion on whether it would be best to collaborate with community partners or create in-house jobs on this item. Councilor Strezo said that there are already community partners doing this work. Councilor Pineda Neufeld said that not everyone will come to the city for help, either for a lack of trust or for other reasons, and that the city should acknowledge it is only part of the solution. Community partners often already have relationships with residents. Councilor Gomez Mouakad spoke of her conversations with a social worker, who thinks in-house positions are better.

Councilor Clingan mentioned that the Trauma Response Unit is only one person and talked about the possibility of expanding that unit.

Final resolution text: “**That the FY 2023 Budget allocate increased funding for creation of a Mental Health Unit within the Health and Human Services Department, as well as increased funding for other mental health professionals and services to respond to mental health crisis.**”

RESULT: Approved by unanimous roll call vote

5. **Chair Wilson introduced a resolution:** That the FY 2023 budget contain funding for a fare-free Bus pilot program.

RESULT: Approved by roll call vote: 10 Yes, 1 Absent (Councilor Pineda Neufeld)

6. **Chair Wilson introduced a resolution:** That the FY 2023 budget contain funding for hiring additional ISD inspectors.

Chair Wilson accepted a friendly amendment from Councilor McLaughlin to include weekends and holidays, and added evenings as well. There was a conversation about how much specificity should be included in the resolution - whether to specify a focus on issues such as accessibility. Councilor Gomez Mouakad said that adding specifics can be insulting to inspectors in that it gives suggestions on how to do their job; also, there are many types of buildings to be inspected, so the resolution text should be general.

Final resolution text: “**That the FY 2023 budget contain funding for hiring additional ISD inspectors, including evenings, weekends and holidays.**”

RESULT: Approved by unanimous roll call vote

7. **Chair Wilson introduced a resolution:** That the FY 2023 budget include resources to implement a comprehensive language justice and language access plan, led by the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs.

RESULT: Approved by unanimous roll call vote

8. **Chair Wilson introduced a resolution:** That the FY 2023 budget allocate increased funding for quick build and permanent improvements consistent with the Vision Zero Action Plan.

Councilor Kelly said that it is important to specify both long-term and quick build projects.

RESULT: Approved by unanimous roll call vote

9. **Chair Wilson introduced a resolution:** That the FY 2023 budget include additional funding for Parks and Recreation for additional staff and programming.

Councilor Strezo proposed a friendly amendment to include a focus on after-school and out-of-school time. She talked about the need to increase the programs and classes available for after school hours and out of school time.

Final resolution text: **“That the FY 2023 budget include additional funding for Parks and Recreation for additional staff and programming, including a focus on after school and out of school time.”**

RESULT: Approved by roll call vote: 10 Yes, 1 Absent (Councilor Gomez Mouakad)

10. **Chair Wilson introduced a resolution:** That the FY 2023 Budget contain additional funding for the Office of Housing Stability.

RESULT: Approved by unanimous roll call vote

Reference Material:

- Budget Priorities Survey Results and Tabulation