



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 20, 2023

7:00 PM

NOTICE: This is NOT the official version of the City Council's minutes. While reasonable efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the data provided, do not rely on this information without first checking with the City Clerk.

1. OPENING CEREMONIES

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen.

- 1.1. Roll Call Call of the Roll.
(ID # [23-1193](#))

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

Present: City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr.
City Councilor At Large Charlotte Kelly
City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo
City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson
Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen
Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan
Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis
Ward Seven City Councilor Judy Pineda Neufeld

Absent: Ward One City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin
Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott
Ward Five City Councilor Beatriz Gomez Mouakad

2. CITATIONS

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. ORDERS, ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS OF MEMBERS

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

7. COMMUNICATIONS OF THE MAYOR

- 7.1. Mayor's Request Requesting rescission of the authorization to borrow \$2,500,000 in a bond,
(ID # [23-1188](#)) and to appropriate the same amount for heating, ventilation, and air
conditioning (HVAC) improvements due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 7.1

through 7.5. President Ewen-Campen sponsored Infrastructure and Asset Management Director Richard Raiche to speak. Director Raiche highlighted that he does not expect for structural investigation of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School to be done for the fall. After review of multiple options, the Edgerly Building was designated as the place to move Winter Hill students in grades 1-8, with other programs moving to the Capuano School. The city received a waiver for emergency procurement to facilitate the quick selection of a contractor through a solicited quote process. Suffolk was the contractor selected to perform the work. The work that will be done to accommodate students at the Edgerly Building by the end of August includes brick replacement, conversion of office spaces to classrooms, updating electrical systems for technology needs, and resurfacing the parking lot to allow for space for a play yard. Director Raiche praised the cross-departmental team and emphasized that they have completed months worth of work in a very short period of time.

Councilor Clingan asked about the status of a kitchen area and Director Raiche stated that there is a separate task force evaluating kitchen/cafeteria needs, but the production kitchen will remain at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School and that space has been deemed structurally safe to continue using it for that purpose. Additional warming ovens are budgeted for the Edgerly Building. Councilor Clingan also asked if Director Raiche and his team were confident the work would be completed by August 30. Director Raiche acknowledged that this is an aggressive timeline but emphasized that he and the entire team are focused on ensuring that the work is as complete as possible by that date.

Councilor Strezo asked Director Raiche about the plans for transportation for students. Director Raiche confirmed that there is a task force that includes Director Brad Rawson of the Mobility Division, studying transportation. Somerville Public Schools (SPS) currently has contracts for bus transportation. Councilor Strezo asked how many students may need support with transportation. Director Raiche stated that it was too early to know. Councilor Strezo also asked what would happen to construction debris that is in the area of the Edgerly Building. Director Raiche stated the debris is from the deconstruction of the 1895 Building and will be brought back up closer to 1895 Building and removed from the current site. Councilor Strezo inquired whether the kitchen renovation in the Edgerly Building is a permanent or a temporary solution. Director Raiche noted that upgrades to the kitchen will be a temporary solution.

Councilor Kelly requested a detailed checklist of work being done with this funding. Director Raiche stated the City and SPS

communication teams will be sending updates and communications. Councilor Kelly asked if there were any costs for moving staff and Director Raiche stated that most of the moving costs are included in the operating budgets for both the city, in particular the Department of Public Works (DPW), and SPS. Director Raiche also stated that there are ongoing discussions with Tufts University regarding the Tufts Administration Building (TAB). Councilor Kelly also asked if there had been any consideration of other city buildings such as the Cummings Building. Director Raiche responded that the family resource center and some Parks and Recreation programming may be located in the Cummings Building, however the TAB is the most suitable.

Councilor Kelly asked if the building engineer is looking to reopen or shut down the Winter Hill Community Innovation School for permanent construction. Director Raiche said that the building engineer needs to evaluate the potential of the building, and it is still too early to determine. Councilor Kelly asked if there is a world where all the work being done in the Edgerly Building will be able to hold a long-term plan to maintain students until the Winter Hill Community Innovation School is rebuilt and re-operating and Director Raiche noted that it is certainly a consideration, but the staff will be utilizing this year to evaluate what works and then make decisions for next year, rather than making a multi-year determination up front. He highlighted that there is no contemplation of a mid-year move.

Councilor Wilson requested insight on how the decisions are being made, given the uncertainty of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School. Director Raiche stated that there have been multiple walk-throughs of the Edgerly space with Information Technology, DPW, Capital Projects, the incoming Assistant Principal, and other SPS staff, including a room-by-room evaluation of the scope of work. Councilor Wilson asked Finance Director Ed Bean about the impact of the funding for this work on long term financial planning. Director Bean stated that he scoured as many resources as possible to avoid affecting the Capital Investment Plan (CIP). Director Bean stated none of the appropriations presented affect the CIP. Director Bean added that the total budget presented for this work is \$5,164,191 with appropriations totaling \$4,819,805 tonight as well as approximately \$324,000 in unused bond funds. Director Bean added that as the situation with the Winter Hill Community Innovation School unfolds, the funding and CIP will be updated as needed.

Councilor Clingan asked for a timeline on the Request for Proposals (RFP) process for a feasibility study. Director Raiche noted that staff have been trying to resolve projections for special needs enrollment which will be a big driver for the RFP, as those projections will define the project size. The city will then look to issue a Request for Quotes

in the fall.

The 5 items were approved together. Following approval of the items, Councilor Clingan moved for reconsideration of all items in the hopes that reconsideration fails. The motion was not approved on a roll call vote of 0 in favor, 8 opposed (Davis, Strezo, Clingan, Wilson, Burnley, Kelly, Pineda Neufeld, Ewen-Campen) and 3 absent (McLaughlin, Scott, Gomez Mouakad).

RESULT: **APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., City Councilor At Large Kelly, City Councilor At Large Strezo, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and Ward Five City Councilor Gomez Mouakad

7.2. Mayor's Request
(ID # [23-1189](#))

Requesting authorization to borrow \$2,500,000 in a bond, and to appropriate the same amount for capital improvements to the Edgerly Education Center and the Winter Hill Community Innovation School.

See item 23-1188.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., City Councilor At Large Kelly, City Councilor At Large Strezo, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and Ward Five City Councilor Gomez Mouakad

7.3. Mayor's Request
(ID # [23-1190](#))

Requesting approval to appropriate \$1,361,025 from the COVID-19 Stabilization Fund and transfer the same amount to the Edgerly Building Improvement Project for capital costs related to the renovation of the Edgerly Education Center.

See item 23-1188.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., City Councilor At Large Kelly, City Councilor At Large Strezo, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and Ward Five City Councilor Gomez Mouakad

- 7.4. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1191](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$460,110 from the Capital Stabilization Fund to the Edgerly Building Improvement Project for capital repairs to the Edgerly Education Center.

See item 23-1188.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., City Councilor At Large Kelly, City Councilor At Large Strezo, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and Ward Five City Councilor Gomez Mouakad

- 7.5. Mayor's Request (ID # [23-1192](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$498,670 in unused bond proceeds from completed capital projects to the Edgerly Building Improvement Project for capital repairs to the Edgerly Education Center.

See item 23-1188.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., City Councilor At Large Kelly, City Councilor At Large Strezo, City Councilor At Large Wilson, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Six City Councilor Davis, and Ward Seven City Councilor Pineda Neufeld

ABSENT: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, and Ward Five City Councilor Gomez Mouakad

8. COMMUNICATIONS OF CITY OFFICERS

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS**11. LATE ITEMS****12. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was Adjourned at 7:38 PM on a roll call vote of 8 in favor (Davis, Strezo, Clingan, Wilson, Burnley, Kelly, Pineda Neufeld, Ewen-Campen), 0 opposed, and 3 absent (McLaughlin, Scott, Gomez Mouakad).