



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 24, 2018
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

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

Others present: Alderman Mark Niedergang, Rich Raiche - Engineering, Frank Wright - Law, Rob King - Capital Projects, Alan Inacio - OSPCD, Suzanne Rinfret - T&P, Ed Bean - Finance, Stan Koty - DPW, Jim Halloran - DPW, Jill Lathan - POS, Michael Fager - CPC, Kristen Stelljes - CPA, Denise Taylor - Communications, Al McDonald - Counsel for SMEA, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:06 PM by Chairman White and adjourned at 6:43 PM.

Approval of the April 10, 2018 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

205516: Requesting approval for a time-only extension with SMMA for the High School building project until 12/31/2021.

RESULT: APPROVED

205517: Requesting approval for a time-only extension for the PMA contract for the High School building project until 12/31/2021.

RESULT: APPROVED

204888: That the Director of Parks and Recreation and the Director of Finance report to this Board how much money was spent per year on girls' programs and boys' programs during FY16, FY17 and FY18 to date.

Ms. Latham distributed a handout with the requested data. The committee discussed various youth programs and their costs, (boys vs. girls expenses), and Alderman Ballantyne expressed concern about more money being spent on boys sports. Alderman Ewen-Campen and Alderman Ballantyne requested that the handout be supplemented with additional information. When the committee receives the additional information from Ms. Latham, it will follow up on the item.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205109: That the Administration and Director of Parks and Recreation develop a financial policy for programming for persons under 18 years of age that ensures gender equity when using public funds.

Ms. Latham confirmed that there are no discriminatory practices or policies occurring in the city. Numbers for males participation are historically higher than those for females, however the numbers for females are increasing and the city is trying to do outreach. Ald. Ballantyne said that she needed the additional information requested for item 204888 before she could fully discuss this item. As a result, this item also was kept in committee, pending receipt of the additional information requested for item

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205502: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$2,700,000 in a bond to finance paving and sidewalk improvements.

Mr. Raiche discussed the algorithm that the city uses to determine the streets and level of improvements that are to be undertaken each year and the requested amount is the level amount that the city has been using.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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205671: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,002,291 in a bond for DPW vehicles and equipment.

Mr. Koty explained what vehicles were needed and he reviewed the list of the vehicles and equipment covered under the requested bond. He also discussed a new piece of equipment that sweeps the streets and cuts weeds on the sidewalk.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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205512: Requesting a transfer of \$28,028 from the Recreation Field Maintenance Salaries Account to the Recreation Part Time Salaries Account.

Mr. Bean explained that there was an oversight in the FY-18 budget in that the increase was due to occur after the budget was presented and voted upon but was not calculated in setting the line item. Alderman Rossetti stated her concern that the error wasn't detected earlier.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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205513: Requesting a transfer of \$6,996 from the Salary Contingency Salaries Account to the Parks and Recreation Part-Time Salaries Account.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205520: Requesting approval to execute a five year lease agreement for the Grove Street parking lot

Ms. Rinfret discussed the details and said that the city has been negotiating with the owner of the lot, who wanted much more than the final rent agreed upon. The lot does produce revenue and it is expected that the meter receipts will cover the rent.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205504: Requesting the appropriation of \$797,330 from the CPA Fund historic resources, budgeted, and undesignated reserves to the City of Somerville Parks and Open Space Division for the rehabilitation of Prospect Hill Park.

Mr. Fager and Ms. Stelljes gave an overview of the work required at Prospect Hill Park and said that it is valuable as both open space and a historical location. They also discussed how the CPA funds are distributed on a percentage basis between open space, historical preservation and affordable housing. Alderman Ewen-Campen is in favor of the Prospect Hill Park project and noted that he has seen a great deal of community involvement. Funding recommendations for various projects were distributed along with a memo from Kristen Stelljes, dated April 19, 2018. (These handouts were also emailed to the BOA and posted on MinuteTraq in advance.) The committee discussed the amounts requested for each project as well as the amount actually granted. The only project to receive 100% of the amount requested was the community path project. Alderman Rossetti expressed concern over the percentages of funds granted to open space projects and she would like to see those projects receive more consideration from the Community Preservation Committee due to the outcry from constituents. Mr. Fager stated that the electorate in the city also has stressed that they want the funds to be allocated to affordable housing. Chairman White requested that applications for the various projects get emailed to the BOA.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205509: Requesting the appropriation of \$85,100 from the CPA Fund historic resources reserve to the City of Somerville Elections Department for the preservation of elections records.

Mr. Fager discussed the importance of putting the data in a digital form.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205510: Requesting the appropriation of \$73,000 from the CPA Fund historic resources reserve to the Elizabeth Peabody House Association to replace their roof.

Mr. Fager stated the building was built circa 1890 and there are extensive renovations needed.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205506: Requesting the appropriation of \$155,339 from the CPA Fund open space/recreation and undesignated reserves to the Mystic River Watershed Association for design services for the Blessing of the Bay Park.

Mr. Fager said the goal is to make the park more accessible to the public, both physically and visually. Chairman White expressed concern about cutting rag weed and invasive weeds at the banks of the Mystic River and inquired about the process of getting permission to do so, as this would help to make the area more usable for the community. Mr. Fager said that he would work with the Conservation Commission in authorizing the removal of ragweed and other invasive weeds during the renovation.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205505: Requesting the appropriation of \$350,000 from the CPA Fund undesignated reserve budget to the Friends of the Community Growing Center for the rehabilitation of the Community Growing Center.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205508: Requesting the appropriation of \$90,000 from the CPA Fund open space/recreational land reserve to the City of Somerville Parks and Recreation Department for improving the Dilboy Auxiliary fields.

The project's goal is to create a natural grass playing field. There are certain drainage concerns due to the extreme moisture caused by Alewife Brook and Alderman Ballantyne expressed concern about irrigation at the fields. The redesign of the fields will add a new soccer field to the complex.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205511: Requesting the appropriation of \$15,000 from the CPA Fund undesignated reserve budget to the City of Somerville for tree canopy and invasive species improvements for the Community Path.

The path has invasive species trees that should be removed. There is also a plan to improve the drainage on the bike path and completing this project at the same time makes sense.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205507: Requesting the appropriation of \$140,000 from the CPA Fund open space/recreational land reserve and undesignated reserve budget to the City of Somerville Parks and Open Space Division for design services for the Brown and West Somerville Neighborhood Schoolyards.

The school yards in the city are considered “city” property and not “school” property and they are open to the public even when school is closed. Many parents and residents complained about the current status of the schoolyards, including their hard top condition.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205503: Requesting the appropriation of \$369,847 from the Receipts Reserved for Appropriation-Cable TV License Receipts Account to the Cable Television PEG Access Fund, to fund the FY18 Budget.

Alderman Rossetti recused herself from this item.

Ms. Taylor discussed how the city obtains revenue from the cable franchises and Mr. Bean discussed how these funds will be allocated and appropriated as it relates to the city’s general fund.

RESULT:

APPROVED

205501: Requesting approval of an Administrative Order providing for the appointment of school physicians and nurses by the School Committee.

Chairman White explained that a public hearing is necessary for this item. Mr. Wright gave a history of the city’s challenges in trying to attract school nurses and said that most of the communities examined (by the city) have the school nurses under their school departments. The intent is to move the school nurses control from the city to the school committee and to keep the terms of employment and salaries as they are now, however going forward they would bargain with the School Committee and not the city. There is a presumption that the SMEA could still bargain for the nurses. Chairman White said he, as the Chair of the committee has great discretion in authorizing public input during committee meetings and that this item was slated for a public hearing. However, in fairness he did invite a representative of the SMEA to speak. Mr. Halloran, President of the SMEA asked if their attorney, Mr. McDonald could speak. The Chair allowed Mr. McDonald to address the committee. Mr. McDonald told the committee that there was no notice from the city to the SMEA that it intended to seek the administrative order. . He feels that the City should have first notified the SMEA and engaged in impact bargaining. He also indicated that litigation could result without that impact bargaining. Mr. Wright was hesitant to have this discussion at an open meeting and respectfully deferred any questions at this time with respect to collective bargaining for discussion in executive session. Alderman Rossetti discussed that she would like to go into executive session to address the concerns. The Chair stated that there was a number of city staff present and it would be unfair to them to go into executive session and require them to wait. Therefore, the Chair said that the best approach would be to table this item and then take up voting on a motion to go into executive session at the end of the meeting. The Committee agreed. At the end of the Agenda, the Chair moved to go into executive session after first confirming with the City Solicitor that executive session was appropriate to discuss collective bargaining. The Committee voted unanimously to go into executive session. The Chair also stated that upon the conclusion of executive session, the committee would then meet in public. The Committee then reconvened in public and the Chair announced that no votes had been taken in committee. Chairman White announced that he will

work with the City Clerk to schedule a public hearing on this item as a committee of the whole in May, 2018, so that all members of the Board can participate.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

205519: Requesting approval of a time-only extension of the Design Consultants Inc. Beacon Street construction administration contract, to 12/31/2018.

Alderman Rossetti commented that there are many constituents concerned about the trees being removed as a result of this project Chairman White clarified that the tree concerns are not relevant to this particular item as the trees were designated in the plans by the state and these consultants had no role in the tree problems that arose. Alderman Rossetti would like to get the Ward 2 Alderman's opinion on this item before acting on it. Chairman White and Alderman Ewen-Campen opined that changing engineers mid-project would cause havoc. Chairman White suggested approving the item to move the item forward and that if there were any objections they could be addressed during the committee report. The committee thereafter approved the item.

RESULT:

APPROVED

Handouts:

- Parks and Rec Spending (with 204888)
- Pavement Mgt. Program (with 205502)
- Allocation of CPA Funds (with 205504)