



HUMAN SERVICES & VETERANS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

5:30 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Human Services and Veterans Committee will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, November 6, 2024 to receive an update on Afterschool programming in Cambridge.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5:35 PM
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Human Services and Veterans Committee was held on Wednesday, November 6, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 5:30 p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Wilson. 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 Co-Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

- Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent
- Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Siddiqui – Absent*
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Wilson – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 3, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Councillor Siddiqui was marked present in the Sullivan Chamber at 5:35p.m.

Co-Chair Wilson offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to hold a public hearing to receive and update on Afterschool programming in Cambridge. Present at the meeting was Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager for the Department of Human Services (DHSP), Michelle Farnum, Assistant Director of Child, Youth, and Family Services, Susan Richards, Coordinator/Supervisor of Activities Agenda, Rachel Grashow, Caregiver Council, Emie Michaud Weinstock, DHSP Consultant and Caregiver Council, Zach Solomons, Inclusion Specialist, Nic Miragliuolo, Strategy Manager, and Khari Milner, Program Manager for Cambridge Public Schools (CPS).

Co-Chair Wilson recognized Michelle Farnum, who along with staff, gave a presentation titled “Human Services and Veterans Committee: Afterschool Update”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. During the presentation, staff were available to respond to clarifying questions from Committee members.

Co-Chair Wilson made a motion to close public comment.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Wilson thanked everyone for being present at the meeting and shared her appreciation for all the effort that continues to be done towards expanding afterschool programs in Cambridge. Co-Chair Wilson noted the importance of shared space between schools and afterschool programs, and continuing to have conversations with those in school leadership roles to collaborate in a positive way for young people. Co-Chair Wilson highlighted how Cambridge continues to think of afterschool as a whole to provide opportunities and services to young people.

Co-Chair Wilson recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared his excitement for the OST study and had clarifying questions related to the study and enrollment. Michelle Farnum provided a review of the study and how it took into account the enrollment process. Khari Milner provided additional examples which supported comments made by Michelle Farnum and the challenges that are faced with enrollment. Susan Richards also provided comments and shared an overview of how data is collected within five-day programs throughout the City, including programs that are not through DHSP. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler asked if the team from the City could provide more information on the process of expanding afterschool to have additional seats. Michelle Farnum responded by sharing what needs to be considered when thinking about expansion, which were staffing, space, and demand and provided examples of each.

Co-Chair Wilson recognized Councillor Nolan who asked how the City is defining success and being accountable for systematic change, as well as the quality of programs and student success. Susan Richards responded by providing a review of the work that goes in to ensuring Cambridge has a quality program and a team of quality coaches, while also creating action plans around improvements that need to be made in programs. Co-Chair Wilson provided additional information by pointing out that there is the Community of Practices where providers can come together to discuss programs. Co-Chair Wilson noted the importance of recognizing the areas where providers want to hold themselves accountable. Councillor Nolan noted the importance of ensuring that all Cambridge children, not just those in CPS, benefit from the out of school time programs. Khari Milner responded by sharing information relating to Cambridge youth who participate in programs that do not attend CPS and noted that they are a part of the data that was shared in the presentation. In addition, Khari Milner stressed the importance for every young person to benefit from the afterschool community. Councillor Nolan shared her appreciation for the responses and the different measures that are being taken to ensure quality programming.

Co-Chair Wilson recognized Councillor Siddiqui who asked for more information on IEP's and staff capacity. Zach Solomons responded by sharing that there are currently positions available, but it has been challenging to find the right candidates to fill the positions. They shared that they would like to hire multiple people to help meet the demand of students that are currently on the waitlist and that with more people on their team, they would be able to increase their efficiency during assessments and supporting students in the program. Councillor Siddiqui asked if there was any additional information on early childhood and pre-k programs being expanded to offer afterschool opportunities. Ellen Semonoff responded by explaining that it is a combination of the schools and afterschool programs collaborating to provide more services. Councillor Siddiqui asked for more information about the long-term plans that have been discussed with the consultants. Michelle Farnum responded by providing an overview of the process and shared that the report will be able to provide a set of recommendations for the City to consider moving forward with long-term goals.

Co-Chair Wilson asked for clarification on the waiting pool within some of the programs and if there was any insight as to why those specific schools have a larger wait list. Michelle Farnum shared that it is an emerging issue that is being addressed and provided how they plan to offer the support that is needed in the reenrollment process which may have been a factor. Co-Chair Wilson asked how the City Council could provide more

support to the Caregiver Council. Emie Michaud Weinstock responded by providing examples of departments coming together to advocate for students and highlighted the importance of having resources and time available while also uplifting caregivers.

Co-Chair Wilson offered closing remarks and stressed the importance of providing the best services possible for young people and added how expanding the programs will continue to help Cambridge youth. Councillor Nolan concluded by sharing how exciting it is to see the growth within the afterschool programs.

Co-Chair Wilson recognized Councillor Siddiqui who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30p.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/894?view_id=1&redirect=true

A communication was received from Nic Miragliuolo, Strategy Manager, transmitting a presentation regarding afterschool updates.