



FINANCE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

9:00 AM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Finance Committee will conduct a public hearing to discuss the City and School budgets covering the fiscal period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Dennis J. Carlone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9:40 AM
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9:40 AM
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, May 9, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 9:00 a.m. by the Chair, Councillor Nolan. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via zoom.

At the request of the Chair, Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote

Councillor Carlone – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Vice Mayor Mallon – Absent*

Councillor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Simmons – Present/Remote

Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Zondervan – Present/Remote

Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Vice Mayor Mallon and Councillor McGovern were marked present in the Sullivan Chamber at 9:40a.m.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan offered opening remarks and shared that the call of the meeting was on the city and school budgets covering the fiscal period year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Present at the meeting was City Manager Yi-An Huang, who was joined by Deputy City

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 9, 2023 9:00 AM (Committee Reports)

Manager Owen O’Riordan, David Kale, Assistant City Manager for Finance, Taha Jennings, Budget Director, Angela Pierre, Deputy Budget Director, Daniel Liss, Principal Budget Analyst, and Jackson Price, Budget Analyst/Participatory Budget Coordinator. Joe McCann, City Auditor was also present at the meeting. Councillor Nolan recognized the Finance Committee co-chair, Councillor Carlone who offered opening remarks and shared that he believes that the budget reflects many of the Council goals and public needs.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan opened public comment and noted that public comment will remain open during the entire meeting.

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that he agreed with funds going towards childcare and offered comments on the Cycling Safety Ordinance.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan shared that the City Council had the opportunity to submit questions for Departments in advance of the hearing (**Attachment A**) to use as a guideline during the budget discussions. It was noted that Councillor Zondervan planned on pulling every department and had two standard questions for each department which are included in the attachment.

EXECUTIVE-LEADERSHIP

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized City Manager Yi-An Huang and his team to speak on the budget in regards to the Executive-Leadership office. The City Manager and his team responded to Councillor Zondervan’s questions, as well as questions and concerns brought forward by Councillor Nolan and Councillor Carlone. The City Manager shared that the primary purpose of the Executive Department is to coordinate and align all the departments and work with the Council to carry out priorities. City Manager Huang noted that he feels that the Executive Leadership team has been focusing on the marginalized communities by trying to work with the Council to build into the values and services that need to be delivered, which has guided many of the decisions in the City.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone made a motion to forward the Executive-Leadership Department to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – No

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 7, No – 1, Absent – 1, Motion passed.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

The Chair, Councillor Nolan made a motion to forward the Mayor and City Council's Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0. Motion passed.

DIVERSITY, DGVPI, EQUITY AND INCLUSION, PUBLIC INFORMATION, AND TOURISM

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Simmons and Councillor Zondervan who had questions regarding the budget going towards the Equity and Inclusion Department. City Manager Huang and his team, including Deidre Brown, Chief of Equity and Inclusion, were available to respond to questions. Deidre Brown offered comments and shared that the City is adding more staff to better work with and build a sense of belonging and safety for employees and will also be adding an Employee Engagement Program Manager who will help identify programs that the City can facilitate with different groups of employees.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor who made a motion to forward the Equity and Inclusion Budget, as well as Diversity, DGVPI, Public Information Office, and Tourism to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0. Motion passed.

HOUSING LIASON

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Maura Pensak, Housing Liaison, who responded to questions from Councillor McGovern, Councillor Nolan, and Councillor Zondervan. Councillor Simmons shared concerns about the Housing Liaison office not having enough funds in their budget to be proactive towards the high volume of work that is being done through the department. Councillor Carlone and Mayor Siddiqui thanked Maura Pensak for the positive difference she has made in Cambridge since she started.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Housing Liaison Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0. Motion passed.

CITY CLERK

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan who asked if software upgrades would be in the budget for the City Clerk's Office. The City Clerk, Diane LeBlanc, responded by noting that software upgrades would fall under the IT budget. Councillor Simmons shared her excitement about archival records and records being digitized to make them easily accessible to the public. Councillor Nolan shared that she appreciated the smart goals that the City Clerk's Office produces and follows through with.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the City Clerk's Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0. Motion passed.

LAW DEPARTMENT

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan who, along with herself, had questions for the City Solicitor, Nancy Glowa. Councillor Nolan shared concerns about claims being filed by the public and being handled in a timely manner to which Nancy Glowa responded by sharing that addressing claims is something the Law Department is also looking to improve. Nancy Glowa shared that if there was additional funding for her department it could potentially be used to invest in new technologies and to work towards various projects.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan made a motion to forward the Law Department's Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

FINANCE ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET, PURCHASING, AUDITING, ASSESSING, TREASURY/REVENUE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, GENERAL SERVICES, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Carlone, Councillor McGovern, Mayor Siddiqui, and Councillor Toner who offered comments and suggestions on the budget as it relates to each department. Taha Jennings, Budget Director, Elizabeth Unger, Purchasing Agent, Joseph McCann, City Auditor, Gayle Willett, Director of Assessing, Michele Kincaid, Assistant Finance Director, Patrick McCormick, Chief Information Officer, and Sheila Keady Rawson, Personnel Director were all available to respond. Councillor Nolan suggested holding a Finance meeting on the Participatory Budget to be transparent going forward. Councillor Zondervan had questions for the Information Technology Department pertaining to software upgrades going forward with the City Clerk's Office. Patrick McCormick shared that there will be a new legislative system that will be introduced in the future once a contract has been finalized and will update the Council when everything is complete.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Finance Administration, Budget, Purchasing, Auditing, Assessing, Treasury/Revenue, Information Technology, General Services, and Employee Benefits Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0. Motion passed.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan opened public comment.

Marie Elena Saccocio offered comments on the budget going towards dedicating funds to a small section of Massachusetts Avenue to bike lanes.

Joan Pickett spoke on comments made by the City Manager on economic downturn and money going towards bike lanes instead of affordable housing.

Terez Gray would like Cambridge Police to get back a drug task force unit to help clean up Central Square and shared they were not in favor of the needle exchange.

Segun Alabade shared they believe there is a fentanyl pandemic affecting youth of Cambridge, and it is important for the City to address the drug problems in Cambridge.

The Finance Committee went into recess.

The Finance Committee reconvened at 1:06p.m.

At the request of the Chair, Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote

Councillor Carlone – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Vice Mayor Mallon – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Simmons – Present/Remote

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – Present/Remote

Mayor Siddiqui – Absent

Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

***Councillor Toner was marked present and remote at 1:47p.m.**

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Sheila Keady Rawson who made herself available to respond to questions from Councillor Zondervan and Councillor Simmons. Councillor Simmons stressed the importance of pay equity. Councillor Nolan asked for clarification on performance reviews and having the goal of 100% of staff getting performance reviews. City Manager Huang shared that the City does have a goal to roll out performance reviews in the fiscal 2024 year.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who made a motion to forward the Human Resource's Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern –Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent - 2. Motion passed.

ELECTION COMMISSION

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Executive Director, Tanya Ford, who made herself available to respond to questions and concerns from Councillors. Tanya Ford shared that the Election Commission was sufficiently funded for the federal, state, and local mandates and to provide Cambridge residents with election and census services.

City Councillors, City Manager Huang, and Tanya Ford discussed an expected election for a Charter change in the future, with Councillor Nolan stressing the importance that there should be supplemental funds to assist with that election.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Election Commission Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern –Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent - 2. Motion passed.

PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Jason Weeks, Executive Director of Cambridge Arts, who offered an overview of the department's goals and how the funds would be used towards continuing to provide critical resources to Cambridge and its residents. Jason Weeks made himself available to respond to questions and concerns from Councillors, with many of them sharing their excitement for the upcoming Dance Party and offering suggestions on how the Arts Council could work towards benefiting Cambridge and its culture and community even further.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Public Celebrations Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern –Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes
Councillor Toner – Yes
Councillor Zondervan – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

RESERVE FUNDS

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Reserve Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation. Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes
Councillor Carlone – Yes
Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes
Councillor McGovern –Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Yes
Councillor Toner – Yes
Councillor Zondervan – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

ANIMAL COMMISSION

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized the Director of the Animal Commission, Christina Correia, who was available to respond to any questions and concerns from Councillors and shared that with more funding she would be able to increase the capacity of the department and provide more training for her staff. Vice Mayor Mallon thanked the Animal Commission for being able to provide a pet food pantry for Cambridge residents who may not be able to provide food for their animals and asked how the food was obtained. Christina Correia shared that all food is donated to the Animal Commission, which they then bring to the CEOC for residents to pick up. Vice Mayor Mallon shared she would be in favor of the City supporting this program in the next fiscal budget year to provide an even better service to the community. Councillor Nolan shared her excitement for the Animal Commission having two electric motor vehicles that they use while providing services to the animals of Cambridge while also helping the environment.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Animal Commission to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation. Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes
Councillor Carlone – Yes
Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes
Councillor McGovern –Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Yes
Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Elizabeth Speakman, Acting Director and Michelle Scott, Program Coordinator who made themselves available to respond to questions from Councillors. Elizabeth Speakman provided updates on the Community Safety Department and shared they are ready to continue to move forward by hiring the appropriate staff and having them respond to calls starting in the Fall with the intention of taking a broader look at the needs of the community and adjust and expand once the department is fully ready.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Community Safety Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent - 2. Motion passed.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Fire Chief Thomas Cahill who made himself available to respond to questions and concerns from Councillors. Chief Cahill reminded Councillors that two fiscal years ago the department made a commitment to increase staffing within a three-year plan and reviewed the upgrades that are needed and have been completed within the department's infrastructure and firehouses. Vice Mayor Mallon asked for clarification on the six firefighters that will be added to the department this year and if the City has been understaffed. Chief Cahill shared that the Fire Department needs to grow as the City grows and noted with excitement that the Fire Cadet program is intended to begin this fiscal year. Councillor Carlone thanked all the Fire Department staff who assisted with COVID vaccinations and testing during the pandemic. Chief Cahill shared that he is very confident in the fire community that serves Cambridge daily.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Fire Department Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes
Councillor Carlone – Yes
Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes
Councillor McGovern –Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Yes
Councillor Toner – Yes
Councillor Zondervan – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Azeem, and Councillor Carlone, who along with herself, had questions and concerns for Police Commissioner Christine Elow. Commissioner Elow along with her team, Superintendent Robert Lowe, Superintendent Fredrick Cabral, Deputy Superintendent John Boyle, Deputy Superintendent Anthony Macone, Deputy Superintendent Steven Magalhaes, Deputy Superintendent Peter Vellucci, Deputy Superintendent Buckowe Yam, Director of Clinical Support Servies, Dr. James Barrett, Director of Professional Standards, James Mulcahy, Esq., and Director of Planning, Budget, and Personnel Manisha Tibrewal, were all available to respond. Commissioner Elow shared that the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) will continue to work hard to increase transparency, revise policies, and enhance procedural justice, while having the ability to respond to critical instances in a way that is consistent with the values and expectations of the City. Superintendent Lowe noted that CPD is constantly evaluating methods and practices to help respond, diffuse, and deescalate situations. Superintendent Cabral offered comments on the Senior Police Academy, which provides outreach to senior citizens in Cambridge that offers resources and support they need. Commissioner Elow shared that CPD is operating at minimum staffing levels, which then requires Officers to be forced to stay and work additional shifts, which includes overtime pay. Commissioner Elow noted that due to the minimum staffing and forcing of Officers it could lead to Officers being exhausted and having wellness issues, which is why it is important to increase staffing, she stressed the importance of a staffing analysis which would help benefit the demands of the City.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Police Department’s Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Carlone – Yes
Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes
Councillor Zondervan – No
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent
Yes – 7, No – 1, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Finance Committee went into recess.

