

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2005

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

Absent: Ald. Parker

Also Present: Ald. Merrill

#425-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$4,000 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of providing funding in the FY06 City Clerk/Clerk of the Board budget for costs related to the 2006 Inauguration.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0 (Gerst, Lipof not voting)**

NOTE: A letter was presented indicating that this request will help to cover the costs associated with the Inaugural exercises scheduled for Monday, January 2, 2006. As in past years, these funds will be used to cover the costs related to flowers, music, printing of programs, and refreshments.

Without debate, the Committee voted 5-0, with Ald. Gerst and Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

#376-05(3) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$17,572 be transferred from the Human Resources Department Severance Compensation account to the City Clerk/Clerk of the Board salary account for the purpose of providing ample funds to make payment to retiring Clerk Edward G. English for unused vacation time as well as special leave buy-back.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-1 (Gentile opposed; Lipof not voting)**

NOTE: Some backup information was provided by the Comptroller (attached to this evening's agenda) related to the breakdown of these costs. Mr. English will be staying on as City Clerk/Clerk of the Board until January 6, 2006. Due to the fact that his employment will go into the next calendar year, he will be paid for his entitled 5 weeks vacation as well as the buyback of the balance of 250 days (for a maximum of \$6,000) of special leave that he has accrued over his many years with the City. These payments would amount to \$14,572. The additional \$3,000 included in this request will be set aside to compensate the staff for assisting with the transition period when the next Clerk takes over.

Ultimately, the Committee voted 5-1, with Ald. Gentile opposed and Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

#283-05 ALD. PARKER requesting that the city adopt §19 of MGL 32B to allow retiree coalition bargaining of health care benefits.

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-2 (Stewart, Linsky opposed)**

NOTE: Since it has been understood that this item does not include current retirees, the way that the item is worded is not appropriate in terms of the intent that Ald. Parker had when filing the item. It is expected that in the future Ald. Parker may want to file a new item to accomplish the change that he had intended. Therefore, the Committee voted NO ACTION NECESSARY on this item 5-2, with Ald. Stewart and Linsky opposed.

#207-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to expend the sum of \$6,010.44 from Lottery Receipts in order that the Fire Department may pay an invoice from a prior fiscal year from the Triumvirate Company for disposal of hazardous materials.

ACTION: **DENIED 6-0-1 (Gentile abstaining)**

NOTE: Chair Coletti, who had been in contact with representatives from the Triumvirate Company, explained to the Committee that this item relates to an incident that occurred over two years ago. A citizen of Newton dropped off a container at Police Headquarters that was suspicious. At that time, the Fire Department was called and, subsequently, Triumvirate came in and handled the disposal of the package. Apparently the invoice traveled from the Police Dept. to the Fire Dept. a few times, and was not settled.

Chair Coletti informed the Committee that he had reviewed the invoice that was submitted, and the charges for this removal are substantially excessive to a point where he asked the Company to amend the invoice and re-submit it. He had also requested a copy of the Disposal Manifest (which would state exactly what the materials that were handled actually were and where they were taken to be disposed of), and, to date, that information has not yet been provided. Chair Coletti explained that his own company handles hazardous materials frequently and does not charge nearly as much for services as Triumvirate is charging the City. He, therefore, suggested that he would support denial of this item at this time.

With that understanding, the Committee, therefore, voted 6-0-1, with Ald. Gentile abstaining, to deny this item.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#134-05 **CITIZEN'S PETITION**, Newton North Ballot Committee of the Newton Taxpayers Assoc., Samuel Robbins, 300 Prince Street, W. Newton submitting a petition pursuant to Section 10-2 of the City Charter, which contains approximately 73 signatures validated by the Newton Election Commission requesting the Board of Aldermen to hold a Public Hearing which seeks the passage of the following measure:

“The total cost of renovating and expanding Newton North High School shall be limited to \$65 million including reimbursements. Cost increases due to inflation, as reported by the Consumer Price Index of the U.S. Department of Labor, will be allowed.”

PUB. FAC. NO ACTION NECESSARY ON 9-21-05

ACTION: **FINANCE HELD 7-0**

NOTE: Since this item would still be appropriate when the Committee begins discussions on the cost of the new Newton North High School, Committee members agreed that it would be appropriate at this time to vote hold. Prior to the December 12th meeting, it will be determined what action should be taken (i.e. NAN or Refer to next Board). With that, the Committee voted 7-0 to hold this item.

#37-05 **ALD. PARKER AND COMPTROLLER** requesting review and discussion of the June 30, 2004 independent auditor Management Letter recommendations.

ACTION: **HELD 7-0**

NOTE: This item was held and will be incorporated into the December 12th discussion of the annual audit report.

#518-03 **ALD. STEWART** recommending the creation of a task force to study and report to the Mayor, Board of Aldermen and School Committee on the policies and criteria that should be used in imposing fees for various kinds of city services.

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-1 (Stewart opposed)**

NOTE: Ald. Stewart had requested that this item be forwarded to the next Board for future consideration. The Committee, however, disagreed on the referral, and, therefore, voted NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-1, with Ald. Stewart opposed.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#503-03 **ALD. PARKER AND STEWART** requesting discussion of the possibility of including drug re-importation from Canada in City of Newton health plans, as pioneered by the City of Springfield, MA.

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

NOTE: The City of Newton is currently practicing this program, therefore, it was determined that the item is no longer needed. With that understanding, the Committee voted NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0 on this item.

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

#369-03 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting a presentation of the findings and results of the *Newton North Feasibility Study* to the Board of Aldermen in a public forum to allow a greater number of the public to hear the presentation and offer public comment.

PROG. & SERV. NAN 5-0 ON 10/20/04

PUB. FAC. NAN 8-0 ON 3/9/05

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0

NOTE: Committee members agreed that, since the Feasibility Study was done, and the substantive Committees have voted NAN on this item, a vote on NAN would be appropriate. Therefore, the motion for NO ACTION NECESSARY carried by a vote of 7-0.

#128-98 ALD. PARKER, SANGIOLO, MERRILL, MANSFIELD requesting an adjustment to the water and sewer rate structure to allow rate relief for low-volume water and sewer users.

ACTION: DENIED 6-1 (Linsky opposed)

NOTE: Since this item was originally filed in 1998, Committee members expressed their hope that a new, more appropriate item to accomplish such a program would be docketed in the future. Therefore, the Committee voted 6-1, with Ald. Linsky opposed, to deny this item.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#548-03 ALD. GENTILE, SALVUCCI AND LENNON requesting discussion and possible City acceptance of Chapter 137 of the Acts of 2003, an Act relative to public employees serving in the armed forces. If accepted, city employees who have been granted a military leave of absence as members of the armed forces called to service after September 11, 2001 will be entitled to receive pay at regular base salary and will not lose any seniority or any accrued vacation leave, sick leave, personal leave, compensation time or earned overtime.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 6-0 ON 4/20/05

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: The Committee was in full support of this concept and was of the understanding that the City currently makes accommodations for its employees called to Active Duty. Therefore, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve this item.

CLERK'S NOTE: *The Director of Human Resources has explained that Chapter 137 of the Acts of 2003 has expired already (in Sept. of this year). Therefore, any vote on this item would be to show support of the concept. In the future, it may be necessary to accept subsequent legislation passed at the state level.*

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: **FINANCE DENIED 6-1 (Linsky opposed)**

NOTE: Due to the fact that this item has remained on the agenda for four years without progress, the Committee voted 6-1, with Ald. Linsky opposed, to deny the item. It is hoped that if Ald. Parker wishes to submit a new item for consideration in the future, he will go ahead and do so.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#432-02 ALD. PARKER, JOHNSON, LINSKY, LIPSITT, LAPPIN, BAKER requesting ordinance change and home rule legislation to implement a policy of indexing automobile excise tax to emissions and/or fuel economy, so low-pollution vehicles have lower taxes than those that pollute more.

ACTION: **DENIED 6-1 (Linsky opposed)**

NOTE: This item was denied by a vote of 6-1, with Ald. Linsky opposed.

REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#250-03 ALD. JOHNSON, SAMUELSON AND SANGIOLO requesting amendments to Chapter 19 Sections 8 and 9 of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Newton to increase the fines for traffic and parking violations.

PS&T HELD ON 4/7/04

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

NOTE: Since the Board did, in fact, vote to raise certain parking fines/fees, the Committee agreed that NO ACTION NECESSARY was the appropriate action at this time. That vote was 7-0.

#429-02 ALD. PARKER requesting progress report from Treasurer/Collector on addressing Management Letter audit issues.

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

NOTE: Given the fact that the Committee will receive the most recent Management Letter for the FY05 City audit, the Committee voted NO ACTION NECESSARY on this item (which initially related to the FY01 audit). The vote was 7-0.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE: *The following items were all REFERRED TO THE 2006-2007 BOARD unanimously for action at a later time:*

REFERRED TO FINANCE COMMITTEE BY FULL BOARD ON 1/18/05:

#134-04(2) TRAFFIC COUNCIL requesting public input regarding the following proposed changes to Washington Street between the Wellesley town line and Route 128: re-stripe Washington Street for four 12'-wide travel lanes and a parking lane on the south side between Concord Street and the ramps to/from Route 128; "No Parking" on the northerly side; "No Parking" on the southerly side from the Wellesley town line to Concord Street; add two to four 15-minute metered parking spaces in front of the Lower Falls Post Office; add 2-hour meters for the remainder of the southerly side to a point near #2278 Washington Street (Ward 4)

ACTION: **REFERRED TO 2006-2007 BOARD 7-0**

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND 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 2006-2007 BOARD 7-0**

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#135-01 ALD. M. LIPOF offering a resolution urging His Honor the Mayor to hire an independent auditor to oversee and report monthly through the Mayor to the Board of Aldermen for the duration of the construction and renovations to the high schools.

ACTION: **REFERRED TO 2006-2007 BOARD 7-0**

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: **REFERRED TO 2006-2007 BOARD 7-0**

#33-01 ALD. YATES proposing an ordinance to establish a special assessment policy for the substantial rehabilitation of owner-occupied residential properties listed in the State Register of Historic Places (Sec.5J. of MGL Chapter 59).

ACTION: **REFERRED TO 2006-2007 BOARD 5-1-1 (Schnipper opposed; Linsky abstaining)**

#206-00(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to expend \$35,000 from Hebrew College pursuant to provisions of Special Permit #66-98(3) and a Traffic Mitigation Agreement between the City and Hebrew College, which funds will be used toward the cost of traffic improvements, studies or transportation programs selected by the City for the purpose of mitigating potential impacts of the Hebrew College project on Herrick and Langley Roads or improving traffic and flow in the Herrick Road area. NOTE: #206-00, approved 6/5/00, authorized acceptance of these funds; #206-00(3), approved 6/19/00, requested implementation of accounting measures to track future expenditures; #206-00(2), the actual expenditure, was held in Committee on 6/19/00 to allow Board review of proposed mitigation measures and costs on a case-by-case basis. (ITEM HELD IN COMMITTEE AT 6/19/00 FULL BOARD)

ACTION: **REFERRED TO 2006-2007 BOARD 7-0**

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND CMTE. ON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

#426-05 ALD. BAKER et als proposing acquisition by the City of Newton or related agencies of all or partial interests in appropriate properties in Newton using Community Preservation or other funds to preserve or enhance such properties for various public purposes.

ACTION: **REFERRED TO 2006-2007 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 2006-2007 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 2006-2007 BOARD 6-0-1 (Linsky abstaining)**

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#428-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY07-FY11 Capital Improvement Program pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter which requires Board of Aldermen approval of a plan to finance \$179,120,279 of new local projects over the next several years:

SUMMARY

PUBLIC WORKS (City-Funded)	\$ 12,544,000
PUBLIC WORKS (Grant/Fee Funded)	\$ 53,255,000
PUBLIC SAFETY.	\$ 3,910,289
PUBLIC BUILDINGS	\$ 5,420,420
SCHOOL DEPARTMENT	\$ 92,415,000
PARKS AND RECREATION	\$ 8,807,410
OTHER	\$ 2,768,160
TOTAL	\$179,120,279

ACTION: **REFERRED TO 2006-2007 BOARD 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: **REFERRED TO 2006-2007 BOARD 7-0**

The Committee adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman