

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT
BUDGET

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2013

Present: Ald. Sangiolo, Linsky, Rice, Blazar, Fischman and Baker

Absent: Ald. Hess-Mahan; One vacancy

Also Present: Ald. Harney

Others Present: Robert Rooney (Chief Operating Officer), Maureen Lemieux (Chief Financial Officer), Bob DeRubeis (Commissioner, Parks & Recreation), David Olson (City Clerk), Jayne Colino (Director, Senior Services), Dori Zaleznik (Commissioner, Health and Human Services), Donnalynn Kahn (City Solicitor), Marjorie Butler (Elections Commission), Linda Walsh (Health and Human Services), Kathy Laufer, Alice Bailey, Molly Sass and Christie Rexford (Senior Services), Carol Ann Shea and Ellen Krasney (Council on Aging Advisory Board), Audrey Cooper (President, Senior Citizen Fund), Marion Knapp (Newton Council on Aging), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#322-12(2) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** submitting in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter the FY14 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$331,073,197 passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY14-FY18 Capital Improvement Program (#322-12). [04-08-13 @ 6:03 PM]
EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION: 04/16/13; LAST DATE TO PASS THE BUDGET 05/31/12

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#322-12 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** submitting the FY14-FY18 Capital Improvement Program pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter. [10/09/12 @ 2:38 PM]

BUDGET

CITY CLERK

City Clerk, David Olson, addressed the Committee. He will present budgets for the Board of Aldermen, the City Clerk, Archives Management, Census Records and Elections.

The Board of Aldermen salaries line reflects the mid-year increase in the City Clerk's salary. There is also \$11,766 in Wage Reserve to accommodate the increase in the City Clerk's salary due to the expansion of duties with the Elections Department. He noted that the Consultants line item has been reduced to zero. There had been \$11.5K in the Consultants line item in FY12 for recodification consulting by Gayle Smalley. That amount was also included in the FY13 but there was no need for it and he does not anticipate a need in FY14. Prior to FY12 there had

never been a line item for Consulting. The amounts indicated for Refreshments/Meals and Awards and Trophies will be used for the end-of-term events for outgoing Aldermen. The Inaugural line item is added every other year and this will be an Inaugural year.

The City Clerk budget indicates a change in full-time salaries which is due in part to an upgrade in one of the clerk position. Jessica Casto will be taking on new responsibilities in the coming year because of Mr. Olson's additional workload with the Elections Department. She will be working on compliance issues with open meeting law and conflict of interest training. Since the City Clerk staff and the Elections staff will be crossed-trained, there is \$6K in wage reserve to potentially add to salaries to account for increased responsibilities. There is also \$2K in wage reserve under Census Records (for Elections staff) for the same purpose. There is capital money in the budget for a new copy machine for the office.

There is a decrease of \$12K which has been moved to Archives Management (with a small increase to accommodate the salary increase for the year). This is for Rosalie Myers who works part-time and will now be working as an assistant to the City Archivist. There are added funds for Document Shredding which will be a City-wide service for all documents coordinated by the Archivist. Archival boxes and folders will also be needed and are provided for as well.

The Elections staff is paid for under the Census Records header. The reduction in the salary is the difference between the Assistant Clerk for Elections and what the former Executive Secretary for Elections had been paid until his retirement. Regular overtime should be reduced because of the larger staff due to the consolidation. There is a reduction in printing because there will be no need for a large mailing as was done last year for the override pro and con mailers. Smaller mailings can be done in-house. Ballots for area councils can also be done in-house.

The Officials with Benefits line refers to the part-time workers that come in to process the census. Three retired Elections Department workers come in and assist in data entry to the state registration system. People who are in the tax work-off program also help open and sort the census forms that come back to the City.

There is dog permit fee revolving fund. Ninety-five percent of the fee goes to Parks & Recreation and the remaining 5% stays with the City Clerk's office to help with the purchase of the dog tags.

Committee Questions and Comments

Election Marketing

The Committee asked about voter turnout for the state special election. Mr. Olson said Newton had a 25% turnout rate. He heard from people that Brookline had more signage about the election, but their turnout rate was 26% and they were also holding their municipal elections. This indicated to him that more signage did not have much of an impact. He did feel it was more important for elections on the municipal level to have more reminders because the statewide advertising would not be a factor. Sandwich boards and other signage in strategic areas would be the plan. A mailing would be cost prohibitive as there are about 54,000 registered voters in the City.

Area Council Elections

It was asked how area council elections should be organized. Mr. Olson said the Board of Alderman has to approve the election day for an area council as stated in the City Charter. Newtonville is requesting October 1st as a date for their election and that will be coming before the Board. They will have two days of pre-voting as well as the official election day. The ballot station will be set up at Village Day on that Sunday and be in City Hall on Monday and Tuesday. In general, he would not want to have area council elections on municipal election days.

Census

The Committee wondered what information from the census comes back to the City from the state registration database. Mr. Olson explained that the street lists are generated for publication. The street list does not have all the information from the census form, but the City can request any information from the census they like. The Committee felt some information might be helpful to the Planning Department for larger economic development purposes.

Equipment

Committee members asked about the tablets that were being considered for the Board. Mr. Olson said they are not in the budget this year as the President of the Board chose not to pursue that. There is \$3K for new microphones in the Aldermanic Chamber as they are failing.

The Committee voted to approve this budget and discharge it to the Committee of the Whole.

SENIOR SERVICES

The proposed FY14 budget for the Department of Senior Services is \$578,802 which is a very small decrease from FY13. This decrease is due mostly to savings in water and oil costs. There was also a buy-back of vacation by a retiring employee.

Jayne Colino, Director of Senior Services addressed the Committee. She started off by saying their Program Coordinator of 20 years retired a little earlier than they anticipated. They hired Molly Sass from an accredited Senior Center in Chicago. She is guiding the direction of the Senior Center in terms of programming and marketing. There is a new brochure, a newly designed website and a presence on Facebook. Ms. Colino said the Senior Services Department is serving people from their 50s to over 100 years old and they need to recognize the different needs of each group. She noted that 22% of the population of Newton is over the age of 60, and just under half of the households in Newton have at least one member who is over the age of 60.

The changes in the budget are minimal. The largest change in the line item was vacation and special leave buy-back for the retired Program Coordinator. The salary level has changed with the new Program Coordinator hire. There is an opening for an Outreach Worker as the previous Outreach Worker is functioning in City Hall working as the Community social worker.

The water usage costs have gone down due to a better irrigation system and a concerted effort to reduce waste. Heating oil charges are going away because they have switched to a gas burner.

Strategic Plan

Ms. Colino explained that they have completed the first ever strategic plan for the Department of Senior Services. It is a one to three year plan. Staff, residents and other providers helped put together their mission and their new vision. The process was led by the Services Opportunities After Fifty-Five consulting group and they will continue to work with them to implement and

support the plan. The plan is inspired by the concepts of age-friendly and livable communities. The specific areas that come up are housing, transportation and awareness. Awareness includes the demographics and the resources that are available to help support people's choices on how to age in the City of Newton. Council on Aging members are being appointed to and attending as many City meetings as possible. The point of this is to advocate for the senior point of view when thinking about any issue in the City.

Needs Assessment

It became clear from working on the strategic plan that a Needs Assessment should be the next step to determine what the City should be providing to its senior population. The goal is to work with the UMass Gerontology Institute. The Institute has done five Needs Assessment studies in smaller communities here in Massachusetts and Ms. Colino is very excited by what she has seen in the reports and how that sort of data could be very beneficial to fulfilling the mission of the Senior Services Department. The first part of the assessment is a demographic analysis based on the American Community Survey and US Census data to set the context for the relevant questions and put the answers in the context of that demographic information. There is a docket item that will come before the Finance Committee next week requesting to expend a \$30K donation that was received from a long-term care facility. They would like to use that money for the Needs Assessment. The Senior Citizens Fund of Newton and the Council on Aging is willing to contribute more funds if that is necessary beyond the \$30K.

Revolving Accounts

Transportation

The Senior Citizen Fund underwrote a fundraising letter to ask for support and donations to expand transportation into village centers. Transportation now goes to doctor's appointments, grocery stores, houses of worship, adult day health centers, Senior Center, Library, City Hall and other community events. They were able to raise \$10K and presented that to the Mayor to help provided expanded service into village centers. Those funds have been put into the Transportation Revolving Fund which has grown so that they have a buffer when needs rise and fall.

