

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

**BUDGET MEETING**

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2011

**7:00PM Room 222**

**ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR DISCUSSION:**

**BUDGET AND CIP ITEMS**

**SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

**PARKS AND RECREATION**

**NEWTON HISTORY**

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**SENIOR SERVICES**

**SOLICITOR**

**LIBRARY**

**CLERK**

**REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES**

#129-11 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter the FY12 Municipal/School Operating Budget passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY12-FY16 Capital Improvement Program (#311-10). [04-11-11 @5:59 PM]

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION: 04/20/10; LAST DATE TO PASS BUDGET 06/4/10**

**REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES**

#311-10 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY'12-FY'16 Capital Improvement Program, totaling \$174,246,135 pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter and the FY'11 Supplemental Capital budget which require Board of Aldermen approval to finance new capital projects over the next several years. [10/18/10 @5:24PM]

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Sangiolo, Chairman

The location of this meeting is handicap accessible, and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons requiring assistance. If you have a special accommodation need, please contact the Newton ADA Coordinator Kathleen Cahill, 617-796-1125, via email at [KCahill@newtonma.gov](mailto:KCahill@newtonma.gov) or via TDD/TTY at (617) 796-1089 at least two days in advance of the meeting date.

**Rebecca Smith**

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Date sent: Fri, 29 Apr 2011 13:00:48 -0400  
Subject: Aldermen questions  
To: "Rebecca Smith" <rsmith@newtonma.gov>  
From: "Mary Burns" <Mary\_Burns@newton.k12.ma.us>

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NEWTON, MA. 02159

Hi Rebecca - here are David's answers to the Aldermen's questions. Please let me know if you have any questions. Mary

**From Alderman Linsky:**

I would like to receive information from the report prepared by School Committee member Reenie Murphy on the status of the School Dept's arrangements with Boston College School of Education for the provision of student teachers and aids in Newton public school classrooms.

***With the exception of our traditional partnership, we continue to have a strong partnership with BC which provides us with student teachers. The Mayor has been exploring new partnerships with Boston College.***

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I would also like to be further advised as to the School Dept.'s efforts in promoting alumni associations in support of the various schools, especially Newton North High School.

***NSF Board members have had discussions with the principals of both high schools regarding alumni. In practice, this has proven difficult in the past due to the labor and time necessary to maintain accurate lists of alumni contact information and to follow up with individual alumni. Because neither the schools nor the NSF has the staff to handle very labor intensive fund-raising efforts, they are exploring ideas on how they might do this efficiently enough to make it worthwhile.***

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**From Alderman Swiston:**

Can we have the items on page 58 listed in order of priority with the understanding that items may be taken out of order depending on how much additional money (if any) we get back? And, a request that if an item gets taken out of order, such action would be accompanied by an fyi explanation?

This is essentially a follow up on the issue the Alderman Shapiro had raised at the

presentation last week. He raised the question about why the "List of additions with \$696,113 in additional State Aid - Best Case" on page 58 was not prioritized. The answer seemed to be that not all line items could be measured equally because of the different cost associated with each item.

My follow-up is that I can appreciate the different costs. However, if the items can be prioritized with indicators on whether an item was able to be broken up or not AND the caveat that some times, an ability to get 2-3 lesser items instead of only 1 top item would be more prudent, I think it would be reasonable to see the list prioritized.

In fact, that would be a comment I have for the whole budget. The "Guidelines" and "driving factors" don't actually follow for me.

For instance, the #1 "Guiding Principle" is that NPS "Remains focused on the priority of improving student achievement". However, that is being measured by "support for professional development for faculty, support for literacy and math instruction goals (which aren't stated) and support for technology learning". For me, I would think that in order to improve student achievement, one would be better off actually measuring student achievement whether through diagnostic tests or through MCAS scores following the students (I.e. that last year's 3rd graders are now doing better as 4th graders) or better yet, that "Little Joanie" did better this year than she did the year before. And then, the #1 budget driver is "class size" ... which, while studies have shown that smaller class sizes have produced greater student achievement, studies have also shown that high performing teachers have produced greater student achievement as well and in fact, a high performing teacher has more impact on students within a larger class size than a low performing teacher has on a small class size.

So, ideally, I would be asking to have all of the School's priorities clearly articulated with clear statements about how one planned to measure whether or not the priority was being met. However, at a minimum, I would just like to have the items on page 58 listed in order of priority with the understanding that items may be taken out of order depending on how much additional money (if any) we get back, however if an item gets taken out of order, such action would be accompanied by an explanation.

***We remain cautiously optimistic that we will receive additional funding from the state. At the conclusion of the budget process, we reviewed the criteria that would be used in determining what would be added back. As you will notice, restoring educational programs, adding back support for special education and reducing class size, are the major areas of focus. We also want to ensure that we have sufficient reserves for unanticipated expenses.***

***We do not yet have a finalized list of specific items that we would add back because we are still analyzing the impact of the budget changes. For example, both high schools are still looking at course requests and how to most***

**efficiently use staff. In addition, the Student Services Department is still assessing the reduction in special education staffing and determining how best to employ fewer staff. That being said, we have publicly stated that we will do everything possible to partially restore programs, if we are not able to fully reinstate them. For example, we could make elementary art 50 minutes rather than 45.**

**There was also a question regarding our current Systemwide Goals and how they are being measured. Attached is a link to those Goals:**

**<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0B3K5jASxP2pIOGYyMzl2NmUtOWQwYS00ZjA0LWlxYmltMTNhYzI0Mjc0OWU5&hl=en&pli=1>**

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**From Alderman Johnson:**

I had asked Sandy G. about who, as employees of the City/School Dept. and not residents of Newton, are eligible to have their children attend the Newton Schools. What is the number taking advantage of this and at what cost to the City, since I do not think that we charge them any tuition?

***School staff in NTA Units A, B, C, D, E, NESAs, the Custodial Union and school nurses may apply for placement of their children in the Newton Public Schools. The application process and policy is detailed in the Newton Public Schools' website under the Quick Link entitled "Out of Assigned District Information".***

***According to the November 2010 Enrollment Analysis Report for Newton Public Schools (p. 93), in the current school year 2010-11, 73 faculty children attend the schools in Grades K through 12. Last school year, (2009-10), 73 faculty children attended the schools, and the year before (2008-09), the number was 68 children.***

***Tuition is not charged; applying for enrollment in the Newton Public Schools is allowed by contract. With 73 faculty children placed over 21 schools, there are approximately 3.5 faculty children per school, on average. The cost for 3.5 additional students per school is not significant as students fit within existing classrooms.***

How do we calculate the dollars for insurance, e.g. a common practice is to take a certain percentage of the employee's salary [23% of base compensation]?

***Insurance costs, mainly health insurance, are calculated by multiplying the***

**actual and projected numbers of enrollees in each health plan times new rates updated yearly by the City of Newton. Also reflected in the calculation are expected personnel changes such as increases in retirees, increases or decreases in staffing due to enrollment changes and program adjustments, and other expected fluctuations. The average teaching salary used for projected increases or decreases in staffing is \$54,000, not including benefits.**

**The average amount per FTE used for all benefits is \$8,600, including \$7,100 for health insurance, \$500 for dental insurance, and \$1,000 for the Medicare payroll tax. In addition, for each FTE decrease, the assumption is unemployment will go up by \$10,600, based on recent actual claims.**

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Mary Burns

Newton Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent

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# FY12 Budget Guidelines for Add-backs

1. Reduces impact of program reductions.
2. Increases flexibility/supports in Special Education.
3. Remediates class size inequities where possible.
4. Ensures that we have sufficient reserves/flexibility given budget assumptions.

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