

CITY OF NEWTON  
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT  
MONDAY, MAY 14, 2001

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

Also Present: David Wilkinson (Comptroller), Chief Edward Murphy (Fire), Fran Towle (Commissioner of Parks & Recreation), Arthur Cabral (Budget & Project Specialist, Public Buildings), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), Mike Rourke (Chief Administrative Officer), Dick Walsh (Director of Information Technology), Elizabeth Dromey (Chair, Board of Assessors), Jay Fink (Director of Utilities)

#144-01      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$425,900 from Free Cash for the purpose of supplementing the overtime account in the Fire Department.

**PS&T APPROVED ON 4/18/01**

**ACTION: APPROVED 4-0 (CICCONE, BULLWINKLE, BRYSON, R.LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:** Chief Murphy was present for the meeting and gave the Committee a backup letter dated April 10, 2001. This is the second time this year the Fire Department has been in for additional money for overtime. There are several factors contributing to the excess use of overtime, including sick leave, minimum manning requirements, contractual obligations relating to vacation and personal leave use and long term injuries. Some of the issues relating to manning are currently under discussion with the City's collective bargaining. The City is continuing to monitor its overtime, it has never funded the overtime for next fiscal year, which is unfortunate, because it means we may continue to experience a problem. Six of the firefighters, who are either on injury or on some limited duty, have in fact taken retirement and there have been five new positions, which have been filled by the Fire Department, and currently the other vacancies are being filled. Therefore with the filling of these vacancies (due to the retirements), the use of overtime will be limited at least in that sense. The Committee understanding the constraints regarding the minimum manning requirements of the contract, hope that the administration would work this item out with the Fire Department and the Fire Union. With that, a motion was made to approve the appropriation from Free Cash and the item carried 4-0.

#164-01      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$15,000 from Sewer Surplus for the purpose of paying a settlement of the claim of Peter and Susan Brown v. City of Newton for damage to their basement on June 17, 1998 as a result of a failure at the Quinobequin pumping station.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 4-0 (CICCONE, BULLWINKLE, BRYSON, R.LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:**      This item is another of those long-standing claims the City receives Occasionally, due to problems associated with our pumping station. Dan Funk was present at the meeting and presented this item. On June 17, 1998, the basement of the Brown's at 188 Quinobequin Road was flooded with sewerage water. The incident was part of the failure of Quinobequin Road Sewerage Pumping Station that occurred subsequent to an intense rain storm of June 13, 1998. It seems that the City bears some responsibility for the pumping station failure. The Browns had originally submitted a substantial claim. The City negotiated the claim down to \$15,000, which represents approximately 14% of the Brown's original claim. The parties continued to mediate and ultimately the City recommended a settlement of \$15,000 for the damage done to personal property and for the clean up of the flooding in the basement. The Committee accepted the explanation by the Solicitor's Office and motion was made to approve and carried 4-0.

#139-00(3)      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the original request to accept and expend an Enhanced School Health Services grant be amended from \$305,889 to \$317,889. This grant has been awarded to the Health Department by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 4-0 (CICCONE, BULLWINKLE, BRYSON, R.LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:**      This is a request that the original acceptance of an Enhanced School Health Service Grant be amended from \$305,889 to \$317,889. The grant was awarded to the Health Department by the Mass Department of Public Health. The dollar amount amount has changed, to include the Fesseden School, as one of the private schools to receive these funds. As a result, the increase of \$12,000 will be used for additional smoking and health education at some of the private at the City of Newton, under the auspices of the Newton Health Department. Without debate, the Committee accepted this item 4-0 to receive these funds.

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

#170-01      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$26,939 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of funding a mosquito control program to combat West Nile Virus.

**ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (BULLWINKLE, R.LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:** Sandy Pooler presented a letter dated May 4, 2001 to the Committee on behalf of Health Commissioner David Naparstek. The Health Department in conjunction with the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project will treat 15,000 catch basins in the City of Newton, with a larvacide, which is called Vectolex to control the mosquito larvae. The appropriation will fund three applications of this material, which will be deposited into all of the catch basins in the City of Newton, one application each month in June, July and August. The program must begin in June and continue through August. Basically this will eliminate the need to do adult spraying of mosquitoes, which is something some of the Aldermen were concerned about. That if we can treat the problem in the larvae stages, that we will not get into a full blown mosquito spraying problem. Luckily with this year's drought so far this year and the lack of rain, certainly there are not many opportunities for the mosquitoes to breed at this point. The Committee realizing that this was a beneficial way to control the West Nile Virus potential, voted and approved 6-0.

#163-01 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** recommending that the sum of \$63,960 be appropriated from Salary Reserve and that expenditure of said funds be authorized in order to fund the cost items set forth in the labor contract agreed upon with the Newton Police Superior Officers Association. This appropriation will also fund a salary adjustment for the Chief of Police.

**ACTION: APPROVED 5-0 (GERST, BULLWINKLE, R. LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:** Mike Rourke was present and presented the Committee with a letter dated May 1, 2001, recommending that the salary adjustments be made and the contract be approved. The contract follows the base wage adjustment pattern of 3% in each of three years and second and third year benefit changes, which will slightly adjust the percentage for those years. The appropriation will also fund the salary adjustment for the Chief of Police. Under the provisions of the Chief's employment contract, the annual salary adjustment is defined in part by the general wage pattern of the Police Union. Now that one of these unions has settled the contracts, the Chief's salary should be adjusted accordingly. The Committee reviewed the proposed new contract and finding that it was certainly within line with the other settlements that the City had this year, a recommendation was made to approve the settlement of the contract and the funding of the salary adjustment. The motion 5-0.

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

#171-01 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$35,000 from Additional Lottery Receipts for the purpose of repairing a drain pipe at the Gath Pool to prevent further leaks.

**ACTION:     APPROVED 6-0 (BULLWINKLE, R.LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:**       Fran Towle and Carol Stapleton from Parks & Recreation were present for this meeting, along with Arthur Cabral from Public Buildings. A letter dated April 28<sup>th</sup> was submitted to the Committee advising leaks had been detected in the drain pipe between Gath Pool and an adjacent field house. The Public Buildings Department has had the pipe scoped by camera and recommends that the pipe be re-lined in order to prevent further leaks. The Public Buildings Department formally requested the money in order to repair the line. The scope of the project will entail the hiring of a contractor to re-line, similar to the way the City does the water/sewer lines through out the City. The re-lining will prevent the loss of water that has occurred over past years. An analysis of the problem and a proposal for procuring in place the ten-inch water drain line at the Gath Pool was submitted by Insituform. The contract price to rehabilitate thirty feet of ten-inch pool drain is \$34,900. The Committee understanding the problem associated with various leaks at the pool, indicated its approval of the item, even though it will not be completed in this current year. The pool will in fact continue the way that it is, but in the Fall, when the pool is drained, the additional work will be done on the line. With that, a motion was made to approve and carried 6-0.

#165-01       HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$7,917 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the FY01 Treasurer/Collector department budget. This sum will cover changes due to salary overlap and parking ticket vendor contract issues.

**ACTION:     APPROVED 6-0 (BULLWINKLE, R.LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:**       Sandy Pooler presented this item and submitted a letter to the Committee dated May 3<sup>rd</sup>, indicating that the salary account requires an additional \$3,422 because of Accumulated Special Leave payments to retiring employees and the overlap of the tenure of the new Deputy Collector Treasurer and Will Stiglich who stayed on to assist in the department. The City also processes parking ticket contracts through the Treasurer's Office with a private vendor. The contract varies also, with the volume of tickets processed and this year the projected cost will slightly exceed the original amount by an additional \$4,495. So because of the additional costs for administration of the parking program and the additional overlap of salary between the two Assistant Treasurers, the total deficit is \$7,917. The Committee understood the item and recommended its approval 6-0.

#166-01       HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$9,568 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of fully funding the FY01 full-time salary account for the Jackson Homestead.

**ACTION:     APPROVED 6-0 (BULLWINKLE, R.LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:** The Executive Department submitted a letter dated May 1<sup>st</sup> to the Committee. Basically the salary account has insufficient funds for the remainder of the current year because of the overlap of David Olson's term (the new director) and the benefits and pay which were due to Peggy Latimer (former director). Because of that overlap, the appropriation is required. The Committee without debate, approved the item 6-0.

#167-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$1,820 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the Veterans' Benefits line item in the FY01 Veterans Department operating budget.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 6-0 (BULLWINKLE, R.LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:** Sandy Pooler presented this item and a letter dated April 30<sup>th</sup> indicating That there were not ample funds to cover additional costs for Veteran's services, Especially with the Memorial Day services approaching. There is a short fall of \$325.59 for Blue Cross, \$384.00 for housing costs, \$3,016.36 for benefits to Veterans and spouses on the Veteran's Services Roll. There is a small amount of money left to deal with this in the account, that after applying those funds, they were short \$1,820.00. This year the City was also responsible for the funeral expenses of an indigent Veteran, so therefore these funds are necessary to settle this account out before the end of the year. The Committee without debate approved this item 6-0.

#168-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting acceptance of MGL Chapter 40 §22F which allows department heads to "fix reasonable charges to be paid for any services rendered or work performed by the city."

**ACTION:** **HELD 7-0 (BRYSON NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:** This item held by the Committee for discussion in conjunction with passage of the Fiscal 2002 budget. Held 7-0.

#169-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting amendments to Chapter 17 to increase Electrical fees and Gas and plumbing fees; to increase fees for certain license applications and permits to be filed with the health department; and to reflect Zoning Board of Appeals application fees.

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 6-0 (BULLWINKLE, R.LIPOF NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE: :** This item held by the Committee for discussion in conjunction with passage of the Fiscal 2002 budget. Held 7-0.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#172-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that an appropriation in the amount of \$96,926 from the Parking Meter Special Revenue Fund for the purpose of fully funding the street light maintenance account for FY01.

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

**NOTE:** A letter from the Executive Department dated April 25<sup>th</sup> indicated that upon the review of the Municipal Light Contract by Betty Sherman and Elaine Gentile it was determined that a transfer is necessary due to the maintenance costs. An analysis was done showing the number of street lights that have been repaired and the fiscal costs. This is the first year of having the Wellesley Municipal Light Program come in and review the status of the City's street lighting program. Submitted with the packet to the Committee and also to the Public Facilities Committee was a break down of the costs for the contact and costs for the equipment and materials needed to repair and replace the street lights in the City. There is a short fall during the months of February through June of 2001 of approximately \$17,153 a month for the continued maintenance of the street lights. It was determined that the City has saved in excess of \$600,000 in its first year by providing its own maintenance for the street lighting, after it taking it over from Boston Edison. An analysis of the new bidding, which was due to the positive collective bargaining contract negotiation experience that the City had with perspective bidders for the new contract. The cost comes down to just about \$17,000 a month for maintenance and repair of the City's entire street lighting system. With that, the Committee indicated its support for the additional funds in order to continue the maintenance program on these lights, which the City now owns. The motioned carried to approve 7-0.

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

#173-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that Chapter 19 Section 191 be amended to provide for doubling (to 50¢ per hour) the parking meter fee for short-term (1-hour meters) on-street parking.

**ACTION:** **HELD 7-0 (BRYSON NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:** This item held until May 24<sup>th</sup> final overview of the budget by the Committee of the Whole and will be dealt with that evening. Held 7-0.

**REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES**

#113-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, in accordance with Section 5-1 of the Newton City Charter, submitting the FY2002 Municipal/School Operating Budget, including Water/Sewer for a total of \$232,421,103.

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION: APRIL 17, 2001**

**LAST DAY TO PASS BUDGET: JUNE 1, 2001**

**ACTION:** **HELD 7-0 (BYRSON NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:** Held for a Public Hearing to be assigned on June 6, 2001, at which time the new water rates will be discussed. Therefore, this item was held 7-0.

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

#158-01 **ALD. GERST** seeking Home Rule Legislation for the purpose of raising qualifying income level for the Newton 41A (Senior Citizen real estate tax deferral) program.

**ACTION:** **HELD 7-0 (BRYSON NOT VOTING)**

**NOTE:** The Committee discussed this item briefly while the assessors were in for their budget review. The Committee will review this item during the month of June, just before the end of the fiscal year and will determine whether to submit Home Rule Legislation via the Mayor's office in order to assist elderly people in getting 41A (tax deferral) on their properties. Therefore, #158-01 was held 7-0.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#109-01 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting that the sum of \$1,235,000 be appropriated and expended from the Water Surplus Fund for the purpose of completing repairs to the WABAN HILL RESERVOIR. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$2,185,200. The remaining costs will be met with the approximately \$1 million of capital improvement funds allocated in the FY01 Water operating budget.

**PUBFAC APPROVED 4-0 AS AMENDED ON 4/18/01**

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

**NOTE:** Jay Fink was present this evening, along with the Mayor's office to discuss this item. A letter dated March 15<sup>th</sup> was submitted to the Committee, indicating that there has continued to be a leakage problem at the reservoir at Waban Hill. During the design portion of the project, divers entered each of the four chambers, to evaluate the extent of the leakage and to determine the most appropriate remedy. During the evaluation it was noted that there was significant leakage from the roof into the City's water drinking supply. This facility provides almost 80% of the total water, which is consumed in the City of Newton. It is typically drained somewhere between 1 and 1.5 million gallons of water per day, which is then replenished by the pumping station, in order to supply the water needs to the entire City. The Committee reviewed a report and basically there are exterior repairs (including the removal of top soil), a crack repair, installation of a plastic cover over the top to the tank and replacement of soil, including seeding. There is additional grate work to be done to the exterior of the structure. Also, interior water proof work utilizing a polypropylene sheet to seal the interior walls of the reservoir. The preparation work requires the filling of cracks in the side (similar to the repair of a gunite pool) with the application of grout into the cracked areas. The work will be done in two different contracts, construction will not begin until the Fall of this year.

During a period of low usage, the facility will be drained one quadrant at a time and replaced. The Committee reviewed the information presented on the design fees, which total approximately \$98,000 for the construction program, which will take effect over the next two years. Understanding that this facility is required in order to provide the water requirements for the City and that this application of the plastic cover against the walls on the inside of the facility would provide us with another fifty years of service from this facility, recommendation was made to approve this item and the item was approved 7-0.

#139-01      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation from Overlay Surplus in the amount of \$350,000 for the purpose of funding the triennial revaluation costs in the Assessing Department.

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

**NOTE:**      Elizabeth Dromey attended the meeting and presented the Committee a budget in order to accomplish 8,000 interior inspections over the next year, as well as 100% of the exterior inspections of the houses, including digital photographing, which will be done in order to supplement the laser disk on file with pictures of various houses in the City. The budget for Fiscal 2002 includes \$30,000 for full-time staff, \$20,000 for seasonal staff. Appraisal work for the telecommunications equipment and golf course appraisal work, \$30,000 for a new software upgrade of the computer assisted Mass Appraisal System, \$30,000 for field personnel and consultants to deal with the residential re-inspections. \$20,000 for consultants to deal with commercial re-valuations, \$50,000 for witness and court costs \$20,000 for postage for the mailing of two notices to taxpayers. Also, \$20,000 to be used for the printing and design of brochures in the Assessing Department, along with computer supplies, \$20,000 for additional software packages and \$50,000 to purchase eight new personal computers for the public to access the records at City Hall. Notebook computers for fieldwork to download data and make changes in the field and a coin operated printer for the public use in the Assessing office. The Committee reviewed the status of the re-valuation process and the fact that there were less than 300 abatement applications in this fiscal year, which is a testament to the work of the Assessing Department. There were no questions, regarding the expenditure of funds in order to guarantee that the Assessing program continues its fine tradition of accuracy and Customer Service. Therefore, the motion was made to approve this item and it carried 7-0.

The Committee also reviewed the Information Technology, Assessing, Comptroller's and Retirement Board budgets, which all on straw votes were passed by the Committee without modification.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman



FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Monday, May 14, 2001

Page 9