#### <u>CITY OF NEWTON</u>

# **IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN**

## FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

#### MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2003

Present: Ald. Coletti (Chair), Gerst, Ciccone, Bullwinkle, Parker, Schnipper and Lipof

Absent: Ald. Stewart

Also Present: Chief Edward J. Murphy (Fire), Eddie Aucoin (Police Dept.), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), Mike Rourke (Chief Administrative Officer), Fran Towle (Commissioner of Parks and Recreation), Bob DeRubeis (Deputy Commissioner, Parks and Recreation), Bob Rooney (Commissioner of Public Works), Mike Trotta (Deputy Commissioner, DPW)

# REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV.&FINANCE COMMITTEES

# 33-03 ALD. COLETTI requesting discussion with representatives of the School

Department and Superintendent of Schools regarding lease vs. purchase options for technology equipment to develop a policy for acquisition of

computers and technology for schools.

PROG. & SERV. NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0 ON 3/5/03

ACTION: HELD 4-0 (GERST, PARKER, SCHNIPPER NOT VOTING)

**NOTE:** Due to budget appearances by Superintendent of Schools and his Ed Center staff, the Chair agreed to hold this item this evening. This item will be discussed at a later date with the Chair, Anne Larner, President Lipsitt, David Wilkinson, and appropriate School Department personnel to attempt to come up with a policy for the lease and acquisition of computer equipment. It is expected that there will be a request made (for Board of Aldermen approval) during April of this year.

With that in mind, a motion to hold this item carried by a vote of 4-0, with Ald. Gerst, Parker and Schnipper not voting.

### REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#113-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$9,226.80 be

transferred within the FY03 Fire Department operating budget to pay for required tests of the self-contained breathing apparatus used by

firefighters:

FROM: Public Safety Equipment

(0121002-583004).....\$9,226.80

TO: R&M; Department Equipment

(0121005-52408).....\$9,226.80

# ACTION: APPROVED 5-0 (PARKER, SCHNIPPER NOT VOTING)

**NOTE:** Chief Murphy joined the Committee for its review of this item this evening. He presented a plan that involves the fitting of masks and self-contained breathing apparatus for all firefighters. He stressed the importance of maintenance of this equipment. Masks must be hand-fitted for each firefighter and it is important to have proper breathing equipment for firefighters to be allowed to enter a building or situation for 20 minutes at a time without being afraid of losing air or being at risk inside of a building.

The Committee reviewed some invoices from some equipment that was purchased. Basically, the Department is looking to transfer these funds in order to be able to cover the invoices for the equipment that is on order.

The Committee fully supported the purchase of this equipment and, therefore, voted 5-0, with Ald. Schnipper and Parker not voting, to approve this transfer request.

#### REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#116-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting acceptance of and authorization to

expend the sum of \$21,000, received as grant funds from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. This grant will reimburse the Fire Department for salary, benefits, and other incidental expenses related to updating the City's Comprehensive Emergency

Management Plan.

PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. APPROVED 5-0 ON 3/5/03

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0 (PARKER, SCHNIPPER NOT VOTING)

**NOTE:** Chief Murphy gave a brief presentation explaining the MEMA plan as it relates to the City of Newton. He indicated that, of this \$21,000, 75% of the funds is for salaries and 25% is for equipment associated with the upgrading of the City's emergency management program.

The Committee reviewed the grant application and supported this idea. Without significant debate, the Committee voted 5-0, with Ald. Parker and Schnipper not voting, to approve this request.

#114-03 <u>HIS HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting that the sum of \$7,400 be

transferred within the FY03 Police Department operating budget in order to properly align the budget without increasing spending while allowing the Cops and Kids program to pay rent to the Newton Community Service Center for the remainder of FY03:

FROM: Cops and Kids; Overtime

(0120105A-5130).....\$7,400

TO: Cops and Kids; Professional Tech. Serv.

(0120105A-5389).....\$7,400

# **ACTION:** APPROVED 5-0 (PARKER, SCHNIPPER NOT VOTING)

<u>NOTE</u>: Eddie Aucoin from the Police Department was present this evening. He explained that this request involves the payment of rent for space at the Newton Community Service Center for the Cops and Kids program. This will also allow for the program to continue at its current level.

There was no debate on this item and the Committee voted 5-0, with Ald. Parker and Schnipper not voting to approve this request.

### REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY/TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#117-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of

\$21,700 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of paying the tuition costs

of academy training for new police recruits.

PUB. SAFETY/TRANS. APPROVED 4-0 (BASHAM NOT VOTING)

ON 3/5/03

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0 (PARKER, SCHNIPPER NOT VOTING)

**NOTE:** The additional costs from the Police Academy for training our 21 new recruits need to be paid while these officers are still in training. Therefore, this appropriation is justified at this time.

The Committee understood the need for training these officers in order to fill existing vacancies within the Department. Without debate, the Committee voted 5-0, with Ald. Parker and Schnipper not voting to approve this request.

## REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#115-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of

\$199,384 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of funding current and future snow and ice and tree emergency expenses in the Parks and

Recreation Department.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 7-0 ON 3/5/03

**ACTION:** APPROVED 6-0 (SCHNIPPER NOT VOTING)

**NOTE:** Some of the Committee members had sat through the Programs and Services discussion on March 5<sup>th</sup> regarding this request. Fran Towle (Commissioner of Parks and Recreation) and Bob DeRubeis (Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation) were present this evening. Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer) was also present.

Since there are sufficient funds in Budget Reserve to cover this request and, given the weather patterns this winter, the Committee felt that this appropriation was necessary at this time. After reviewing the backup information regarding departmental expenditures for snow and ice control thusfar, without debate, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Schnipper not voting to approve this item.

#### REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#118-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of

\$1,130,731 from Free Cash for the purpose of supplementing the current

year DPW snow and ice control accounts.

PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED AS AMENDED @ \$998,658 6-0

ON 3/5/03

ACTION: APPROVED @\$1,130,731 6-0 (SCHNIPPER NOT VOTING)

SUBJECT TO SECOND CALL

**NOTE:** DPW Commissioner Bob Rooney and Deputy Commissioner Mike Trotta joined the Committee this evening.

At the time that the Public Facilities Committee discussed and approved this item, the total had been amended to \$998,658. Since that vote was taken on March 5<sup>th</sup>, we have had another 6 inch snowstorm, which has now made that original \$1,130,731 out to be an appropriate amount in order to continue to fund snow and ice control accounts in the Public Works Department accounts.

The Chairman had met with Commissioner Rooney and Brian Connolly to review these numbers.

The Committee reviewed how these accounts had been monitored in order to determine that a portion of this money was actually to cover storms dating all the way back to February  $6^{th}$ . Although money had been previously appropriated to cover storms back then, there was still a deficit (of approximately \$260,000). The Committee reviewed the figures for the costs associated with cleanup the 2/16 storm and subsequent hauling done to clear village centers and municipal lots, etc.

Once the bookkeeping was re-evaluated and the Commissioner shared the totals of actual expenditures, the Committee had no problem with the amount of funding used to clean up storms to date. The Committee questioned whether the Executive Department will properly fund the needed accounts for snow and ice control (at least at a more accurate level) in the FY04 operating budget.

Mr. Pooler indicated that, by budgeting for the lower amount to begin with, that offers the Board of Aldermen the opportunity to continue to review expenditures when they occur, as well as review the overall control of snow and ice.

The Committee agreed that it (and the Board) would be willing to continue review in this same manner (essentially on a case-by-case basis). The Chairman did express a concern to Mike Trotta that neither the Mayor nor the Commissioner of Public Works is allowed to deficit spend in these accounts unless they are prepared to transfer monies from their own operational accounts within the departmental accounts. This is because it is always a possibility (however small) that, with these requests for additional appropriations, the Board of Aldermen may not approve the funds (or part of them), thereby leaving the accounts in the red. There seems to be a concern that the DPW continues to deficit spend without getting approval (or at the least authorization from the Chair of Public Facilities and the Chair of Finance) to spend these funds.

The Committee voted 5-0, with Ald. Schnipper and Parker not voting to approve this request. Please note that this item will be SUBJECT TO SECOND CALL due to the fact that the vote of the Finance Committee differs from that which was approved by the Public Facilities Committee.

#69-03 VINCENT FILIPPONE requesting that there be a requirement that all

parking ticket appeal hearings be tape-recorded.

**ACTION:** HELD 6-0 (PARKER NOT VOTING)

**NOTE:** A motion to hold this item until March 24<sup>th</sup> carried by a vote of 6-0, with Ald. Parker not voting.

# REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

# 32-03 <u>ALD. COLETTI</u> requesting discussion of status of Executive

Department's negotiations regarding AT&T and RCN Cable Franchise Renewals and institutional network status as well as proposed City of

Newton Fiber Optic Project.

PUB. FACILITIES NAN 7-0 (GERST NOT VOTING) ON 2/19/03

ACTION: NAN 7-0

#483-02 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of

\$181,090.62 from the RCN gift fund (received pursuant to its franchise agreement with the City of Newton). Said funds are to be expended through the Planning Department in the form of a grant to the NCAC for

the promotion of public, educational, and governmental access

programming and for other cable-related purposes.

**ACTION: APPROVED 7-0** 

**NOTE:** The Committee had a presentation from Mike Rourke, Chief Administrative Officer, this evening in regard to both of these related items. The Committee reviewed some of the basic information regarding the contracts and how much both RCN and Comcast will be paying to the City.

After a very brief discussion, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve item #483-02. The Committee then voted NO ACTION NECESSARY, in accordance with the vote by the Public Facilities Committee, by a vote of 7-0.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman