

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2013

Present: Ald. Sangiolo (Chairman), Linsky Rice, Blazar, Baker, Hess-Mahan, Fischman  
One vacancy

Also Present: Robert Rooney (Chief Operating Officer), Phil McNulty (Director, Newton Free Library), John MacGillivray (Veteran's Agent), Cindy Stone (Director, Historic Newton), David Olson (Clerk of the Board/City Clerk), Leo Brehm (Director, Information Technology and Libraries, NPS), Rob Symanski (Financial Analyst), Audrey Cooper, Jeff Hermann (Library Trustees), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

#147-13      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting approval to implement a reorganization plan in order to consolidate the Elections Department into the City Clerk's Department under **Article 6, Sec. 6-2.** of the City of Newton Charter.  
[04/08/13 @ 5:02 PM]

**ACTION:**      **HELD 4-0 (Baker, Hess-Mahan, Fischman not voting)**

**NOTE:** David Olson, Clerk of the Board/City Clerk addressed the Committee. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was attached to the agenda will be signed by both the Election Commission and the Board of Aldermen. The MOA indicates that both are in agreement with the new configuration and also the change in the City Clerk section of the ordinances that makes the City Clerk staff the support staff of the Election Commission. The MOA is not a legal requirement, but the Law Dept. felt it would help clarify the reorganization. The upcoming FY' 14 budget is a combined budget that reflects the changes. Mr. Olson will be presenting that budget at the May 8<sup>th</sup> Programs & Services meeting.

A public hearing will also be held on May 8<sup>th</sup>, so Mr. Olson wanted to know if there were any concerns from the Committee prior to that. There was concern from the Committee that Mr. Olson had sufficient staff to take on the duties of the combined departments. He said that with the hiring of the new Assistant Clerk for Elections, he will be adequately staffed. He is in the process of interviewing for that position and has seen some excellent candidates. There is sufficient staff in place to work through the April election and he will invite candidates back in May for second round interviews. The position could be filled on a contract basis until the new budget is implemented. The hope is to have someone in place for the dual June elections.

Ald. Linsky moved to hold this item and the Committee voted in favor.

**REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#157-13 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting authorization to appropriate the sum of one hundred nineteen thousand four hundred twenty-six dollars (\$119,426) from Fiscal Year 13 E-Rate Reimbursement Funds for the purpose of upgrading the wireless network at the high schools. [04/11/13 @ 12:16PM]

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 6-0 (Fischman not voting)**

**NOTE:** Leo Brehm, Director of Information Technology and Libraries at Newton Public Schools addressed the Committee. He explained that the wireless demand on the high schools is increasing and there are approximately 1,600 guest connections every day in each of the two schools. There is an unofficial Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy in place at the high schools and the wireless networks are being taxed beyond their capacity. The upgrade to the network will allow for two devices for every person in the building for educational purposes. Both wireless networks are fairly new so the intention is to disperse and re-use the wireless hardware at the elementary schools. There is enough equipment for every elementary school. The technology at the middle schools is currently being upgraded using funds from the operating budget.

Mr. Brehm explained that the equipment at both Newton South High School and Newton North High School is excellent equipment that will last for approximately another eight years. The problem is that it was not designed for one-to-one access so it cannot handle the current and expected density demand. There are about 2,100 people in each school and the current hardware is designed for coverage, but not density, whereas the upgrade is designed for the uptick in density. The high school buildings are the highest performing areas and the most frequented schools buildings not only for school uses but also for community uses (via a guest network). The middle schools are also widely used and the upgrades are needed as well. The elementary schools demands are growing so they can really benefit from the equipment they will be receiving as a result of this upgrade. The intention is to have all installations done this summer.

The Committee asked if the technology was being used for non-educational purposes. It was explained that most cell phones come with their own data packages. Mr. Brehm explained that the use of digital materials and resources has increased substantially. These materials are accessed across the network as well as the internet connection. The two devices to every person ratio is used because there are other resources that will be used that will need access to the network. It doesn't necessarily mean that each person will have two devices on at any given time. For instance, a teacher may need to send information from their computer to a projection device and may do this wirelessly through this upgraded network. They have been investigating how they can best leverage what is most cost effective and "future-proof" as they move forward. Providing this infrastructure is what they will need to accomplish that over the next several years. There is a new wireless standard coming out called AC and this new network will be AC capable. Therefore it could be upgraded to that new standard and that will also have a cost, but they are preparing to leverage that with the equipment they are purchasing now.

He also noted that they are running the latest security package from Cisco called ISE so they are monitoring who the users are, what the devices are, etc. because they have to be CIPA (Child Internet Protection Act) compliant. All of the internet connections are filtered from inappropriate material to the best of the CIPA compliance tool.

Some Committee members wondered if all students in all schools were getting fair access to the technology. Mr. Brehm stated that it is being balanced with internal funds as well as things like the BC Initiative for money for equipment. The functionality and age of each piece of equipment is rated across the 15 elementary schools and they work with the PTOs to raise money to keep that ratio fair. He estimated that between 15,000 and 25,000 square feet of classroom space is used up by carts with projectors and other equipment on them. These require cords and cables to be run across the floors which are a nuisance. They will be able to mount that kind of equipment on walls. Going wireless will remove the carts and cords and improve the classroom environment.

There was a question about leasing space for cell phone towers near the school. Mr. Brehm said that the cost benefit to that has dropped significantly over the past 10 years or so. His experience in another town he worked in was that there was concern about the health effects of cell towers and the town did not want them near schools. He did not know what the response would be in Newton.

Ald. Hess-Mahan moved to approve this item and the Committee voted in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Mah Sangiolo, Chairman