The Senior Parking Pass program is growing as the over 60 population has been growing. The revenue is growing as well and she feels that people who are driving should be subsidizing those who are not driving. Therefore, she would like to look at putting those funds into the Senior Center Transportation revolving account instead of back into the General Fund. About 2700 stickers were sold in the last 2-year cycle. In the first 10 months of this new 2-year cycle, the same amount has been sold so far.

State Council on Aging Formula Grant

Ms. Colino said the Mass Association of Council on Aging and Senior Center Directors is the state association that helps to promote professionalism within the organizations but is also their advocate at the state house. Newton got the largest single percentage increase in the Elder Affairs line items out of House Ways and Means. They are asking for \$8 per elder from \$7 per elder which would result in a \$20K increase. This is only half way through the legislative process but they have significant support and are very optimistic.

CIP

The one item in the CIP is to change over the air handlers and the fans and a heating coil within the heating and cooling system in the Senior Center. They are 20 years old are overdue for an upgrade. They have also just finished a gas conversion.

Committee Questions and Comments**Elders at Risk**

The Committee asked if there was a network of support for elders if it became apparent through multiple or concerning calls to police or other departments, that there was some sort of problem. Ms. Colino said there is indeed cooperation and coordination through several departments including Health and Human Services, Senior Service, Law Dept, Police Dept., Inspectional Services and Fire occasionally. The main vehicle is through the Citizens Support Initiative (CSI). CSI was initiated under this administration in recognition that there are patterns of behavior that can cut across several departments (those listed above) and utilize resources in inappropriate or concerning ways. CSI meets every other week and individuals are brought up that are of concern. They are able to put their resources and thoughts together to determine the best way to help and offer help. But the help is not always welcome and there is only so much they can do. They continue to track, however, and try to make in-roads whenever they can.

Needs Assessment

It was asked that a link to a Needs Assessment that has been done by the UMass Gerontology Initiative be made available. The Committee would like to see an example of the work.

Please see link below:

http://www.umb.edu/editor_uploads/images/Marshfield%20COA%20report%20final-1.pdf

Transportation Fund

A suggestion was made the local businesses be asked to donate to the Transportation fund. Considering the service would be bringing customers to their establishments, it seems like a logical fit. Ms. Colino said she finds that idea very intriguing and would like to bring them some data. They have asked Veteran's Taxi, their current provider, to track the specific addresses of drop-offs. If they can show the numbers to the businesses, she feels that would provide strong evidence of the value of the service to the businesses. Peripheral businesses to those that are specifically services reap the benefit as well and they would be good to target too. Ald. Linsky would bring up this idea to the Economic Development Commission even in advance of such data.

Snow Waivers

There was a question regarding snow shoveling waivers and how many people have applied. There are always fewer volunteers than those who are exempt. They are looking at more helpful ways to match people. Those people who went unmatched were informed that they would not be fined or cited. People also had to understand that the volunteers are there to clear the public way and not their private property. Snow removal contractors have been added to the referral program. Half the number of people applied this year than last year and 85% were eligible. More people applied last year but only 50% were eligible. People now better understand the criteria for waivers.

The Committee voted to approve this budget and discharge it to the Committee of the Whole.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The proposed FY14 budget for the Health & Human Services Department is \$3,170,375 which is a less than 1% decrease over the FY13 budget.

Dori Zaleznik, Commissioner of Health and Human Services, addressed the Committee. The department surrendered the administration of burial permits to the City Clerk's office and in return took over Alcohol Permits. The Alcohol permits take much more time than the burial permits and administrative assistance is needed. There was a \$25K line item for a part-time position but added a full-time position. Utility costs are down because they are no longer at the Centre Street location. The Youth Services Director was moved from being grant funded to city funded and from part-time to full-time. This will also allow for more grant-writing time. The Counseling Services line item is funded for \$9K which allows them to continue with Project Interface. This was previously grant supported and services more than 300 families a year by directing them to appropriate services for counseling. The School Department funds the other \$9K that is necessary.

FY13 Accomplishments:

- The Department was awarded a 5-year FDA grant for environmental health services to bolster the food safety program by complying with FDA voluntary standards. The biggest accomplishment was finding a software package to put the food inspections out in the field.
- Increase in participation in school-based flu vaccination clinics.
- Began to work with a wellness program (Wellcoin) for community and staff.
- Created a Youth Services Division and ran two successful youth summits.

FY14 Goals

- Create a grading system for restaurants in conjunction with the food inspection software. They will attempt to work with restaurants to help them get the best grade possible.
- Increase flu vaccination rates. The school-based clinics are very popular and they will try to increase both student and staff participation.
- Wellcoin allows one to earn virtual currency by doing any number of healthy things. The currency can be redeemed at local businesses who partner with the program. Parks & Recreation will also be involved, offering reduced rate swim passes, and things of that nature. The City does not pay Wellcoin, but as a model City, we will be using their program and recruiting people to join and businesses to partner. The goal is to come up with something that actually works to help people make healthier choices. The launch announcement is May 30th.
- Launch the third annual free Shingles vaccine campaign for people over age 60. This is a difficult vaccine to find at many doctor's offices and it is expensive, so the City uses all the doses they receive.
- The Health Advisory Council meets with the Commissioner 4 times a year. It has undertaken a project to identify possible expansions to the tobacco ordinance. There are suggestions from the state that are being reviewed and then will work with the Board.
- Make the Youth Services Program Director a full-time position and move it from grant funding to City funding. A pilot summer intern program for 6 high school students is something they would like to initiate. There would be a career oriented curriculum associated with this and eventual expansion if successful. Expand drug and alcohol prevention programs to Junior and Senior years in high school instead of just in the

Freshman year. Offer a time management curriculum to all students in the 8th or 9th grades. Currently, only special needs students receive this instruction.

Revolving Accounts

The large accounts are grant funded. There are a few service accounts which are used for emergency needs for vulnerable citizens. These are generally accessed by the Community Social Worker.

Committee Questions and Comments

Mosquito Control

Ald. Baker explained that he attended an MMA meeting and was able to get support for the bill that allows pesticide licensing exemptions for those who ride bicycles and drop the larvacides into catch basins for mosquito control. Otherwise, there is a huge manual and training exercise which is a disincentive for people to do this important service for the entire state. Mass Audubon does not oppose this. This is to reduce the mosquito population and mosquito-borne illnesses.

School Nurses

There is a school nurse at each school in the City as well as a couple of floating positions.

Emergency Preparedness

There is an Emergency Preparedness grant and they use that to run various tabletop exercises including the Boston Marathon incident.

Grants/Youth Services

The Committee asked if moving the Youth Services Director from grant funding would be a disincentive to look for more grant money. Commissioner Zaleznik said moving her to full-time actually provided more time for grant-writing. They are not looking to be a direct service provider but a clearinghouse and connectivity provider. There is an online resource book under Youth Services on the website. It was mentioned that Middle School is a difficult time and would be a good place to focus some resources.

Animals

There was a concern about turkeys and other wildlife and how citizens can co-exist. Commissioner Zaleznik said the animals are protected by law. Police can only kill an animal if there is an attack. The department's main responsibility with animals is to do rabies testing. They deal with a lot of bats in the summer.

The Committee voted to approve this budget and discharge it to the Committee of the Whole.

CITY SOLICITOR

The proposed FY14 budget for the Law Department is \$1,268,966 which is a 2.4% increase over the FY13 budget.

City Solicitor, Donnalynn Kahn addressed the Committee.

FY13 Accomplishments

- The Department was able to coordinate all the telecommunication providers' contracts to expire at the same time. This allowed for one ascertainment instead of several during the

year which was a complicated process. An Ascertainment Group has been formed that will work with the schools, and other departments to determine the telecommunication needs of the City.

- Bringing the Labor Law component in-house has been very successful. This has helped keep labor grievances down and regular meetings with the unions have been underway. As a result, Labor relations have improved dramatically between the largest unions (DPW, Police and Fire) and there is a level of trust that has not been there in the past. This has also resulted in cost savings.
- Last year there were 21 school cases poised for potential litigation. This year there were 13. Regular meetings with education staff have helped ward off situations that do not warrant litigation.
- Police detail collections have gone well. Businesses owed quite a bit of money and they have gotten that down to about \$25K still outstanding from about \$200K. There is also a 14% interest charge on overdue bills and this has been an incentive to pay. Due dates on bills have been cut down to 90 days from 120 days. Ms. Kahn would like to see that go down even more. They are working on getting a credit card payment system going for detail expenses so that they get secured payment.
- Continued work with the Retirement Board and the Pension Reform Act/

FY14 Goals

- The Department will be keeping up to date on the many new municipal and state law changes. In particular there are significant changes in the dog laws and hearings for those with problem dogs. Also, Christian's Law relates to wearing Coast Guard approved flotation devices in natural bodies of water. A family brought such a device to a lake, but the lake had rules prohibiting any flotation devices and the child drowned. The City of Newton is looking into expanding the allowance to the Gath Pool and not just Crystal Lake. They are also working with the Health Department on the new law and regulations for Medical Marijuana Dispensaries. There is a limit to how many are allowed in a city or town and this is an ongoing discussion. They will also be looking at the new possible ice cream vendor laws and fingerprinting.
- Simplify permitting and licensing process by changing some of the uses to permits from licenses. Parks & Recreation is very supportive of this.
- Fees and fines need to be cleaned up and reviewed in the ordinances as there is some contradictory and/or unclear language.
- Continue work with Labor Law issues.

Personnel

Ms. Kahn said she expects that there will be a significant amount of work coming to the Law Department now that the override has passed and projects will be underway. The current issues are well staffed but the upcoming projects may be problematic. She is not including anything in the budget for more staff right now, but the need for an expert in Construction Law may prove necessary and that remains to be seen. Ms. Kahn wants the Law Department to be able to service the City as well as possible and will keep a close eye on this.

Committee Questions and Comments

Ms. Kahn has been working closely with the Procurement Officer on RFPs, etc. When the projects get up and running many legal issues do come up, however. They have worked on

some bid protests with the Procurement Officer which have turned out well and continue to work closely with him.

Teachers Union

It was asked if the Law Department worked with the Teachers Union. Ms. Kahn said they do not and the School Department hires outside lawyers. She felt that bringing that in-house would work well as it has for the City. Rather than have the School Dept. use outside counsel for every grievance and arbitration that has come up, the Law Department has stepped in and helped. The Teachers' Union contracts are up in August of 2014 and Maureen Lemieux said they would start talks with them in October of 2013. The City did not use any attorneys when negotiating teacher contracts the last time around and it saved a tremendous amount of money. There were no lawyers on either side. Ms. Lemieux said the Schools are working very closely with the Law Department on many issues and feels they will start using it more and more and lessen the need for outside counsel.

Lawsuits

Ms. Kahn said they usually end up trying 2 or 3 large cases a year. The City just won a large race discrimination case with the Fire Department. She has not needed much money in the Claims and Settlements account. They are very early on in other cases and therefore has no sense of what might be needed in the future.

Police Details

It was suggested that businesses pay up-front for police details. This would avoid the non-payment issue that has been a problem in the past. Ms. Kahn said that is why they are trying to set up the credit card payment system.

Public Private Partnerships

Looking at private-public partnership to do work on public land projects would be a good idea. Ald. Rice mentioned that some other cities have given over public land to private use, then renovated or restored with private money and given back to the City. This avoids putting private money into a public bidding process. Ms. Kahn said she would love to discuss this more and to talk to Parks & Recreation. She noted that Little Leagues so similar projects in taking care of fields.

Legal Research

Ms. Kahn said they have negotiated a great online package for research. So much is available on the web right now too. They have two interns to work on research as well and that has been very helpful.

Special Ed Citizen Concern

Ald. Sangiolo noted that a citizen from Ward 2 is concerned with the time spent by the Law Dept. on special education cases. She asked Ms. Kahn to provide information on how many cases have been worked on in regard to special education, as well as an explanation of the process of working on such cases. Ms. Kahn noted that they are in a couple of litigation matters with that citizen right now: one case in front of the public records supervisor; and the other is in Superior Court. She has been giving out as much detailed information as possible.

Dedicated BOA Attorney

There was sentiment from the Committee that a lawyer dedicated to the Board of Aldermen should be considered. This would exclude any conflict of interest with the Executive Department. This might be something that the Board wants on occasion and perhaps it does not have to be a full-time position.

The Committee voted to approve this budget and discharge it to the Committee of the Whole.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Mah Sangiolo, Chairman