



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

June 16, 2022
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jake Wilson	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Beatriz GomezMouakad	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Judy PinedaNeufeld	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	
Charlotte Kelly	City Councilor At Large	Present	

Others present: David Shapiro-City Solicitor's office, Linda Dubuque-Treasury, Michael Mastrobuoni-Auditing, Hannah Carrillo-Mayor's Office, Ed Bean-Auditing, Angela Allen-Purchasing, Andrea Caruth-Purchasing, Laura Haas-Grants Development, Cheryl Cruz-Treasury, Nicholas Antanavica-Inspectional Service Division, Kate Hartke-Grants Development, Ann Gill-Human Resources, and Nikki Spencer-Mayor's Office.

213980: Requesting approval of an amendment to Ordinances 2-322 and 2-323 to update categories and associated salaries for non-union positions.

Councilor Scott stated this ordinance only impacts non-union and elected officials. This amendment is to add in the titles. Director Gill talked about the grading system when the compensation study was done in 2016 and how this guides how you pay for each position. The steps are meant to give flexibility to the hiring manager to work with human resources based on experience on a position. Councilor Kelly asked how many employees are at step 19, which there are two employees per Director Gill. Councilor Kelly also asked if this ordinance needs to be approved before the end of the year. And yes this does need to be approved.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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2. Review of the FY 2023 Budget

Auditing

Ed Bean, Finance Director & City Auditor

2023 goals recalculating 10-year projection of expenditure.

Reevaluating all metric of financial policies, investment policies, and bond ratings.

Director Bean stated they are working on an electronic program for payments to vendors, upgrading Munis system will happen in September 2022. Over the summer, they will be working with OSPCD, IAM, Capital Projects and the Mayor's office to update the Capital

Plan that was put on hold due to COVID and new administration.
Director Mastrobuoni talked about \$1M participatory budgeting, reaching out to organizations that help with this type of work. They want to incorporate feedback from residents.

The Proposal up 4.6%, Personal Services is up 3.7%, no new positions for 2023.

The increases are based on collective bargain agreements.

Overtime in auditing is spent in June and July for year end close which is about 80%.

Given the pandemic, not many invoices have come in during this time.

OM budget up over 14% for benefits evaluation for the outside actuary.

Incorporated a budget director and analyst into this year's budget.

Councilor Kelly asked Director Bean about auditing services. There is \$23,000 for annual audit with three phases, just finished Phase 1 and the auditor will be back in the fall for Phase 2, Phase 3 in the spring.

Councilor Wilson asked who audits the auditor. Director Bean stated by law the city is required to have an external CPA auditor who is Powers and Sullivan.

Grants Development

Kate Hartke

In FY22 budget, an additional grant writer was approved. The staff writer has not been hired. There is one open position and they are in the process of hiring.

There are no new positions.

Ordinary Maintenance budget has a larger increase to support for training, workshops, conference attendance and related travel.

Councilor Scott asked about the grant writer position not filled last year. Ms. Hartke used the funds to increase Laura Haas' hours. Laura Haas is retiring and her position will be changed to deputy director.

Treasury

Linda Dubuque and Cheryl Cruz

Goal of trying to go paperless, encouraging all employees to go paperless.

Eliminated part-time customer service rep because they are now using Citizen's Help service online 24/7 look up for the community and attorneys. There will be a flyer in the tax bill to promote the online service.

OM is the same with exception of employee training

Vacant assistant collector's positions due to retirement

In interviews for two positions.

Putting out RFP for banking services

Building Insurance

Linda Dubuque

Insurance was very expensive over COVID. 10% increase in fees budgeted and 10% increase for contingency. She gave an example of the bike path needing to be insured.

Procurement & Contracting Services

Angela Allen, Chief Procurement Officer and Andrea Caruth, Deputy Chief Procurement Officer

PS adding senior procurement position
Adding an over time line for union staff
OM request for a vendor management software system \$15,000
Councilor Scott asked about the procurement study and what is the time line to get the study underway. The Town of Brookline expressed interest in doing this disparity study jointly with Somerville. They will be working on the RFP over the summer.
Councilor Kelly asked about the cost of the disparity study and the timeline once it starts. Director Allen believes the disparity study may be over \$300k. She also believes the study may take over a year based on some other communities' results.
Councilor Gomez Mouakad asked about the time to it takes to reimburse of 45 days which could be a barrier for some small businesses.

Assessing

Frank Golden, Chief Assessor
4 assistant assessors in his office who are responsible for permits, reading and entering deeds, entry of abatement
Just filled their 3rd clerk position
Sales analyst retired, hiring in process
OM line professional & technical service is for property vendor
Tuition line increased
Personal property audit line increased for a specialist
Councilor Scott asked about legal services line and if the hourly rate line will be higher and will there be enough funds available. Assessor Golden stated this is for an outside attorney for some of the larger properties in Somerville such as the life science buildings.

Human Resources

Director Ann Gill
Stated they hire someone every day. Looking to hire another recruiter and HRIS manager to look at the system the city has and what's needed. Technology in payroll and human resources are behind the times.
Councilor Pineda Neufeld asked about existing interview and what are the common themes, which are working remote and salary, per Director Gill.
Councilor Scott asked about ongoing negotiations with unions without the labor counsel no longer here. Director Gill stated they are using outside counsel and use in-house counsel as well. Councilor Scott asked Director Gill if she tracks the time it takes to fill a position, union vs. non-union positions. They have a recruitment software which can track resumes and do not pass around paper resumes. Councilor Scott would like Director Mastrobuoni to update Appendix B because someone who retired was still listed as an employee.

Accountability, Transparency and Access

Chief of Staff Nikki Spencer
Hire a director who will propose a series of activities working with city departments, such as for public records, minutes and meetings, compliance, lobbyist registration and city council. There is a proposed \$89,000 in PS with an October start date. There is also \$20,000 in OM for office supplies, computer, and \$15,000 in Professional Technical for any expertise or training needed.

Councilor Kelly asked for a scope of work or job description for this position. Councilor Gomez Mouakad asked if there is such a position in other cities or towns to better understand how this position would work. Chief of Staff has not found another position of this nature in other communities.

Councilor Scott made a motion to lay this on the table for Personal Services.

Law

Acting City Solicitor David Shapiro

There are 4 vacant positions.

They are using a temporary attorney serving as special counsel.

Councilor Scott asked about status and if interviews are ongoing for city solicitor. Once this position is filled, the city solicitor will hire the rest of the staff. They are using paid interns in the law office. They are proposing new positions start in August and with base salaries which explains why the PS line is so low. Councilor Scott suggested extending their temp line, Acting City Solicitor Shapiro stated the most helpful would be to have a lawyer.

Director Mastrobuoni suggested a short-term opportunity in the law office would be to use salary lag and put into law department.

Councilor Kelly asked how many contracts are currently being negotiated. She also asked how often the city has outside counsel negotiating contracts.

Councilor Scott asked if it would be easier to use money in legal services line, professional technical line

Councilor Scott made a resolution requesting that the mayor provide immediate accessible funds for the acting City Solicitor to bring on temporary legal help for \$200,000 while the hiring process is underway.

Damages to Persons and Property

Acting City Solicitor David Shapiro

Inspectional Services

Nick Antanavica, Superintendent of Inspectional Services

FY22 into FY23 now able to issue permits at a faster rate. They have identified the areas where they need the most help.

Requesting 2 positions for ISD operations managers. The overtime for the admin staff has increased to keep up with the processes coming through. His proposal to review the complaints file to work with the inspector to create a 2nd shift. They have 3 open positions. Interviewing next week for safety position and code enforcement position. The zoning review planner will be starting by the end of the month.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad asked about wage theft ordinance. Superintendent Antanavica has not done anything in terms of enforcement. He would like to implement once he has the additional staff. The affidavit has been reviewed by legal department.

Councilor Kelly asked about the senior rodent control officer in the health division. She asked about filling four vacancies. Nick stated the deputy sealer is in place getting trained. The deputy director position working on job description change. The finance position will be filled very shortly. Kelly asked for scopes of work or job descriptions for the new positions he has created. He will check with HR for the job descriptions. She asked about rodent program update. ISD, HHS and DPW regularly get together to make sure there is a

coordinated effort to remove rodents from the city.

Councilor Scott asked if the senior building position posted yet. Nick has not sent in the posting yet because he has had other positions that needed to be filled first. A lot of the positions are union so they are posted internally.

PAYGO

Director Michael Mastrobuoni

Pay as you go capital, is the new cost center for FY23 for mid-sized capital expenses funded at \$1.5M. There are 3 uses, \$500,000 department vehicle purchases, \$500,000 for road paving and construction, and \$500,000 for building improvements to be controlled by DPW. Councilor Scott asked how is this different than the stabilization fund? Director Mastrobuoni said that they intent to use the money and whatever is left over will be put into the stabilization fund.

Debt Service

Director Mastrobuoni budget includes all projects for which they have borrowed money.

State Assessments

Director Mastrobuoni stated to be paid by the Commonwealth, like life insurance and other areas.

Councilor Wilson asked about the Charter School. Director Mastrobuoni stated charter school assessment and estimates are highly variable.

Unemployment Compensation

Director Mastrobuoni stated this is the cost center for non-union employees

Pension

Director Bean stated that \$15M based on actuarial numbers. Transferring the funds to the retirement board on July 1.

Salary Contingency

Director Mastrobuoni stated this is part of the budget to allocate funds for staff for temporary vacancies, perfect attendance with the bulk reserved for labor negotiations. Councilor Kelly asked about the FY22 \$405k that was transfer out of PS line and where did it go. This is for the two settlements for the crossing guards and two superior officers.