



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES**

April 13, 2021

**REPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS
AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE**

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mary Jo Rossetti	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Kristen Strezo	City Councilor at Large	Present	

Others present: Tom Galligani - OSPCD, Ann Gill - Personnel, Ellen Collins - Personnel, Lauren Racaniello - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

Councilor Strezo arrived at 6:50 PM as she was participating in the Job Creation and Retention Trust meeting.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:02 PM by Chair Rossetti and adjourned at 8:34 PM on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Clingan, Strezo, Scott and Rossetti), 0 against and 0 absent.

Approval of the March 2, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the March 16, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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211210: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Colleen Moran to the Municipal Job Creation and Retention Board of Trustees.

Ms. Moran said that she was honored to be before the committee, and she spoke about some of her background and prior experience. She noted that she is a former resident of Somerville. Chair Rossetti inquired if members of the trust were required to live in the city and Ms. Racaniello explained the requirements in the ordinance. This position will fill the only vacancy on the trust. Councilor Clingan noted that most of Ms. Moran's positions have been in management and the vacant position she would be

filling is the local business representative slot. Councilor Clingan sits on the board of the trust and commented that the candidate doesn't live in the city and works for a business that isn't local (Mass General Brigham), therefore, he will not support her candidacy. Councilor Mbah asked Ms. Moran why she wants to serve in this volunteer position, and she replied that she works in Somerville now and she feels a connection between the work she does and the needs of the city. She said it's important to have training programs for the jobs that have the most openings and room for advancement, adding that she would use connections from her previous board positions to accomplish this. Councilor Scott asked for an estimate of how many Somerville residents have been brought into the Partners site at Assembly Square and Ms. Moran replied that she didn't have those numbers, (noting she just recently began this job), but said that it's a goal. Councilor Scott remarked that he understood his colleague's desire for a candidate with more of a local link. Chair Rossetti said the objection seems to be about where this candidate works and not with her personally. Mr. Galligani joined the meeting and provided some context. He explained that the trust has 2 business representatives and that there is no size requirement for the business. The current vacancy was previously held by someone who worked at one of the city's larger employers and he thinks Ms. Moran's experience working for a large employer would be an asset to the trust. Councilor Clingan said that the candidate is "management", and he doesn't think that's the direction the trust should follow. Councilor Strezo arrived from another meeting and stated that she would not vote on this item since she hadn't heard the full interview. She then commented on the hardships faced by women in the workforce. She asked Mr. Galligani if there are any other candidates for this position and he responded by saying that there were not, as it's difficult to find qualified people who are willing to serve.

Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the item. Councilor Strezo asked if this item could be held until the next committee meeting to give her time to review the objections presented. Councilor Clingan reiterated his concerns for Councilor Strezo's benefit saying that he doesn't think that this is a good fit. Mr. Galligani believes that the term of the position would expire on December 31, 2023. The motion to approve failed on a roll call vote.

Chair Rossetti explained that the committee's action on this item would be reported to the City Council at its next meeting on April 22nd and that this action would not become official until the Council takes final action on it.

RESULT:	NOT APPROVED. [2 TO 3]
AYES:	Rossetti, Strezo
NAYS:	Scott, Mbah, Clingan

204274: That the Director of Water and Sewer appear before this Board's Committee on Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters in six weeks to present a plan for vendor contracts, constituent communications and the day to day operation of the department.

This item was submitted in 2017. It was discussed with item 211301.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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211301: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Chad Whiting as Director of Water and Sewer.

Mr. Whiting told the committee that he has served in this capacity since December 14, 2020. He commended the Water and Sewer Department's staff for working through the pandemic, noting that they

cannot work from home to perform their duties. Councilor Mbah asked the candidate what he anticipates for the upcoming water and sewer rates and he replied that those projections are coming soon and there is a need to repair and rehabilitate the infrastructure, noting that there were 14 water main breaks in the first 90 days of his employment with the city. Capital projects are needed to make the system reliable. He told the committee that he worked his way up in the wastewater industry and believes in fixing things when needed and he supports the implementation of an integral asset maintenance system. Chair Rossetti asked about any differences between Somerville and other communities where he worked. Mr. Whiting said that Somerville is much larger than Plymouth and has the initiative to maintain and improve its system, adding that the level of professionalism in here is superb and he feels blessed to be part of this team and to serve the community. Chair Rossetti spoke about the many vacancies in this department over the years and she asked if there is movement on any of them. Mr. Whiting said that 3 vacancies have been filled so far and he would like to get them all filled to bring some of the work back in-house. Recruiting will continue but he noted that there is not a large pool of qualified candidates.

Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the item. The item was approved on a roll call vote.

Chair Rossetti explained that the committee’s action on this item would be reported to the City Council at its next meeting on April 22nd and that this action would not become official until the Council takes final action on it.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

209508: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Fred Massaro as Director of Capital Projects.

Mr. Massaro stated that he has served in this capacity beginning September 3, 2019 and that he enjoys the work. Chair Rossetti noted that the candidate formerly worked with Wireworks and she asked if there was anything that could be applied to Somerville. Mr. Massaro said that the city will be implementing a preventive maintenance system that may involve integration with the DPW and 311 for work orders. The green building manager position ‘jumped over’ the building maintenance manager position, however, combining both positions to work as a team is now being considered. Councilor Mbah asked the candidate about his concept of preventive maintenance and Mr. Massaro said that periodic reviews and tasks should be performed to prolong the life of an asset. He also said that modifications to equipment should be evaluated to extend the life of assets. Mr. Massaro noted that the challenges presented by COVID have slowed down or delayed some projects. Councilor Scott said having this preventive maintenance system in Capital Projects could be viewed as an indictment of the city's previous methods. Mr. Massaro explained that Capital Projects is involved because it's a project to find the right system to integrate with the DPW. Like a lot of dated infrastructure in the city, the city kept looking for ways to keep its buildings up. He said that the new high school is the first city building to go through a commissioning process. Councilor Scott asked what the depth of Mr. Massaro’s involvement in the preventive maintenance would be and he replied that it would be to select the system and track how and when work orders are completed. Councilor Clingan commented on the candidate’s work history and said he hopes Mr. Massaro sticks with the tasks. Chair Rossetti spoke about a spreadsheet of capital projects and asked that it continue to be provided to the City Council. She also inquired if the new preventive maintenance system would allow vendors and residents to be updated and Mr. Massaro said it could be part of the system. Chair Rossetti asked that efforts to fill the building maintenance manager position be sped up.

Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the item. The item was approved on a roll call vote.

Chair Rossetti explained that the committee's action on this item would be reported to the City Council at its next meeting on April 22nd and that this action would not become official until the Council takes final action on it.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

211294: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Fred Massaro as Director of Capital Projects.

See 209508.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

209513: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Rich Raiche as Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management.

See 211295

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

211295: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Rich Raiche as Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management.

Councilor Scott commented that Mr. Raiche's track record speaks for itself and he supports this appointment. Councilor Clingan asked about the department's organizational structure and Mr. Raiche explained that he has oversight of Capital Projects and Engineering, but not Water and Sewer. He does, however, provide Water and Sewer with engineering support. Mr. Raiche has been employed by the city since November of 2016. Most of his career has been as a private consultant for municipalities. Mr. Raiche noted that the City Council recently approved a 2nd deputy director position in the Engineering Department to keep up with the workload. Additionally, the traffic engineer position has recently been filled and will start in 2 weeks. Chair Rossetti spoke about COVID funds coming to Somerville and asked where those funds could be best used. Mr. Raiche said that the city pressed the pause button on a number of projects, but none that were in the design stage, so there are a number of projects that are almost ready for the construction phases and the funds could be used for those.

Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the item. The item was approved on a roll call vote.

