

CITY OF NEWTON  
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT  
MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2004

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

Also Present: Ann Cornaro (IT Director), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), David Wilkinson (Comptroller), Dan Funk (City Solicitor), Fran Towle (Commissioner of Parks and Recreation), Nick Parnell (Public Buildings Commissioner)

**Chairman's note: The Committee began its meeting this evening by reviewing the budgets for the Information Technology and Executive Departments. Without changes, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the Information Technology budget.**

**Similarly, without changes, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve the Executive Department budget for FY05.**

**The budget item itself (#209-04) was held 8-0.**

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

#221-04      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$58,000 from funds paid to the City from cable franchisees for the purpose of supplementing the Law Department legal assistance account (\$48,000) for the remainder of FY04 and providing the Law Department with funds to hire legal interns and work-study students (\$10,000).

**PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 7-0 ON 4/21/04**

**ACTION:      APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:**      Dan Funk, City Solicitor, was present this evening. He presented a letter dated April 13<sup>th</sup> indicating that, over the past three years, the Law Department has provided significant services relative to the cable contract. Also, during this year, there has been a significant increase in the amount of money required for outside counsel. During the first eight months of FY04, over \$100,000 has been spent for collective bargaining, grievances, and labor issues that have required outside counsel.

Mr. Funk believes that this request for additional appropriation will cover the costs for the balance of this fiscal year.

Because of the work that the Law Department has done on the cable contract and related issues, the Committee agreed that this is the appropriate funding source for this item.

With that understanding, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve this item.

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

**ACTION:** **HELD 6-0 (Gerst, Lipof not voting)**

#239-02 ALD. LENNON requesting a discussion with appropriate personnel regarding the process for appealing parking tickets.

**ACTION:** **HELD 6-0 (Gerst, Lipof not voting)**

#69-03 VINCENT FILIPPONE requesting that there be a requirement that all parking ticket appeal hearings be tape-recorded.

**ACTION:** **HELD 6-0 (Gerst, Lipof not voting)**

**NOTE:** Without discussion on these three items, the Committee determined that they should be held for a later meeting. With that, each item was held by a vote of 6-0.

#189-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$12,500 be appropriated from the Marathon Receipts fund for the purpose of purchasing playground apparatus at the Upper Falls playground.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 6-0 (Gerst, Lipof not voting)**

**NOTE:** A letter dated March 30<sup>th</sup> was submitted by the Mayor, explaining that the Upper Falls playground is next on the list to be upgraded this year.

Understanding that this project is part of the annual playground improvement project for the Parks and Recreation Department, the Committee was in full support of this request. Without debate, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Gerst and Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

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

#193-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$30,000 from the Marathon Receipts fund for the purpose of purchasing new Fibar and additional playground equipment to replace worn, defective or unsafe equipment as deemed necessary by the Parks and Recreation Department.

**PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 7-0 ON 4/21/04**

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

**NOTE:** Fran Towle, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, joined the Committee this evening.

Ald. Gentile asked how much Fibar would be purchased as part of this item. Commissioner Towle indicated that every playground in the City will have a suitable safety base for the children to play on. Some of this money will also be used to replace worn and defective equipment.

The Committee supported these safety improvements and voted 7-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

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

#194-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$30,000 from the Marathon Receipts fund for the purpose of purchasing playground apparatus and building a handicapped accessible walkway at the Newton Centre Playground.

**PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 7-0 ON 4/21/04**

**ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Gerst, Lipof not voting)**

**NOTE:** Fran Towle indicated that \$12,500 of these funds will be used to purchase and install new playground equipment to replace the old concrete structures that were recently removed from this park. The remaining \$17,500 will be used to create a handicapped accessible walkway at this location.

The Committee reviewed the proposed design plan for this walkway. There were concerns that the costs for these types of projects in recent years have come in significantly higher than projected.

