

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2008

Present: Ald. Coletti (Chair), Salvucci, Parker, Gentile, Lennon, Johnson and Schnipper and Freedman

City Staff: Susan Burstein (Chief Budget Officer), Sandy Pooler (Chief Admin. Officer), Dave Turocy (Department of Public Works), Tom Lopez (Newton Fire Department, Local 863), and John Lojek (Commissioner of Inspectional Services)

The following three items were taken up on First Call Report according to the recommendation made by Comptroller, Dave Wilkinson in his attached First Call Items Report without debate all of the items were approved.

#395-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to appropriate the sum of \$1,810.10 from budget reserve to the Health and Human Services Department to pay a portion of the housing costs of Newton citizens who were displaced as a result of the fire at Peirce House. [11-10-08 @ 4:33 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0

#394-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to A) appropriate for expenditure a gift of five hundred dollars (\$500) from Comptroller David Wilkinson and B) appropriate from budget reserve five hundred dollars (\$500) to the expense budget of the Comptroller's office. This total sum of \$1,000 will be expended for the purpose of purchasing a high-speed scanner for the Comptroller's office. { 11-10-08 @ 4:33 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0

#371-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization for the School Department to enter into a three-year lease for laptop computers to be used at Newton South High School with the first payment of \$75,000 funded through the School Department's FY'09 budget. [10-14-08 @ 4:40 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0, SUBJECT TO 2ND CALL

NOTE: Ald. Coletti's expectation is that this item will be on 2nd call at the December 1, 2008 Board of Aldermen meeting when he will provide a full report.

The Executive Department provided the committee with an updated request (attached to report) requesting instead, that the sum of \$144,641 be transferred from capital stabilization fund to the school budget for an outright purchase of these computers and not lease as originally intended.

Total purchase price of \$216,961.50 to fund these computers in years two and three. It is the intention that the school department will budget \$72,320.50 in the FY10 and FY11 budgets to restore these funds to the capital stabilization fund over the next two years. This method of funding this purchase results in saving over \$10,000 in the current economic market.

Ald. Coletti made the motion for approval.

#356-08(2) FINANCE COMMITTEE proposing a resolution requesting the Commissioner of Revenue provide the City of Newton with an accounting of the actions of the Director of Accounts regarding the legal basis for his directive on how the City of Newton is to use Massachusetts School Building Assistance grant revenue and how such a directive should be understood in light of the fact that it contradicts published regulations from his department.
[11-10-08 @ 8:20 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0

NOTE: Committee members reviewed the resolution (attached to report) and without debate agreed to send a letter to the Commissioner of Revenue requesting the Finance Committee members are contacted through David Wilkinson, Comptroller to explain the actions of the Director of Accounts, Mr. Parry.

Ald. Parker made the motion for approval to adopt this resolution.

REFERRED TO ZONING & PLANNING AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#397-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to appropriate and expend One-hundred fifty three thousand three hundred dollars (\$153,000) from Free Cash to the Purchasing Department for the purpose of purchasing three hybrids and seven economy vehicles for the Assessing and Inspectional Services Departments. [11-10-08 @ 4:33 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED, Subject to 2nd Call, 4-3-1 (Ald. Coletti, Johnson and Gentile opposed; Parker abstaining)

NOTE: Ald. Coletti's expectation is that this item will be on 2nd call at the December 1, 2008 Board of Aldermen meeting when he will provide a full report.

Susan Burstein, Chief Budget Officer and John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Mr. Lojek provided the Committee with a current car list (attached to report) dated November 24, 2008, indicating the vehicle #, license plate #, description of vehicle, driver's name, mileage, status, condition of vehicle and comments on the status of the current cars used by employees in the Inspectional Services Department.

Mr. Lojek indicated Inspectional Services Department is requesting seven new economy vehicles including two hybrid vehicles. The Assessing Department is requesting three new vehicles including one hybrid vehicle.

Ald. Salvucci made the motion for approval.

#30-07(2) COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting that the Board of Alderman rescind Board Order #30-07, dated February 20, 2007, as it relates to a betterment assessment levy in the amount of \$2,250 on the property of Mary M. Logalbo, 55 Herrick Road, on land known as Section 65, Block 19, Lot 8, Book 39318, page 366. [10-31-08 @10:15 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: David Turocy joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Mr. Turocy indicated in the summer of 2004 it was anticipated that this betterment would be completed. When the original estimate was completed in the proposal it was the intention that curbing would be done on both sides of the property on Herrick Road and Braeland Avenue.

The City decided they would complete 120' of curbing at a cost of \$2,250.00. This project was not completed that year. In the spring of 2005 a new proposal was completed and reduced the scope of the project only completing curbing on Herrick Road.

The new cost proposal of \$1,476.00, which was the cost for 84' of curbing. The correct amount is \$1,476.00 for 84' of curbing.

Without debate Committee members approved that board order #30-07 be rescinded.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#400-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to appropriate and expend one million, five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) from Free Cash for the purpose of supplementing the snow and ice budget in the Department of Public Works to be broken down as follows: Salaries \$400,000 and Expenses \$1,100,000 [11-10-08 @ 7:42 PM]

PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED 5-0 on 11-19-08

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: David Turocy once again joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Mr. Turocy provided the Committee with a chart for FY09 Snow and Ice Budget chart through November 21, 2008 including the proposed \$1.5 transfer from Free Cash (attached to report).

Ald. Coletti made the motion for approval, indicating the Committee will continue to monitor the snow and ice spending amounts.

#353-08 ALD. COLETTI requesting monthly report by Executive Office before Post Audit and Oversight Committee on snow and salt expenditure from November 2008 through April 2009. [09-30-08 @ 1:54 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: Dave Turocy (Department of Public Works) joined the Committee for brief discussion on this item.

Mr. Turocy indicated it is with the hopes that the City can get through the winter with the 2.5 million dollars for snow funding and salt operations.

Ald. Coletti made the motion to hold this item in order to continue reviewing the operations of the Department of Public Works over the next few months.

#246-08 ALD. COLETTI proposing a RESOLUTION to His Honor the Mayor and the School Committee to prohibit immediately the use of any city-owned vehicle for commuting purposes in excess of ten miles from the physical boundaries of Newton and to limit use of city-owned vehicles to circumstances where an emergency response is likely during non-business house and in which the necessary equipment is carried for such emergency response. [7-2-08 @ 12:12 PM]

ACTION: HELD 8-0

NOTE: Sandy Pooler, Chief Admin. Officer) joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Committee members were provided with a draft policy for their review on the “City of Newton Policy for Commuting with City Vehicles” (attached to report).

Mr. Pooler stated back in 1968 a City policy was provided; this draft covers the rules on driving City owned vehicles on what are allowable and not allowable uses of the vehicle with specific guidelines emphasizing that they are to be used for City work only as it is a City vehicle.

After reviewing such draft, the item was held to continue monitoring this policy over the next few months.

Ald. Coletti made the motion to hold.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#399-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriate and expend one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) from Free Cash for the purpose of supplementing the snow and ice budget in the Parks and Recreation Department to be broken down as follows: Salaries \$10,000 and Expenses \$90,000. [11-10-08 @ 7:42 PM]

PROGRAM & SERVICES APPROVED 6-0 on 11-19-08

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0

NOTE: Susan Burstein, Chief Budget Officer once again joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Ms. Burstein provided Committee members from Fran Towle, Commissioner Parks & Recreation Department A Snow and Ice Statistic Sheet from FY04 -FY08 dated

November 19, 2008 (attached to report).

