



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 26, 2019
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three City Councilor	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Ward Two City Councilor	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six City Councilor	Present	

Others present; Eileen McGettigan - Law, Rich Raiche - Engineering, John DeLuca - Water/Sewer, Tom Galligani - OSPCD, Ed Bean - Finance, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman White and adjourned at 11:00 PM.

Approval of the February 11, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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207479: That the Director of Finance, the School Committee and the Superintendent of Schools, with the Administration, provide by February 25, 2019, a written report on the budgetary impacts that adding an Innovation School (i.e. Powderhouse Studios), would have the School and City budgets over 10 years.

Councilor Ballantyne stated that the School Committee had met on a number of occasions to discuss the budgetary impacts that might result from the establishment of the Innovation School at the Powderhouse Studios. The Committee expressed concerns about the cost of adding the new Innovation School and the sources that would be available to fund that new Innovation School, suggesting that those would be a substantial shortfall. The Committee then questioned how this shortfall would impact the school

department budget, especially if the ultimate funding source would be the City budget. The discussion also centered around the impact on the new high school. Members questioned whether the Innovation School should be located in the new high school. Councilor Hirsch questioned its impact on enrollment in the High School if the Innovation School were located elsewhere. At this point in the process, the School Committee is scheduled to vote on approving the Innovation School on March 4, 2019. The Council will become involved during this fiscal year if the School Department needs an appropriation from the general budget as a result of approving the Innovation School. In future years, funding would be included in the overall School Department budget.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206486: That the City take by eminent domain for a public purpose the property at 217 Somerville Ave, for the sum of \$1,200,000.

Councilor Scott stated that he riled this request for the taking on 10/30/18 and was concerned about the delay in addressing it. Mr. Proakis stated that the City had obtained an appraisal for the property at \$1,220,000. Mr. Proakis stated that a taskforce was formed about three weeks ago and a title question held up the response initially. Mr. Proakis offered to speak further with Councilor Scott on the use. The current state of the lot was discussed and members were informed that the building on the site had been demolished. Councilor Hirsch asked what would have to come off the capital project list in order to fund the acquisition of this property and how this acquisition addresses the goal of open space. The committee discussed the impact of the addition of new items to the capital plan on items that are already on the list. Councilor Ballantyne talked about a priority list that was shared with the community. Healey was first priority on the list, followed by the Brown School and West Somerville and Kennedy. Councilor Scott stated that he had spoken with residents and knocked on doors in the community. The developer acted without delay to tear down the building and that residents in the neighborhood are clear that they do not want more condos on that site. Councilor Niedergang stated that these types of opportunities rarely come up and \$1M can be added on to our current financial obligations. Ms. McGettigan stated if the property is taken for open space, it will be dedicated into perpetuity or can take for general municipal purposes. For the City to actually take property by eminent domain, the Mayor would have to submit an appropriation request, which has not been done. The item was kept in committee to await information from the administration on its intentions on the item.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207563: 23 residents submitting a petition re: #206486, a proposed order of taking at 217 Somerville Ave.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207293: Requesting approval to pay a prior year invoice totaling \$220 using available funds in the Personnel Department Professional & Technical Services Account for investigative services.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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207583: 62 residents submitting a petition re: #206486, a proposed order of taking at 217 Somerville Ave.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

207429: City Engineer requesting to address this Board with a water and sewer infrastructure presentation outlining the needed capital, in anticipation of the upcoming rate recommendations.

Mr. Raiche appeared to give an overview an overview of the existing conditions of the water and sewer infrastructure. He presented the attached slides and talked about how 90% of the city's pipes are over 50 years old and how they cannot accommodate current households. Mr. Raiche plans to appear before the committee in the future with a more detailed analysis, including a rate study.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

206004: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$8,745,000 in a bond to purchase land by eminent domain.

Attorney George McLaughlin, who represents the owner of 90 Washington Street, spoke at tonight's meeting. He stated he respectfully disagrees with the city solicitor on the taking of the property and if the City goes forward his client will challenge the taking in superior court. He also stated that his client contends that the property is worth 2-3 times what the city is offering to pay.

The committee went into executive session and no votes were taken.

There was a voice vote in open session with all approving the request. Councilor Scott was not present. The administration will submit a new appropriation request to the Council at the next Council meeting because of the need to change the language of the request that was approved by the Committee and substitute that request with the one that was approved by the Committee.

RESULT:

APPROVED

206005: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,860,000 in a bond for new Public Safety Building design, architectural, engineering, and owner's and contractual project management services.

Mr. Galligani stated it will take approximately 6-9 months for the design process. There are two parallel processes: technical and community. The staff will handle the community dialog.

RESULT:

APPROVED

206735: Attorney Robert McLaughlin, Sr., submitting a court decision relevant to #206003, an Order of Taking for 90 Washington St.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE

207118: Attorney Michael Corcoran submitting comments re: #206003, a proposed Order of Taking of 90 Washington St.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE

207582: McLaughlin Brothers PC submitting comments re: #206003, a proposed Order of Taking for 90 Washington St.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

207548: City Solicitor seeking approval to settle an outstanding claim over \$5,000 in accordance with Ordinance 2-124, and to appear in Executive Session to discuss the matter.

The item was discussed in executive session and no votes were taken. This item was approved unanimously in open session. Councilor McLaughlin recused himself.

RESULT: APPROVED

207527: Requesting the appropriation of \$575,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance to the Law Department's Legal Services Account, to fund anticipated outside legal counsel invoices.

The item was discussed in executive session and no votes were taken. This item was approved unanimously in open session. Councilor McLaughlin recused himself.

RESULT: APPROVED

207530: Requesting the appropriation of \$85,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance Account to the Damages to Persons and Property Account in order to fund the settlement of an outstanding claim.

The item was discussed in executive session and no votes were taken. This item was unanimously approved in open session. Councilor McLaughlin recused himself.

RESULT: APPROVED

207536: Requesting acceptance of a \$41,125 grant with no new match required from the Metro North Workforce Board to SPCD's Economic Development Division for the Advanced Manufacturing Training Program.

Mr. Galligani stated that this is the fourth year in which the City has received the grant. Funds are used training and the participants receive certifications upon completion. The salaries for jobs that are funded through this program start at \$40,000. The program started on January 28th with eight adult students.

RESULT: APPROVED

Handouts:

- Responses (with 207479)
- Water Sewer Capital Needs 2-26-19 (with 207429)
- Letter (with 207118, 206003)