

Officer's Communication

To: Somerville City Council
From: Crystal Turner, Co-Chair Somerville Commission for Women (SCW)
Date: June 23, 2021
Re: Updates from June 6th Memo to City Council and Finance Committee

On June 7th, at the Finance Committee Meeting, a recommendation was made that Mayor Curtatone, Health and Human Services (HHS) Director Doug Kress, and Racial and Social Justice Office (RSJ) Director Denise Capers set up a group meeting with SCW to have a discussion of needs. To date, we have not had this meeting.

On June 20th, I sent a follow up email to the Mayor, Director Kress, and Director Capers reminding them of the need to have a discussion with the commission (and the importance of it being held in a public setting so that it can be transparent, honest, and inclusive). To date, we have not received a response.

The commission has been advocating for months and trying to bring the Mayor to one of SCW's meetings to discuss the need for an executive director (as required by ordinance) and as a follow up to city council's resolution for a full-time executive director. Additional items the commission advocated for include:

- having an autonomous department
- providing the director with an initial budget of \$20K for programming, etc.
- having the director develop a strategic plan.
- being included in the hiring process (e.g., job description)

The RSJ's budget proposal for a shared coordinator with the Human Rights Commission does not include any of the commission's asks, nor was it created with the commission.

I therefore urge city council not to vote on a budget that does not include an allocation for more resources and provides SCW an opportunity to have a transparent, open, and collaborative process.

See the original memo [here](#) for more details and a recommendation for a review process.