Chair Rossetti explained that the committee's action on this item would be reported to the City Council at its next meeting on April 22nd and that this action would not become official until the Council takes final action on it.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

211482: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Brian Postlewaite as City Engineer.

Mr. Postlewaite lives in Somerville and enjoys working with people to accomplish goals. He told the committee that the city has a solid legacy system that needs work to make it last. Councilor Mbah noted that the candidate isn't a stranger to the City Council. Councilor Scott asked when the sewer and drainage plan for duck village would be available and Mr. Postlewaite said that the plan is waiting for a couple of reviews by him. Chair Rossetti noted that Mr. Postlewaite left SMMA to come to Somerville and she asked that he do what he can for sustainability in the city's projects. She thinks that more could have been done with the new high school with respect to rain water harvesting. Mr. Postlewaite commented that although the high school building was probably the most green, sustainable building ever built in the city, we always wish that we could have done more. He hopes that the changes to the streets help to make it safer for bikers, persons with disabilities, pedestrians and all residents. Councilor Clingan spoke about working with Mr. Postlewaite and the challenges faced on Medford Street. Mr. Postlewaite commented that he sees a path forward and that the Medford Street project taught him about working with the community to find solutions to problems while bringing streets to the level they're expected to be at.

Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the item. The item was approved on a roll call vote.

Chair Rossetti explained that the committee's action on this item would be reported to the City Council at its next meeting on April 22nd and that this action would not become official until the Council takes final action on it.

The meeting was recessed at 8:04 PM and reconvened at 8:10 PM

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

211456: That the attached March 12, 2021 vacancy list be referred the Committee on Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters for discussion.

Chair Rossetti asked Ms. Gill to continue forwarding monthly vacancy lists to the City Council.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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211582: That the Acting Director of Personnel discuss with the Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee such topics as the external investigations process, increasing diverse staff hiring, and the nearly 100 current job vacancies (including over 40 union positions).

Councilor Scott said that the bottom line was that there was a backlog in the hiring process, partly because the process is paper based. He commented that he gets frustrated when he sees more managerial and consultant/contractor positions being added in the city while there are so many vacancies. He also stated that he would like to know more about the external investigation process. Chair Rossetti spoke about the 100+ vacant positions in the city, many of which have existed for years. She wants to know if these positions are really needed since homeowners will soon be seeing an increase in their tax bills because of the new high school and it's going to be costly to taxpayers to fill all of these positions. Director of Personnel Ann Gill agreed and said that the Personnel Department will continue to vet what positions are still needed and take action to fill them. She intends to push forward and secure a recruiter to assist in the process and said she understands that open positions are always a concern. Councilor Clingan commented that city jobs never needed a recruiter in the past to fill them, but he understands the challenges to fill them now. He commented that he hears things 'on the ground' about morale being low. Ms. Gill agreed that jobs are changing, and the city needs to constantly update job descriptions,

requirements and salaries. Chair Rossetti asked if the recruiter has been contracted yet and Ms. Gill said that interviews currently being held. The recruiter will be the point person for filling positions, working with department heads, advertising vacancies in the right places, updating requirements, performing outreach to the community, etc.. Deputy Director of Personnel Ellen Collins noted that the city did have a recruiter, but that person transitioned to another position in the city.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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To be Placed on File

204900: Requesting the re-appointment of Ron Bonney as Superintendent of Fleet Management.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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207400: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of Ron Bonney as Superintendent of Fleet Management.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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209496: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of Ron Bonney as Superintendent of Fleet Management.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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209499: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of Candace Cooper as Director of Personnel.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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209514: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Jessica Fosbrook as City Engineer.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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Referenced Material:

- Brian Postlewaite resume (with 211482)
- Chad Whiting resume (with 211301)
- Colleen Moran Resume (with 211210)
- Fred Massaro resume (with 209508, 211294)
- Rich Raiche resume (with 209513, 211295)