



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

6:00 PM

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7918356614079204875>

Roll Call

This meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:04 pm and adjourned at 6:37 pm. Councilor Kelly moved to adjourn, and the motion was passed by roll call vote.

Others present: Aneesh Sahni - Mayor's Office, Brain Postlewaite - DPW-Engineering, Alan Inacio - OSPCD, Michael Richards - IAM, Tom Galligani - OSPCD, Stephanie Widzowski - Assistant Clerk of Committees.

Present: Judy Pineda Neufeld, Charlotte Kelly, Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott and City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson
Absent: Matthew McLaughlin

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [22-1551](#))

Approval of the Finance Committee Minutes of September 6, 2022.

RESULT: APPROVED
AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wilson
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

Bonding Appropriation

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1439](#))

Requesting authorization to borrow \$993,132 in a bond, and to authorization to appropriate the same amount for the General Fund portion of the Clarendon Hills Infrastructure Improvements project.

Taken together with item 22-1240. Dir. Galligani explained that the city is seeking additional authorization due to increased costs in infrastructure work, and that the portion of the DIF received in December will be going to infrastructure. Dir. Postlewaite added that the construction environment has changed a lot in the past year and bids came in much higher than the expected estimate of \$4 million. He said that he felt that the bids they received are at current market value.

Councilor Scott asked about the total cost, which led to a breakdown of the allocations. Dir. Richards added that the two authorization requests in this

meeting total \$8.1 million. Councilor Scott also referenced Councilor White’s former work to fight “bad actors” in the city and asked who won the bid. Dir. Richards said that the low bid came from RM Pacella and that the city did have a pre-award meeting with them to ensure that they would follow the city’s requirements.

Councilor Scott asked if there would be a specific liaison on-site to make sure the city’s expectations are met by crews on the ground, as well as from a business standpoint. Dir. Postlewaite said that the construction will operate similar to Spring Hill. The new streetscapes manager, Rebecca Wright, will be taking over the role of liaison, and Dir. Postlewaite and Daniel Amelin will be overseeing that. Regarding procurement, the internal project manager sees to both fieldwork and the contract. The consulting engineer has a clerk on-site daily, but the city will not be there daily.

Councilor Kelly asked for the difference between portions coming from the general and sewer funds, and also for the percentage of the dollar increase. Dir. Bean gave a breakdown of the portions from the general fund, sewer fund, and CPA, and added that the DIF allows for more flexible borrowing terms. He said that the increase was \$2.5 million over what was appropriated, and that he also raised interest rates. Councilor Kelly asked about the projected timeline and whether delays could increase costs. Dir. Postlewaite explained that the bid is good for the entire length of the contract, except for a few escalation causes related to the prices of asphalt and diesel fuel. However, Somerville put in a 20% construction contingency into the project for that and other potential obstacles.

Councilor Kelly also asked about the cost of police details on the sewer enterprise and general funds and whether the cost would exceed what was listed on the attachment. Dir. Richards said that the police detail allocations will be split equally between the sewer and streetscape funds. He also said that they have been conservative with spending on details in the last few years and does not expect to approach that full value. Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked if DCR shared the costs for police details, to which Dir. Postlewaite said that DCR is not an active partner in the contract.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked about potential delays from fall into the spring. Dir. Postlewaite replied that the major risk for delay is in getting the contract funded, signed and returned to the contractor; the other risk is winter conditions. He said that they should at least get initial work done before the end of the year.

- RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wilson
- ABSENT:** Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 3. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1440](#)) Requesting authorization to borrow \$662,088 in a bond, and authorization to appropriate the same amount for the Sewer portion of the Clarendon Hills Infrastructure Improvements Project.

Taken together with item 22-1239.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wilson
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

Grant Acceptances

- 4. Mayor's Request (ID # [22-1509](#)) Requesting acceptance of an additional \$500,000 grant with no new match required, from the MA Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development for Clarendon Hill Project infrastructure improvements.

Dir. Inacio explained that the full grant is \$4.9 million. The city applied for \$4.4 million through this grant in 2019 and was accepted for that amount through negotiations with the state. Later on, Somerville was approved for the full \$4.9 million. Councilor Kelly asked for confirmation on the timeline of the initial approval, to which Dir. Inacio answered that the original award was in October of 2019, after which there were back-and-forth negotiations.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wilson
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin