

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2007

Present: Ald. Lennon (Vice-Chair), Linsky, Salvucci, Gentile, Parker, Schnipper and Lipof

Absent: Ald. Coletti (Chair)

Also Present: David Wilkinson (Comptroller), Susan Burstein (Chief Budget Officer), Chief Joseph LaCroix (Fire), Nick Parnell (Public Building Commissioner)

Chairman’s Note: The first five items are “first call” eligible items. The Comptroller prepared a memo to the Finance Committee dated June 8, 2007, indicating that he has reviewed the items and recommends approval (attached). The Committee reviewed the draft Board Orders, which are attached. The Committee felt that these items were appropriate “first call” items and a motion for approval was made, which carried unanimously.

#171-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$500,000 from Free Cash to the office of the Comptroller. It is also requested that the Comptroller be authorized to transfer from this sum, in addition to employee benefits accounts, any amount necessary to close any gap that may exist at FY07 year end in the employee health funds. [05-15-07 @ 5:42 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)**

#172-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$48,880, received as State and Federal reimbursement grant funds for the purchase of bullet proof vests for the Police Department, be transferred to the Capital Stabilization Fund. [05-15-07 @ 5:43 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)**

#173-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting rescission of unexpended authorized bonded indebtedness for the following board orders:

#265-06; School Boilers.....	\$99,000
#230-06(A); NNHS Costs.....	\$ 250
#382-06; Fire Station Improv.....	\$ 165
#461-06; School Windows.....	\$ 500

[05-15-07 @ 5:43 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)**

#191-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$7,000 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the Newton Library Overtime accounts for FY07. [05-29-07 @ 4:54 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)**

REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#194-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$25,000 be transferred within the Police Department FY07 operating budget (from the personnel account to the gasoline account) in order to cover a shortfall in the gasoline account.

PS&T APPROVED 4-0 ON 6/13/07

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)**

#190-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$340,000 be appropriated from FY07 wage reserve to various departmental payroll accounts to make FY07 retroactive salary payments in accordance with the memorandum of agreement reached with the Local 3092 municipal bargaining unit (salary adjustments also include H-grade non-union employees) and that the sum of **\$763,510** be appropriated from FY08 Wage Reserve to various department salary accounts to reflect these increases in the FY08 operating budget. [05-29-07 @ 4:54 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED AS AMENDED 6-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: Susan Burstein, Chief Budget Officer, presented this item. She has been working diligently on the agreement as well as the process to implement increases for H-grade employees. She stated the agreement with 3092 was in line with regard to what other bargaining units had agreed to.

The Committee spent some time reviewing the spreadsheet (attached) with Susan Burstein that depicted increases for 3092 as well as H-Grade (non-union) employees. This appropriation will provide for a 2% increase for both groups (retroactively) for FY07 along with an additional 2% (for FY08) on July 1, 2007, as well as another 1% on January 1, 2008. The H-Grade employees will also receive step increases on a new pay schedule (attached) effective July 1, 2007.

Ald. Salvucci inquired whether we had the funds necessary to meet the expectations of this agreement and the increases for the H-grades. Both S. Burstein and Dave Wilkinson, Comptroller, stated the funds are available. The item was moved and passed unanimously, as amended, according to the figures contained in the attached draft Board Order (which are lower for FY08 than the original request).

REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#175-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$90,000 be appropriated from the Newton-Wellesley Hospital Emergency Department Expansion and Arborpoint at Woodland Station Traffic Mitigation Funds for the purpose of designing and preparing for the construction of improvements to the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue (Rte.30) and Washington Street (Rte.16). [05-15-07 @ 5:43 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 6-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: Based on the fact that no one was available to present the item and that it was still going to be heard in Public Safety and Transportation, the Committee decided to HOLD this item until such time that it is reviewed in PS&T. Additionally, both Ald. Schnipper and Salvucci felt the item should be reviewed in Public Facilities. Ald. Schnipper stated she would inquire about this and let the Committee know.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#193-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$25,000 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the Law Department FY07 salary account. [05-29-07 @ 4:54 PM]

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 7-0 (Hess-Mahan not voting) ON 6/6/07

ACTION: **APPROVED 4-1-1 (Ald. Salvucci opposed; Ald. Schnipper abstaining; Ald. Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: Susan Burstein, Chief Budget Officer, presented this item. City Solicitor Dan Funk requested the additional funds based on the circumstances that Department staff are utilized to work on CPA projects and commercial tax appeals before the Appellate Tax Board. That work is partially funded as projects are completed. The Law Dept. 'invoices' both the CPA and Assessor's for work done on these cases at a discounted rate. With cases slowing in both of these areas and having this staff work on other items that come through the Law Dept., there is a shortfall in the FY07 salary account.

Ald. Salvucci felt this is something that doesn't seem acceptable. No other depts. are 'invoicing' other depts. for work done and doesn't feel it should be happening with the Law Dept.

