

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Josh McLinden <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 1:27 PM  
**To:** Public Comments  
**Subject:** Fwd: Somerville Public Safety For All Task Force Report Recommendations

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Hello: Please see below for my public comment ahead of tonight's City Council hearing on FY26 budget priorities. I neglected to include the public comment email address in my initial email.

Thank you,  
Josh McLinden  
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Josh McLinden <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** Thu, Jan 30, 2025 at 12:57 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Somerville Public Safety For All Task Force Report Recommendations  
**To:** [REDACTED]

To Mayor Ballantyne and Somerville City Council:

Thank you for releasing the recent Public Safety For All Task Force report. I believe that the City is taking public safety seriously but wanted to express my concerns about the recommendations from the report.

Incorporating clinical and mental health professionals into emergency response is an important step. However, I am concerned about the continued inclusion of Somerville Police Department officers, who, under the recommended model, continue to lead the response, with clinicians in a "ride-along" model. I believe that police do not contribute productively to resolving most emergency situations, and in fact, are active detriments to situations involving e.g. a mental health crisis. The presence of guns carried by police in a high-stress emergency situation only increases the risk to all parties involved.

Such calls should not involve a police response at all. Continuing to give money to the police has not created a safer environment for Somerville or any city. Police are a huge and wasteful drain on municipal budgets.

Instead, I encourage the City to pursue an alternative model outside of the purview of SPD, following the lead of examples like Cambridge HEART, an independent nonprofit that leads crisis response in the City of Cambridge. Further, redistributing funds from the police budget toward social services such as

affordable housing, homeless shelters, health clinics (including mental health), supervised consumption sites, job training, etc. will address the issues at play at their roots. Poverty leads to addiction and crime as people seek to cope and survive with their lot in life.

Building a more just and equitable city does not involve the police; it requires instead a compassionate response including robust social services and specialized professionals for emergency response, not armed cops. The Public Safety For All Task Force recommendations are a move in the right direction, but continuing to include police in all emergency response is not appropriate. Please consider these alternatives.

Thank you,  
Josh McLinden

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

- (i) your dissatisfaction with the recommendations in the administration's recently-issued reports; as well as
- (ii) your support for an unarmed alternative emergency response service outside of the police department [similar to Cambridge HEART] and greater investments in social services generally — particularly for our most marginalized residents — such as social housing and overdose prevention.

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Cole rainey-slavick [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 1:36 PM  
**To:** Public Comments; All City Council  
**Subject:** Fund Unarmed First Response not more police

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Hello,

I am a resident of ward 2 writing in to express my opposition to the Mayor's push for a "co-response" model where clinicians accompany police officers to calls. This completely misrepresents the community desire for a non-armed response outside of the police department, as it would mean a call for help still results in the arrival of an armed officer, albeit potentially along with an accompanying clinician (where resources and staffing allow). Rather than redirecting funding from potentially violent enforcement and into community based care this would only funnel more money and resources into the police.

Cambridge HEART is the model somerville should be looking to replicate and it disproves the claims that "infrastructure and legal/union rules" make this impossible.

Please fund an unarmed alternative emergency response program that is meaningfully separate from the police department, rather than investing more money in failed models the community has consistently demanded we move beyond. Please also fund social programs (some of which have been planned for years with little action) that reduce the need to call for help in the first place such as supervised consumption sites, public/social housing, support for immigrants, and a new community center for teens.

Please also do not pay the police more money to wear body cameras either. Despite being marketed as a reform to policing the effect has only been an expansion of police surveillance (the cameras are aimed at us not them), which are frequently deliberately turned off or blocked during incidents of police brutality, and the oversight of which is controlled by the very organization they are supposed to hold accountable. Meaningful accountability requires building community oversight of policing not expanding police oversight of all of us.

Thank you,

Cole Rainey-Slavick

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Barbie D <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 2:44 PM  
**To:** Madalyn Letellier  
**Subject:** Re: City Budget Meeting

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name: Barbara Duckworth  
ward: 7

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**From:** Barbie D [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 2:38 PM  
**To:** Mayor [REDACTED]; All City Council [REDACTED]; Public Comments  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** City Budget Meeting

Hello,

I am emailing to express my dissatisfaction with the recommendations in the administrations recently-issued reports and my support for an **unarmed alternative emergency response service** outside of the police department (similar to Cambridge HEART) and **greater investments in social services generally** — particularly for our most marginalized residents — such as social housing and overdose prevention.

Every year that the City Council has prepared their own budget priorities, they have included a non-police emergency response among their requests. The PSFA Task Force recommendation is not the answer. I want to see an **unarmed** alternative emergency response staffed by peer responders connected to their community.

Thank you,

Barbie

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## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Valerie Werder [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 2:46 PM  
**To:** Public Comments  
**Subject:** Input on FY26 budget - fund a non-police emergency response program

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Hello,

My name is Valerie Werder, and I am a resident of Ward 3 in Somerville. I'm not able to attend tonight's public hearing on Zoom, so I wanted to share my input on FY26 budget priorities via email.

I believe that Somerville needs non-police solutions to emergency response. I strongly disagree with the Public Safety for All Task Force's recommendation that the city adopt a co-response model, and disagree that the existing COHR program is an alternative response to the police. In both the co-response model and in the existing COHR program, a call for help will still result in an armed police officer at the door.

We need to fund an unarmed alternative emergency response program that is separate from the police department. This program must be staffed by peer responders connected to their community, like the [Cambridge HEART](#) program—not by respondents who are housed in the same building as the police department, like COHR.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

All my best,  
Valerie Werder

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Valerie Werder  
Harvard University  
Ph.D. Candidate in Film and Visual Studies  
Department of Art, Film, and Visual Studies

[REDACTED]

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Lauren Colodny [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 4:21 PM  
**To:** Public Comments; All City Council  
**Subject:** FY26 Budget Comment

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Hello all,

I am a resident at [REDACTED] in East Somerville and I am unable to attend the public hearing for the FY26 budget this evening.

I would like to submit as a comment my staunch opposition to any increase in spending for “public safety,” which we see consistently funneled into our already bloated Police budget. The seizure of land to build any such “public safety” complex is disgraceful and, while I believe that this project is currently on hold, it should be cancelled entirely and the budget distributed elsewhere. Agencies such as CAAS should receive greater funding, and subsidies provided to independent organizations like the Somerville Community Land Trust.

Additionally, Somerville has contracts with companies that are complicit in war crimes. Hewlett Packard (HP) is contracted by the City and Schools as a provider of computers, printers, and accessories. HP, among many other atrocities, furnishes the apartheid state of Israel with the ID card system that categorizes Palestinians and grants them, regardless of whether they are Israeli citizens, less rights than Jewish Israelis. In light of the past year of genocide in Gaza, it is shameful for our tax dollars to be sent to companies like HP. The FY26 budget should reflect our town’s values and should see us, rather than buy from HP, buy from companies like Acer, Lenovo, or Epson, all of which have far cleaner human rights records.

Thank you and all the best,

*Lauren Rebel Colodny*  
*they/them/theirs*  
*MLIS, B.A. in Peace and Justice Studies*  
[REDACTED]

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Julia Gray Peters [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 5:26 PM  
**To:** Public Comments; All City Council  
**Subject:** Priorities for FY26 Budget

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Dear Somerville City Councilors,

I am writing to make a public comment on the priorities for the FY26 budget.

As a resident of Somerville, I urge the city to consider reducing the budget of the Somerville Police Department and instead add more funds to public education, libraries, or other community-based resources. I also urge the city to consider divesting any city funds tied to israeli apartheid over the Palestinian people. One example would be to divest and find an alternative to using HP computers and other technology software HP provides to the city.

Please consider the implications of our tax dollars being spent to propagate violence around the world and in our city of Somerville. Thank you.

Best,  
Julia Peters  
Ward 7 Resident



## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 7:03 PM  
**To:** Madalyn Letellier  
**Subject:** Re: Somerville FY26 Budget

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Greetings Councillors

I have been proud to call Somerville and Davis Sq my home for the last 24 years.

I met my wife in Seven Hills park 20 years ago. My boy hopes to practice Kung Fu with Davis Square Martial Arts in Seven Hills next summer.

When considering priorities for the fy26 budget, please keep in mind the tremendous uptick in bad behavior we witnessed last summer along the bike path, in Seven Hills park, and in Davis Square.

Broader funding focused on the health and safety issues brought to our attention last summer in Davis square.

Some of the things I would like to see budgeted for are the following:

- More of the compassionate policing in, such as what we saw in Davis Sq as a result of the meeting with the mayor last fall.
- More non-police social workers doing outreach to both the unhoused and those dealing with substance abuse disorder.
- Call boxes in the square, in the parks and along the bike path.
- Means for safe disposal of sharps.
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- Free and available Narcan in high traffic areas such as Davis sq.
- A communication strategy to better inform residents when to call 311 vs 911 including readily available and consistent reports on 311 calls and the cities proportional response.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.



## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Jaclyn Pillitteri [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 7:43 PM  
**To:** Public Comments  
**Subject:** I support unarmed alternative emergency response program that is separate from the police department.

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Hello,

As a resident of Somerville, I support an unarmed emergency response program that is **separate** from the police department.

Having emergency response dedicated to the health and safety of citizens that do not increase the risk of escalation is important to feeling safe in my community. Since Black and Latino men are more likely to die in encounters with the police than white men (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6085013/>) it is imperative for racial justice to allow non armed responses.

Thank you  
Jaclyn Pillitteri

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Rebecca George [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 1, 2025 8:54 PM  
**To:** Public Comments  
**Subject:** Public Comment for Finance Committee - FY26 budget priorities

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Hello,

My name is Becca George [REDACTED] and I would like to provide my public comments for the Finance Committee for the FY 2026 Budget Priorities for the City of Somerville. I attended the Committee hearing on Thursday, January 30, 2025 and wanted to provide my comments as well.

I would like to see the following things prioritized in the Somerville budget for FY26:

1. Affordable housing development and maintenance, legal and educational support for renters as well as relocation support when needed, funding for fair housing efforts, and permanent supportive housing development
2. Funding for non-police responses to crises to have safe alternative emergency responses, not funding for a co-response system.
3. Increased funding for immigration support and services, especially for housing needs, legal support, healthcare needs, and social events and programming
4. Funding to support anti-displacement work, especially the work identified by the anti-displacement taskforce for Somerville.
5. Supporting climate resiliency programs/work such as adaption of infrastructure, reducing the urban heat island effect through greater and more equitable distribution of tree plantings and park development and maintenance, and rainwater harvesting etc.

Thank you!

Best,  
Becca