

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2006

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

Also Present: Ed Spellman (Treasurer/Collector), Sandy Pooler (Chief Administrative Officer), Nunzio Piselli (Retirement Board), Dolores Hamilton (Director, Human Resources), Bob Rooney (DPW Commissioner),

***CHAIRMAN'S NOTE: The Committee was called to order early this evening (at 7:30 p.m.) in order to hold a brief discussion with the Committee on Community Preservation regarding the following item:***

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

#161-05      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR proposing an ordinance amendment for the preservation of city-owned properties subject to funding under the Community Preservation Act.

**ACTION:**      **HELD 7-0 (Parker not voting)**

**NOTE:**      This item attempts to set down the requirements for deed restrictions to guarantee that, when CPA funds are used for restoration of historically significant properties (public or private), the City would be able to recover these funds in the event that said properties are sold.

The Community Preservation Committee will iron out the details of the ordinance language at its next regularly scheduled meeting. At this time, there was no final action needed by the Finance Committee, as it will have a cursory review of the final proposed ordinance language. Therefore, the Finance Committee voted 7-0 (with Ald. Parker not voting) to hold this item.

***The Finance Committee then reviewed the following items on its agenda:***

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#88-06      EDWARD SPELLMAN, being re-appointed as TREASURER/COLLECTOR by His Honor the Mayor, pursuant to Sections 3-3(b) and 3-4 of the City Charter. Said re-appointment is effective January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2009.  
(90-day Board action date: 4/19/06)

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 7-0 (Lennon not voting)**

**NOTE:** Ed Spellman was present this evening. On Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Spellman sent a memo to Committee members which provided an update of the Treasury Department operations (this was a lengthy document which is on file in the Clerk's office for any member of the Board who wishes to view it). Mr. Spellman explained the recent bond sale (on 2/15) and calls placed to Moody's Investor Services as part of that process.

This evening, Mr. Spellman gave a 30-minute overview of the status of various activities in the Treasurer/Collector's office. He has now served the City as Treasurer/Collector for five years. He has worked towards implementing a series of policies and procedures for the Department. With the assistance of Rogers and Sullivan (almost 2 years ago), the Department has brought cash reporting and reconciliation (with Comptroller's office) as close to current as it has been in recent history.

The Committee questioned Mr. Spellman about Department projects for the future, including on-line payments, debit payments and other means of access that citizens will have to make payments of taxes, etc. The Committee was confident that Mr. Spellman and his staff are working towards many of the goals that have been established.

The Committee was pleased to vote 7-0, with Ald. Lennon not voting, to approve Mr. Spellman's reappointment.

#89-06            **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$366,361 from Salary Reserve in order to fund the cost items set forth in the labor contract agreed upon with the Newton Police Superior Officers Association.

**ACTION:**        **APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:** Assistant Superintendent Bob McDonald was present this evening. He presented the status of the union contract which was agreed upon with the Superior Officers Association union. This settlement falls in line with the established pattern of collective bargaining for City unions this year. Basically, the benefits offered to the Superior Officers Association are parallel to those granted through the contract agreement for the Patrolmen's Association. Therefore, the changes (from the previous contract) were made to keep these benefits consistent in the Police Department.

The Committee reviewed the total changes which include police detail schedule, longevity payments, wage benchmarks for 2004-2006 (patrol officer salaries for 2004 were \$47,899.25, Sgt. rank receives 21.5% above that mark, Lieutenants receive 17% above Sgt., Captains receive 17% above Lt.).

After reviewing the details of this contract settlement, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve this item.

**COMMITTEE CLERK'S NOTE:** *At the time of this evening's meeting, the Comptroller had not been provided with specific cost estimates for payment of this contract. It was understood that the information would be forwarded to the Comptroller (by the Executive Department) in short order. As of the time of the writing of this report (10:45 a.m., February 17), the Comptroller has indicated that he still has not received exact figures from the Executive Department for review and final verification.*

#90-06      NEWTON RETIREMENT BOARD requesting Board of Aldermen acceptance of Chapter 157, Sections 1 and 2 of the Acts of 2005, *Veteran's Benefit for Accidental Disability Retirees*. (Retirement Board approved acceptance on 12/14/05).

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:**      Nunzio Piselli, Chair of the Retirement Board, was present this evening. He indicated that this provision was accepted by the Retirement Board by vote of 5-0 on December 14, 2005. He presented a letter dated December 20, 2005 (which was attached to this evening's agenda) addressed to Ald. Baker and members of the Board, which indicates that the Retirement Board was requesting that the Board of Aldermen make timely approval of this action. Eligible disability retirees would have a period of 120 days from the date of the Retirement Board action to make application to be eligible to receive this benefit (by March 14, 2006). It explains that this benefit is applicable only to living retirees, therefore, timely acceptance of this act is important.

The total figure (based upon 75 active retirees who would be eligible for this benefit) would be \$289,945, which will be paid for out of the City's retirement pension fund. The monthly payroll will increase by \$18,375 in order to include this \$300 monthly payment to each qualified retiree. This action corrects the fact that all other retirees in the system have received this benefit all along, but this group was not included in the monthly payments. Therefore, acceptance of this provision will also provide for retroactive payments to these individuals (which is the \$289,945 payment as described in this paragraph).

Since this is a matter of equity, Committee members agreed that this was the proper time to act on this item. Therefore, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve this item.

#93-06      COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting approval of the following mentioned betterments; said betterments to be graded and constructed and assessments to be levied under the provisions of MGL relating to betterment assessments relating to public way construction:

<u>SBL</u>	<u>Names &amp; Address of Owner</u>	<u>BK/PG</u>	<u>Amount</u>
83-36-3BA	Trustees of The Gables Through Condominium Trust	14391/434	\$1,111

83-36-3DN	401-4329 Dedham Street (66 units)		
83-36-21	Linda L. Chanowski 111 Countryside Road	21144/356	\$13,828
83-36-26	Nancy Ellen Nathanson 62 Rachel Road	20812/215	\$8,166
83-36-27	Pnina Joseph 73 Countryside Road	31169/269 Countryside Road	\$14,717
			Mosley Road <u>\$9,616</u>
			Total \$24,333
83-36-28	James H. Mitchell & Nancy B. Mitchell 83 Countryside Road	24673/207	\$13,828
83-36-29	Vilis Gravitis & Herta Gravitis 95 Countryside Road	11429/402	\$13,828
83-36-30	Ming T. Wong & Julia Q. Wong 105 Countryside Road	27829/493	\$13,917
83-36-32	Arlene E. Fruman 125 Countryside Road	18565/107	\$19,083
83-36-33	Randi B. Lapidus Trustee & John H. Lapidus, Trustee 141 Countryside Realty Trust 141 Countryside Road	35940/504	\$19,456
83-36-34	David Goldstein 159 Countryside Road	35324/583 35324/584	\$18,833
83-36-35	Stephen S Silk Trustee & Barrie S. Silk Trustee The 175 Countryside Road Realty Trust 175 Countryside Road	34730/250	\$16,739
83-36-36	Alan Greenbaum & Sylvia Greenbaum 185 Countryside Road	14552/560	\$13,828

83-36-37	Shirley W. Waldenburg Trustee 197 Countryside Road Nominee Realty Trust 197 Countryside Road	36150/479	\$18,605
83-36-38	Sidney & Rosalie F. Gersh 170 Countryside Road	14054/10	\$30,368
83-36-39	Alan Levick a/k/a Alan L. & Nancy Rogoff a/k/a Nancy E. 150 Countryside Road	13933/376	\$16,992
83-36-40	William Seidenberg & Linda M. Seidenberg 140 Countryside Road	13625/578	\$13,828
83-36-41	Karim Zahedi & Maryam Zahedi 130 Countryside Road	13802/290	\$13,828
83-36-43	Matthew B. Feuer & Nicole B. Feuer 110 Countryside Road	31362/576	\$25,213
83-36-44	Beverly F. Greenwold & Richard B. Aron 7 Patten Circle	21327/314 Countryside Road Patten Circle	\$13,126 <u>\$9,251</u> \$22,377
83-36-45	Lin Nick 19 Patten Circle	38641/407	\$15,606
83-36-46	David H. Zises, Trustee David H. Zises 2004 Revocable Trust & Margery Zises, Trustee Margery Zises 2004 Revocable Trust 20 Patten Circle	44066/392	\$15,211
83-36-47	Craig Hammer, Trustee Jola Realty Trust 10 Patten Circle	33192/002 Countryside Road Patten Circle	\$12,474 <u>\$9,061</u> Total \$21,535
83-36-48	Patricia Fabrizo Malkasian, Trustee & Gia A. Nicolazzo, Trustee Anthony S. Fabrizio Nominee Trust 70 Countryside Road	35971/26 35971/33	\$16,032

83-36-49	LOGICAL, LLC 50 Countryside Road	46705/498	\$12,185
83-36-50	John Mitchell 44 Countryside Road	22670/405	\$13,828
83-36-51	David E. Gorman & Jennifer Udwin Gorman 32 Countryside Road	26469/465	\$13,828
83-36-52	Robert E. Sullivan & Anne M. Sullivan 391 Dedham St.	13215/683	\$15,880
83-36A-3	Leon Semonian, Jr. & Marion D. Semonian 373 Dedham Street	11506/387	\$2,690
83-36A-4	Carole G. Jabbawy 17 Countryside Road	44692/517	\$19,668
83-36A-7	Muzio Pesaresi & Michelle T. Pesaresi 39 Countryside Road	43568/342	\$15,285
83-36A-8	Shirley Altschul 53 Countryside Road	21353/599 Countryside Road 36249/25 Patten Circle 45267/204	\$19,034 \$2,070 Total \$21,104
83-36A-9	Peter E. Leavitt & Amy D. Leavitt 11 Mosley Road	34453/518	\$13,889
83-36A-10	Richard G. Marcus & Beth A. Marcus 46 Rachel Road	14161/133	\$8,100

**ACTION:    APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:**        The above listed properties were improved by the laying out, grading and acceptance of these streets (a project completed during 2005). These assessments (which will be placed on a 20-year payment schedule) are now ready to be registered at the Registry of Deeds (before any of the properties may be sold) and billed by the City as

part of real estate tax bills. Each of these items meets the statutory requirements for assessment of betterments that they be in excess of \$500.00.

Without debate, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve this item.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#95-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$756,533 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding snow and ice costs in the Public Works Department.

**PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED 6-0 ON 2/8/06**

**ACTION: APPROVED AS AMENDED @ \$1,106,533 8-0 – SUBJECT TO SECOND CALL**

**NOTE:** This evening, a supplemental request was received, which sought to increase the amount of this appropriation to \$1,106,533. This new total includes costs incurred (\$340,000) by the Public Works Department during the “blizzard” which took place on February 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Please refer to attached information. The original seed money for the Department has been expended. At the time that this original request was docketed, there was sufficient money available in the department accounts for a 1-2 inch storm, but with this recent storm, funds have been depleted.

This appropriation will provide approximately \$700,000 for use during future snowstorms.

The Committee briefly discussed snow fighting efforts and commended Commissioner Rooney for the job done that allowed for schools to be opened today (when most other communities had cancelled school). To date, the City has had approximately 48-50 inches of snow this winter. The Committee was somewhat concerned that the financial reserves for the City will be nearly exhausted by the time that this recent appropriation is made, but the weather is really something that the city has no control over. Ultimately, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve this item, as amended @ \$1,106,533.

***CHAIRMAN’S NOTE: this item will be placed on second call due to conflicting Committee reports. There will be a motion to suspend the rules in order to allow the Chair of the Public Facilities Committee to poll that committee so that the amended amount of this appropriation can be approved.***

Re-appointment by Board President

#85-06 ALD. ANTHONY J. SALVUCCI re-appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Board of Aldermen Scholarship Fund, representing Wards 1-4. Said term to expire on 12/31/07.

**ACTION: APPROVED 8-0**

Re-appointment by Board President

#86-06      ALD. PAUL E. COLETTI re-appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Board of Aldermen Scholarship Fund, representing Wards 5-8. Said term to expire on 12/31/07

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 8-0**

Re-appointment by Board President

#87-06      ALD. BRIAN E. YATES, re-appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Emerson Community Center Trust. Said term to expire on 12/31/07.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:**          Since these Aldermen have done fine work in each capacity in serving these funds, without debate, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve each of these Aldermanic re-appointments.

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

#23-06      ALD PARKER AND LINSKY requesting that the City adopt §19 of MGL Chapter 42 to allow retiree coalition bargaining of health care benefits.

**ACTION:**      **HELD 7-0 (Linsky not voting)**

**NOTE:**          Because there was a great deal of interest in this issue (by members of the Board, the Executive Department, and various union groups), and there is a need for further information to thoroughly understand the issue of retiree coalition bargaining of health care benefits, there was a request to hold this item this evening (to be discussed either on 2/27 or on 3/13). This would give all interested parties the opportunity to prepare presentations for this Committee relative to their respective positions on this issue. Therefore, the Committee voted 7-0, with Ald. Linsky not voting) to hold this item.

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

#458-05      COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$55,675 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of studying and planning the restoration of the Crafts Street Stable Exterior Building Historic Preservation Study.

**CMTE.COMM.PRES. APPROVED AS AMENDED @ \$65,675 4-0-3 (Linsky, Lappin, Parker abstaining) on 1/24/06**

**ACTION:**      **HELD 6-2 (Salvucci, Gentile opposed)**

**NOTE:**          This item was approved by the Committee on Community Preservation on 1/24/06. Charlie MacMillan, member of the Community Preservation Committee, was present this evening. He explained that there was great interest by the CPC as well as Historical Commission in developing a master plan to undertake over \$500,000 in renovations to this Crafts Street Stable building. This is one of the oldest buildings in the City.



According to Public Buildings Commissioner Nick Parnell, this building is in terrible disrepair, and a determination needs to be made as to the potential use of that building in order to tie it in to the Public Works facility and make it a productive building. Although the building is not listed on the Historic Register (and, therefore, not part of the Newtonville Historic District) it should be properly repaired. Due to the level of use of this building in comparison with other Historically Significant Buildings city-wide, it is difficult to ascertain whether now is the time to spend these funds for this building (when they could possibly be used on a building that has higher use).

Therefore, a motion was made to hold this item until such time as the Community Preservation subcommittee and the Public Buildings Commissioner are prepared to return with a recommendation for potential uses of this building (in the event that the Board of Aldermen approves future funding for renovation and maintenance of this building). The motion to hold carried by a vote of 6-2, with Ald. Salvucci and Gentile opposed.

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

#459-05 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$26,425 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the historic preservation study for Newton Health Department Building Improvements.

**CMTE.COMM.PRES. APPROVED 6-0-1 (Lappin abstaining) on 1/24/06**

**ACTION: APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:** This Building is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is a very important building in regards to future renovations and work to be done as part of the Newton Centre Economic Revitalization Plan. The building currently houses the Food Pantry and the Health and Human Services Department. The current estimated value is in the neighborhood of \$1 million. Outside of its current use, the City does not have other use for this building, but it is agreed that any improvements made to this building will only add to its value for possible future sale or reuse (depending on the needs of the City). Therefore, spending these funds at this time is a wise decision.

The Committee was in full support of taking this action to preserve this building, and voted 8-0 to approve this item.

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

#466-05 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$320,550 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the pilot *Accessory Apartment Incentive Program* to create affordable apartments.

**CMTE.COMM.PRES. APPROVED 7-0 ON 1/24/06**

**ACTION: APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:** Community Preservation Committee (housing subcommittee) members present this evening provided a proposal for creating a pilot program that would select three properties in Newton whose owners would have \$90,000 to assist them in the application process, which involves review of necessary code requirements to create accessory apartments. These units would then be made available to persons who fit into the 70% of median income level for housing. The requirement would be that a deed restriction be placed on these properties (either in perpetuity or for some designated period of time) in order for the City to get the benefit of having made these grant/loan funds available.

The goal of this pilot program is to find out if there is significant demand in Newton for this type of assistance for property owners to create accessory apartments (units of approximately 800 sq. ft. or less).

The Committee believed that, as it stands today, there have been very few applications processed by the City for accessory apartments. It is hoped that, by the offering of these funds (to be administered through Cooperative Living of Newton (CLN), which would promote the program and monitor its implementation), property owners would be encouraged to make these affordable units available. There was a certain amount of skepticism, but Committee members were willing to support this attempt at this time. The Committee voted 8-0 to approve this item.

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

#468-05 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$205,000 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the *Bowen Park Initiative* for open space and recreation improvements.

**CMTE.COMM.PRES. APPROVED 6-0 (Yates not voting) on 1/24/06**

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:** CPC members, along with representatives of the Bowen School community, were present this evening. They provided a complete plan for the Bowen Park Initiative for the Bowen park and playground in Newton Centre. The Committee has worked for some time with the City (and the Parks and Recreation Commission) and has raised funds in excess of \$50,000 in order to initiate this work. In-kind services have been provided by planners, architects, and others within the Bowen School community to present this plan for this work to be accomplished. They are now prepared to move forward for City approval and implementation of this plan. Basically, these requested funds include; \$40,000 for professional project management services, \$98,00 for demolition and construction, \$17,000 for plantings, \$78,000 for playground equipment/amenities, \$2,000 for legal costs, and \$21,000 for contingency.

The Bowen PTO has committed \$54,000 from other sources to contribute to this project. There are significant drainage problems with the playing field (in its current condition)

that leave it unsuitable for use for a major portion of each year. This overall improvement project includes drainage improvements (\$24,000) that will be funded using School Department funds (this portion of the project is not included in the CPC funding request).

The Committee was willing to support this request, particularly since there have been no CPA funds appropriated for outdoor projects in the Newton Centre area. This seemed like a project that is definitely well planned out, and the fact that significant outside funds have been raised only demonstrates the community support for these improvements. The Committee voted 8-0 to approve this item.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman