



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 4, 2022

REPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Judy PinedaNeufeld	Chair	Present	
Kristen Strezo	Vice Chair	Present	
Charlotte Kelly	City Councilor At Large	Absent	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Jake Wilson	City Councilor At Large	Present	

Others present: Malik Drayton - OSPCD, Jill Lathan - DPW, Anne Gill - HR, Morena Zelaya - OSPCD, Chris Major - SFD, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Pineda Neufeld and adjourned at 7:03 PM on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Wilson, Clingan, Strezo and Pineda Neufeld), none against and 1 absent (Councilor Kelly). Councilor Kelly was unable to attend this meeting due to a death in her family.

Approval of the April 6, 2022 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the April 7, 2022 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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213496: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Susan O'Brien to the Conservation Commission.

Malik Drayton, Tree Warden designee, introduced the candidate, Susan O'Brien to the committee. Ms. O'Brien has over 25 years in environmental consulting and has lived in Somerville for 31 years.

Councilor Wilson spoke about the importance of the position and asked the candidate for her thoughts regarding bioswales in managing stormwater. Ms. O'Brien noted that most of the city's stormwater goes out to Deer Island, however she does a lot of work in that field and said it's almost mandated for most new buildings. Councilor Wilson asked if plots in a community garden should be granted to someone in perpetuity and Ms. O'Brien replied that making possession time limited would

give more people an opportunity to participate in community gardening. She went on to say that she doesn't have an answer to this question. Councilor Clingan thanked the candidate for getting involved. Chair Pineda Neufeld asked the candidate what most excites her and what she hope to achieve as a member of the Conservation Commission and Ms. O'Brien replied that said she wants to learn as much as she can and use this experience to sharpen her wetlands protection skills.

Chair Pineda Neufeld advised the candidate that this appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	PinedaNeufeld, Strezo, Clingan, Wilson
ABSENT:	Kelly

213634: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Kathleen Byrne to the Condominium Review Board.

Housing Policy Coordinator Morena Zelaya introduced the candidate, Kathleen Byrne to the committee. Ms. Byrne said she feels the need to give back to the community and is excited to serve on the Condominium Review Board. Councilor Wilson asked the candidate if she could remain impartial, given her involvement with CAAS and she assured him that she could. Chair Pineda Neufeld asked Ms. Byrne what excites her and what she hopes to accomplish as a member of the Board. The candidate responded by saying that she is eager to learn more about what may be done, and she looks forward to being an active participant, adding that she is concerned about the ability to identify condo conversions that may be slipping under the radar.

Chair Pineda Neufeld advised the candidate that this appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	PinedaNeufeld, Strezo, Clingan, Wilson
ABSENT:	Kelly

213633: Requesting confirmation of the promotion of Antonio Cicolini to the position of Fire Lieutenant.

Deputy Chief Major introduced the candidate, Antonio Cicolini, who is currently serving as an Acting Lieutenant, and informed the members that the candidate has received 2 citations as well as an award for assisting in the rescue of a child from a car accident, while off duty. Mr. Cicolini said that he has been a fire fighter in Somerville for 12 years, serving on Rescue 1, Engine 1, and Engine 2. Councilor Wilson asked the candidate how he defines the duties of the position and Mr. Cicolini replied that safety education is paramount to the job and he believes that it is incumbent upon him to continue to educate subordinates as part of the job. He recalled a former fire fighter's ability to provide outstanding customer service and said that he would like to aspire to that, as well. Chair Pineda Neufeld asked the candidate about his hardest day on the job and he recounted a call where a child was choking in his parent's arms. Thankfully, because of the training received by those who responded to the call, the child survived and is fine. Chair Pineda Neufeld then asked about his favorite day on the job and he told a story about being approached by an individual while he was washing the apparatus. After talking for a few moments, the individual gave him a bear hug for

being on the call that saved his life when he had a heart attack. Chair Pineda Neufeld asked Mr. Cicolini if he had any concerns about the position and he replied that he was worried about bringing senior fire fighters up to his standards, however, after discussing things he's happy to report that all is well.

Chair Pineda Neufeld advised the candidate that this appointment would not be official until it is approved by the City Council.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	PinedaNeufeld, Strezo, Clingan, Wilson
ABSENT:	Kelly

213286: That the Director of Human Resources update this Council on family leave benefits available to City of Somerville employees.

Items 213286 and 213437 were discussed together.

Councilor Wilson explained that he submitted this item to make sure that benefits provided to employees match the city's stated values. Human Resources Director Anne Gill said currently, city offers employees both family medical leave and parental leave. An employee can participate in parental leave after 90 days of employment and would be eligible to receive 2 weeks paid leave plus another 6 weeks of leave. Family medical leave is a federal mandate with no requirement that it be paid leave. City employees are eligible for this program 1 year of employment and at least 1,250 hours worked in the previous year. Participating employees may take up to 12 weeks leave using their sick and vacation time. Ms. Gill noted that during that 12-week period, the position/salary has to be kept available for the employee when he returns. The city has not opted into the state's municipal family medical leave plan since municipalities' benefits are better, however, that option is being examined. The state plan would be an advantage for the city since it would be administered by the state. It would be paid for by the employee and employer.

The city has hired a consultant to organize surveys and focus groups to determine what benefits employees want and to ensure that the city is offering an attractive and competitive total compensation package to attract employees. Preliminary data may be available in about 3 months and Chair Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Wilson asked that the committee be kept informed.

Ms. Gill informed the members that employees are allowed to carry over accrued sick time from year to year, but vacation time is capped at 40 days. She said that it's very typically for employees to build up sick and vacation time to be able to avail themselves of the full 8 weeks of parental leave, should it be needed. Councilor Wilson asked what would convince her to join the state's paid family medical leave (PFML) plan and Ms. Gill replied that it would have to be examined to determine the cost to the city as well as the benefit for employees and the city. Councilor Clingan asked if there is a standard benefits package for city employees and Ms. Gill said there is as far as health and welfare benefits, but other benefits are negotiated in collective bargaining agreements. Councilor Clingan commented that he thinks the city should have opted into the states PFML to give employees the best options.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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213437: That the Director of Human Resources appear before this Council to discuss

opting into Massachusetts's Paid Family Medical Leave Act.

Items 213286 and 213437 were discussed together.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213427: That the Department of Public Works and the Department of Human Resources provide a report on current open positions and a comparison of wages to neighboring communities and the private sector.

Ms. Gill reported that there are several open positions throughout the city and said that recruiting has been ongoing, but people are leaving. She said that it's difficult to find qualified people who can pass the city's stringent background checks. Many salaries are dictated by collective bargaining agreements, so there is no wiggle room to offer more compensation. Round table discussions will be getting underway in the near future in preparation for collective bargaining negotiations. Asked if there is a routine study for compensation in the city, Ms. Gill replied that the last one was 4-5 years ago, and it needs to be looked at along with the total compensation package.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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213346: That the Administration report on how it is staffing and executing sections 9-37 through 9-41 of the Wage Theft Ordinance, relative to enforcement.

Chair Pineda Neufeld will keep this item in committee until an update is available.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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