



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom, was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:01 pm and adjourned at 7:33 pm with a roll call vote of four in favor (Councilor Clingan, Councilor Burnley, Councilor Scott and Chair Wilson), none opposed, and one absent (Councilor Sait).

Others present: Hannah Carrillo – Mayor’s Office, Timothy Mitsakis – SPD, Charles Breen – Fire, James Mucci – Fire, Erik Larson – OSE, Mohammed Uddin – Finance Analyst, Cathy Piantigini – Libraries, Alan Inacio – OSPCD, Stephanie Widzowski – Clerk of Committees.

Roll Call

Present: City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan

Absent: Ward Two City Councilor Naima Sait

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [24-0139](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of February 6, 2024.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Sait

Personnel Requests

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0141](#))

Requesting the use of available funds in the amount of \$24,317 from the Library's Personal Services account to reestablish a Librarian III West Branch Manager position.

Councilor Burnley asked if this position is at the other city libraries, and Councilor Scott asked if the position is union, both of which are correct. Dir. Piantigini gave some background on the position.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Sait

Appropriations

3. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0135](#))

Requesting approval to appropriate \$75,900 from the Energy Stabilization Fund for design services for a building project at 42 Cross Street.

Mr. Larson said that the Archive Department and SOIA are housed in this building now, and the funds are for an all-over decarbonization project. Councilor Burnley asked if this is part of a larger decarbonization effort, to which Mr. Larson said that larger buildings usually are addressed through a master plan in Capital Projects. He talked about the timeline of the project and added that there may be some disruptions to traffic, but that they can work around the school day.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Sait

4. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0134](#))

Requesting approval to appropriate \$49,250 from the Energy Stabilization Fund for insulation projects for Department of Public Works steam systems.

Mr. Larson said that there are three boiler systems at 1 Franey Rd that need to be reinsulated.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Sait

5. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0130](#))

Requesting the appropriation of \$650,000 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund for the Capital Projects Division to restore the City Hall clock tower and roof.

Dir. Inacio said that this would go toward the eligible historic components of the work and toward stabilizing the roof for the foreseeable future. Chair Wilson asked about the estimated \$3.4 million for the project through Beyer Blinder Belle (BBB) and about the scope of the project. Councilor Scott asked about the \$650,000 appropriation request through CPA compared to the city's request of \$1 million. Dir. Inacio said that IAM and Capital Projects are still determining the scope, talked about the logistics of using the CPA Fund and noted that a separate appropriation request would probably be submitted once the full estimate is known. Finance Analyst Uddin added that the DCAMM waiver on the project indicates urgent repairs are needed.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Sait

Transfers

- 6. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0129](#)) Requesting the transfer of \$280,010 from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund Undesignated Fund Balance to the Historic Preservation Reserve.
 Dir. Inacio said that this transfer is needed to fulfill the \$650,000 request in item 24-0130 and is not in addition to the \$650,000.
RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED
AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan
ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Sait

- 7. Order (ID # [24-0174](#)) By Councilor Strezo, Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Sait Requesting approval of a transfer of \$1,000 from the City Council Legal Services Account to the City Council Office Supplies Account for the purchase of furniture and supplies to create a space for children in the City Council Chamber.
 Finance Analyst Uddin said that this item is to create a more inclusive space for families during City Council meetings, and that he does not see a significant financial impact to this transfer. Councilor Burnley asked where the children’s space would be and how filling the bookshelf would be decided. Analyst Uddin deferred to Councilor Strezo, who could not attend the meeting. Councilor Scott had concerns about the legality of the transfer and requested that the item stay in committee until legal counsel could comment, given that this action could set a precedent.
RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Prior-Year Invoices

- 8. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0128](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$638 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Public Safety Supplies Account for Verizon Fleet subscription services.
 Chair Wilson referred to the memo for this item attached to the agenda (“Finance - 2024-02-20 DPW response (with 24-0127, 24-0128)”).
RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Sait

9. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0127](#))

Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$278.40 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Buildings Plumbing Supply Account for building related plumbing materials.

Chair Wilson referred to the memo for this item attached to the agenda (“Finance - 2024-02-20 DPW response (with 24-0127, 24-0128)”).

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Sait

Contracts & Easements

10. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0154](#))

Requesting the acceptance of a 30-year lease with BRE-BMR Assembly Innovation I LLC, and the appropriation of \$171,969 from Free Cash to the Fire Department Special Items Account to fund said lease, for the Assembly Square Fire Station for the remainder of FY 2024.

Dir. Inacio gave historical context on the timing of the lease, and Chair Wilson referred to a discussion last year in committee on the layout of the station. Dir. Inacio said that he believes the acceptance of the lease and the appropriation requests are separate.

Councilor Scott listed concerns with the lease over city responsibilities and rent. She also said that Sec 4.3 on page 5 of the lease implies that the entirety of negotiated community benefits may fall on the city to cover. Dir. Inacio said he wanted to get legal and economic development teams involved on this topic. Councilor Burnley noted the 2% annual raise in base rent and asked what alternatives had been considered. Councilor Burnley also asked about sections in the lease that read “Intentionally Omitted”.

Dir. Inacio said that the first payment is due April 25, 2024. There was discussion over whether to delay until answers could be given about the lease. Chair Wilson moved to recommend approval.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE NOT APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

NAY: Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Sait

Grant Acceptances

11. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0140](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$48,529.99 grant with no new match required, from the Boston Mayor's Office of Emergency Management to the Police Department for installation of access controls, card entry access, and indoor fencing.

Dir. Delmonaco said that this item relates to a previously approved request, 23-1840, and that the changes are to the UASI grant and the final reimbursement date. He explained that it is the same award amount, but would switch to using funds that expire in May 2024.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr. and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Sait

Referenced Documents:

- Finance - 2024-02-20 DPW response (with 24-0127, 24-0128)