

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, JULY 18, 2005

Present: Ald. Coletti (Chair), Linsky, Gentile, Stewart and Parker; Absent: Ald. Gerst, Schnipper and Lipof

Committee on Community Preservation members present: Ald. Linsky (Chair), Lennon, Hess-Mahan, Sangiolo, Yates, Parker and Lappin

Also Present: Ald. Merrill and Danberg

***CHAIRMAN'S NOTE:*** *The Committee began its meeting this evening at 7:00 p.m. The purpose for this early start time was to hold a joint Committee meeting with the Committee on Community Preservation.*

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

#255-05 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$738,383 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the Millhouse Commons Community Housing project at 1093-1101 Chestnut Street.

**ACTION:** **CMTE. COMM. PRES. APPROVED 4-0-2 (Sangiolo, Parker abstaining; Yates excused)**  
**FINANCE APPROVAL RECOMMENDED 2-0-3 (Parker, Stewart, Gentile abstaining)**

**NOTE:** Josephine McNeil, representing the petitioner (CAN-DO) and Judy Jacobson, representing the Planning Department, were both present this evening. Please refer to Committee on Community Preservation report for details of the discussion on this item.

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

#256-05 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$67,853 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the Newton Centre Playground Pedestrian Improvements Design project.

**ACTION:** **CMTE. COMM. PRES. APPROVED 5-0-1 (Sangiolo abstaining; Lappin not voting)**  
**FINANCE APPROVED 4-0-1 (Gentile abstaining)**

**NOTE:** Please refer to Committee on Community Preservation report for details of the discussion on this item.

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

#257-05 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$52,177 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the Farlow Park/Chaffin Park Restoration Plan.

**ACTION:** **CMTE. COMM. PRES. APPROVED 6-0 (Lappin not voting)**  
**FINANCE APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** Please refer to Committee on Community Preservation report for details of the discussion on this item.

#248-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of \$18,493 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of funding payments to the East Middlesex Mosquito Control District to conduct mosquito larva control in catch basins to control the spread of West Nile Virus.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** This item was listed on the memo submitted by David Wilkinson on July 18 entitled "First Call Item Report" (see attachment #1). Without debate, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve this item.

#249-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of \$33,571 from Salary Reserve to fund the cost items set forth in the labor contract agreed upon with the Professional members of the Engineering Division.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** This item was listed on the memo submitted by David Wilkinson on July 18 entitled "First Call Item Report" (see attachment #1). Without debate, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve this item.

#253-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting a transfer of funds in the amount of \$4,646.37 from Newton Free Library Electricity account to the Accumulated Special Leave account to pay the accumulated special leave of an employee who retired at the end of the fiscal year.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** This item was listed on the memo submitted by David Wilkinson on July 18 entitled "First Call Item Report" (see attachment #1). Without debate, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve this item.

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

#254-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of \$38,029 to staff the reference desk on Sundays and to purchase supplemental reference materials to enable the Newton Free Library to fulfill its duties as a Regional Reference Provider

**ACTION:** **FINANCE APPROVED 5-0**  
**PROG. & SERV. TO MEET**

**NOTE:** This item was listed on the memo submitted by David Wilkinson on July 18 entitled "First Call Item Report" (see attachment #1). Without debate, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve this item. Since the Committee will not meet again until September 12<sup>th</sup>, members agreed to take action on this item this evening, even though the Programs and Services Committee has not yet reviewed this request.

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

#232-05 CHAIRMAN OF FINANCE requesting an amendment to Section 4-21 of the City of Newton Ordinances, 2001, to reflect an adjustment of salary for the City Clerk/Clerk of the Board to mirror retroactive adjustments given to all Hay Grade employees from July 1, 2004 to July 1, 2006.

**ACTION:** **PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 6-0 ON 7/13/05**  
**FINANCE APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** (please refer to attachment #2 for further information on this item) Chair Coletti explained that he docketed this item because the City Clerk/Clerk of the Board has not had a salary adjustment since 2001. From time to time the Board reviews the Clerk's salary and adjusts it appropriately, as it is set by ordinance. Since 2001, other Hay group (management-level, non-union employees) have received cost of living adjustments, and this item seeks to bring the Clerk's salary current with that pattern of adjustment.

The Law Department provided the attached memo which informed the Committee that retroactive salary adjustments can only be given back over two years (and no longer than that). Therefore, this item would begin to adjust the Clerk's salary as of July 1, 2004 (in order that the adjustment can be made for FY05 and also for FY06).

On July 13, the Programs and Services Committee voted to recommend approval of this salary adjustment for the City Clerk/Clerk of the Board and requested that the Law Department provide the proper language for the ordinance amendment. The Comptroller provided the figures for this adjustment to ensure that they are, in fact, in line with the other H-grade adjustments that were made since the previous amendment to this ordinance.

The Committee was in full support of this overdue adjustment and voted 5-0 to approve the amendment as it was provided by the Law Department.

#250-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to expend a grant of \$10,000, awarded to the Mayor's Office for Cultural Affairs, the Newton History Museum at the Jackson Homestead, and Discover Newton ARTS, to fund a program to promote tourism in Newton.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 4-1 (Stewart opposed)**

**NOTE:** A letter dated June 24<sup>th</sup> was submitted to the Committee by the Mayor indicating that the City has received a grant in the amount of \$10,000 from the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. These funds will be used for graphic design and promotion materials, website design and other purposes as described in the budget that was presented (which was attached to this evening's agenda). Basically, the purpose of this grant is to promote increased tourism in Newton.

The Committee was in support of this purpose, and voted 4-1, with Ald. Stewart opposed, to approve this item.

#252-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of \$14,406 from proceeds reserved for charitable purposes by the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course in calendar year 2004 to Newton Pride.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** The Committee reviewed the letter dated July 5<sup>th</sup> (which was attached to this evening's agenda) which describes the purpose of this item. Without debate, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve this item.

#### **REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#233-05 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS recommending that Sec. 26-31, of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Newton, 2001, be amended by deleting the \$25 application fee plus an additional \$10 fee pertaining to the number of boxes and inserting a fee of \$50 per box.

**ACTION:** **PUB FAC APPROVED AS AMENDED 6-0 ON 6/22/05**  
**FINANCE APPROVED AS FURTHER AMENDED 5-0**

**NOTE:** A letter dated June 6<sup>th</sup> was submitted (and attached to this evening's agenda) indicating the need for this proposed increase. The Committee also reviewed the language for this amendment that was approved by the Public Facilities Committee on June 22<sup>nd</sup> (see attachment #3 to this report). There was one issue that Committee members agreed should be changed. In Section 26-31(6)(i)(4), the Committee voted to change the distance from 10 feet to 15 feet.

After approving that further amendment to the language that was approved by the Public Facilities Committee, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve this item **as further amended**.

#251-05      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$16,000 from the Parking Receipts Reserved Fund for the purpose of funding repairs or replacement of city-owned light poles that have been knocked down by motorists.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:**      A letter dated June 27<sup>th</sup> was submitted indicating that the Police Department sometimes is able to identify the parties responsible for damage to city-owned light poles, but that these funds are necessary to help to defray the cost of repairing/replacing poles for which the City has not been able to seek payment from insurance companies.

The Committee understood the problem of seeking reimbursement for repairs/replacement of poles damaged, and also the need to continue to make such repairs/replacements in the interest of public safety. Therefore, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve this request.

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

#231-05      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$55,000 (\$30,000 for Fibar and \$25,000 for equipment) from Marathon Receipts for the purpose of funding park improvements and repairs at Hunnewell Park and Cabot Park.

**ACTION:**      **PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 4-0 (Johnson, Baker not voting) on 7/13/05**  
**FINANCE APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:**      Bob DeRubeis, Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, was present this evening. He presented a letter dated June 14<sup>th</sup> which explains that the Fibar will be purchased and placed under the playground equipment for safety reasons. He indicated that the \$25,000 for equipment will be used to replace equipment which is no longer safe.

These funds are “seed money” and it is hoped that additional funds can be put into these playgrounds to improve conditions for the enjoyment and safety of all who use them.

The Committee was in full support of this item and voted 5-0 to approve this request.

#229-05      MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION seeking Board of Aldermen approval of a RESOLUTION in support of House Bill 2408 that would close the telecommunications property tax loophole and eliminate the unfair exemption in out-dated property tax statutes.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** The Committee reviewed the resolution that was presented at the State House hearing. The Committee (which had previously approved of this issue under Suspension of the Rules) was prepared to show its formal support of this item this evening. The Committee, without debate, voted 5-0 to approve this item.

#230-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and appropriate a grant in the amount of \$20,237 from a National historical Publications and Records Commission grant for the purpose of completing the cataloguing of the city archival collection held by the City Clerk.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 3-0-1 (Parker abstaining; Linsky not voting)**

**NOTE:** A letter dated June 13<sup>th</sup> was submitted indicating that the completion of this cataloguing project is crucial to allow for future retrieval of archival documents. It is estimated that these grant funds should cover the cost of completing this task.

The Committee was in support of continuing this program in order to complete the recording, and voted 3-0-1, with Ald. Parker abstaining and Ald. Linsky not voting, to approve this item.

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#247-05 LINDA HILLER, 41 Bound Brook Road, Newton Highlands, re-appointed as a Resident Representative member of the NEWTON TAXATION AID COMMITTEE, for a 3-year term to expire on May 1, 2008 (60 days 9/9/05).

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:** Ms. Hiller had not been invited to attend this evening's meeting because the Committee does not require **re-appointees** to meet with the Committee. The Committee was happy to support Ms. Hiller's re-appointment and voted 5-0, without debate, to approve this item.

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

#182-05(2) COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$1600 for reimbursement to the Law Department for legal services rendered in connection with the Gath Pool Accessibility Enhancements.

**ACTION:** **CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. APPROVED 5-1 (Parker opposed) on 6-28-05**  
**FINANCE APPROVED 3-1-1 ((Parker opposed; Gentile abstaining)**

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

#183-05(2) COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$650 for reimbursement to the Law Department for services rendered in regard to the funding of City Hall and War Memorial Historic Landscape Design project.

**ACTION: CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. APPROVED 5-1 (Parker opposed) on 6-28-05**  
**FINANCE APPROVED 3-1-1 ((Parker opposed; Gentile abstaining)**

**NOTE:** Dan Funk, City Solicitor, was present this evening. He reviewed the memo from the Community Preservation Committee, dated June 23, 2005 (see attachment #4 to this report).

It is expected that these items will be placed on Second Call at the August 8<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, therefore, the Chairman will not provide a detailed report of the discussion which took place this evening.

Essentially, the Committee agreed with the view of the Community Preservation Committee that it is appropriate for the Law Department to cover reasonable costs associated with the oversight of CPA items as they work their way through the approval process. It was also understood that the maximum amount to be charged per year for legal costs associated with CPA projects will be \$40,000. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee voted 3-1-1, with Ald. Parker opposed and Ald. Gentile abstaining, to approve each of these two items.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 11:00 p.m.

**NOTE: The Committee will hold a special joint meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 8<sup>th</sup> in Room 222 with the Public Facilities Committee for the purpose of taking a final vote on the following item:**

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#238-05 WENDY KIMMEL, et al. filing on 6/20/05 a petition pursuant to Section 10-2 of the City Charter for a public hearing for the purpose of capping the cost of the Newton South High School project at the "revised current budget" of \$59,305,020.

*The next regularly scheduled Finance Committee meeting will be held on Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman