



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Legislative Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Scott at 6:07pm and adjourned at 7:30pm on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Davis, Ewen-Campen, Strezo, Scott), 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor Mbah).

Councilor Ewen-Campen joined the meeting at 6:26pm.

Others present: David Shapiro - Deputy City Attorney, Brendan Salisbury - Legislative & Policy Analyst, Yasmine Raddassi - Legislative Liaison, Madalyn Letellier - Assistant City Clerk, Legislative Services.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis, City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah, Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott

1. Ordinance
(ID # [26-0046](#))

By Councilor Davis

Amending Chapter 2, Article III of the Code of Ordinances by adding a new section establishing the time and place of regular meetings of the City Council.

Legislative & Policy Analyst Salisbury shared that the Charter now requires the time and place of meetings be set by ordinance. The suggestion for substantive change beginning in 2028 is for the meetings to be moved to the second and fourth Tuesday of the month beginning at 6pm, from the current practice of Thursday at 7pm. Analyst Salisbury shared that a primary reason for the suggested change concerns staff time and the difficulty Thursday meetings pose with only a half-day available on Friday to complete all action items from the Council meetings along with regular departmental workload. Another consideration is the potential ability to have items approved by the Mayor in the same week. He also mentioned staff morale and the exhaustion that comes from working over 12 hours regular on Thursday, and this shift allows staff to take a break between work hours and the meeting start time. He highlighted the expectations for timing is not different than now as committee meetings traditionally start at 6:00pm.

Councilor Davis expressed support for the change and inquired about having the public engage with the change. Councilor Ewen-Campen expressed this would impact scheduling for members and acknowledge there is never going to be a time that fits everyone's ideal schedule.

Councilor Scott raised concern over the ability to hear items in the same

week with current notice requirements and Councilor Ewen-Campen raised taking Monday off the table as meetings are not currently allowed the night before a meeting. Analyst Salisbury shared there are already obstacles to act around given holidays and the current practice with committee items is there is often more advanced notice than one week before an item appears on a committee agenda.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

2. Order
 (ID # [26-0354](#))

By Councilor Davis

That Rule 4 of the Rules of the City Council be amended to update submission deadlines for agenda items, consistent with the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Councilor Davis introduced the intent behind the item to better align the Rules and practices of the City Council with the Open Meeting Law (OML). This change aims to limit the use of the supplemental agenda, which results in items not advertised until the day of the meeting, as this practice is not in alignment with the OML, which requires agendas to be posted 48 hours in advance. Councilor Davis shared there is some grey area around if the item was not reasonably anticipated or if there are urgent time considerations, in which case an item may need to be addressed before the next City Council meeting.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Mbah

3. Order
 (ID # [25-1439](#))

By Mayor Wilson, Councilor Mbah, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Scott

That the City Clerk work with this Council to amend the Code of Ordinances to better regulate the sale of second-hand goods.

This item was discussed with item #25-1686.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE PLACED ON FILE**

4. Ordinance
 (ID # [25-1686](#))

By Mayor Wilson

Amending Chapter 8, Article III of the Code of Ordinances pertaining to secondhand dealer licenses.

Deputy City Attorney Shapiro was present and confirmed that the Law Department has reviewed to the language and has no concerns as to legality. Analyst Salisbury provided an update on the attachment, *Legislative Matters - 2026-05-05 - Second Hand Dealers Amendment (with 25-1686)*, which includes updates to the language pursuant to previous conversation in committee. Changes were made to the language to remove the requirement to show a license at time of purchase, to clarify precious items, and to remove the word “donation”. Further clarification was made around receipts and transaction records and amends to a report-based model for enforcement. There is a requirement that records be maintained for at least three years after a sale. Distinction was made that most changes were stylistic over substantive to bring the drafting in line with current guidelines. Councilor Strezo asked if power tools and musical instruments were considered while drafting. Analyst Salisbury said the language is meant to be broad and capture high-theft items and he can investigate how power tools are marked and the monetary threshold. Councilor Mbah asked about the enforcement mechanism behind this language, and Analyst Salisbury stated the enforcement mechanism has not changed; if a report is made, an investigation will be conducted by the Police Department, who will determine any associated repercussions. Councilor Scott asked for clarification about what a unique identifier entails and itemized receipts. Analyst Salisbury stated an identifier can be an autographed copy of a book or a sculpture and specified items can quickly become unwieldy depending on the purchase so it is largely left to the business and can be visited again in the future as needed.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

5. Ordinance
(ID # [25-1762](#))

By Councilor Davis and Mayor Wilson
That the Code of Ordinances be amended to prohibit the use of tax-payer funds for self-promotion.

Councilor Davis presented the item, which was submitted in conjunction with former Councilor Wilson. Liaison Raddassi provided an update on behalf of the administration and requested to keep this item in committee to address some final language updates.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

6. Order
(ID # [22-0504](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.
That this Council amend its Rule 24 by requiring a majority vote of the Council before a councilor can be removed from a committee.

Councilor Davis, as the current Council President, shared the hurdles this may present on certain committees, specifically on a three-person committee when a councilor needs to be substituted for a committee meeting.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE PLACED ON FILE**

Referenced Documents:

- Legislative Matters - 2026-05-05 - Second Hand Dealers Amendment (with 25-1686)