

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
MONDAY, JUNE 25, 2001

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

Also Present: Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer)

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: **\$70,000 THRESHHOLD APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: This item has been before the Committee for approximately 3 months. The item was taken up this evening because Home Rule Legislation needs to be proposed for the City of Newton to raise the Newton clause 41A (Senior Citizen deferral program) so that the income level may be raised in order for people to participate. The 41A program is a program for citizens over 65 years of age. The previous requirements were for less than \$30,000 annual income in order to participate in deferring tax payments. Under Ald. Gerst's proposal, the new income level would be \$70,000 (for a husband and wife, or \$35,000 each), which would allow more seniors to take advantage of this program.

This seems like a good idea and Committee members supported this proposal. This proposal is in line with a new state-wide initiative that has been proposed. If the Board of Aldermen votes to approve this, then the item will be sent back to Programs and Services for the drafting of the petition and the Home Rule Legislation and then it will be forwarded to the state for enactment. On a motion to approve, the item carried by a vote of 8-0.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

55-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$14,600 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of adding an Assistant Executive Secretary position in the Election Commission department.

ACTION: **PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 5-0 ON 5/23/01**
NAN 8-0

NOTE: This item, unfortunately, was not taken up during the FY02 budget deliberation process. The FY01 monies that were originally intended for this purpose were used to fund the Cops & Kids program instead. At this particular time, the Executive Department is still holding the creation of this position, and will come back to the Board of Aldermen at a later date to seek funding for this purpose.

Therefore, the Committee voted NO ACTION NECESSARY, 8-0 on this item.

#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: **APPROVED 5-1 (GERST OPPOSED; CICCONE, PARKER NOT VOTING) AS IT RELATES TO MUNICIPAL LIEN CERTIFICATES**

NOTE: Sandy Pooler, Chief Budget Officer, was present this evening. He reviewed this item with the Committee. The proposal calls for a Mass. General Law acceptance which would, instead of having the Board of Aldermen set all fees for services performed in the City (those which are not controlled by state law), allow department heads to set these fees. The Board of Aldermen has always been reluctant to turn over the fee setting authority to department heads without formal review and approval by the Board. This year, when the FY02 budget was put together, the Mayor’s office has included an additional \$50,000 under Municipal Lien Certificate revenue. If the City continues to use the old fee for MLC’s, then the City will not raise this additional \$50,000. Therefore, it is important that the MLC fee be raised. The acceptance of this MGL will allow the Treasurer/Collector to set the fee for MLC’s at \$50, which will then provide for this additional income.

The Committee did not have a problem with the raising of the MLC fees, but looked for assurances from the Executive Department that all further increases in fees will be referred back to the Board of Aldermen for scrutiny prior to implementation. This would include any fee increase proposals for Inspectional Services, Health Department, Parks & Recreation fees. After a full discussion of the item, the Committee voted 5-1-2, with Ald. Gerst opposed and Ald. Ciccone and Parker not voting, to approve this acceptance.

CLERK’S NOTE: Please refer to attached letter received from Mayor Cohen on 7/3/01 relating to this issue.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERVICES, ZAP & FINANCE COMMITTEES

64-01 ALD. PARKER, M. LIPOF, YATES, TATTENBAUM, SANGIOLO, BAKER, MANSFIELD, JOHNSON, SAMUELSON, MERRILL
requesting discussion of possible implementation of the Massachusetts
Community Preservation Act in Newton.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES HELD

ACTION: HELD

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV., ZAP AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#64-01(2) PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE recommending Board of
Aldermen approval of ballot question to implement Community
Preservation Act in Newton.

**ZAP APPROVED 4-0-3 (JOHNSON, SANGIOLO, GENTILE
ABSTAINING) ON 6/11/01**

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 6-0 (TATTENBAUM NOT VOTING)

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (GERST, BULLWINKLE NOT VOTING)

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND ZONING & PLANNING COMMITTEES

#64-01(3) PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE recommending ordinance to
implement Community Preservation Act in Newton.

PROG. & SERV. HELD 6-0

ACTION: HELD

NOTE: The Committee this evening had a quick review of the backup information which was attached to the agenda. For the benefit of any Aldermen who have not had the opportunity to review this information, it is attached to this report. Rather than to give a lengthy report on this item, since it is assumed that this item will be debated on the floor of the Board on Second Call on 7/9, there will not be specific details given regarding the Community Preservation Act.

In order to ensure appropriate timing to include this ballot question as part of elections this fall, it is imperative that the Board act on (2) on July 9th. Please read the attached information in order to be prepared to discuss this issue at length on that date.

Having reviewed the backup information, the Committee voted 6-0, with Ald. Gerst and Bullwinkle not voting, to approve item (2) for the ballot question. The other two related items were held.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chair