



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Legislative Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Davis at 6:02 pm and adjourned at 7:26 pm with a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilor Scott, Councilor Burnley, Councilor Kelly, and Chair Davis), none opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor McLaughlin).

Councilor McLaughlin was unable to attend due to travel.

Others present: Neha Singh – Mayor’s Office, Brendan Salisbury – City Clerk’s Office, Joe Lynch – Somerville Licensing Commission, Stephanie Widzowski – Clerk of Committees.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Lance L. Davis, Vice Chair Charlotte Kelly, Willie Burnley Jr. and Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott
Absent: Matthew McLaughlin

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-0193](#)) Approval of the Legislative Matters Committee Minutes of January 31, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED
AYE: Chairperson Davis, Vice Chair Kelly, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Two City Councilor Scott
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

2. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-0253](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Legislative Matters Committee Meeting of February 14, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED
AYE: Chairperson Davis, Vice Chair Kelly, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Two City Councilor Scott
ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

Somerville Public Schools STAR

3. Mayor's Communication (ID # [23-0107](#)) Conveying the 2022 Surveillance Technology Annual Report as it relates to Somerville Public Schools.

Liaison Singh addressed a previous question from Councilor Kelly on whether Somerville Public Schools will notify the Council when the notification system is ready. She said that the system is now in place for text, email and 911 if the technology is triggered, but implementation through

police cruisers is still ongoing. Councilor Kelly commented that she would like to know how the system will work with the new police policy passed by the School Committee.

Councilor Scott asked if there is any other technology specific to Somerville Public Schools that will receive a report and mentioned concerns a student raised about surveillance technology in school laptops. Chair Davis said that because the reports are specific to the technology, laptop surveillance would require its own annual report.

Councilor Burnley asked of SPD how Somerville Public Schools investigate complaints about surveillance technology and whether there are policies in place to train staff to do so.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Family and Relationship Structure

4. Ordinance
(ID # [22-1992](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Scott
Amending Section 1-4 of the Code of Ordinance to add definitions for relationship status and intimate personal relationship.

Taken together with items 22-1993, 22-1994, 22-1995, 22-1996, and 23-0299. Chair Davis kept item 22-1994 regarding Fair Housing in committee, as he noted that the Administration is looking to get several affordable units back online and he wants to give them time to do so.

Legislative Policy Analyst Salisbury explained their suggestions. There was discussion over whether to change “family and relationship structure” to “family *or* relationship structure”, and over whether to include the word “consenting” in the definition of an intimate personal relationship.

Analyst Salisbury noted that there was an outstanding question of whether to include the term “domestic partner” in Section 15-31. They also said that in the Fair Housing sections, “family and relationship structure” was included in such a way as to bisect ancestry and national origin, which are often considered together; therefore, they suggested moving the new term after marital status. There was a discussion about the terms “spouse” and “domestic partner” in Section 15-31, and Chair Davis strongly recommended keeping the text as-is to be consistent with other sections.

A series of motions were made, tabled, and then taken up together for a single vote. *Councilor Burnley made motions to replace all instances of “family and relationship structure” with “family or relationship structure” in sections 1-4, 2-326, 7-41, 7-43, 7-44, 7-47, and 10-102 of the Code of Ordinances. Chair Davis moved to relocate “family and relationship structure” after “marital status” in each instance where they appear*

together in the proposed amendments. The motions passed with a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilor Scott, Councilor Burnley, Councilor Kelly, and Chair Davis), 1 absent (Councilor McLaughlin), and none opposed.

Liaison Singh forwarded a request from the Administration for Councilor Burnley that if there are any model policies or implementation toolkits that may be useful, then he should flag those for new staff.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED AS AMENDED**

AYE: Chairperson Davis, Vice Chair Kelly, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

5. Ordinance
(ID # [22-1993](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Scott
Amending Section 2-326 of the Code of Ordinances, related to the Personnel program.

Taken together with item 22-1992.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED AS AMENDED**

AYE: Chairperson Davis, Vice Chair Kelly, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

6. Ordinance
(ID # [22-1994](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Scott
Amending Sections 7-41, 7-43, 7-44, and 7-47 of the Code of Ordinances, related to Fair Housing.

Taken together with item 22-1992.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

7. Ordinance
(ID # [22-1995](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Scott
Amending Section 15-31 of the Code of Ordinances, related to the Code of Conduct, Ethics, and Financial Disclosure.

Taken together with item 22-1992.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE PLACED ON FILE**

AYE: Chairperson Davis, Vice Chair Kelly, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 8. Ordinance (ID # [22-1996](#)) By Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Scott Amending Section 10-102 of the Code of Ordinances, regarding the definition of biased based policing.

Taken together with item 22-1992.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED AS AMENDED

AYE: Chairperson Davis, Vice Chair Kelly, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

- 9. Public Communication (ID # [23-0299](#)) Organization for Polyamory and Ethical Non-Monogamy (OPEN) submitting comments re: nondiscrimination provisions in ordinances based on relationship structure.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Licensing Commission Alternative

- 10. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-0256](#)) Requesting approval of a Home Rule Petition Authorizing the City to Appoint an Alternate Member to the Somerville Licensing Commission.

This item was taken up first in the meeting. Commissioner Lynch explained that the alternate member is to ensure the commission can conduct business without delay, and that it will be especially helpful if one of the commission's three members has a conflict of interest and must recuse themselves from a vote. Councilor Burnley asked about other commissions with alternate members, and Commissioner Lynch talked about his findings of other municipalities. There was a discussion about how the Home Rule Petition allows the alternate to deliberate.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Chairperson Davis, Vice Chair Kelly, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

Paid Leave for Survivors

- 11. Ordinance (ID # [23-0075](#)) By Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Kelly Amending Chapter 2, Article VI, Division 2 of the Code of Ordinances by adding a new section establishing Paid Leave for Survivors.

Taken together with items 23-0077 and 23-0218. Councilor Burnley cited domestic violence statistics in Massachusetts. He noted that MGL dictates employers solely determine whether leave for instances of violence is paid and discussed the repercussions of that. Councilor Kelly has outstanding questions about implementation and whether paid leave for survivors would

be covered by PFMLA.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

12. Resolution
(ID # [23-0077](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.
In Support of Survivors.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

13. Public
Communication
(ID # [23-0218](#))

Commission for Women submitting comments re: item #23-0075, an
Ordinance establishing Paid Leave for Survivors.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE