



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

November 2024

Dear esteemed Members of Committees, Commissions, Boards,

First and foremost, thank you. I appreciate your continued dedication and service to the City of Somerville through your participation and membership on a City committee, commission, or board. The work of boards and commissions is vital to allowing the community at-large to meaningfully engage in city work and help enact positive change. I, Mayor Ballantyne, and City staff deeply value your commitment and impact on our city.

Vision for Committees, Commissions and Boards

My inaugural goals included Access, Accountability, and Transparency with the intention to better serve the Somerville community. One specific access goal I set was to establish a process to increase engagement and diversification of boards and commissions. To meet this goal, I directed staff to evaluate and improve the recruitment and appointment process from top to bottom in order to foster inclusive and broad participation in the City's boards and commissions.

During my first term, we successfully reevaluated the appointment policy and since I took office in 2022 we have filled 91 vacant Committee, Commission, and Board seats. We are now moving into the second phase of this work, which is addressing reappointments, with a focus on the numerous expired terms across the 45 boards and commissions. With that in mind, my office is implementing a policy change to the reappointment process to increase opportunities for all community members, including those who are underrepresented, to serve. This will be a multi-year process.

New Reappointment Process

Starting in January 2025, the following reappointment process will go into effect:

- A. If you have served less than two full terms, you will be asked to indicate your interest in continuing to serve and may be reappointed at the discretion of the Mayor.
- B. If you have already served two full appointed terms, a future call for applications will be advertised to the community and all will be welcome to apply—including you.
 - You are welcome to submit an application for consideration, and while your application will be considered with the others, attention will be given to new applicants. Our goal is to share access to the opportunity to participate to allow all community voices to be heard, and to ensure an ever-evolving, inclusive, and broad representation that reflects our community.

If you are currently serving an expired term you can continue to serve until we reach your board for review (additional on the next page).



What You Can Expect

As we move forward, we would like to emphasize this is not an immediate change. This reappointment process will begin to take effect January 2025, with a staggered rollout as we work individually through all boards. **If you are currently serving an expired term you can continue to serve until we reach your board for review.** *Again, this will be a **multi-year process** as we need to proceed thoughtfully to avoid any undue burden to a board which might have several seats to address, nor do we want to oversaturate Somerville residents with requests to participate.* A staggered process allows us to better track who is still serving, what the vacancies on boards are, better track term lengths and reappointments, and fulfill the goal of creating a system that best serves all residents. Your liaison will be in communication with you as this process moves forward.

To help all members feel supported and informed during this transition the City has created a micro page you can view here <https://www.somervillema.gov/mayor> that shares more information about reappointments and why this change in policy is being implemented. The page also includes information on the appointment process, AAC guidelines, and the Code of Conduct.

For specific questions surrounding this change we ask that you reach out directly to the following staff:

- For questions surrounding your term please contact the City Clerk's office at cityclerk@somervillema.gov
- For a question specific to your board or recruitment process please contact your Board or Committee liaison directly
- For a question regarding this new policy and/or implementation process please contact the Mayor's Office at IGA@somervillema.gov

I would like to reiterate our appreciation for those who have served many years within Somerville, and for those who go on to continue their service. The hard work and enthusiasm that you have all brought to the community is an immeasurable success, my staff and I sincerely thank you.

Kind Regards,

Katjana Ballantyne
Mayor