

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2001

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

Absent: Ald. Ciccone

Also Present: Ald. Lipsitt

City Officials Present: Edward Murphy (Fire Chief), Robert Rooney (Commissioner of Public Works), Michael Rourke (Chief Administrative Officer), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer) and David Wilkinson (Comptroller)

REFERRED TO PS&T AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

25-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$250,000 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the overtime account in the Fire Department.

PUB. SAFETY & TRANS. APPROVED 6-0 ON 1/17/01

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: Chief Murphy was present and submitted a letter dated January 9, 2001 indicating that he needs additional overtime funds in his budget. There are two reasons for the additional funds. First, the Fire Department overtime budget for the current year started at \$354,000, which is approximately \$200,000 less than the overtime budget from the previous year. The reduction of overtime funds was done during the budget in an effort to reduce overtime costs and monitor overtime more closely. Second, notwithstanding all of the oversight and monitoring, overtime costs for the Fire Department continue to remain high. There are several factors for the request for supplemental funds, which include sick leave, minimum-manning requirements, and patterns of vacations; personal leave use and long-term injuries.

Some of these factors are currently being discussed or are in collective bargaining. It is hopeful that there will be some outcome regarding the collective bargaining aspects of the personal leave and the use of sick time. In the meantime, the department has expended its overtime budget. There have been significant fires during this winter season and the additional overtime funds will cover the overtime requirements for the next couple of months. The Committee is aware that the Fire Chief will be coming back for additional funds for overtime.

The Committee reviewed the item and understands the need for the additional overtime funds. The Committee approved this item by a unanimous vote.

REFERRED TO PUB. FAC. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

29-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$283,000 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the snow and ice accounts in the Department of Public Works.

PUB. & FAC. APPROVED 7-0 ON 1/17/01

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 AS AMENDED @ \$566,000

NOTE: Robert Rooney was present for the discussion of this item and submitted a letter dated January 22, 2001 from the Mayor amending the original request of \$283,000 to \$566,000 (Attached). Since the original request there have been two more storms, which have left the snow and ice accounts in arrears. Five of the storms have required plowing of the streets and multiple snowfalls that have required sanding and salting. The Public Works' snow and ice accounts were originally budgeted at \$492,727. The Commissioner is requesting an appropriation of \$210,000 to overtime, \$256,000 to rental of vehicles and equipment and \$100,000 to salt and sand. The indications are that this appropriation will provide for two medium size storms during the next couple of months as well as cover the unpaid portion of the cost of the last two storms.

The Committee reviewed backup information supplied by the Commissioner of Public Works. The Commissioner provided a recap of the snow and ice accounts for the benefit of the Committee. Upon review of these items, as well as a six-year historical analysis of the snow accounts, the Committee felt comfortable that the Commissioner was appropriately using the snow and ice accounts. It is understood that, although, snowfall has been heavier in previous years the costs associated with snow removal and the significant sanding that has been done this year has depleted the original appropriation. Therefore, having reviewed the appropriateness of the item and the backup the Committee voted unanimously to approve the request as amended.

28-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$30,230.34 in order to fund the cost of items set forth in the labor contract agreed upon with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Building Inspectors, Local 3092B.

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Parker Not Voting)

NOTE: Mike Rourke presented the information regarding the settlement that was reached with the Building Inspectors. The terms of the contract allow for base wage pattern of 3% per year for three years. There are also some manpower agreements and the possibility of an increase in staffing in the department in order to handle the large work demand. There will be a modification of the hours, which provides for the 7:00 a.m. opening of the window for the issuance of various permits. This wage settlement is within the pattern that has been set forth by the Executive Department. The modification of the office schedules and other information regarding staffing would improve the customer service aspects of the department. Therefore, the Committee adopted the settlement as requested by the Executive Department.

26-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$5,920 from Additional Lottery Receipts for the purpose of purchasing a photocopier for the Health Department.

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: The Health Department's photocopier is broken and needs to be replaced. This item is in the Capital Improvement Plan for replacement and will be done a little ahead of some of the other items, which will be done in the spring. The Committee understood the need for the new machine and the item was approved unanimously.

#237-99(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend a gift of \$2,000 from the Newton Conservators to match the \$2,000 appropriated in Board Order #237-99, for design construction and installation of signage at various conservation areas.

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: The Committee reviewed a letter dated January 9, 2001 and information from Martha Horn dated January 4, 2001. The Commission is in receipt of a donation from the Conservators. It is a gift to match a grant for additional signage. The Committee had no questions about this particular item, and without debate the item was approved by a vote of seven in favor and none opposed.

27-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$2,500 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the office supplies and postage budget of the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen.

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: A letter dated January 9, 2001 was submitted by the Executive Department and also a letter dated January 5, 2001 from Edward English was submitted. Mr. English's letter indicated that the office supplies account is short by \$1,500 due to the purchase of tape recorders and a transcription machine. The postage account needs to be supplemented due to the additional cost of notifying abutters regarding the Boston College football game parking and other mailings from the Clerk's Office. The Clerk is asking for the funds to cover the balance of the year. The Committee voted to approve the item without debate.

All other items were held without discussion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman