

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2007

Present: Ald. Coletti, Lennon, Linsky, Salvucci, Gentile, Schnipper and Lipof

Absent: Ald. Parker

Also Present: Ald. Hess-Mahan; Anne Larner, School Committee; Susan Burstein, Chief Budget Officer; Donnalyn Kahn, Law Dept.; Fred Guzzi, Veterans & Licensing; Arthur Cabral, Public Building Dept.; Hank Milo, Public Building Dept.

#473-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$13,055.03 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of settling a claim filed against the City of Newton as the result of a motor vehicle accident in which a City vehicle struck another vehicle causing damage to the private vehicle and personal injury to the driver. [12-12-06@4:32PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (Ald. Schnipper not voting; Ald. Parker absent)**

NOTE: Donnalyn Kahn, Associate City Solicitor, joined the Committee for this discussion. Ms. Kahn explained this settlement was negotiated for quite some time. The employee in question was suspended for a period of three months without pay and is also paying back the city through payroll deductions for the damage to the city vehicle (approx. \$3,000). The driver of the vehicle was awarded funds for property damage (\$10,155.03), rental expenses for five weeks (\$900) and medical bills (\$2,000). This settlement also includes no further claims for damages to be filed against the City.

The Committee reviewed all information provided on this claim and agreed that this settlement was appropriate at this time. Therefore, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Schnipper not voting, to approve this request.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#13-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$30,000 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the FY07 appropriation for Veterans' benefits.[1-9-07 @4:54 PM]

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 7-0 ON 1/17/07

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0 (Ald. Parker absent)**

NOTE: Fred Guzzi, Veterans Agent, joined the Committee for this discussion. He explained that the funds appropriated each year assist Veterans or spouses with living

expenses for which they are having difficulty with. The discussion focused on how various individuals are provided funds on a 'need' basis. This funding is also available for burial assistance. Additionally, Mr. Guzzi explained it is something that is very difficult to forecast for each year and/or how much will be needed. Mr. Guzzi conducts interviews with individuals to find out what it is they are seeking assistance for. Currently, the average requests are in the neighborhood of \$4,000 per month. The funding is also reimbursed 75% by the state. Mr. Guzzi also stated it is possible that he will be looking for a small increase in next year's original appropriation (which has been \$30,000).

The Committee then voted 7-0 to approve this request.

REFERRED TO PROG.& SERV., PUBFAC AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#5-07(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$1,000,000 from Free Cash to lease/purchase eight (8) modular classrooms for the School Department. [12-22-06 @1:11PM]

Note: Site plan approval required for item #5-07; public hearing assigned for 1/17/07.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 7-0 ON 1/17/07 (Ald. Sangiolo absent)

PUB. FACILITIES APPROVED 7-0 ON 1/17/07 (Ald. Yates absent)

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (Parker not voting)

NOTE: Arthur Cabral, Budget and Project Specialist for the Public Buildings Department, and Hank Milo, Facilities Manager for Public Buildings, joined the Committee for this discussion. Mr. Cabral gave a brief presentation of the item because many of the same members of Finance participated in the Public Facilities and Programs & Services discussion. There have been three different types of modulars being looked at. The consensus has been to acquire the 'high-end' modulars that are about 900 square feet, insulated and will last approximately 10-20 years. The cost will be about \$160,000 per modular and the balance (approx. \$280,000) will be funded by the school department budget. Some of the discussion focused around the ability or need to have water service (or possibly restrooms) in these and the associated engineering that will go along with them. These modulars will not be used for kindergarten-aged children. Mr. Cabral was instructed to ensure that proper drainage is installed if the modulars will contain sinks (the need will be a 1/4" drain) or toilets (the need will be a 3" drain). Some of the discussion also focused around the placement of the modular at Horace Mann. Some members felt it should be on the side behind the current modular, some felt it should be located on the front of the school. Ultimately, the Committee felt it was an issue for Design Review and that we should be concentrating, at this time, on the funding.

The Committee, after review of all information provided, voted 7-0 to approve this request. It was understood that the purchase/lease option will be determined when bids come in; the Public Buildings Commissioner will select the most cost-effective method at that time.

#474-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting acceptance of and authorization to expend the sum not to exceed \$20,000, received as additional grant funds from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health as an Essential School Health Services Grant. [12-12-06@4:32PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: Susan Burstein, Chief Budget Officer, joined the Committee for this discussion. She explained that the City was notified by the Department of Public Health that the *Essential School Health Services Grant* was increased to an amount closer to \$220,000, rather than the 'not to exceed' \$200,000 total approved by the Board for the FY07 budget. Ald. Coletti asked Ms. Burstein to provide a quick budget to ensure that the City is not "on the hook" for any additional costs or requirements beyond the \$220,000.

The Committee reviewed all information provided then voted 7-0 to approve this request.

REFERRED TO FINANCE COMMITTEE BY FULL BOARD ON 1/18/05:

#134-04(2) TRAFFIC COUNCIL requesting public input regarding the following proposed changes to Washington Street between the Wellesley town line and Route 128: re-stripe Washington Street for four 12'-wide travel lanes and a parking lane on the south side between Concord Street and the ramps to/from Route 128; "No Parking" on the northerly side; "No Parking" on the southerly side from the Wellesley town line to Concord Street; add two to four 15-minute metered parking spaces in front of the Lower Falls Post Office; add 2-hour meters for the remainder of the southerly side to a point near #2278 Washington Street (Ward 4)

ACTION: **REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY/TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE 7-0**

NOTE: There was a question as to whether this item had been referred to Finance in error, as it appears as though an item of this nature that requires further review would be more properly referred to the Public Safety/Transportation Committee.

Ald. Gentile wanted to ensure that, because of the amount of time that this item has been around, it should be taken up at some point in time soon because he was aware that some folks from this area are waiting on a few of these items.

The Acting Chair stated he would follow up to understand why the item had been referred to this Committee (instead of PS&T, where it seemed most appropriate) and would make PS&T Chair Samuelson aware of his concern relative to the scheduling of this item for discussion in that Committee.

The Committee then voted 7-0 to refer the item to the Public Safety & Transportation Committee.

COMMITTEE CLERK'S NOTE: Public Safety/Transportation Committee Chair Samuelson has indicated her intention to move approval of this item on the floor of the Board on 2/5/07, with proper draft language made available, since this item was already heard by the Traffic Council and it is her belief that this item should not require additional review by the PS&T Committee at this time.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott F. Lennon, Acting Chair