Ald. Parker stated this is a process that was proposed to us by the Law Dept. that we accepted and felt we really didn't have much of a choice at this particular time. He felt strongly that work being 'paid for' gets pushed to the top where other work not being 'invoiced' was of a lesser priority.

Ald. Lennon recalled the presentation first done by the Law Dept. describing the need for this and understood the work being done was at a considerable discount as compared to having to hire outside counsel.

Ald. Parker moved approval and the item carried 4 in favor, 1 opposed (Ald. Salvucci) and 1 abstention (Ald. Schnipper).

REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#197-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$20,000 from Free Cash to repair the upper boom of the Fire Department Wires Division W-2 Bucket Truck, which serves as the primary truck for fire alarm and as the backup truck for streetlight repairs. [6-1-07 @ 1:50 PM]

PS&T ON 6/13/07

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)

NOTE: Chief LaCroix, Fire Department, presented the item. He explained to the Committee this was a needed repair of the older of the two buckets trucks. During a routine inspection, it was noted there was a significant crack in the 'boom' of the apparatus. It was explained that the "boom" is the arm fixture on the truck that controls movement of the bucket. The cost estimate for the work is between \$18 and \$19K. The reason the item is requested at \$20K is that during that same inspection, it was noted there was damage to one of the fiberglass bumpers of the truck and it has been requested to fix that as well. The Committee voted unanimously to pass the item.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#195-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$672,530 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of funding the Tier I work identified in the Fire Station Report of April 20, 2007. Said funds will go toward the design, testing and renovation of 6 fire stations. [5-29-07 @ 4:54 PM]

PUB. FAC. APPROVED 6-0 ON 6/6/07

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)

NOTE: Both Public Buildings Commissioner Nick Parnell and Chief LaCroix joined the Committee for discussion on this item. Quite simply, Cmr. Parnell explained the work being done regarding the funds requested has been laid out in the fire station report recently received by the Board. Items range from immediate life/safety needs to items identified by RDK that are beyond routine maintenance. Items such as electrical, plumbing and HVAC are listed and also need immediate repair. These items are classified as 'Tier I' repairs within the report and will be done station-wide. When asked about a timeline for the beginning of this project, Commissioner Parnell indicated that he hopes to have things ready to go within 2 months (after the bidding process is completed).

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#196-07(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$1,969,227 from bonded indebtedness for the purpose of funding the rehabilitation of Fire Station #4. [05-29-07 @ 5:54 PM]

PUB. FAC. APPROVED 6-0 @ \$325,000 FOR DESIGN, PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND TESTING ON 6/6/07

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 @\$325,000 FOR DESIGN, PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND TESTING

NOTE: Both Public Buildings Commissioner Nick Parnell and Chief LaCroix joined the Committee for discussion on this item. Commissioner Parnell explained the design and testing could commence within the next few months.

Ald. Lennon asked who the Project Manager would be for this project.

Commissioner Parnell indicated that he did not know who that will be because the project will be put out to bid..

Ald. Parker wanted to know why we were choosing Station #4 because there had been previous reports that Station #3 was in much worse condition.

Both Commissioner Parnell and Chief LaCroix felt that since window and roof work was being done at Station #4, it made sense to renovate that station completely while it was being disrupted. Additionally, Chief LaCroix felt that because of the proximity to Station #1, there may be the option to forego the modulars and house folks at Station #1. It may be difficult, based on spacing, to have modulars at Station #4.

Ald. Lennon expressed some concern about response times when you are moving apparatus and personnel to a different station.

Chief LaCroix again felt because of proximity that it should not be an issue. The coverage areas for Stations #1 and #4 overlap. Ald. Lennon asked if this could be discussed further at a future meeting of the fire station subcommittee because he was still uncomfortable with this approach.

Ald. Gentile asked Chief LaCroix if the Fire Union would be given the courtesy to weigh in on this and the Chief responded that they would be given the opportunity to do that.

The original request was amended in Public Facilities to \$325K for the design, project management and testing. This Committee also voted on the amended request of \$325K and the item passed unanimously.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#174-07 ALD. PARKER requesting a RESOLUTION to the state legislature in support of Governor Patrick's Municipal Partnership Act. [05-09-07 @ 11:56AM]

PROG. & SERV. 8-0 ON 6/6/07

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0-1 (Ald. Lennon abstaining; Ald. Gentile not voting)

NOTE: Ald. Parker presented this item to the Committee. He made copies of the resolution available to Committee members and explained this was a good opportunity for Newton to express support for the package being presented to the Legislature. There was limited discussion once members read through the resolution and a vote was then taken. The item passed 5 in favor with 1 abstention (Ald. Lennon).

Ald. Lennon abstained because of the fact he wanted to further understand how some of these initiatives would ultimately impact local commerce. Ald. Parker then went on to express some of the initiatives just provide municipalities options.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott F. Lennon, Vice-Chair