



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

CLERK OF COMMITTEES

June 21, 2018
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Vice Chair	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Ward Two Alderman	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Alderman At Large	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	Alderman at Large	Present	

Others present: Emily Monea - SomerStat, Greg Jenkins - Arts Council, Nick Salerno - Elections, Oliver Sellers-Garcia - OSE, Denise Taylor - Communications, Steve Craig - Constituent Services, Michael Mastrobuoni - Budget Manager, Ed Bean - Finance, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place in the Aldermen's Chamber and was called to order at 6:14 PM by Chairman White and adjourned at 10:04 PM.

FY-19 Departmental Budget Review and any associated departmental financial matters.

SomerStat

Ms. Monea presented her department's budget request and responded to questions about the possibility of linking the various data systems used by the city, noting that there are legal and technical concerns. Alderman Mbah asked how much money SomerStat has saved the city and Ms. Monea will attempt to get an estimate, but she noted that the department often advocates for additional resources for departments. Alderman Rossetti inquired about any available data regarding gas leaks and Ms. Monea replied that none are available, but the matter will be looked into. Alderman Hirsch asked about work order systems and Ms. Monea explained that the city is using the city's customer service as a work order platform, although it wasn't designed for that purpose. Alderman Rossetti inquired about apparent discrepancies in line 530000 for FY17 and FY19 and Chairman White asked that invoices be made available showing expenditures against that line. Alderman Scott also asked about discrepancies and Mr. Mastrobuoni explained that if a FY17 bill is paid in FY18, it doesn't show as a FY17 expense. He will be talking to Auditing

to try to resolve this. Chairman White asked for a report of all carryover expenses for the past several years.

Arts Council

Mr. Jenkins told the committee that the city plans to bring back the Sunsetters next summer, although it might be under the Parks and Recreation Department. Alderman McLaughlin spoke about his questioning of the Youth Coordinator position during another budget process and how it was moved from Communications to the Arts Council.

Elections

Mr. Salerno spoke about the wireless transmission of election data from the voting polls to City Hall. Alderman Scott questioned why line 512000 was underspent by \$93,000 in FY17. Mr. Salerno explained the higher request in the FY-19 budget is due to there being 2 elections and possibly 2 early voting sessions this year, noting that if there is only 1 early voting session, the unused funds will go back to the general fund. Mr. Salerno also contributed the low expenditure for line 530011 to a problem with advertising in one particular newspaper.

Office of Sustainability

Mr. Sellers-Garcia presented his department's budget request. Alderman Hirsch asked if the city could be fully compliant with the law regarding recycling in the schools by the first day of school this fall. Mr. Sellers-Garcia said they have learned some things and would like to come back to the committee at a later date with additional information. He gave a few reasons why the law isn't being followed in the school cafeterias. Alderman Hirsch stated that the directive has to come from the mayor to get accomplished and said that she doesn't want any excuses - she wants a program in place by the fall and she wants dishwashers for flatware. Alderman Davis added that it's a matter of executive will and that leadership is needed. He has been hearing the same thing for 2 1/2 years and he's done listening to excuses. Mr. Sellers-Garcia said that there really has been progress made, although not as fast as some would like. Recycled materials must be deposited clean. There should be less waste and more recycling. Staff will be needed in the schools to interact with the containers. Alderman Rossetti commented that this discussion belongs with the Superintendent of Schools and the School Department. Mr. Sellers-Garcia stated that he spoke with the Food Services Department for the schools and noted that they do all procurement on a large regional basis.

Alderman Scott commented about discrepancies in line 530000 over several years and Mr. Sellers-Garcia will reply in writing, noting that it most likely was due to carryovers and/or the composting pilot program. Alderman Scott requested the actual amount spent for FY-15.

Communications

Alderman Rossetti was recused from all discussions regarding this department.

Ms. Taylor presented her department's budget request and said that there are surplus funds in line 530000 that will be returned to the general fund.

PEG Access

Alderman Rossetti was recused from all discussions regarding this department.

Ms. Taylor presented her department's budget request.

Constituent Services

Alderman Rossetti was recused from all discussions regarding this department.

Mr. Craig responded to inquiries by Alderman Hirsch about the possibility of centralizing all services for residents, e.g., library cards, school registration, parking permits, etc., via self-service portals. Mr. Craig told the committee that weekend call coverage is provided by a vendor on a per call basis and Alderman Scott asked Mr. Craig to provide an estimate of how many FTE's would be needed to provide the coverage in-house.

Handouts:

- 6-21-18 OSE-Solar Power Agreement Cost Savings
- 6-21-18 Prof & Tech Services Breakdown