

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
MONDAY, MAY 10, 2004

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

Absent: Ald. Gerst

Also Present: Re Cappoli (Chief Procurement Officer), Dolores Hamilton (Director of Human Resources), David Wilkinson (Comptroller), Elizabeth Dromey (Director of Assessment Administration), Ed Spellman (Treasurer/Collector), Bob DeRubeis (Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), Andrew Stern (Community Preservation Committee),

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE: The Committee held budget review discussion with the department heads scheduled to do so this evening from 7:00 p.m. through 9:30 p.m. The Committee reviewed the following budgets and approved them, as presented, without amendment:

***PURCHASING
HUMAN RESOURCES/BENEFITS
COMPTROLLER/RETIREMENT BOARD
ASSESSING
TREASURER/COLLECTOR/PARKING CLERK***

#233-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the total sum of funds received by the Department of Public Works as FEMA reimbursements for snow and ice removal costs, be transferred from the federal reimbursement fund to the General Fund, which will become part of the City's Free Cash for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004.

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

NOTE: Sandy Pooler was present this evening. He indicated that because our first snowstorm (back in December of 2003) produced such significant snowfall, a state of emergency was declared. That declaration made the City eligible for FEMA reimbursements. The cost of snow and ice removal for that storm was in excess of \$700,000. The City has recovered approximately \$451,000 in reimbursements from FEMA. The purpose of this docket is to make sure that all funds received from FEMA for this purpose are transferred back into the General Fund.

The Committee supported this action and voted 5-0 to approve this item.

#234-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$179,800, received as reimbursement funds from the federal government for the purchase of electronic voting machines, be transferred from the federal reimbursement fund into the Capital Stabilization Fund for future capital expenditures.

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

NOTE: Sandy Pooler also presented this item to the Committee. He indicated that, as the Committee had been told at the time of the appropriation for the purchase of the electronic voting machines, the reimbursement for a portion of that cost would come from the federal government. The City has received \$179,800 from the federal government. This amount represents a reimbursement of approximately 50% of the purchase cost.

There was brief discussion in Committee regarding the potential for some of this money to be used to purchase additional voting tables/booths for those who do not believe that the ones in use provide ample privacy.

Peter Karg was present this evening and explained that, unfortunately, the cost of purchasing the specialized voting tables would be great, and storage of larger tables would be much more difficult to accommodate, since space at City Hall is limited.

The Committee agreed with Mr. Karg's assessment of the current voting equipment being sufficient for the amount of times that it is actually in use, and voted 5-0, with Ald. Schnipper and Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

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

ACTION: **HELD 6-1 (Stewart opposed)**

NOTE: Ed Spellman was present this evening. He provided a document dated 5/7 (which was distributed to all Aldermen on that date) containing his objectives and goals and a summary of the balances for his department and other accounts received from the Comptroller's office.

There was a correlation between the Comptroller's office and the Treasurer's office this month, in that they are currently both working on the cash reconciliation for the month of April. It is expected that the City will be ready and will in fact have the FY04 books closed by August 15th in preparation for the next audit review by KPMG.

There was a brief discussion regarding the reports presented, since a new Management Letter and audit report will be presented towards the middle of next month.

With that, the Committee voted 6-1, with Ald. Stewart opposed, to hold this item until such time as the next Audit and Financial Management Letter is received.

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

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

NOTE: Mr. Spellman presented to Ald. Lennon and the Committee a two-page document explaining the appeal process for parking tickets and hearing request form.

Ald. Lennon was present this evening to discuss this issue. After review of the information presented by Mr. Spellman, Ald. Lennon indicated that he was satisfied with the process as it currently works.

With that understanding, the Committee voted NO ACTION NECESSARY on this item by a vote of 7-0.

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

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0 (See Proposal Prepared by Ald. Parker)**

NOTE: Mr. Spellman indicated that there has only been one occasion in the three years that he has held the Treasurer's position where a person has requested the audio taping of a parking ticket appeal hearing.

The Committee understood that the Treasurer had no objection to audio taping a hearing at the request of the person who received the parking ticket, if needed, but certainly understood that there is no need for all hearings to be taped. There is no requirement that tapes be stored.

Ald. Parker, in an attempt to help bring this item to closure, had put together a substitute proposal, spelling out requirements for the tape recording of parking ticket appeal hearings. That proposal is to be submitted to the Clerk's office to be included as attachment #1 to this report for distribution to all Aldermen for review prior to the Full Board meeting on 5/17.

