

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2006

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

Also Present: Ald. Baker; Susan Burstein (Chief Budget Officer), Dolores Hamilton (Director, Human Resources), Lori Burke (Workers' Compensation Manager),

#454-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to expend the sum of \$42,500 from the Workers' Compensation Lump Sum Account for the purpose of settling a Workers' Compensation claim for an injury sustained by Edwin Cordova on July 8, 2003. [11-28-06@4:30 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Dolores Hamilton, Director of Human Resources, and Lori Burke, Workers' Compensation Manager, were present this evening. They explained that this employee had suffered an ankle-crushing injury involving granite curbing while on the job. As a result of injury, Mr. Cordova has undergone surgery which has resulted in scarring and 10% loss of function (he requires the use of a cane to walk). Under Workers' Compensation relevant statutes, Mr. Cordova has exhausted all benefits allowed. He has accepted a disability retirement from the City in 2005.

If Mr. Cordova had continued to work for the City under Workers' Compensation, the exposure to the City would be in excess of \$500,000. This final settlement amount will cover all payments on this claim.

The Committee reviewed all information provided on this claim and agreed that this settlement was appropriate at this time. Therefore, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve this request.

#455-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting acceptance of and authorization to expend the sum of \$5,015.50, received as grant funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents for proactive training in workstation setup and injury prevention. [11-28-06@4:29 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Lori Burke explained that this grant was received from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents for proactive training in workstation setup and injury prevention. The goals of this program include assessment of workstations of City Hall employees, and training for employees on ergonomics to ensure proper workstation setup and use to prevent injuries.

It is possible that there will be a need for future appropriation of funds to correct any problems with workstation setups, but that determination will be made when the workstation evaluation process has been completed.

It was understood by the Committee that the Human Resources Department may come back in the future seeking appropriation for this purpose. But, for the time being, the Committee was in support of the grant acceptance to provide this service to employees in order to improve safety in the workplace. The Committee voted 8-0 to approve this item.

#456-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$25,277 from Free Cash for the purpose of purchasing photocopiers for the following departments:

City Clerk/Clerk of the Board.....	\$ 8,711
Human Services.....	\$ 4,652
Parks & Recreation.....	\$ 8,711
Cultural Arts.....	\$ 3,203
TOTAL.....	\$25,277

[11-28-06@4:30 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0-3 (Ald. Gentile, Lennon, Linsky abstaining)**

NOTE: Susan Burstein, Chief Budget Officer, was present this evening. She reviewed the backup information (attached to this evening's agenda) which was provided by the Purchasing Department. The machine in the Clerk's office is 8 years old; the Human Services machine is 10.7 years old; the Parks and Recreation machine is 8.5 years old; the Cultural Arts division has been leasing their machine from the School Department, so this purchase will allow them to return the machine to the School Department and long-term savings will be realized with the elimination of the lease price. These copiers are due for replacement under the Supplemental Capital Budget, and once Free Cash had been certified, the Mayor was willing to commit these funds for replacing these copiers.

The major discussion in Committee this evening was related to the policy that the City has of purchasing vs. leasing of this type of equipment. Some years back, there was a subcommittee that had looked into this issue and a recommendation was made (particularly with the School Department) to discontinue leasing of copiers because the purchase of this equipment saves an overall substantial amount of money for the City. It was recommended that the front-line copiers be purchased and that large volumes of copies be processed through the City Hall and School Department print shops. This process has worked very effectively over the past several years, and should be continued.

Some members of the Committee requested that the Purchasing Department perform an updated analysis of the two options and what savings the City has realized by making this change (this could possibly be done at the time of budget review). The Chairman agreed to invite Re Cappoli to attend a future meeting at which time this issue could be re-visited.

In the meantime, the Committee supported the purchase of this equipment, and voted 5-0-3, with Ald. Lennon, Linsky and Gentile abstaining, to approve this item.

#457-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$6,120 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of producing copies of the re-codified City Ordinances and purchasing an Internet indexing service for an improved search mechanism. [11-28-06@5:08 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0-1 (Ald. Linsky abstaining; Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: A letter dated November 28, 2006 was submitted to the Committee indicating that these funds will be necessary to assist with the completion of the re-codification process. There was additional backup provided by David Olson (attached to this evening's agenda) which explained that this process is performed every five years. The work on this project is carried out in-house by the City Solicitor and City Clerk/Clerk of the Board departments, and the printing (of approximately 175 copies which can be purchased at a cost of \$75 each) will be performed in the City Hall print shop. The requested funds will cover the cost of the purchase of binders, tabs, paper and toner, as well as an Internet indexing service (at a cost of \$120 for the period of January through June of 2007) for an improved search mechanism (which will be implemented after the re-codified ordinance printing process has been completed).

There was some discussion about the need to print so many copies of the ordinances. The first 60-70 copies printed will be distributed to members of the Board and various City departments (including Clerk, Law, Police, Fire, DPW, ISD, etc.); the balance of the copies printed will be made available for sale to the general public.

