

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

BUDGET MEETING

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY MAY 9, 2012

Present: Ald. Sangiolo, Linsky, Rice, Blazar, Fischman, Hess-Mahan

Absent: Ald. Baker, Merrill

City Staff: Dori Zaleznik (Commissioner, Health and Human Services), Linda Walsh (Health Department) Jayne Colino (Director, Senior Center), Donnalynn Kahn (City Solicitor), David Olson (City Clerk/Clerk of the Board), Maureen Lemieux (Chief Financial Officer), Rebecca Smith (Committee Clerk)

BUDGET AND CIP ITEMS:

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

SENIOR SERVICES

SOLICITOR

CITY CLERK

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#383-11(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter the FY13 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$312,979,964 passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY13-FY17 Capital Improvement Program (#383-11). [04-09-12 @ 2:48 PM]

EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION: 04/17/12; LAST DATE TO PASS THE BUDGET 06/01/12

STRAW VOTE APPROVED 6-0

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#383-11 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY13-FY17 Capital Improvement Program pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter and the FY12 Supplemental Capital budget which require Board of Aldermen approval to finance new capital projects over the next several years. [10/31/11 @ 3:12 PM]

STRAW VOTE APPROVED 6-0

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Dori Zaleznik, Commissioner for Health and Human Services joined the Committee to discuss her budget. She first outlined the department's accomplishments over the past year:

- 1) Environmental health inspections have increased by 51%

- 2) The vaccination rate for the flu has increased by 24% which is significant. There are many communities that have not been able to reach that percentage because they do not have clinics in each building.
- 3) They partnered with Human Resources to put on the “Invest in Yourself” program.
- 4) A monthly wellness newsletter has been established
- 5) Emergency preparedness exercises have occurred
- 6) The Human Services branch developed and implemented an emergency services request tracking system.

Commissioner Zaleznik then discussed the goals for this coming fiscal year which include the following:

- 1) Computerize health inspection forms which can be sent wirelessly and shared between Health, ISD, and the Fire Department so that these departments can coordinate inspections and have access to the most current inspection information.
- 2) Create a grading system for our restaurants which will be put on an electronic map showing the location of the restaurant and the grade it receives. The Commissioner intends to work with restaurant facilities to come up with a meaningful system. Having this information so easily accessible for the public will hopefully make restaurants even more accountable. The environmental health inspectors will be assigned the responsibility of grading these restaurants.
- 3) Increase the flu vaccination rate by 2%. Perhaps one way to do this is to organize make-up clinics in each school since some people miss the vaccine if they cannot make it one day.
- 4) Develop wellness initiatives for public health week, including a yoga program
- 5) Create a smoking cessation program.
- 6) Organize the second annual shingles vaccine program, which was very successful this past year for which the department purchased \$18,000 worth of the vaccine which is an expensive vaccine to purchase and a difficult one to store. Because of these two factors many private physicians’ offices don’t offer it. The City gave the vaccine for free to people over 60 with permission from their doctor. This is the second year that vaccine money has been dedicated in the budget (line item 5499 on page 5 of the HHS section). If there is additional vaccine money after the purchase of the shingles vaccine then a second vaccination program with a different vaccine may be entertained.
- 7) Continue the Emergency Preparedness program, this time to address a different emergency situation.
- 8) Locate a new human services coordinator to take the place of Ana Gonzalez who has been promoted to the Community Engagement Officer position in the executive office.
- 9) Fill the newly created part-time youth services person, which is grant supported. Investigate options to make this a long-standing and sustainable position through fundraising efforts.

- 10) Have the Licensing Commission review the rules and regulations that have been in place since 2004
- 11) Prepare for mosquito season. The Commissioner commented that because we had such a dry winter we may not have to do some of the early work in the springtime.

The Commissioner entertained questions from the Committee:

Ald. Linsky asked the Commissioner how long the shingles vaccine lasts. The Commissioner explained that it appears to last forever. With vaccines there are sometimes anomalies where someone may need a booster, but from what's been seen so far that isn't the case. The Commissioner also noted that the vaccine works even if a person has had the virus before; if one waits 6-9 months after they have it, the vaccine is still effective for future infections.

Commissioner Zaleznik clarified that Licensing is supported by 2 Health Department clerks and the Licensing Commission is staffed by the Commissioner. The reason why the Licensing function isn't a block in the organization chart is because there aren't any specific positions assigned to Licensing. Rather, this function is assigned to pre-existing positions.

Ald. Fischman asked about the history of youth services within the City. Commissioner Zaleznik explained that there was a volunteer youth services coordinator not long ago, and before that there were youth outreach workers and a full time supervisor for them. By having a city directed position the Department can make sure that collaborations between and city and the youth in need will continue to foster. Youth and families are a big part of our community and the City wants that population to continue to thrive. During the coming year, the Department will be working on fundraising and trying to figure out ways to keep the position funded. Commissioner Zaleznik informed the Committee that services for people 60 and under are done through the Riverside Community Center, and the overwhelming amount of services provided there are for youths.

Commissioner Zaleznik was asked whether the City would be partnering with the community farm to promote healthy eating. The Commissioner explained that the department will be focusing on one aspect of wellness at a time. This year is geared towards activity since one of the biggest factors of obesity is that people just aren't moving as much. Ald. Sangiolo asked if the Health Department is working at all with the schools to promote activity since every year recess gets cut, which is counterintuitive to wellness goals. Additionally, Ald. Sangiolo shared her concern that lunch times continue to be reduced so by the time children get through the line lunch time is over and they are forced to eat very quickly. She is concerned that this isn't healthy practice. Commissioner Zaleznik would love to work more with the schools. She also noted that one of the big issues with getting good food into the schools is the lack of full kitchens in the elementary schools. As we move forward it is going to be required that kitchens are included in the building plans.

Ald. Rice asked whether the Department will be moving to a different location soon. Commissioner Zaleznik informed the Committee that the CIP includes renovations to the Veteran's wing of City Hall so that the Health and Human Services Department can move into that location at a time in the future.

Ald. Linsky asked the Commissioner whether her Department is taking any measures to combat childhood obesity. The Commissioner noted that the City did sign up for the First Lady's "Let's Move" program but so far that program hasn't led to any funding source.

Ald. Linsky then moved a straw vote of approval which carried unanimously.

SENIOR SERVICES

Jayne Colino, Director of the Senior Center, listed the accomplishments of the Senior Center from fiscal 2012:

- 1) The Senior Center is serving more seniors and has increased the number of new seniors that it serves.
- 2) The number of seniors utilizing the transportation system provided has increased and the center has developed a new software system that allows for the center to keep track of it.
- 3) Expanded programs through new collaborations. They have developed the first senior bike program in the city that was run jointly with Bike Newton and was guided by members of the group and by the local police.
- 4) Worked on member engagement and the completion of a strategic plan so that they know how to best serve the senior residents of Newton and intends to raise awareness about aging in the community as well as determine what people are looking for to help them age well in their community.

Ms. Colino then moved on to the Senior Center's desired goals. She explained that the 5 goals for the center are: programs, social services, transportation, engagement, and connectivity.

- 1) Ms. Colino has set a goal to have an offering of 50 programs reach a participation of 500 people each month. She explained the Joanne Fischer, the current Program Manager, will be retiring soon, so the center will have to look to hire a new person to fill this role.
- 2) The center will conduct a survey of Newton residents 50 years and older, which has never been done before.
- 3) A new transportation contract has been awarded again to Veteran's Taxi. The service for this contract has been expanded to include the Library, City Hall, and other city events that may be occurring. The contract begins on July 1. The service to City Hall will begin on Mondays and Wednesdays. The service to the Library will take place on Sundays and will begin in the fall (since the library doesn't open on Sundays in the summer). Come the end of the first contract year, the service to City Hall will likely expand to include Fridays as well.
- 4) In terms of mental health services, the senior center will continue to identify at risk elders and will work jointly with other city departments to identify "frequent flyers" in the departments to make sure that risks are being addressed for these people. Additionally, home safety checks will continue and will hopefully increase to 2 per month. For these checks people come in and ask the city to do a safety check of the home. The rotary club works with the Senior Center to make sure that these are accomplished.

