



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 23, 2018

REPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Chair	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Vice Chair	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	Alderman at Large	Absent	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three Alderman	Present	

Others present: Alderman Mark Niedergang, Tom Galligani - OSPCD, Bryant Gaspar - OSPCD, Christopher Hosman - HHS, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:03 PM by Chairman Scott and adjourned at 7:19 PM.

Chairman Scott explained where these appointments fall in the new procedures chart. Alderman Hirsch inquired about health/pension benefits for members of commissions and boards and Ms. Connor will provide that information. Ms. Connor told the committee that the administration was providing the resumes for tonight's candidates along with the job descriptions for the positions being filled. Other information requested by the committee is available online. Information pertaining to complaints is not being provided and an explanation will be included in the administration's response to the committee's new procedure manual. With regard to the committee's request for candidate's statements of financial interest, Ms. Connor said that they are not required for city staff, board or commission personnel, (with the exception of a very few employees).

Alderman Ewen-Campen's motion that the Administration provide information about the governing law requiring the filing of financial disclosure forms and the penalty for not doing so, was approved.

The committee decided to conduct the candidate's interviews this evening without having the statement of financial interest forms, but agreed to resolve this matter before confirming any other individuals.

Approval of the May 9, 2018 Minutes

RESULT:	TABLED
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204678: Requesting the appointment of Joseph P. Lynch, Jr., to the Licensing Commission.

Mr. Galligani represented City Clerk John Long (who was unable to attend this meeting) and explained the function of the licensing commission and introduced Mr. Lynch. Mr. Lynch told the committee that he began attending meetings of the Licensing Commission in 1999 and has appeared before the commission several times, both as a proponent for and activist against many issues. He believes that, in order to perform the duties of this position effectively, one must know the applicable laws and have the ability to listen very carefully to all parties. He believes that ward aldermen should attend commission meetings and provide input, since they usually are aware of the issues affecting their wards. Mr. Lynch disclosed that would recuse himself from any issues involving the Armory or the Somerville Media Center that might come before the Licensing Commission. Mr. Lynch said that more small businesses are coming to the city due to the number of licenses being made available and he spoke about working with OSPCD to smooth the waters for applicants. Alderman Davis commented that independent boards work best when they work independently and aren't influenced by the administration or aldermen. Mr. Lynch said that his job would be to represent the best interests of the citizens of the city and pointed out that the Licensing Commission has the same authority as the mayor or Board of Aldermen to make independent decisions, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't listen to others. Mr. Lynch stated that he believes that statements of financial interest should be required of Licensing Commission members.

RESULT:

APPROVED

203896: Requesting the appointment of Holly Fox to the Commission for Women.

Chris Hossman spoke briefly about the Commission for Women and then introduced Ms. Fox to the committee. Ms. Fox has served as a volunteer in every capacity for the commission, except voting. When asked about what issues were important for the commission to work on she mentioned health issues, financial literacy and education centering around micro aggression. Chairman Scott is pleased that Ms. Fox will bring financial expertise to the commission and he requested that the commission address employment equity issues.

RESULT:

APPROVED

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

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

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

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

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

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

205226: Requesting the re-appointment of Dennis Fischman to the Fair Housing Commission.

Mr. Gaspar introduced Mr. Fischman who is the longest serving member of the Fair Housing Commission and possesses a wealth of knowledge and history about the commission. Mr. Fischman informed the committee that the commission is an all-volunteer group. Much of the commission's work needs to be educational and the commission runs a training program for owners of large or multiple properties. Attending this program is sometimes a requirement in order for the property owner to obtain funding. Mr. Fischman noted that most of the commission's cases deal with people trying to rent and landlord/tenant issues.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205227: Requesting the re-appointment of Rona Fischman to the Fair Housing Commission.

Mr. Gaspar introduced Ms. Fischman who works as a real estate buyers' agent. Ms. Fischman has served on the commission since 2013 and is currently working on a handbook for tenants. Mr. Gaspar told the committee that Ms. Fischman worked with the city's Housing Department to update the its fair housing website. Ms. Fischman told the committee that the commission has not had a meeting quorum present for over two years, partly due to the way the regulations were written and the trouble encountered trying to find people to serve. She also noted that there is still a digital divide, i.e., many people, especially low income families, don't have computers and that makes it difficult to get information to them. The commission has focused on getting information, in a simplified format, out to those who need it. Alderman Davis asked Ms. Fischman to let the Board of Aldermen know if there's something they can help with.

RESULT:

APPROVED