



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES**

February 9, 2021
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Vice Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	City Councilor at Large	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Present	

Others present: Khushbu Webber-Mayor's Office, Alan Inacio-OSPCD, Doug Kress-HHS, Matthew Mitchel-HHS, Jill Lathan-DPW, Balkys Sicard-DPW and Greg Jenkins-Arts Council. The chair sponsored Councilor Clingan to speak on item number 3.

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairperson Scott and adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Approval of the January 26, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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211199: Requesting to transfer CPA funds totaling \$436,069 from the CPA Undesignated Fund Balance to designated CPA Reserve Accounts.

Mr. Inacio stated this is a procedural accounting request for city fiscal year end for tax revenue.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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211200: Requesting the appropriation of \$375,578 from the CPA Open Space/Recreational Land Reserve Budget and the Budgeted Reserve for the Healey School Tot Lot Renovation.

Mr. Inacio stated CPC voted for initial phase of Healey tot lot project. This will be going out to bid shortly with completion date in the summer. Chair Scott stated there had been funding already appropriated for this project which has been on hold. Ms. Oliveira stated there is a larger project of \$6.5M, but when the pandemic hit, it forced the smaller project forward. She also stated the funding through CPA will be bid out next week while moving the larger project forward. The original plan was to put the whole project out as one project. Ms. Oliveira is

hoping to get the tot lot done quickly. Bidding separately can give them a lead with bid prices being very favorable right now. They did a very deep dive on how to bid this out.

Councilor Ballantyne asked when did they approve the bond for the field. It was stated that the bond was approved in 2020 and they were preparing to get the bid out in March, but then the pandemic hit. Ms. Oliveira stated the field portion of the bid will go out in late March.

Chair Scott sponsored Councilor Clingan to speak on this matter. Councilor Clingan's constituents are very concerned about the school yard and what happens to summer programs. Ms. Oliveira responded to Councilor Clingan that this is a technical construction decision made by the construction team. Getting this out will advance the tot lot for the fall of 2021 to have access to that space. The bid for the tot lot has already been advertised.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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211201: Requesting the appropriation of \$125,000 from the CPA Historic Resources Reserve Budget and the Budgeted Reserve to the Broadway House, 181 Broadway, to rehabilitate the exterior, replace windows, and preserve historic details.

Mr. Inacio stated these are exterior improvements to replace windows. There are community organizations that utilize this building for non-profit work.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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211202: Requesting the appropriation of \$90,000 from the CPA Historic Resources Reserve Budget to the Broadway Winter Hill Congregational Church for the renovation of the bell tower.

Mr. Inacio explained these are exterior improvements to the building to preserve its historical character.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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211203: Requesting the appropriation of \$87,114 from the CPA Historic Resources Reserve Budget to the Somerville Museum for Collection Care.

Councilor White recused himself from this item. Somerville museum has had several requests to preserve the building and to add some ADA compliance.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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211204: Requesting the appropriation of \$49,500 from the CPA Historic Resources Reserve Budget and the Budgeted Reserve to the Grace Baptist Church to repair the slate roof, replace related gutters, and repaint brick masonry.

Mr. Inacio stated the funding this year is to preserve exterior elements. There are non-profit organizations who use the space such as the Hispanic Resources Development and Food Pantry.

RESULT:

APPROVED

211205: Requesting the appropriation of \$3,500 from the CPA Historic Resources Reserve Budget to the Somerville Public Library for the Works Progress Administration Carved Wood Bas-Relief Restoration.

Mr. Inacio stated this funding will complete this project. Councilor Rossetti asked how many have presented their cases but did not receive funding. Mr. Inacio stated there was one project that did not meet the criteria and they suggested they apply again next year.

RESULT:

APPROVED

211206: Requesting acceptance of a \$100,000 grant with no new match required, from the MA Attorney General's Office to the Health & Human Services Department for opioid recovery navigators.

Mr. Kress HHS director and Mr. Mitchell, prevention manager responded to this item. It was stated they applied for the grant with Mass General office to bring on opioid navigators to the community of color. Column Health is an opioid related center with other locations in surrounding area. They have medication and psychiatry on staff and are looking to expand their business with the community of color.

Councilor Ballantyne asked about the need that is out there. Mr. Mitchell stated he relies on the data from the state and from Column Health. He believes this one grant will not fill the need completely but is a step in the right direction. Mr. Kress is hoping that the opioid recovery navigators will be bilingual with Haitian/Creole and Spanish languages.

RESULT:

APPROVED

211207: Requesting acceptance of \$11,500 grant with no new match required, from the Mass Cultural Council to the Arts Council for unrestricted operational support.

Mr. Jenkins stated this is a typical grant from the state Mass Cultural Council and can be used for people in the office or for supplemental programming.

RESULT:

APPROVED

211230: Requesting the use of available funds in various DPW Ordinary Maintenance Accounts to pay \$52,414.95 in prior fiscal year unencumbered invoices.

Ms. Lathan stated that Ms. Sicard has been very diligent going through the invoices. Ms. Sicard stated there are number of invoices for each DPW division that were not paid. She managed to put together a list of vendors to call for invoices when she rolled this out in December to minimize late invoices. Historically, DPW has received invoices very late. The majority invoices coming in now are a result of call for invoices. Ms. Sicard sent out a memo to all vendors to educate them on the city's practices. DPW has moved to electronic billing wherever they can. Ms. Sicard believes they are 85% to 90% of the way to having invoices handled electronically.

Councilor Rossetti asked Ms. Sicard about the previous person doing this job. Ms. Lathan stated they are doing a deep dive in DPW to make sure payments are up-to-date and transparent. Ms. Lathan believes this will not be the last request, but is the most current. Councilor Rossetti asked what was the total of the last request that was approved? Ms. Sicard will send the communication for the committee regarding last request for funding of unpaid invoices. Ms. Sicard stated she has identified 150 vendors that were not on her list of vendors to be paid. Councilor Rossetti feels she needs a further discussion on this matter with the mayor.

Chair White asked about the process of how this happened in the first place. Ms. Sicard is creating internal systems so that this does not happen in the future. Ms. Sicard stated the current practice is that the superintendent has to sign off on invoices if they are \$10,000. The foreman has the authority to make purchases. DPW would receive many paper invoices through various areas of Franey Road through different locations. Not all were coming to DPW and could show up a year later. Ms. Sicard worked to make the process fully transparent. She has vendors submit invoices electronically in an effort to make sure invoices are not lost. Ms. Sicard has established Outlook inboxes for the various departments and the vendors can forward their invoices to the specific inboxes. Once the superintendent approves the invoice, the clerk will submit the invoice for payment. The invoices before the committee are legacy issues. Ms. Sicard is going through the invoices and talking to the vendors to make sure the invoices are legitimate before paying them. Ms. Lathan stated there has been significant turnover in the finance area.

Councilor Ballantyne would like to know in writing the total of invoices year to date by year. Councilor Ballantyne asked Ms. Sicard to send her an email within the next month by year on how much is over in the budget.

Councilor Mbah stated that DPW is a large department and asked if DPW works with an auditor. Ms. Sicard works with one of the city's internal auditor and Somerstat to review the system and invoices. Ms. Sicard stated DPW is going through an initiative to go through inventory to tag equipment and understand depreciation value of equipment.

Councilor Rossetti requested Ms. Webber set up time with the Mayor to discuss this matter. Chair Scott requested to be included with the discussion with the Mayor.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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211208: Requesting approval of a time-only extension for Gienapp Design Associates for engineering and construction administration services on various on-call engineering projects for one year through 2/28/2022.

It was stated this is for the Winter Hill school water leaks and is on the CIP.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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211198: Requesting the appropriation of \$130,853 from the Medical Marijuana Stabilization Fund for substance use prevention, community/parent/student education, overdose/naloxone training, and an Overdose Prevention Center.

There was a breakdown provided with this item. Mr. Kress stated this request is to utilize stabilization funds for registered medical marijuana. He also stated that the funds have been updated with the additional checks and the balance is just over \$1M. It was stated that Mr.

Mitchell helps to coordinate some of the activities for this request. There are stipends for parents and young people for peer education. Additionally, there are increasing requests for naloxone to help with overdose prevention center. Mr. Mitchell stated the people from the working group are community members who have been involved in substance abuse, psychiatrist from Mclean hospital, Revolution clinic, liberty clinic, Somerville Police Department, Councilor Clingan and School Committee member Andre Green. Mr. Kress stated the money will be coming in for a short period of time, like a revolving amount of money and has to be allocated within a certain perimeter. Councilor Rossetti suggested the money should be put to good use right away and not wait for another year to use the money. Mr. Kress will make sure the task force takes a look at where the funds are going.

RESULT:

APPROVED

Referenced Material:

- Budget summary FY21 (with 211198)