

Resolution in Support of Voluntary Recognition for Somerville Workers United

**WHEREAS:** This City Council and Mayor Wilson regularly and proudly proclaim their support for labor unions as critical to workplace and economic justice; and

**WHEREAS:** This City Council is grateful for the dedicated public service of City of Somerville employees, and the positive impact their efforts have on the lives of all Somervillians; and

**WHEREAS:** More than two hundred city employees across roughly twenty-seven departments and divisions do not currently benefit from union representation and as a result are not afforded a seat at the bargaining table to negotiate aspects of their compensation and working conditions; and

**WHEREAS:** All staff deserve the respect and dignity of clear policies and expectations, and workplace conditions that allow staff to provide high-quality services for all of our residents; and

**WHEREAS:** Following the initiation of Somerville’s “Non-Union Compensation Study” under the Ballantyne administration, certain professional city staff organized under the name Somerville Workers United (“SWU”); and

**WHEREAS:** Several significant policy changes that affect staff pay, benefits, and working conditions have been implemented across administrations without meaningful feedback from or partnership with impacted staff, such as the Non-Union Compensation Study, departmental restructuring plans and changing citywide remote work policies; and

**WHEREAS:** Union representation would help address conditions that have led to significant employee turnover in multiple critical departments, which has in turn led to loss of institutional knowledge and increased workload for remaining staff; and

**WHEREAS:** Union representation would also improve communication and partnership to address important issues such as multi-lingual pay incentives and support for employment based immigration; and

**WHEREAS:** Through the efforts of SWU, over fifty percent of eligible non-union staff have signed union authorization cards to affiliate with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (“AFSCME”) Council 93; and

**WHEREAS:** SWU have requested voluntary recognition from Mayor Wilson and have received an invitation to a meeting on May 29; and,

**WHEREAS:** Recent layoffs and a budget shortfall in the lead-up to the FY2027 budget process have greatly heightened concerns amongst staff; **NOW, THEREFORE, BE**

**RESOLVED:** That this City Council strongly supports the right of all City of Somerville employees to unionize, and supports the voluntary recognition of a new bargaining unit of city employees; **AND BE IT FURTHER**

**RESOLVED:** That this City Council urges the Administration to engage with SWU and their affiliates at AFSCME Council 93 to establish a bargaining unit for currently non-unionized city employees.