



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 23, 2019
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Absent	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three City Councilor	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	

The meeting was held in the Committee Room and was called to order by Chairman White at 6:05pm and adjourned at 7:39pm.

Others present: Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison; John DeLuca - Water & Sewer; Alex Lessin - Water & Sewer; Rich Raiche - Engineering; Frank Wright - Law; Eileen McGettigan - Law; Julie McKenzie - Law; Brad Rawson - OSPCD; Alan Inacio - OSPCD; Courtney Kirk - OSPCD; Tom Galligani - OSPCD; Kimberly Wells - Assistant Clerk of Committees

Approval of the April 9, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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207521: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,000,000.00 in a bond for the Union Square Streetscape & Plaza Design.

Ms. Connor noted that there is an element of time-sensitivity to this request to align with the construction. Councilor Ewen-Campen asked what these funds would cover and Ms. Kirk confirmed that this request would fund the community process and bringing the technical drawings to a 25% level, which covers the curb-line layout and some other functions like directionality at the plan-level. There are six anticipated community meetings, and a year-long process of engagement. Additional design money would go toward understanding the utility impacts and more technical issues like signal timing.

Ms. Kirk noted that the CIP document does not reflect the accurate funding for this project. The total amount of the design phase, excluding Bow Street is approximately \$957,000. If Bow Street is included, that total becomes \$1.2M. Another \$1.2M would be for the advancement of the technical drawings to a construction document level. The grand total is estimated to be \$29M, but the construction costs will change depending on when the construction takes place.

Chairman White expressed concern that the entirety of this \$1M request would not be utilized. Ms. Kirk shared that it is necessary for streetscape planning and has a ripple effect to encompass all of the

connected streets. President Ballantyne requested an updated flow chart with dollar amounts, which Ms. Kirk provided. Councilor Ewen-Campen noted that some of the costs seem low, and Ms. Kirk clarified that they are based on linear foot and may shift when a consultant is involved. Further, the graphic only includes the construction administration costs, which are 10% of the total construction.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

207524: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$300,000 in a bond for Central Hill Campus phase 2 design.

This request was withdrawn, as there is a previously approved but un-issued bond from 2008 that can be used for this purpose. There is \$450,000 remaining from that \$500,000 bond.

Councilor Rossetti noted that documentation about the parking study was shared with this request, and she has further questions about that, which is still in draft form.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE

207953: Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$37,778.81 using available funds in the Department of Public Works Buildings and Grounds and Highway Division Accounts for invoices received after the close of FY18.

Ms. Connor noted that Mr. Koty was not available for this meeting. Chairman White would prefer that he address this, so will take it up at a future meeting when Mr. Koty is available.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

207761: Requesting a Contract Extension for the Weston & Samson Design and Construction services contract.

Mr. Rawson commented that this is a time-only extension and does not incur extra fees. The design for Lincoln Park will require additional time to complete, and the contract extension is requested through December 31, 2020. Testing of the playing fields and changing soil was largely the cause of the delays. As there was confusion about the nature of the request, Chairman White asked that Mr. Rawson return with clarification on what funds are needed.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

207762: Requesting a Time-Only Extension for the Mackay Construction Services contract for Lincoln Park.

This is a time-only extension and no funds are needed.

RESULT:

APPROVED

207763: Requesting approval of a time-only extension of the Newport Construction Beacon Street construction contract.

This is a time-only extension and does not increase costs, and additionally should be completed in mid-2019.

Councilor Rossetti moved that this Committee be made aware of the punch list as it is updated.

The motion was approved.

RESULT:

APPROVED

207764: Requesting approval of a time only extension of the Design Consultants Construction Administration contract for Beacon Street.

The in-house expertise does not exist for this work, so the request is to continue the contract with the consultant through December.

RESULT:

APPROVED

207768: Director of Water and Sewer submitting proposed water and sewer rates for FY20.

Mr. DeLuca noted that the public hearing was held last night, with four people testifying, and three people have submitted written testimony via email. Chairman White asked for confirmation that no additional submission is needed if there are no suggested changes. Ms. Connor is awaiting that confirmation and will follow-up when she has more information. The hearing is open until next week, so Councilor Rossetti asked that this item be addressed at that time.

President Ballantyne asked that a few sample residential and commercial properties be used to give an example of the impact of the rate changes, which would be more helpful than an average. Chairman White asked further that the number of properties that would fall within each tier be provided. Councilor Ewen-Campen inquired about when the residential exemption could be put in place. Mr. DeLuca noted that the target would be for fiscal year 2021 (FY21). A committee will be formed to determine how best to move forward. Councilor Ewen-Campen also noted that raising the rate could affect use and wondered if this impact had been considered. Mr. DeLuca noted that promoting water conservation is a goal, but no specific budget implications have been calculated.

Councilor Rossetti asked for a comparison to the rates in neighboring and comparable cities and towns. Mr. DeLuca noted that the combined water and drain system, the age of the system, and other complexities make comparing difficult, but he will put something together. Chairman White asked if the City monitors its own use and leakage. A company is hired to do leak detection every year, and all City buildings are metered. Chairman White wondered whether the City should pay into the Water and Sewer enterprise fund to account for its use. It would be "paying itself" but could allow for more transparency in the budget.

President Ballantyne wondered about what the City pays to the MWRA. Mr. Raiche shared that there is a connection component, a population component, and a component based on metered use. The MWRA bill will only decrease if our usage decreases at a greater rate than our neighbors.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

207951: Requesting a transfer of \$40,000 from the SPCD Housing Division Professional and Technical Services Account to the SPCD Admin Legal Services Account to engage outside eminent domain counsel to defend the Redevelopment Authority in the acquisition of 90 Washington St.

Ms. McGettigan spoke as counsel for the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA). A complaint was served and the SRA would like to re-engage James Masterman, a noted eminent domain practitioner, to

defend the Authority in this action. The complaint alleges that the SRA did not have the authority to take the property.

Councilor Rossetti confirmed that Ms. McGettigan would be working alongside this attorney, and the hourly rate (which is discounted for municipalities) is \$650/hour.

RESULT:

APPROVED

207952: Requesting a transfer of \$37,863.99 from the Office of Housing Stability Professional and Technical Account to the SPCD Finance and Admin Land Acquisition Account for final closing costs for 90 Washington St.

Ms. McGettigan noted that the appraised amount was approved, but because the date of payment was not established, there is an interest charge from the date of taking, and taxes that were prepaid are refunded, thus there is a difference in the amount that was previously appropriated.

RESULT:

APPROVED

207753: Requesting approval to amend Ordinances 11-125(c) and 11-164(b)(3) regarding water and sewer billing and payment periods.

The ordinance states that bills must be paid within 30 days, and the amendment would change this to 45, which is what is already allowed in practice. The maximum number of bills would be changed from 4 per year to 6 per year, as there are commercial properties that are in practice already receiving 6 bills per year and this would correct the ordinance to match. The intent is for the maximum of 6 to be for commercial properties only.

Councilor Rossetti moved to amend Sec 11-125 (c) to read "...a maximum of 6 per year for commercial and 4 per year for residential". Mr. Raiche noted that they are exploring adjusting the billing frequency for residential properties as well.

The motion was approved.

Councilor Rossetti moved to amend Sec 11-164 (b)(3) to read "...a maximum of 6 per year for commercial and 4 per year for residential".

The motion was approved.

RESULT:

APPROVED AS AMENDED

207954: City Solicitor requesting to amend a contract and appear in Executive Session to discuss a matter of potential litigation.

The Committee entered executive session to discuss this matter and after discussion, approved the request on a voice vote.

RESULT:

APPROVED

208012: Requesting the appropriation of \$854,038 from the Salary Contingency Account to various departmental Personal Services Accounts to fund the FY19 costs of the Memorandum of Agreement with SMEA Unit B.

Ms. McKenzie noted that this represents the retroactive portion on the FY19 appropriation (2 prior years were approved previously), and includes the balance of this fiscal year.

RESULT:

APPROVED

208013: Requesting the appropriation of \$74,095 from the Salary Contingency Account to various departmental Salaries Accounts in order to establish and fund several new positions as part of the SMEA B Memorandum of Agreement.

Ms. McKenzie shared that this funds an upgrade of three positions, which was agreed to in the Memorandum of Agreement, and the increase in salary for engineers to move into non-unit positions, as well as eight new positions into the SMEA B bargaining unit for the balance of the year. Councilor Rossetti asked whether these new positions will be filled quickly enough to justify this funding. Because of the bidding process, there is a shorter timeline. Councilor Rossetti noted that inside transfers would still leave funds available from the vacated positions.

RESULT:

APPROVED

Handouts:

- Union Sq Info (with 207521)
- Union Sq Schedule (with 207521)
- Requests for Finance Committee (with 207521, 207671)
- Central Hill Campus (with 207524)
- Civil Action #1984CV01046 (with 207951)