



FINANCE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

10:00 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10:10 AM
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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 type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, May 16, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 10:00 a.m. by the Chair, Councillor Carlone. 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 – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Simmons – Present/Remote

Councillor Toner – Present/Remote

Councillor Zondervan – Present/Remote

Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 8, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

*Vice Mayor Mallon was marked present in the Sullivan Chamber at 10:10 a.m.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone offered opening remarks and noted that the call of the meeting was to discuss the City budget covering the fiscal period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Present at the meeting was City Manager Yi-An Huang, Deputy City Manager, Owen O'Riordan, Assistant

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 16, 2023 10:00 AM (Committee Reports)

City Manager for Finance, David Kale, Budget Director, Taha Jennings, and Deputy Budget Director, Angela Pierre. Councillor Carlone 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.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone opened Public Comment.

Clara Hendricks, 6 Rice Circle, Cambridge, MA, Co-Chair of Library Services, shared concerns about leadership within the Library Department.

Justin Saif, 259 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, urged the Council to increase the budget towards the affordable housing trust to meet affordable housing goals in Cambridge.

Charles Teague, 90 Jackson Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and concerns on trees in Cambridge and asked for more funds go towards the forestry budget and that the Urban Forest Master Plan be a priority.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, urged the City to implement the Urban Forestry Master Plan to help reach goals climate change goals and offered comments on affordable housing.

John Pitkin, 18 Fayette Street, Cambridge, MA, agreed with comments made by previous speakers on the Urban Forestry Master Plan and shared that canopy in Cambridge is critical.

CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE

The Chair, Councillor Carlone introduced Derrick Neal, Chief Public Officer who was joined by Deborah Odunze, Deputy Chief Public Health Officer, and noted that Dr. Assaad Sayah, Chief Executive Officer, was joined via Zoom. Dr. Sayah and his team were available to respond to questions and concerns.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Zondervan who asked for clarification on what the \$7.9 million dollars covers for the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) so the Council and the City has a better understanding on what is being funded and what is being cut within in the Department. Dr. Sayah shared that he is not prepared to provide information on where the funds will be going because that information is not public within the CHA, noting that expenses should be matching income and it requires difficult decisions. Councillor Zondervan shared concerns about the Council not being able to know what the budget is being used towards and urged the CHA to provide information.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Simmons who stressed the importance that the CHA is receiving the necessary funds to help the community now and in the future. Councillor Simmons shared that she supports renovating the campus at 119 Windsor Street, better funding for the department in general, and the overall budget. Dr. Sayah agreed that the Windsor Street location could benefit from having renovations done to help maintain the building and to serve the community the best way possible.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Nolan who asked if there was an annual assessment done and filed for the needs of the City. Derrick Neal shared that a community health improvement plan and community health assessment are completed to determine the health needs of the community, which are available on the CHA website. Councillor Nolan asked for the status of the Birth Center, noting that it is a big interest to the community and the Council. Dr. Sayah shared that the Birth Center needs to be modernized in the way that it operates and focuses on serving more of the vulnerable population. Councillor Nolan shared concerns on the Birth Center and urged CHA to better serve the women who need their assistance. Dr. Sayah clarified that the Birth Center never closed, birthing patients was stopped during the pandemic because of the Hospital's ability to keep an environment where patients could get appropriate care and minimize the spread of COVID.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor McGovern who suggested that the Council receive an update from CHA or the City Manager yearly or quarterly, so members are up to date with information pertaining to the Hospital. Councillor McGovern agreed with comments made by Councillor Zondervan regarding not knowing where the funds for the budget will be going. Councillor McGovern asked for an update on Mental Health Services in CHA. Dr. Sayah was available to respond and shared that CHA is the largest provider in the State for psychiatric care and has committed to adding 25 additional adult beds to help those in need.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Mayor Siddiqui who asked for a timeline on when staffing cut decisions will be made. Dr. Sayah shared that the decisions and information will be made public during the month of May. Mayor Siddiqui shared that she agrees there should be more discussion with the CHA and the City Manager around the structure of the relationship between the City and CHA.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who shared that it was hard for her to understand and justify where CHA is making cuts to the Public Health Department in some of the critical roles when there are not being cuts made in other areas. City Manager Huang noted that based on conversations that took place with CHA, the budget reflects that. The City Manager shared that he appreciates the concerns that have been brought forward. The Vice Mayor agreed that there should be conversations in the future about long-term feasibility between the City and the CHA.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone shared that there was a strong message coming from the Councillors which he hopes will be addressed moving forward, both with short-term and long-term goals.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Zondervan who made the following motion, That City Manager be and hereby is requested to adjust the Health Alliance Budget to ensure that all services provided to the City of Cambridge by the Health Alliance for Public Health Department needs and staff are fully funded, and to adjust the Capital Budget to ensure all necessary repairs are made to the Windsor Street clinic. (Copy Attached)

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

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, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

ORDERED: That City Manager be and hereby is requested to adjust the Health Alliance Budget to ensure that all services provided to the City of Cambridge by the Health Alliance for Public Health Department needs and staff are fully funded, and to adjust the Capital Budget to ensure all necessary repairs are made to the Windsor Street clinic.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who made a motion to forward the Cambridge Health Alliance budget to the full City Council with a negative recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent
 Councillor Carlone – Yes
 Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes
 Councillor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – Yes
 Councillor Simmons – Present
 Councillor Toner – Absent
 Councillor Zondervan – Yes
 Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
 Yes – 6, No – 0, Present – 1, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Meeting recessed at 12:15p.m.

The Finance Committee reconvened at approximately 1:00p.m.

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

Councillor Azeem – Absent *
 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 – Absent
 Councillor Toner – Absent
 Councillor Zondervan – Present/Remote
 Mayor Siddiqui – Absent*
 Present – 5, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

*Councillor Azeem was marked present and remote at 1:07p.m.

*Mayor Siddiqui was marked present and in the Sullivan Chamber at 1:16p.m.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone opened Public Comment.

Lee Farris, 269 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that they would like to make sure that the budget has funds to purchase properties for affordable housing and a plan that balances goals, a focus on community outreach, fund the Urban Forest Master Plan

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Chair, Councillor Carlone introduced Kathy Watkins, Commissioner of Public Works, and her team. Councillors offered comments on tree canopy, the Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP), and energy efficient goals. Kathy Watkins and her team were available to respond, noting that public health, the environment, and employment are three main focuses for the Department. Kathy Watkins shared that there is almost 1.7 million dollars in the tree fund and in both FY24 and FY25 capital budget there is funding towards trees, noting that the Department is focusing on the most sustainable and economic way to meet the overall planting goals in the UFMP. Councillor Zondervan and Councillor Nolan urged the Department to reach out for assistance from the Council whenever it is needed to help reach climate change goals.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone made a motion to forward the Department of Public Works 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 – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Absent

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

WATER DEPARTMENT

The Chair, Councillor Carlone introduced Mark Gallagher, Acting Managing Director for the Water Department, who was joined by his team Julie Greenwood-Torelli, Director of Water Operations, Fred Centanni, Director of Administration, and Elisabeth Barr, Administrative and Fiscal Operation Manager. Councillor Carlone opened the discussion to Councillors. Mark Gallagher shared information on PFAS levels and noted that the industry and EP standards have shared that their equipment cannot test down to a zero level, and anything below two parts per trillion is considered non detectable. Councillor Zondervan shared that he would be in favor of any budget that would help with the Cambridge water supply. Councillor Nolan shared worries from residents and business owners, specifically coffee shops, that are concerned about the water supply damaging equipment and offered comments on climate changes concerning rain and long-term droughts. The Water Department shared that they are in the process of consulting an engineering firm to put together a Drought Management Plan.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone, made a motion to forward the Water 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 - Absent

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

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

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department (CDD) who was joined by Sandra Clark, Chief of Administration, and many members of her Leadership team. Iram Farooq shared that the priority of CDD is to provide livable, sustainable, and equitable solutions in Cambridge by working with the City Manager to align their work with City Council goals. Iram Farooq shared that six outreach workers from underrepresented communities have recently been hired to help CDD connect with their communities to ensure goals are being met and that community members have access to all the CDD is able to provide.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Zondervan who shared that he appreciated all the work that CDD does and is happy to see they are increasing staffing to help address issues. Councillor Zondervan asked for an update on inclusionary housing preferences. Chris Cotter, Housing Director, noted that although Housing has been short staffed, they are prioritizing day to day operations of the program and have been busier then ever with the inclusionary rental program, and three new buildings were opened with more than 200 units in the last year.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Simmons who read a prepared statement which voiced her concerns around the Community Development budget, specifically towards the Affordable Housing Trust (**Attachment B**). Councillor Simmons brought forward a proposed Policy Order and the Chair opened the floor for discussion.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor McGovern who shared that it is not a lot to ask that the Affordable Housing Trust budget increase at the same rate as the overall city budget increases and noted that if affordable housing is a goal of the City then everyone needs to work towards making housing one of the top budget priorities. Councillor McGovern shared that he supports the proposed Policy Order.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who noted that it is important to think about the different ways in which the City can fund affordable housing that may not be part of the City budget. Iram Farooq shared that whenever there has been a property that the City is looking to purchase, CDD has been able to get free cash to support it, which is something that the City Manager and other staff have expressed their willingness to continue doing this format because it allows for more flexibility. Chris Cotter was available to respond and shared the process of how CDD uses the affordable housing trust when looking at properties. Vice Mayor Mallon shared that the City's commitment to affordable housing and funding affordable housing is very strong.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone offered comments and suggestions about leasing land, similar to what Boston does, noting that it could be a more progressive way of achieving a better end goal, and properties could be used differently depending on the neighborhood the land is in.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Nolan who shared concerns about the proposed Policy Order and where the increase of funds would be coming from. Councillor McGovern shared that the City does not have to cut funds from other departments to appropriate free cash.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Mayor Siddiqui who shared that she would like to see work going towards increasing the homeownership programs, noting that it is a way to keep families and children in the City who may not be able to afford a home. Iram Farooq responded and noted that the Department is currently working with the Trust to complete a proposal for modifying the homeownership program by taking a closer look at the resale formula and inheritance. Chris Cotter shared that the Home Bridge program just recapitalized with \$6 million dollars of new funding from the trust that should last over a year and noted that Home Bridge is one program that CDD has which does not have a waiting list.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Zondervan who shared that he was in favor of the proposed Policy Order and believes that the increase in funding is a reasonable request. City Manager Huang offered comments on the proposed Policy Order and free cash.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone shared he was in favor of the proposed Policy Order and that the City should be doing more to work towards open space, the environment, pedestrian safety, and streets and suggested there should be an urban design and sociological strategy to make these plans work and to be successful.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Simmons who made the following motion, That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to increase the Affordable Housing Trust budget in FY24 by 7.1% to equal the increase of the overall city budget, increase the Affordable Housing Trust budget by \$20 million through a free cash appropriation, outside of the FY24 budget, and engage in creating a 3-year plan to increase the Affordable Housing Trust budget to 10% of the overall City budget. (Copy attached) Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carlone – No

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes
 Councillor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – No
 Councillor Simmons – Yes
 Councillor Toner – Absent
 Councillor Zondervan – Yes
 Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
 Yes – 6, No – 2, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to increase the Affordable Housing Trust budget in FY24 by 7.1% to equal the increase of the overall city budget, increase the Affordable Housing Trust budget by \$20 million through a free cash appropriation, outside of the FY24 budget, and engage in creating a 3-year plan to increase the Affordable Housing Trust budget to 10% of the overall City budget.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone, made a motion to forward the Community Development Department budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent
 Councillor Carlone – Yes
 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, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Finance Committee went into recess.

The Finance Committee reconvened at approximately 4:07p.m.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent
 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/In Sullivan Chamber
 Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
 Present – 7, Absent - 2. Quorum established.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Charles Sullivan, Executive Director of the Historical Commission, to respond to questions and comments from Councillors. Councillor Simmons thanked Charles Sullivan for the work that is being done restoring St. Augustine African Orthodox Church and for all of the outreach that is done not only with the interfaith communities looking for assistance in restoration, but for all the work that is done to help historic preservation.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone made a motion to forward the Historical Commission budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

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. Absent – 2. Motion passed.

LIBRARY

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Maria McCauley, Director of Libraries, and her team for comments on the Library's budget. Maria McCauley shared that Cambridge Public Libraries are committed to providing services through free and equitable goals and reviewed the many teams that assist with the public when they are in the libraries, including youth and adult services, STEAM initiatives, and collaborations with the School Department. Councillor McGovern thanked Maria McCauley and her staff for continuing to create a safe environment and a welcoming place for everybody.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone made a motion to forward the Library budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

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, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

CABLE TELEVISION

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Calvin Lindsay, Director of 22-City View, who was available to respond to comments and questions from Councillors. Calvin Lindsay shared that the main goal for Cable TV is for residents and the public to have access to municipal government. He shared that the department is currently involved with the ongoing project of digitizing Council and Committee meetings so the public and Councillors have access to records going back to the mid 1980's to early 1990's. Councillor Zondervan shared that he would like to see the Department focus on getting a YouTube channel available to be able to stream meetings and other City events to the public.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone, made a motion to forward the Cable Television budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

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, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

DEBT SERVICES

David Kale shared that Debt Services is an interdepartmental effort to get all the information together collaboratively. David Kale and Michele Kincaid, Assistant Finance Director, outlined the projects that are used with City funds and how the debt is managed through prescribed ratios and that it is critical to pay back debt in a reasonable amount of time based on policy. Councillor Zondervan asked for clarification on whether the City would be able to borrow money to go towards affordable homeownership units and subsidized housing, to which David Kale noted that the Bond Counsel did prior legal research and under the state statute that it is not a possible option to borrow money for that specific purpose.

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

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

CAPITAL BUILDING PROJECTS

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Rebecca Fuentes, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, who was joined by the Nick Stouff, Assistant Commissioner for Architectural Services for the Department of Public Works and Brendon Roy, Manager of Capital Building Programs. Rebecca Fuentes and her team shared that the Capital Buildings projects is a team of architects and engineers who are working on multiple design and construction projects throughout the City and shared what the future staffing plans look like. It was noted that some of the projects are managed by the City Manager's Office, and some are through the Department of Public Works. Councillor Nolan noted the importance of building facilities that are net-zero eliminating fossil fuels should be built into all new projects going forward.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone made a motion to forward the Capital Building Project budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

WOMEN'S COMMISSION

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Kimberly Sansoucy, Executive Director, who was joined by Emily Shield, Project Coordinator. Kimberly Sansoucy shared that the Women's Commission is dedicated to serving Cambridge residents through advocacy, collaboration, and public awareness. Councillor Zondervan, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Nolan, and Councillor Carlone thanked the Women's Commission for all their hard work that is dedicated to Cambridge youth and residents, especially the work that is done around promoting youth in sports.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone made a motion to forward the Women's Commission budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Yes
Councillor Toner – Absent
Councillor Zondervan – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Cambridge City Council’s Finance Committee recessed at 5:24p.m. and will reconvene on Thursday, May 18, 2023, at 9:00a.m.

On Thursday, May 18, 2023, the Cambridge City Council’s Finance Committee that recessed on May 16, 2023, reconvened at 9:00a.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 – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Simmons – Absent*
Councillor Toner – Present/Remote
Councillor Zondervan – Present/Remote
Mayor Siddiqui – Present/Remote
Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

***Vice Mayor Mallon was marked present in the Sullivan Chamber at 9:41a.m.**

***Councillor Simmons was marked present and remote at 9:41a.m.**

The Chair, Councillor Nolan offered opening remarks and noted that the call of the meeting was to continue the discussion on the City budget covering the fiscal period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Present at the meeting was City Manager Yi-An Huang, Deputy City Manager, Owen O’Riordan, Assistant City Manager for Finance, David Kale, Budget Director, Taha Jennings, and Deputy Budget Director, Angela Pierre.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan opened Public Comment.

