

Madalyn Letellier

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 9:23 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: I urge councilors to reject an Israel boycott

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Frank Valdes
[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Sylvia Belkin [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 8:39 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Israel Boycott

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Please pass this on: Citizens of America must be inclusive and caring of each other. The boycott of Israel's resources is sending a message to citizens of Somerville: Jews are not welcome in our city! It's a terrible thing to be rejected by one's fellow townspeople, let alone curse a religion. We must stand together to support each other. It's not too late!
I am a proud Jew who cares about our people; our country; our world. Stand with me.
Sylvia Belkin

Madalyn Letellier

From: Dial, Topher [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 11:50 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Please Keep Focused On SOMERVILLE

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Dear Somerville City Councilors:

I am writing to encourage you to reject the proposed Israel boycott. This boycott is divisive and does nothing to help Somerville residents.

Let's focus on the problems that are real and truly impacting our community!

Sincerely,
Topher Dial

[REDACTED]
Somerville MA 02145

Topher Dial
Banaji Implicit Social Cognition Lab | Harvard Psychology Department | 617-384-9654

Madalyn Letellier

From: Jonathan Dovev <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 10:39 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Assessment of the potential fiscal, governance and economic risks of a BDS ordinance

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Dear City Councillors,

I am writing this assessment of the potential fiscal, governance and economic risks for you to consider before Somerville adopts a BDS ordinance.

The BDS movement has succeeded in hijacking Somerville's political agenda, but it offers nothing of substance for residents—particularly not the city's poor, hungry, or unhoused. Instead of addressing urgent local needs, BDS would impose a highly politicized agenda that risks driving businesses away, increasing legal costs, and destabilizing city finances.

This is not symbolic or ideological—it is a governance, fiscal, and credit risk with real and lasting consequences. Credit rating agencies such as Moody's evaluate not only fiscal metrics, but also the quality, predictability, and stability of municipal governance. Policies that are legally vulnerable, politically contentious, and disconnected from core municipal functions raise concerns regarding management focus and institutional discipline.

The adoption of a BDS ordinance would introduce:

- Politicized procurement and contracting decisions
- Increased exposure to constitutional and contractual litigation
- Reduced policy predictability and administrative stability

From a credit perspective, these are negative governance indicators that elevate institutional risk.

Credit Implications

Moody's evaluates municipal creditworthiness through:

- Governance quality
- Legal and operating risk
- Economic vitality and tax base stability

While Somerville currently benefits from strong financial management and an AAA credit rating, the sustained introduction of:

- Governance volatility
- Politicized procurement practices
- Recurring legal exposure
- Heightened regulatory and political risk

could incrementally weaken the city's credit profile. Even a modest deterioration in perceived risk management can trigger heightened rating scrutiny, constrain financial flexibility, and increase borrowing costs over time. Higher borrowing costs directly reduce funds available for housing, infrastructure, and social services.

Legal and Contractual Exposure*

BDS ordinances are highly susceptible to constitutional challenges, contract impairment claims, and procurement disputes.

Legal exposure is recurring and structural, not one-time. Based on comparable municipal litigation patterns:

- Initial legal defense costs: \$500,000 – \$1.0+ million
- Multi-year litigation and appeals: \$2–\$4+ million
- Ongoing legal carry costs: \$250,000 – \$500,000 annually

These costs weaken financial flexibility, introduce budget volatility, and divert management attention from essential services.

Direct Operating Costs: Staffing and Compliance Infrastructure*

If enforced meaningfully, a BDS ordinance would require a permanent compliance and enforcement apparatus. Minimal staffing:

- Compliance / BDS Director
- Municipal legal analyst
- Procurement & contract compliance officer
- IT / data compliance officer
- Administrative or policy analyst

Total staff: 4–6 full-time employees

Annual staffing costs: \$500,000 – \$750,000

Monitoring software & systems:

- Initial setup: \$100,000 – \$250,000
- Ongoing maintenance: \$50,000 – \$100,000 annually.

Economic and Tax Base Risk: Business Avoidance

Business location and expansion decisions are heavily influenced by regulatory and political risk. Legal uncertainty, litigation, and politicized procurement reduce investment attractiveness. For companies considering Somerville, a BDS ordinance signals:

- Unpredictable contracting rules
- Elevated compliance and reputational risk
- Exposure to political controversy unrelated to operations

Even modest risk perception can lead firms to exclude Somerville, favoring neighboring jurisdictions. This reduces job creation, erodes the commercial tax base, weakens revenue growth, and shifts fiscal pressure onto residents. Combined with compliance and legal costs, this creates a reinforcing cycle of financial stress.

Bottom Line

A BDS ordinance would:

- Require 4–6 new municipal employees
- Create a permanent \$1–2 million annual budget drain
- Invite years of costly litigation
- Deter business investment and job growth
- Introduce governance risks inconsistent with AAA credit standards

From a fiscal and credit standpoint, this is not symbolic policy. It is structural risk, real money, and real opportunity cost. From a community perspective, BDS diverts attention and resources away from the residents of Somerville.

**Disclosure : The costs are conservative estimates obtained using ChatGPT and Gemini. While directionally correct they may under or overestimate specific line items.*

Jonathan Dovev, resident
[REDACTED], Somerville