

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2010

Present: Ald. Sangiolo (Chairman), Merrill, Rice, Blazar, Linsky, Baker, Hess-Mahan, Fischman
Also Present: Ald. Brian Yates, Fuller, Lennon
City Staff: Bob DeRubeis (Commissioner of Parks and Recreation), Bob Rooney (Chief Operating Officer), Linda Walsh (Interim Commissioner of Health and Human Services), Rebecca Smith (Committee Clerk).

Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#240-10(2) KAREN LISCHINSKY, 230 Walnut Street, Newtonville, appointed as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term of office to expire November 1, 2013 (60 days 11/29/2010). [10/01/2010@ 12:34pm]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Karen Lischinsky joined the Committee at the table to discuss her appointment to the Youth Commission. Ms. Lischinsky is a Sociologist who teaches full time at Curry College as well as part time at the BU prison program. She notes that in Newton there is so much attention paid to the high achiever that students in other categories feel excluded from the community. She has heard sentiments like this first hand from the young men she teaches at the prison program. Many of the people she encounters there didn't feel supported by, or included in, their community and ended up spending time with the wrong crowd simply because they felt accepted. Ms. Lischinsky would like lessen the occurrence of such unfortunate instances by working to make all students feel included in the community and by helping them to find and create different and interesting activities through which they can build a positive social network. Following this discussion with Ms. Lischinsky Ald. Linsky moved approval of the appointment.

#91-10(3) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR re-appointing LINDA WALSH Interim Director of Health and Human Services, effective October 1, 2010 until a permanent replacement is hired, but not to exceed 90 days when the temporary appointment may be extended with Board of Aldermen approval pursuant to §3- 6 of the City Charter. [09/01/10 @4:38 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0 (Sangiolo not voting)**

NOTE: Bob Rooney, Chief Operating Officer, joined the Committee to address their concerns about the length of time it is taking to hire a full-time replacement for this position. The Committee made it known that they are very happy with the work that Linda Walsh is doing and their interest in an explanation from the Executive Department is in no way a reflection on her. Ald. Hess-Mahan, Yates, Baker, and Linsky voiced their concerns about the significant delay in filling department head positions stating that such integral positions should be a priority and shouldn't take 10 months to begin to fill. Furthermore, they are concerned with the lack of

communication between the Mayor's office and the Board; they would like the Mayor's office to keep the Board abreast on their progress in situations like this so that they aren't left wondering.

Mr. Rooney explained that the reason for the delay is simply that the process is very time consuming and labor intensive and it would be impossible to fill all available positions at once. The current administration has had to hire a number of people and this position happens to be towards the bottom of the list which speaks to administration's confidence that the department is currently stable and in good hands. Mr. Rooney went on to say that the administration does not want to rush to fill these important positions; if they don't find exactly what they are looking for in one crop of applicants they have no qualms about re-posting a job. The Committee further expressed their concern that the delay is a burden on those filling interim director positions since they are essentially working two jobs- their previous job and the job they are filling in for. Mr. Rooney recognizes this and is grateful to the interim directors for their continued hard work. Ald. Merrill moved approval of the appointment after this discussion.

REFERRED TO PUB SAFETY & TRANS AND PROG & SERV COMMITTEES

#20-10 ALD. HESS-MAHAN AND HARNEY requesting special legislation prohibiting the use of handheld mobile devices to send, read or receive electronic messages while operating a motor vehicle within the City of Newton and in order to protect its citizens and to limit unnecessary motor vehicle accidents, injuries, and fatalities, and that the appropriate committees conduct a public hearing to examine the feasibility thereof. [01/04/10 @ 5:07 PM]

PUB SAFETY VOTED NO ACTION NECESSARY ON 9/22/10

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0 (Sangiolo not voting)

NOTE: Since the docketing of this item the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has passed a ban on texting while driving. This item is no longer necessary since the ban applies to all cities/towns within the Commonwealth. Ald. Hess-Mahan moved a vote of No Action Necessary.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#274-08 ALD. JOHNSON AND SANGIOLO proposing a RESOLUTION to His Honor the Mayor requesting that he create a plan to move the Child Care Commission to a self-sustaining model for FY2010. [07/17/08 @ 9:53 AM]

FINANCE VOTED NO ACTION NECESSARY ON 3/8/10

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0 (Hess-Mahan and Baker not voting)

NOTE: Since the docketing of this item it has been decided by the administration that the Child Care Commission must be self-sustaining by FY2012. As this decision renders this docket item unnecessary Ald. Sangiolo moved a vote of No Action Necessary.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#262-10 PRESIDENT LENNON AND ALDERMAN FULLER recommending that the 2010 – 2011 Rules and Orders of the Board of Aldermen be amended to establish a FINANCIAL AUDIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE. The advisory committee will report to the Board of Aldermen through the

Finance Committee. The focus of the committee's work will be on the annual financial audit of the City and any other fiscal accountability matters, as deemed important by the Finance Committee, needing review.

[09-13-10 @ 1:52 PM]

APPROVED BY FINANCE 7-0

ACTION: HELD 6-0 (Hess-Mahan and Sangiolo not voting)
REFERRED TO RULES SUB COMMITTEE 6-0 (Hess-Mahan and Sangiolo not voting)

NOTE: President Lennon and Ald. Fuller joined to table to discuss this item. They explained to the Committee that an Audit Committee currently exists but meets infrequently and is comprised of a hand full of Aldermen. In order to thoroughly address all the important issues that arise there must be a Financial Audit Advisory Committee created that's members are individuals with expertise in finance and that meets on a regular basis. In order to accomplish these goals it is proposed that the Audit Advisory Committee include Aldermen as well as other qualified citizens not belonging to the Board. This Advisory Committee would report through the Finance Committee and the existing Audit Committee would be dissolved.

The Committee decided that this item should be referred to the Rules Subcommittee. Ald. Baker recommended it be referred so that the Rules Subcommittee and the Law Department can address the question of what kind of change should be made to the rules; Ald. Baker thinks it may not need to be a formal rules change since this Advisory Committee will include citizens and the rules of the Board apply only to Board members. A mechanism by which such a committee can be created will be determined by the Rules Subcommittee and the item will be reported out for Programs and Services to vote on.

#346-99 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting creation of an ordinance that would prohibit dogs (leashed or unleashed) from all elementary school playgrounds.

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0 (Hess-Mahan not voting)

NOTE: Bob Derubeis, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, joined to the committee for a brief discussion on this item. Ald. Sangiolo explained that she originally docketed this item back in 1999 soon after the incident at the Ward School and soon after she joined Ald. Samuelson in pursuing the creation of dog parks. She noted that she was concerned that elementary school playgrounds might be considered candidates for off-leash areas but asked that the item remain on the Programs and Services Committee docket until the issue of use of elementary school playgrounds had been resolved. Commissioner DeRubeis informed the Committee that he and the Off Leash Area Working Group understand the concern and are not going to allow any elementary school grounds to be considered for off-leash areas. After being given that reassurance, the Committee was comfortable voting No Action Necessary for this item.

#363-09 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting a discussion to increase the tobacco seller license fee. [09/13/19 @ 1:07 PM]

ACTION: HELD 7-0 (Hess-Mahan not voting)

VOTE TO CREATE PARENS 2 7-0 ACTION ITEM (Hess-Mahan not voting)

NOTE: Ald. Sangiolo presented her proposal to increase the tobacco seller's fee. The City currently charges \$100 per year to establishments that sell tobacco. The Committee agreed that it is a reasonable proposal but that there needs to be more research done. Ald. Linsky suggested that Ald. Sangiolo look into how many sellers this would apply to and when our last fee increase took place. Ald. Baker noted that this is a license fee and the fee has to apply to the City's cost of regulation for this service. Ald. Linsky moved to hold this discussion item and create a parens 2 action item so that the Committee can move forward with a fee increase should it seem reasonable and feasible.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Sangiolo, Chairman