



# GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, RULES & CLAIMS COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, August 6, 2024

11:00 AM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee will hold a public hearing to receive an update from the City Manager on progress in meeting annual goals, as well as the timeline and process for completing this year's evaluation. In addition, the Committee will begin discussions for creating a process for evaluation of the City Clerk and City Auditor. There will be no public comment. Members of the public are welcome to submit written communications to [CityClerk@Cambridgema.gov](mailto:CityClerk@Cambridgema.gov).

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Joan Pickett	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<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 Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee was held on Tuesday, August 6, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 11:00 a.m. by the Chair, Councillor Toner. 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

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

- Councillor Azeem – Absent
- Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/Remote
- Councillor Pickett – Absent
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

**Present – 3, Absent – 2. Quorum established.**

The Chair, Councillor Toner offered opening remarks and shared that the Call of the meeting was to hold a public hearing to receive and update from the City Manager on progress in meeting annual goals, as well as the timeline and process for completing this year’s evaluation. In addition, the Committee will begin discussions for creating a process of evaluation of the City Clerk and City Auditor. The Chair noted that there will be no public comment and that members of the public were welcome to submit written communications to the City Clerk’s Office. Present at the meeting was City Manager, Yi-An Huang, Chief People Officer, Raecia Catchings, Acting City Solicitor, Megan Bayer, City Clerk, Diane LeBlanc, and Deputy City Manager, Owen O’Riordan. Also present at the meeting was Mayor Simmons, Councillor Nolan, Councillor Siddiqui, and Councillor Wilson.

The Chair, Councillor Toner reviewed the timeline for the City Manager performance review, noting that today’s meeting was to reflect the mid-year check in.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Raecia Catchings who offered a brief update on the full staff survey.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized City Manager Huang who offered a mid-year status update on the City Manager 2024 Goals. This document was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. City Manager Huang reviewed the following topics within the 2024 Goals: leadership, City Council relationship, management, community engagement, culture, ADEI, City operations, and fiscal management. The City Manager and Raecia Catchings were available to respond to the comments and questions brought forward regarding the goals throughout the discussion.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who asked if there was anything that would be a positive addition to help the City Manager and City Council relationship move forward and to help reach the City Manager's goals. City Manager Huang provided examples of how the two have a good relationship and areas that may always need improvement.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who asked for more information on the digitizing of documents and the City moving towards using less paper. The City Manager provided a brief update on the work being done towards digitizing and shared how the City is initiating more electronic options that are available to the public within different departments.

The Chair, Councillor Toner asked if the employees who are hired in leadership roles have contracts when they are hired. City Manager Huang and Raecia Catchings responded by sharing that some leaderships roles do have contracts, some are appointed, and some do not have contracts.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Mayor Simmons who stressed the importance of community engagement. Mayor Simmons offered suggestions on how different departments can implement community engagement plans, and pointed out that it should be consistent and structured throughout the City. Mayor Simmons noted how much of the work the City does depends on feedback from the community. Councillor Wilson echoed comments made by the Mayor and noted how important it is to reach out to residents by using the Language Justice Department. City Manager Huang agreed with comments made by Mayor Simmons and Councillor Wilson on how important community engagement is to the City as a whole.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Wilson who asked for clarification on the Leadership Together meetings and how candidates are selected to participate in those meetings. City Manager Huang provided a review of the process on how people are selected. The City Manager also pointed out how his team is receiving and listening to feedback from participants in order to improve meetings and include more people. Councillor Wilson asked how the City is coming up with the questions that are provided in the resident and staff surveys. Raecia Catchings provided a response on the staff surveys, while the City Manager was able to provide an answer regarding the resident surveys.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Mayor Simmons who provided comments and a brief update on the establishment of the American Freedman Commission. Councillor Wilson noted the importance of being thoughtful on the rollout of the Commission. Mayor Simmons acknowledged and thanked the work being done through the Equity and Inclusion Department. Councillor Nolan echoed and agreed with comments made by the Mayor and Councillor Wilson.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who had questions regarding the Antiracism, Equity, and Inclusion (AEI) Advisory Council. City Manager Huang pointed out how important the work is done through the AEI Council and suggested the possibility of having a more in-depth conversation in the Civic Unity Committee. In addition, City Manager Huang provided examples of the work that is done through the Council.

The Chair, Councillor Toner and Councillor Nolan offered suggestions and comments on ways the City can move forward and strategize with Universities to create plans for peaceful protests if they were to occur. City Manager Huang agreed and noted the importance of free speech while also having a space where people feel safe. Councillor Wilson and Mayor Simmons provided additional comments that supported peaceful protesting and safe spaces.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Siddiqui who offered suggestions on how to move forward with community and employee engagement events. Mayor Simmons provided additional comments and shared that it is important for departments to be coordinated, consistent, and collaborative when creating events for the community and employees.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Mayor Simmons who asked for additional information on the scope of work within the AEI Council. City Manager Huang responded and shared that it will be an internal commission to work with the OEI leadership team.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan suggested that a more detailed conversation regarding SeeClickFix take place in Committee.

The Chair, Councillor Toner shared that the remainder of the meeting will be a brief discussion on how to create a process of evaluation for the City Clerk and the City Auditor, both who are appointed by the City Council. Councillor Toner noted that he has been some conversations with the Human Resources Department and the Mayor relative to this. Councillor Toner shared that he does not believe the evaluations will need to be as extensive as the City Manager's. In addition, Councillor Toner shared that Mayor Simmons will be appointing members of the Council to help lead the process and stressed the importance of Councillors providing input to help guide those who are appointed. Councillor Toner asked Raecia Catchings and Mayor Simmons if they had any thoughts they would like to share regarding the process. Raecia Catchings communicated that they are working on a framework for evaluations relative to other City leadership and that the Council is welcome to use it as a guidance. Mayor Simmons pointed out that evaluations are an important tool, especially for those who are working closely with the City Council.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who shared her excitement for the Council moving forward with this process and pointed out that there was a City Clerk evaluation done a few years ago with the previous City Clerk.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Siddiqui who shared that she has the documents that were used to conduct the evaluation process for the former City Clerk and noted that she will share with the Council as a tool to help with the current process of creating an evaluation.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Acting City Solicitor Bayer who reminded the Council that reviews of the City Clerk and City Auditor will have to be a part of a public process and provided additional legal clarity on how the City Council can move forward with evaluations.

The Chair, Councillor Toner thanked everyone for their time and participation.

**The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

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

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

**Yes – 3, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.**

**The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:40p.m.**

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

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/806?view\\_id=1&redirect=true](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/806?view_id=1&redirect=true)

**A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting the Agenda for the Government Operations, Rules & Claims Committee meeting.**

**A communication was received from City Manager Yi-An, transmitting the City Manager 2024 Performance Review Council update.**

**A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting documents relative to the City Manager Review Process.**

**A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting the job description for the City Clerk.**

**A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting the job description for the City Auditor.**