



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom, was called to order by Chair Wilson at 6:00 pm and adjourned at 7:05 pm with a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Scott, and Chair Wilson), 1 opposed (Councilor Kelly), and none absent.

Chair Wilson noted that due to a clerical error, there is no item 2 on the agenda.

Others present: Hannah Carrillo – Mayor’s Office, Alan Inacio – OSPCD, Maria Nagel – SomerViva, Anthony Delmonaco – SPD, Diane D’Angeli – SPD, Stephanie Widzowski – Clerk of Committees.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Jake Wilson, Vice Chair Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, Charlotte Kelly, Jesse Clingan and Judy Pineda Neufeld

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-1706](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of November 14, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Appropriations

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1718](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$170,000 from the Union Square Community Benefits Stabilization Fund, with \$100,000 for workforce development services and \$70,000 for small business technical assistance services.

Councilor Kelly asked for clarification from the memo on what the funds will be used for. Dir. Inacio said that the previous service accounts had gone to Union Square Main Streets and the Somerville Community Corporation, and those organizations will most likely be funded again.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

4. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1721](#)) Requesting the appropriation of \$955,000 from the Participatory Budgeting Stabilization Fund for the purpose of implementing the winning projects from Somerville's first Participatory Budgeting cycle.

Liaison Carrillo said that staff will present the full body of work at the upcoming City Council meeting.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE DISCHARGED WITH NO RECOMMENDATION**

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Contracts and Easements

5. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1723](#)) Requesting approval to extend a contract with Janeth Moreno from Moreno Law for one year, to June 30, 2024, for the provision of immigration legal services.

Dir. Nagel explained that municipal finance law requires that contracts not be extended for over 3 years, but that there is an exception for legal services going directly to constituents through the civilization fund. This contract is such an exception. Dir. Nagel talked about the logistics of billing and setting aside funding, and added that the contract will need to be extended through June of 2024 to be able to fulfill their obligations.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Gift Acceptances

6. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1720](#)) Requesting approval to accept an in-kind gift valued at \$15,000 with no new match required, from the SUGi project to the Parks and Urban Forestry Division for materials and professional services for the Miyawaki forest planting.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Transfers

7. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1732](#)) Requesting approval of a transfer of \$25,000 from various SomerStat Ordinary Maintenance Accounts to the SomerStat Salaries & Wages Temporary Account to fund additional temporary employee time.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Amendments

- 8. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1641](#)) Requesting approval to amend the Community Preservation Act Fund's FY 2023 grant of \$425,000 to the Somerville Hispanic Association for Community Development, to change the scope of the building renovations without increasing the funds.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Grant Acceptances

- 9. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1722](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$116,800 grant that requires a match, from the MA Department of Transportation to the Mobility Division for the West Broadway Vision Zero Implementation project.

Chair Wilson noted that the grant requires a match and that the Finance Committee will be looking for the match to appear before them later.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

- 10. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1756](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$20,000 grant with no new match required, from State Opioids Response to the Police Department for the Post-Overdose Follow-Up with First Responders program.

Councilor Scott recused herself from this item. Dir. Delmonaco explained that Somerville is a subrecipient of the grant and is partnered with Fenway Health. Councilor Kelly reiterated her past question of why the grant must go through SPD instead of HHS. Liaison Carrillo confirmed from Patti Contente that this is a requirement, and said that she could touch base with her again to determine the reason. Councilor Kelly requested a follow up on this information before the City Council meeting.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Chairperson Wilson, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

ABSENT: Vice Chair Scott

11. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1752](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$39,398 grant with no new match required, from the Department of Mental Health to the Police Department for jail diversion.
- Dir. Delmonaco said that the grant has been renewed since 2011 and that a large part goes to the salary of the jail diversion coordinator. Councilor Kelly noted how the grant application describes the coordinator working directly with officers on-scene. She asked for confirmation that the coordinator goes with officers to respond to service calls. Liaison Carrillo said that she could get the answer to this by the City Council meeting.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld
12. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1751](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$298,280 grant with no new match required, from the Department of Mental Health to the Police Department for the Crisis Intervention Team Training and Technical Assistance Center (CITT-TAC) jail diversion program.
- Dir. Delmonaco said that the grant provides training for professional development. Currently, 83% of trained officers are in a 40-hour CIT class. This number is not 100% because of vacancies and new hires. Councilor Kelly asked if officers are repeating the training. She also requested a list of officers in the CIT training. Liaison Carrillo clarified that there are multiple trainings under the grant and that no officers are repeating trainings, to her knowledge. Councilor Kelly also asked about the backfill for officers in the attached table (document titled "DMH CITT TAC Jail Diversion FY24renewal") and whether it is more expensive to have the shift backfilled. She ended with a question about the \$15,000 honoraria, which Liaison Carrillo said she would look into.
- Councilor Scott asked if the Co-Director MB CIT TTAC position is in SPD. Ms. D'Angeli said that three positions in the table are not shown on the SPD budget because their entire salaries are paid by the grant. Councilor Scott mentioned an agreement made several years ago to list such positions on the budget regardless, for recordkeeping.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
13. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1755](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$295,463 grant with no new match required, from the State 911 Department to the Police Department for enhanced 911 Telecommunicator personnel costs.
- Dir. Delmonaco said that the grant is mainly used to offset salaries for 911 operators.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

- 14. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1754](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$120,420.65 grant with no new match required, from the State 911 Department to the Police Department for Emergency Medical Dispatch training.

Dir. Delmonaco said that there are 16 hours of state-mandated training for 911 operators, and there have also been wage increases since the last request. Councilor Kelly asked who is backfilling the dispatchers. Ms. D'Angeli said that they are officers, but are certified along with the 911 staff. Councilor Kelly asked for confirmation that it is the 16-hour training that backfill officers take.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

- 15. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1753](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$24,500 grant with no new match required, from the State 911 Department of Emergency Medical Dispatch to the Police Department for Emergency Medical Dispatch work with Cataldo Ambulance Service of Massachusetts.

Dir. Delmonaco said that the whole grant goes to the contract for ambulance services.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Chairperson Wilson, Vice Chair Scott, City Councilor At Large Kelly, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

Ordinances

- 16. Ordinance (ID # [23-0827](#)) By Councilor Scott and Councilor Wilson Amending Section 2-323 of the Code of Ordinances, Salary Ranges, to provide cost-of-living adjustments for School Committee Members and City Councilors.

Chair Wilson noted that the School Committee position descriptions have changed in the past few years, which informs the adjustments for those positions. He suggested setting up a process, either by charter or by ordinance, where an elected compensation study is done periodically to determine whether an increase in elected compensation is warranted, with that recommendation informing any change to elected salaries. Elected pay would then automatically increase by the rate of inflation as measured by

either the Consumer Price Index or Social Security COLA. Multiple councilors supported using the Council's authority as currently written in the charter to raise pay in the meantime. Councilor Kelly also advocated for closing the gap between the salaries of the City Council and the School Committee.

Councilor Scott asked about the staffing study, and Liaison Carrillo said that there will be an executive session for that item during the 12/14 City Council meeting.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- Finance - 2023-12-12 Grant Acceptance Request Memo (with 23-1722)
- Finance - 2023-12-12 Somerville - MARWIS Quote 10.27.23 (with 23-1722)
- Finance - 2023-12-12 Memo CommunityBenefitsAppropriation Final (with 23-1718)