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns on the Capital Budget and appropriations, and shared that the Capital Budget should be transparent and have accountability identifying any changes in the FY24 budget.

Joan Pickett, 59 Ellery Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on the AHO, traffic congestion, parking concerns, and the Cycling Safety Ordinance.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 16, 2023 10:00 AM (Committee Reports)

The Chair, Councillor Nolan introduced Crystal Rosa, Language Access Manager for the Human Rights Commission, who was joined by Sarah Binney, Director of Operations and Carolona Almonte, Attorney Investigator. Crystal Rosa and her team made themselves available to respond to questions and concerns from Councillors. The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan for questions. Crystal Rosa shared that they believe that the Human Rights Commission has the funding it needs given the current capacity. It was shared that any additional funding would be used to grow the department to help expand the strength and frequency of programming and outreach. Crystal Rosa noted that a yearly written progress report is something that can be discussed with the City Manager once the position of Executive Director is filled.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan made a motion to forward the Human Rights 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 – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

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

MWRA AND CHERRY SHEET

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan who asked if the City had done a complete analysis on what it would cost to switch to MWRA as the permanent water supply. Deputy City Manager O’Riordan shared that through discussions, it has been determined from a legal perspective that it is impossible to move away from the City’s water supply to the MWRA. Councillor Zondervan noted that this is something he would like to have further conversations about in the future.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan made a motion to forward the MWRA and Cherry Street 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 – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

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

VETERAN'S SERVICES

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Neil MacInnes-Barker, Director of Veteran' Services who was joined by Cynthia Harris, Deputy Director. Neil MacInnes-Barker shared that the Veteran Service Department is a supported network of services and benefits to ensure that none of 500,000 Veterans in Massachusetts who served our Country honorably, or their dependents, will be homeless, hungry, or medically deprived. The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern, Councillor Zondervan, and Councillor Simmons who all thanked Neil MacInnes-Barker and his team for the extraordinary work they do every day to help those who need it. Director MacInnes-Barker and Deputy Director Harris shared goals of the Department, reviewed events that Veterans are involved in, and responded to questions on the outreach that were done to help unhoused Veterans and marginalized members of the community.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Simmons who made a motion to forward the Verteran's Services 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.

HUMAN SERVICES

The Chair, Councillor Nolan introduced Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager for Human Services (DHSP) who was joined by her leadership team. Ellen Semonoff shared that it is a priority of the Department on how services are funded in the community because DHSP delivers services to the community and is also a major funder of community partners, which is reflection of City Council goals. Ellen Semonoff shared that with the increase of DHSP's budget a focus of goals will be working towards the development and implementation of Universal Pre-K, expansion of after school programs, and providing services to address the needs of the unhoused community.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan who thanked DHSP staff for all their work and stressed that he would like to have more information on the demographics of people who pay dues at the Fresh Pond Golf Course. Councillor Zondervan shared his excitement for the Green Jobs Specialist position and Sue Walsh, Assistant Director for Adult and Family Services was able to provide detail on the goals and vision of the new position.

Councillor Zondervan noted the importance of ensuring the Department is helping Transgender and Non-Binary residents who are unhoused and other struggles within the community.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who offered comments on the struggles the unhoused community faces and the challenges that come with the Department and the City to all of those in need of somewhere to live. Councillor McGovern shared how important the Meals Program is, not just because it provides food, but it is an opportunity to check in with people to make sure they are doing ok in other aspects of their lives and noted that he would support having a program like this continue. Councillor McGovern stressed the importance of having a Day Drop-In Center to help the unhoused community not only at night with shelters but be able to provide a positive service to them in the daytime as well.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan asked DHSP if this budget would be able to continue to provide critical services to those affected by the opioid crisis, noting that the number of overdoses that result in death in Cambridge is not declining. Ellen Semonoff and Councillor McGovern shared that there will be a Committee meeting held on June 13, 2023 concentrating on overdose prevention sites. Ellen Semonoff shared that there is ongoing funding, both from the State and the City, which will continue the ability to help those who need it, and noted that her Department will continue discussions with the City as well as the Public Health Department regarding outreach and how to expand the work that is already ongoing.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui who thanked DHSP for all of their work and shared that her office has been working very closely with the Multi-Service Center to help residents.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Human Services 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 OVERVIEW

No Discussion and no vote needed.

FINANCIAL SUMMARIES

No Discussion and no vote needed.

REVENUE**No vote needed.**

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan who asked if the payment in lieu of taxes for the FY24 budget will be the \$8 million dollars for Harvard and MIT and asked if there was any possibility of renegotiation or if the City needs to stick with the contract. David Kale confirmed that a majority of payments received do come from Harvard and MIT and that the current language in the contract does allow the City at some points within in the agreement, the possibility of additional conversations, noting that they were 20 and 40 year agreements that were signed by a previous City Manager. Councillor Zondervan also had a question on the \$60 million in free cash that would be used as an operating revenue source. David Kale and his team were available to provide a response.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT

The Chair, Councillor Nolan had a question regarding fossil fuel investment in facilities. David Kale shared that there was an amendment made to the City's investment policy last year to include fossil fuel and offered insight into the State law that deals with stocks in the City's trust.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Toner who asked if Commissioner Watkins could provide a review of the City's plan on installing bicycle lanes and other amenities around the City. Commissioner Watkin was available to respond and provided an update on bike lanes, sidewalks, bus lanes, and utilities.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who asked what the safety measures for pedestrians on Massachusetts Avenue will look like, noting that Mass. Ave is extremely busy with both motor vehicle and bicyclist traffic. Commissioner Watkins shared that a working group was newly created to help work out the design of Mass. Ave, and will look at additional signals, flashing beacons, and curb extensions, among other things.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who suggested that a summary be prepared to help the residents understand the goals and vision on the future of Mass. Ave.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who offered suggestions on pedestrian safety and retail spaces on Mass Ave and hopes that there will be a lot of pedestrian amenities and safety improvements moving forward.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Azeem who asked if Commissioner Watkins thinks that there would be the possibility of reducing the number of lanes on Mass. Ave. Commissioner Watkins shared that the current analysis does not include narrowing lanes right now, but it is something that could be reviewed in the future as a part of a larger project.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to forward the Public Investment 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 – Yes
Yes – 8, No – 1. Motion passed.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to refer the six Appropriations back 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 – Yes
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Vice Mayor Mallon 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 – Absent
Councillor Toner – Yes
Councillor Zondervan – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Meeting adjourned.

Attachment A – Questions submitted by Councillors to Departments

Attachment B – Prepared written statement from Councillor Simmons

The City Clerk's Office received 9 written communications, Attachments C-K.

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 these meetings can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/510?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=f2e7db4c9865236df46860eeb951623b
https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/507?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=265b7a52142a045cec13ad70d64a9892

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

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

A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to relative to the appropriation and authorization to borrow \$50,000,000 to provide funds for the reconstruction of the Mass Avenue between Waterhouse Street and Alewife Parkway.

A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to appropriation and authorization to borrow \$35,350,000 to provide funds for the Municipal Facilities Improvement Plan. Funds will support upgrades to the 689 Mass Avenue Interior; upgrades at the Moses Youth Center; Interior fit-out of Rindge Pre-K building; electric vehicle charging station infrastructure at several municipal buildings; and additional work at Inman and East Cambridge Fire Houses; First Street Garage upgrades to stairs and elevator; and other City building upgrades.

A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to appropriation and authorization to borrow \$2,500,000 to provide funds for the construction of the Peabody School Playground and Corcoran (Raymond Street) park.

A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,800,000 to provide funds for financing school building upgrades.

A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to the appropriation and authorization to borrow \$51,500,000 to provide funds for the construction of sewer separation, storm water management and combined sewer overflow reduction elimination improvements within the Port and River Street areas as well as the Sewer Capital Repairs Program and climate change preparedness efforts.

A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to the appropriation and authorization to borrow \$26,000,000 to provide funds for the reconstruction of various City streets, sidewalks and bike facilities. \$15,000,000 of this loan order is attributable to the improvement project related to sewer infrastructure upgrades on River Street, which include full depth roadway reconstruction, new sidewalks, new street trees and various other street improvements.

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?

Councillor Simmons

Remarks for Budget Discussion Re Affordable Housing Funding

May 16, 2023

Thank you Mr. Chair,

In reviewing the City Manager's budget for Fiscal Year 2024, I was disappointed to see that there is no significant increase in funding allocated to the acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable housing. While there is a nominal increase of \$800,000 for the coming fiscal year, this figure falls far short of addressing the critical need for affordable housing in our community.

The City has taken steps to maintain funding levels, such as increasing tax revenue by \$1.17 million, due to the anticipated reduction in building permit funds for the upcoming fiscal year. However, this is simply not enough. The lack of significant increase in funding for affordable housing is effectively a decrease, when we consider the rising costs of construction materials, labor, and land. Effectively, we are in a boat that's taking on water, and we've been given a table spoon to drain it – that's simply not a strategy for success.

The Community Development Department's memo to the Housing Committee, dated April 13, 2023, highlights the potential demand for funding that could exceed the available resources. The Affordable Housing Trust currently has \$155 million in funds for Fiscal Year 2023, with \$99 million already committed to projects. However, there are still \$34 million in requests for viable projects and an additional \$54 million in requests for new

development opportunities. If these projections hold true, the Trust will be unable to fund all proposed projects.

If the FY24 allocation of \$39.5 million is included, the Trust could end FY24 with only \$7 million in uncommitted funds – this is simply not sufficient to meet the growing demand for affordable housing and to achieve our city's goals.

If we are serious about increasing the production of affordable housing, we must ensure that financing for these projects increases on an annual basis, rather than merely maintaining level funding. Predictable city support from year to year is essential for sustaining a pipeline of projects that will help address the affordable housing crisis.

I urge that the City Manager and his team reconsider the allocation for affordable housing in the proposed budget, get creative in making the numbers work, and make a greater commitment to providing the funding we need for affordable housing. Too many people are counting on us to get this right, and I know we all want to do everything in our power to do so. I thank you and I yield.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Charles Teague <charles.d.teague@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 5:55 PM
To: City Council; City Manager; City Clerk
Subject: Finance Committee: add \$1 million to plant more trees

Dear Councillors, Mr. Manager, M. Clerk (please add this to the record),

Please add \$1 million to the Urban Forestry Program to fund:

- restoring the Emerald Ash Borer treatments from \$75,000 to \$210,000 as specified in FY23 budget
- restoring tree pruning from \$50,000 to at least match last year's \$105,000
- increasing pruning funds for the city-wide removal of dangerous dead limbs from last year's drought
- increasing pruning funds to increase the frequency of pruning to increase the lifetime of our mature trees
- increasing funding to plant trees (and adding a second vendor if required) to :
 - adequately fund the existing planned plantings
 - add plantings to replace trees killed by last year's drought
 - add plantings to mitigate the recent history of nearly 1-in-4 deaths in 5 years
 - add plantings to replace the "DBH" of trees cut down by permit over the last 5 years
- increasing funding for sidewalk tree well reconstruction
- increasing funding for other "de-paving" (as already planned for the cemetery)

The Urban Forest Master Plan details strategies for placing new trees in our parks.

Charles Teague
 90 Jackson St

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 16, 2023 10:00 AM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Bond Worthington <bond@bondworthington.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 8:29 AM
To: City Council; City Manager; City Clerk
Subject: Finance Committee: add \$1 Million for trees

Dear Councillors, Mr. Manager, M. Clerk:

Please include this in the council record.

Please add \$1 million to the Urban Forestry Program to fund:

- restoring the Emerald Ash Borer treatments from \$75,000 to \$210,000 as specified in FY23 budget
- restoring tree pruning from \$50,000 to at least match last year's \$105,000
- increasing pruning funds for the city-wide removal of dangerous dead limbs from last year's drought
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- increasing funding for sidewalk tree well reconstruction
- increasing funding for other "de-paving" (as already planned for the cemetery)

The Urban Forest Master Plan details strategies for placing new trees in our parks

Thank you,
 Bond



617-699-2255

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 16, 2023 10:00 AM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ruth Loetterle <rloetterle@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 9:59 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Increase the budget for the preservation and maintenance of Cambridge's trees and the addition of new trees

City Manager Huang and City Council members,

Last summer's drought brought the realities of the climate crisis to our doorsteps. Please do not ignore its impact on our city, and provide the necessary funding to increase the planting of trees, responsibly maintain and water our existing trees, and fully implement the Urban Forest Master Plan. I have always believed my city of 42 years to be a thoughtful leader in many arenas, so I am greatly disturbed to learn that the budget currently proposed cuts rather than increases funding for our tree canopy. What will get your attention and become responsible stewards of our City's ecological health?

Sincerely,
Ruth Loetterle
29 Cogswell Ave.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 16, 2023 10:00 AM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: S Ringler <sringle23@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 8:55 PM
To: City Council; City Manager; City Clerk
Subject: Finance Committee, please add \$1M in budget for TREES

Please add \$1 million to the Urban Forestry Program to fund:

- restoring the Emerald Ash Borer treatments from \$75,000 to \$210,000 as specified in FY23 budget
- restoring tree pruning from \$50,000 to at least match last year's \$105,000
- increasing pruning funds for the city-wide removal of dangerous dead limbs from last year's drought
- increasing pruning funds to increase the frequency of pruning to increase the lifetime of our mature trees
- increasing funding to plant trees (and adding a second vendor if required) to :
 - adequately fund the existing planned plantings
 - add plantings to replace trees killed by last year's drought
 - add plantings to mitigate the recent history of nearly 1-in-4 deaths in 5 years
 - add plantings to replace the "DBH" of trees cut down by permit over the last 5 years
- increasing funding for sidewalk tree well reconstruction
- increasing funding for other "de-paving" (as already planned for the cemetery)

The Urban Forest Master Plan details strategies for placing new trees in our parks

thank you

Susan Ringler
 82 Kinnaird St.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 16, 2023 10:00 AM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Slate, Jonathan - BLS <Slate.Jonathan@bls.gov>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 7:25 PM
To: City Clerk; City Manager; City Council
Subject: Please Increase the Budget for the City's Trees

Dear Cambridge City Councilors and City Manager Huang,

I am writing to request that the City of Cambridge significantly increase the funding for more trees and better care of them in Cambridge.

Though I have been a resident in Cambridge for many decades, I have just recently come to fully understand the significance of growing and maintaining the tree canopy in Cambridge.

This Arbor Day, I did my part by going to City Hall to get a tree to plant in my yard. I hope the City does there's by at least adding \$1 million to the Urban Forestry Program.

Thank you,

Jonathan Slate

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 16, 2023 10:00 AM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Joan Pickett <jpickett7@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2023 10:11 AM
To: City Council; City Manager
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: 2024 capital budget - Public Investment section/CSO investment

Dear City Council,

This email contains my full comments which I shortened to fit within the allocated public comment time to the Finance Committee on Thursday May 18.

When the AHO was passed a couple of years ago, it had a built-in evaluation requirement. At the fifth year, there was going to be a look back to see how successful or unsuccessful the AHO has been.

By contrast, the Cycling Safety and Ordinance has no requirements for any evaluation over any period. The council essentially told residents -----Trust us, we know what we're doing.

In the absence of a city evaluation, residents are doing their own CSO evaluation and below are their findings:

- increased traffic congestion through all parts of the city,
- increased cut through traffic in our neighborhoods,
- increased commercial traffic through neighborhoods due to relocation of loading zones,
- frustration by customers over parking removal,
- business owners complaining about the removal of parking on customers,
- increased difficulty of doing business in the city due to loading zones being moved, and
- difficulty of elders and mobility impaired individuals accessing services or getting services at their homes.

What residents see for the money invested so far are separated bike lanes that are **sparsely used** and a report by a resident that **safety has not improved**.

There is a total lack of accountability for the millions spent and to be spent. This budget has at least \$50 million dollars for separated bike lanes but there is more tucked in other projects. Despite asking, no one actually has told us how much money has been spent or what the overall cost of installing 25 miles will be.

Before approving the 2024 capital budget, I urge the City Council to take a hard look at how the cycling safety ordinance is performing. Currently, there is an economic impact assessment underway. Wait for the results.

And,

- Establish a continuously monitoring system in multiple locations to accurately determine cycling activity over time,
- Complete a safety review to determine if the CSO is really making cycling safer or not. A report from John Hanratty says separated bike lanes are not making the streets safer,

- Study the impact of bike lane installation on seniors and the disabled and ensure their access to services,
- Understand the impact of bike lane traffic diversions on the safety of young children and neighborhood residents and
- Require disclosure by public officials of donations from cycling individual and corporate interests.

With this information, the council can then objectively do a cost/benefit assessment and determine if the CSO should continue.

Finally, please let residents know if the \$50 million allocated for the Mass Ave 4 project includes the combined sewer overflow separation or will that effort require digging up of sections of Mass Ave at some point in the future?

Joan Pickett
59 Ellery Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Annette LaMond <annettelamond@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2023 9:48 AM
To: Kelleher, Kristen
Cc: City Manager; City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Mass Avenue Construction Project

Dear Ms. Kelleher:

This very expensive project – approximately \$50 million – has not been justified in terms of cycling demand, safety, or the impact on small businesses. Further, a project of this scale is not merited when one considers the City's other needs.

Regarding design, Mass Avenue's traffic medians play an important traffic-calming role. They should not be removed. Rather, the traffic-calming service of these medians could be enhanced by planting low perennial grasses and pollinator-friendly plants. The transformation of the medians into planters or bio-swales would have a positive environmental impact – promoting better drainage and mitigating urban heat island effects. Planted medians would make Cambridge a greener place.

This project should not be given priority over other Traffic department projects – modern roundabouts at key points in the city and intersection improvements – that would have a bigger impact on the safety of our city's roads, and for a far smaller expenditure.

Sincerely,

Annette LaMond
 7 Riedesel Avenue
 Cambridge, MA 02138

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 16, 2023 10:00 AM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2023 8:14 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; Jennings, Taha; Watkins, Kathy; Cambridge Charter Review Committee
Subject: Capital Budget - Finance Committee Meeting 5/18/2023

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

Please accept my apologies for the late submission and length of this letter but the more I delved into the proposed capital budget and 5-year appropriation plans, the more issues I found.

The capital budget process must ensure transparency and traceability by stating the underlying statute/procedures/Ordinance/Policy Order for each line item. Capital budget process must also ensure accountability by identifying and explaining any changes in the proposed FY24's 5-year appropriation plan from the approved FY23's plan.

In fact-checking for this letter, I found the following Cycling Safety implementation related items. And each item I found is riddled with questions based not only on prior years' approved budget books but also on public documents I obtained through 29 Public Records Requests. I will not have enough time to ask all the questions I listed below during the public comment period and so I am looking to you, members of Finance Committee, to ask the City Manager the questions I raised and ask him to identify total budget for Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) implementation that he can be held accountable. My best estimate of total cost is well over \$100M considering all the expenditures under Operating Budget.

Thank you for your consideration,
 Respectfully yours,
 Young Kim
 Norris Street

- 1) Community Maintenance And Development:
 - a) 5-Year Appropriation Plan for Public Works: Sewer/Stormwater - River Street = \$33M (\$30M for FY24 and \$3M for FY27) (pg. VI-47) + "An FY19 and FY22 appropriation of \$54,000,000 funded the design and initial improvements and will be combined with the FY24 appropriation to fund construction which brings the total appropriation of \$87M; What portion of this is attributable to "Improvements include ... a separated bike lane, a dedicated bus lane"?
 - b) 5-Year Appropriation Plan for Public Works: Streets - Central Square = \$45M appropriation in FY25 with no other plan for FY24 and FY26 to FY28. "Project improvements will include ... separated bike lanes, and enhanced transit amenities for the key bus stops along the corridor... Consistent with the Cycling Safety Ordinance, the construction of the improvements will begin by December 31, 2025." "An FY23 appropriation and bond authorization of \$5,000,000 is funding the design." This will bring the total appropriation for this project to \$50M. What portion of this is attributable to "a separated bike lane, a dedicated bus lane"?
 - c) FY24 budget for Mass Ave. -- Harvard Sq Bus Stops (1/3 funding) under Public Works: Streets - Complete Streets Reconstruction = \$6M (pg. VI-51)
 - i) This is Segments C & D of MassAve4.
 - ii) The approved FY23 budget for MassAve4 -- Harvard Sq Bus Stops (1/2 funding) (pg. VI-43) was \$5M. What is the appropriation plan for the remaining 1/6 funding? Based on FY24 budget

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 16, 2023 10:00 AM (Committee Reports)

and assuming level funding, the budget for the remaining 1/6 funding would be \$3M bringing the total budget for this line item to \$14M

- d) 5-Year Appropriation Plan for Eliot Street between Brattle Street and Bennett Street under Public Works: Streets - Harvard Square - Eliot Street = \$10M (\$2M for FY25 and \$8M for FY27) (pg. VI-52)
 - i) The approved 5-Year Appropriation Plan was \$6M all for FY24 (Approved FY23 Budget VI-44)
 - ii) What is the justification the 2/3 increase and delayed appropriation?
 - iii) The House Doctor Engineering Support Contract for MassAve4 & Eliot Street, File 8412QQQ, with Kleinfelder dated 8/13/2021 with contract value of \$1,121,196 defines location of work for this project as Eliot Street from Brattle Street to JFK Street. Where is the 5-Year Appropriation Plan for Eliot Street Between Bennet Street to JFK Street?
- e) FY24 budget for Public Works: Streets - Mass Avenue - Waterhouse To Alewife Brook Parkway = \$50M with no further appropriation plan from FY25 to FY28 (pg. VI-53)
 - i) This is Segments A & B with added scope
 - ii) This was \$40M planned for FY24 on approved FY23 Budget (pg. VI-45),
 - iii) What is the justification for the 25% increase?
 - iv) Did CSO time line require revisit of previously installed quick-build separated bike lanes on Mass Ave from Dudley Street to Alewife Brook Parkway (Segment E) and Roseland Street to Beech Street (Segment F) so soon after quick build separated bike lanes were install on these two segments of Mass Ave?
 - v) File 8412QQQ ended in 5/1/2023 and did not include design services for Segments E and F. Has the contract been amended to include the expanded scope of work and has it been extended? If not, has new contract been issued for the added scope?

2) Public Safety

- a) 5-Year Appropriation Plan for Traffic: Vision Zero Safety Improvements Fund (pg. VI-22) = \$1.70M with \$0.5M planned for FY24 and level appropriation of \$0.3M/year for FY25 – FY28. What portion of this Plan is for CSO implementation?
- b) Status Of Prior Year Projects for Traffic: Vision Zero Safety Improvements Fund (pg. VI-22) states "In previous years the City has installed separated bike lanes on mid-Mass Ave, Inner Mount Auburn from Seller St. to Trowbridge, Alewife Brook Parkway to Dudley St., and South Mass Ave to Albany." What percentage of \$300,000 budgeted for FY23 was actually spent on these separated bike lanes?
- c) 5-Year Appropriation Plan for Traffic: Traffic Signal Program (pg. VI-21) = \$1.75M at level appropriation of \$0.35M/year. What portion of this is "part of the Cycling Safety Ordinance"?
- d) Status Of Prior Year Project for Traffic: Traffic Signal Program states "In FY23, the Department installed new Accessible Pedestrian Signals at 8 intersections and implemented signal and timing changes (including installing new bike signals and updated pedestrian crossings) along Garden St. at three locations. Signal timing and infrastructure changes were made at Mass Ave, Beech St, and Garden St. as a part of the Cycling Safety Ordinance." (pg. VI-21). The approved FY23 budget of was \$350,000 (pg. VI-14). What was actual expenditure for CSO? Were all the changes part of CSO? How much of \$1.75M of 5-Year Appropriation Plan will be used for CSO implementation?

K

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lee Farris <Lee@LeeFarris.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 9:42 PM
To: Huang, Yi-An; City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Residents Alliance comments on the budget

May 17, 2023

Dear Manager, Mayor, and Councilors,

I am writing for the Cambridge Residents Alliance to share some thoughts on the proposed budget.

While we very much appreciate the investment in pre-K, we are concerned about the elimination of paraprofessional positions.

We would like to make sure the budget contains adequate funds for purchasing properties, such as the Matignon School, to be used for priorities such as affordable housing and open space.

We want there to be funds for turning Envision into a real plan, meaning a plan that balances and reconciles competing goals. We would like to see funds for the analysis needed to give regular presentations to the Council on the city's progress in meeting the Envision targets. We would like to see funds for CDD to work with residents and neighborhood groups to develop community benefit plans to propose to developers seeking up-zoning, including possibly holding a charette. These requests could be facilitated by hiring more urban designers.

There should be substantially more funds for affordable housing. While the growth in the affordable housing budget has been good, it still does not meet our city's needs. In particular, we should increase purchases of existing apartment buildings. There needs to be a greater emphasis on programs that reduce the displacement of long-time residents and families due to soaring rent increases.

Our budget needs to fully fund the Urban Forest Master Plan. After last year's drought, we need to ensure adequate maintenance of our park and street trees, and a reduction in tree maintenance is harmful. We need to ensure funds for tree replacement due to drought and to better prepare for future droughts. Further, we need to fund a plan to relocate larger trees when working on parks, rather than destroying them. Lastly, during the pandemic and recent drought, many of our parks were under-maintained. Our parks now need an infusion of maintenance, including planting perennials and pruning or replacing shrubs.

Lastly, we ask that the Council establish clear review mechanisms to judge the effectiveness and efficiency of each department.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lee Farris, President
 Cambridge Residents Alliance: *Working for a Livable, Affordable and Diverse Cambridge*
<https://www.cambridgeresidentsalliance.org/>

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 16, 2023 10:00 AM (Committee Reports)