



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA • OCTOBER 4, 2021

Regular Meeting

Sullivan Chamber

5:30 PM

Cambridge City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139

I. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

1. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to votes necessary to seek approval from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue of the tax rate for FY2022.

CMA 2021 #220

This communication asks the City Council to approve the City's proposed tax rate, the last step of the City's Fiscal Year 2022 budgeting process. The FY22 property tax levy will increase to 9.05%, a slight increase from last year. Each year, a certain amount is taken from cash reserves to reduce the property tax rate impact, and this year, \$22.5 million will be used to make this reduction possible; as a result, 58.2% of residential taxpayers will see a reduction, no change, or increase of less than a \$100 increase on their tax bill this year. Last year, the City was able to include a commercial owner-occupied tax exemption for small business owners who would owe less than \$10,000 in taxes. The city is also increasing a small business tax exemption for personal property accounts. Last year, in FY21, the city provided this exemption for personal property accounts equal to or less than \$10,000 in assessed value which exempted 1,194 small businesses from receiving a personal property tax bill. For FY22, Cambridge's home rule petition to increase the exemption amount to \$20,000 was accepted by the City Council and will exempt 1,553 small business accounts. The City is also recommending that certain licensing fees continue to be reduced by up to 40% in FY22 in order to provide additional financial relief to businesses affected by COVID-19. This much-needed relief will provide aid to 1,553 small businesses across the City.

Although I'm happy to see that Cambridge is in a strong financial position for FY22, we have to begin taking steps earlier to plan for the following fiscal year. I'm looking forward to the early FY23 budget conversations the City Council will have with the City's Finance team in November so we can be proactive and build consensus about what budget priorities for FY23 will be. Based on a property tax levy of \$494.7 million, the FY22 residential tax rate will be \$5.92 per thousand dollars of value. This is an increase of \$0.07, or 1.2% from FY21. The commercial tax rate will be \$11.23, which is a decrease of \$0.62, or - 5.2% from FY21. Both are subject to Department of Revenue approval.

This item was adopted, and the City Council voted against reconsideration. Typically, a member of the prevailing side can file a motion to reconsider any vote taken within 24 hours. By moving to reconsider, and not changing our affirmative votes, the Finance team doesn't have to wait an additional two days to submit their plan to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue for approval.

This item was placed on file.

2. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appointment and reappointment of members of the Family Policy Council, effective October 1, 2021:
CMA 2021 #221

This item was placed on file.

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 21-22, regarding updating neighborhood organization lists.
CMA 2021 #222

This item was placed on file.

4. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 21-33, regarding Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment standards in the review of development projects.
CMA 2021 #223

Councillor Nolan pulled this item to remind us of the growing need for electric vehicle supply equipment. In order to meet the standards Cambridge has set, it is important that we ask whether or not we need to adjust our own ordinance to make sure that we are making adequate space for electric vehicles in our city, and planning for EV expansion.

This item was placed on file.

II. CALENDAR

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ON THE TABLE

1. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 21-13, regarding next steps on implementation of Universal Pre-K.
PLACED ON THE TABLE IN COUNCIL MAY 17, 2021
CMA 2021 #123

No action was taken.

2. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 21-41, regarding a report on closing Mass Ave from Prospect Street to Sidney Street on Friday and Saturday evenings.
CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR MCGOVERN
IN COUNCIL JUNE 28, 2021
PLACED ON THE TABLE IN COUNCIL AUGUST 2, 2021
CMA 2021 #176

No action was taken.

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 21-56, regarding improvements to Jerry's Pond and along Rindge Avenue.
PLACED ON THE TABLE BY MAYOR SIDDIQUI IN COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 13, 2021
CMA 2021 #193

No action was taken.

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III. APPLICATIONS AND PETITIONS

1. An application was received from MIT Visual Arts Center requesting permission for a temporary banner across Ames Street, Memorial Drive to Main Street 15 lights poles announcing Welcome back/Now Open, Contemporary Art Museum at MIT, MIT List Visual Arts Center from October 2021 until February 2022.

APP 2021 #42

This application was approved.

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IV. COMMUNICATIONS

1. A communication was received from Mark Rinaldo, regarding redesign of Mass Ave.
COM 524 #2021
This communication was placed on file.
2. A communication was received from Mark Goldberg, regarding redesign of Mass Ave to create a separate bicycle lane.
COM 525 #2021
This communication was placed on file.
3. A communication was received from Perry Lubin, regarding APP 2021 #26 - Ordinance Committee Neighborhood Conservation District amendments.
COM 526 #2021
This communication was placed on file.

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V. RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution on the death of Maryann (Iannacci) Cataldo
Councillor Toomey
RES 2021 #228
This item was adopted unanimously.
2. Resolution on the death of Sarhad Karageuzian
Councillor Toomey
RES 2021 #229
This item was adopted unanimously.
3. Resolution on the death of Dorothy (Bernarducci) Harr
Councillor Toomey
RES 2021 #230
This item was adopted unanimously.
4. Resolution on the death of Lorna Hoover
Councillor Simmons
RES 2021 #231
This item was adopted unanimously.
5. Wishing Joe Rose a Happy Birthday
Councillor Simmons
RES 2021 #232
This item was adopted unanimously.
6. Resolution on the death of Michael “Trifty” Trifone
Councillor Toomey
RES 2021 #233
This item was adopted unanimously.
7. Resolution on the death of Joyce Frith.
Councillor Simmons

RES 2021 #234

This item was adopted unanimously.

8. Congratulations to Jada Simmons Ononeme for being presented with the Mystic River Watershed Association's Ripple Award.

Councillor Toomey

RES 2021 #235

This item was adopted unanimously.

9. Congratulations to the Jose Mateo Ballet Theatre on the success of the Dance for World Community Festival.

Councillor Nolan, Councillor Simmons, Vice Mayor Mallon, Mayor Siddiqui

RES 2021 #236

Jose Mateo Ballet Theatre was able to successfully bring together over 50 different groups of dancers for a joyous outdoor celebration. We have been advocating for additional supports for arts programs that have been struggling over the last two years to stay afloat, so the success of Jose Mateo is something to be celebrated and I hope this serves as a reminder to us all to continue to do more for our Arts programs.

This item was adopted unanimously.

10. Resolution on the death of Donald Burroughs

Councillor McGovern, Councillor Simmons

RES 2021 #237

Donald Burroughs was a dedicated teacher at the Pilot School and later Cambridge Rindge and Latin who was able to have a profound impact on many students during his tenure. He will surely be missed and we extend our deepest sympathies to his family.

This item was adopted unanimously.

11. Thanks to all those who helped plant the Miyawaki Forest in Danahey Park.

Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Nolan

RES 2021 #238

With the help of several organizations, including a group of Native women, Councillors Zondervan and Nolan were able to plant a mini forest in Danahey Park that will add to the environmental landscape as it matures.

This item was adopted, 8 in favor, Councillor Toomey was marked absent.

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VI. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

1. That the City Manager is requested to make available the appropriate staff and information pertaining to past efforts to establish a Green Jobs program.

Councillor Simmons, Councillor McGovern, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Zondervan
POR 2021 #204

The Green Jobs program was intended to bring BIPOC into the environmental jobs sector, but it unfortunately did not provide the opportunities it promised. As Councillor Simmons noted, there is no shortage of BIPOC who are interested in these types of jobs, the problem is that there are not enough gainful employment opportunities. Councillor Zondervan pointed out the challenges around recruitment and training of this particular set of interested individuals, and remarked that many young people have a passion for taking hold of their own destiny when it comes to climate change. At Councillor Simmons' request, this item was amended to include the entire City Council and I was happy to sign on in support of creating a more viable Green jobs program.

The item was passed as amended.

2. That the City Manager is requested to establish a written plan designed to ensure that Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color will be recruited by the City, trained, and placed in leadership positions throughout the municipal government.

Councillor Simmons
POR 2021 #205

BIPOC women are often used, then underrepresented in the spaces they were used in. It is imperative that we create space for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other people of color to not only be recruited and hired, but also thoroughly trained and educated in their roles.

This item was amended to include Latinx people as well. The amended resolution was adopted.

3. That the City Manager is requested to direct appropriate staff to design a Language Access Plan in conjunction with the Cambridge Public Schools.

Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler
POR 2021 #206

The need for a Language Access Plan is urgent throughout the City, but especially in conjunction with the Cambridge Public Schools. School Committee Member Ayesha Wilson has been an integral part of these discussions with Mayor Siddiqui, members of the Family Policy Council, and myself over the last two years to develop our own Language Access Plan for the City. As modeled by cities like [Seattle, WA](#), [Denver, CO](#), and [Boston, MA](#), bi-lingual employees, close captioned meetings, phone translations, and plain accessible language are just a few of the many ways we can better serve our non-native English speakers in Cambridge. I will be happy to see when we are able to implement some of these programs.

This item was adopted.

4. That the City Manager is requested to re-establish the Community School Neighborhood Councils.
Councillor Simmons, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Toomey
POR 2021 #207
This item was adopted.
5. That the City Council go on record requesting that the Neighborhood & Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee hold a hearing to discuss the ways the city might support residents interested in having pickle and paddle ball opportunities available.
Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Toomey
POR 2021 #208
This item was adopted.
6. City Council support of the MIT Graduate Student Union.
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Zondervan, Councillor McGovern, Vice Mayor Mallon
POR 2021 #209
This item was amended to include Councillor Simmons. The amended item was adopted.
7. That the City Manager is requested to present a plan, which includes funding, and the findings of any feasibility study of any DHSP and any other city department providing children and/or city youth programs, for rapidly expanding out of school time in the city to create enough slots for all families who need it.
Councillor Zondervan, Councillor McGovern, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Carlone
POR 2021 #210
This item was adopted.
8. That the City Manager is requested to convene a Caregiver Advisory Council that is overly represented by high priority families will be convened in partnership with DHSP that engages key stakeholders that includes, but is not limited to, the Agenda for Children, current and former out of school time staff and leadership, and out of school time community benefit organizations. Such a council will receive reports as ordered by Policy Order 2021 #201 that describe who applied and were enrolled, capacity, staffing, and outreach efforts.
Councillor Zondervan, Councillor McGovern, Mayor Siddiqui
POR 2021 #211
This item was adopted.

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VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. The Health and Environment Committee met on April 14, 2021 to conduct a public hearing regarding the City's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Councillor Zondervan exercised his Charter Right to place this item on the table for the next Council Meeting on October 18, 2021.

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VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

A communication was received from Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, communicating information from the School Committee.

COF 2021 #87

This item was placed on file.

A communication was received from Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, Vice-Mayor Mallon, Councillor McGovern Communicating information about the Children's Savings Account Program.

COF 2021 #88

Children's Savings Accounts are here for CPS Kindergarteners! In Partnership with East Cambridge Savings Bank, every kindergartner in Cambridge Public Schools is eligible to receive \$50 in a savings account as part of a new initiative to help propel conversations about post-secondary options for students. In addition to seed funding, students and their families will receive financial literacy education. As research indicates, even modest capital can have an impact on a child's future -- compared to students with no savings, children with less than \$500 in their own name are three times more likely to attend college and four times more likely to graduate. We are so grateful to San Francisco's Kindergarten to College program, the Boston Saves program, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston for providing counsel to us as we set out to bring a much-needed program like this to Cambridge. This is something Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor McGovern and I have been working to bring to fruition for nearly two years, and I am so excited to see the outcome! To read our full communication and the letter sent home to CPS kindergarten families, click [here](#).

This item was placed on file.