

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Councillor Al-Zubi, Co-Chair  
Councillor Nolan, Co-Chair  
Vice Mayor Azeem  
Councillor Flaherty  
Councillor McGovern  
Councillor Simmons  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler  
Councillor Zusy  
Mayor Siddiqui

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Finance Committee was held on Thursday, April 9, 2026. The meeting was Called to Order at 2:00 p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Nolan. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

**At the request of Co-Chair Nolan, Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present/Remote  
Vice Mayor Azeem – Absent\*  
Councillor Flaherty – Absent  
Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Councillor Simmons – Absent\*  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

**Present – 6, Absent – 3. Quorum established.**

\*Vice Mayor Azeem was present and remote at 2:10p.m.

\*Councillor Simmons was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 2:20p.m.

Co-Chair Nolan offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting to continue the discussion from February 25, 2026, on establishing future Budget Priorities. Present at the meeting was City Manager, Yi-An Huang, Deputy City Manager, Kathy Watkins, Assistant City Manager for Finance, Claire Spinner, and Budget Director, Taha Jennings.

Co-Chair Nolan gave a presentation titled “Council Prioritization and Future Budget Planning”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

**Co-Chair Nolan opened Public Comment.**

Paul Angelosanto, 61 Medford Street, spoke in strong support of the City providing support to adult and elder services.

Colin Barr, 61 Medford Street, spoke in strong support of the City providing support to adult and elder services.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized City Manager Huang and Deputy City Manager Watkins for comments related to future budget priorities. City Manager Huang provided an overview of the budget priorities, noting that some initiatives have already begun, while others require more, detailed planning, community engagement, and a review of costs. Kathy Watkins added that the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) is progressing with current regulations and that a draft CSO plan would be available soon for the public to review. City Manager Huang shared that many of the priorities can be an expansion of existing programs and services that the City already offers. Kathy Watkins provided information related to the implementation of the Cycling Safety Ordinance and how projects relate to the budget.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who highlighted the new budget prioritization process and asked how the City can move forward making efforts towards these priorities, and what a timeline for identifying higher priorities looks like. City Manager Huang pointed out that timelines will be different for each priority. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler asked what the next steps would be and if initiatives within the different priorities need to be discussed further. The City Manager shared that additional conversations in the future would most likely be needed for some priorities and suggested forming smaller working groups or committees to help define initiatives and provide recommendations to the City and City Council. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler asked for more information on the timeline for social housing. The City Manager explained that social housing is still in the early stages of planning and would need more time to create proposals to bring forward.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Vice Mayor Azeem who shared his support for the prioritization process and for combining preschool and afterschool expansion initiatives into a broader childcare priority.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui who offered comments related to short-term and long-term Council priorities, noting how some priorities are able to move forward sooner because of the groundwork that has already happened, such as the housing voucher expansion, while others may take longer because they will need years to complete and more time to analyze and review. Mayor Siddiqui emphasized how important childcare and early childcare services are, and asked what a timeline would look like for expanding preschool and afterschool programs. City Manager Huang agreed with comments made by the Mayor, noting that some priorities involve expanding existing programs, while other initiatives will require more time, planning, and resources.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who shared his support for the budget prioritization process but questioned how some of the initiatives would fit into the budget discussion without knowing their scope and costs. Councillor McGovern noted that some of the priorities may be easier to tie to funding decisions because they involve expanding programs. Councillor McGovern asked if the Finance Committee would be taking any action during the

meeting and how this conversation relates to the upcoming FY27 Budget Hearings. Co-Chair Nolan explained that the discussion was to help assist in determining priorities and City Council consensus before the Budget Hearings. City Manager Huang added that this discussion would also help with strategic and budget planning.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who highlighted the importance of long-term planning while also having fiscal restraint and efficiency. Councillor Zusy shared initiatives she was interested in, such as workforce development, support for seniors, social housing, and community land trusts. Councillor Zusy raised concerns about deferred maintenance to municipal buildings, emphasizing that investing in infrastructure can help prevent high repairs in the future. Councillor Zusy also shared concerns related to thermal energy and geothermal energy not being reflected in the final priority list. Kathy Watkins provided a brief overview of how staff are continuing their efforts towards sustainability. Co-Chair Nolan noted that it was an error that distributed thermal energy networks were not listed and that it should be on the list of initiatives.

Co-Chair Nolan pointed out that there was a lot of support from Councillors related to both Social Housing and Supportive Housing as priority areas, noting that Supportive Housing would need further discussion related to planning and implementation. Co-Chair Nolan suggested that preschool expansion and afterschool programming be combined into one, broader priority. Co-Chair Nolan emphasized how childcare can help working families and low-income households. Co-Chair Nolan added that the purpose of the discussion was to help guide staff with directions on which priorities should receive additional analysis and planning for future budget discussions.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui who echoed the importance of childcare opportunities and the meaningful impact it will have on families. Co-Chair Nolan shared information related to previous discussions regarding childcare and offered suggestions on ways the City can serve more families. Councillor McGovern pointed out that process is not eliminating other initiatives that the Council are interested in, and those priorities will remain important. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler spoke in favor of combining preschool expansion and after school programming into one broader childcare priority. Co-Chair Nolan agreed that moving forward with Social Housing, Supportive Housing, and Childcare as priorities does not prevent future work in other areas of interest. Councillor Zusy shared concerns about expanding programs during a time of financial uncertainty, while also acknowledging the importance of childcare services. Co-Chair Nolan explained that the Committee was not proposing to expand childcare programs or additional funding, but for staff to analyze, plan, and evaluate program models before any policy or budget decisions are made. Co-Chair Al-Zubi noted that combining preschool and afterschool into one category would help to increase overall support for programming.

**Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who made a motion to combine preschool expansion and afterschool expansion into a single childcare priority and direct staff to start further scoping and analysis of Social Housing, Supportive Housing Expansion, and Childcare as the Council's primary budget priority areas. Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes  
Councillor Nolan – Yes  
Councillor Simmons – Absent  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes  
Councillor Zusy – Yes  
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes  
**Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.**

Co-Chair Nolan recognized City Manager Huang who shared that the discussion has been helpful and will help guide staff moving forward.

Co-Chair Nolan offered closing remarks.

**Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes  
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes  
Councillor Flaherty – Absent  
Councillor McGovern – Yes  
Councillor Nolan – Yes  
Councillor Simmons – Absent  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes  
Councillor Zusy – Yes  
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes  
**Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.**

**The Finance Committee adjourned at approximately 3:35p.m.**

**Clerk’s Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:  
<https://cambridgema.v3.swagit.com/videos/381715>