



Finance Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Monday, October 28, 2019

Present: Councilors Lappin (Vice-Chair), Rice, Ciccone, Grossman and Noel

Absent: Councilors Gentile, Norton and Cote

City staff present: Comptroller Sue Dzikowski and Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo

#343-19 **Discussion on the new City website**
COUNCILORS NORTON, ALBRIGHT, LAREDO, KALIS and MARKIEWICZ requesting a discussion with IT and Executive departments regarding the City's new website now in development.

Finance Held 5-0 on 10/16/19

Action: **Finance Held 5-0**

Note: Chief Information Officer, Joe Mulvey, was unable to attend the meeting. Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo presented the request for a discussion on the City's new website. Mr. Yeo explained that they are moving along with the design of the website. The IT and Executive Departments are working towards having a test of the website available soon. Mr. Yeo emphasized it will be easier to find City Council related materials and overall the new website will be cleaner and easier to use.

A committee member asked if there will be a mechanism where residents can get a Councilor's voting record easily and further explained that as of now when residents ask for voting records, they must read all the docket items. Mr. Yeo explained that he didn't know if the Clerk's office could do that and that would take a huge amount of an organizational effort by the Clerk's office to get all that information. The committee member agreed but also stated that if the votes were organized after each meeting, going forward, then it will be easier to create a mechanism online for residents to have this information. A committee member added that they looked at agenda management software to tie in with the website's search feature. Mr. Yeo agreed that this would be helpful when searching for City Council items and will investigate this further. Additionally, Mr. Yeo explained that right now the docket numbers can't be easily searched on the website and an agenda management system would help with that issue. The committee members discussed holding this item until Mr. Mulvey could attend a future meeting. Councilor Ciccone motioned to hold which passed unanimously.

#375-19 **Authorization to accept a Mass Housing Grant of \$4,300**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept a Mass Housing grant of four thousand three hundred dollars (\$4,300) to support the activities of the Newton Hoarding Task Force.

Action: **Finance Approved 4-0 (Councilor Ciccone not voting)**

Note: Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo presented the request to accept a Mass Housing grant. Mr. Yeo explained that this is an annual grant that the City receives, and this grant helps with the Wellesley College Intern Program. The grant will go towards putting together some work shops and creating a small fund to help assistants who are decluttering to pay for moving items. Mr. Yeo explained this has been a successful program. Councilor Rice motioned to approve which passed 4 to 0, with Councilor Ciccone not voting.

#376-19 **Authorization to rescind a curb betterment assessment**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to rescind a curb betterment assessment at 66 Waban Hill Road dated November 5, 2018, Council Order #532-18.

Action: **Finance Approved 4-0 (Councilor Ciccone not voting)**

Note: Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo presented the request to rescind a curb betterment. Mr. Yeo explained that this was due to a clerical error. The property on 66 Waban Hill Road was mistakenly added to Council Order #532-18 and should be removed. Councilor Noel motioned to approve which passed 4 to 0, with Councilor Ciccone not voting.

#377-19 **Appropriate \$11,706 for McKinney-Veto Homeless Student Transportation**

SCHOOL COMMITTEE requesting that the City Council approve authorizing the Mayor to appropriate the state reimbursement of eleven thousand seven hundred and six dollars (\$11,706) for McKinney-Vento Homeless Student Transportation from the general fund to the School Department.

Action: **Finance Approved 4-0 (Councilor Ciccone not voting)**

Note: Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo and Comptroller Sue Dzikowski presented the request to accept and appropriate the state reimbursement for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Student Transportation Program.

A committee member asked if this reimbursement will only be appropriated for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Student Transportation Program. Mr. Yeo confirmed that the reimbursement is only to off-set the cost for this program. When asked if there is a separate account for this, Ms. Dzikowski confirmed that this is a separate special appropriation account that carries over from year to year. Councilor Rice motioned to approve which passed 4 to 0, with Councilor Ciccone not voting.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees**#346-19 Accepting Green Communities Program grants funds**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to accept Green Communities Program grant funds of one hundred eleven thousand two hundred and seventeen dollars (\$111,217) from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. The grant will be used for lighting at the Newton South High School tennis court and field house. The Public Buildings Department requesting authorization to spend \$24,406 out of the Energy Stabilization Fund to supplement the state grant funds and complete this lighting

Public Facilities Approved 5-0 on 11/23/19

Action: **Finance Approved 5-0**

Note: Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo presented the request to accept Green Communities Program grant funds. Mr. Yeo explained that Bill Ferguson, Co-Director of Sustainability, works to get these grants from the state each year and this is the 5th or 6th year the City has received this grant. Mr. Ferguson was able to receive this grant for the City again this year and was able to show that these are high payback projects. Mr. Yeo explained that there will be LED lights and will improve the lighting at the tennis courts.

A committee member commented that the new lights will not spread out to the neighbors. There were other projects being considered but this project had the quickest payback of 3 to 4 years. Councilor Rice motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees**#347-19 Appropriate \$1,160,066 for the Day Middle School Boiler Replacement Project**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend one million one hundred sixty thousand and sixty six dollars (\$1,160,066) for the Day Middle School Boiler Replacement Project, of which approximately three hundred sixty thousand seven hundred and fifty-three dollars (\$360,753) will be funded by a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority's Accelerated Repair Program and authorization to apply any premium received upon the sale of the bonds or notes, less the cost of preparing, issuing, and marketing them, and any accrued interest received upon the delivery of the bonds or notes to the costs of the project and to reduce the amount authorized to be borrowed for the project by like amount.

Public Facilities Approved 5-0 on 11/23/19

Action: **Finance Approved 5-0**

Note: Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo presented the request to appropriate and expend funds for the F.A. Day Middle School Boiler Replacement Project. Mr. Yeo explained that the Accelerated Repair Program that is a part of the Massachusetts School Building Authority is there to help fund projects like these. Originally this was combined with the Bigelow project, these projects were separated,

and the Bigelow project is almost complete. The projects were separated to give Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux time to budget for both projects. The F.A. Day project will be completed over the summer of 2020. Mr. Yeo explained that this project can save the School Department \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year.

A committee member commented that initially this was a smaller project, but the state required the City to do more but the full amount of \$1,160,066 is accounted for on the CIP. Councilor Ciccone motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#208-19(D) Request for ordinance amendment to increase School Committee salary

PRESIDENT LAREDO requesting an amendment to City Ordinance **Chapter 2, Sec 9. Salary and benefits of school committee members** to read: "Each school committee member, with the exception of the mayor, shall receive annual compensation of seven thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$7,750), payable monthly; and each such member shall be eligible to participate in the group insurance program available to other city officials and employees." This change to take effect January 1, 2020.

Programs & Services Approved 5-0 on 11/23/19

Action: **Finance Approved 4-1 (Councilor Grossman opposed)**

Note: A committee member explained that this docket item will allow the School Committee raise to start January 1st. The originally docket item did not specify when the raise for the school committee would begin. Councilor Grossman explained she would oppose this item because she feels there are so many unfunded projects that are a priority and the fact that the teachers still do not have a contract. Councilor Rice motioned for approval which passed 4-1, with Councilor Grossman opposing.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lappin, Vice- Chair