Commissioner Towle assured the Committee that the \$17,500 that is being allocated as part of this request will cover the costs associated with this installation. With that understanding, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Gerst and Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

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

#195-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$250,000 from Free Cash and \$15,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of funding the following Capital Improvement projects in the Parks and Recreation Department:

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Tennis Court Repairs (Lower Falls)..... | \$60,000 (FC) |
| Field Renov. (Cold Springs Park).....   | \$50,000 (FC) |
| New Pick-up Truck w/plow.....           | \$30,000 (FC) |
| Pellegrini Park well.....               | \$15,000 (CS) |
| Tree Planting.....                      | \$35,000 (FC) |
| Tree Pruning.....                       | \$25,000 (FC) |
| Turf Control.....                       | \$50,000 (FC) |

**PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 7-0 ON 4/21/04**

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

**NOTE:** The Committee reviewed all of the backup information provided this evening (see attached information). The Committee understood the appropriateness and necessity of each of these projects, and voted 5-0, with Ald. Gerst, Schnipper and Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

#191-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$14,300 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding the installation of a temporary handicapped accessible ramp at the Police Annex building (located at 25 Chestnut Street).

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

**NOTE:** Nick Parnell, Public Buildings Commissioner, was present this evening. He explained that the City is required to install a temporary ramp at this location because there is an employee who works there that needs the access. Since the City is not prepared to move towards construction of the permanent ramp at this time, the temporary metal emergency ramp is necessary. After the permanent ramp is installed, this temporary ramp will be able to be moved to other locations throughout the City where it might be needed.

Understanding the necessity of this item, the Committee voted 5-0, with Ald. Gerst, Schnipper and Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

**REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#200-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$90,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding several environmental cleanup and compliance projects for the Public Buildings Department:

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Cabot School Envir. Compliance.....        | \$20,000 |
| Elliot St. Garage Envir. Compliance.....   | \$20,000 |
| Horace Mann Sch. Envir. Compliance.....    | \$35,000 |
| NSHS Football Stadium.....                 | \$ 7,500 |
| 1309 Washington St. (near Courthouse)..... | \$ 7,500 |
| TOTAL.....                                 | \$90,000 |

**PUB FAC APPROVED 7-0 ON 4/21/04**

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

**NOTE:** Nick Parnell explained the current status of each of these projects and their expected completion dates for environmental remediation.

Satisfied that these items are ongoing and being taken care of, with some near completion, the Committee voted 5-0, with Ald. Gerst, Schnipper and Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

**REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#206-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$150,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of replacing the existing boiler at the Bowen Elementary School.

**PUB FAC NAN 7-0 ON 4/21/04**

**ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0 (Gerst, Schnipper, Lipof not voting)**

**NOTE:** This item was voted NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0 at the request of the Mayor. This was because this money is to be re-allocated to the window replacement project at the Pierce Elementary School.

**REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#208-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$50,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of completing repairs to the boiler and heating system in Fire Station #4 and for making other miscellaneous repairs to other City buildings.

**PUB FAC APPROVED 8-0 ON 4/21/04**

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

**NOTE:** Commissioner Parnell provided backup information regarding this item. The boiler replacement at station #4 will cost \$22,800. The remainder of these funds will go towards other buildings projects, as listed in the backup information (attached to this evening's agenda).

The Committee had no problem with this request and voted 5-0, with Ald. Gerst, Schnipper and Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

**REFERRED TO ZONING AND PLANNING & FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#192-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting Board of Aldermen authorization to submit to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) the FY05 Annual Action Plan for the City of Newton COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) and EMERGENCY SHELTER GRANT (ESG) funds and the WestMetro HOME Consortium. This Plan must be submitted to HUD by May 14, 2004.

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

**NOTE:** The Committee reviews this application each year. Steve Gartrell reviewed the proposal with the Committee, which included a list of projects (see attachment #3). Minute cuts in funding will, fortunately, not have great impact on this plan.

After reviewing all pertinent information regarding this item, the Committee voted 5-0, with Ald. Gerst, Schnipper and Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

**REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#207-04      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$100,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding sidewalk betterments by the Department of Public Works.

**PUB FAC APPROVED 5-0-2 (Stewart, Mansfield abstaining) on 4/21/04**

**ACTION: APPROVED 4-0-1 (Stewart abstaining; Gerst, Schnipper, Lipof not voting)**

**NOTE:**      Sandy Pooler, Chief Budget Officer, presented this item to the Committee this evening. He explained that this item represents the annual sidewalk betterment program for the Department of Public Works. These projects are funded by the City (50%) and by the homeowners requesting the betterments (50%). The Commissioner of Public Works approximates that this appropriation will allow the Department to work on approximately 108 sidewalk installation projects.

The Committee showed its support for this ongoing project by voting 4-0-1, with Ald. Stewart abstaining and Ald. Gerst, Schnipper and Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 10:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman