

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

SPECIAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2006

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

Also Present:

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE: Comptroller David Wilkinson had prepared a "First Call Item Report" containing the following items:

#15-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$60,000 be appropriated and expended from the Workers' Compensation Lump Sum account for the purpose of settling a claim by Mary DeLeonardis.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: This item is the result of a claim filed by a School Department employee who suffered a fall while on the job. Her injury was an extensive knee injury which required surgery and a significant amount of rehabilitation; to this day she is still unable to walk (even though she has had knee replacement surgery) on her own.

This settlement is in an amount much lower than the actual potential exposure for the City (which would be in excess of \$300,000 and possibly as high as \$700,000 when all is said and done).

The Committee reviewed the backup information on this case and agreed that it would be in the City's best interest to expend these funds to make this settlement at this time. Therefore, the Committee voted 7-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

#16-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting acceptance of and authorization to expend the sum of \$3,250.13, received as grant funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Industrial Accidents. Said funds will be used to provide training to DPW employees on how to prevent back and shoulder injuries.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: At the recommendation of the Comptroller and after reading the backup information which was attached to this evening's agenda, the Committee voted 7-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, and without debate, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#464-05(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting a transfer of funds in the amount of \$130,228.79 from funds appropriated for the completed Lexington Street sewer extension project to an account for the purpose of funding emergency sewer construction, including extension of the sewer main on Wood End Road, Bowdoin Street, and Hillside Road in Newton Highlands. **NOTE: In accordance with Sec. 2-9 of the City Charter, the Mayor has declared this to be an emergency measure, necessary to protect the health of the people and property of the City of Newton, thereby requiring a separate vote.**

PUB FACILITIES APPROVED 7-0 ON 1/4/06

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: The Committee understood that, by making these funds available, the City will have some flexibility to allow for proper completion of the listed projects. Since these projects are of emergency nature, the Committee was in support of the emergency preamble as well. Without debate, the Committee voted 7-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#376-05(2) PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE recommending that the difference in the current and proposed salary be made available to the new City Clerk/Clerk of the Board to compensate current staff to assist in the transition.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 6-0 (Parker, Sangiolo not voting) on 11/09/05

NOTE: In December of 2005, the Finance Committee had voted to refer this item to this Board. Subsequently, at the Full Board meeting on December 19th, the item was approved on the floor of the Board. Therefore, no action is needed, as the item is no longer properly before the Committee.

#465-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR seeking Board of Aldermen support for a RESOLUTION in support of increased funding for the Commonwealth Sewer Rate Relief Fund which will pay up to 20% of wastewater project costs, thus reducing some of the financial burden of the City.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: A copy of the proposed RESOLUTION was attached to this evening's agenda. The Committee reviewed this information and agreed with the intent of the RESOLUTION that it is important to remind the MWRA that it should be mindful of the affects of its actions on its rate payers. Therefore, after very limited discussion, the Committee voted 7-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#454-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$850,000 be appropriated from bonded indebtedness for the purpose of purchasing a new ladder/tower truck for the Fire Department to replace Fire Ladder No. 2.

PS&T APPROVED 6-0-1 (Lennon abstaining) on 12/7/05

ACTION: APPROVED 7-1 (Coletti opposed)

NOTE: Chief LaCroix and mechanic Mike Sturniolo were present this evening. They reviewed some of the information regarding the status of the bid process for this ladder truck replacement. There are currently 3 companies (Pierce, Emergency One and American Lafrance) actively bidding and providing specifications for this equipment sale.

The Committee had a brief discussion about the fact that this would be the first fire truck purchase (to the Chairman and other Committee members' recollection) to be carried out through bonded indebtedness. In prior years, the City has followed the practice of funding refurbishment and replacement projects through Free Cash (through the CIP).

Chair Coletti pointed out that, in recent months, the purchase of DPW trucks and equipment in the amount of \$887,000 was requested for bonding, and now this purchase of a new ladder truck is also proposed to be bonded. He indicated that bonding these purchases will put pressure on the City's ability to deal with other infrastructure issues.

Chief LaCroix indicated that the bids have been favorable, even though this equipment is approximately \$360,000 more expensive than any other piece of fire apparatus purchased by the City. The Chief indicated that he would prioritize this purchase ahead of purchase of a new rescue truck or adding on to the program for the repair of fire stations.

The Committee had some in-depth discussion with the Chief regarding the purchase of this equipment as a priority to pursuing early action on fire station repairs. Ultimately, the Committee was convinced that the list of priorities for the department (with regard to this purchase) is acceptable, and the Committee voted 7-1, with Ald. Coletti opposed, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#456-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$200,000 be appropriated from bonded indebtedness for the purpose of *replacing the generator at the Peirce Elementary School (\$100,000) AND replacing the boiler at the Ward Elementary School (\$100,000).*

ACTION: APPROVED AS AMENDED 8-0

NOTE: Nick Parnell was present this evening. A letter was received from the Mayor's office (see attached) seeking to amend this item. The Committee agreed that the amount of funds to be used for the generator replacement at the Peirce School should be reduced to \$100,000.

Additionally, there was a subsequent request that the remaining \$100,000 be appropriated to fund the replacement of the boiler at the Ward Elementary School. Mr. Parnell indicated that this boiler is in desperate need of repair, and it is his intention to immediately replace one of the two existing boilers at that location.

The Committee was in support of the item, as it was proposed to be amended and, therefore, voted 8-0 to approve the item in its new format.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman