



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

CLERK OF COMMITTEES

June 21, 2010

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Maryann M. Heuston	Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Vice Chair	Present	
Bruce M. Desmond	Alderman At Large	Present	
John M Connolly	Alderman At Large	Absent	
Rebekah L. Gewirtz	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Thomas F. Taylor	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
William M. Roche	Ward One Alderman	Present	
Walter F. Pero	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Sean T. O'Donovan	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Robert C. Trane	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Present	
Joseph Curtatone	Mayor	Present	
Frank Wright	City Solicitor	Present	
Matt Buckley	Assistant City Solicitor	Present	
Jessie Baker	Personnel Director	Present	
Ed Bean	Finance Director	Present	
Matthew Dias	Administrative Assistant	Present	
Janice Delory	Chief of Staff	Present	
Rositha Durham	Purchasing Director	Present	
Stan Koty	DPW Commissioner	Present	
George Landers	Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds	Present	
Michael Cabral	Chief of Police	Present	
Carol Antonelli	Water Superintendent	Present	
Kevin Kelleher	Chief Fire Engineer	Present	
Nancy Milnor	Library Director	Present	
Doug Willardson	Budget Analyst	Present	
Robert Bradley	Director of Traffic and Parking	Present	

The Committee met as a Committee of the Whole.

Motion: By Alderman White to go into Executive Session to discuss issues concerning the school custodians collective bargaining agreement.

Approved on a Roll Call vote. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Heuston, White Jr., Desmond, Gewirtz, Taylor, Roche, Pero, O'Donovan, Trane, Sullivan
ABSENT:	John M Connolly

189788 - Requesting Approval of an Appropriation of \$165,507,404 to fund the Fiscal Year 2011 Operating Budget for the City of Somerville:

City Solicitor Wright provided information on how the Board of Aldermen votes on the city budget and told the members that the Board has 45 days from the time the budget is received to reduce or reject items on a line by line basis. Essentially, the Board does not vote on total budget submitted, rather, it votes on each individual line item in the budget. If the Board votes to not accept the budget, after going line by line, the mayor would have to submit a continuing appropriation request, month to month.

Mr. Wright was asked to provide answers to the following questions:

- What happens if a \$0 budget is approved?
- What happens if an entire department's budget reduced to \$0?
- How long can continuing appropriations be used?

The following departments appeared this evening to review their budgets:

- **DPW**
 - **Water Enterprise**
 - **Sewer Enterprise**
 - **Snow Removal**
 - § There are no significant changes from last year's budget.
 - **Weights and Measures**
 - § There are no significant changes from last year's budget.
- **Libraries**
 - Four Librarian positions will be eliminated, one of which will be vacant due to a resignation. The savings from eliminating these positions is \$174,775.
 - An additional \$94,200 was included in temporary salaries and wages to hire 6 new part-time positions to maintain service levels.
 - There will be no reduction in library hours as a result of these changes.

There was a discussion about the elimination of full time positions and the addition of part time positions and Mr. Buckley stated that there is no provision in the contract to prohibit this from happening, adding that the change is legally classified as a reorganization and is being done to save money.

- **Recreation and Youth**

- Three Recreation Supervisors and the Youth Director positions are being eliminated from the budget for a savings of \$188,736. This will allow more money to be focused on providing recreational opportunities to the city's youth.

Alderman Gewirtz noted that long time employees were being laid off while some with less time were being retained and said that the lay offs highlight a philosophical difference, i.e., should the city have more programs for youth or more police? Alderman Gewirtz continued by saying that the city should have more programs available for its youth to keep them out of trouble and she expressed concern about what would be lost Mr. Halloran told the members that part time employees have been running the department's programs for the last 5 years. The department will be adding programs at the skating rink and the Mystic Boathouse.

- **Fire** (Alderman O'Donovan recused from this discussion)

- \$26,339 is appropriated as a grant match for technical rescue training and rescue equipment. The grant, in the amount \$105,356, was awarded by the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA.

Alderman Gewirtz said that she believes that the Fire Department's reserve list should be a reserve force and she asked that a ruling be provided from Civil Service stating that the city is using the list properly. Chief Kelleher will try to get the letter and he extended an offer to sit with Alderman Gewirtz at any time, to explain to her how having a reserve list saves the city money. Alderman Gewirtz and Chairman Heuston asked what the effect on the city would be if 2 or 3 fire fighters were not replaced. Chief Kelleher replied that overtime costs would increase, since each vehicle must meet the accepted staffing levels, and the risk of injury increases when fire fighters work extended hours. Additionally, if a vacancy existed for over 6 months, the city would have to pay the federal government \$545,595.60 for violating the requirements of the Safer Grant, which states that the city has to maintain 152 employees in the Fire Department.

- **Emergency Management**

- **Fire Alarm**

- One vacant Fire Alarm Operator position is being eliminated.

- **Police** (Alderman Roche recused from the Administration discussion)

- The Personal Services increase reflects a return to a full year's salary expenses after last year's one-week furlough for Patrolmen, Superior Officers and Non-Union employees.
- PSTN Usage was increased \$15,900 for basic cruiser connectivity, air cards and neighborhood officers' phones.

Chief Cabral told the members that going forward, new recruits will be responsible for paying for their training at the police academy. At the present time, there are 4 vacancies, with another

one coming due to a military service activation. If the vacancies aren't filled, the department can't provide the services needed.

- **E-911**
 - There are no significant changes from last year's budget.
- **Animal Control** (Alderman Taylor recused from this discussion)
 - There are no significant changes from last year's budget.
- **Traffic and Parking** (Alderman Sullivan recused from this discussion)
 - A vacant PCO position (\$38,759) and the part-time office help (\$19,798) will be eliminated to create an accountant position at \$55,000.
 - An additional \$18,000 is appropriated in the Repairs to Highways line for additional painting of crosswalks.
 - An additional \$47,000 is included in the Professional and Technical Services line for a sign maintenance contract.

The department currently has 34 Parking Control Officers, each of whom brings in an average of \$170,000 above his or her salary. If PCO positions are cut, the city would lose about \$50,000 in revenue per position. No additional revenue would be realized by hiring additional PCO's. The issuance of tickets is down but revenue from tickets is up 3%.

Requests for Information

- Alderman Gewirtz requested that an explanation of line # 69192 in the DPW Water Enterprise be provided.
- Alderman Trane requested a breakdown of the costs and savings associated with the full time staff reductions and hiring of part time employees.
- Alderman Pero requested that a copy of the Recreation Brochure (listing the programs being offered) be provided to each member of the committee.
- Alderman Desmond requested that the Administration provide information regarding the city's representation on the regional E-911 proposal.
- Alderman White requested a breakdown for item # 51430 in Police - Shift Differentials line item, i.e., how much is due to the Quinn Bill?
- Alderman O'Donovan requested that additional information on parking meter receipts be provided.
- Alderman White requested to know the average cost of installing/replacing a street sign, handicap parking sign, etc. (including all material and labor costs).
- Alderman White requested to know the number of residential parking violations issued for that last few years to determine if have they gone down this year. FY-07 = 58,800; FY-08 = 57,700; FY-09 = 53,400; FY-10 = 51,000.

- Alderman White requested information on the potential cost savings of replacing the wired fire alarm system with a wireless one.