



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

June 12, 2017
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Tony Lafuente	Chair	Present	
Maryann M. Heuston	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	
Robert J. McWatters	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Alderman at Large	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Present	

Others present: Mary Skipper - Schools, Tom Bent - MCAB, Candace Cooper - Personnel, Joe Curtatone - Mayor, Skye Stewart - Chief of Staff, Ed Bean - Finance, Michael Mastrobuoni - Budget Director, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place in the Aldermen's Chamber and was called to order at 6:08 PM by Vice Chair Alderman Heuston and adjourned at 9:46 PM.

Chairman Lafuente stated that he will divide the duties of the Chair with Alderman Heuston for the duration of the budget process.

FY-18 Departmental Budget Review and any and all associated departmental financial matters

Schools:

Superintendent Mary Skipper reviewed some FY-17 School Department highlights, commented on many of the programs offered by the School Department, reviewed several key metrics, explained the budget preparation process and reviewed the department's FY-18 budget request of \$68,549,180, which represents an increase of \$3,129,099 over FY-17. Salaries have increased by \$2,174,867. Committee members asked questions regarding some of the items on the FY-18 Budget request. Alderman White requested student demographic information for the past ten years. Alderman Niedergang noted that enrollment at the high school was down and he asked for the superintendent's projections, given that a new high school is going to be built. Superintendent Skipper said that the hope is that the new school

will attract students from charter and private schools. The population of students who fit the technical definition of homeless fluctuates between 75-100 students at any given time.

MCAB:

Aldermen Rossetti and Heuston recused themselves from all discussion and votes on this item.

Mr. Bent made an opening statement regarding the work of the MCAB. Ms. Cooper continued with a presentation.

Mayor' Presentation:

Mayor Curtatone presented the city's near level-service proposed FY-18 budget. The total proposed operating budget is \$233,000,000 which represents a 4.79% increase over FY-17. The greatest share of the budget is taken up by the School Department. The FY-18 tax levy limit will be \$143,000,000, (\$664,000 under the limit). Alderman Ballantyne asked what portion of state aid was excluded from the schools and requested a breakout. Mr. Bean said that the tax revenue split of residential vs. commercial is 75% to 25%. Alderman Ballantyne asked why there was no graphic on this information, as in the past, and noted that last year's split was 82% to 18%. The mayor said that it would be broken down later when setting the tax levy. Alderman White asked that state aid figures factor out school reimbursement costs. Alderman Rossetti inquired about PILOT payments and the mayor stated that setting the payment is an Executive function. Alderman Rossetti commented that she will submit a resolution to have BOA representation when negotiating PILOT payments. Alderman Ballantyne requested a breakdown of all PILOT payments and the expiration dates of each. Alderman White asked if the city has authority to impose a fee on parking and the administration will research this option. Mayor Curtatone told the committee that the city is progressing and investing and that the commercial tax base is growing towards his goal of a 60%/40% split. Alderman Ballantyne requested to see a plan and a timeline for achieving the commercial goal. The mayor said that Somerville spends less per capita than Cambridge or Boston, while providing more services. Alderman Rossetti requested a report on projected revenues and a report on unexpected funds from each department, (which she requested in 2015). Alderman Niedergang spoke about housing, saying that the city should not permit based on the budget, but rather on merit. Alderman Connolly spoke about the value of the city's workforce and the mayor said that retention data would be compiled. Alderman Ballantyne requested the percentage difference for Personal Services from FY-17 to FY-18.

Executive:

Skye Stewart presented the Executive Department's proposed budget. Alderman Ballantyne asked for a list of conference requests. Alderman McLaughlin asked about contributions from FRIT for youth employment and requested an accounting of the number of youth employed at Assembly Square over the past two years. Alderman White inquired if all department presentations would include a breakdown of the Professional and Technical Services line. Ms. Stewart said that the information would be available on SharePoint. Alderman White and Heuston suggested that all information, including responses to questions, be posted to the Finance Department's page on the city's website. Mr. Mastrobuoni will accommodate this request and Alderman Ballantyne requested that a folder

be created online for each day's budget meeting. Alderman Rossetti asked about donations received and funds expended for fireworks for the past few years.

BOA:

Michael Mastrobuoni presented the BOA proposed budget.

Clerk of Committees:

Michael Mastrobuoni presented the Clerk of Committees proposed budget.

Handouts:

- School Department Information
- Non-Union Wage Review Phase II
- Somerville Budget Overview