

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2001

Present: Ald. Coletti, Chairman; Ald. Gerst, Ciccone, Bullwinkle, Bryson, Parker and Schnipper

Absent: Ald. R. Lipof

Also Present: Ald. Lipsitt; Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), David Naparstek (Health Commissioner), Mark Gilroy (Acting Commissioner of Inspectional Services), Fred Guzzi (Veterans Agent), Bob DeRubeis (Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation), Bob Perruzzi (Assistant Comptroller)

**REFERRED TO PROG & SERV AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

# 45-01 PRESIDENT LIPISTT recommending review of Sec 4-21 of the Revised Ordinances, 1995, re compensation level of the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen (Ord V-134, 10/6/97).

**PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 4-0 ON 2/7/01**

**ACTION: APPROVED 6-0**

# 45-01(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$7,000 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the administrative salary in the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen's office to allow a retroactive salary adjustment for the Clerk of the Board as part of an overall compensation adjustment (the said salary schedule to be set by ordinance).

**ACTION: APPROVED 6-0**

**NOTE:** These items were taken up simultaneously by the Committee. This item deals with a review of Sec. 4-21 of the Revised Ordinances, 1995, which is the compensation level of the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen. The second is a request for authorization to appropriate and expend \$7,000 from budget reserve for the purpose of supplementing the administrative salary for the Clerk of the Board.

The Committee, this evening, had the pleasure of having President Lipsitt present and she made a presentation regarding the history of the salary of the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen as it was presented to the Programs and Services Committee last week. The last time that the Clerk received a raise was in 1999 at which time the Clerk's salary (by ordinance) was set at \$69,554. Over the period of ten years, the salary has kept pace with

most of the department head increases except for the fact the Board has typically been late in implementing the adjustments, but in most cases the adjustments have been retroactive. Similarly this year Dolores Hamilton worked with Brooke Lipsitt in order to review the salary arrangements that should be in place effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000 so this salary adjustment will be retroactive to the first of July this year and based on a grading of an H12, Step 7 (which is where the Human Resources Department felt this position should be placed). The annual salary for that position is \$76,552.21. This is the appropriate step for the Clerk to be placed at and will mean that his salary over a two year period will go from \$69,550 to \$76,000 which is a \$7,000 increase and pretty much in line with the increases that were given to the Hay Management people over the past three years. There is also a request from July 1, 2001, the position go up to an H12, Step 8 and then on 7-01-02 the item go up to a salary of \$82,931.69. therefore, over the next three years due to the voting of these step increases, the Clerk will in fact keep pace with the rest of the municipal H-Grade employees.

The Committee felt very comfortable with the justification for the salary change and there was some discussion in committee about when merit pay would be implemented as a justification for granting raises. The Committee, at this time, felt that in keeping with the adjustments that were made across the board with departments, this, in fact, was a reasonable increase. The Mayor did fund the money and, therefore, the Committee voted on both items 6 in favor, 0 opposed with no abstentions and two absent (Gerst, Lipoff) to approve the modification of the ordinance as well as the \$7,000 appropriation from budget reserve to fund the salary retroactive to July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**REFERRED TO PROG & SERV AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

# 46-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$333,333 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding current and future snow and ice and tree emergency expenses in the Parks and Recreation Department.

**PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 4-0 ON 2/7/01**

**ACTION:** APPROVED 6-0 with no abstentions, 2 absent

**NOTE:** This item was heard on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February in Programs and Services and Fran Towle was present and made a detailed explanation of the substance of the item. She was unavailable this evening because she was out of town and Bob DeRubeis represented the department at the Committee and presented the same spread sheet that Fran had given the Committee the week earlier and it basically showed that with the recent storm that happened in the first week of February, these funds will barely provide about \$45,000 of additional money in three of the various accounts to support one more 2 to 4 inch snow storm.

Basically the Committee reviewed the accounts for hired equipment and the monies that were being appropriated for the various municipal buildings, the libraries, the schools, City Hall. The Committee basically agreed with the appropriateness of the appropriation and after just the minor review of the sheet and a report of the substance of the Programs and Services discussion, a motion was made to approve this item and it carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed, with no abstentions, 2 absent

# 51-01        HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting a transfer of funds in the amount of \$5,000 to pay for a temp who performed clerical services during a vacancy in the Health Department, as follows:

From: Health Administration FT        01-50101-511001  
To:    Health Administration Clerical    01-50101-5313

**ACTION:**    **APPROVED 6-0**

**NOTE:**        Dave Naparstek was present and gave a quick overview of this item and the Committee really had no questions about the item. He indicated, in a letter dated January 12<sup>th</sup>, that there was a new clerk being recruited and the person has been hired. The position is responsible for licensing food service establishments and other health department regulated activities. A large number of permits and other department issues, hence the clerical position was important from a customer service basis. Therefore, a temporary person was used to assist in the licensing of all of these establishments.

The Committee, since it was a transfer from the full-time personal services account into a clerical account had no problem with this. A motion was made and carried with 6 in favor, 0 opposed, with no abstentions and 2 absent.

# 52-01        HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting the establishment of revolving fund for the *Newton Women's Commission*, with a spending limit of \$10,000 through June 30, 2001, in order to fund an all-day Annual Women's Conference on March 31 in celebration of Women's History Month and to fund materials related to the work of the Commission.

**ACTION:**    **APPROVED 6-0**

**NOTE:**        This is a seminar being done in conjunction with the Newton Women's Commission which is a group of women who have come together in order to fund materials and basically discuss issues of concern to women, especially in the Boston area. It is a seminar that will take place at Boston College. The Committee was very interested in reading the brochure that is being put out and funds that will be collected from entrance fees that are being charged by people who participate need to be accepted into the account and then turned around and used to pay expenses of the seminar.

Ken Parker had concern about the name that was given to this group indicating that typically commissions in Newton which are established by the Mayor and confirmed by

the Board of Aldermen with some permanent stature. The Committee indicated that it wasn't so concerned with how the commission was adopted and what they call themselves but this seemed like a very worthwhile event and because of the timing and the fact that it was being done only up to the balance of June 30<sup>th</sup>, that this revolving fund, if maintained, would have to be reestablished in the fiscal 2002 budget.

With that in mind, the Committee felt that there certainly was no harm in moving this item ahead and, therefore, a motion was made and it carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed with no abstentions and 2 absent to establish the revolving fund with a spending limit of \$10,000 only through June 30, 2001.

# 53-01        HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$7,902 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of funding unanticipated costs in the Sealer of Weights and Measures and the Veterans Benefits accounts, these costs include further repairs to the Sealer of Weights and Measures Van and increases in annuity payments to disabled veterans and Gold Star parents.

**ACTION:**        **APPROVED 6-0**

**NOTE:**        Fred Guzzi was present this evening and Mitch Baker, the Sealer of Weights and Measures and presented letters dated January 31<sup>st</sup> indicating that there was approximately \$402. required to pay some additional repairs for the brake lines for the van which is used by the Sealer of Weights and Measures and the Committee had just spent some money to do the transmission. The van is in excellent condition but needed some work done on the brakes and, therefore, the Committee had no problem with this portion of the expenditure.

The second money that was being requested was for the Veterans Benefits accounts and \$7,500 was needed to cover expenses through the end of this fiscal year. There are two indigent veteran funerals, both costing a little under \$2,000. and there is a possibility the payments for a third indigent funeral are maybe imminent and there are also veteran's widows coming in to apply for benefits under Chap. 115 which would also require us to pay them an additional stipend. There are also some upcoming annuity payments that the state will reimburse the city for disabled veterans and gold star parents and there is only about \$2,000 left in the benefits account in the veterans office and the monies required \$7,500 will, in fact, be reimbursed by the state veterans agencies when the city makes application for this payment.

The Department Head, Fred Guzzi, presented a letter from the Department of Veterans Services, dated January 24<sup>th</sup> indicating that in February these annuity payments for spouses were coming but unfortunately, once again, the budget by the state legislature did not contain these funds but there will be the adjustment made and the funds reimbursed at a later date.

The Committee had no problem with the expenditures for the money for these items in these accounts and the motion was made to approve and the item carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions and 2 absent.

#139-00(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend an increased Enhanced School Health Services grant of \$305,889 from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to fund 3.0 full-time additional school nurses, capital equipment for health rooms, education support for school health staff, information system support for school health records, and support for participating non-public schools. The original notice of grant was for the amount of \$109,000 (#139-00).

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 5-0-1** abstention (Ald. Parker) 2 absent.

**NOTE:** This is a substantial increase from the original amount of \$109,000. It has been increased over \$305,000 and is great news to the city and the committee reviewed the amendment from the Mass Dept. of Health and we actually saw a budget, presented by Dave Naparstek, this evening. This is for the additional participation for non-public schools. There are approximately 17 non-public schools that will participate in the program which is established by the City of Newton, the enhanced school health services and the grant will fund three additional school nurse positions and capital equipment, health rooms, education support, school health staff, information systems support for school health records and support for participating non-public schools. There was discussion by some members of the committee regarding how the funds were being allocated to non-public schools. It is assumed that this item will be placed on second call. Therefore, there will not be a substantial amount of discussion contained in this report, since it is anticipated that the Board of Aldermen will discuss this on Tuesday evening.

The Committee was certainly happy to accept the additional grant funds and once again it is not continuous from year to year. If the program were to go back to its original funding amount of \$109,000, the positions would obviously be in jeopardy but at least for now the City can use these funds to supplement the program within public schools as well as expanding it to some of the non-participating non-publics. Therefore, the Committee voted to approve this acceptance and authorization to spend the grant by a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention (Ald. Parker) and 2 absent.

# 54-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting a transfer of found in the amount of \$5,200 to hire a consultant who will help evaluate and streamline the departmental workflow and permit processes, as follows:

From: Inspectional Services Dept Admins Salary Acct \$5,200  
(0122002-511001)  
To: Inspectional Services Dept Consultant Acct \$5,200  
(0122001-5301)

**ACTION:** **APPROVED AS AMENDED 6-0 (SEE LETTER FROM MAYOR DATED 2/9/01)**

**NOTE:** Michael Rourke presented this item. It was unfortunate that Mark Gilroy was not able to be present. Basically the Mayor's office has been continuing to monitor granting of building permits in the City and customer service as it relates to the timely granting of permits and processing of paperwork in the department. As everyone knows, the Committee has had an interim department head, while a search is conducted and the city is very close to making a decision on how the department will be led in the future, but it is certainly important to determine whether we are currently with the customers business efficiently and effectively.

The Mayor submitted an adjustment letter indicating that they would like to increase the amount of the transfer to \$5,200 in order to expand the scope of the consultant work and the money is coming from the administrative salary account due to the vacancy of the department head in the account and transferring it into the Inspectional Services Consultant account.

The Committee was very interested in supporting this and hoped it would bring fruitful results regarding the processing and flow in the department. The item carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed, no abstentions, 2 absent.

That concluded the business of the Committee. The Committee indicated to the Programs & Services Chair, Ken Parker, that it was imperative that #55-01 be taken up on March 1 (or as soon as appropriate) in order to have the Assistant Executive Secretary position in the Election Commission filled so that we can begin the Election season this year and the other item #33-01 was not yet ready and the item will be held until acted on by Zoning and Planning.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman