

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2003

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

Also Present: Dolores Hamilton (Director of Human Resources), Joe LaCroix (Asst. Fire Chief), Fran Towle (Commissioner of Parks and Recreation), Bob DeRubeis (Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), Jennifer Goldson (Preservation Planner), Peter Karg (Executive Secretary to Election Commission)

#156-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$7,000 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the unemployment insurance account. Unemployment costs have increased related to FY2002 layoffs and some public safety mandatory retirements in FY2003.

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (PARKER, LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

NOTE: Dolores Hamilton was present this evening and indicated that as five people were laid off during the end of the budget cycle, for a short period of time, until some of the people found new jobs, they collect unemployment. Some police and fire personnel retired before reaching the mandatory retirement age. Therefore, they are eligible for insurance and unemployment benefits.

The Committee reviewed the item with Dolores Hamilton and found no problem with it. A motion to approve was made and carried 6-0(Parker and Lipof Not Voting).

#156-03(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$7,000 be transferred from the Human Resources advertising account to the City's unemployment insurance account for the purpose of supplementing this account.

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (PARKER, LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

NOTE: Dolores Hamilton indicated that there is extra money in the advertising account, as there is a hiring freeze. The \$7,000 will not be needed to advertise positions however; it is needed to pay some of the unemployment benefits. She would like to transfer the funds within the department from the advertising account to the unemployment insurance account. The Committee had no problem with this item which was approved by a vote of 6-0 (Ald. Parker and Lipof Not Voting).

#157-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$4,143 be transferred from the account established in 1998 (to hold a refund from Blue Cross/Blue Shield) to an account under the control of the Director of Human Resources for the enhancement of employee health.

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0 (PARKER NOT VOTING)**

NOTE: The Committee had very little debate on the item. It is a request for movement of some reimbursement money for Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The Committee moved approval, which carried 7-0 (Parker Not Voting).

#158-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$13,369 be authorized for expenditure from the Workers' Compensation Sewer Lump Sum Settlement account for the purpose of paying a claim, as endorsed by the Industrial Accident Board, to an employee who fractured his wrist at the Elliot Street Yard.

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0 (PARKER NOT VOTING)**

NOTE: This is a request for \$13,369 to settle a claim. We are unable to know the employee's identity due to new State laws. An employee tripped over a misplaced wire at the Elliot Street Yard and fractured his wrist. Basically, surgery and extensive rehabilitation were required. There was scarring, disfigurement and loss of function in his hand, as well.

The Industrial Accident Board, the City's attorney and the employee's attorney agree in regards to the settlement. The Committee had no problem with the amount of the settlement to cover the injuries to the employee. A motion to approve carried unanimously (Parker Not Voting).

#189-02(C1A) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$18,500 from Free Cash for the purpose of completing the refurbishment of Fire Ladder 3. (This supplements the original appropriation of \$100,000 for refurbishing Ladder 3 that was approved as part of the FY02 supplemental capital budget)

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0 (PARKER NOT VOTING)**

NOTE: Assistant Chief LaCroix was present and brought in an addendum to the bid from the company that was doing the renovations to Ladder 3. Unfortunately, once the refurbishment began it was then clear that the two hydraulic pistons that operate the extension ladder were leaking and failed the initial test. Therefore, additional work had to be done in order to replace the hydraulic pistons. A full cab is being replaced on the top of this fire engine so that all fire fighters will be enclosed. The refurbishment also includes major engine repairs and repainting of the vehicle. The refurbishment of the

vehicle has been delayed for three weeks awaiting the additional money to be appropriated to complete the refurbishing.

The Committee had no problem with this and reviewed the list of things that were needed. A motion to approve the appropriation of \$18,500 was made and carried 7-0 (Parker Not Voting).

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#159-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$25,000 be appropriated from Free Cash in order to fund field renovations at the Russell J. Halloran Complex.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 7-0 ON 4/9/03

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (PARKER NOT VOTING)

NOTE: Fran Towle and Bob DeRubeis were present this evening for discussion of this item. The funds are for renovations to the Russell J. Halloran Complex. It will involve sluicing the entire football and softball fields from the pool back to Crafts Street. The area has received extensive use as football and tag football games are played there throughout the year. A significant amount of glass, rocks and dirt has surfaced and there is very little grass left in these fields.

There is a piece of equipment that will be used to till down 7-8", bury the deep rocks underground, seed and fertilize the area all at the same time. The City will also install a well that will irrigate the area in order to maintain a healthier grass for the use by the citizens of the City. The total cost of the renovations is \$25000.

The Committee agreed that this field needs to be updated and that as the City is in fact spending extra money to put in the irrigation it is an appropriate time to spend the money. A motion was made to approve the item, which carried 7-0 (Parker Not Voting).

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#142-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$50,752 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of funding current and future snow and ice expenses in the Parks and Recreation Department.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 4-0-3 (Lipsitt, Parker, Sangiolo abstaining) ON 4/9/03

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0

NOTE: The Programs and Services Committee approved this item on April 9, 2003. The Committee reviewed the expenditures and there is enough money to deal with snow, ice and tree emergencies until the end of the Fiscal year. While we were waiting to appropriate these funds, a seven-inch storm occurred so half of this money has already been spent on the snow removal during that storm. The balance will be used for tree, ice

and wind emergencies for the balance of the Fiscal year. The Committee had no problem with this appropriation and the item was approved unanimously.

REFERRED TO AD HOC COMMUNITY PRESERVATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#121-03 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$56,805 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for the purposes of funding costs for installing a drilled well and pump irrigation system at the Bowen Elementary School Field (not at the Memorial-Spaulding or Solomon Schechter fields)
AD HOC APPROVED 4-0-1 (Sangiolo abstaining; Merrill not voting) ON 4/3/03

ACTION: **HELD 5-3**

NOTE: The Committee had a significant amount of discussion on this item. The Chair will not be putting this into the report due to the time nature of getting this done and the holidays this week. In short, the Committee was concerned with the use of the money. Doug Dixon and Andy Stern members of the CPA Committee were present to discuss why they approved what is considered a maintenance item, which should be paid by the City of Newton. They indicated that a maintenance item would be a continued upkeep of the system but the initial cost of the installation for upgrading the field did meet the requirements of the CPA guidelines. Consequently, they recommended the installation but not the up keep. The cost of the upkeep will have to be assumed by the soccer people and the City of Newton.

Several Committee members were not satisfied with the discussion that took place. A motion made for approval resulted in a tie vote, at which time the President of the Board, who was present, voted in opposition. Therefore, the item was denied. There was a motion to reconsider, which carried 5-4. A motion was then made to hold the item for two weeks to give the Committee the opportunity to review information regarding the Terrace's construction project behind the field and some common easements and repair work that was being done on the field. Therefore, the motion to hold for two weeks carried 5-3.

REFERRED TO AD HOC COMMUNITY PRESERVATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#128-03 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$188,277 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for the purpose of funding costs for phase one (years 1 and 2) of the *Master Plan for Newton's Historic Burying Grounds*.
AD HOC APPROVED 4-0-1 (Sangiolo abstaining; Baker not voting) ON 4/3/03

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: David Olsen, Director of the Jackson Homestead was present this evening and brought with him the master plan. There is over \$800,000 worth of work to be done to the three burial locations in the City. He made a brief presentation to the Committee about the work that would be done under Phase I, which is years one and two of the proposed plan. This is a very worthwhile project for Historic Preservation. The Committee was very excited that these areas, which have been neglected, were going to be improved. There was very little debate against the item. The sentiment of the Committee was that this was a good use of Community Preservation Fund. A motion to approve the item carried unanimously.

**REFERRED TO AD HOC COMMUNITY PRESERVATION AND FINANCE
COMMITTEES**

#120-03 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$195,129 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the rehabilitation of the Newton Corner Branch Library.

AD HOC APPROVED 3-0-2 (Sangiolo, Linsky abstaining; Baker not voting) ON 4/3/03

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: Kathy Glick-Weil requested more time to come up with a plan for this item. Therefore, the item was held by a unanimous vote.

**REFERRED TO AD HOC COMMUNITY PRESERVATION AND FINANCE
COMMITTEES**

#119-03 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of **\$23,718** be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund in order to continue improvements to an 8,000 square foot parcel of unimproved land at the Memorial-Spaulding School. This land will serve as an outdoor classroom, "Kayla's Garden" and will be used by teachers, school staff, and students to enhance classroom curriculum and by the neighborhood to enjoy passive recreation.

AD HOC APPROVED 2-0-3 (Lappin, Linsky, Sangiolo abstaining; Baker not voting) ON 4/3/03

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0 (SUBJECT TO SECOND CALL)**

NOTE: Doug Dixon and Andy Stern made a presentation to the Committee, which showed a drawing of where the parcel of land is located. The parcel is off to the right of the Memorial-Spaulding School on the Hoffman Road side. There was some discussion regarding where the equipment, and various items were to be placed on the lot. It seems to be a very worthwhile project.

There were some concerns about the naming of the particular garden. There was some question about whose control the land was under, whether the School Department had to approve the name of the garden or whether the Parks and Recreation had to do it. That seemed to be the only issue. There will be some funds raised by the neighborhood for this work and the City has agreed, through Community Preservation Act, to put up \$23,718 in order to fund some of this work. There is still the question about whether the naming has been done appropriately under the guidelines established by the City. Therefore, a motion was made to approve this item at \$23,718 subject to second call in order to establish who has jurisdiction over the naming of this park.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#160-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$30,000 be transferred from the DPW salary account to an expense account for the purpose of allowing the Engineering Division to employ the services of an independent traffic engineering firm to proceed on review of several proposed projects, including special permit applications. This is necessary due to the vacancy of the City Traffic Engineer position.

PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED ON 4/9/03

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: A representative from the Engineering Department was not available for this discussion. Sandy Pooler presented the item on their behalf. Due to the resignation of the Traffic Engineer, the Assistant Traffic Engineer has been trying to take care of many of the traffic items in the City. She has found it very difficult to take care of two jobs at the same time. As a result, several proposed projects including some special permit application that require a review by a City Traffic Engineer need to be reviewed. The Engineering Department would like to use an independent Traffic Engineering Firm to precede with the reviews.

Some of the members questioned who the independent traffic-engineering firm was, because of conflict of interest issues; in so much as there is the possibility the firm represented petitioners who had filed lawsuits against the City. It is hoped that the Committee receives some information regarding the firm that would be hired to assure us that it is an independent Traffic Engineering Firm.

A motion to approve the item subject to second call unless the information that was requested is submitted was made, which carried 7-0 (Parker Not Voting).

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#161-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$127,667.51 be
(110-03) appropriated from Sewer Surplus for the purpose of constructing common
(111-03) sewers in DEDHAM STREET and GROVE STREET.

PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED ON 4/9/03

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: The Committee had absolutely no problem with this item. The only concern related to Dedham Street. Four houses will be ultimately served by the sewer extension. Two of these homes will need to pump out to the sewer. Due to the amount of work involved with installing this system on Dedham Street because of ledge and digging issues, the City will be hiring a private contractor. The Committee wanted to make sure that the home owners were aware that when the private contractor installs the sewer system it would be to their financial benefit to have the same contractor do the installation into their houses. There was some concern that at least one of the homeowners had to connect immediately. One of the homeowners has indicated he has interest in doing this since the house is for sale and did not pass the Tittle V Septic System Inspection.

The Committee moved approval of this item, which carried unanimously and requested that the Public Works Department notify the homeowners of the benefit of connecting their sewer system into the new system at the time of construction.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#143-03 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$285,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of replacing the City's mechanical voting machines with an optical scan voting machine system.
PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 6-0 (Lipsitt not voting) on 4/9/03

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Peter Karg made a presentation before Programs and Services Committee last week. Many of us were present for that discussion and were give the specifics about the proposal to replace the outdated mechanical voting machines with a new optical scanning system in the 31 precinct of the City. The new system would save the City substantial money because the units will not have to moved around, reducing the number of personnel and moving companies needed.

The new scanning equipment requires a paper ballot. The ballot can be retained for recount and there is so much additional benefit in a having this new system. The entire results for the Election will be known within one hour of the closing of the poles. Before the next Presidential Election, the Federal Government is requiring that the new voting machines be in place. The City stands to be reimbursed for over \$100,000 by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by a Federal Government grant to buy these machines. It is the belief of the Election Commission and Peter Karg that it would be beneficial for the City to use these voting machines in the Board of Aldermen election, as there will be fewer people coming to the polls. It will be easier for the personnel to get accustomed to the new voting system. As well as being able to receive this additional grant money from the State, the cost will be about half of what it would be if we had to buy this equipment at a later day. With that information, the Committee made a motion

to approve, which carried unanimously. The City will be going out in a bulk bid with the City of Boston and the City of Waltham to get the best price on this equipment.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman