



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 20, 2021

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 6:01pm and adjourned at 7:41pm.

Councilor Clingan was absent due to the Legislative Matters Committee meeting at the same time; he joined the meeting at 7:30pm.

Others present: Khushbu Webber - Mayor's Office; Anne Gill - Personnel; George Proakis - OSPCD; Charles Breen - Fire; Chris Major - Fire

Chair Rossetti noted that this will be the final meeting before the budget hearings begin, but she hopes to have one additional meeting in July before summer break.

211741: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Daniel O'Donnell to the position of Reserve Firefighter.

Chief Breen introduced the candidate, who has taken an EMT course and has worked for the Somerville Public Schools. He is currently a labor and finish carpenter and has knowledge of building construction, which is a useful skill for the Department.

Councilor Mbah mentioned that he has known the candidate for several years and asked why he wanted to become a firefighter. Mr. O'Donnell responded that it is an extremely fulfilling job that would allow him to help his community, which is meaningful as a fourth generation Somerville resident. Councilor Scott asked about the candidate's EMT certification, and he passed the practical exam but not the national written exam, so he is not yet certified. He will have to re-take the entire course. Councilor Strezo asked about the candidate's experience as a Special Education Paraprofessional and the job was in a behavior program, monitoring hallways, and providing safe areas to work with children who had to leave classrooms. He enjoyed the experience and felt it provided him a good background.

Chair Rossetti asked for confirmation that all candidates have the appropriate certifications to serve and Chief Breen noted that becoming an EMT is required within 18 months of graduating the Fire Academy.

Chair Rossetti also shared that she knows the candidate's family and his mother is an employee in the Schools.

Chair Rossetti moved to enter into Executive Session to review protected personnel information or to discuss matters related to individual candidates pursuant to MGL c30A s21(a)(1). The motion was laid on the table at 6:36pm. The motion was taken off the table and approved on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Strezo, Mbah, Scott, Rossetti), 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Clingan) at 7:06pm. The Committee entered Executive Session at 7:14pm and returned at 7:29pm. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

Councilor Scott encouraged the candidate to return to Somerville High School to encourage students to pursue careers in the fire service. Mr. O'Donnell said it would be his pleasure to do so.

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

211742: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Jeffrey Querusio to the position of Reserve Firefighter.

Chief Breen introduced the candidate, who has a Bachelor's Degree, and is CPR and First AID certified, and also currently working for the Somerville DPW as a special heavy machine equipment operator (SHMEO). This knowledge of hydrants and the water system will be a benefit to the Fire Department.

Councilor Scott asked about how the candidate's licenses and machine operator experience will benefit him, and Mr. Querusio noted that he likes to pursue certifications and challenge himself and his knowledge. He has some other safety, equipment, and confined space training that will also benefit him in the work he will encounter in the Fire Department. Councilor Mbah asked why the candidate was interested in becoming a firefighter. Mr. Querusio shared that he grew up in Somerville with exposure to the Fire Department through friends and his interest grew from a young age. He is interested in a position where depending on each other and building trust is important. Councilor Strezo asked about the candidate's experience with the Eliot School and the candidate noted that it was a great experience and he is very interested in continued opportunities for mentorship.

Chair Rossetti shared that she has known the candidate since he was in Junior High and pointed out that his resume references "coachable, learning, executing, and leading" and that will be an asset to the department. She encouraged Mr. Querusio to connect and engage with the community through football.

Chair Rossetti moved to enter into Executive Session to review protected personnel information or to discuss matters related to individual candidates pursuant to MGL c30A s21(a)(1). The motion was laid on the table at 6:49pm. The motion was taken off the table and approved on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Strezo, Mbah, Scott, Rossetti), 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Clingan) at 7:06pm. The Committee entered Executive Session at 7:14pm and returned at 7:29pm. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

Councilor Scott encouraged the candidate to return to Somerville High School to encourage students to pursue careers in the Fire Department. Mr. Querusio said he would love to do so.

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

211743: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Patrick Soares to the position of Reserve Firefighter.

Chair Rossetti noted that the candidate has withdrawn.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE

211744: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Matthew Sullivan to the position of Reserve Firefighter.

Chief Breen introduced the candidate, who has a Bachelor's Degree, is emergency medical responder (EMR) certified, and works as a security officer at MA General Hospital.

Councilor Scott asked about the EMR certification, and Mr. Sullivan noted that it is mandatory for his position at the hospital, and there is an annual recertification. It falls between basic CPR and an EMT, and has taught him a lot. Councilor Mbah asked why the candidate wants to become a firefighter and Mr. Sullivan shared that his father was a Somerville firefighter and it would be an honor to follow in those footsteps, and he would welcome the responsibility to serve the community.

Chair Rossetti shared that her father was also a firefighter and she knew the candidate's father. She agreed that the bond among the department is strong and the candidate would fit well.

Chair Rossetti moved to enter into Executive Session to review protected personnel information or to discuss matters related to individual candidates pursuant to MGL c30A s21(a)(1). The motion was laid on the table at 6:59pm. The motion was taken off the table and approved on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Strezo, Mbah, Scott, Rossetti), 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Clingan) at 7:06pm. The Committee entered Executive Session at 7:14pm and returned at 7:29pm. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

RESULT:

APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]

AYES:

Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

211745: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Brittany Taylor to the position of Reserve Firefighter.

Chief Breen introduced the candidate, who has an Associate's Degree in Fire Science, is a paramedic, and currently works for the Belmont Fire Department as a firefighter/paramedic and Cataldo Ambulance as a paramedic, often working in Somerville.

Councilor Mbah thanked the candidate for wanting to serve. Councilor Scott commended the candidate's qualifications and noted that her experience speaks for itself. Councilor Strezo asked why the candidate was looking to leave Belmont for Somerville and Ms. Taylor noted that it was a great place to gain knowledge and experience, but she wants to be in a busier, bigger city, and she lives in Somerville and would be honored to be part of the department.

Chair Rossetti asked for clarification that the candidate would need to wait until others who scored higher on the Civil Service exam complete the academy in order to begin. Chief Breen conformed that, and Chair Rossetti confirmed with the candidate that she was open to not starting until October.

Chair Rossetti moved to enter into Executive Session to review protected personnel information or to discuss matters related to individual candidates pursuant to MGL c30A s21(a)(1). The motion was laid on the table at 7:05pm. The motion was taken off the table and approved on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Strezo, Mbah, Scott, Rossetti), 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Clingan) at 7:06pm. The Committee entered Executive Session at 7:14pm and returned at 7:29pm. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

Councilor Scott encouraged the candidate to advocate for diversity in the Fire Department and fire service generally, and encourage more women to follow this path. The candidate noted she would be honored to do so.

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

211907: Requesting that this Council confirm the appointment to the Urban Design Commission of the same members previously appointed to the Interim Urban Design Commission, pursuant to Zoning Ordinance 15.4.7.

Mr. Proakis shared the update that the Zoning Ordinance in December of 2019 dissolved the previous Design Review Committee and created the Urban Design Commission. There are some differences to how they are formed and the technical background required of members. The language on staggering terms was not in the code when it passed, and people were quickly needed in order to continue the review process. Thus, an interim version of the Commission was created, and a new ordinance followed that which created staggered terms. This item would re-confirm the group as a permanent Commission, and set the staggered terms according to the standing on the Interim Commission as follows:

Andrew Arbaugh for a term to expire 2/28/2022;

Deborah Fennick for a term to expire 2/28/2023;

Tim Talun for a term to expire 2/28/2024;

Heidi Cron for a term to expire 2/28/2025;

Frank Valdez to be re-appointed in a separate item as his term already expired in 2021.

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

211908: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of Frank Valdez to the Urban Design Commission.

Mr. Proakis introduced Mr. Valdes, noting that he is a Somerville resident and architect, and has served for many years on the Design Review Committee, providing helpful guidance. Mr. Valdes added that he has been serving since shortly after he moved to Somerville in 2002. He believes in the beautification of the City and has been honored to be part of the process to ensure development that works for the City, pedestrians, and the future.

Councilor Mbah asked about designing spaces that are inclusive to those with disabilities and varying ages and Mr. Valdes noted that his firm is very diverse in its work, including working with senior housing, and he brings a concern for locations of particular things, such as trash and mail pickup, with inclusivity in mind. Considering how a building is contributing to the public realm is important. Councilor Scott confirmed that Mr. Valdes has been serving since 2007 with no complaints and thanked him for continuing to stay engaged. Chair Rossetti also thanked the candidate for his service and asked how many projects he has pushed back against and Mr. Valdes noted that there are small projects that have posed challenges, but he has enjoyed working on large projects as there is more

opportunity to be creative. He estimated about 10-20% pose challenges, with the majority open to hearing what the Commission has to suggest. He added that the Commission members do not insert personal opinions to impact their decisions, but focus on what is best for the City and the open realm.

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