



# City of Somerville, Massachusetts

## City Council Public Utilities and Public Works Committee

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

6:00 PM

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5869505756558032143>

Others present: Demetrios Vidalis – Director of Water & Sewer, Rich Raiche – Director of Engineering, Hannah Carrillo – Legislative Liaison, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Clingan and adjourned at 7:14 PM on a roll call vote of 2 in favor (Councilors Gomez Mouakad and Clingan), none against and 1 absent (Councilor Kelly).

#### Roll Call

**Present:** Chairperson Jesse Clingan and Vice Chair Beatriz Gomez Mouakad

**Absent:** Charlotte Kelly

#### DPW

1. Order  
(ID # [22-1572](#))

By Councilor Strezo, Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Kelly and Councilor Burnley Jr.

That the Commissioner of Public Works take the necessary steps to remove the cable tied around the telephone pole at Lexington Avenue and Cedar Street.

See the attached response from DPW.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

2. Order  
(ID # [22-1213](#))

By Councilor Strezo

An order that the Commissioner of Public Works immediately replace the three outdoor picnic tables on the plaza outside the Somerville Media Center due to their unsafe condition.

See the attached response from DPW.

**RESULT:** **RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

3. Order  
(ID # [22-1118](#))

By Councilor Scott and Councilor Kelly

An order that the Commissioner of Public Works add stone or concrete landscape features to prevent vehicles from driving over the planted bump-out features on Beacon Street.

See the attached response from DPW.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad suggested using bollards at this location.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

4. Order  
(ID # [22-1117](#))

By Councilor Scott

That the Commissioner of Public Works provide this Council with the plan for maintaining new tree wells along Somerville Avenue and other locations.

See the attached response from DPW.

Chair Clingan spoke about the adopt-a-tree program and said that the city does well with planting trees, but tree well maintenance has been lacking. Councilor Gomez Mouakad suggested that a follow up item might be in order to track dead tree data.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

5. Order  
(ID # [22-1374](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.

An order that the Commissioner of Public Works expedite the fixing of the elevator in the Armory.

See the attached response from DPW.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

6. Order  
(ID # [22-0934](#))

By Councilor Clingan and Councilor Strezo

That the Commissioner of Public Works make rain barrels available, at no cost, to any properties within the city's flood zones.

See the attached response from DPW.

Chair Clingan would like to alleviate the problems in some high flood zones and would like the city to make barrels available at a lower cost.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

#### Water and Sewer

7. Order  
(ID # [22-1594](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Wilson

That the Director of Water and Sewer update this Council on the cause of the sinkhole near 370 Medford Street and what is being done to address this problem.

Chair Clingan spoke about the problems with flooding in the Gilman Square area. Director Vidalis explained that the sinkhole was due to the aging infrastructure of a sewer line that had structural failure. As the pipe was a primarily sanitary sewer line, backups could have occurred in sewers and possibly some houses, however it would not have caused any flooding.

Contractors were brought in to deal with the issue and additional problems were discovered during the repairs necessitating the replacement of the pipe from the worksite to the manhole at the intersection of Medford and School Streets. Chair Clingan noted the swift action taken by the city. Director Raiche pointed out that in a general sense, sewer and wastewater is combined since it all goes to the MWRA. He said that there are many areas throughout the city that are probably in the same condition. Councilor Gomez Mouakad asked the age of the pipe and if it was a factor in its failure and Director Raiche replied that the pipes are either 100 or 120 years old, adding that pipes of that era are very strong in comparison to pipes of the past 50 years. Director Vidalis said it appears that the top portion of the pipe started to crumble, causing a domino effect adding more stress on the pipe and causing the street to sink. Director Raiche said that pipes are examined with CCTV, with approximately 20 miles (out of 170 miles) of pipe checked annually. Director Vidalis said after these repairs are made, a condition assessment of the immediate area will be conducted.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

### Asset Management

8. Order  
(ID # [22-1220](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

An order that the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management update the Ward 1 City Councilor on plans to renovate Tufts Street.

See attached response from IAM.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

9. Order  
(ID # [22-1596](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.

That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management present to this Council, a plan to fix the Somerville Media Center's roof.

See attached response from IAM.

Director Raiche reported that the work needs to be done very soon and said that bid documents are ready.

**RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

### Engineering

10. Order  
(ID # [22-0936](#))

By Councilor Clingan

That the Director of Engineering explain the timeline for the installation of the proposed Gilman Square water retention tank, as it relates to the overall flood water management plan.

Director Raiche explained that there are several variables that affect the

timeline. There is much down-stream work that needs to happen and designer selection will begin in the next few months with work to commence next year. All of this other work needs to be done before the tank can be installed in Gilman Square. The location for the tank needs to be in the general area of the Homan's site to maximize the plans for Gilman Square.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

### Veterans Services

11. Order  
(ID # [22-1360](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

An order that the Director of Veterans' Services update this Council on the status of the veterans' memorials previously removed due to construction of the new high school.

See attached response from IAM.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad asked about tying this monument to the 1895 building. Director Raiche said that a number of memorials were removed and have been safely stored until they are ready to be reinstalled.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

### Housekeeping

12. Resolution  
(ID # [22-0364](#))

By Councilor Clingan

That representatives of Boston Carting appear before the Committee on Public Health and Public Safety to address concerns raised in the attached anonymous letter dated April 15, 2021.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

13. Order  
(ID # [22-0960](#))

By Councilor Clingan

That the Commissioner of Public Works repair the uneven road pavement on Sycamore Street, between Medford Street and Evergreen Avenue.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

14. Order  
(ID # [22-0360](#))

By Councilor Clingan

That the Commissioner of Public Works discuss with this Council the current city contract for trash and recycling disposal services.

Liaison Carrillo stated that the current contract will expire on 12-31-2024. Councilor Gomez Mouakad spoke about receiving complaints about recycling items being combined with regular trash. Chair Clingan related that the DPW has asked that such instances be reported.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**