



Finance Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Monday, October 16, 2017

Present: Councilors Fuller (Acting Chair), Ciccone, Norton, Brousal-Glaser, Rice, Blazar, and Lappin

Absent: Councilor Gentile

Also present: Councilor Sangiolo

City staff present: Jayne Colino (Director of Senior Services), Barney Heath (Director of Planning and Development) and Susan Dzikowski (Comptroller)

#318-17 Grant from AARP for a pilot study to help seniors retrofit their homes

HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend a grant from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in the amount of four thousand three hundred twenty dollars (\$4,320) to perform a pilot study of ways to help Newton seniors retrofit their homes to make aging-in -place more feasible. [09/25/17 @ 10:11 AM]

Action: Finance Approved 6-0 (Rice not voting)

Note: Director of Senior Services Jayne Colino and Chair of the Council on Aging Marion Knapp reviewed the request to accept \$4,320 in grant funding from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). The Senior Center conducted a needs assessment and community engagement sessions and found that one of the highest priorities for seniors is remaining in their homes. The grant funds will go towards establishing a program called "So You Want to Stay in Your Home" that includes the creation of a self-assessment tool that volunteers will use to evaluate their own homes and a professional evaluation of the volunteer participants' homes. The professional assessment provides the Senior Center and Council on Aging information on how the self-assessment tool could improve for future use. The hope is that the funding will help set the groundwork for an ongoing process for home assessments.

In addition, the Senior Center and Council on Aging are collaborating with the Planning Department to connect senior residents with available programs offered through the Planning Department like the Housing Rehabilitation Program that could provide financial support such as low-interest loans to implement any suggested modifications that would allow seniors to remain at home.

The Senior Center is recruiting seniors from all different types of housing to volunteer to do the self-assessment. They are finding volunteers through word of mouth and targeted outreach. The grant requires the Senior Center to submit a report to the AARP. The grant supports Newton's designation as an Age-Friendly Community.t designation. The Committee was supportive of the program and voted unanimously in favor of a motion to approve the item.

#319-17 Inclusionary zoning funds to develop affordable abutting Jackson Gardens

HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting consideration of a request from the Newton Housing Authority to use their portion of the Inclusionary Zoning funds in the amount of three hundred fifty-five thousand nine hundred sixty dollars (\$355,960) to develop new affordable housing on NHA-owned property next to Jackson Gardens. [09/25/17 @ 11:52AM]

Action: Finance Approved 6-0 (Rice not voting)

Note: Executive Director of the Newton Housing Authority Amy Zarechian and Member of the Board of Commissioners for the Newton Housing Authority Vince O'Donnell presented the request to provide the Newton Housing Authority (NHA) with \$355,960, which is the Authority's portion of the payments in lieu of providing inclusionary housing units as required by Newton's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance. NHA anticipates using the funds to supplement the costs of predevelopment work for 40 or more affordable and accessible units on land adjacent to the NHA's Jackson Gardens Development.

The predevelopment work is necessary to determine feasibility, develop design, and leverage State and Federal funding. The NHA is already working with a development team with experience in affordable housing development and construction to move the project forward. The NHA expects to fund the project by layering financing through the Federal Low-income Housing Tax Credit Program, borrowing, Community Preservation Act funding, and NHA equity. It will take a couple of years to determine how the funding for the project will work due to the application processes for the tax credit program funding. There is no guarantee that the project will receive approval for funding.

Committee members had questions regarding how the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program works. Mr. O'Donnell explained that the Internal Revenue Service allocates the tax credits to states on a per capita basis and in Massachusetts the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) allocates the credits. The tax credit provides a means by which developers may raise capital for the construction or acquisition and major rehabilitation of housing for low-income persons. Under the federal income tax code, investors in low-income rental housing are permitted to take a credit against taxes owed the federal government. Developers of affordable rental housing developments apply to DHCD for tax credits. If they are awarded the credit, the developers seek investors to help pay for the development of the housing.

The Planning Department is generally supportive of this innovative approach to creating affordable housing. Planning Director Barney Heath is aware that there is some risk involved in terms of expending money with no guarantee that the project will move forward but the substantial benefits are worth the risk. The Committee asked Mr. Heath if the City has expended any of its share of the inclusionary zoning funding. Mr. responded that the Planning has not expended any of the funds. With that Councilor Norton moved approval, which carried by a vote of six in favor, none opposed, and one member not voting.

#142-17 **Funding for a Public Information Plan for site clean-up at the Horace Mann School**
HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) from the following accounts to the Public Building Department for the development of a public information plan regarding the site clean-up at the Horace Mann School for an oil leak that occurred in 1998. [05/08/17 @ 6:49 PM]

Comptroller Wage & Salary Reserve (0110498-5197)	\$5,375
Comptroller Budget Reserve (0110498-5790)	\$3,810
Free Cash (01-3497)	\$5,815

Action: **Finance voted No Action Necessary 6-0 (Rice not voting)**

Note: The funding for the above item is from Fiscal Year 2017 and is no longer available for transfer or expenditure; therefore, the item needs to be voted no action necessary and resubmitted, if necessary. Councilor Lappin moved no action necessary, which carried unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#56-17 **Request to increase the Public Works Department by one full-time position**
HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to add one full-time employee within the Public Works Department to manage all detail requests submitted to the Police Detail Coordinator. [02/27/17 @ 2:42 PM]

Action: **Finance voted No Action Necessary 6-0 (Rice not voting)**

Note: The Fiscal Year 2018 Budget includes a new position in the Public Works Department to manage police details. Therefore, the above request for authorization to increase the Department of Public Works by one full-time employee is no longer necessary. Councilor Lappin moved no action necessary, which carried unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#357-16 **Reallocate \$250,467.24 for decommissioning two elevated storage tanks**
HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to reallocate the sum of two hundred fifty thousand four hundred sixty-seven dollars and twenty-four cents (\$250,467.24) from the Waban Hill Reservoir Improvements Account to be used for the decommissioning of the Stanton Avenue and Winchester Street elevated storage tanks. [10/11/16 @ 11:29 AM]

Public Facilities Approved 6-0 on 10/19/16

Action: **Finance voted No Action Necessary 6-0 (Rice not voting)**

Note: The decommissioning of the Stanton Avenue water tank will be the responsibility of the purchaser of the Stanton Avenue site at no cost to the City. The City will look for the same type of

arrangement for the Winchester Street water tank; therefore, the requested funds are no longer required. Councilor Ciccone moved no action necessary, which carried unanimously.

All other items before the Committee were held without discussion and the Committee meeting adjourned at 7:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted;

Leonard J. Gentile, Chair