



Finance Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Monday, April 29, 2024

Present: Councilors Gentile (Chair), Grossman, Lipof, Bixby, Malakie, Greenberg, and Humphrey

Also Present: Councilor Block, Wright and Albright

Absent: Councilor Micley

City staff present: Manager of Financial Planning & Analysis Perry Rosenfield, Senior Financial Analyst Connor Roach, Comptroller Stephen Curley, Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Treasurer/Tax Collector Ron Mendes, Chief Procurement Officer Nick Read, Director of Human Resources Michelle Pizzi O'Brien, Commissioner of Public Works James McGonagle, and Commissioner of Public Buildings Josh Morse

All Finance agendas and reports, both past and present, can be found at the following link:
<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/city-clerk/city-council/council-standing-committees/finance-committee>

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link:
[Finance Committee- April 29, 2024](#)

#184-24 Appointment of Marcia Tabenken to John C. Chaffin Educational Fund

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Marcia Tabenken, 11 North Street, Newton as a trustee of the John C. Chaffin Educational Fund for a lifetime appointment.

Action: **Finance Approved 7-0**

Note: Marcia Tabenken joined the committee to discuss her appointment to the John C. Chaffin Educational Fund. Ms. Tabenken explained her background including being an active volunteer for the Newton Public Schools.

Councilors thanked Ms. Tabenken for her willingness to serve.

Councilor Lipof motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#185-24 Appointment of Rabbi Allison Berry to John C Chaffin Educational Fund

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Rabbi Allison Berry, 42 Clarendon Street, Newtonville as a trustee of the John C. Chaffin Educational Fund for a lifetime appointment.

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Rabbi Allison Berry joined the committee to discuss her appointment to the John C. Chaffin Educational Fund. Rabbi Berry explained her background including leading a nonprofit and noted that she wants to be able to serve the community in this way.

Councilors thanked Rabbi Berry for her willingness to serve.

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#188-24 Authorization to accept and expand a Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Green Communities Grant

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) from a Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Green Communities Grant, to complete the funding for the replacement of the Newton Free Library's heating, ventilation and air conditioning system.

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Josh Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings joined the committee to discuss the request to accept and expand a Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Green Communities Grant. It was noted that this project has been discussed by both the Finance and Public Facilities Committee. Commissioner Morse explained that this is to replace the cooling system and change the heating system to full electric. He noted that this is a direct reimbursement grant and the first meeting has been had with the contractor to start to work out logistics for the project.

It was questioned if this project would disrupt library services. Commissioner Morse explained that the goal is to not disrupt any services. The expectation is to start work within weeks of Council approval and they will have this completed before next summer. The substantial completion will be early Spring 2025.

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#193-24 Requesting authorization to transfer \$100,000 for library computers and technology

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer the sum of \$100,000 from Account # 0160110-511001 Main Library, Full Time Salaries to a Library Project Account for the purpose of replacing aging computers and technology at the Newton Free Library.

Programs & Services Approved 7-0 on 04/18/24

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer joined the committee to discuss the authorization to transfer \$100,000 for library computers and technology. Mr. Yeo explained that the library has a fleet of 164 computers that are used by the staff and for the public. These funds will begin the replacement

of some of the oldest computers. He further explained that the funds come from salary savings for supervisor positions; these positions have now been filled.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#187-24 Authorization to appropriate and expend \$1 million for the DPW Vehicle Replacement Program

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend a total of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) from June 30, 2023, Certified Free Cash as part of the Vehicle Replacement Plan for the purpose of replacing one 2008 and two 2007 6-wheel dump trucks with two 6-wheel dump trucks and one 10-wheel swap loader truck for the Streets Division operations.

Public Facilities Approved 8-0 on 04/17/24

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Jim McGonagle joined the committee to discuss the appropriation of \$1 million for the DPW Vehicle Replacement Program. Commissioner McGonagle explained that they will be replacing 2 dump trucks that have come to the end of their useful life and they will also be buying a swap truck that is used for snow plowing and construction work.

It was questioned if this was through a State contract. Commissioner McGonagle explained that these will be purchased off the State Contract. The State puts out bids that all municipalities can piggyback on to save time and allows the City to standardize their equipment.

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#196-24 Authorization to appropriate and expend \$615,000 for hydro vacuum excavator trailer

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend a total of six hundred and fifteen thousand dollars (\$615,000) from Water Fund Surplus Acct# 6000-3599 three hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$315,000) and from Sewer Fund Surplus Acct # 6100-3599 for three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) for the purchase of a hydro vacuum excavator trailer to enhance digging safety measures.

Public Facilities Approved as Amended to truck 8-0 on 04/17/24

Action: Finance Approved as Amended to truck 7-0

Note: Commissioner McGonagle joined the committee to discuss the appropriation of \$615,000 for hydro vacuum excavator truck. He noted that the request is for a truck and not a trailer as it was stated in the docket request. The equipment will allow for excavation without the use of a backhoe. This

was recommended for purchase by the Department of Labor and Safety when they did an inspection last summer. Commissioner McGonagle added that this will be considerably safer.

It was questioned if this is the same State process as the previous docket item. Commissioner McGonagle explained that it is the same process; this is the State approved vendor.

Steve Curley, Comptroller noted that there is currently still \$4,548,183 available in free cash, \$16.36 million available in the water fund balance and the sewer fund balance is at \$17.76 million. Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial offers explained that the City does try to have 3 months' worth of revenue in the sewer fund and water fund. The City is currently above that amount and within the next couple of months they will determine what the City should use these reserves for. She also noted that for free cash they have docketed new free cash items to be referred at the next City Council meeting.

Councilor Malakie motioned to amend to truck which passed unanimously

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve as amended to truck which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#199-24 Authorization to appropriate and expend \$500,000 for the water hydrant flushing program

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend a total of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) from the Water Fund Surplus -- Available for Appropriation, Account # 6000-3599 to Account # 60A40106-530203 Water Hydrant Inspections, Engineering Services to fund a water hydrant flushing program to ensure proper water circulation and water quality within the water main system.

Public Facilities Approved 8-0 on 04/17/24

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Commissioner McGonagle joined the committee to discuss the appropriation of \$500,000 for the water hydrant flushing program. He explained that they historically they have done this in house but due to the vacancies in the Utilities Division, the City is not able to keep up with this program. This program is critical so that there is an up-to-date map of the hydrants and this is when the inspections/testing are done.

A councilor questioned if this will help with find broken hydrants and the water volume. Commissioner McGonagle explained that it will and the work will be done annually.

Commissioner McGonagle also noted that there are a number of companies that do this work.

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#198-24 Authorization to expend grant and city funding for the Stormwater Asset Management Plan

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend the State's Revolving Fund Grant of one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to update the

Stormwater Asset Management Plan, and to appropriate and expend the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) from the Stormwater Management Operating Reserve - 2024 Budget to provide the City share of matching funds for this program. The grant also includes a twenty-five thousand dollar (\$25,000) additional match of in-kind services from city- staff.

Public Facilities Approved 8-0

Action: **Finance Approved 7-0**

Note: Commissioner McGonagle joined the Committee to discuss the Authorization to expend grant and city funding for the Stormwater Asset Management Plan. He explained that these funds will update the City's stormwater assets. The department's Environmental Engineer will be doing the majority of this work with the consultant. He further explained that this will also look at privately owned stormwater assets to be able to get phosphorus credit.

Councilor Greenberg motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#172-24 Requesting a discussion regarding a contract for audit services

COUNCILOR GENTILE AND THE COMPTROLLER requesting a discussion with the Finance Committee regarding a new contract or extension for audit services.

Finance Held 7-0 on 04/08/24

Action: **Finance Approved as Amended to enter into a five-year contract for audit services**

Note: The Chair introduced the item to discuss the new contract or extension for audit services. He explained that the administration and the Financial Audit Advisory Committee are comfortable with moving forward with CLA. There will be new principals from CLA working on the audit for this contract. This will be a five-year contract which does require City Council approval.

The work for the next audit will begin at the May 15th Financial audit Advisory Committee Meeting.

The pervious audit report will be given to the Finance Committee at their next meeting.

Councilor Malakie motioned to amend item #172-24 to enter into a five-year contract for audit services which passed unanimously.

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve as amended to enter into a five-year contract for audit services which passed unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 9:33 pm after the budget discussions.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Gentile, Chair

CITY OF NEWTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT

ORDERED:

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Finance Committee through its Chair Leonard Gentile, the authorization to accept and expend five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) from a Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Green Communities Grant, to complete the funding for the replacement of the Newton Free Library's heating, ventilation and air conditioning system is hereby approved.

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Approved
DRAFT

(SGD) CAROL MOORE
City Clerk

(SGD) RUTHANNE FULLER
Mayor

Date: _____

CITY OF NEWTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT

ORDERED:

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Programs & Services Committee Chair Joshua Krintzman, and the Finance Committee through its Chair Leonard Gentile authorization to transfer the sum of \$100,000 from Account # 0160110-511001 Main Library, Full Time Salaries to a Library Project Account for the purpose of replacing aging computers and technology at the Newton Free Library is hereby approved as follows:

FROM:	Library Full Time Salaries (0160110-511001).....	\$100,000
TO:	Library Computers and Tech (01C60102-585111)	\$100,000

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Approved
DRAFT

(SGD) CAROL MOORE
City Clerk

(SGD) RUTHANNE FULLER
Mayor

Date: _____

CITY OF NEWTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT

ORDERED:

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Public Facilities Committee Chair Susan Albright, and the Finance Committee through its Chair Leonard Gentile authorization to appropriate and expend a total of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) from June 30, 2023, Certified Free Cash as part of the Vehicle Replacement Plan for the purpose of replacing one 2008 and two 2007 6-wheel dump trucks with two 6-wheel dump trucks and one 10-wheel swap loader truck for the Streets Division operations is hereby approved as follows:

FROM:	June 30, 2023 Certified Free Cash (0001-3240).....	\$1,000,000
TO:	Dump trucks and loader (7638E401-585020).....	\$1,000,000

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Approved
DRAFT

(SGD) CAROL MOORE
City Clerk

(SGD) RUTHANNE FULLER
Mayor

Date: _____

CITY OF NEWTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT

ORDERED:

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Public Facilities Committee Chair Susan Albright, and the Finance Committee through its Chair Leonard Gentile authorization to appropriate and expend a total of six hundred and fifteen thousand dollars (\$615,000) from Water Fund Surplus Acct# 6000-3599 for three hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$315,000) and from Sewer Fund Surplus Acct # 6100-3599 for three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) for the purchase of a hydro vacuum excavator truck to enhance digging safety measures is hereby approved as follows:

FROM:	Water-Fund Balance	
	(6000-3599).....	\$315,000
	Sewer-Fund Balance	
	(6100-3599).....	\$300,000
TO:	Hydro Vacuum Excavator Truck	
	(7013L401-585020).....	\$615,000

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Approved
DRAFT

(SGD) CAROL MOORE
City Clerk

(SGD) RUTHANNE FULLER
Mayor

CITY OF NEWTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT

ORDERED:

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Public Facilities Committee Chair Susan Albright, and the Finance Committee through its Chair Leonard Gentile authorization to appropriate and expend a total of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) from the Water Fund Surplus -- Available for Appropriation, Account # 6000-3599 to Account # 60A40106-530203 Water Hydrant Inspections, Engineering Services to fund a water hydrant flushing program to ensure proper water circulation and water quality within the water main system is hereby approved as follows:

FROM:	Water Fund Balance (6000-3599).....	\$500,000
TO:	Water Hydrant Inspections, Engineering Services (60A40106-530203)	\$500,000

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Approved
DRAFT

(SGD) CAROL MOORE
City Clerk

(SGD) RUTHANNE FULLER
Mayor

Date: _____

CITY OF NEWTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT

ORDERED:

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Public Facilities Committee Chair Susan Albright, and the Finance Committee through its Chair Leonard Gentile authorization to accept and expend the State's Revolving Fund Grant of one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to update the Stormwater Asset Management Plan, and to appropriate and expend the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) from the Stormwater Management Operating Reserve - 2024 Budget to provide the City share of matching funds for this program. The grant also includes a twenty-five thousand dollar (\$25,000) additional match of in-kind services from city- staff is hereby approved as follows:

FROM:	Stormwater Budget Reserve (62A10498-579000)	\$75,000
TO:	Stormwater Asset Management Plan (7217D401-530100)	\$75,000

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Approved
DRAFT

(SGD) CAROL MOORE
City Clerk

(SGD) RUTHANNE FULLER
Mayor

Date: _____