



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 25, 2019

REPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE

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

Others present: Heidi Burbidge - Councilor Katjana Ballantyne, John Long - City Clerk, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Candace Cooper - Personnel, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees, OSPCD, Candace Cooper - Personnel, Jennifer Mancia - Personnel, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:03 PM by Chairman Scott and adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Approval of the February 4, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the February 14, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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207301: Requesting the re-appointment of Paula Machado to the Board of Health.

Ms. Machado did not appear and Mr. Kress was not available.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207340: Requesting the confirmation of Kimberly Wells to the position of Assistant Clerk of Committees.

Councilor Ballantyne, Mr. Long, Mr. Snyder and Ms. Wells attended this meeting. It was stated that Ms. Wells is very well suited for this position and works collaborative with the city councilors. Additionally,

Ms. Wells lives in Somerville. Councilor Ballantyne recalled a statement Ms. Wells made during her interview that she chose to live in Somerville because of it being a well-managed city. She currently is a consultant to municipalities around Massachusetts. Mr. Long thanked the president of the city council and the administration for bringing a fresh eye to the hiring approach. Councilor Rossetti inquired about the reporting structure for the clerks and recalls that all clerks would report into Mr. Long, city clerk. It was stated that the city councilor has not been given a proposal to make this change as of yet. Councilor Ballantyne stated there were discussions about professionalism and consistency of staff and the clerks should report into the president of the city council and the city clerk. There will be a meeting this week Thursday with President Ballantyne and Mr. Long on this matter. The change could happen at the next budget hearing. There were questions from the committee about why appoint now when Ms. Wells has been working since the beginning of the year? What would happen if someone did not get appointed after they have been working for a while? It was stated that many start out in an acting capacity before being appointed.

RESULT:

APPROVED

207097: Requesting the reappointment of Mary Cassesso to the position of Trustee of the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Ms. Cassesso could not be at the meeting tonight.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

207099: Requesting the reappointment of Donna Haynes to the position of Trustee of the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Ms. Haynes could not be at the meeting tonight.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

207100: Requesting the reappointment of Andrea Shapiro to the position of Trustee of the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Ms. Burbidge, staff to AHT/OSPCD Housing, introduced Ms. Shapiro for the reappointment. She has been trust fund member for 15 years. Formerly, she was housing director under former Mayor Gay. Ms. Shapiro has spent 25 years of her career in Affordable Housing. She talked about how different Somerville is now with a lot of changes demographically. Councilor Ewen-Campen serves on this trust fund and stated the members are accomplished, professional people with challenging tasks before them. They look at RFP's, budgets and respondents to RFPs. It was stated there is a lot more funds coming through now and hope this will open up more opportunities. Councilor Rossetti talked about reappointing and the opportunity for new blood. Ms. Shapiro stated that each time someone is up for reappointing, they have a conversation about this matter. Councilor Rossetti reviewed a report on members and how long they have been on commissions. Currently, there are 9 members and 2 open positions. Councilor Mbah asked about the composition of the trust fund members. It was stated that 85% of the trust fund members are women, 1 person of color and one person with disabilities. An advertisement was posted hoping people who represent the city with low income will apply for the position.

RESULT:

APPROVED

207098: Requesting the reappointment of Daniel LeBlanc to the position of Trustee of the

Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Ms. Burbidge introduced Mr. LeBlanc as one of the longest members for this trust fund. He works for SCC and brings knowledge about affordable housing and has strong understanding of what it takes to do affordable housing and requesting funds. Mr. LeBlanc recently moved after living in Somerville for many years. He will be leaving the SCC in a couple of years. Mr. LeBlanc talked about 100 homes program and was able to get additional state funding for 5 units. Some homes were used for homeless families with 8 units on Cross Street. There were discussions about criteria to be a resident of Somerville. It was stated there is nothing in the by-laws or ordinance about residency requirement.

Councilor Rossetti motioned and it was accepted to revisit the ordinance to consider including Somerville residence requirement.

Ms. Burbidge stated that there had previously been a trust member who lived in Somerville but was forced to leave because they could not afford to stay in Somerville.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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205525: Requesting the re-appointment of Ramon Bueno to the Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change.

Ms. Connor introduced Mr. Bueno who was first appointed in 2017. He is an expert in economic climate change. Mr. Bueno talked about moving to Somerville in 1979/1980 and wanted to help out the community. He has experience as a climate change and development specialist, consulting researcher and contributing author for Union of Concerned Scientists.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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205526: Requesting the re-appointment of Julie Wood to the Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change.

Ms. Connors appeared before the committee for Mr. Sellers-Garcia. Ms. Wood was first appointed in 2016. She has done a fair amount of media for her job. She also did a Curious George episode. Ms. Wood was asked what inspired her to apply for this position. She has experience of working in the water world and some in the energy world. She has been working on the city’s NetZero initiative. She was also asked if we will all be under water in the next 100 years. Ms. Wood responded, yes, in some areas. Councilor Rossetti asked if there is anything that frustrates her in the area and what could be done better, as it relates to energy use and climate change. Chair Scott asked about large buildings that are directly in flood zone areas. There were other questions about the Somerville Climate Plan and raising awareness with SomerVision 2040.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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205527: Requesting the re-appointment of Michelle Melton to the Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change

Withdrawn by the Administration

RESULT:	WITHDRAWN
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205472: That the city’s Recruiter appear before the Committee on Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters to discuss strategies to increase the diversity of

candidates applying for civil service jobs.

Ms. Cooper and Ms. Mancia attended the committee meeting. There were discussion about promoting work across the city also attending events, career affairs every two months, along with career affairs at Somerville High School. Ms. Mancia has done some research with other communities who are using networking cafes and open houses to encourage the community to apply to various jobs. Some communities advertise with the link to testing site, as a way to encourage interest with the community. Ms. Mancia also has an email list with a number of organizations that she uses to advise them of open positions. She will be hosting a networking café on April 8. Councilor Ewen-Campen asked if this is a new approach. Ms. Mancia has been with the City of Somerville for about two years. She stated that the school resource office has been working on this initiative. Ms. Cooper talked about testing for police and fire happens every two years. She hopes to use the results from the March test to evaluate whether or not the new approach is working. There were discussions about the challenges in general with police candidates. Ms. Mancia and Ms. Cooper were asked if the city had an open house for the upcoming March test. It was stated that these is new information about the open house and has not been put into place yet here in Somerville. There were also discussions about using a 1-1 mentorship program which is also new information found out from other communities. It was suggested that Somerville provide a workshop on the civil service process to increase interest. Councilor Clingan stated he had been at a previous career fair at the Somerville High School and no one from the police or fire were in attendance. He also suggested offering childcare for those who may want to take the test. He thought it would be helpful to highlight Somerville’s all women fire fighters and first African-American fire Lieutenant to help create awareness in the community. Ms. Cooper stated this has been a learning process for them and they are happy to make changes to the process. There were questions from the committee about tracking communications with possible candidates and if they follow up. In the past when part of the Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters committee, Councilor Rossetti had asked candidates who went to Somerville High School to go back and let students know that they were once a student there and share their story. Chair Scott would like to see more candidates in the pipeline and the need to have a more proactive approach to connect people to the resources. Councilor Ewen-Campen asked Ms. Cooper and Ms. Mancia for an update after the March test exam. There were conversations about HRD sending out notifications and Ms. Cooper will find out if the city can get access to the email list to help promote the civil service exams. Councilor Mbah asked if there is a way to eliminate the civil service exam to get more recruits. This question may be discussed at a future meeting.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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