

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2001

Present: Ald. Coletti, Chair; Ald. Bullwinkle, Bryson, Parker, Schnipper and Lipof

Absent: Ald. Gerst and Ciccone

Also Present: Ald. Lipsitt; Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), Mike Rourke (Chief Administrative Officer), Fran Towle (Parks & Recreation Commissioner)

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#276-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$110,000 be appropriated from Overlay Surplus and that the sum of \$95,000 be appropriated from the Capital Stabilization Fund in order to fund the following capital projects:

<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>COST</u>
a) Conservation Commission	Marty Sender Path	\$ 5,000
<u>ACTION: HELD 6-0</u>		
b) Parks & Recreation	Tree Planting	\$ 50,000
PROGRAMS & SERVICES APPROVED 7-0 ON 9/19/01		
<u>ACTION: APPROVED 6-0</u>		
c) Parks & Recreation	Field Renov/Water Control	\$ 25,000
PROGRAMS & SERVICES HELD 7-0 ON 9/19/01		
<u>ACTION: HELD 6-0</u>		
d) Parks & Recreation	Turf Control	\$ 50,000
PROGRAMS & SERVICES APPROVED 7-0 ON 9/19/01		
<u>ACTION: APPROVED 6-0</u>		
f) Veterans/Licensing	Veterans Graves	\$ 25,000
PROGRAMS & SERVICES APPROVED 7-0 ON 9/19/01		
<u>ACTION: APPROVED 6-0</u>		

NOTE: Bob DeRubeis, deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, presented items b and d. He indicated that tree planting (item b) will be performed using funds received from the FEMA reimbursement grant as well as Overlay Surplus. He explained that there are currently over 500 requests for city trees to be planted and that these requests are filled on a case-by-case basis. He stated that they purchase and install as many trees as they can, and this amount will provide approximately 200 trees for planting.

Ald. Lipsitt was present this evening and indicated her frustration because there are constituents who were present this evening (specifically from the Church Street/Newton Corner area where street reconstruction projects have been completed) who are looking for tree plantings. She requested that the Parks and Recreation Department look very carefully at finishing up those areas and getting those trees planted before the end of the planting season.

Mr. DeRubeis took that under advisement and indicated that he would speak to the Commissioner about making that a priority.

The Committee spent some additional time discussing how citizens can acquire trees and the discussion will continue in Programs and Services and Public Facilities regarding the replacement of as many trees as possible on an annual basis.

With that understanding, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve item b, \$50,000 for Tree Plantings.

Mr. DeRubeis then presented item d, turf control, to the Committee. He presented some backup information that showed over 80 acres of land as active recreation areas throughout the city. He also gave the pricing for fertilization, slice seeding, seeding aeration, top dressing, and other maintenance to be performed at these locations. This request is a supplement to the current \$100,000 budgeted for the same maintenance program. There is also a concern that the upgrading of various irrigation systems must be completed in a timely manner so that the soil and the grass can be maintained more appropriately.

The Committee held very little discussion regarding turf control, although information was presented which covered the relationship with the citywide soccer program. Basically, this maintenance is a requirement that the City has in order to keep these park lands functional. With that, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve item d, \$50,000 for turf control.

Item f was also discussed briefly this evening. Fred Guzzi, Veterans' Agent, was present this evening. He explained that the City of Newton is quickly running out of burial plots in the veterans' section of the Newton Cemetery. He has been negotiating with the Newton Cemetery Corporation to secure some additional grave sites and he has reached an agreement where the City will have access to 29 single graves and 2 urn garden in a section next to the section that the City currently uses. The total value of the purchase of these 31 graves will be \$57,510. The Newton Cemetery Corporation has given the City a discount and the purchase price will be \$50,000. Basically, the City will pay \$25,000 up front and will pay the additional \$25,000 within one year.

The Committee reviewed the location of these graves, which will be directly to the left of the flagpole in Section I North. The Committee believes that there will be a need to

install a new flagpole in this new section and that installation will take place at a later date. The Committee had no problem with moving forward on this item at this time and voted 6-0 to approve item e, \$50,000 for Veterans' graves.

The remaining 2 items, a and c, were not ready for Committee discussion at this time, therefore, they were held by a vote of 6-0.

REFERRED TO FINANCE, PUBFAC & PROG&SERV COMMITTEES

#309-01 ALD. PARKER requesting increase in the income eligibility level of the 30% water/sewer discount for low-income senior citizens.

ACTION: **HELD 6-0**

NOTE: This item was not scheduled for discussion this evening, as no backup information was provided. The Committee voted 6-0 to hold this item until it is ready for discussion in the future.

#113-01(4) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$1,166,000 be appropriated and transferred from the FY02 estimated revenue to the Capital Stabilization Fund for FY02 for the purpose of adding to the Debt Reserve established to fund capital expenses associated with the high school renovation projects.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: The Committee had waited until the end of the fiscal year in order to maximize the City's Free Cash position before taking up this item. The Chair was also concerned that, if we took money from FY02 General Revenue and put it away in the Capital Stabilization Fund, we would not be able to utilize those funds in order to make up the shortfall in the School budget. The Committee asked Sandy Pooler if the School budget had been brought up to an acceptable level. The Chairman indicated that \$6.3 million was the area where it was expected that the School budget would be raised to.

Mr. Pooler indicated that, in fact, the School Department has sufficient funds to operate, at least through the first 6 months of the school year, and they will continue to look at their financial position as the year progresses.

The Chairman indicated to the Committee that it would be okay at this point to transfer this \$1,166,000 into the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of adding to the debt reserve established to fund capital expenses associated with the high school renovation projects.

The Committee, at the recommendation of the Chair, voted 5-0 to approve this request.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#96-01(3) PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE proposing a RESOLUTION to the Mayor and School Administration requesting that the hiring freeze not cause the elimination of any program that was voted on as part of the FY01 budget.

Prog&Serv Approved 6-0-1 (Baker & Parker Abstaining) on 3/21/01; Held in Committee and referred to Finance by Full Board on 4/2/01.

ACTION: NAN 6-0

NOTE: This item was docketed for a prior fiscal year operating budget and is no longer necessary. Therefore, the Committee voted 6-0 to NAN this item.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#253-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$130,000 be appropriated from the Parking Meter Receipts fund and expended for the purpose of supplementing the street light budget.

PUBFACILITIES APPROVED 5-0 ON 9/19/01

ACTION: BOARD VOTE OF 8/13/01 REAFFIRMED

NOTE: This item, on August 13th, was incorporated into the vote on docket item #252-01 and #252-01(2), relative to the operation of the NEXUS system. That action makes this item moot. Therefore, the Committee simply reaffirmed the vote of August 13th in support of this item.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chair