



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

September 17, 2020

REPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mary Jo Rossetti	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Kristen Strezo	City Councilor at Large	Present	

The meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Rossetti at 6:15pm and adjourned at 8:41pm.

Councilor Clingan was absent for the start of the meeting due to the Legislative Matters Committee meeting taking place at the same time.

Others present: Annie Connor - Mayor's Office; Ellen Collins - Personnel; Nancy Bacci - HHS; Captain Rich Lavey - Police; Jesse Moos - OSPCD; Kate Van Sleet - Library Board of Trustees

Approval of the July 9, 2020 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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204904: Requesting the re-appointment of John DeLuca as Director of Water & Sewer.

Chair Rossetti explained that Mr. DeLuca has retired.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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207402: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of John DeLuca as Director of Water & Sewer.

Chair Rossetti explained that Mr. DeLuca has retired.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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209497: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of John DeLuca as Director of

Water & Sewer.

Chair Rossetti explained that Mr. DeLuca has retired.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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204921: Requesting the re-appointment of Candace Cooper as Director of Personnel.

Chair Rossetti shared that Ms. Cooper has left her position with the City.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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207412: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of Candace Cooper as Director of Personnel.

Chair Rossetti shared that Ms. Cooper has left her position with the City.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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207408: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of Edward Bean as Finance Director.

Chair Rossetti clarified that this was an additional agenda item, and Mr. Bean's confirmation has already been confirmed.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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209494: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of Edward Bean as Finance Director.

Chair Rossetti clarified that this was an additional agenda item, and Mr. Bean's confirmation has already been confirmed.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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209495: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of Edward Bean as Auditor.

Chair Rossetti clarified that this was an additional agenda item, and Mr. Bean's confirmation has already been confirmed.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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209516: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Julie Coen as Animal Control Officer.

Chair Rossetti noted that Ms. Coen has left her employment with the City.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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204922: Requesting the appointment of Rachel Taylor as Animal Control Officer.

Chair Rossetti noted that this item was withdrawn by the administration.

RESULT:

WITHDRAWN

209515: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Rachel Taylor as Animal Control Officer.

Chair Rossetti introduced Captain Lavey who presented Ms. Taylor for consideration to the position of Animal Control Officer (ACO), a position which she has held for nearly 10 years. Ms. Taylor elaborated that she was born and raised in Somerville and began in Animal Control in the Assistant position in 2008, moved to part-time ACO in 2009, and then to a full-time position beginning in 2012. She loves working with animals and the public.

Councilor Mbah asked what the candidate's greatest challenge has been and Ms. Taylor responded that building relationships with local rescues, foster agencies, and surrounding agencies was a challenge that took many years. Councilor Scott clarified that Ms. Taylor is currently the only ACO in the department, and she works on-call, including getting called in for emergencies at all hours. Captain Lavey elaborated that Ms. Taylor also responds to the email address for constituents to report animal issues. The previous ACO left on June 30 and Ms. Taylor has stepped up to handle the workload. Chair Rossetti asked about the use of Facebook and this is usually done for the rabies clinic, and lost-and-found animals, but this year things have been different since there are no in-person clinics and events. Chair Rossetti noted that public education is part of the responsibility of this role and it would be useful to use Facebook and other media to educate residents about policies around wildlife and other issues. Ms. Taylor agreed that this is a great idea and she will do so.

RESULT:

APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]

AYES:

Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Strezo

ABSENT:

Clingan

209519: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Nancy Salamoun as Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission.

Chair Rossetti thanked the candidate for her work and her resume and asked why Ms. Salamoun applied for the position. Ms. Salamoun noted that she has always worked in the public sector and focused on casework, but wanted to work on more systemic change. She previously served as a member of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and wanted to do more on policy initiatives, building on what she learned while doing case work and fixing the gaps.

Councilor Scott clarified that Ms. Salamoun has served as the Executive Director of the HRC since she began in her position as the Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), which was in 2017. She served on the Commission beginning in approximately 2012. During that time, there were two different staff members and it functioned differently. The role was created for an Executive Director, but there was a staff person who was in charge of several commissions at one point, and then it transitioned to a staff liaison, and then to the DEI Manager. Ms. Bacci elaborated and shared some historical knowledge that there was previously a director of Somerville Commissions, but it did not include all commissions. The DEI Manager position was created in 2016, and that staff person took over as staff of the HRC and the Somerville Office for Persons with Disabilities. Councilor Scott asked how much of Ms. Salamoun's role is devoted to this function, and Ms. Salamoun responded that she would like to devote more time, though the Commission has accomplished its goals and event planning. Ms. Salamoun has ideas for the HRC to grow stronger, but the ADA and equity work encompasses more of her time. Councilor Scott noted that

one of the roles is for the HRC to respond to complaints of those who feel that their rights have been violated. Ms. Salamoun clarified that the commission does not work in an investigatory role. Her priorities are to grow the membership, and then to train them to receive complaints and conduct investigations. Currently, the ordinance is written such that the HRC would refer out to the state rather than having its own remedies. Councilor Scott asked about the complaints, and Ms. Salamoun noted that she works with the Law Department, and the Personnel Department if the complaints are related to City staff. A complaint against a business would be referred to the state rather than handled internally. There have been a few complaints in Ms. Salamoun's tenure; the Commission itself has not investigated any of the claims (it currently only has two individuals and has not been able to meet quorum). There is outreach and recruitment conducted through events, but COVID led to a loss in momentum. The HRC is also working with the Communications Department to recruit for the openings. The restructuring of the Commission to make it functional is an ongoing goal for Ms. Salamoun. Councilor Scott noted that this position should not be a full-time City employee who already has a full workload, as that sets both the Commission and the Director up for failure. The Commission needs funding and a separate position. Councilor Rossetti clarified that there should be 12 members on the HRC. The last report showed 3 vacancies, but Ms. Salamoun confirmed that there are 10 vacancies currently, with one potentially being filled soon.

Councilor Mbah commended Ms. Salamoun for her community service and noted that he is looking forward to what she can do. Councilor Strezo asked how long it has been that the HRC has not had a quorum and Ms. Salamoun responded that in her tenure it never has, though it has met informally to plan events and brainstorm ideas. She added that a bigger issue than quorum is for the Commission to be trained to fulfill its mission and objectives, and better address the needs of the community. The first focus is to build the body, and then to secure funding and empower the body. Chair Rossetti asked if any other staff attended the informal meetings, and Ms. Salamoun replied that there are occasional community members who attend, but not specifically staff. Ms. Bacci is the direct supervisor for this position, and the Chair emphasized to Ms. Bacci the critical nature of this Commission in addressing the concerns of the community. This Commission will be integral in coordinating with the newly created position for Racial & Social Justice as well. Ms. Bacci added that she would welcome feedback and creative engagement opportunities, noting that lack of participation is a challenge overall for many reasons. Chair Rossetti offered the suggestion of using social media and encouraged her fellow Councilors to share information to assist in these efforts. Councilor Clingan clarified that Ms. Salamoun is the ADA Coordinator, and coordinates between residents and the City. She works with other departments when complaints are received and maintains contact with the resident throughout the process. The technical expertise is in different departments depending on the specific issues.

Councilor Scott clarified that his vote is not a reflection on Ms. Salamoun, but on the resources that the Commission needs. Councilor Mbah echoed that sentiment. Chair Rossetti noted that the vote is not a reflection of Ms. Salamoun's service or strengths.

RESULT:	NOT APPROVED. [2 TO 3]
AYES:	Rossetti, Strezo
NAYS:	Scott, Mbah, Clingan

209772: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Katharine Milton to the Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

Ms. Connor noted that Ms. Milton was unable to attend this evening.

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE****210145: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of Joseph P. Lynch, Jr., to the Licensing Commission.**

Mr. Lynch shared that it has been a challenging time to Chair the Licensing Commission during the COVID-19 pandemic. Councilor Strezo thanked Mr. Lynch and expressed her confidence in his leadership. Councilor Clingan agreed and commended Mr. Lynch on his dedication to the small business community throughout the City. He is an asset to the City and to the business community, and is fair in his role. Councilor Scott echoed those sentiments and has been impressed with how well-prepared and thorough Mr. Lynch is. He added that there have been some complaints and concerns from the public about the marijuana use policy, but the problem seems to be that the Licensing Commission is not receiving applications. Mr. Lynch noted that there are multiple layers of regulatory guidance from the City and the Cannabis Control Commission, as well as many regulatory agencies in addition to the City's ordinances. The major challenge that the Licensing Commission has in licensing recreational marijuana shops in the City are the current economic times. Provisional approval was given to three applicants, but some may not have the financial resources to continue in the process, and the Licensing Commission has not received any applications. The Marijuana Advisory Committee (MAC) has reconvened and is reviewing applicants, which will be referred to the Licensing Commission, hopefully this year. Councilor Scott expressed concern that the MAC has not been convening. Councilor Mbah thanked Mr. Lynch for his public service. Chair Rossetti also echoed the accolades for Mr. Lynch, adding that his leadership and guidance, along with his research and preparation, have been an immense benefit, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESULT:**APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]****AYES:**

Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

210348: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of April Kuehnhoff to the position of Trustee for the Board of Library Trustees.

Ms. Van Sleet, President of the Library Board of Trustees, spoke on behalf of Ms. Kuehnhoff, noting that she has been a dedicated library patron and is ready to help the Library move into the future. Ms. Kuehnhoff added that the Library is an institution that she has great respect and admiration for. Councilor Scott asked why the Library instead of the many other areas in critical need right now, and Ms. Kuehnhoff shared her passion for issues of access to libraries, noting that they are a critical connection to other services, such as remote court hearings, and access to legal services and information. Ms. Kuehnhoff expressed her interest in finding other ways to serve the City as well. Councilor Clingan thanked the candidate for her willingness to serve and caring about libraries and access. Chair Rossetti added that the candidate's current responsibilities include protecting vulnerable consumers, which will be a great benefit to the City, as will her language skills.

RESULT:**APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]****AYES:**

Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

208511: That the Director of Personnel provide the City Council with a monthly vacancy report.

Chair Rossetti shared that she has been interested in receiving these reports to inform the budget process, and on a regular basis to keep apprised of the vacancy situation in the City. She reiterated that the

Committee would like to receive this monthly. Chair Rossetti noted that several positions on the list were budgeted for 10-12 months, without much progress made to fill them thus far, at three months into the year's budget. Chair Rossetti asked for clarifications on the positions listed as "pending". Ms. Collins responded that there was a hiring freeze during COVID-19, and they want to ensure a fair bidding process and the administration is working with the union on that. Chair Rossetti also asked about the "Civil Service" status, and Ms. Collins shared that she will add some language to elaborate in the future. Chair Rossetti also recalled that the Police Department vacancies were determined in the budget process to not be filled, and Ms. Collins expressed that this may be an error. Chair Rossetti asked for more information on the police officers that were approved in comparison to the six open positions listed at 8% funding. Ms. Collins will research further and provide an answer. The three new positions for Health and Human Services are being advertised in order, with the Case Manager position currently advertised. Chair Rossetti emphasized that the ISD positions are critical and need to be filled.

Councilor Scott shared Chair Rossetti's frustrations and acknowledged that ISD is interviewing for an inspector position currently. He added that there were 9 names on the Police Reserve list, with 6 vacancies listed with 1 month funding. He expressed concerns about the reallocation of funds. Councilor Clingan asked about the Chief of Police position and Ms. Collins clarified that the list was for the positions that were tracked throughout the budget process and that position will not be vacant until November. Councilor Clingan echoed the frustrations around the recruitment processes. Councilor Mbah confirmed that the hiring freeze was lifted when the budget passed. He also asked about the process to fill the Chief's position and Ms. Collins noted that the process to find a vendor to conduct the search is underway. Councilor Scott asked about the vacant ACO position and Ms. Collins noted that since it was not vacant at the time of the budget, it was not included on the list.

Chair Rossetti confirmed and shared her irritation that there is no active list of vacancies in the City. Ms. Connor recognized the frustration, noting the lack of staffing in the Personnel Department, and asked for some flexibility. Chair Rossetti noted that the Interim Director has never come before the Committee, and it is difficult to continue a back-and-forth when someone should be able to be present to answer questions. Ms. Connor will work with Ms. O'Sullivan to appear before the Committee to continue this dialogue.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

210491: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Kerri Connolly to the Memorialization Committee.

Mr. Moos spoke as the staff member for the Memorialization Committee. He noted that a Chair will be selected from among the membership once seated, and there will be 8 members, including one representative of the Somerville High School Building Committee. Once that building is complete, that role will transition off of the Committee. The other representatives will be a designee of the Mayor, a representative of the City Council, a representative of the School Committee, a representative of the Veterans Commission, a representative of the Historical Commission, and two members of the public. Councilor Mbah will be the representative for the City Council and Chair Rossetti will be the representative of the SHS Building Committee. Mr. Moos added that there were 12 applications for the two public member positions. Ms. Connolly is from Somerville and understands the City's history. She has a great vision for the Committee and serving the City. Ms. Connolly added that she considers her success a direct result of the City's public institutions and looks forward to giving back, and to improving representation in naming of public spaces and assets.

Councilor Strezo asked about the candidate's vision, and her background as a journalist and investigator has equipped her with skills to help shine a light onto some individuals who have

contributed to Somerville. Councilor Scott shared his excitement and thanked the candidate for her contributions. Chair Rossetti commended the candidate's letter and interest, and willingness to serve.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

210492: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Sara Marx to the Memorialization Committee.

Mr. Moos introduced Ms. Marx and explained that diversity on the Committee was important, and Ms. Marx's experience as a teacher was an important consideration. Ms. Marx added that she is a trained historian and looks forward to using that background in this position. She is excited for this concrete way to contribute to the community. Councilor Scott asked the candidate's perspective about buildings that can have a painful history. Ms. Marx noted that there is value in bringing the diverse set of voices together, and the process and collective understanding will be important, and she knows that it will not be an easy endeavor. Ms. Marx elaborated that there are many monuments that recognize things are negative, and there are examples of ways to find a positive way to move forward. Chair Rossetti thanked the candidate for volunteering.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

Handouts:

- Resume - R Taylor (with 209515)
- Resume - N Salamoun (with 209519)
- Resume - J Lynch (with 210145)
- Resume - A Kuehnhoff (with 210348)
- FY21 Vacancy List Update 09172020 (with 208511)
- Statement of Interest - Kerri Connolly (with 210491)
- Statement of Interest - Sara Marx (with 210492)