

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

**SPECIAL JOINT MEETING**

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2004

Present from Programs and Services : Ald. Johnson (Chair), Hess-Mahan, Parker, Sangiolo, Coletti, Baker, Merrill  
Present from Finance: Ald. Coletti (Chair) Parker, Schnipper Linsky, Gerst  
Present from School Department: J. Young, (Superintendent) Sandy Guryan, C. Bock, Anne Larner, Nancy Levine, Susie Heyman D. Zeleznik, Patty Kellog, Renee Murphy  
The Committees will meet jointly this evening to discuss the following issues as they relate to the FY05 School Department Budget:

**REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES**

#209-04      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter, submitting the FY05 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$266,992,346, passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY05-FY09 Capital Improvement Program, submitted in November, 2003. EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION 4/20/04.

NOTE:            Chair Anne Larner of the School Department presented the budget. She noted that despite continuing economic constraints for the state, the Newton Schools are able to attract and retain a superior staff and still maintain strong programs. With the budget currently being presented does show that class size is inching up, selection of electives that are being presented to children in the secondary level is trimmed back and technology, supplies, materials and text books are not able to be sustained at the levels that would be preferred.

Superintendent Young said the budget proposal suggests that the bulk of the School budget (84%) goes to salaries. Expenses relate to things like the school bus, chaulk, technology, books, maintenance, etc. He explained that the term "maintenance of effort" means to try to take the program in place during one school year and transporting it ahead to the next year. What would it cost incrementally to roughly provide the same types of services in one year, both in the classroom and in extra-curricula activities to move it forward. The factors involve contracts with three unions. Funds have been set aside and will hopefully will be adequate for the school to settle contracts with the three unions as well as the non-aligned employees that would include central staff members, school principals,

and a small group that are not part of any union. We are dealing with the fact that certain contracts that have fixed costs such as oil or gas utilities. The other volatile account is the fund for special education. Major factors are contract settlements, preserve classroom instruction, fixed and mandated cost increases, and instructional efficiencies.

Unfortunately, Supt. Young said this year there will have to be reductions in the teaching staff. Transportation costs will increase and one bus will be added. Three custodians are being added to the staff as we presently are understaffed. Dr. Young explained the circuit breaker legislation which called for the state to reimburse school systems for 75% of certain special education costs. This year the legislature supplied not 75% but 35%. If there is an increase, it would be able to offset teacher costs and the class size problem. Three areas Dr. Young was not happy with included professional development. The teachers should be aware of the latest research and trends in education as possible. This cut would constrain professional development opportunities for teachers next year. It had been noted in the past that Newton was lagging behind in the area of text books. Significant dollars have now have been invested in K through 12 and significant gains have been realized.

**REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES**

#549-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY05-FY09 Capital Improvement Program pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter which requires Board of Aldermen approval of a plan to finance \$170,899,860 of new local projects over the next several years:

**SUMMARY**

PUBLIC WORKS (City-Funded).....	\$ 8,075,000
PUBLIC WORKS (Grant/Fee Funded).....	\$ 54,256,057
PUBLIC SAFETY.....	\$ 4,611,000
PUBLIC BUILDINGS.....	\$ 4,555,750
SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.....	\$ 89,293,029
PARKS AND RECREATION.....	\$ 8,143,500
OTHER.....	\$ 1,965,524
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$170,899,860</b>

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia T. Johnson, Chair, Programs & Services Committee  
 Paul E. Coletti, Chair, Finance Committee