

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2005

Present: Ald. Johnson (Chair) President Baker, Ald. Parker, Merrill, Coletti, Fischman, Hess-Mahan, Sangiolo

Other Aldermen Present: Ald. Vance, Linsky, Lennon

Others: Carol Stapleton (Recreation) Dave Mandatori(Recreation) Derek Mannion (Recreation) Marc Welch (Recreation)Cathy Glick-Weil (Library)

Re-Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#330-05 DEBORAH HOWARD, 43 Fairfax Street, Newton reappointed as a member of the URBAN TREE COMMISSION for a term expiring July 30, 2008. (60-day Board action date 12-04-05)

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0**

NOTE: Background information was included in the aldermanic packet. President Baker also noted Ms. Howard is the former Assistant Secretary of Environmental Affairs. There was a motion to approve and the Committee voted 6-0

Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#331-05 JOANNE KAZARIAN, 131 Cypress Street, Newton appointed as a member of the NEWTON YOUTH COMMISSION for a term expiring October 31, 2007.(60-day Board action date 12-04-05)

ACTION: **HELD 6-0**

NOTE: Ms. Kazarian is a new appointee. Since she was unable to be present, The Committee voted 6-0 to hold her appointment.

Re-Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#343-05 ADELE HOFFMAN, 80 Greenlawn Avenue, Newton Centre, reappointed by His Honor the Mayor as a member of the NEWTON COUNCIL ON AGING.for a term to expire on September 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date 12-16-05)

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Documentation was available to Committee members on Ms. Hoffman's appointment and the Committee voted 8-0 to approve.

#344-05 DENA SALZBERG, 65 Kenilworth Street, Newton, reappointed by His Honor the Mayor as a member of the NEWTON COUNCIL ON AGING. for a term to expire on September 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date 12-16-05)

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

NOTE: Ms. Salzberg is a reappointment to the Council on Aging. Ald. Sangiolo noted that she has worked with Dena Salzberg and was happy to make a motion to approve.

Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#345-05 ELLEN K. MEISELS, 183 Allerton Road, Newton appointed by His Honor the Mayor as a member of the ADVISORY COUNCIL OF HEALTH for a three year term to expire February 1, 2008. (60-day Board action date 12-16-05)

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Ms. Meisels was present and told the Committee she has been involved in health policy work and was Special Counsel to the Commissioner of Health for the State. Ald. Sangiolo stated that she had asked that the Advisory Council on Health to check on air quality of city-owned buildings and hoped that Ms. Meisels could follow up on that. in issue. Ms. Meisels responded that she would be happy investigate the issue. There was a motion to approve and the Committee voted to approve 8-0...

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#358-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$30,775.35 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of paying a previous fiscal year's electric bills. *This amount represents a deficit from FY05 and must be closed before the City sets its tax rate for FY06.*

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Ms. Glick-Weil reported to the Committee that this appropriation was needed for both electricity and gas bills and explained that part of the problem was that the Nonantum Library had not received an electric bill. The bills had been inadvertently sent to a wrong address. Ms. Glick-Weil indicated that every penny from that account was spent for utilities. More than \$179,000 was spent on electricity as demand and kilowatt hours have been up. Turning the chiller on for the air-conditioning on during the day can cost \$3,000.. There was discussion regarding having an energy audit for the whole building to try to make things more efficient. Ald. Sangiolo was also in favor of an energy audit. Ald. Coletti felt that no department head or school official should be allowed to reduce the utility budget from less than what it was the prior year. The Committee approved the item 5-0.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#359-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$86,120 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of funding current and future tree emergency tree expenses in the Parks and Recreation Department.

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0**

NOTE: Marc Welch and Fran Towle were present for this discussion. A recent windstorm had between 20 and 30 trees down and well over 350 large limbs that were blocking sidewalks and public ways. This money will help with department over-time and rental equipment. Ald. Coletti had great concern for running out of money in the middle of the coming season and asked that spending be carefully monitored. .

#296-05 ALD. VANCE, JOHNSON & SANGIOLO requesting discussion with Parks and Recreation Commissioner of the status and content of the Parks & Recreation Department's plan for managing the maintenance of the city's parks, recreation areas, and other public open spaces, per the resolution OF the Board of Aldermen

ACTION: NAN 7-0

NOTE: Fran Towle, David Mandatori, Derek Mannion , Carol Stapleton and Marc Welch were all present for this discussion. Ms. Towle said the general mission for the department is to provide traditional and innovative recreation, leisure and cultural activities in a quality environment to all the residents of Newton. It is the Recreation Department's charge to maintain public parks, recreation facilities and other public spaces. The highest priority on maintenance is safety. Service to the schools and service to local organizations is also a priority. Fran Towle noted that weekly staff meetings involve setting up schedules, and preparation for the upcoming season, special events and weekly schedules for various activities throughout the City. In many instances such as storms and special events, special meetings are called to set up a game plan. There was a presentation which included an overview of areas maintained. Ms. Towle stressed that safety is of prime importance. Emergency and safety issues are always responded to first. Work orders are prioritized as they are processed. School activities receive high priority. The prioritizing of the work orders comes from Mr. Mannion and Mr. Mandatori. Other duties include athletic preparation, carpentry, community service program, fence repair, field markings, irrigation maintenance (over 35 irrigation sites) play apparatus, pool, outdoor skating, rubbish removal in squares and parks, small equipment maintenance repair, snow removal in and around the schools as well as public buildings, specialty events, turf maintenance and turf management.

