

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 08, 2006

Present: Ald. Baker, Merrill, Parker, Johnson (Chair), Sangiolo

Absent: Ald. Coletti, Lipof, Hess-Mahan

Other Alderman: Ald. Harney

#368-06 DR. EUGENIA MARCUS, 1555 Commonwealth Avenue re-appointed by His Honor the Mayor as a member of the Advisory Council of Health and Human Services for a 3 year term to expire February 1, 2009. (60 days 01-05-07)

ACTION: **APPROVED 4-0 (Sangiolo not voting)**

NOTE: Dr. Marcus is a re-appointment to the Advisory Council of Health and Human Services. A very detailed curriculum vitae was attached to the agenda. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve her reappointment

#79-04 ALD. PARKER & GERST requesting discussion of the development of a Citywide wireless internet access network in Newton.

ACTION: **HELD 5-0**

NOTE: Background: Ald. Parker said there have been several subsequent conversations after the demonstration with Eileen McGettigan of the Law Department, Steve Smith of the Police IT Department, Public Works Commissioner Rooney, IT Director Ann Cornaro, and the Fire Department.

Ald. Parker noted that Galaxy Internet initially offered a pilot that would allow free internet access for city departments and employees, including fee wireless access throughout Newton on both standard and emergency communication frequencies, free wireless internet access for the public in parks and other open spaces limited to an agreed upon number of hours per user per day at a lower speed in commercial usage, inexpensive, wireless internet access available to all Newton residents, free wireless internet access for indigent Newton residents unable to afford the fee and discounted, remote server backup of city files, and reciprocity with Brookline. What they would want in exchange is access to the city buildings and the city poles so that they can sell the service to the public. Another benefit added is one-hour of free low speed wireless internet access per day for residents anywhere in the City. There was discussion regarding whether this would have to go to Land Use or Public Facilities. Ald. Parker said the Law Department was working on whether this is a special permit application that

would have to come from Galaxy Internet after the agreement is signed. The agreement would have to be conditional on the special permit being granted. Ald. Baker felt it was important to get the Law Department opinion on this.

Citizens Response Ald. Parker added that Theresa Park of the Planning Department had put a question out to Newton residents in the 2005 Newton Census asking if there was interest in this and Ald. Parker said the response was very positive and many responded that they would be willing to pay a substantial amount.

Department Response Chairman Johnson asked how city officials would see using this. Ald. Parker would feel badly if we lost this opportunity with Galaxy Internet by default. She also questioned Mr. Smith on how city officials would use this service. In response, he said there are cost savings and a public safety benefit. He felt it would help the Fire Department and Public Works Department operate more effectively in a storm. The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) is a very visual web data base. There is an infrastructure that allows multiple departments to share the same information. The state runs one during the Marathon that we can all share looking at it. He feels there would be an advantage with snow emergencies and bad weather. The Public Works Department can look at the same information as the Police and Public Utilities have and if there is a downed tree, all the right departments would see it and allows everybody to share the same information.

The Fire Department does not utilize computers; the Police Department does. Part of the reason is the Fire Department does not have as heavy an infrastructure in the IT area. They do not use automatic route into fires; they have not seen the need for it yet and the vision of how it could help. They are pretty much paper based and ring tones. There would be advantages to pick up water meters and there would be no cost to the City from Galaxy to put it in. It also provides another public safety channel. If cell phones go down, this would be another means of communication. As a citizen of Newton, Mr. Smith felt this was a good thing.

Aldermanic Response Ald. Baker would like to hold the item pending a receipt of an opinion from the Law Department. He asked what happens when there are other providers that say they are selling the same service. Ald. Parker responded that there is no one else in Newton selling the same service.

In conclusion Ald. Baker noted that the Committee felt this would be positive addition to City services but would really like to hold the item pending an opinion from the Law Department. He also wanted to be sure of current franchise agreements that the City has with other providers.

#22-06 ALD. PARKER, SALVUCCI & HARNEY requesting reorganization of the Clerk's office to create the position of Assistant Clerk of the Board.

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0**

NOTE: Ald. Parker began this discussion and said that after talking to David Olson, he felt he was very open to doing something like this but because there are budgetary implications, the best time to take it up would be during the budget process. Ald. Parker wanted to give Mr. Olson time to move through some of the structural questions and have a plan to present during budget time.

Ald. Harney added that a reason he was interested in supporting this was a chain of command and an Assistant Clerk should have a goal to move up to a higher level. He emphasized that Ms. Finucane is such a wealth of knowledge and so important to the office, this position should be created. He added that good employees should be rewarded with something for working extra hard.

Mr. Olson said there presently is a structure within the Department and the Chief Committee Clerk is Linda Finucane. Dawna Baccari is the Operations Supervisor of the City Clerk's side of the office. Over the next few months, Mr. Olson would like to come up with a solution that works for both sides of the office and accommodates the great performance of many of the staff in that office and would like to continue to work on that as part of the budget process.

The Committee voted NAN 5-0 with the caveat that this will be part of the budget planning process

#369-06 ALD. JOHNSON requesting that all newly docketed items, when appearing on the new docket, shall include the date and time that the item was received by the Clerk's office and the name of the clerk who received the item.

ACTION: **APPROVED 3-2 (Baker and Merrill abstaining)**

NOTE: Ald. Johnson was concerned with regard to the SBAB item and felt showing when items were docketed would be a fair thing to do. Mr. Olson noted that all docket items are date and time stamped. In Ald. Baker's opinion it seemed superfluous to put all that information on the docket. Chairman Johnson felt this would be a very simple addition and allow the Board to know when an item is docketed.

Ald. Parker said he was aware of certain cases, where items came in late and were accommodated and feels this item is a reasonable thing to do. Over Ald. Parker's 15 years on the Board, he has not seen this as a problem. Ald. Sangiolo wants to be sure that no one gets something in late and everyone should be under the same rule and would support Johnson's item. There was a question regarding email items. David Olson would use the time the email was sent. Ald. Baker said his policy was to enforce the rule. He has told the Executive Department has to have

items in on time. He respectfully disagrees with just adding this burden to the process. The deadline should be there. He does not want to put the Clerk's office in the position of having to try to decide whether it is early or late enough to 7:45 deadline. He does not support this item. He said rules suspension is needed if items are accepted after the deadline.

David Olson said adding this would not be a burden to the office. Ald. Sangiolo suggested that when a docket item is brought in, the alderman stamp it in before leaving it. There was a motion to approve the item with a date and time and not the Clerk's initials on new docket items.

#370-06 ALD. SANGIOLO, PARKER, MANSFIELD requesting home rule legislation to allow advisory questions to be asked in a Newton special election.

ACTION: **HELD 5-0 (TO BE DISCUSSED IN FEBRUARY)**

NOTE: Ald. Parker feels for the long term it is advisable to put advisory questions on the ballot. He continued to say that, in his opinion, this item should be held so it is not thought of in connection with the high school referendum.

Chairman Johnson asked if this would mean that this Home Rule Legislation which we would request to have these advisory questions be asked, is a blanket home-rule resolution. In response Ald. Parker said it would give you the opportunity to put in an advisory question on that ballot too. For example, if there was a vacancy in a ward where an alderman has moved, an advisory question could be put on that ballot. Ald. Parker would like it postponed until February.

#171-04 ALD. HESS-MAHAN requesting home rule legislation authorizing local voting rights for permanent resident aliens residing in Newton.
Item recommitted by Full Board on February 7, 2005
(SEE ATTACHED BACKUP)

ACTION: **HELD 5-0**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Johnson, Chair