

CITY OF NEWTON  
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2001

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

Also Present: Ald. Lipsitt; Carol Stapleton (Supervisor, Parks/Recreation), Robert DeRubeis (Deputy Commissioner of Parks/Recreation), Dan Funk (City Solicitor), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), David Wilkinson (Comptroller)

**REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

# 73-01      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$61,250 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of providing initial funding for construction at the Davis Community Playground. The City has been awarded a grant, but must expend the money and then seek reimbursement from the State.

**PROG & SERV APPROVED 5-0 ON 2/22/01**

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:**      The City has been awarded a grant. A letter dated January 29, 2001 was presented by Bob DeRubeis, Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, who was sitting in for Fran Towle this evening. These funds will be expended for playground equipment, benches, game table, picnic tables, drinking fountains, landscaping (which will include grass, shrubs, trees), as well as a gazebo roof and irrigation. These grant funds were secured through the efforts of State Representative Peter Koutoujian and the money was originally scheduled to be expended last year, but we couldn't spend the money at that time, so it was carried forward into the new calendar year. Thanks to Peter Koutoujian, these funds were retained in the State budget and earmarked for the City of Newton for this project.

The Committee had absolutely no problem in appropriating this money from Capital Stabilization. The Committee's only interest was that the City get this job underway as quickly as possible, so that we can complete it and hopefully get reimbursement back from the State before June 30, 2001. This will ensure that the reimbursement funds can close out into this year's Free Cash rather than be a reduction of \$61,000 in Free Cash as a result of not getting this money back from the State. It is the Committee's assumption that the project will move forward with that in mind. The Committee voted 8-0 to approve the appropriation from Capital Stabilization.

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

# 76-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$20,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of completing work at Levingston Cove at Crystal Lake.  
Spent to design of amenities

**PROG & SERV APPROVED 5-0 ON 2/21/01**

**ACTION: APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:** This item was taken up by the Programs and Services Committee on 2/21. It is scheduled to be taken up by the Public Facilities Committee on 2/28 and our Committee took it up in advance of Public Facilities at the request of the Mayor's office and with the concurrence of Ald. Schnipper, Chairman of Public Facilities. As we know, the original appropriation amount of \$122,000, some money from Parks and Recs and money from Community Development and some money from Public Works was spent to design and to begin the initial construction of amenities for handicapped accessibility and community access to Crystal Lake along the Lake Ave. portion of the lake.

Unfortunately, due to complaints from neighbors the work was stopped and approximately 4-5 months have gone by and the contractor was issued a change order in order to modify the design to be more compatible with the wishes of the neighbors. The additional money \$20,000 is the result of the additional input of the neighbors and the modification in regards to benches, trash receptacles, wall redesign and redesign of cement walkways.

The Committee agreed not to get into the specifics on the items, since these details are reviewed by the substantive Committees. The Finance Committee's job was to approve the additional funds and, at the Chairman's request, without debate the motion to approve carried 8 in favor, none opposed.

#409-00(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$150,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of replenishing Budget Reserve for the appropriation of \$150,000 in docket item #409-00 which supplemented the NEXUS bus system for the remainder for FY2001.

**ACTION: APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:** It is not uncommon for the Board of Aldermen to use sources like Budget Reserve because Free Cash isn't certified so that any additional appropriations made during the months of July, August, September and October basically need a funding source in the short term until Free Cash is certified. This year Free Cash was certified around December and the Mayor is following the procedure he has done in the past of replenishing Budget Reserve with these funds.

The Committee, understanding this process, had no discussion on the item. The motion to approve carried 8 in favor, none opposed.

# 72-01        HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting a transfer of funds in the amount of \$15,000 from the Comptroller's salary account to the Treasurer/Collector's budget for the purpose of contracting with an accounting firm to perform essential catch-up work on accounts in the Treasurer/Collector's office that have fallen behind timely reconciliation in the past six months.

**ACTION:**    **APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:**        With the hiring of a brand new treasurer and after a quick review in the treasurer's office, once again the office has fallen behind. The City's receivables and cash reconciliation ledgers must be brought up to within 30 days of the current date. These items were part of last year's audit report and the City was cited in the audit report for being behind in these items by Powers and Sullivan. Since in another three months the City will be preparing to close the books again, we felt that it was important that we catch up and comply with the management letter complaint that was made to us last year.

In a meeting between the Chairman of Finance and the Mayor's office and Ed Spellman it was concluded that it would be advisable to have the accountants that currently do our audit come in and assist in the auditing of the receivables and cash reconciliation so that they will be done. Approximately \$15,000 worth of labor (covering a span of approximately 500 hours of time) will be spent in order to bring the books up to date. It is also hopeful that, with the addition of a new Assistant Treasurer/Collector, the new person will take on the responsibility of doing timely reconciliation This is certainly what the Committee and what the Board and what the City needs at this time. It's better we had a private consultant write the policies and procedures manual, but it is important that our auditing firm assist in the reconciliation so that we both get it done timely and secondarily that the employees who will be doing the work feel familiar with the process and the people that will be assisting in the reconciliation of the books. With that explanation a motion was made to approve, the item carried 8 in favor, none opposed.

#518-00        HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting adoption of an ordinance providing for the acceptance of gifts of tangible personal property by the mayor, a department, board, agency, or commission. **(SUBCOMMITTEE APPOINTED: GERST, PARKER, R. LIPOF ON 12/11/00.)**

**ACTION:**    **APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:**        In reviewing this item we had a sub-committee report and we also had Dan Funk present this evening to go over the various drafts that were proposed for this ordinance. It seems that the initial draft which had certain omissions which were suggested by the members of the sub-committee (which is called Version B) and then a second draft of another ordinance which was prepared, submitted by Aldermen Coletti is called Version C. The Committee reviewed all three of these versions.

It is the Chair's understanding that it is very likely that this item will be placed on second call on 3/5. Ultimately a proposal that merged together the three draft ordinances was adopted and is being redrafted by Dan Funk to be presented on Monday evening.

It is appropriate that the Board discuss the new version insomuch that it contains aspects of each of the three proposals and Committee members think that will effectively handle the acceptance of gifts and have a proper way of handling them and making sure that the gifts are given in the spirit in which the City accepts these types of gifts.

Therefore, assuming that this item will be placed on Second Call on 3/5, the Chairman will indicate that the docket item 518-00 is approved as amended, 8 in favor, none opposed. The new draft will have to be submitted by Dan Funk to be included in the packet on 3/2 in order for the item to be approved.

**REFERRED TO PS&T AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

# 75-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$21,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding the accreditation costs for the re-accreditation of the Police Department.

**PS&T APPROVED 5-0 ON 2/21/01**

**ACTION: APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:** The Mayor's office presented this item this evening on behalf of the Police Department. Basically this is a partial request. A letter dated February 13<sup>th</sup> was submitted to the Committee indicating that an additional \$21,000 is required for the next phase of re-accreditation of the Police Department. A budget was submitted for the use of this money. \$1,535 of the funds will be used for consultant costs for the on site assessment (which took place in September). \$12,000 will cover fees paid to the association in order to maintain our status. \$5,000 is for out of state travel which will cover expenses associated with attending the annual conference. \$2,000 is for training. Funding is sought to attend three of the training conferences and three state accreditation conferences and \$150.00 is for dues and membership into the MassPAC. Then there are approximately \$315.00 in expenses for supplies related to accreditation. The Committee, having reviewed the budget and feeling that the importance of police accreditation as it relates to the quality standards that we set for a police department, approved this item without substantial debate and a motion was made and carried 8 in favor, none opposed.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman