



# FINANCE COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

**The Finance Committee will hold a public meeting to receive a status update on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in Cambridge, as well as to review and discuss the Police Department budget for FY25 before it is submitted to the City Manager, as required under Cambridge Municipal Code Chapter 2.74.040.**

| Attendee Name          | Present                             | Absent                   | Late                                | Arrived |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Burhan Azeem           | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3:05 PM |
| Marc C. McGovern       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3:40 PM |
| Patricia Nolan         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |         |
| Joan Pickett           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |         |
| Sumbul Siddiqui        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |         |
| Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |         |
| Paul F. Toner          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3:05 PM |
| Ayesha M. Wilson       | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |         |
| E. Denise Simmons      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3:19 PM |

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00 p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Pickett. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

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

- Councillor Azeem – Absent\*
- Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent\*
- Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Pickett – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
- Councillor Toner – Absent\*
- Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote
- Mayor Simmons – Absent\*

**Present – 5, Absent – 4. Quorum established.**

\*Councillor Azeem and Councillor Toner were marked present and remote at 3:05p.m.

\*Mayor Simmons was marked present and in the Sullivan Chamber at 3:19p.m.

\*Vice Mayor McGovern was marked present and in the Sullivan Chamber at 3:40p.m.

Co-Chair Pickett offered opening remarks and shared that the Call of the meeting was to receive a status update on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in Cambridge, as well as to review and discuss the Police Department budget for FY25 before it is submitted to the City Manager, as required under Cambridge Municipal Code Chapter 2.74.040. Co-Chair Pickett indicated that the first half of the meeting would be to discuss ARPA and then the Committee would transition to discussing the Police Department budget.

Present at the meeting to discuss ARPA were City Manager Yi-An Huang, Deputy City Manager, Owen O’Riordan, Assistant City Manager for Finance, Claire Spinner, Taha Jennings, Budget Director, Michele Kincaid, Assistant Finance Director, and Matt Nelson, Director of Administration and Operations. The City Manager offered opening remarks and shared his excitement for all the hard work that has been done related to ARPA. The City Manager turned the meeting over to Matt Nelson, who thanked all the staff for their efforts towards ARPA funding. Matt Nelson gave a presentation titled “American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Cambridge Update” which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered an overview of ARPA commitments by priority area, a review of ARPA projects that are underway or complete, a review of funding that has been reallocated based on programs’ spending and needs, federal guidelines within the Treasury Department, a plan on how the City will assess how ARPA recipients are spending their funding, and the plan to assess extensions and potential budget changes for recipients. During the presentation Committee members were recognized for clarifying questions.

Co-Chair Pickett shared that she was excited to see how far and how quickly the funding has come and noted that it was very impressive to see how much work has been put into this to help those who need it.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Councillor Wilson, who thanked the City for their presentation and appreciated all of the information provided that showed the opportunities and resources that are in the community. Councillor Wilson asked if there were still opportunities for people to submit a proposal or for existing organizations to ask for an increase in funding. City Manager Huang responded and shared that currently all the ARPA funds have been allocated but there may be some funds left to allocate based on spending and grants and agreements that are not able to be finalized..

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who had a clarification question on transportation-related projects and which category those projects would fall under on packet page 4. Matt Nelson responded and shared that it would fall under the sustainability category. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler expressed that he and other Councillors would like to see Rise Up continue after ARPA in 2026 and asked if there had been any discussions on how to keep that program going. City Manager Huang responded and shared what the City is focusing on currently and that there will be future conversations relative to supporting some of these programs that are very operational and how to incorporate them into the City’s long-term budget plan.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Councillor Siddiqui who asked where the money for Starlight got reallocated to. Matt Nelson responded and shared that when money is reallocated it goes into a general pool to help fund other projects when needed. City Manager Huang provided additional comments that supported how funding is reallocated. Councillor Siddiqui pointed out how much funding has been used so far and Matt Nelson provided an overview of the remaining funding and projects with grant agreements and projects working towards grant agreements, noting that 80% of projects currently have grant agreements. Councillor Siddiqui provided suggestions on

how to move forward with current projects and their funding and highlighted the importance of the Council's involvement, especially with Climate Change funding.

Co-Chair Pickett highlighted that on packet page 9 June 2024 is when the City expects to have a better understanding of what, if any, additional funding might be available and where everyone is in their process of spending and agreements. Matt Nelson responded and offered an overview of what the next few months will look like as far as reviewing spending plans and timelines. Co-Chair Pickett noted that it would make sense to have a follow-up ARPA meeting after June.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Co-Chair Nolan who echoed comments made by Councillor Siddiqui related to Climate Change. Co-Chair Nolan shared that it is important for the Council to understand why some projects were not followed through with funding and why they were not moved forward, and echoed comments about having discussions on projects once the funding is no longer available in 2026. Matt Nelson responded and provided feedback to comments made by Co-Chair Nolan. Co-Chair Nolan recognized how challenging federal contracting can be and shared she looks forward to future updates.

Co-Chair Pickett shared that the Committee would be transitioning into the discussion on the Cambridge Police FY25 budget.

Present at the meeting to discuss the Cambridge Police FY25 budget were Police Commissioner, Christine Elow, Deputy Superintendent Frederick Cabral, Deputy Superintendent Pauline Carter-Wells, and Manisha Tibrewal, Director of Planning, Budget, and Personnel. Commissioner Elow shared that there were also members from the Police Department present on Zoom to answer any questions that may come forward. Commissioner Elow gave a presentation titled "Cambridge Police FY25 Budget", which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation included a summary of the FY25 proposed budget summary, budget growth, a review of the proposed FY25 budget by division, key initiatives for FY25, and a comparison in budget with Somerville Police Department. During the presentation, members from the Police Department team were available to answer any clarifying questions from Committee members.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Mayor Simmons who shared that she appreciates the opportunity for the Police Department to share the good work that they are doing and offered comments of support and encouragement in the direction the Department is going. Mayor Simmons asked for more information regarding resources that are being used by the Police Department towards drug enforcement. Commissioner Elow responded and offered a review of how the Police Department is providing different approaches to address drug enforcement.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who asked if there have been conversations within the Department and with the Union about the possibility of having civilians hired to work traffic details. Commissioner Elow shared that conversations about bringing different initiatives forward are ongoing, and because they are currently in discussion with the Union it is not something she can go into detail about at this time.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Councillor Toner who asked where the Police Department is as far as being fully staffed. Commissioner Elow responded and explained that it is still a struggle to hire a full class of new officers and that the Department is still trying to reach full staffing numbers. Commissioner Elow also pointed out that having a fully staffed Department is challenging due to Officers retiring and people not wanting to become Police Officers at this

time. Councillor Toner asked if the Commissioner could provide more information on the possibility of civilians conducting traffic stops, which has been discussed in previous conversations. Commissioner Elow confirmed that traffic enforcements have to be done by a uniformed Police Officer. Councillor Toner echoed comments shared by Councillor Azeem during the presentation regarding body cameras and agreed that he would like to see body cameras implemented as soon as possible.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who confirmed that the budget increase the Police Department is asking for is \$2.5 million and shared he appreciated how the budget was broken down clearly. Vice Mayor McGovern offered comments and shared some of the challenges faced with drug enforcement and asked if there was the possibility for other City Departments to be better utilized to assist with Police Department efforts. Commissioner Elow and Deputy Superintendent Cabral provided insight into how the Social Justice Department works within the Department and how the Department continues to move forward to assist those who need an alternative police response.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Councillor Wilson who thanked the Commissioner and her team and shared she appreciated the conversation. Councillor Wilson highlighted the importance of the Police Department having many partnerships within the schools and the community asked how the Council could support the Police Department with any initiatives they are planning to bring forward. Commissioner Elow pointed out how important it is to be a positive resource in the community and shared her excitement for the many collaborations and programs that are already in place. Dr. Barrett, who was joined via Zoom, shared that the Police Department is always looking to make more availability for mental health support to the youth, who are most at risk and offered suggestions on how multisystemic therapy would be an effective service to provide. Councillor Wilson addressed the current violence that is happening across different high schools in the area and noted the importance of being proactive versus reactive. Dr. Barrett responded and provided an overview of the proactive work that is being done.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Co-Chair Nolan who asked if the Commissioner could provide more insight into the recruitment process. Commissioner Elow responded and shared the many challenges the Department is facing as far as recruitment and how it negatively effects current Police Officers and their families due to them having to be forced into another shift because of low staffing. Co-Chair Nolan shared that she would support any tools necessary to help the hiring process.

Co-Chair Pickett offered closing remarks and thanked the Police Department for all the information they shared today and for the conversation.

**Co-Chair Pickett made a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

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

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

**Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:55p.m.**

**Clerk’s Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/711?view\\_id=1&redirect=true](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/711?view_id=1&redirect=true)

**A communication was received from Matt Nelson, Director of Administration and Operations, transmitting a presentation relative to an ARPA update.**

**A communication was received from Manisha Tibrewal, Director of Planning, Budget, and Personnel, Cambridge Police Department, transmitting a presentation regarding the Cambridge Police FY25 Budget.**

**A communication was received from Manisha Tibrewal, Director of Planning, Budget, and Personnel, Cambridge Police Department, transmitting relative to the proposed FY25 Budget by Division.**