The Finance Committee reconvened at approximately 4:04p.m.
At the request of the Chair, Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.
Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote
Councillor Carlone – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Vice Mayor Mallon – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Simmons – Present/Remote
Councillor Toner – Absent
Councillor Zondervan – Present/Remote
Mayor Siddiqui – Present
Present – 8, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

POLICE REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD/PEACE COMMISSION

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Brian Corr, Executive Director of the Police Review Advisory Board (PRAB) and Peace Commission, who was available to respond to questions and concerns from Councillors. Brian Corr shared that the most important role of the PRAB is to address concerns about the Police Department, even if it is not an official complaint, and offered insight on how a concern or complaint is conducted by the Board. Brian Corr noted that the PRAB can improve department policies and procedures.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Simmons who made a motion to forward the PRAB/Peace Commission’s Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.
Councillor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Carlone – Yes
Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Yes
Councillor Toner – Yes
Councillor Zondervan – No
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

TRAFFIC, PARKING, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Brooke McKenna, Transportation Commissioner for Traffic, Parking, and Transportation, (TPT) who was joined by Stephanie McAuliffe, Assistant Director for Parking Management and Gardy Laurent, Fiscal and Administrative Manager. Brooke McKenna and her team made themselves available to respond to questions and concerns brought forward by Councillors, noting that TPT promotes the safety of the City by creating a parking system that supports transportation options, by designing safer streets and enforcing parking regulations. Brooke McKenna noted that the Department was recently approved to increase staffing, which Councillor Zondervan shared he was happy to hear. Councillor Carlone emphasized the safety concerns for pedestrian traffic and would like to see more funds going towards pedestrian infrastructure for the safety of children and citizens. Vice Mayor Mallon and Councillor Azeem had clarifying questions for the Northern Massachusetts Avenue project and the expansion of separated bike and bus lanes. Brooke McKenna and her team were available to respond.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation's Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carlone – Present

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 7, No – 0, Present -1, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillors who had questions and concerns for Acting Commissioner for Inspectional Services, Peter McLaughlin and his team who made themselves available to respond. Peter McLaughlin shared that Inspectional Services (ISD) is committed to making sure marginalized populations have safe, clean, and accessible living accommodations with access to all the amenities that are available to them and feel that ISD is adequately staffed with housing inspectors to ensure that residents are receiving the best care and attention as possible. It was shared that the City will soon have a Housing Liaison position, which will be ISD's main contact person to reach out to when issues or concerns arise. The team from ISD also explained the process of applying for permits and shared their plan for meeting the stretch code for new residential and commercial construction in the City.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward Inspectional Service's Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Carlone – Yes
Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Yes
Councillor Toner – Absent
Councillor Zondervan – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent
Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

LICENSE COMMISSION

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan who had a question about entertainment license fees and if the License Commission planned on getting rid of those fees. Nicole Murati Ferrer, Chair of the Cambridge License Commission responded by sharing that some of the fees that the License Commission charge comply with state law and noted that looking more closely at eliminating some of the fees would require a more in-depth look, but believe the fees are appropriate to the services that are provided. Councillor Zondervan suggested having the tax payers possibly pay the fees to have a less affect on the establishments. Councillor Nolan thanked ISD for their work and shared concerns about noise complaints and the difficulties of responding to them in a timely manner due to the nature of the complaint.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the License Commision’s Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Carlone – Yes
Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Yes
Councillor Toner – Absent
Councillor Zondervan – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent
Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Christina Giacobbie, Director of Emergency Communications (ECC), and her team who were available to respond to questions and concerns from Councillors. Councillor Zondervan shared concerns about staffing levels at ECC that were raised by the Union. Christina Giacobbie shared that there are currently 26 dispatchers that are active, and 5 have just been hired and are currently going through the academy and shared that she is confident that the department is on the right track of having complete staffing levels.

Councillor Nolan reviewed the performance measures of the department and shared that it has historically been 99% of emergency calls answered within 20 seconds.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Emergency Communication's Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – No

Mayor Siddiqui – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Simmons who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – No

Mayor Siddiqui – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Attachment A – Questions submitted by Councillors to Departments

The City Clerk's Office received six written communications, Attachments B - G

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/498?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=06c064d3d23eaf171a72e3d6caa05ffa

Transmitting Communication from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to the FY2024 submitted budget and appropriation orders. .

RESULT: REFERRED BACK TO THE FULL CITY COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION

A communication was received from Budget Director Taha Jennings, transmitting the Schedule for the upcoming Budget hearings.

Questions submitted for Budget Hearings.

Councillor McGovern

Regarding the Caregivers Council:

- To promote equity and authentic engagement with caregivers who work on the council, members of this council must appropriately compensated as recognition of their expertise and time.
- Have funds been allocated for this purpose? If so, how much?
- You have been given a mandate by the city to make sure that parents are informed of afterschool in a timely and equitable manner. How are you accounting for or anticipating the cost of greater portion of the
- What is the plan to ensure that the Council is funded fully and maintained?

Housing Liaison:

- Can you please provide an overview of your duties and accomplishments over the past year?
- What do you see as some of the main reasons people come to see you and do you have the capacity to meet this demand?
- How will additions in next year's budget support your department?

Community Safety:

- Can you please provide an overview of where your department stands now?
- How is the hiring process going?
- When do you think the department will be up and running?

Cambridge Health Alliance:

- Can you please give us an overview of mental health services, including staffing, waiting lists, emergency department data and any plans to address any obstacles?

Human Services:

- Can you please tell us what is in this budget to address homelessness issues and how they tie into the Unhoused Task Force report?
- Can you please tell us what is in this budget to address universal pre-school?
- Can you please tell us what is in this budget to address after school concerns?

Councillor Zondervan – same two questions for all depts.

- How does the department budget support or improve the lives of our residents, especially the most marginalized?
- If the department had more money how would you spend it?

Mayor Siddiqui

- Under key initiatives/Community Development—it is not clear to me from last year's budget to this year's budget—how we are growing our homeownership program and what the budget increase has been? 1-37 says in the last 5 years, 70 residents purchased their homes with assistance from the City, and more than 155 residents have purchased a City-assisted affordable home in the last decade. What is the plan for the next 5 years? Why is our FY24 Target 20? When FY23 is 25. I also understand we have been evaluating our homeownership programs, when will that be complete?
- Payment in lieu of taxes is on page IV-33, Revenue section: My read of the agreements is that they can be revisited if the City of Cambridge does so in the time frame called out in the contract? We should have that discussion now that we have a new city manager.
- Cambridge Health Alliance: I've heard there will be cuts in the public health department. Who will be affected? Why can't the city increase \$ to CPH so these cuts don't happen?

Vice Mayor Mallon

- Cambridge Health Alliance - same questions as the Mayor and Councillor Nolan

Executive - Leadership

- The Budget for Executive Leadership has an increase significantly mostly due to a large increase in the number of staff. How does this organizational structure compare to comparably sized cities? Can you go through the reorganization and explain where new roles were created instead of reallocating roles?
- With increased capacity to do analysis, will there be expected changes in the future to take advantage of systems and re-allocate funding in the future ?
- Overall, how can the city do more to learn from other cities - where do we outperform, and where can we learn to do more with less, so we can reallocate funds?

Budget

- In the budget letter the City Manager notes that the City will not be “using additional non-property tax revenues or Free Cash when determining the actual tax levy this fall.” This has been a change that has been talked about in the community and in Council for a long time now. Is this a change that will lead to tax increases being higher than usual this year?

Finance Department

- Investment policy - page III-18: The city implemented a policy on fossil fuel and carceral facilities in 2021. What has been the experience to date with the policy? How soon can we lower the threshold to 5% and eventually 0% from the current 10%?
- What is the best level for reserve funds? They are below recent levels - should they be replenished or are they appropriate now? Page II-19

Information Technology

- How does the department see big data and newer systems of information affecting the future of the city’s operations and workforce?
- The plan to work on municipal broadband is to hire a consultant to further the feasibility study - will there be new city staff to oversee?

Recreation

- How does the department plan to ensure coordination with DPW and others especially around addressing the needs at Danehy Park?
- Why is golf course revenue projected to be down 20% (\$200K) from projected revenues this year? Page IV-5

Police Department

- How will body cameras be implemented and funded?
- As the Dept. of Comm Safety gets staffed, how is it expected that CPD will change in staffing and expenses?

Traffic, Parking, and Transportation

- What are the plans for updating the systems in the department to ensure more timely response to requests for service? Often we hear that residents do not get a quick response - and if staff need better systems or tools to be more responsive, what are they?
- If we've stopped towing for street cleaning, why is towing revenue up by \$4K - or is that a different towing? Page IV -5

Inspectional Services

- What is the status of getting all applications for permits online?
- SeeClickFix numbers suggest quick resolution - yet there are complaints that go without answers for months. Can we review and evaluate the operations of SCF to ensure that the date is correct for timely responses?
- Is there appropriate staffing levels to ensure timely electrical hookups and other sign-offs?

School Department

- Questions to be sent directly to the school department

Cambridge Health Alliance

- The birth center closure is of intense interest to the city, and community. And a disappointment to those who center equity and public health. The data is clear that birth centers have better health outcomes for women who use them, and address racial disparities in our health system. What is the status of the birth center?
- The acts establishing the CHA were to ensure that the City's contribution goes to enhance public health. What is the plan for the future of the city's public health department in terms of staffing? We need to ensure the continuation of work of public health staff.
- What reports does the city get on how our contribution to CHA is spent?

Public Works

- The UFMP calls for the city to plant 1,100 trees in FY24 - and the budget notes a \$935,000 capital budget line for the DPW Urban Forestry Programs. How does this number compare to the last 5 years?
- Does the budget include enough capacity to ensure that plans for future street work be coordinated with possible broadband work and electrical work as the city electrifies?

Community Development

- Is there enough staff to do the planning and zoning committed to - N. Cambridge, Alewife, Cambridge Street, citywide, Envision, etc?
- Good that there is separating out the Net Zero Goals from the other climate resilience spending including sewer separation, etc. it's important to see climate spending across all departments, but also in individual line items dedicated to building decarbonization. What changes are expected in staffing or approach to ensure that climate goals are met?
- What are the lessons from the CEA evaluation that will be included in this planning for more effective actions?
- Affordable Housing investment appears to be far above any other nearby city - should we consider a staff person in the budget tasked with ensuring a regional approach so Cambridge is not the only city, (besides with Boston, providing services needed?

Capital Building Projects/Public investment

- Our projects are often much more expensive than comparable projects in other cities. We have often heard this is due to expensive worker benefits and high quality control mechanisms in Cambridge, but what does the city do to ensure cost effectiveness
- The buildout for the CSO seems inordinately high - what is the rationale, and how does that compare to what other cities have done?

Erwin, Nicole

From: Joan Pickett <jpickett7@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 10:26 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: City Manager
Subject: 2024 Budget---- implications on tax rates

Councillor Nolan,

While I know the tax rate is not set until later, I am very concerned that the substantial budget increase will result in an increase in the tax rate. Increasing taxes along with increases in water/sewer rates makes Cambridge even less affordable which runs counter to your goal of maintaining diversity within the city. Please push to understand now what the implications are to the residents **before** approving this budget. Approving the 2024 budget without having any idea as to the tax rate implications is not good representation for the residents.

The inclusion of \$50 million in the capital budget for separated bike lanes implies that cycling safety has a higher priority than other efforts including affordable housing. Is this correct? After the May 8th city council meeting discussion about the city purchasing land for affordable housing, it would seem the \$50 million or some portion thereof would allow for the flexibility needed to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

Additionally, it is my understanding that the Mass Ave 4 separated bike lanes will need to be torn up for the combined sewer overflow project which is a federally mandated effort. Is this correct that the separated bike lanes will be torn up? It would seem an improper use of tax payer funds to proceed with the \$50 million investment with the full knowledge that these sections will be torn up. Why not tackle the combined sewer overflow now prior to installing the separated bike lanes?

Sincerely,

Joan Pickett
 59 Ellery St

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 9, 2023 9:00 AM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: btantony <btantony@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 11:24 AM
To: Siddiqui, Sumbul; Zondervan, Quinton; Toner, Paul; Nolan, Patricia; McGovern, Marc; Carlone, Dennis; Simmons, Denise; City Manager; Mallon, Alanna; City Clerk; Azeem, Burhan
Subject: Re: City budget

My apologies this should be addressed to Councilors Nolan and Carlone as FinCom co-Chairs.

Sent from my iPhone

Barbara Anthony, Esq.

Senior Fellow in Healthcare, Pioneer Institute Former Senior Fellow & Associate, Center for Business & Government, Harvard Kennedy School Former MA Undersecretary, Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation

Cell: 857-998-0273
 Email: btantony@aol.com;
 Barbarabanthony@gmail.com
 Banthony@pioneerinstitute.org

> On May 9, 2023, at 10:50 AM, btantony <btantony@aol.com> wrote:

>

> Dear Councilors Toner and Nolan,

>

> I write to you as you are co-chairs of the Council Finance Committee and I write in full support of recent, previous submissions to you by Young Kim. While I do not understand the intricacies of the coming budget as well as Mr. Kim does, I can see that there appears to be little transparency or accountability regarding the costs of separated bike lanes in this city. I am truly astounded to read from your own CM that he plans to increase the cost of certain lanes up to possibly \$60 million. Even a cost of half that amount is staggering for a few miles of bike lanes. We need much more transparency and accountability.

>

> And one of the things I have never seen is some actual data on the number of Cambridge residents who regularly use the lanes versus those who just pass through Cambridge on their way to adjacent cities. Not "trips" but actual tax paying residents because they rent or own here. That would be an interesting factoid.

>

> For the past several years, I have been horrified about the installation of lanes and the way that the legitimate concerns of neighborhoods, seniors, the disabled and small business are simply disregarded to appease organized cyclists lobbies. It's like the people who live here and pay taxes either through rents or home ownership just don't matter. (We all know what can happen to a Councilor who doesn't do as the organized cyclists unions wish.) Now the potential cost of CSO seems to have no limits and could actually result in a tax increase on Cambridge residents. That will be just too much for residents to accept!

>

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 9, 2023 9:00 AM (Committee Reports)

> I submit this is not a responsible way to spend the city's resources. There needs to be a full and detailed accounting of what has been spent so far and why we continue to throw tens of millions of dollars at this terribly destructive infrastructure plan that does not benefit the overwhelming majority of Cambridge residents. And which creates damaging externalities for neighborhoods and commercial centers. That is a fact! The spending and projected costs certainly appear to be out of control and have no oversight.

>

> I submit that the way the finances for the CSO have been handled and the planned future spending would be fodder for recall petitions in any city which has such a process. Cambridge needs that process! It's something the Charter Commission should hear about.

>

> I strongly urge you to put the breaks on this bike lane spending spree before it's too late. Raising taxes because of the CSO will be the final straw for many residents.

>

> Thank you for considering my views,

>

> Barbara Anthony

>

> Sent from my iPhone

>

> Barbara Anthony, Esq.

>

> Senior Fellow in Healthcare, Pioneer Institute

> Former Senior Fellow & Associate, Center for Business & Government, Harvard Kennedy School

> Former MA Undersecretary, Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation

>

> Cell: 857-998-0273

> Email: btantony@aol.com;

> Barbarabanthony@gmail.com

> Banthony@pioneerinstitute.org

>

>

Erwin, Nicole

From: Joan Pickett <jpickett7@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 1:57 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: 2024 Budget - Outreach Communication

Dear Finance Committee and City Manager,

One of the priorities I heard from the Council this past year is the need to improve outreach and communication to residents. I hope this is funded in the Executive/CM budget as I know a new outreach position is part of the 2024 budget. (Or it could also be in the CC operating budget?)

Here are 3 suggestions for improving outreach:

1. **Re-do the Website-** It is confusing and not well organized making it hard for residents to quickly find the information they need. It may be hard for the CC to see this issue as you are all adept at finding what you need or your staff finds it for you.
2. **Develop an index for Policy Orders** - Unless residents know at which CC meeting a policy order was adopted, you can't find it any other way then to go back through the meeting minutes and past agendas. Why not develop an indexing system to make it easier for residents to find PO's and where they are in the committee process? And have the most recent version of the policy order readily available on line.
3. **Develop a 'push strategy' for important information** - I am impressed by the PB outreach--- postcards for each residence, banners, innumerable emails, etc. The CC and CM get poor markets for outreach in comparison. When there are broad sweeping initiatives---- BEUDO, CSO, Municipal Broadband----- the only way you know is if you are signed up for the city emails or on a private email list serv. I have spoken with many neighbors and they are totally unaware of the daily email from the City. You should be promoting that tool but also why not snail mail residents (you have our addresses for taxes, water bills, renewing dog licenses) or use the email lists the city already has for snow emergencies, street sweeping, etc. Why not consolidate all the email lists and use them to push information out to residents on important policy issues to follow? (I am not sure if you have access to the Election Commission list but clearly that is another source of contact information updated regularly.)

If you don't know how to (or can't) easily navigate the website or how to look for policy orders, it is hard to get engaged. If you don't know that you can get on a list for daily updates and project lists, it is hard to get engaged.

I hope the new outreach/communications position is not only for internal communications but also covers external communications.

Sincerely,

Joan Pickett
 59 Ellery St

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 9, 2023 9:00 AM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 8:37 AM
To: Carlone, Dennis; Nolan, Patricia; Azeem, Burhan; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Clerk; Erwin, Nicole
Cc: City Manager
Subject: FinCom hearing to discuss FY24 budgets

Dear Cochairs Carlone & Nolan, Members of the Finance Committee and City Clerk,

I am submitting the same comment I submitted to the City Council on FY24 Budget forward below.

I am grateful that project description for PUBLIC WORKS: STREETS - MASS AVENUE - WATERHOUSE TO ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY project no longer has open ended caveat "As the scope of work evolves, the cost estimates will be updated" However, the budget for this project increased 25% from FY23 approved budget plan. Please require the City Manager and Budget Director Jennings to justify this increase.

The FY24 appropriation and bond authorization of \$6,000,000 approved in FY23 budget for 5-YEAR APPROPRIATION PLAN for PUBLIC WORKS: STREETS - HARVARD SQUARE - ELIOT STREET also underwent major changes going from \$6,000,000 to \$2,000,000 in FY25 and \$8,000,000 in FY27 for total of \$10,000,000. Please require the City Manager and Budget Director Jennings to justify this increase.

This puts the total budget for MassAve4 project in Cycling Safety Ordinance at \$60,000,000 for little over 2 miles of separated bike lanes. Please require the City Manager and Budget Director Jennings to justify this cost of CSO implementation and require them to account for operating and capital cost to date for CSO implementation including part of River Street Reconstruction cost attributable to CSO implementation. Also, please require the City Manager to justify redoing the separated bike lanes in the Mass Ave north of Harvard Square using quick build so soon after they were installed.

Thank you for your consideration,

Respectfully yours,

Young Kim
 Norris Street

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Young Kim** <ycknorris@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, May 1, 2023 at 9:22 AM

Subject: City Manager Agenda #1 & 2

To: Siddiqui, Sumbul <ssiddiqui@cambridgema.gov>, Mallon, Alanna <amallon@cambridgema.gov>, Azeem, Burhan <bazeem@cambridgema.gov>, Carlone, Dennis <dcarlone@cambridgema.gov>, McGovern, Marc <mmcgovern@cambridgema.gov>, Nolan, Patricia <pnolan@cambridgema.gov>, Simmons, Denise <dsimmons@cambridgema.gov>, Toner, Paul <ptoner@cambridgema.gov>, Zondervan, Quinton <qzondervan@cambridgema.gov>, City Clerk <cityclerk@cambridgema.gov>

Cc: City Manager <citymanager@cambridgema.gov>, Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@cambridgema.gov>, O'Riordan, Owen <ooriordan@cambridgema.gov>

Dear Mayor, City Councillors and City Clerk,

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 9, 2023 9:00 AM (Committee Reports)

City Manager (CM) Huang is following the same business-as-usual practices, which perpetuates the same lack of transparency and accountability of his predecessors. His cover letter for the FY2024 submitted budget and appropriation order, for example, is identical to the FY2023 submittal letter save for the simple changing of "The Submitted Budget" to "The budget book," with a promise that "The Submitted Budget and back up materials will be available to the City Council" at the City Council meeting. There is no way for anyone to review or for any of the public to comment on the proposed budget when the budget book and backup material are not available before the meeting. **Please require the City Manager to submit these records as well as cost justification for the CSO implementation to its completion before referring his submission to the Finance Committee.**

My request is based on the fact that the approved FY24 appropriation plan of \$40,000,000 in Section VI – Public Investment of FY23 Budget Book, mushroomed to the authorization request of the CM's Agenda Item #2 to borrow \$50,000,000 to provide funds for the reconstruction of the Mass Avenue between Waterhouse Street and Alewife Parkway (ABP). This is a whopping 25% increase from the projected plan just a year ago. In his submitted budget, former CM DePasquale added scope to the approach and timeline of MassAve4 project which was approved just the previous week but kept the appropriation plan at \$40,000,000. And now, CM Huang drops the other shoe, increasing the approved appropriation plan by 25%. This raises many questions which includes but not limited to:

1. Does it really cost \$10,000,000 more to revisit previously implemented separated bike lanes using quick-build from Dudley Street to ABP (Installed Fall 2021) and from Roseland Street to Beech Street (Installed Summer 2022), together to be called Segment E?
2. With no visibility of actual cost of Segment E quick Build, including cost of any mitigation plans yet to be developed, was the cost effective given the short period between completion and the do-over?
3. If CM can change the budget at will, does the cost matter at all or is the sky the limit for CSO implementation? When the public demanded delay, however, in the Porter Square project until the catenary wires came down, we were told it can't be delayed because of CSO dictated timeline.
3. The submitted operating expenses for education for FY24 is \$245,000,000. Is borrowing 20% of what we spend on our children's education for just 2 miles of the projected 25 miles of separated bike lanes a wise allocation of taxpayers' money?
4. If the timeline for the separated bike lanes from Waterhouse Street to ABP is the same as the approved timeline for Mass Ave Dudley St. to Beech St. (Segment A of MassAve4) and Mass Ave Roseland St. to Waterhouse St. (Segment B), then the project will be completed by the end of FY26. How can we make CM accountable if there is an overrun of \$50,000,000 borrowed?
5. CM must submit and get approval for approach and timeline for MassAve4 - Mass Ave Partial Construction Project just as former CM had to for MassAve4. The approach will have to include measures not to duplicate or waste MassAve4 work to date, including the House Doctor engineering support at a contract value of \$1,121,196.00.
6. Approved FY23 Budget included \$5,000,000 for the Complete Streets Program MassAve4 -- Harvard Sq Bus Stops (1/2 funding) from Plympton St. to Garden St. This is Segment C and D of MassAve4 that the City Council approved full construction on 4/25/2022. This will put the total capital cost of MassAve4 - Mass Ave Partial Construction Project to be \$60,000,000. Total capital budget for CSO implementation also includes the unknown capital cost CSO implementation component of the River Street and unaccountable operating cost of all the CSO projects. So, the capital expenditure alone is fast approaching \$100,000,000 if all operating expenditures are accounted for.

Respectfully yours,
Young Kim
Norris Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Joan Pickett <jpickett7@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 10:26 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: City Manager
Subject: 2024 Budget---- implications on tax rates

Councillor Nolan,

While I know the tax rate is not set until later, I am very concerned that the substantial budget increase will result in an increase in the tax rate. Increasing taxes along with increases in water/sewer rates makes Cambridge even less affordable which runs counter to your goal of maintaining diversity within the city. Please push to understand now what the implications are to the residents **before** approving this budget. Approving the 2024 budget without having any idea as to the tax rate implications is not good representation for the residents.

The inclusion of \$50 million in the capital budget for separated bike lanes implies that cycling safety has a higher priority than other efforts including affordable housing. Is this correct? After the May 8th city council meeting discussion about the city purchasing land for affordable housing, it would seem the \$50 million or some portion thereof would allow for the flexibility needed to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

Additionally, it is my understanding that the Mass Ave 4 separated bike lanes will need to be torn up for the combined sewer overflow project which is a federally mandated effort. Is this correct that the separated bike lanes will be torn up? It would seem an improper use of tax payer funds to proceed with the \$50 million investment with the full knowledge that these sections will be torn up. Why not tackle the combined sewer overflow now prior to installing the separated bike lanes?

Sincerely,

Joan Pickett
 59 Ellery St

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 9, 2023 9:00 AM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: btantony <btantony@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 11:24 AM
To: Siddiqui, Sumbul; Zondervan, Quinton; Toner, Paul; Nolan, Patricia; McGovern, Marc; Carlone, Dennis; Simmons, Denise; City Manager; Mallon, Alanna; City Clerk; Azeem, Burhan
Subject: Re: City budget

My apologies this should be addressed to Councilors Nolan and Carlone as FinCom co-Chairs.

Sent from my iPhone

Barbara Anthony, Esq.

Senior Fellow in Healthcare, Pioneer Institute Former Senior Fellow & Associate, Center for Business & Government, Harvard Kennedy School Former MA Undersecretary, Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation

Cell: 857-998-0273
 Email: btantony@aol.com;
 Barbarabanthony@gmail.com
 Banthony@pioneerinstitute.org

> On May 9, 2023, at 10:50 AM, btantony <btantony@aol.com> wrote:

>

> Dear Councilors Toner and Nolan,

>

> I write to you as you are co-chairs of the Council Finance Committee and I write in full support of recent, previous submissions to you by Young Kim. While I do not understand the intricacies of the coming budget as well as Mr. Kim does, I can see that there appears to be little transparency or accountability regarding the costs of separated bike lanes in this city. I am truly astounded to read from your own CM that he plans to increase the cost of certain lanes up to possibly \$60 million. Even a cost of half that amount is staggering for a few miles of bike lanes. We need much more transparency and accountability.

>

> And one of the things I have never seen is some actual data on the number of Cambridge residents who regularly use the lanes versus those who just pass through Cambridge on their way to adjacent cities. Not "trips" but actual tax paying residents because they rent or own here. That would be an interesting factoid.

>

> For the past several years, I have been horrified about the installation of lanes and the way that the legitimate concerns of neighborhoods, seniors, the disabled and small business are simply disregarded to appease organized cyclists lobbies. It's like the people who live here and pay taxes either through rents or home ownership just don't matter. (We all know what can happen to a Councilor who doesn't do as the organized cyclists unions wish.) Now the potential cost of CSO seems to have no limits and could actually result in a tax increase on Cambridge residents. That will be just too much for residents to accept!

>

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 9, 2023 9:00 AM (Committee Reports)

> I submit this is not a responsible way to spend the city's resources. There needs to be a full and detailed accounting of what has been spent so far and why we continue to throw tens of millions of dollars at this terribly destructive infrastructure plan that does not benefit the overwhelming majority of Cambridge residents. And which creates damaging externalities for neighborhoods and commercial centers. That is a fact! The spending and projected costs certainly appear to be out of control and have no oversight.

>

> I submit that the way the finances for the CSO have been handled and the planned future spending would be fodder for recall petitions in any city which has such a process. Cambridge needs that process! It's something the Charter Commission should hear about.

>

> I strongly urge you to put the breaks on this bike lane spending spree before it's too late. Raising taxes because of the CSO will be the final straw for many residents.

>

> Thank you for considering my views,

>

> Barbara Anthony

>

> Sent from my iPhone

>

> Barbara Anthony, Esq.

>

> Senior Fellow in Healthcare, Pioneer Institute

> Former Senior Fellow & Associate, Center for Business & Government, Harvard Kennedy School

> Former MA Undersecretary, Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation

>

> Cell: 857-998-0273

> Email: btantony@aol.com;

> Barbarabanthony@gmail.com

> Banthony@pioneerinstitute.org

>

>

Erwin, Nicole

From: Joan Pickett <jpickett7@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 1:57 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: 2024 Budget - Outreach Communication

Dear Finance Committee and City Manager,

One of the priorities I heard from the Council this past year is the need to improve outreach and communication to residents. I hope this is funded in the Executive/CM budget as I know a new outreach position is part of the 2024 budget. (Or it could also be in the CC operating budget?)

Here are 3 suggestions for improving outreach:

1. **Re-do the Website-** It is confusing and not well organized making it hard for residents to quickly find the information they need. It may be hard for the CC to see this issue as you are all adept at finding what you need or your staff finds it for you.
2. **Develop an index for Policy Orders** - Unless residents know at which CC meeting a policy order was adopted, you can't find it any other way than to go back through the meeting minutes and past agendas. Why not develop an indexing system to make it easier for residents to find PO's and where they are in the committee process? And have the most recent version of the policy order readily available on line.
3. **Develop a 'push strategy' for important information** - I am impressed by the PB outreach--- postcards for each residence, banners, innumerable emails, etc. The CC and CM get poor markets for outreach in comparison. When there are broad sweeping initiatives---- BEUDO, CSO, Municipal Broadband----- the only way you know is if you are signed up for the city emails or on a private email list serv. I have spoken with many neighbors and they are totally unaware of the daily email from the City. You should be promoting that tool but also why not snail mail residents (you have our addresses for taxes, water bills, renewing dog licenses) or use the email lists the city already has for snow emergencies, street sweeping, etc. Why not consolidate all the email lists and use them to push information out to residents on important policy issues to follow? (I am not sure if you have access to the Election Commission list but clearly that is another source of contact information updated regularly.)

If you don't know how to (or can't) easily navigate the website or how to look for policy orders, it is hard to get engaged. If you don't know that you can get on a list for daily updates and project lists, it is hard to get engaged.

I hope the new outreach/communications position is not only for internal communications but also covers external communications.

Sincerely,

Joan Pickett
 59 Ellery St

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 9, 2023 9:00 AM (Committee Reports)