Ms. Colino entertained questions from the committee. Ald. Linsky asked for clarification on the transportation program. Ms. Colino explained that the service is from home to location. Often times if there are multiple people going to one location Veteran's Taxi will use a van but the Senior Center tries not to have anyone riding in the van too long.

Ms. Colino responded to an inquiry about the community social worker and how much interaction that position, once filled again, will have with the Senior Center. She stated that sometimes elder cases are shared with this position and that the Senior Center often also works with cases relating to fuel assistance and food stamps.

Ald. Blazar asked Ms. Colino whether she offers support for people with aging parents and who are looking for aid in finding assisted living facilities. Ms. Colino explained that the Senior Center has access to resources and does assist people to the best of their ability should they be in need.

Ald. Rice asked Ms. Colino about how the sidewalk waiver program went this winter. Ms. Colino explained that it was a challenge for the department as the answers on these forms didn't always accurately depict the need of the applicant. Additionally finding enough snow shovel volunteers was a difficult. Ald. Rice followed up by asking what kind of improvements can be made to this process for next year. She explained that as the process went on throughout the season, most of the administrative issues were worked out. The main challenge for the next year is to calm people about the new ordinance and make sure they understand that the worst thing that can happen for a violation is a letter of non-compliance; there will be no fines next year. The public should also understand that letters of non-compliance are distributed only upon complaints by other residents; there is no one patrolling.

Ald. Hess-Mahan moved a straw vote of approval of this budget which carried unanimously.

SOLICITOR

Chairman's Note: The Committee received an email message from a resident who has issues with the City Solicitor's representation of the School Department in cases involving SPED. Because of the nature of his email, the Chair thought it wise to provide the Board with a transcription of the budget discussion:

[Transcript]

CITY CLERK

David Olson, City Clerk and Clerk of the Board, joined the Committee to discuss his budget. He began by explaining that line item 5712 and 5753 have dropped because this is not a retirement year. He noted that the budget for the Clerk's side of the office has not changed at all. Though one thing that is not reflected in the Clerk's budget is that there will be a part time archivist (not the position currently assigned to Rosalie Myers, who is a research assistant) in the Library budget who will actually be working under the guidance of the Clerk.

Mr. Olson explained that there will be some technological advancement that will benefit this office but those are included in the IT Department budget. The first is agenda

management software which will hopefully be implemented in the coming year, and the second is a table top smart-board, a mobile projector and sound system to be used in the conference rooms. Ms. Lemieux explained that this has already been approved so it should be on its way.

Ald. Hess-Mahan expressed his desire for all the Aldermen to go paperless and wants everything that is given to the Clerk's office to be transferred electronically. Ms. Lemieux commented that at the Finance cluster, Ann Canaro and Joe Mulvey have made great progress in understanding that they need to articulate needs. Ms. Lemieux believes that the IT Department was unable, under the previous administration, to make certain purchases, which has left the city behind with certain technologies; she stated that things are moving forward, but cautioned that it won't happen overnight. The Committee also expressed frustration over the poorly functioning search engine on the website. Mr. Olson explained that the IT Department is working towards improving this.

Ald. Sangiolo commented that she has heard from the Clerk's office, the Library, and the Newton History Museum about the need for storage space. Locating storage spaces is in the CIP but it is not high on the list. Ms. Lemieux commented that if we continue the process to figure out where we are going to put the people that work for the city we will hopefully be finding efficiencies for where we can use as storage. Stephanie Gilman, Commissioner of Public Buildings, is responsible for the space planning, but everyone is aware that the city is in need of archival space. Mr. Olson commented that he has spoken extensively with the Public Buildings Department about tweaking the CIP rankings so that it isn't solely dependent on the public safety aspect since, because of this, archival needs are never a priority.

Ald. Hess-Mahan then moved a straw vote of approval of the Clerk's budget which carried unanimously

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Sangiolo, Chairman