



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

7:00 PM

Committee of the Whole

This meeting was held via Zoom, was called to order by Chair Wilson at 7:07 pm and adjourned at 8:34 pm with a roll call vote of 10 in favor (Councilor Davis, Councilor Mbah, Councilor Strezo, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Burnley, Councilor Sait, Councilor Scott and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and one absent (Councilor McLaughlin).

Others present: Stephanie Widzowski – Clerk of Committees.

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, Lance L. Davis, Ben Ewen-Campen, Wilfred N. Mbah, Judy Pineda Neufeld and Kristen Strezo

Absent: Matthew McLaughlin

1. Public Hearing

1.1. Order (ID # [24-0178](#))

By Councilor Wilson

That this City Council hold a public hearing in the Committee on Finance on the community's Fiscal Year 2025 budget priorities.

Chair Wilson opened the public hearing at 7:10 pm and closed it at 8:31 pm. He explained how the Budget Priorities survey attached to the agenda ("Finance - 202-03-19 City Council FY25 Budget Priorities Survey") will be used to determine councilor support for priorities at the next Finance Committee of the Whole meeting on 3/26 and encouraged people to reach out to Brendan Salisbury (bsalisbury@somervillema.gov <<mailto:bsalisbury@somervillema.gov>>) or Mohammed Uddin (muddin@somervillema.gov <<mailto:muddin@somervillema.gov>>) with questions about the process.

Thirty-seven members of the public gave testimony. A few represented organizations such as the Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS) and Mutual Aid Medford and Somerville (MAMAS). Many voiced support for affordable housing and ensuring the continuation of ARPA-funded programs such as municipal vouchers, tenant organizing, rental assistance and legal services for residents. Many also urged the Council and the Mayor to keep the Winter Hill community together by improving the Edgerly School and offering safe public transportation for all students - using the city's budget, not the schools'. Other pressing issues included a Green New Deal for public schools, paid family/medical leave and fair contracts for SMEA workers, reallocating SPD funding to an

unarmed, alternate emergency response, invasive plant removal, medical debt forgiveness, a composting pilot program, supervised consumption sites, free MBTA passes, and increased staff. Some people stressed that the Council needs to use its power to get the Mayor to follow through on these priorities.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK
COMPLETED**

Referenced Documents:

- Finance - 2024-03-19 Public Comments (with 24-0178)
- Finance - 2024-03-19 City Council FY25 Budget Priorities Survey