

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES  
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2004

Public Facilities Committee Present: Ald. Salvucci (Acting Chairman), Gerst, Albright, Stewart and Lappin

Absent: Ald. Yates, Mansfield and Schnipper

Finance Committee Present: Ald. Coletti (Chairman), Gerst, Linsky, Stewart and Parker

Absent: Ald. Gentile, Schnipper and Lipof

Also present: Ald. Baker, Samuelson and Sangiolo

City personnel: Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), Lou Taverna (Director of Utilities), Robert Rooney (Commissioner of Public Works) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#209-04(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR proposing that new water and sewer rates be implemented for Fiscal Year 2005.

**ACTION:** **PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED 4-0-1 (Lappin abstaining)**  
**FINANCE APPROVED 4-0-1 (Linsky abstaining)**

**NOTE:** Sandy Pooler presented the proposed rates for FY'05. The water and sewer budget has increased by 4.3% and total water consumption has decreased. The decrease requires a decrease in the consumption estimate of approximately 150,000 HCF of consumption and an increase in the water and sewer rates over the increase for the total budget. The MWRA assessments are the largest part of both budgets and have increased by 4.3% or \$857,412. The average increase per household would be between \$37 and \$38. The increase is below average compared to other communities. The average increase was 6.4% for communities receiving water and sewer service from the MWRA.

The Mayor is proposing that Table 1 of the attached rate structure be adopted until October 1 when Table 3 would be implemented to include rates with condominium and apartment adjustments. Ald. Stewart asked if the proposed increase was the highest in the most recent years. Mr. Pooler responded that it is not the highest increase and that the rates have fluctuated over the years. Ald. Lappin stated that she does not see a reason for conservation if the rates are increasing. Mr. Pooler explained that Newton's increase is less than that of other communities due to conservation and the measures Newton has taken to reduce intake and infiltration.

The public hearing was opened and no one spoke on the water/sewer rates. Ald. Parker stated that he would like to look closely at more progressive water/sewer rates. There are several items pending in the Public Facilities Committee and Finance Committee to address Ald. Parker's concerns. Both Committees voted to approve the water and sewer rates as proposed by the Mayor.

*The Finance Committee also discussed the following items which were not admitting of delay:*

#297-04      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$10,000 be appropriated from Free Cash in order to supplement the FY04 Library electricity account.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 5-0**

**NOTE:**      Sandy Pooler presented the item to the Committee. The electricity rates went up over 15% in FY'04, therefore, many departments had to shift money from other accounts to meet the increase. The Library shifted funds but at the end of the year, the Library was still \$10,000 short. In order to pay the remainder of the bills for FY'04, \$10,000 is required.

Ald. Linsky asked if the City negotiated its electric rates. Mr. Pooler explained that the City buys them from an outside supplier. Currently the City buys from Select Energy from a collaborative of HEFA, which is a collaborative of major universities and state agencies. The City has a fixed rate contract for FY'05, which is in effect until March of 2005. Ald. Linsky asked if the City was aware of the 15% increase in FY'04. Mr. Pooler responded that the City was unaware that the increase would be as large as it was.

The Committee voted 5-0 to approve this item.

**REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#298-04      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$184,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of closing a gap in the Police Department salary and overtime accounts for FY04.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 4-0-1 (Linsky abstaining)**

**NOTE:**      Sandy Pooler reviewed the information provided to the Committee as backup attached to the agenda. The money is being requested because the Police Department does not have the funds to pay officers overtime until the end of FY'04. The shortfall in the budget is due to a contract

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settlement that was more than was originally budgeted, the Department of Labor ordered the City to pay overtime rates at a higher rate than the City had been paying and there were Quinn Bill payments to retirees that were more than anticipated due to timing of the retirements. Originally, the Police Department thought that they would not need additional funds because they would use savings in their general overtime spending. The Police have done an excellent job in keeping down overtime this year; however, due to the above circumstances they require the requested funds.

Ald. Linsky asked for a rough break out of the requested funds. Overtime ordered by the Department of Labor is about 30,000, approximately \$20,00 is needed for the Quinn Bill, the Police Department also had to pick up the \$50,000 salary of James Cairra, who is working as a Parking Control Officer in the Treasurer's Office, the settlement with the Traffic Supervisors is about \$10,000 and the overtime is about \$60,000. The Committee requested an official breakdown before the Full Board meeting.

The Committee approved the item with the understanding that the requested information would be provided.

*All other items were held.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Anthony J. Salvucci, Acting Chair, Public Facilities Committee

Paul E. Coletti, Chair, Finance Committee