

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2014

Present: Ald. Sangiolo, Rice, Blazar, Norton, Kalis, Leary, Baker and Hess-Mahan

Also Present: Ald. Fuller

City Staff Present: David Olson (City Clerk), Dori Zaleznik (Chief Administrative Officer), Rob Symanski (Budget Analyst), Linda Walsh (Interim Commissioner, Health and Human Services), Donnalyn Kahn (City Solicitor), Jayne Colino (Director, Senior Services), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

Re-appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#145-14 MARJORIE A. BUTLER, 33 Andrew Street, Newton Highlands, re-appointed as a member of the ELECTION COMMISSION for a term to expire March 31, 2017. (60 days 06/21/14) 04/01/14 @ 9:08 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 4-0 (Ald. Kalis, Leary, Baker and Hess-Mahan not voting)**

NOTE: Ms. Butler joined the Committee and said she enjoys serving on the Election Commission. She has been involved in many elections over the years and there have been some very positive changes in the Commission and she would be pleased to serve. The Committee thanked Ms. Butler for her service and approved the re-appointment.

#146-14 NEWTON ELECTION COMMISSION requesting the Board of Aldermen approve a change of polling location for Ward 5, Precincts 3 and 4, from the Zervas School to the Waban Branch Library contingent upon the completed installation of a handicap ramp, paved parking area, door opener, and adequate exterior lighting by August 1, 2014. [04/09/14 @ 3:24 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0 (Ald. Leary, Baker and Hess-Mahan not voting)**

NOTE: David Olson addressed the Committee. The Election Commission discussed changing the polling location from the Zervas School to the Waban Branch Library at their April meeting. The Commission is very much in favor of this change as there were issues with using the school. Handicap accessibility improvements need to be made at the Library, however, in order for it to be a suitable polling location. The improvements will include the installation of a handicap ramp, an automatic door opener and exterior evening lighting, and paving of the parking area and path leading up to the ramp. This work is scheduled for completion by August 1, 2014 in order to allow time for proper notification to the voters of the polling location change. If the work cannot be completed by that deadline, the polling location will have to remain at the Zervas School for this next election. A mailing would be sent to notify every resident that would be involved in this change. There will also be signs at the Zervas School directing voters to the new polling location.

Ald. Rice explained that this is a public-private partnership project. They have been trying to get a permanent ramp installed at the Waban Branch Library, but the Public Buildings Department determined that would be prohibitively expensive. Ald. Rice looked into other options and found a metal ramp system for \$6K that could be temporary, or could be used permanently. The Waban Improvement Society very much wants residents to visit the Library to see what is being offered there and the Zervas community would prefer not to have the polling location at the school because of parking and traffic issues, among other things. Therefore, the Zervas PTO is donating \$3K and the Waban Improvement Society is donating \$3K to purchase the ramp. Josh Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings, is ensuring that the ramp will be installed properly and safely, and the Mayor has committed to having the parking lot paved, which has been in need of work for more than 40 years. Josh Morse provided a letter stating that he understands the work that needs to be done and is committed to getting it completed by the August 1st deadline.

Ald. Norton asked about moving the polling location out of the Cabot School. Mr. Olson said the Election Commission met earlier that evening and discussed that issue. There is agreement that the polling location should move from the Cabot School to Cabot Park Village, which is next door to the school. He has visited the site and it is more than adequate for a polling location. That request will be docketed and would be in place for the upcoming fall election.

The Committee voted to approve this item.

#147-14 NEWTON ELECTION COMMISSION recommending that, due to a death, a Special Municipal Election for Ward Alderman, Ward 3, be held on Tuesday, September 9, 2014 in conjunction with the State Primary Elections to be held on that date. [04/09/14 @ 4:07 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0 (Ald. Leary, Baker and Hess-Mahan not voting)**

NOTE: David Olson explained that the Election Commission looked at several dates on which to hold this special election. June 24th was considered but quickly eliminated due to the short timeframe and the inability to get nomination papers out and returned in time. The state primary elections will be held on September 9th and this seemed like the most logical opportunity. The Commission is proposing a dual election in Ward 3, with a separate ballot for the Ward 3 city election. If this date is approved at the May 19th Board of Aldermen meeting, there is plenty of time for nomination papers to be distributed, candidates to collect signatures and return their papers for certification. This will also fall within the required 120 days of the Board of Aldermen vote. November 4th was ruled out as it would fall beyond the 120 day timeframe. Mr. Olson said that they would only need to print ballots for Ward 3 because it is a Ward aldermen election and not an At-Large election. The machines will need to be programmed for the dual election, but piggybacking it onto the state primary election will bring the cost to just \$3K as the infrastructure will already be in place. The dual election also helps with voter turnout.

Ald. Kalis wondered if they could use November 4th instead of September 9th in order to allow more time for candidates to prepare. Ald. Sangiolo felt the timeframe for the September election is sufficient and elections have occurred in shorter timeframes.

David Olson said the election needs to be called “forthwith” and waiting too long could cause some problems. The costs savings and voter turnout factor were more favorable for the September 9th date.

The Committee voted to approve this item.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Mah Sangiolo