

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2007

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

Absent: Ald. Lipof

Also Present: Ald. Danberg, Ald.-Elect Freedman; David Wilkinson (Comptroller), Susan Burstein (Chief Budget Officer), Sandy Pooler (Chief Administrative Officer), Bob DeRubeis (Deputy Commissioner, Parks and Recreation), David Turocy (Acting DPW Commissioner), Elaine Gentile (DPW)

#386-07      SULLIVAN & ROGERS AND COMPTROLLER, submitting Annual Financial Audit Report for the City's fiscal year ending 6/30/07. [11-27-07 @11:42 A.M.]

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 7-0**

**NOTE:**      The Committee spent a significant portion of this evening's meeting in review of the Annual Financial Audit Report for FY2007. Chris Rogers was present from the firm of Sullivan and Rogers, and he gave a presentation of the findings, after which time the Committee reviewed the contents of the report and other documents (such as the Management Letter), which were prepared by Sullivan & Rogers as part of the audit process.

The Committee thanked the auditors and David Wilkinson for all of the work that they performed in getting the audit completed and in preparation of the submitted documents. In keeping with current practice, the Committee will continue to monitor the City's financial position through the work of the Financial Audit Subcommittee throughout the fiscal year.

Ultimately, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve (and accept the audit report).

#387-07      PRES. BAKER, ALD. SANGIOLO AND COLETTI, pursuant to Sec.2-7 of the City Charter, recommending re-appointment of DAVID C. WILKINSON as COMPTROLLER OF ACCOUNTS; said term will be two years or until a successor is duly qualified. [11/27/07 @11:41 A.M.]

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 7-0**

**NOTE:** The Committee was pleased to recommend approval of the re-appointment of David Wilkinson as Comptroller of Accounts. The Committee thanked David for all of his tireless efforts to keep the City's accounts in good order as well as providing detailed reports as required and/or requested on various projects (especially the Newton North Construction Project, as well as other bond issue projects). The Committee looks forward to working for yet another term with David.

This re-appointment was approved unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

**REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#388-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$36,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding the initial phase of FY08 City Tree Removal operations (for trees that have been identified as potential public safety hazards) by the Parks and Recreation Department. [11-27-07 @4:47 P.M.]

**PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 8-0 ON 12/05/07**

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 7-0**

**NOTE:** This item was discussed and approved at the Programs and Services Committee meeting on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Bob DeRubeis, Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, was present this evening. He explained that this request was filed because the Parks and Recreation Department has deemed it necessary to remove trees that have been identified as potentially hazardous to persons or property *before* major winter storms can make matters worse. The remainder of the routine tree removal operations will be funded during the spring months.

The Committee understood the need to perform this work sooner (rather than later), and voted 7-0 to approve this request.

#207-07 ALD. COLETTI (FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR) submitting City of Newton Financial Policies draft, prepared by the Comptroller, for review and adoption by the Board of Aldermen. [06-12-07 @ 5:50 PM]

**ACTION:** **HELD UNTIL 12/18/07 7-0**

**NOTE:** This item has been a topic of discussion in this Committee for months now. There has been discussion with the Executive Department regarding the need for establishing formal financial policies, and it is hoped that this can be accomplished (and implemented) very soon. Sandy Pooler, Chief Administrative Officer, and Susan Burstein, Chief Budget Officer, were present this evening. They explained that Mayor Cohen has reviewed the proposed policies draft, and wished to make some changes to that document. It was requested that a red-lined version be prepared (by the Executive Department) to clearly delineate the proposed changes to the document.

With the anticipation that the red-lined document will be available for distribution in the weekly packet (on December 14<sup>th</sup>, in preparation for further discussion on December 18<sup>th</sup>), the Committee voted 7-0 to hold this item for further review at the December 18<sup>th</sup> special Committee meeting.

**CHAIRMAN'S NOTE:** Subsequent to this evening's meeting the need for a meeting on December 18<sup>th</sup> has changed, therefore, there will be motion on the floor of the Board to substitute REFERRAL OF THIS ITEM TO THE 2008-2009 BOARD.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#291-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to enter into a multi-year contract for collection of municipal solid waste. [09-25-07 @ 3:57 PM]

**PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED 4-2-1 (Ald. Gentile, Mansfield opposed; Ald. Salvucci abstaining) on 11/28/07**

**ACTION: DENIED 4-1-2 (Ald. Schnipper opposed; Ald. Lennon, Salvucci abstaining)**

**NOTE:** There was lengthy debate on this item in Committee this evening, to follow-up on the previous discussions that took place in the Public Facilities Committee. The discussion was focused on the terms of the proposed contract, and consideration of amendments to the contract document.

For two reasons, a detailed written report will not be given at this time. The first reason being that, since there are conflicting Committee votes on this item, it will need to be placed on SECOND CALL on the floor of the Board on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, there will be a need for further discussion, possibly at that time, but more likely there will be a motion to postpone discussion of this item until January in the Full Board forum (as opposed to having the item sent back to both Committees.

The second reason for lack of a detailed written report is that, subsequent to this Committee meeting, Mayor Cohen has agreed to further changes to the contract document. It is also understood that Waste Management (the contractor) is also still conducting ongoing review of the document, which means that there could be further changes before the Board takes its final vote.

Ultimately, the Committee voted 4-1-2, with Ald. Schnipper opposed and Ald. Lennon and Salvucci abstaining to deny the version of the contract that was available at this evening's meeting.

**REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#67-07 ALD. WEISBUCH requesting a RESOLUTION asking His Honor the Mayor to fund the INTERFACE SYSTEM, which coordinates mental health services among school age children. [2/26/07 @ 3:28 PM]  
**PROG. & SERV. NO ACTION NECESSARY 8-0 ON 12/5/07**

**ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0**

**NOTE:** In agreement with the action of the Programs and Services Committee, and with the support of Ald. Weisbuch, without debate, the Committee voted NO ACTION NECESSARY on this item, 7-0.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#160-05 ALD. HARNEY, SANGIOLO, PARKER AND HESS-MAHAN requesting an independent audit and possible appointment of an independent commission to investigate the Newton South construction project.

**PUB FAC NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0 ON 12/05/07**

**ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0**

**NOTE:** In agreement with the recommendation of the Public Facilities Committee action, and without debate, the Committee voted NO ACTION NECESSARY on this item 7-0.

**REFERRED TO ZONING & PLANNING AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#364-04 ALD. SANGIOLO & HARNEY requesting a RESOLUTION to His Honor the Mayor to ask that the City acquire, whether by eminent domain or by purchase, the two parking lots associated with the St. Bernard's property for the purpose of providing commuter parking.

**ZONING & PLANNING APPROVED AS AMENDED 8-0 ON 9/13/04**

**ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0**

**NOTE:** Ald. Yates had informed Chair Coletti that the need for this item has passed, therefore he requested that it be voted NO ACTION NECESSARY. Therefore, without debate, the Committee voted NO ACTION NECESSARY on this item 7-0.

**\*\*\*THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE REFERRED TO THE 2008-2009 BOARD:**

**REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#381-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation of \$20,000 (twenty thousand dollars) from Budget Reserve for the purpose of increasing the Law Department account for outside legal services to pay current and anticipated bills for services related to the negotiations and settlement of interest and penalties assessed to the City by the IRS. [11-13-07 @ 3:27 P.M.]

**PROG. & SERV. REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD**

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#382-07 BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS requesting that Sec.17-11(2) of the Revised Ordinances be amended to increase the fee for Common Victualler License from \$50 to \$100, effective January 1, 2008. [11-06-07 @ 11:17 A.M.]

**PROG. & SERV. REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD**

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#359-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$50,000 be appropriated from Free Cash to conduct a study of the properties along Crystal Lake for the purpose of developing a Master Plan for the redevelopment of these city-owned properties. [10-30-07 @ 5:17 P.M.]

**PROG. & SERV. REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD**

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES**

#358-07 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY09-FY13 Capital Improvement Program pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter which requires Board of Aldermen approval of a plan to finance \$194,907,647 of new local projects over the next several years:

**SUMMARY**

PUBLIC WORKS (CITY AND GRANT/FEE FUNDED)	\$ 67,632,500
PUBLIC SAFETY	\$ 6,230,535
PUBLIC BUILDINGS	\$ 16,772,295
SCHOOL DEPARTMENT	\$ 94,259,767
PARKS AND RECREATION	\$ 7,366,000
OTHER	\$ 2,646,546
TOTAL	\$194,907,647

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

#91-06        COMPTROLLER providing interim reports on the financial condition of various City funds and account groups.

**ACTION:**        **REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

#383-07        THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$498,500 be appropriated from the FY08 Community Preservation Fund's community housing and general reserves for development and associated legal costs of a community housing project proposed at 29 Coyne Road, Waban, by CAN-DO (Citizens for Affordable Housing in Newton Development Organization). [11-13-07 @ 5:09 PM]

**CMTE.ON COMM.PRES.HELD 7-0 ON 11/27/07**

**ACTION:**        **REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

#453-06        LEON JR. AND MARION D. SEMONIAN, 373 Dedham Street, requesting total abatement of betterment assessment in the amount of \$2,690 (assessed for sidewalk/curbing/road improvements to Countryside Road and Patten Circle). [11-16-06@11:02 AM]

**ACTION:**        **REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**ITEM RECOMMITTED TO PUB. FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEES  
3/19/07:**

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#76-07        HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$300,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of conducting a study of the municipal buildings throughout the city. [02-27-07 @ 4:16 PM]

**PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED 6-0-1 (Ald. Gentile abstaining)  
on 3/7/07**

**FINANCE MOTION TO APPROVE FAILS TO CARRY 2-4-1 (Ald. Lennon, Salvucci, Gentile and Coletti opposed; Ald. Linsky abstaining) on 3-12-07**

**ACTION:**        **REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#345-06        ALD. SCHNIPPER requesting that the contingency on smaller Public Buildings projects be increased from 5% to at least 8%.

**ACTION:**        **REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO PROG. & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#264-03(3)     ALD. JOHNSON AND BAKER requesting update on the work of the Taxation Aid Committee established by the Board of Aldermen in March 2004 in administering aid to the elderly taxation fund.

**ACTION:**        **REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO FINANCE AND PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEES**

#245-06 ALD. JOHNSON AND HESS-MAHAN requesting an amendment to the City Charter to require the Mayor annually to prepare and submit to the Board of Aldermen a long-term financial forecast of anticipated revenue, expenditures and the general financial condition of the City, including, but not limited to identification of any factors which will affect the financial condition of the City; projected revenue and expenditure trends; potential sources of new or expanded revenues; anticipated municipal needs likely to require major expenditures; and a strategic plan for meeting anticipated municipal needs, to include, but not be limited to, any long or short-term actions that may be taken to enhance the financial condition of the City.

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**ITEM RECOMMITTED on 3/5/07 TO FINANCE COMMITTEE ONLY:**

**REFERRED TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#23-06 ALD PARKER AND LINSKY requesting that the City adopt §19 of MGL Chapter 32B to allow retiree coalition bargaining of health care benefits  
**Programs & Services voted NO ACTION NECESSARY 4-0-2  
(Parker, Merrill abstaining; Sangiolo not voting) on 3/8/06.**

**FINANCE NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0-3 (Ald. Lennon, Linsky  
and Parker abstaining) ON 2/12/07**

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

#29-06 ALD. JOHNSON AND PARKER requesting creation of a Citizen Financial Advisory Committee to work with city officials and staff to facilitate bench markers, strategic planning and other initiatives to improve the financial operation of the City.  
(President's Note: While not formally referred to the Long Range Planning Committee, this item might usefully be discussed there in light of prior discussions of similar issues.)

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#455-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of  
(21-05.2) \$6,000 from the Riverside Traffic Mitigation Fund for the purpose of funding the installation of a radar-controlled speed limit sign at the intersection of Concord and Grove Streets. (#65-05)

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**



**REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#267-06(3) ALD. PARKER, BURG, LINSKY, FISCHMAN, HESS-MAHAN, VANCE, HARNEY, JOHNSON, & DANBERG proposing Home Rule Legislation authorizing the City of Newton to apply the ordinance proposed in item #267-06(2) to assets held by the City's retirement system.

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

#209-05 ALD. STEWART requesting that the Mayor provide the Board of Aldermen with a list of all salaried City employees who receive additional compensation (other than overtime) along with an explanation of the exact reasons for said additional payments.

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#55-02 ALD. YATES requesting that the water/sewer discount rate be made available to homeowners who receive Fuel Assistance, Supplementary Security Income, Food Stamps, Supplementary Disability Income, General Relief, Low Income Sewer and Water Assistance, School Breakfast and Lunch and other income based State and Federal programs.

**PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED 6-0 on 6/16/04**

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO ZONING & PLANNING AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#168-02 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the Board of Aldermen establish new civil fines under Section 20-21 of the City of Newton Ordinances for the violation of various environmental provisions enforced by the Conservation Commission.

**ZONING & PLANNING APPROVED 6-0 ON 12/13/04**

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

# 35-06 ALD. JOHNSON AND HESS-MAHAN requesting discussion with the School Department and School Committee members regarding the results of the studies addressing compensation for management and executive personnel and organizational structure of central administrative salaries.

**PROG. & SERV. HELD 5-0 (Sangiolo not voting) ON 3/2/06**

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

**REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV., PUB. FAC. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#309-01 ALD. PARKER requesting increase in the income eligibility level of the 30% water/sewer discount for low-income senior citizens.

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**



**REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV., PUB. FAC.AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#453-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$150,000 be appropriated from bonded indebtedness for the purpose of funding a space needs study for the elementary schools throughout the City.

**PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 4-0-1 (Sangiolo abstaining; Baker not voting) ON 3/22/06**

**ACTION: REFERRED TO 2008-2009 BOARD 7-0**

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman