



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 31, 2023

7:00 PM

NOTICE: This is NOT the official version of the City Council's minutes. While reasonable efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the data provided, do not rely on this information without first checking with the City Clerk.

1. OPENING CEREMONIES

Present: City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr.
City Councilor At Large Charlotte Kelly
City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo
City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson
Ward One City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin
Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen
Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan
Ward Five City Councilor Beatriz Gomez Mouakad
Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis
Ward Seven City Councilor Judy Pineda Neufeld

Absent: Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen. Councilor Clingan noted that today is Overdose Awareness Day and asked that the Council remember the tens of thousands of people who have died from drug overdoses.

- 1.1. Roll Call Call of the Roll.
(ID # [23-1318](#))

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

2. CITATIONS

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. ORDERS, ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS OF MEMBERS

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

7. COMMUNICATIONS OF THE MAYOR

- 7.1. Mayor's Request Requesting approval of a 1.5-year lease for the Tufts Administration
(ID # [23-1319](#)) Building (TAB), from September 1, 2023 through February 28, 2025.

Chief of Staff Nikki Spencer thanked the Council for its assistance in relocating the students and staff affected by the situation at the Winter Hill Innovation School and said that most of School Department staff has already moved into the Tufts Administration Building (TAB).

Councilor Burnley inquired about taxes on the building and asked if the city would pay them. Budget Director Mike Mastrobuoni explained that there are no taxes on the building as Tufts is tax exempt. He went on to say this would not affect any PILOT agreements the city has with Tufts. Councilor Burnley asked why it was included in the lease agreement and City Solicitor Cindy Amara said the lease was started from a template and the focus was on important details of the agreement. She stated that it doesn't have a substantive effect on the city. Councilor Burnley asked Solicitor Amara about Tufts PILOT agreement(s) and she said that the language was included to clarify that Tufts would not use this towards any PILOT. Councilor Wilson asked why the lease is for 1.5 years and Chief of Staff Spencer said the city requested that time frame to be able to consider any future use of the facility by the city.

Councilor Strezo asked for information regarding parking and Chief of Staff Spencer said that the details are still being worked out. There are 79 paid spaces available as well as an additional 25 spaces for the Council on Aging and SCALE. These spaces are reserved for the city and School Department under the terms of the lease. Some employees will be allowed to park on neighborhood streets and city employees and School Department personnel will have free access to blue bikes.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld spoke about the bus shelter that was removed, saying she spoke to the Mobility Department about having it replaced and she asked that the administration work to bring this to fruition.

Director Mastrobuoni explained that the lease is expected to be funded from the general fund through tax revenue, since there is more new growth than previously anticipated. Councilor Gomez Mouakad suggested that a better picture of the city's finances should be made available when financial requests, such as this, are made.

Councilor Strezo asked about the 'right of first offer' in the lease and Chief of Staff Spencer said this wasn't included in the license, but it is in the lease. City Solicitor Amara explained it's there for the benefit of the city. Councilor Wilson asked if the city would be responsible for utility costs, i.e., water and sewer during its tenancy and Chief of Staff Spencer stated that Tufts included those costs as part of the rent. Director Mastrobuoni spoke about comparable rents saying there's not a lot of available buildings this big and in terms of pricing, the only other experience was a few years back when moving ISD was being considered, and at that time, the rent estimates were close to \$1 million per year.

Councilor Clingan asked if the DPW will still be doing maintenance under this lease and Chief of Staff Spencer explained that it's the city's responsibility to provide custodial and basic maintenance services for the building and these services will be contracted for with a vendor. Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked about the plan for election days, since this is a polling

location and Chief of Staff Spencer will get an answer and report back. In closing, she commented that the Tufts team was extremely accommodating to the city's needs.

RESULT: APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Kelly, City Councilor At Large Strezo, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Five City Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

- 7.2. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1320](#)) Requesting a supplemental appropriation of \$1,053,387 to the Capital - Building Lease Account to pay for a Lease Agreement regarding use of space at the Tufts Administration Building (TAB) on Holland Street.

See item #23-1319.

Councilor Ewen-Campen moved for reconsideration of items 7.1 and 7.2 (23-1319 and 23-1320) in the hopes that reconsideration fails.

Reconsideration failed on a roll call vote of 0 in favor, 10 opposed (McLaughlin, Davis, Strezo, Clingan, Wilson, Burnley, Gomez Mouakad, Kelly, Pineda Neufeld, Ewen-Campen), 1 absent (Scott).

RESULT: APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Kelly, City Councilor At Large Strezo, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Five City Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

8. COMMUNICATIONS OF CITY OFFICERS

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS

11. LATE ITEMS

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was Adjourned at 7:45 PM on roll call vote of 10 in favor (McLaughlin, Davis, Strezo, Clingan, Wilson, Burnley, Gomez Mouakad, Kelly, Pineda Neufeld, Ewen-Campen), 0 opposed, 1 absent (Scott).