Ms Burstein indicated that last year median and average cost of snow and ice removal fell short due to the large amount of snowfall. Due to the cost of salt being much higher this year, Parks & Recreation Department are requesting an additional \$100,000 from Free Cash in hopes it will carry them through two modest storms. Ms. Burstein stated if there are large storms like last year the Parks and Recreation Department will be in a deficit and would return to request additional appropriations before the winter ends.

Ald. Coletti made the motion for approval.

#396-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to transfer \$20,000 from payroll to expenses within the Treasury Department for the purpose of paying an additional consultant with specific expertise in MUNIS to development and provide training for the staff in the use of MUNIS for reconciling receivables. [11-10-08 @ 4:34 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Ald. Coletti informed the Committee this money was requested to pay an additional consultant. The current consultant contract will be ending next month. Ald. Coletti stated the goal was instead of having the City go out to bid for a MUNIS expert the City has been contracting on a training basis which subverts the public bidding law and allows the City to contract a person immediately.

Ald. Coletti said MUNIS now has been properly installed and employees are now being trained.

Ald. Salvucci made the motion for approval.

#354-08 ALD. COLETTI requesting monthly report on cash and receivable reconciliations by Treasurer and status of Consultant work in Treasurer's Office. [09-30-08 @ 1:54 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: Ald. Coletti indicated that employees of the Treasury Department are still working on last years reconciliations and there is nothing new to report to the Committee at this time.

Ald. Coletti made the motion to hold, pending an update from the Acting Treasurer, James Reardon.

REFERRED TO PUB.SAFETY & TRANS. & FINANCE COMMITTEES

#80-08 ALD. SALVUCCI & DANBERG requesting creation of a parking permit program for employees of Newton businesses to allow long-term parking in municipal parking lots. [1-23-08 @1:15 PM]

ACTION: **PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION APPROVED 5-0 on 11-5-08**
HELD 8-0

NOTE: Ald. Salvucci informed Committee members the Public Safety & Transportation Committee approved a fee of \$80.00 per month for this parking permit program. Indicating this program will be initiated by the Treasurer's Department on parking spaces recommended by the Traffic Engineer.

Committee members expressed their concerns regarding the following questions be answered from Mr. Schuckel, Traffic Engineer.

- Specifically what areas of the City are being considered
- Is the Nonantum area being considered
- Is the Auburndale Bank area being considered
- How many spaces per lot will be designated for long-term parking
- What about areas of the City that are not metered, perhaps they would like this program
- Will a lottery on employees/employers take place
- Will there be a set number of spaces employers can request
- Suggestion was made to even charge more than \$80.00 per month
- Would these permits be on a first serve, first come basis
- Suggestion was made to have an auction for spaces
- How will patrons of business' be effected

Ald. Coletti made the motion to hold in order for various committee members to express their concerns in their area and for the opportunity to ask questions to Mr. Schuckel, Traffic Engineer.

#348-08 ALD. COLETTI requesting discussion on the Executive Department submission of a new 5-year forecast for FY2010 budget preparation. [09-30-08 @ 1:54 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: Ald. Coletti has asked the Executive Department to hold a joint advisory meeting in December, 2008 which would include the Board of Aldermen, Executive and School Departments to discuss the status of the City's budget guidelines plan for next year.

Ald. Coletti made the motion to hold.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#34-08 ALD. COLETTI requesting that His Honor the Mayor immediately provide the latest "estimate" of the minimum price as per the Dimeo and Turner companies (for the Newton North High School Construction Project) to the Board of Aldermen with a date certain for the filing of a supplemental funding request. [01-15-08 @ 11:14AM]

PUBLIC FACILITIES NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0 on 11-19-08

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 8-0**

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#32-08 ALD. COLETTI requesting discussion of Architect Services Contract and additional \$8 million revision to the Dorr Whittier Contract for additional services. [01-15-08 @ 11:14 a.m.]

PUBLIC FACILITIES NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0 on 11-19-08

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 8-0

At approximately, 10:55 pm, Ald. Coletti moved for adjournment, which was approved 8-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman