



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Public Health and Public Safety Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 30, 2026

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair McLaughlin at 6:03 pm and adjourned at 6:38 pm on a roll call vote of 2 in favor (Councilors Clingan and McLaughlin), 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor Strezo).

Also present: Amanda Nagim-Williams — Director of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA), Lisa Robinson — Director of Community Wellness, Tina Los — Director of Prevention Services and Delaney Fisher-Cassiol — Clerk of Committees

Roll Call

Present: Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan and Ward One City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin
Absent: City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo

1. Committee Minutes
(ID # [26-1212](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Public Health and Public Safety Committee Meeting of July 1, 2026.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**
AYE: Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin
ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Strezo
2. Officer's Communication
(ID # [26-1339](#))

Director of Emergency Management conveying the 2025-2026 Cummings School Winter Warming Center After Action Report and Improvement Plan.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
3. Resolution
(ID # [26-1305](#))

By Councilor Strezo
That the Director of Health and Human Services discuss the street harassment reported by abutters and pedestrians on Prescott Street, School Street and the area surrounding the Warming Center (when it is open) and what steps are being taken to address this going forward.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
4. Public Communication
(ID # [26-0914](#))

Christopher Rosol submitting comments re: off leash dogs.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Resolution
(ID # [26-0708](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Wheeler and Councilor Hardt
That the Commissioner of Public Works invest in trash barrels with latches to address rodent issues.

Chair McLaughlin noted that the City has a major rodent problem and referenced the composting pilot program in Ward 1, noting that rodents are not chewing through the composting barrels because of the latches. He said that if there are holes in a trash barrel, it is likely that a rodent got into the barrel and chewed its way out, and that if there is a lock on the barrel, the rodent may look elsewhere rather than chew through it. DPW Commissioner Weisman noted that the City had piloted the latches on trash barrels and that they need to be automatic-release latches when the barrels are tipped because the hauling company will not manually unlock them. The pilot program included 50 addresses and had mixed success, with some latches being immediately chewed through and needing to be replaced within a few days. Adding the latches to barrels that residents already have costs approximately \$10 per barrel. Commissioner Weisman also noted that residents would still need to manually latch the barrels, so their effectiveness depends on residents consistently using them.

Councilor Clingan noted that there may still be some chewing into the barrels and asked if there was an option to use a different type of plastic for the barrels themselves. DPW Commissioner Weisman said that over the past year, the City has switched to a higher-density plastic. The barrels previously used medium-density plastic. He noted that the City is keeping an eye on potential cracking but that, anecdotally, he has heard that the higher-density barrels are slightly more rodent-resistant. In response to Councilor Clingan, Commissioner Weisman added that the new barrels are also smoother, which should make them harder for rodents to bite. In response to a question from Chair McLaughlin about the rodent resistance of the composting barrels, Commissioner Weisman said he would look into this with the vendor and get back to the Committee.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED6. Public
Communication
(ID # [26-0493](#))

Gilman Square Neighborhood Council submitting comments re: McGrath Boulevard.

Chair McLaughlin reviewed the attachment *GSNC - McGrath* and expressed concern about the loss of the pedestrian footbridge connecting the east and west sides of McGrath Boulevard, as well as the use of a HAWK signal instead of a traditional stoplight. He requested that IGA Director Amanda Nagim-Williams consider adding a footbridge or a traditional stoplight.

Director Nagim-Williams confirmed that she would look into these options and provide an update at the next meeting.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

7. Resolution
(ID # [26-0106](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin and Councilor Davis

That the Administration provide monthly updates to the Committee on Public Health and Public Safety on progress towards addressing homelessness in Somerville.

Lisa Robinson, Director of Community Wellness, reviewed the attachment, *PHPS - 2026-09-30 Handout (with 26-0106)*, and highlighted that the new shower van is now operational and that the Engagement Center is seeing many intakes each week. She also discussed the plan for extreme weather. The City will receive an invoice soon from Healthcare for the Homeless and will provide an update when it is received. The Public Health vending machines have switched from warm-weather to cold-weather products, and the department is also working on a campaign about the proper disposal of sharps. Councilor Clingan asked for clarification on the 31 unsheltered people, and Director Robinson noted that this refers to people fully on the streets, not those staying in a car or shelter. Councilor Clingan also asked whether the City has been able to get anyone into permanent housing. Director Robinson noted that there have been some success stories, but that the process does take some time. In response to a question from Chair McLaughlin, Director Robinson noted that the Inspectional Services Division (ISD) is now part of the Health and Human Services (HHS) Department and that the shift has been going well because there is a lot of overlap between the departments.

In response to a question from Councilor Clingan, Tina Los, Director of Prevention Services, noted that improper disposal of needles creates an additional cost for cleanup, which is why they are working on a community information campaign. They are also working with pharmacies to share this information when someone is prescribed an injectable medication. Some pharmacies take needles back and some do not.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- PHPS - 2026-09-30 Handout (with 26-0106)