With that understanding, the Committee voted 6-0-1, with Ald. Gentile not voting, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#460-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$210,000 from bonded indebtedness for the purpose of purchasing heavy equipment and heavy duty trucks for the Parks and Recreation Department. [11-28-06@4:29 PM]
PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 6-0 (Ald. Baker and Coletti not voting) on 12/6/06

ACTION: **FINANCE APPROVED AS AMENDED WITH FREE CASH AS FUNDING SOURCE 7-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: David Mandatori, Parks and Recreation Supervisor, was present this evening. He indicated that the Supplemental Capital Budget submitted by the Mayor in November of this year includes \$210,000 for the purchase of heavy equipment and heavy duty trucks for the Department. The Department plans to utilize approximately \$150,000 of these funds for the purchase of a rubbish packing machine to replace the current equipment which has seen excessive use and wear over the years. The current packer is a 1994 rubbish truck with over 134,000 miles on it. When that truck breaks down, the department is forced to use an open pickup truck, which significantly complicates the removal process. A significant amount of funding has been used to attempt to repair this vehicle over the past two years, but it is apparent that a replacement vehicle is necessary at this time.

Additionally, over the past three years, the Parks and Recreation Department has seen an increase in the amount of trash removal that is performed, with the addition of trash pickup in village centers throughout the City; they pick up an average of 5,000 barrels per month. These responsibilities were transferred from the Public Works Department.

The second piece of equipment to be replaced is a 1993 back hoe, which has been declared surplus. At the present time, the Department relies on equipment from the DPW yards to perform required work. The piece of equipment planned for purchase is a multi-function tractor which will expand work capabilities for the Parks and Recreation Department (i.e. excavation, playground building, loading materials, snow removal, turf work, seeding and aerating of playing fields). The cost of this equipment is approximately \$60,000 (including the attachments for landscaping functions). The Department is convinced that this equipment will be more versatile and a great asset.

The Committee reviewed the backup information that was attached to this evening's agenda and agreed that these equipment purchases for the Parks and Recreation Department are justified at this time. The Committee voted 7-0, with Ald. Gentile not voting, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#462-06 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$750,000 from bonded indebtedness for the purpose of purchasing heavy equipment and heavy duty trucks for the Department of Public Works. [11-28-06@4:29 PM]

PUB. FACILITIES APPROVED 8-0 ON 12/6/06

ACTION: FINANCE APPROVED 8-0

NOTE: Bob Rooney, DPW Commissioner, was present this evening. He explained the significant facts contained in the backup information provided (as attachments to this evening's agenda) as it relates to the purchase of this equipment. The Department is proposing to replace a large construction truck (\$125,000) and 5 trucks (\$125,000 each) to replace vehicles that are in the range of 19-27 years old. A street sweeper (\$125,000) will also be purchased. It was understood that these bonds will be issued for a period not to exceed the expected useful life of the equipment (15 years for the trucks and 10 years for the street sweeper).

Because much of the equipment proposed to be replaced was purchased back in 1978 (after the blizzard), the Committee supported this purchase plan and voted 8-0 to approve this request.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#463-06 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$1,483,000 (\$1 million from Free Cash and \$483,000 from bonded indebtedness) for the purpose of replacing 8,440 City streetlights to reduce energy consumption by approximately 65%. [11-28-06@5:08 PM]

PUB. FACILITIES APPROVED 6-1-1 (Ald. Mansfield opposed; Albright abstaining) on 12/6/06

ACTION: **FINANCE APPROVED AS AMENDED WITH \$790,000 FROM FREE CASH AND \$693,000 FROM BONDED INDEBTEDNESS 8-0**

NOTE: In accordance with the attached letter received from the Mayor, the Committee discussed the change in funding source on this request to provide ample Free Cash under the previous (Parks and Recreation equipment purchase) item; therefore, the funding for the purchase of the street lights will be \$790,000 from Free Cash and \$693,000 from bonded indebtedness (for a bond period of 3 years, which is equal to the period over which it is expected that the proposed savings will take place).

The Committee reviewed the backup information that was provided for this item (which was attached to this evening's agenda; please refer to items submitted by the Mayor and DPW Commissioner for specific information regarding the breakdown of cost for this project).

The Committee heard a presentation on this light replacement program to phase out the current mercury vapor lights). The City has secured grant funds from NSTAR (in the amount of \$450,000 for this replacement project); this will cover 50% of the funds to be used from Free Cash for this project.

The Committee was satisfied with the presentation and the fact that the lights will save the City money over their expected 15-year span of use. The old lights will be marketed for sale to other communities that continue to use the mercury vapor type. The Committee voted 8-0 to approve this item with the amended funding amounts and 3 year bond term.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#461-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$1,433,000 from bonded indebtedness to fund the following Public Buildings projects:

A) Window/Door Systems; Zervas.....	\$ 587,500
B) Window/Door Systems; Mason-Rice.....	\$ 845,500
TOTAL.....	\$1,433,000

[11-28-06@4:30 P.M.]

PUB. FACILITIES APPROVED AS AMENDED @ \$1,420,500 8-0 on 12/6/06

ACTION: FINANCE APPROVED AS AMENDED @ \$1,420,500 6-0-2 (Ald. Lennon, Gentile abstaining)

NOTE: Arthur Cabral, Budget and Project Specialist for the Public Buildings Department, was present this evening. He explained the details of the work to be performed at these two schools. Both of these projects are contained in the Supplemental Capital Budget. These items were approved by the School Committee at their meeting on November 27th. The estimates for these projects were attached to this evening’s agenda (please refer to the information provided for specific figures and information).

The Public Facilities Committee approved this item on 12/6, but amended the amount of the appropriation, as the original request contained a contingency amount in excess of the currently allowed 5%; therefore the item was amended by decreasing the project total to \$1,420,500.

It was clear that these windows, doors and related masonry work are needed at both of these schools (in order to make these buildings more weather-tight), and the Committee voted 6-0-2, with Ald. Lennon and Gentile abstaining, to approve this item as recommended by the Public Facilities Committee. Ald. Lennon and Gentile indicated that they abstained from voting on this item due to the fact that these two projects, in their estimation, was not as large of a priority as the fire station improvement projects. **It is possible that this item will be placed on second call on the floor of the Board on Monday, December 18th.**

#458-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, in accordance with MGL Ch.30B, Sec.12, requesting authorization for the School Department to solicit bids and enter into a contract for school bus transportation for a term of five years. [11-28-06@4:29 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0-1 (Ald. Parker not voting)

NOTE: The Committee received a letter received a letter from the School Department indicating that it is their intention to reward a 3-year bus contract commencing 7/1/07 through 6/30/10, with an option to renew for an additional two one-year terms.

The Committee and the Board has approved of this type of request in the past. Without debate, the Committee voted 7-0, with Ald. Parker not voting, to approve this item.

Re-Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#452-06 EDWARD GOURDEAU, 81 Dalby Street, re-appointed as a CONSTABLE for the City of Newton; said term to expire on 11/1/09.(60-day action date: 2/3/07)
[11-22-06@1:37 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Because Mr. Gordeau was being re-appointed as a Constable, the Committee did not require him to attend this evening's meeting to discuss this item. All appropriate paperwork was filed with the Clerk's office, and, without debate, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve this re-appointment.

REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#206-00(4) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$35,000 from the Hebrew College Traffic Mitigation Fund for the purpose of a study of the traffic safety and volume issues in Newton Centre in the vicinity of Herrick Road, Braeland Avenue and Chase Street.

PS&T APPROVED 8-0 ON 12/6/06

ACTION: **FINANCE APPROVED 7-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: Since the funds that are in the Hebrew College Traffic Mitigation Fund are due to expire (and be returned to the contractor who gave them to the City at the time that the Special Permit was granted) in March of 2007, and it has been requested that a traffic safety and volume study be performed in the vicinity of Hebrew College, this seems like a good opportunity to secure funding through this source.

The motion to approve this item carried by a vote of 7-0, with Ald. Gentile not voting.

REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#380-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$115,289 from Free Cash for the purpose of replacing the bunker gear that firefighters wear when responding to a fire or other incident.

PS&T APPROVED 8-0 ON 12/6/06

ACTION: **FINANCE APPROVED 7-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)**

NOTE: This is the third year of the bunker gear replacement program, which will provide firefighters with their needed turnout gear. The Committee reviewed the specific information that was attached to this evening's agenda. This clothing is expected to last approximately 10 years, and the equipment that is to be replaced is now older than 10 years old.

The Committee was in full support of this equipment replacement and, without debate, voted 7-0, with Ald. Gentile not voting, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#381-06 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$30,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of replacing two watch desks, which control the fire station automatic house lights, apparatus overhead doors, audible fire station alerting systems, vocalarm system, traffic signal preemption, alarm transmission decoding and other functions in the stations in Fire Stations #3 and #4.

PS&T APPROVED 8-0 ON 12/6/06

ACTION: FINANCE APPROVED 7-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)

NOTE: The desks to be replaced were manufactured and installed in the 1950's. The Committee reviewed the backup information that was attached to this evening's agenda. It was clear that this replacement is necessary at this time, particularly because the company that manufactured the existing equipment no longer makes replacement parts.

The Board previously approved a request for watch desk replacements at other stations, so this project simply continues that replacement program. The Committee was in full support of this item and voted 7-0, with Ald. Gentile not voting, to approve this request.

All other items were held. *Due to the Christmas holiday, the next regularly scheduled Finance meeting will be held on Monday evening, January 8, 2007.* The Committee adjourned at approximately 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coltti, Chairman