With the understanding that Ald. Parker would have this proposal prepared in a timely manner, the Committee voted 7-0 to adopt the proposal as discussed this evening.

COMMITTEE CLERK'S NOTE: As of 4:30 p.m. on 5/14 (the date on which this report is to be distributed in the weekly Aldermanic packet), Ald. Parker's proposal has not yet been received. Due to production of large amounts of documents prior to the Full Board meeting, printing of this report will not be held at this point.

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

#222-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$1,160 be transferred from the Community Preservation Committee expense account to the CPC personal services account for the purpose of allowing the Committee to hire a Master's level student to assist the CPC during the summer months (while the Preservation Planner is on maternity leave).

CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. APPROVED 6-0 ON 4/27/04

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Andrew Stern was present this evening, along with other members of the Community Preservation Committee.

Finance Committee members fully understood and agreed with the need for this request and, without debate, voted 7-0 to approve this transfer.

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

#223-04 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$65,968 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding costs for installing a drilled well and pump irrigation system at West Newton Common.

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0-1 (Schnipper abstaining)

NOTE: This park is located at the intersection of Elm Street and Webster Street in West Newton. It is a very active recreation facility. Currently there is no way to water the park here. The Committee agreed that this park should be added to the list of ongoing maintenance projects. Through this item, the beginning steps to bringing this park "up to snuff" will be in place.

Bob DeRubeis, Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, was present this evening. He reviewed all of the costs associated with this project.

After reviewing this information, the Committee voted 6-0-1, with Ald. Schnipper abstaining, to approve this item.

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

#224-04 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$68,270 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding a portion of the costs for creating an outdoor classroom at Cabot School.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Mr. Stern and members of the Cabot School PTO and its Principal were present. They reviewed the plans for this project to create an outdoor classroom and sitting area.

Committee members were in full support of this positive project, and voted 7-0 to approve this item.

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRESERV. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
#133-04 **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE** recommending that the sum of \$375,000 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund as a grant for the purpose of creating the Municipal Employee Homebuyer Assistance Program (MEHAP) to provide downpayment assistance for City of Newton employees with household incomes at or below 100% of the area median and to permanently convert existing market rate units to affordable units in perpetuity through permanent deed restrictions.
CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0 ON 4/24/04

ACTION: **NAN 6-0 (Lipof not voting)**

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
#133-04(2) **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE** recommending that the sum of \$500,000 be appropriated from the Community Preservation fund for purposes of funding costs for the Newton Homebuyer Assistance Program.
CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. APPROVED 6-0 ON 4/27/04

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

NOTE: The first item was originally brought forward to be implemented if the Christina Street project had actually moved forward. The Christina Street project was withdrawn, due to lack of interest, therefore, the Committee voted NO ACTION NECESSARY by a vote of 6-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting. This was done in the hopes that there will be a substitute plan similar to this in the future.

This second item is brought forward as an alternative to the previous item. This is a new proposal that would provide the opportunity for employees, residents, students, and the like to get assistance through grants to be tied to a lien on the property to be purchased. This will allow for approximately 1/3 deposit on affordable housing units. It is hopeful that this additional money (which will be returned to the City if the person who makes the initial purchase intends to sell said property at some point in the future) will provide seed funds for such a purchase.

The Committee was hopeful that this new plan will work. Additional information can be obtained from the Committee on Community Preservation report of 4/27 (distributed in the 5/7 Aldermanic packet).

The Committee showed its support of this program by voting 6-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
#225-04 **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE** recommending that the sum of \$25,000 be transferred from the City Hall Balustrade Replacement account to the City Hall Lighting Improvement account in order to accommodate bids that vary from the original budgeted amounts.
CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. APPROVED 5-0 (Sangiolo not voting)
ON 4/27/04

ACTION:

NOTE: According to the Public Buildings Commissioner, the cost of the City Hall Balustrade Replacement project is actually \$25,000 less than what it was budgeted for. Actually, the cost for the City Hall Lighting Improvement project came in over what was budgeted for that purpose. Therefore, this request will close out the Balustrade project and provide ample funding for the Lighting Improvement project.

The Committee agreed that this was a proper action to take at this time, since it was already determined (previously) that these project should move forward. With that, the Committee voted 5-0, with Ald. Schnipper and Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman