



## CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

March 2, 2021

### REPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mary Jo Rossetti	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Kristen Strezo	City Councilor at Large	Present	

Others present: Deputy Chief Chris Ward - SPD, Deputy Chief James Stanford - SPD, Khushbu Webber - Director of Governmental Affairs, Ellen Collins - HR, Lauren Racaniello - Legislative Liaison, Rose Durham - Clerk of Committees, Peter Forcelllese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:01 PM by Chair Rossetti and adjourned at 9:01 PM on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Clingan, Strezo, Scott and Rossetti), 0 against and 0 absent.

Chair Rossetti explained the process for tonight's meeting and said that each candidate would be allowed to make opening and closing statements, if desired, and would be interviewed in open session prior to continuing the interview in Executive Session and would then return to open session to conclude the interview. Chair Rossetti asked that members keep to same line of questioning for all candidates and to keep to the matter at hand. Chair Rossetti explained to each candidate that some of the questions asked tonight may have been asked during other stages of the process and she asked that the answers provided tonight be honest and consistent with their previous answers, adding that they should feel free to comment on or explain their answers if they wish to do so. After the Committee returned from Executive Session, the candidates were voted on in the reverse order of the agenda.

#### **Approval of the February 2, 2021 Minutes**

The minutes were accepted on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Clingan, Strezo, Scott and Rossetti), none against and none absent.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED</b>
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### **Approval of the February 16, 2021 Minutes**

The minutes were accepted on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Clingan, Strezo, Scott and Rossetti), none against and none absent.

**RESULT:**

**ACCEPTED**

### **Approval of the February 18, 2021 Minutes**

The minutes were accepted on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Clingan, Strezo, Scott and Rossetti), none against and none absent.

**RESULT:**

**ACCEPTED**

### **210575: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Kevin Henriquez to the position of Reserve Police Officer.**

Deputy Chief Ward introduced candidate Kevin Henriquez to the committee and gave a brief summary of his background. Mr. Henriquez is a graduate of the Police Academy in Lowell, that is one of the academies that Somerville uses to train its officers. Mr. Henriquez is fluent in Spanish and is currently learning to speak Italian.

The candidate thanked the committee for the opportunity presented to him. Councilor Mbah asked the candidate what made him want to be a police officer and Mr. Henriquez replied that he wants to help people and change the perspective held by young people. Councilor Mbah asked about his experience in a correctional facility and the candidate explained his part time position of auditing cells inside the center. Councilor Scott asked the candidate if black lives matter and the candidate replied that they do, adding that everyone should be treated equally.

Chair Rossetti said she appreciated Mr. Henriquez's statements in his introduction video about bridging the gap and the candidate stated that police officers should be part of the community.

Chair Rossetti posed the following scenario:

'You and a partner have arrested a suspect for selling drugs. During the arrest procedure at the scene, you recovered illegal drugs and a large amount of money. While you are securing these items for submittal as evidence, you observe a partner place some of the money in his or her pocket. What would you do in that case?' The candidate replied that he would speak to his supervisor right away and also tell his co-worker that he observed him and was going to report it.

Chair Rossetti asked the candidate if the Executive Session notification was received and understood, and Mr. Henriquez said it was and that he was prepared to go into Executive Session.

Chair Rossetti moved to enter into Executive Session to review protected personnel information or to discuss matters related to individual candidates pursuant to MGL c30A s21(a)(1). The motion was laid on the table until the remaining candidates were interviewed. After the last candidate was interviewed, the Committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session for the above stated reason at 7:05 PM and returned to the regular meeting at 8:01 PM. Chair Rossetti announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session other than the vote to return to the regular meeting.

The candidate told the committee that he was grateful to be here and Councilors Scott and Mbah expressed their appreciation for his responses. Chair Rossetti inquired if this candidate could be

pinned soon and Deputy Chief Ward answered that he could, since he has already completed the academy training.

Chair Rossetti's motion to approve this item was approved on a roll call vote. The candidate was advised that the committee's report would be before the City Council next week for approval and she requested that he return to the high school to speak with the students.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED. [3 TO 2]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Rossetti, Clingan, Strezo
<b>NAYS:</b>	Scott, Mbah

**210572: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Jamey Thompson to the position of Reserve Police Officer.**

Deputy Chief Ward introduced candidate Jamey Thompson to the committee and gave a brief summary of his background. Mr. Thompson attended Bunker Hill Community College and has worked with the YMCA working to assist youths with employment and literacy.

The candidate thanked the committee for the opportunity and said that he was grateful to have made it this far in the process. Councilor Mbah asked what made him want to be a police officer and Mr. Thompson replied that he realized it's one of the most important and difficult position to hold, and he feels he has some unique skills. Having recently lost both his parents, he thinks he'll be able to connect with others going through that difficult time in their lives. He wants a career that he's passionate about it and he wants to be a good role model for his son. Councilor Scott asked the candidate what black lives matter meant to him and Mr. Thompson replied that throughout history, African-Americans and people of color have been treated unfairly and unjustly, and many times have been mistreated by police. As a bi-racial person himself, he stands behind the Black Lives Matter movement as it tries to speak out against social and racial injustice.

Chair Rossetti was impressed with the candidate's involvement with younger children.

Chair Rossetti posed the following scenario:

'You and a partner have arrested a suspect for selling drugs. During the arrest procedure at the scene, you recovered illegal drugs and a large amount of money. While you are securing these items for submittal as evidence, you observe a partner place some of the money in his or her pocket. What would you do in that case?' The candidate replied that he would report the incident to his superior and said that the officer would need to be held accountable, adding that he wouldn't want another officer to jeopardize his career or the integrity of the Police Department.

Chair Rossetti asked the candidate if the Executive Session notification was received and understood, and Mr. Thompson said it was and that he was prepared to go into Executive Session.

Chair Rossetti moved to enter into Executive Session to review protected personnel information or to discuss matters related to individual candidates pursuant to MGL c30A s21(a)(1). The motion was laid on the table until the remaining candidates were interviewed. After the last candidate was interviewed, the Committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session for the above stated reason at 7:05 PM and returned to the regular meeting at 8:01 PM. Chair Rossetti announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session other than the vote to return to the regular meeting.

The candidate thanked the committee for meeting with him tonight. Councilor Scott stated that he explicitly supports Mr. Thompson’s statement of solidarity with Black Lives Matter and Councilor Mbah thanked him for his humility.

Chair Rossetti’s motion to approve this item was approved on a roll call vote. The candidate was advised that the committee’s report would be before the City Council next week for approval.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED. [3 TO 2]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Rossetti, Clingan, Strezo
<b>NAYS:</b>	Scott, Mbah

**210574: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Kelsey Malloy-Ripley to the position of Reserve Police Officer.**

Deputy Chief Ward introduced candidate Kelsey Malloy-Ripley to the committee and gave a brief summary of her background. A lifelong resident of Somerville, she holds a degree in Criminal Justice from Bunker Hill Community College and has coached Somerville youth softball.

The candidate thanked the committee for the opportunity. Councilor Mbah asked what made her want to be a police officer and the candidate replied that she always wanted to be one, adding that she was influenced by her participation in the Cops and Kids Program. She wants to give back to community she grew up in. Councilor Mbah asked what she thought people she supervised might say about her and Ms. Malloy said that she thinks they would say that she has integrity. Councilor Scott asked what black lives matter means to her and she responded that they matter and that it’s important to show that they matter and that they should be treated fairly and with respect by everyone, not just by the police.

Chair Rossetti commented that she was moved by the candidate’s statement, in her introduction video, that she wanted to give a positive influence to all members of the community.

Chair Rossetti posed the following scenario:

‘You and a partner have arrested a suspect for selling drugs. During the arrest procedure at the scene, you recovered illegal drugs and a large amount of money. While you are securing these items for submittal as evidence, you observe a partner place some of the money in his or her pocket. What would you do in that case?’ The candidate replied that she would let her partner know that she saw him and would report him. She would give her partner an opportunity to turn himself in and if he didn’t, she would immediately report him.

Chair Rossetti asked the candidate if the Executive Session notification was received and understood, and Ms. Malloy said it was and that she was prepared to go into Executive Session.

Chair Rossetti moved to enter into Executive Session to review protected personnel information or to discuss matters related to individual candidates pursuant to MGL c30A s21(a)(1). The motion was laid on the table until the remaining candidates were interviewed. After the last candidate was interviewed, the Committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session for the above stated reason at 7:05 PM and returned to the regular meeting at 8:01 PM. Chair Rossetti announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session other than the vote to return to the regular meeting.

The candidate thanked the committee for meeting with her tonight.

Chair Rossetti requested that Ms. Malloy go to the high school to speak to the students there. Councilor Mbah stated that he was impressed with the interviews.

Chair Rossetti's motion to approve this item was approved on a roll call vote. The candidate was advised that the committee's report would be before the City Council next week for approval.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED. [3 TO 2]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Rossetti, Clingan, Strezo
<b>NAYS:</b>	Scott, Mbah

**210579: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of William Wood to the position of Reserve Police Officer.**

Deputy Chief Ward introduced candidate William Wood and told the committee that he has a proven track record of public service. He has volunteered as an EMT at Fitchburg State University, served as an emergency medical care volunteer for the BAA, worked for Lifeline and Cataldo Ambulance and currently is employed as an E-911 Public Safety Dispatcher for the Town of Belmont.

The candidate thanked the committee for the opportunity and said he feels fortunate to be part of this process. Councilor Mbah asked the candidate what made him want to be a police officer and Mr. Wood said that he wants to make somebody's bad day better. He realizes that he can't fix everything, but he would try to make situations easier, adding that it's a role he doesn't take lightly as a member of the community. Councilor Mbah asked about his dispatch activity and Mr. Wood said that dispatches are made based on the resources that are available, but he thinks that at times there should be more variety of resources available for dispatch. He said that what we have now isn't working. Councilor Scott asked the candidate what black lives matter means to him and Mr. Wood replied that they absolutely matter but people of color have been treated unfairly and although society has come a long way, there are lasting effects of the wrong that's been done. As a leader, he would take his role very seriously.

Chair Rossetti posed the following scenario:

'You and a partner have arrested a suspect for selling drugs. During the arrest procedure at the scene, you recovered illegal drugs and a large amount of money. While you are securing these items for submittal as evidence, you observe a partner place some of the money in his or her pocket. What would you do in that case?' The candidate replied that he would report the officer to the shift commander and document it and let chain of command handle it from there.

Chair Rossetti asked the candidate if the Executive Session notification was received and understood, and Mr. Wood said it was and that he was prepared to go into Executive Session.

Chair Rossetti moved to enter into Executive Session to review protected personnel information or to discuss matters related to individual candidates pursuant to MGL c30A s21(a)(1). The motion was laid on the table.

Chair Rossetti asked if Deputy Director Collins needed to bring anything to the committee's attention and since she was having technical difficulties with her audio, she conveyed through Ms. Webber that she did not. Chair Rossetti informed Deputy Chief Ward that he would be notified when to log into the Executive Session.

The Committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session for the above stated reason at 7:05 PM and returned to the regular meeting at 8:01 PM. Chair Rossetti announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session other than the vote to return to the regular meeting.

Councilor Clingan asked for a general update on vacancies, retirements, etc. in the Police Department and Chair Rossetti said that there were originally 6 vacancies and that she wanted to fill the vacancies created by retirements. Last week she learned there was an additional retirement effective this week, raising the number of vacancies to 7. If the 4 candidates before the committee tonight are approved, that would fill all of the retirement slots, leaving nobody on the reserve list. Deputy Director Collins said there are currently 7 patrol vacancies. Councilor Clingan said he's excited to see Somerville natives and people who have worked in the city being considered for positions in the department..

Councilor Scott asked about a January 28th email from the Personnel Department that listed the retirement vacancies, but not the names of the retirees, and he asked if those names would be provided. Deputy Director Collins said that has not been the practice of the Personnel Department, to which Councilor Scott stated that perhaps he should make a public records request and compare the Police Department's roster of June 30<sup>th</sup> to the roster of today.

Councilor Strezo asked if vacancies caused by retirements included included the family services division and Deputy Director Collins said that it would be best to address that question to the Police Department. Deputy Chief Stanford stated that filling the positions before the committee tonight would allow that position to be filled by another officer.

The candidate thanked the committee for its time.

Chair Rossetti moved for approval. Councilor Mbah commented that he was impressed with the interviews, however, he will not be voting for approval of any candidate because he's "not there at the moment" and he's not comfortable with the process. Councilor Scott agreed with Councilor Mbah's comments and also will not vote for any candidate this evening. He, too, was impressed with all of the candidates.

Chair Rossetti's motion to approve this item was approved on a roll call vote. The candidate was advised that the committee's report would be before the City Council next week for approval.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED. [3 TO 2]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Rossetti, Clingan, Strezo
<b>NAYS:</b>	Scott, Mbah

**211029: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Callen Scott to the Urban Forestry Committee.**

Ms. Racaniello informed the committee that the candidate withdrew his application for this position.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WITHDRAWN</b>
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**206240: That the Administration establish an independent task force to look into hiring more minorities in various departments, most especially the Fire and Police Departments.**

This item was first brought forward in 2018 and recently, conversations were held offline between Councilor Mbah and the Administration. Councilor Mbah reported that Deputy Director Collins would be presenting something to the committee, or to the Council, providing a breakdown of positions and their racial and gender composition. Deputy Director Collins said she was in receipt of Councilor Mbah's request and she will try to have something in advance of the next City Council meeting. Chair Rossetti will put these 2 items on the committee's agenda for March 16<sup>th</sup> and she

asked that the information be provided by March 12 if it's not ready in time for the March 11<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.

Councilor Clingan commented that fire and police hires go through Civil Service and he thinks that the main piece of this item is getting the word out about the Civil Service exams.

Councilor Strezo asked Councilor Mbah why this is still being discussed since it seems that the city already has achieved what was being asked for. She said that the past several confirmation meetings have included people of various backgrounds and race. Councilor Mbah said he's trying to establish a process and a framework. Chair Rossetti explained Councilor Strezo's question and asked if diversity has been forthcoming in recent interviews, why then does he still not vote to approve any candidate? Councilor Mbah explained that the process hasn't been established he doesn't believe that he should vote for a person of color simply because that person is a person of color. Chair Rossetti asked Councilors Strezo and Mbah to meet privately to discuss this matter. Councilor Scott noted that these items came from a conversation with the then Personnel Director and Recruiter, and that Councilor Mbah asked what kind of structure could be put in place to ensure that a more diverse pool of people apply for Civil Service positions as well as other employment with the city.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**206939: That the Administration create an equity task force to look at the city's hiring practices for all city positions and boards/commissions.**

See item 206240

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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