

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, MAY 24, 2004

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

Absent: Ald. Stewart

Also Present: Ald. Salvucci; Elizabeth Dromey (Director of Assessment Administration), Ed English (City Clerk/Clerk of the Board), Re Cappoli (Chief Procurement Officer), Nick Parnell (Public Buildings Commissioner), Arthur Cabral (Budget and Project Specialist, Public Buildings Dept.), David Wilkinson (Comptroller), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer)

Re-Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#248-04 ELIZABETH DROMEY, 15 Horace Road, Belmont, Re-appointed to the Board of Assessors for a term expiring February 1, 2007.
(60-day Board action date; 7/16/04)

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

NOTE: Elizabeth Dromey was present this evening. The Committee reviewed her resume (which was attached to this evening's agenda). She has served the City as Director of Assessment Administration since 1994. Before that time, she had worked as an Assessor for the City since 1987.

The Committee continues to be impressed with the level of commitment that Elizabeth has shown in her tenure, particularly in the revaluation process. The Committee discussed some of the ongoing issues relating to the revaluation process. This year is a revaluation year, which requires more detailed work by the Department. The Committee discussed the status of the revaluation program, as well as the hiring of the City's new Commercial Assessor.

The Committee thanked Elizabeth for her continued excellence in the Department, and showed its support of her re-appointment by voting 6-0, with Ald. Gentile not voting, to approve this item.

#250-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, requesting that the sum of \$3,366 be transferred within the FY04 City Clerk/Clerk of the Board operating budget in order to fund the purchase of a new public microphone for the Aldermanic Chamber as well as four digital audio recorders and appropriate equipment to be used for recording Board of Aldermen and Committee meetings.

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

NOTE: Ed English, City Clerk, joined the Committee this evening to discuss this item and item #251-04. He indicated that these funds are necessary to replace the microphone in the Aldermanic Chamber that is used by the general public during meetings and public hearings. These funds will also be used to replace the tape recorders that are currently used for Committee meetings (that are not functioning properly). The purchase of the digital recorders will provide a savings (as opposed to purchasing new tape recorders) as well as the ability to more clearly record meetings. The sound cards will be compatible with the proposed new computers to be used by the Board staff.

The Committee has seen first hand the need for replacement of this equipment. After very brief discussion on this item, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Gentile not voting, to approve this request.

#251-04 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting that the sum of \$10,691 be transferred within the FY04 City Clerk/Clerk of the Board operating budget in order to fund the purchase of new Computers, related equipment and licenses to be used by the Clerk of the Board staff. The PCs currently used by Board staff will be transferred as computer upgrades to be used by the four City Clerk staff members.

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

NOTE: Mr. English explained that this item is similar to the previous item in that it seeks to replace equipment that needs to be upgraded. Since the position of Secretary in the Clerk of the Board division remains unfilled, there are surplus funds available in the Personal Services account to cover the cost of these computer upgrades. The PCs currently used by the Board staff are outdated and quite slow in processing the volume of documents that are created and stored on a daily basis. These current computers, however, can be used (as an upgrade to what they currently use) by the City Clerk division.

The Committee reviewed the list of equipment to be purchased (that was attached to this evening's agenda) and determined that it was appropriate to move forward with this item at this time. With that, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Gentile not voting, to approve this request.

#252-04 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting that the sum of \$2,475 be transferred within the FY04 Purchasing Department operating budget in order to provide ample funding for the department to continue to pay the temp agency employee who covers the Mail Clerk function for the remainder of this fiscal year.

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

NOTE: There were two letters submitted as backup for this item (both attached to this evening's agenda. The first was a letter dated April 22nd from Re Cappoli to the Mayor indicated that these funds will be needed to continue to retain the temp who is currently handling the Mail Clerk function in the Department. She indicated that, for FY05, she hopes to have this position filled on a permanent basis.

Re Cappoli explained that the mail is delivered twice daily at City Hall, at 7:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., and outgoing mail is picked up twice daily, at 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Because of these times, this position is a split shift, which can be difficult to fill.

The second letter was the cover letter, dated May 11th, submitted by the Mayor in support of this request.

The Committee understood the need to have someone available to perform this important function at City Hall. It is understood that this position will be filled in conjunction with the filling of another vacancy in the Purchasing Department. The Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Gentile not voting, to approve this request.

#253-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$44,938 be appropriated from the Capital Stabilization Fund (\$34,598), Water Surplus (\$4,900), and Sewer Surplus (\$4,900) for the purpose of purchasing one Canon imageRUNNER 105 Black and White copier for the City Hall Print Shop. This machine will replace the current printing press, which has become obsolete and unreliable.

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

NOTE: A letter from the Mayor, dated May 11th, was attached to this evening's agenda, along with backup information regarding this requested purchase. The City Hall Print Shop is currently still using an old AB Dick printing press that has become obsolete and unreliable. The volume of black and white printing jobs requested on a regular basis to be performed in the Print Shop dictates the need for two copiers. The printing press is now 17 years old and breaks down frequently. It is so old that it is sometimes impossible to obtain replacement parts when it does need fixing.

There are funds in the FY05 Purchasing Department budget to purchase one of the copiers needed, therefore, this request is to provide funding for the purchase of the second copier. The specifications for this purchase were provided with the backup information attached to this evening's agenda.

After reviewing all backup information, the Committee agreed that this purchase is certainly justified at this time. With that, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Gentile not voting, to approve this request.

REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

- #258-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$93,125 be appropriated from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of making emergency repairs to the Newton Free Library main branch cooling towers.
PUB FAC APPROVED 5-0 ON 5/19/04
ACTION: APPROVED AS AMENDED FOR \$93,125 5-0-2 (Linsky, Gentile abstaining)

REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

- #258-04(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, in accordance with Section 2-9 of the Newton City Charter, declaring docket item #258-04 to be an emergency measure, necessary to protect the health and safety of the people and property of the City of Newton.
PUB FAC APPROVED 5-0 ON 5/19/04
ACTION: APPROVED 6-0-1 (Gentile abstaining)

NOTE: Nick Parnell, Public Buildings Commissioner, was present this evening, along with Arthur Cabral, Budget and Project Specialist for the Public Buildings Department. They discussed the fact that the City has a repair contract with one company to drain the chilling and water cooler towers at the Main Library building every year. It was discovered that the stainless steel chiller unit has leaks in it. Subsequently, the Public Buildings Department would like to move forward with the repair at this location, since warmer weather will be coming soon, and it is important to fix this unit before it is in high demand, as great damage can result if it is not repaired.

The City has repaired some of the components but, at this point, some of the coils are cracked and cannot be repaired (they require replacement). The service company indicates that four coils within the two towers are severely damaged and will require replacement. The cost of the replacement coils is \$86,625, with a 5-6 week delivery/installation period. In the event that these coils do not arrive in a timely manner, a temporary cooling system will have to be installed. Such units would cost \$50,000-\$90,000. However, the Public Buildings Department is building a temporary coil to provide the same level of cooling at a cost of approximately \$6,500.

Therefore, the total amount requested is to replace the coils and to fund the building and installation of the temporary coil by the Buildings Department. The second item is for an emergency preamble to this appropriation in order that the ordering/delivery of the permanent parts will not be delayed any longer than necessary (instead of having to wait 20 days from the Board vote to process the proper paperwork/payments).

With the understanding that this item *is* an emergency, the Committee understood the need for the emergency preamble to the appropriation. The Committee urged Commissioner Parnell to seek reimbursement of the replacement costs, since it appears as

though the service company did not properly drain the system last year. It was understood that these details will be ironed out at a later date between the Public Buildings Department, the Library Department and possibly the Law Department, but the Committee saw fit to move forward on these two items at this time.

With that, the Committee voted 5-0-2, with Ald. Linsky and Gentile abstaining, to approve the appropriation request for the total of \$93,125. The Committee then voted 6-0-1, with Ald. Gentile abstaining, to approve the emergency preamble to this appropriation.

REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#268-00(6) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting issuance of long term debt in the amount of \$2,120,000 for the purpose of completing construction and renovation of Newton South High School. These funds are necessary to cover unanticipated costs associated with the project.

PUB FAC APPROVED 5-0 ON 5/19/04

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: The Chair will not provide in-depth details of the discussion that took place on this item, as it is expected that this item will be discussed on the floor of the Board on 6/7. For a breakdown of the costs, please refer to attachment #1 (which was also already distributed to all Board members in a previous weekly packet).

In effect, based on a letter dated May 11th from the Mayor, it is requested that, due to a report received by the Public Buildings Commissioner on 4/15, the Newton South project has encountered certain unforeseen obstacles which have increased the cost of the project. The construction team found more asbestos and mold than was originally anticipated. In addition, several parts of the older building were built on slab that proved too weak to support the new construction. The slabs have cracked and buckled since the time that construction was underway, due to the fact that pilings were not installed under these slabs when they were poured.

Unfortunately, throughout this project, there have been significant numbers of change orders, which may have lead to the overrun in terms of deficiencies in design work. Carl Francesci was present this evening to explain that, in some areas of the building, proper as-built plans were not available in order to understand some of the challenges that have come about. There was only a 5% contingency allocated for this project. Turner Construction representatives indicated that, with this type and scale of project, a 10% contingency would certainly have been more appropriate.

The Committee reviewed all information regarding the construction progress on-site and looked at all backup information carefully. The total cost for this overrun (including contingency) is \$2,125,000. The Committee realized that it is important to move forward

on this project so that it can be completed and, therefore, voted 6-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

NOTE: Like the original debt authorization for this project, this supplemental debt authorization is not to exceed ten years.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#255-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$45,745 be appropriated from E-rate reimbursement funds for the purpose of purchasing elementary school computers.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 8-0 ON 5/19/04

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: Letters submitted indicated that this item is necessary in order to follow through on the vote of the School Committee on 11/24/03, whereby the use of \$45,745 from E-rate reimbursement funds will be used to purchase computers at the elementary school level. This is in accordance with the previous agreement that states that E-rate reimbursements received will be deposited for future technology appropriations. Appropriations from this fund can be requested by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen as frequently as needed by the Schools.

Attached to this evening's agenda was a memo from David Wilkinson to Janet Goldrick indicating how the E-rate disbursements would be made.

The Committee reviewed the item and agreed that, in keeping with the commitment that E-rate funds are to go directly back into purchase of school technology, this item was proper. With that, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#256-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$82,800 be appropriated from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of purchasing 92 Personal Computers for the School Department.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 7-0-1 (Sangiolo abstaining) on 5/19/04

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0-1 (Linsky abstaining; Lipof not voting)

NOTE: A letter dated May 12th was submitted to the Committee by the Mayor, indicating that \$84,800 is being used to purchase 92 PCs for the School Department. As part of this project, the City will upgrade the Pentamation software system over the course of FY05. The IT Department plans to begin implementation of parts of the new system as early as January 1, 2005.

This new system requires either new PCs or the most up-to-date MacIntosh computers. The School Department has slowly been shifting (in Administration) from MacIntosh to

PCs. Rather than to invest any additional funds in MacIntosh computers, the School Department believes it is more logical to purchase PCs. This appropriation will allow the School Department to purchase two PCs for each elementary and middle school (one for the Principal and one for a member of the Secretarial staff). Each High School will receive 5 computers, and in the Education Center, all administrators and clerical staff who use the Pentamation system will be issued a new PC.

The Committee reviewed this information and saw no problem with this changeover so that the Pentamation system can be upgraded and proper access will be possible at all of these levels. With that, the Committee voted 5-0-1, with Ald. Linsky abstaining and Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#257-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$400,000 be appropriated from Free Cash for the purpose of supplementing the School Department FY04 budget in order to make up a shortfall in state aid in the special education accounts.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 8-0 ON 5/19/04

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: This item was presented by Chief Budget Officer Sandy Pooler. As part of the FY04 budget, the State Legislature enacted a new Special Education program (the Circuit Breaker Program). Under this program, the State projects it will reimburse 75% of Special Education costs. That rate, however, is subject to appropriation. Last fall, long after the FY04 School Budget had been set, the City was informed that the reimbursement would fall short of the 75%.

Sandy Guryan reported that the Special Education Department funds will be short by approximately \$400,000 for FY04. The situation at the state level is still in flux. The School Department will not be informed of its final reimbursement number until the end of June. It is anticipated that, if more funds are received, any surplus funds from this supplemental appropriation will be returned to the General Fund.

With that understanding, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

#254-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$2,025 be transferred from the Massachusetts Historical Commission reimbursement account to the Planning Department Temporary Wages account for the purpose of hiring a part-time historical preservation intern to assist the Preservation Planner with several projects.

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: The Committee reviewed the letter from the Mayor, dated May 11th, which indicated that the transfer of these funds is necessary to cover the cost of having an intern work on completing landmark reports, potential changes to the demolition review ordinance, administration of a community preservation grant for Upper Falls and Newtonville, and answering initial questions regarding historic district requests, and updating and maintaining the database used by all commissions under the guise of the Planning and Development department.

The Committee agreed with the proposed use of these funds, and voted 6-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

#249-04 IRVING FRED KOFFMAN, Constable for the City of Newton, submitting annual Constable Bond in the surety amount of \$5,000, pursuant to MGL Ch.41, Sec.92 and 93.

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

NOTE: Constable Koffman submitted his Annual Constable Bond, as required by Massachusetts General Laws.

Without debate, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#201-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$50,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund Bonded account for the purpose of remodeling portions of the Newton Senior Center.

PUB FAC APPROVED 5-0 ON 5/19/04

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

NOTE: Jayne Colino, Senior Center Director, and Nick Parnell presented this item to the Committee. They explained that there are a couple of projects being considered at the Senior Center that involve the modernization of two of the vestibules in the building to provide additional shelter and make easier access to the center.

Commissioner Parnell presented the estimates for these projects.

Ms. Colino indicated her support of these projects and stressed how important they are for the comfort and safety of the seniors who visit the center as well as those who work in the building.

The Committee was in full support of this item and voted 6-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

REFERRED TO PS&T, PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#203-04(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$65,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding the following Public Buildings Department projects:

Police Dispatch Ctr. Improvements.....\$65,000

PS&T APPROVED 5-0 (Gentile not voting) on 5/19/04

PUB FAC APPROVED 5-0 ON 5/19/04

ACTION: HELD 6-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: This item was held because there was a miscommunication with the Police Department, and there was no one present to offer input to the discussion. It will be scheduled for discussion at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The item was held by a vote of 6-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting.

REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#203-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$135,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding the following Public Buildings Department projects:

A) Boiler Repl.; Pub. Bldgs. Dept.....\$35,000

B) Replacement of Utility Van.....\$25,000

C) UST and Veeter Root Sys. Repair/Repl.....\$75,000

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

ACTION: A) APPROVED 5-2 (Coletti, Linsky opposed)

B) APPROVED 7-0

C) APPROVED 6-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: The Committee reviewed the backup information that was attached to this evening's agenda. Committee members felt differently about supporting these individual projects, so three votes were taken.

ITEM A.....The Public Buildings Department is going to convert the heating system at the Public Buildings Dept. office on Elliot Street to baseboard heating. This project also includes the upgrading of the existing air conditioning system.

There were some concerns over the expense of this project, since this is a "temporary" building.

According to Mr. Parnell, the existing heating system is not adequate to provide ample coverage for this space.

With that understanding, the Committee voted 5-2, with Ald. Coletti and Linsky opposed, to approve item A.

ITEM B.....This is a request to replace a utility van. This is a continuation of the equipment and vehicle replacement program for the Department. This van is used for building maintenance purposes.

The Committee had no problem supporting this request and voted 7-0 to approve item B.

ITEM C.....The backup information provided indicates that this project will cover the implementation of a testing program on 16 tanks throughout the City, as well as the upgrading of 6 systems with additional monitoring equipment (which will detect leaks).

There was brief discussion on this item insomuch as each of the Veeter system replacements will cost approximately \$6,000. The Building Department had an estimate of \$1,800 for each testing of the underground fuel tanks.

The Chairman was concerned that, not only should these underground fuel tanks be tested, but after a period of about 4 or 5 years, each tank should be emptied, cleaned and inspected before the heating systems are turned on each fall (in order to ensure that they do not have a substantial amount of water and sludge accumulating in the bottom of them). It is hoped that the Building Department will work with the Chairman to ensure that the City gets a fair price on these 3 level tests (typically each test is \$500-\$700). This is a wise expenditure, but it is also important to make sure that the appropriate quotes should be received from the testing companies.

With the understanding that the Building Department will connect with the Finance Chair to review this program before it is initiated, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve item C.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman