



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 22, 2026

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Wheeler at 6:02 pm and adjourned at 7:19 pm on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Link, Strezo, Hardt, Scott, and Wheeler), 0 opposed, and 0 absent.

Also present: Colin Zeigler — Director of Public Health, Anoop Malik — Health and Human Services Finance Manager, Alan Inacio — Director of Finance & Community Development, Maria Teresa Nagel — Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs Director, Josh McCorkle — Property and Tenant Relations Manager, Eric Weisman — Commissioner of Public Works, Brad Rawson — Director of Transportation & Infrastructure, Emily Wisdom — Somerville Police Department Finance and Administration Director, Megan Huckenpahler — Department of Public Works Finance and Administration Director and Delaney Fisher-Cassiol — Clerk of Committees

Roll Call

Present: City Councilor At Large Jon Link, City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Emily Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott and City Councilor At Large Ben Wheeler

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [26-1382](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of September 3, 2026.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Immigrant Advancement

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1334](#)) Requesting approval to appropriate \$350,000 from the Immigrant Legal Services Stabilization Fund for legal services for immigrants and asylum seekers seeking permanent residency.

Maria Teresa Nagel, Director of the Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs, introduced this item and noted that this item is primarily a procedural matter. Chair Wheeler expressed support for putting the funds to use in alignment with Somerville's values.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Health and Human Services

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1254](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$215,919.15 grant with no new match required, from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to the Health and Human Services Department for a Shared Services Coordinator and a Clinical Community Health Worker.
- Anoop Malik, Health and Human Services Finance Manager, introduced the item and noted that the department is seeking grant approval to support FY27 funding for the existing full-time Shared Services Coordinator and Clinical Community Health Worker positions. He noted that the City has received this grant for the past three years. In response to a question from Chair Wheeler, Manager Malik added that the grant also covers benefits, nursing supplies and other support in addition to funding the two positions.
- Councilor Hardt asked how the positions interact with the community. Colin Zeigler, Director of Public Health, explained that the Shared Services Coordinator works with partners in Cambridge and handles administrative paperwork and reporting required by the Department of Public Health. He added that the Community Health Workers help administer various programs as supplemental staff.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
- AYE:** City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Arts

4. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1354](#)) Requesting approval to enter into lease agreements with various tenants to provide commercial arts space at the Somerville Armory Building, 191 Highland Avenue.
- Alan Inacio, Director of Finance and Community Development, introduced Josh McCorkle, the City's new Property and Tenant Relations Manager, who will serve as the primary point of contact for tenants at the Armory and other City-owned properties. Manager McCorkle introduced the item and noted that he began the position a month and a half ago, following the completion of the RFP process, with a goal of creating and maintaining positive relationships with tenants. In response to questions from Councilor Scott, Manager McCorkle noted that one lease for Arts at the Armory, covering Units 2A, 2D, 1B and 1C, is still being finalized due to outstanding questions from the organization's lawyer, but the City hopes to have it signed by the end of the week. Director Inacio noted that Arts at the Armory, Deadmoon Audio and Acoustic Strings are returning tenants, and Manager McCorkle added that all three tenants will have five-year leases.
- In response to a question from Councilor Link, Manager McCorkle clarified that several spaces remain vacant and that the City plans to seek tenants for those spaces through a future RFP process. Councilor Hardt asked how rents were determined, and Director Inacio explained that the Economic

Development team conducted an analysis intended to support the Armory's financial stability while keeping the spaces affordable for arts organizations. Councilor Scott asked how much rents are increasing for returning tenants, and Director Inacio said he would provide those details before Thursday's City Council meeting. Councilor Scott also asked for clarification on the vacant spaces, and Manager McCorkle explained that only a small number of RFP applications were denied because the proposals were not a good fit, while some applicants who were offered the opportunity chose not to proceed with a lease.

Chair Wheeler noted that the RFP application was lengthy and asked whether the City is considering simplifying the process and offering more flexible options, such as shorter-term leases. Manager McCorkle agreed that making the process more accessible is an important consideration and noted that the City is working to publicize the opportunity more broadly. He said that some potential applicants may have missed the opportunity or found the application process overwhelming, and that these issues will be considered in planning for the next round.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Mobility

5. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1240](#))

Requesting approval to appropriate \$255,045 from the Transportation Network Receipts Reserved Account to the Transportation Network Revolving Account for Fiscal Year 2027 Vision Zero efforts.

Alan Inacio, Director of Finance and Community Development, introduced the item and noted that it is the annual allocation of funds provided by the State from rideshare companies, based on a set rate per trip. Mobility Director Brad Rawson noted that the funding program began in 2016 after legislation was passed authorizing it. He explained that the City plans to use the funds to advance the Vision Zero framework, provide design and engineering support for Complete Streets projects on Broadway and in Magoun Square, and support quick-build projects on Somerville Avenue and Western Washington Street. He noted that implementation is planned for 2027, making the funding particularly timely. Councilors Link and Hardt expressed appreciation for the work.

In response to a question from Councilor Hardt, Director Rawson explained that the Mobility Division's operating budget includes \$400,000 for street reconstruction, but the division often has more projects and infrastructure needs than can be accommodated within that budget.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

DPW

6. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1341](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$80,852.95 using available funds in various Department of Public Works accounts for various services.

Megan Huckenpahler, Department of Public Works Finance and Administration Director, introduced this item and noted that the invoices are from prior years and fall into three categories: budgeting issues and invoices that were higher than expected, billing issues and training or process issues that caused some invoices to fall through the cracks. Councilor Scott asked about the Barrett Tree Service invoice and why the Tree Amigos could not perform the work. Director Huckenpahler explained that Barrett Tree Service is used for emergency work after hours when the Tree Amigos are not on duty. Councilor Hardt asked about the Direct Energy charge, and Director Huckenpahler explained that in spring 2025, the City moved onto a state contract, which resulted in the previous single bill from Eversource being split into two bills. She noted that the City experienced billing issues and unexpected costs at the beginning of 2026. Eric Weisman, DPW Commissioner, clarified that given the energy profile of City buildings, the City is able to achieve better rates through a separate procurement.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

Police Department

7. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1320](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$24,500 grant with no new match required, from the State 911 Department to the Police Department for emergency medical dispatch.

Emily Wisdom, Somerville Police Department Finance and Administration Director, introduced the item and noted that the department receives this grant annually. She explained that the department's budget includes the full-year personnel costs without accounting for the grant, which allows the grant to offset some of those costs. The grant also provides funding for overtime related to training. Councilor Scott noted that the way the funding is presented in the budget book has changed. Director Wisdom clarified that the grant funding is not included in the department's budget and is used to offset budgeted personnel costs. Any remaining funds from the department's personnel budget are returned to free cash.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

8. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1322](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$295,463 grant with no new match required, from the State 911 Department to the Police Department for E911 dispatcher personnel costs.

This item was discussed with item #26-1320.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

9. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1323](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$159,754.04 grant with no new match required, from the State 911 Department to the Police Department for training costs for E911 dispatcher certification and recertification.

This item was discussed with item #26-1320.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler

10. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1221](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$9,809.81 grant that requires a match, from the United States Bureau of Justice Assistance to the Somerville Police Department for body armor vests.

Emily Wisdom, Somerville Police Department Finance and Administration Director, introduced the item and noted that the funding is separate from any other federal funding the department receives each year. She explained that bulletproof vests expire every five years and must be properly fitted for new employees, so the department plans for these costs annually. The purchase was already planned for this year, and the department was fortunate to receive this funding. The State will also match the grant amount, allowing the department to purchase the vests at no cost. Councilor Link asked whether this is typically a cost the City would absorb, and Director Wisdom confirmed that it is, noting that the department tracks the expiration dates of each vest already in use. Chair Wheeler noted that the Council typically receives a copy of the grant application for grant approvals. Director Wisdom explained that this is an older program that does not have an official grant application.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Link, City Councilor At Large Strezo, Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and City Councilor At Large Wheeler