

**EXECUTIVE SESSION  
MINUTES OF THE  
CITY CLERK PRELIMINARY SCREENING COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, September 24, 2025**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Megan Bayer, City Solicitor  
Raecia Catchings, Chief People Officer  
Marc McGovern, Vice Mayor/City Councillor  
Matt Nelson, Director of Administration and Operations, City Manager’s Office  
Melissa Peters, Assistant City Manager, Community Development Department  
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler, City Councillor  
Mayor E. Denise Simmons

A Special Meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s City Clerk Preliminary Screening Committee was held on Wednesday, September 24, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 11:00a.m. by the Honorable Mayor E. Denise Simmons. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation via Zoom and in person.

**At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Megan Bayer – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Raecia Catchings – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Matt Nelson – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Melissa Peters – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent  
Mayor Simmons – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

**Present – 6, Absent -1.**

Mayor Simmons read the Call of the meeting which explained that the Committee would be moving to executive session to consider applicants for the position of City Clerk because doing so in open session would have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants. Mayor Simmons noted that the Committee would adjourn in executive session and not return to open session. Also present in both open and executive session was Naomie Stephen, Executive Assistant to the City Council.

**Mayor Simmons recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who made a motion to move to executive session.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Megan Bayer – Yes  
Raecia Catchings – Yes  
Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes  
Matt Nelson – Yes  
Melissa Peters – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent  
Mayor Simmons – Yes  
**Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.**

**At the request of the Mayor, Clerk of Committees called the roll for executive session.**

Megan Bayer – Present/Sophie Conference Room  
Raecia Catching – Present/Sophie Conference Room  
Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/Sophie Conference Room  
Matt Nelson – Present/Sophie Conference Room  
Melissa Peters – Present/Sophie Conference Room  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent  
Mayor Simmons – Present/Sophie Conference Room  
**Present – 6, Absent - 1. Quorum established.**

Naomie Stephen reviewed the schedule for the day and responded to questions from Committee members.

Mayor Simmons provided opening remarks and thanked the first candidate of the day for their interest in the role of City Clerk. Mayor Simmons provided a brief overview of the responsibilities of the Office of the City Clerk. Committee members went around the room and introduced themselves and their role within the City.

Mayor Simmons read the first question. In response to the first question, related to work experience, the candidate provided a background of their work experience and education and shared what attracted them to the role of City Clerk.

Matt Nelson read the second question. In response to the second question related to knowledge of the City of Cambridge and how they prepared for the interview, the candidate shared that they read the job description numerous times and highlighted Cambridge's pivotal efforts in DEI.

Melissa Peters read the third question. In response to the question related to customer service experience, the candidate explained in detail their past experiences and involvement with customer service. The candidate also shared a negative experience related to customer service and how they were able to turn it into a positive one.

Naomie Stephn read the fourth question. In response to the fourth question related to laws and rules associated with public meetings, the candidate shared they had a general understanding related to the Open Meeting Law requirements and Robert's Rules. The candidate responded to a follow-up question from Megan Bayer.

Megan Bayer read the fifth question. In response to the fifth question related to management style, the candidate provided a brief overview of their managerial experience and style and shared that it is important to be a leader by example. The candidate added how they handle conflict within the office.

Vice Mayor McGovern read the sixth question. In response to the sixth question related to computer software, the candidates shared their experience working with confidential records in past positions.

Raecia Catchings read the seventh question. In response to the seventh question related to determining workload priorities, the candidate stressed the importance of using all tools that are available to help them stay organized and understanding work styles of each employee to create goals and provide training when available.

Mayor Simmons read the eighth question. In response to the eighth question related to experience with archiving and historical documents, the candidate provided an overview of their previous experience and added how they designed a specific system to help with retrieval and errors in filing.

Mayor Simmons asked the candidate if they had any questions for the Committee. The candidate emphasized their enthusiasm for the City Clerk role and shared that they were honored to be considered for the position. The candidate asked the Committee what qualities they would like to see in someone who successfully takes on the role of City Clerk. Committee members went around the table and shared their thoughts.

Mayor Simmons reviewed the process going forward, noting that the final interview would be in open session, and thanked the candidate for their time.

The first interview concluded.

The second interview began.

Mayor Simmons provided opening remarks and thanked the second candidate of the day for their interest in the role of City Clerk. Mayor Simmons provided a brief overview of the responsibilities of the Office of the City Clerk. Committee members went around the room and introduced themselves and their role within the City.

Mayor Simmons read the first question. In response to the first question related to work experience, the candidate shared how their current position as City Clerk would make for a good transition into the role of Cambridge City Clerk. Additionally, the candidate provided an overview of their municipal work and how they came to take on the role of City Clerk. The candidate responded to two follow up questions from Raecia Catchings and Vice Mayor McGovern.

Matt Nelson read the second question. In response to the second question related to knowledge of the City of Cambridge and how they prepared for the interview, the candidate shared that they reviewed the City's website, City Council meetings, and watched the most recent Employee Award Ceremony.

Melissa Peters read the third question. In response to the third question related to customer service experience, the candidate highlighted how important it is for staff to have the right tools

available to them to assist the public, noting that customer service is the responsibility of anyone who works in a City Hall. The Candidate shared that it is important to recognize the needs of the public.

Naomie Stephen read the fourth question. In response to the fourth question related to laws and rules associated with public meetings, the candidate explained their knowledge of rules and laws and added that they currently work with a parliamentarian who assists them in City Council meetings to ensure rules are being followed.

Megan Bayer read the fifth question. In response to the fifth question related to management style, the candidate explained that they have an open-door policy and that it is important to lead by example and be a servant leader. The candidate recognized the importance of a fair workload and making improvements and adjustments when necessary.

Vice Mayor McGovern read the sixth question. In response to the sixth question related to computer software, the candidate shared what they are currently using for agenda software and added that they assist with creating agendas for small boards and commissions.

Raecia Catchings read the seventh question. In response to the seventh question related to determining workload priorities, the candidate shared what helps to keep them organized, while also being aware of specific deadlines, and reviewing priorities with staff.

Mayor Simmons read the eighth question. In response to the eighth question related to experience with archiving and historical documents, the candidate emphasized that historical documents are their favorite part of working in the City Clerk's Office. Additionally, the candidate shared that it is important to have documents organized and accessible while also understanding it is a slow, but important process.

Mayor Simmons asked the candidate if they had any questions for the Committee. The candidate asked what the Committee expects the City Clerk to be for the City. Committee members went around and shared their expectations.

Mayor Simmons thanked the candidate for their interest in the position and shared what the process would be going forward. Mayor Simmons noted that the final interview would be held in open session.

Committee members shared their initial thoughts and impressions on the first two candidates.

The third interview began.

Mayor Simmons provided opening remarks and thanked the third candidate of the day for their interest in the role of City Clerk. Mayor Simmons provided a brief overview of the responsibilities of the Office of the City Clerk. Committee members went around the room and introduced themselves and their role within the City.

Mayor Simmons read the first question. In response to the first question related to work experience, the candidate provided an overview of their education, work experience, and knowledge of the Open Meeting Law, noting that they currently serve as an Interim City Clerk.

Matt Nelson read the second question. In response to the second question related to knowledge of the City of Cambridge and how they prepared for the interview, the candidate shared they reviewed the City's website, population, and form of government.

Melissa Peters read the third question. In response to the third question related to customer service experience, the candidate shared their experience in customer service and working with news outlets. The candidate noted that when there is an issue, it is important to hear people out and try to find a solution.

Naomie Stephen read the fourth question. In response to the fourth question related to laws and rules associated with public meetings, the candidate share their experience with creating meeting agendas and record management, while adding that as Interim City Clerk it is important to have conversations with the Law Department and City Council President in advance of the meeting to have a general understanding of what may occur during the meeting. The candidate added that the City Clerk is the parliamentarian for the meetings.

Megan Bayer read the fifth question. In response to the fifth question related to management style, the candidate gave an overview of their management experience, sharing it is important to work as a team, and address conflict if it arises and create solutions to the problem.

Vice Mayor McGovern read the sixth question. In response to the sixth question related to computer software, the candidate explained the different software that they are currently using within the Clerk's Office, such as OpenGov.

Raecia Catchings read the seventh question. In response to the seventh question related to determining workload priorities, the candidate shared how important it is to be able to multitask and have a strong and organized staff.

Mayor Simmons read the eighth question. In response to the eighth question related to experience with archiving and historical documents, the candidate shared that they are currently working towards creating a transparent system for records.

Mayor Simmons asked the candidate if they had any questions for the Committee. The candidate added that they are currently working towards becoming a Certified Clerk through NEMCI and asked what the Committee is looking for in a City Clerk. The Committee members shared their thoughts.

Mayor Simmons thanked the candidate for their time and shared the process going forward. The Mayor added that final interviews would be held in open session.

The interview concluded.

The Committee reviewed the responses from the final candidate.

The Committee reviewed all four candidates and discussed their takeaways from the interviews, including strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. The Committee discussed who they believe should advance to the next round of interviews.

**Mayor Simmons recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Megan Bayer – Yes

Raecia Catchings – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Matt Nelson – Yes

Melissa Peters – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Mayor Simmons – Yes

**Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.**

**The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:56p.m.**