President Baker asked for clarification of snow removal. Ms. Towle explained the sidewalks that are interior to the schools, the Parks and Recreation Department removes, the sidewalks that lead up to the school are cleared by Public Works. There are two to four people who help with athletic preparation. Parks and Recreation. take care of Little League fields, softball, basketball courts, and Lacrosse fields. This could also include the markings on these fields. Chairman Johnson asked how much of the maintenance of soccer fields is funded by the soccer leagues as well as softball, baseball little league versus the city. Ms. Towle responded that soccer has helped out in the last few years by contributing anywhere from \$20,000 to \$30,000. and this money has been used for turf management (fertilizing, etc.) Little League does not contribute money but have major league fields and they maintain those funds. At the very most 5% would be provided by the private sector. There are ten baseball fields, 38 basketball fields, 18 basketball courts, 27 little league fields, 2 running tracks. These are dealt with on a daily basis. There are carpentry crews that fix benches, picnic tables, rubbish barrels, fences throughout the City, home plates, as well as signs on playgrounds. The Community Service Program involves

students or youths who have some problems. Through the court system, they come back and help with the litter problems picking up trash. Ald. Vance questioned how many people work on this program. On the first and third Saturday of the month, between ten and twelve are available, on Tuesdays there are four to six. This program has been a plus. Ald. Vance asked about accidents that have occurred on playground equipment. Ms. Towle responded that there have not been any serious accidents. There was discussion about “adopting a space” and it was noted that there is currently a program in place

Presently there are three contracts for turf management which work at 76 locations. At the majority of them, leaf removal, mulching, and pruning services are taken care of. They are prioritized by whether or not it is an irrigated site, and if it is a school.

Chairman Johnson requested a list of areas that have been adopted and Ms. Towle said one would be available.

Marc Welch said his mission is to provide a safe and healthy tree population through cost-effective professional care. Mr. Welch’s group is responsible for approximately 30,000 street trees along 280 miles of road and responsible for the trees on 1000 acres of land. He told the Committee that there is a tree pruning class that has been going well.

Ald. Vance said the presentation was very informative, especially the work load of the department and how it is discharged. . In his opinion, response to complaints from residents is an initiative that should be pursued.. The appearance as well as the look of the City and the viability of its recreational resources for all citizens is very important and hoped that a case to the Mayor could be made to be sure and fund future budgets to allow this to continue.

Ald. Vance thanked the Recreation Department for their fine presentation. The Committee voted no further action on this item.

REFERRED TO FINANCE , PROG. AND SERV.

#431-04 ALD. LIPOF, HESS-MAHAN, HARNEY recommending the reduction of the size of the Board of Aldermen from 24 members to 16 members: 8 Ward Aldermen and 8 At-Large Aldermen.

ACTION: REFERRED 6-0 TO 2006-2007 BOARD

NOTE: Chairman Johnson informed the Committee that Ald. Lipof has said he would like this referred to the next Board.

In 2003 Ald. Ciccone had docketed an item do a Charter reform and that could not be done.but the Board could present a home rule petition to the legislature. The legislature, based on the research from the Law Department said that the legislature most likely would not agree to that without putting it before the citizens. Unilaterally the Board of Aldermen cannot reduce itself. The aldermen cannot but on a binding question, only advisory questions. Ald. Sangiolo said the board could take action to reduce the size and submit a home rule petition to the state legislature.

There appears to be action that the Board could take; but unilaterally the Board cannot reduce the size.

#74-05 DAVID DONAHUE & ALLAN CICCONE requesting an ordinance to prohibit a special election being called for the purpose of overriding Prop 2 ½ that has the effect of increasing the operating budget of any City Department including the Newton Public Schools and to guarantee that any future request to override Prop. 2½ with the intent of increasing the operating budget shall be held at the next regularly scheduled General Election that includes the election of Aldermen, School Committee or the Mayor.

ACTION: **NAN 7-0**

NOTE: David Donahue and Allan Ciccone were not present for this discussion.. The Chairman noted that an effort has been made to contact them. The Committee voted no action necessary 7-0

#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

ACTION: **REFERRED TO 2006-2007 BOARD.**

NOTE: It was decided that since this item will not be ready for discussion until December Ald. Hess-Mahan suggested that it be referred to the next board.

#324-05 ALD. LINSKY & LENNON offering a TESTIMONIAL RESOLUTION honoring FATHER WALTER CUENIN of OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ACTION: **APPROVED with amendments 5-2 (Sangiolo & Coletti opposed, Parker not voting)**

NOTE: There was a lengthy discussion on this testimonial resolution and the Committee voted to adopt as amended. . Please see amended version attached to report.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Johnson Chair