



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:05pm and adjourned at 9:54pm with a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Clingan, Burnley, Wilson), none opposed, and 2 absent (Councilors Davis, Scott).

Others present: Cindy Amara – City Solicitor, Elyse Belarge – Sustainability and Resiliency Planner, Office of Sustainability and Environment, Kirstina Burgquist – Director of Youth Services, Kathy Cole – Financial Analyst, Office of Sustainability and Environment, Tom Galligani – Director of Economic Development, Kate Hartke – Director of Grants & External Funds, ARPA A&F, Kimberley Hutter – Legislative Liaison, Alan Inacio – Director of Finance and Administration Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, Jill Lathan – Commissioner of Department of Public Works, Cathy Lester Salchert – Assistant City Solicitor, Anoop Malik – Finance Manager, Erica Satin-Hernandez – ARPA Director, David Slonina – Deputy Director of Information Technology, Julie Spurr-Knight – Finance Director of Department of Public Works, Mohammed Uddin – Financial Analyst, Natasha Frazier – Assistant Clerk of Committees.

Councilor Scott was unable to attend due to a conflict. Councilor Clingan arrived at 6:34pm. Councilor Davis left after the roll call vote for agenda item 15.

Roll Call

Present: City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson, City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr. and Lance L. Davis
Absent: Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott and Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [24-1387](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of September 24, 2024.

RESULT: ACCEPTED
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

Prior Year Invoices

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1417](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$45.97 using available funds in the City Clerk Maintenance Contract Account for printer/copier service.

Chair Wilson noted that the invoice was not paid within the fiscal year because it was transmitted to an incorrect email address and that the complete explanation is on Legistar.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large
 Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 3. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1429](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$24,802.06 using available funds in the Information Technology Cellular & Paging Services and Leased - Photocopier Equipment Accounts for cellular and copier services.

Director Slonina stated that this request is to cover invoices that were received late due to a clerical error and that these items are well within the budget. He stated that most of the invoices are for iPads for various departments, and the remaining amount is for photocopier expenses. Director Slonina noted that steps are being taken to prevent this error from recurring in the future.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large
 Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 4. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1378](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$160 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Administration License Reimbursement Account for commercial license employee expense.

Agenda items 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 were also taken up with this item. Director Spurr-Knight stated that regarding agenda item 7, the invoices date back to 2021 and are part of DPW’s internal reconciliation process of accounts that have been accruing for multiple years. She stated that DPW is trying to switch to a master billing system because of the large number of gas and electricity accounts. Regarding agenda item 9, Director Spurr-Knight stated that OSE and DPW each manage different ends of the billing for solar net metering, and they are working towards a reconciliation process to streamline billing.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large
 Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 5. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1381](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$15 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Highway Rubbish Removal Account for disposal of break out material.

This item was taken up with agenda item 4, ID number 24-1378. Please refer to agenda item 4 for this item’s minutes.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 6. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1444](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$60 using available funds in the Department of Public Works License Reimbursement Account for employee reimbursement for hoisting licensing.

This item was taken up with agenda item 4, ID number 24-1378. Please refer to agenda item 4 for this item’s minutes.
RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 7. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1379](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$22,633.58 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Buildings Natural Gas Account for prior year balances on bills.

This item was taken up with agenda item 4, ID number 24-1378. Please refer to agenda item 4 for this item’s minutes.
RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 8. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1380](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$4,675 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Highway Rubbish Removal Account for Recycling Services.

This item was taken up with agenda item 4, ID number 24-1378. Please refer to agenda item 4 for this item’s minutes.
RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 9. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1443](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$48,930.22 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Electricity Account for solar net metering.

This item was taken up with agenda item 4, ID number 24-1378. Please refer to agenda item 4 for this item’s minutes.
RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

Grant and Gift Acceptances

- 10. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1445](#)) Requesting approval to accept a donation of equipment valued at \$15,000 with no new match required, from the City of Boston Department of Emergency Management to the Department of Public Works for two trailers.

Director Spurr-Knight stated these are emergency management trailers that are in great shape and DPW would like to accept them. One trailer is for storage and another is for emergency use, such as food or blanket distribution.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 11. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1410](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$33,940.50 grant from Metro North Regional Employment Board to the Health and Human Services Department for the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program.

Director Burgquist stated that this grant has been used by HHS for many years to support youth employment through the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program at various external placements in the Somerville community. Chair Wilson asked why there is fluctuation in the grant amounts in recent years. Director Burgquist stated that Youth Works received a 40% reduction in funding across the board. She stated that they were able to sustain the same number of youth employees, but less of the funding came from the Youth Works grant. However, Groundworks Somerville continued to provide a match.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 12. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1434](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$310,100 grant with no new match required, from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to the Office of Sustainability and Environment for resilience hubs.

Planner Belarge stated that this is an opportunity to create more regional resiliency in the form of resiliency hubs, which are places people can go during extreme weather emergencies, such as cooling centers and warming centers. Councilor Davis asked what resiliency centers are and how they are intended to work. Planner Belarge described them as places where people can go during weather emergencies to charge phones and access Wi-Fi, for instance, in addition to warming and cooling needs. She stated that this project will help conceptualize and identify locations for a regional network of these community serving facilities. Chair Wilson noted that the requested

amount is spread over two fiscal years and noted that there is no match required. Ms. Cole noted that the 10% match has been met through the Bar Foundation. Councilor Davis asked if this is connected to pre-existing initiatives to help people stay warm in the winter months. Chair Wilson asked about the possibility of these hubs existing year-round for members of the community experiencing homelessness.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

13. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1377](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$250,000 grant with no new match required, from MA Department of Transportation to the Mobility Division for an East Somerville soundwall feasibility study.

Director Inacio stated that this is an earmark from the State delegation that was intended as kickoff funds for a feasibility and assessment study for a soundwall design. He stated that a similar earmark was received for Mystic Ave a year or two ago. Director Inacio stated that the thinking between Mobility and Mass DOT is to combine these projects into one RFP and one feasibility assessment project. Chair Wilson noted that there are different technical challenges along Mystic Ave because it runs parallel to 93. Chair Wilson asked Director Inacio how complicated he anticipates the implementation of this project will be in Somerville. Chair Wilson also thanked Councilor Clingan and the State delegation for their advocacy regarding the soundwall project. Chair Wilson also noted that Boston has soundwalls and Somerville does not. Councilor Burnley asked if the studies will also include design, noting that the necessity of the project seems established. He asked when will steps be taken to implement the solution. Director Inacio stated that the feasibility study aspect precedes design to identify technical barriers. Chair Wilson stated that for the Ward 4 soundwall project, Director Rawson estimated 9-12 months for the study, and 1-2 years for design and construction.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

Contracts and Easements

14. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1374](#))

Requesting the approval of a time-only contract extension for three years with a new expiration date of 9/1/2027, for the Somerville Hispanic Association for community development for restoration of 59 Cross Street.

Agenda items 19 and 20 were taken up with this item. Regarding agenda item 14, Director Inacio stated that the 59 Cross Street building is heavily used asset in the city and is an historic building. He stated that structural repairs have delayed project to beyond a 3-year extension. Regarding agenda

item 19, Director Inacio described the background of the ArtFarm project, noting that because funds were previously approved for the ArtFarm project by the CPA Committee, but because funds unused for so long while the Poplar Street pump station was completed, the funds for the ArtFarm project were moved to an undesignated balance. This request is the result of a revote and recommitment by the CPA Committee to recommit the funds to the ArtFarm.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

15. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-1477](#))

Requesting acceptance of an easement for a pedestrian bridge over the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Green Line.

Attorney Salchert noted that a memo was sent explaining why this easement agreement is before the Committee. Attorney Salchert provided an overview of this matter, noting that the green line extension goes through the Innerbelt and Brickbottom developments. Additionally, she stated that the developer parties have been engaged in a process with the MBTA for over a year to plan an at-grade connection, which would allow pedestrians to cross from one side of the T-station to the other. She stated that developers hold a license for entry that was approved and recently received their notice to proceed from the MBTA. As a condition of granting the at-grade connection, the MBTA requires an easement to create a pedestrian bridge that will go over the tracks for pedestrian safety.

Chair Wilson stated that the at-grade crossing would help open up the Innerbelt area and make it more accessible for pedestrians. Chair Wilson and Attorney Salchert noted that the at-grade connection is a stopgap until the pedestrian bridge can be completed. Director Galligani described the the anticipated location of the permanent pedestrian bridge. He stated that it would be close to where the Innerbelt building is located, roughly connecting where Poplar Street extends, and would land on the opposite side, where the 200 Innerbelt Road building is located.

Director Galligani noted that there is no commitment for the City to build the permanent bridge, which is anticipated to be expensive. He stated that the City is hoping it will be funded through a public-private partnership that would include a contribution from the two landowners and a significant contribution from the State. The Committee adjourned for Executive Session on this matter at 7:12pm and returned at 9:04pm, followed by a recess from 9:05pm until 9:11pm.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Davis

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Appropriations

- 16. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1332](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$100,000 from the Encore Artist and Cultural Support Stabilization Fund to support Local Cultural Council grants to artists, organizations, and schools.

Chair Wilson noted that a staff memo was received for this item from the Arts Council. Chair Wilson expressed his support for this program.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 17. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1333](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$220,120.80 from the Receipts Reserved-Transportation Network Company Revenue Fund to the Transportation Network Company Special Revenue Fund for Vision Zero Safety efforts.

Director Inacio stated that this is a special revenue source from Lyft and Uber. He stated that the City receives 10 cents for every ride in which Somerville is the initiating destination or final destination of the ride. He stated that the City previously had a revolving account, but that the Department of Revenue now views this revenue more like a gift or a grant, and it needs to be treated like an appropriation. Director Inacio then described the types of projects they anticipate using this funding for.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 18. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1335](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$262,000 from the Prospect Street Traffic Conditions Stabilization Fund to implement the conditions of Planning Board case PB 2019-04.

Agenda item 21 was taken up with this item. Director Inacio stated that approval of the creation of the account is needed first, then approval for the appropriation. He stated that this is a planning board decision, and that mitigation funds meant to address bus traffic safety issues. He stated that a traffic safety mitigation condition requires the developer to provide the City with these funds. He stated that they will be used for traffic signalization improvements, and that the Mobility team is handling the implementation of this. Chair Wilson pointed out this will help with better bus service in Somerville. Councilor Burnley noted that they were discussing one of 82 conditions included in the attached document and that the condition being discussed is Condition 37, which states:

The Applicant shall improve accessibility and comfort, to the extent practicable, at one existing MBTA bus stop along the frontage of D2.2. Specific improvements must be approved by the Director of Transportation & Infrastructure. The Building Official shall not issue a Certificate of Occupancy for the subject building until such improvements have been installed or constructed.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

- 19. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1430](#))

Requesting the appropriation of \$542,675 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Open Space Reserve Fund for the development of the ArtFarm park improvement project.

This item was taken up with agenda item 14, ID number 24-1374. Please refer to agenda item 4 for this item’s minutes.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

Transfers

- 20. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1431](#))

Requesting the transfer of \$174,776 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund Undesignated Fund Balance to the Open Space Reserve.

This item was taken up with agenda item 14, ID number 24-1374. Please refer to agenda item 4 for this item’s minutes.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

Funds and Accounts

- 21. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-1334](#))

Requesting approval to create the Prospect Street Traffic Conditions Stabilization Fund and accept a payment to the fund of \$262,000 from the Union Square RELP Master Developer LLC to satisfy special permit conditions.

This item was taken up with agenda item 18, ID number 24-1335. Please refer to agenda item 18 for this item’s minutes.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Davis

Orders and Resolutions22. Order
(ID # [24-1300](#))

By Councilor Wilson and Councilor Pineda Neufeld

That the Director of Grants Development and External Funds and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Director update this Council on ARPA grant encumbrances ahead of the obligation deadline of December 31, 2024.

Director Satin-Hernandez and Director Hartke gave a presentation regarding the Fall 2024 ARPA Obligation Status Update. The presentation is included as an attachment to this item. The presentation defined ARPA terms, provided an overview of the timeline for spending, discussed the funds in terms of obligation status, and discussed the Munis report.

During the presentation portion on obligation status, Director Satin-Hernandez stated that Somerville received just over \$77.5 million in ARPA funds, and just under 70%, which is approximately \$53.7 million, has been fully expended. Director Satin-Hernandez described the remaining obligation categories and the status of the spending. This included unexpended funds. Chair Wilson stated that in a previous meeting, the Committee learned that Treasury is less inclined to repossess funds and is therefore offering leeway for expending unused funds. He asked if the City will be utilizing this leeway.

Director Satin-Hernandez stated that she believes the leeway will not be necessary for Somerville. She stated that contracts are already in place and they are ready to receive the funding. She stated that the process is expected to move quickly because they do not need to start from scratch with bidding, procurement, contract, execution, and circulation, which can be a multi-month process. Rather, this can take a matter of weeks because it would be more of a transfer than an entirely new procurement. Councilor Burnley asked about which backup projects are being selected. Director Satin-Hernandez stated they are working closely with IAM to prioritize both speed and impact, while prioritizing projects with existing contracts. Councilor Burnley asked about the anticipated timeline of when the remaining funds will be obligated. Director Hartke described the anticipated timeline. There was additional discussion regarding funding strategies and the gender wage gap project.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Referenced Documents:

- Finance -2024-10-22 ARPA (with 24-1300)
- Finance - 2024-10-22 Arts Council (with 24-1332)
- Finance - 2024-10-22 MBTA Pedestrian Crossing Easement Agreement (with 24-1477)