



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Present: Councilors Rice (Chair), Schwartz, Kalis, Leary, Hess-Mahan and Baker

Absent: Councilor Sangiolo and Auchincloss

Also Present: Councilors Crossley, Brousal-Glaser, Danberg, Gentile, Lappin, Lennon, Laredo, Albright and Fuller

City Staff: Lou Taverna (City Engineer), Nadia Khan (Committee Clerk), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

Referred to Programs & Services, Public Facilities and Finance Committees

- #57-17** **Authorize submittal of Lincoln Eliot statement of interest to the MSBA**
SUPERINTENDENT FLEISHMAN requesting a vote of the City Council to complement the vote of the School Committee to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) they FY 17 Statement of Interest no later than April 7, 2017 for the consideration of Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School as a major school Building project after Cabot Elementary School. [02/17/17 @ 9:29 AM]
Public Facilities Approved 7-0-1 (Councilor Gentile abstaining)
- Action:** **Programs & Services Approved 4-0-2 (Councilors Baker and Hess-Mahan abstaining)**

Note: The Programs & Services and Public Facilities Committees met jointly on this item. Please refer to the March 8th Public Facilities Committee report for details.

Public Facilities approved this item with Councilor Gentile abstaining. Programs & Services approved this item with Councilors Baker and Hess-Mahan abstaining. The item will be heard in Finance Committee on March 13th.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

- #55-17** **Appropriate \$200,000 for repairs to the Gath Pool**
HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) from Overlay Surplus for the purpose of funding repairs to the Gath Pool. (03/02/17 @ 9:55 AM)
- Action:** **Programs & Services Approved 6-0**

Note: Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, Bob DeRubeis, joined the Committee. Attached to the agenda were handouts describing the types of repairs and associated costs. He explained that while the water quality of the Gath Pool is excellent, the decking, pipes and other areas are in need of repair. This appropriation should extend the quality use of the pool for another 5 years or so. Many of the repairs are needed on the concrete deck, the water slide, and one of the diving boards. The gutter which runs around the pool also needs some crack repair and he believes this will work very well as more major repairs were done in the recent past. He did not want to spend \$200K to replace the gutter system when the repairs would be effective and they could use money on the other areas that needed attention as well. The wading pool for the smaller children needs re-surfacing and they will likely add some decorative illustrations on the bottom so the children know where the depth changes occur. The Commissioner noted that some work will also be done on the women's showers; the men's showers and locker rooms were done recently. People are generally very happy as long as the pool water quality is good, the showers have hot water and are in good working order.

Committee Questions/Comments

A Councilor asked what the "Miscellaneous" category included since it was about 23% of the budget. The Commissioner noted that much of the money in the category will be used to remove the diving board anchors and other work related to the concrete repair. He said he will revise the budget for Finance Committee with more details of this category. A Committee member asked the Commissioner to provide some details on the more extensive repairs that had been done in the past as well.

It was asked if the pool was being winterized consistent with best practices. The Commissioner explained that leaving water in the pool is the best way to keep it from being damaged in the winter and that they do take proper steps with pipes, etc. In the future, when a new pool is built, they will seriously consider having it in a covered structure to allow for year-round use. It is a great resource that can currently only be utilized for 3 months a year and there is a great demand from the high schools, the Newton swim teams and recreational use by the residents for pool time. The Gath Pool was built in 1965 so the City has been stretching its use with repairs. The Commissioner thinks there would be the need for a new pool within 10 years, at the most.

A Committee member asked about staffing for a year-round pool. The Commissioner noted that staffing would be much easier for a pool than the Crystal Lake; twelve guards are needed for the Lake while only four would be needed for a pool. A Councilor said that if a new pool were to be built, other sites should be taken into consideration. The Commissioner noted that the current site would probably make the most sense because that land is adjacent to the Horace Mann building which is slated to become a recreational center.

It was asked if there were alternative methods to keeping the water quality high aside from using chlorine. The Commissioner said that they are always looking at new technologies and products to find the best methods. It was also asked if heating the pool would be an option, perhaps with solar panels, but the Commissioner said they would probably not want to invest in that for the current pool, but that may be something to consider for a new pool. It was also asked if City water or well

water was used to fill the phone and the Commissioner said it was City water as there are water quality issues with using well water for pools.

A Committee member asked if any spray parks were being considered. The Commissioner noted that one is being installed in the spring at Burr Park for preschool children. Waltham changed out all their existing wading pools to spray parks and Newton is looking at doing something similar. There is a possibility of a combination ice rink in the winter/spray park in the summer facility at Halloran. They are researching the costs, which may be in the \$1.3M range, not including refrigeration and ongoing maintenance. He said he would keep the Council updated on that.

Councilor Hess-Mahan moved approval and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#54-17 **Request to increase the Parks & Recreation Department by one full-time position**
HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to add one full-time employee within the Parks and Recreation Department. The position will be involved extensively in the administration of camps. [02/27/17 @ 2:42 PM]

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 6-0**

Note: Commissioner DeRubeis said the City has 14 camps which are extensively used and well attended. Families love the summer camps and the vacation camps as well. This past year the camps have brought in \$1.7M which is up from \$1.4M the previous year. This new position would be for a general recreational manager with a focus on the camps, but available for other duties as well. The position would be paid from the revolving fund and is not in the operating budget. The department has been using part time people to fill in the gaps, but they decided a full time person was really necessary.

Committee members noted that the camps have been an invaluable amenity to families in the City. Having adequate staff to run the camps effectively and safely is absolutely necessary and the Committee supported the request for the position.

A Committee member commended Commissioner DeRubeis for the enthusiasm and positive energy he demonstrates for his department, programs and staff. Councilor Hess-Mahan moved approval and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

#300-16 **Ordinance to register lobbyists**
COUNCILORS COTE, NORTON AND HARNEY proposing an ordinance to register lobbyists in the City of Newton. [08/10/16 @ 3:11 AM]

Action: **Programs & Services Held 5-0 (Councilor Schwartz not voting)**

Note: Councilors Cote and Harney asked for this item to be held. It will be scheduled for the next meeting in March. The Committee voted to hold the item 5-0.

Referred to Programs & Services, Public Facilities and Finance Committees

- #312-10** **Update on plans to address space needs in schools**
ALD. LENNON, LAPPIN, SCHNIPPER, SANGIOLLO requesting a discussion with the School Committee on its plans to address space needs in the Newton public schools. [10/27/10 @11:07 AM]
Finance voted No Action Necessary
Public Facilities voted No Action Necessary
Action: **Programs & Services voted No Action Necessary 5-0 (Councilor Schwartz not voting)**

Note: The docketers of this item agreed to a vote of No Action Necessary as this item has been on the agenda for several years. If a new update item is needed, it can be docketed as necessary. The Committee voted No Action Necessary 5-0.

Referred to Public Facil, Programs & Services and Public Safety & Trans Committees

- #46-15** **Discussion of parking options and permits at municipal & school parking lots**
ALD. JOHNSON & CICCONE, requesting a discussion with the Commissioner of Department of Public Works and the School Department to determine and discuss parking options including use of school properties based on the current municipal parking lot programs including the issuance of permits. [02/11/15 @1:35 PM]
Public Safety and Transportation voted No Action Necessary 6-0 on 03/08/17
Action: **Programs & Services voted No Action Necessary 5-0 (Councilor Schwartz not voting)**

Note: Councilor Ciccone felt the discussions which have taken place on this item have been sufficient. He supported a vote of No Action Necessary and the Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

John B. Rice, Chair