



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

September 21, 2021
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Vice Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	City Councilor at Large	Absent	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Present	

Councilor-at-Large Mary Jo Rossetti was unavailable to attend tonight's meeting due to attending an all-day city meeting.

Others present: Hannah Carrillo-Mayor's Office, Lauren Racaniello-Mayor's Office, Ed Bean-Auditor/Finance, Rich Raiche-IAM, Charles Breen-Somerville Fire, Tom Galligani-OSCPD, George Proakis-OSPCD

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Chairperson Scott and adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Approval of the June 9, 2021 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

Approval of the June 14, 2021 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

Approval of the June 16, 2021 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

Approval of the June 17, 2021 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

Approval of the June 21, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 22, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 23, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 8, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 7, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 21, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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SOMERVILLE CLT FUNDING

212031: Requesting approval to appropriate up to \$153,000 from the Union Square Community Benefits Stabilization Fund to pay for the Somerville Cares Fund operating expenses and the Community Land Trust startup costs.

The chair stated there was a written communication from Union Square Neighborhood Council on this matter supporting the transfer.

Mr. Proakis responded to Councilor Mbah's question stating there has not been specific direction about how city-controlled Community Benefits funds are allocated, but they have had many conversations with the neighborhood council regarding the land trust have and having a neighborhood focus. He also stated that this is seed funding and its difficult to find another source.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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ACCESSIBILITY FUNDING

212400: That the Director of Finance and the Treasurer create a separate revenue account for deposit of all funds received from handicapped parking violations, and allocate said

funds to the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, as authorized under MGL.

Mr. Bean received inquiry from Councilor Clingan re: handicap parking violation funds be directed to the Person with Disabilities commission. He also stated that the parking violations go to general funds and according to the statute, it would be diverted to a special revenue account for people with disabilities. The funds from the parking violations are \$67,800.00. Mr. Bean stated that operationally, there is a question as to how the funds would be managed.

Ms. Racaniello will provide more information once they have details on the operational side. Chair Scott asked if the city councilors would need to write an HRP on Section 8J. Mr. Bean stated that Section 8J is already been adopted and may have been adopted several years ago.

Councilor Mbah asked if the \$67,800 is the actual parking fines from 2020 for handicap parking violations. Mr. Bean stated this would go into a revolving account for special revenue.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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DPW PRIOR YEAR INVOICES

212215: Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$25,254.23 from various DPW accounts using available FY22 funds.

The chair was informed by the administration that this item is being superseded by another submission.

The administration has requested to withdraw this item and a new one will be submitted on Thursday.

RESULT:	WITHDRAWN
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LEAD LINE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

212361: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,910,000 in a bond for participation in the MWRA Lead Line Replacement Program.

Mr. Raiche stated this is part of the water CIP and participated in MWRA zero interest loan for 10 years. He also stated they were just about to start in FY2020 when COVID hit. This was put on hold until 2021 calendar. Mr. Raiche stated there are several services requested for this year in continuation for this program. This is also part of a regulatory program and under order from DEP to continue to remove lead services.

Councilor Mbah asked where the funds come from in the first place. Mr. Raiche stated this is part of the same program and website as previously discussed. It would be impossible to do all the lead services in one year. There are still a number of lead services and it was noted that the city knows which homes have copper. This will take a number of years to remove the lead.

Councilor Mbah asked how does the city handle absentee landlords. Mr. Raiche stated that renters are eligible to sign up for the program. He also stated that mailers, email blasts, ResiStat and cold calling residents were used to let residents know about the program.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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GLX ELEVATOR

212267: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,331,543 in a bond for the construction of an outdoor elevator to improve accessibility between the High School Field Level and the new Green Line Extension Gilman Square Station.

Items 15, 16 and 17 were discussed together along with slides presented by Mr. Raiche.

Mr. Raiche discussed the external elevator Phase 3 from last year and changes. The Green Line Gilman Square Station is right behind the high school and the station is now at track level. There is an entrance from School Street. The main entrance is from the community path.

Mr. Raiche stated the cost estimates are admittedly very high. Suffolk Construction Company is already working in the area and the city will submit a change order to include the elevator. They have added in 15% contingencies and hope there will be money left over. The sum total is \$9M and IAM is working with Mr. Bean to find funding source. The GLX stabilization fund current balance is \$7,668,457, set aside to pay interest on the \$50M GLX payment the city committed to several years ago. This gives the city an opportunity to use this fund instead of borrowing funds.

Councilor White asked Mr. Raiche for a breakdown of cost of the elevator vs. the amount being paid to Suffolk. It was stated that most of the expense is for the construction of the building with mechanicals within the building; the elevator itself only costs \$1.1M. Councilor White also asked about the life expectancy of the elevator, potential usage of the elevator and who would be using it. Mr. Raiche stated this is a stand alone building that is expected to have a life cycle of 50-100 years. He is not sure how many will use the elevator vs. the stairs. The elevator is really for the 4 to 5 story building. Additionally, the commission of persons with disabilities is very much in favor of this elevator. There are approximately 16 different subs with trade specialties. Mr. Raiche stated that Suffolk's fee is \$1.5M. All of the wage rates are fixed because it's a Mass prevailing rate job with shipping and escalating costs are very high.

Chair Scott asked for the cost savings that was previously discussed by not constructing a parking garage. Mr. Raiche believes it was \$15M. Mr. Proakis believes the cost was closer to \$30M by not doing a garage. The chair asked Mr. Raiche if there is any opportunity to revise the plan and incorporate an elevator in a parking lot. Mr. Raiche stated that it would be difficult to go back to the drawing board at this point given where this project is in the production schedule.

Councilor White asked how long would it take to get plans developed along with cost estimate. Mr. Raiche stated they would have to do a lot of exploratory for this request. Also, GLX has built a retaining wall with tie-backs. The city would have to negotiate with GLX to re-engineer their wall where needed and could be a 12-month exercise.

RESULT:	DISCHARGED W/NO RECOMMENDATION
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212268: Requesting approval to re-purpose the Green Line Extension Stabilization Fund and appropriate \$7,668,457 from said fund for the construction of an elevator between the High School Field and the new Green Line Gilman Square Station.

See item #212267

RESULT:	DISCHARGED W/NO RECOMMENDATION
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212269: Requesting approval to appropriate \$151,000 from the Facility Construction and Renovation Stabilization Fund for additional design and electrical conduit work related to the Gilman Station elevator and GLX platform.

See item #212267

RESULT:	DISCHARGED W/NO RECOMMENDATION
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ALLEN STREET ACQUISITION

212266: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,509,600 in a bond for the acquisition of 9-11 Allen St.

Councilor White recused himself from this item.

Mr. Proakis stated there are 2 houses owned by a family who reached out first to US2 then to City hall. He stated the houses have been in their family for a long time. These two parcels do not lend themselves to a development strategy, are half the size of other lots and back onto Parcel 5 (which is owned by the City currently). Mr. Proakis stated there are possibilities for affordable housing like with Somerville Community Corp or Land Trust. The family that owns the houses have been very supportive of this purchase. Mr. Proakis stated that each house is approximately 2,100 sq ft.

Mr. Proakis responded to Councilor Mbah’s question about zoning and stated it could be left as they are without changing structure much or could tear down both buildings and have an urban residence.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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ALDERSEY TAKING

211364: Requesting the adoption of an Order of Taking for 9-11 Aldersey Street for historic, open space, and affordable housing purposes.

Mr. Proakis stated this site has an historic building on it and a proposal went through which has ben fought in court for 20 years, but the cases were all decided not in the city’s favor. The developer who went through the court case has another developer to purchase this property if the city does not take it. The administration’s point is this would be a good site for taking which could use Community Acts Funds for affordable housing space and open space on another side. The taking of the property would be \$3.4M and the owner had it on the market for \$5.5M.

Councilor White stated his concern about being taken to court due to valuations. He asked how many affordable housing units could be built on this site. Mr. Proakis has not run the numbers for the affordable housing overlay but believes there could be one or more affordable units. Councilor White asked about cost benefit analysis.

Chair Scott asked about the market rate offer, as did Councilor White, and expressed a real concern about the taking of the property and the potential cost of defending a lawsuit concerning the validity of the taking, given the decades long litigation history.

RESULT: DISCHARGED W/NO RECOMMENDATION

211373: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$3,450,397 in a bond for the cost of acquiring the property at 9-11 Aldersey Street.

RESULT: DISCHARGED W/NO RECOMMENDATION

ASSEMBLY SQUARE FIRE STATION LEASE

212265: Requesting approval of a 30-year lease for the new Assembly Square Fire Station.

Mr. Galligani stated \$450k will be paid in the first year and the city will pay utility costs above and beyond the \$35/sqft NNN rent. Councilor White asked the Chief if there will be a new engine company needing new equipment and personnel. Chief Breen stated they have submitted for a grant for 8 fire fighters for this location. Councilor White asked what's the annual cost funding for 8 positions. Mr. Galligani stated the grant would be for 3 years with no conditions stating to keep the staff on after the 3 years. All 8 fire fighters would be at Assembly Row. Councilor White asked Chief Breen for the total cost of what it would cost the city be if the city goes forward including the lease, principle and interest payments and the salaries for the 8 fire fighters.

Mr. Galligani stated an estimated time line after talking with the landlord for the end of this year to begin the process and will take a year to two years for the parking garage to be built. It may take the city 6 months to a year to build out the location, for a couple of years before having a functioning fire station.

Chief Breen stated he will have an answer for Councilor White's question on the total cost within the next two weeks.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS

211859: Director of Infrastructure & Asset Management conveying the Water and Sewer Capital Investment Plan update for April, 2021.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

211943: That the Administration submit to the City Council an appropriation of \$1,000,000 from the Water and Sewer Stabilization Fund to the upcoming FY22 budget to reduce the increase in the water rate from 7% to 6%.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

211944: That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management provide this Council with all documents, emails and correspondence regarding the overflow from the EPA and MWRA.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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211995: Requesting acceptance of a \$30,850,472 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 grant from the U.S. Treasury.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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212017: School Committee requesting the appropriation of \$84,267,002 to fund the FY22 School Committee Budget.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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(ID # 25000): That the administration devote \$1.5 million as requested for the building reconstruction (line 582002) and improvement (line 582003) in Capital Projects.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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(ID # 25001): Councilor Scott moved that the administration devote \$500,000 for street repairs (line 588002) in Engineering.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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(ID # 25023): That the Administration reconsider its proposed budget by incorporating 10% of ARPA funds towards the FY-22 Budget, given the increase in Water and Sewer rates, Real Estate Taxes, and the High School debt exclusion, coupled with a 9% increase in the proposed FY-22 Budget.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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Referenced Material:

- SCLT Support Letter (with 212031)
- SHS External Elevator - City Council 2021Sept21 (with 212267, 212268, 212269)