

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2005

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

Also Present: Ald. Albright, Vance, Yates, Gentile, Stewart, Gerst, Mansfield, Danberg, Samuelson, Schnipper, Linsky

#369-05 ALD. JOHNSON on behalf of the Clerk of the Board/City Clerk Search Committee recommending David A. Olson for appointment by the Board of Aldermen to succeed Edward G. English as Clerk of the Board and Newton City Clerk.

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

369-05(2) PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE recommending that the 2004-2005 Board of Aldermen recommend that the 2006-2007 Board of Aldermen appoint David A. Olson as Clerk of the Board/City Clerk to succeed Edward G. English.

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

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE: Because the appointment is formally voted by the 2006-2007 Board, the item was clarified to indicate that this is a recommendation to the new Board and will be reported out for Board action on November 21st. For clarity, the item is set out as #369-05(2) rather than modify 369-05 which if #369-05(2) is passed, would be held and referred to the 2006-2007 Board for formal action.

NOTE: David Olson was present to address the members of the Committee as well as other Board members and to answer questions. Human Resources Director Dolores Hamilton has played a dual role in this process as an active member of the search committee as well as her role as Director of Human Resources for the City of Newton.

Background: Mr. Olson provided the Committee with information regarding his background. For the past five years he has been approved by the City of Newton as the Director of the Newton History Museum. In that capacity he has been able to work with the museum staff, the trustees, and the Newton Historical Society to look at the operations of the museum to increase visitation and to provide programs and services to meet the needs of the community. He said it has not only been his efforts but a team of people at the museum who have worked diligently to raise the profile of the museum in the community. He works with nine trustees as well as the Newton Historical Society which has 24 directors that help to guide the Historical Society and its

role at the Newton History Museum. Prior to coming to Newton, Mr. Olson served as the Museum Director at the House of Seven Gables. He has also worked at the Missouri Historical Society and at Plimoth Plantation. He noted he has a Master's Degree in Business Administration. He focused on his ability to be able to bring his strong management skills to the Clerk's office and help to create an atmosphere where the staff can efficiently and effectively do their jobs, and work with the aldermen to get the information that is needed. He concluded by saying he looks forward to that challenge.

Remarks/Questions from Members of the Board:

Ald. Stewart noted that he shares a similar background with Mr. Olson as he spent his professional career in museums and archives between managerial roles and professional roles. He asked how Mr. Olson would see himself at a meeting relating to an association of Massachusetts City Clerks and being questioned that since he did not come up through the ranks, why was he present. Mr. Olson responded that he did not see it as a challenge but as an opportunity. One of the great things about associations, he said, was that they are educational opportunities. He would take full advantage of the opportunity to learn from those City Clerks in areas that he is lacking.

Ald. Gentile noted that he felt that one of the strongest challenges is supervising staff and asked about his experience in that area. Mr. Olson responded that presently at the museum there are three part-time staff that are employed by the City. The Historical Society is also housed at the museum and he oversees six part-time people. In his career, he has worked at larger institutions. In his capacity at the House of Seven Gables, he oversaw all museum operations with approximately 30-40 full time staff. At the Missouri Historical Society, Mr. Olson oversaw a full time staff of six. Ald. Gentile commented about the difficulties of working with 24 people. He felt it was extremely important that all information is shared equally and would continue under Olson's leadership. Mr. Olson agreed it was important to have all the information shared equally. Ald. Gentile asked if there was a plan to get Mr. Olson up to speed on issues. Ms. Hamilton explained the Law Department would help put together a transition plan. Discussion ensued regarding whether the City Clerk would also be a Justice of the Peace. It was noted that there is presently an attorney in the Law Department who is a Justice of the Peace. Ald. Gentile expressed his opinion that the Clerk's position is totally different from Mr. Olson's past position. He said there a number of statutory requirements that a Clerk must be aware of and Ald. Gentile asked how he planned to learn all of these statutory requirements such as special permits, notification of abutters, etc. Mr. Olson responded that the wonderful thing is that there is a staff in place within the Clerk's office that has been there for many years and is capable of providing instruction until he gets up to speed. He feels that many of the things he has done as a Museum Director correlate with things that happen in the Clerk's office.

Ald. Parker has worked with Mr. Olson and noted he is a talented manager and very able. Since this is a very different job, he sees an important role to be the window or front door of city hall. Ald. Parker said that the city website is difficult to navigate and poorly organized and wondered

if Mr. Olson would like to take on the responsibility to redesign the web site to make it more user friendly and become a better vehicle to inform the public. Mr. Olson said that with his staff he redesigned the pages of the Newton History Museum. He would try to find someone who has the talent to design web pages that would be able to assist. Ald. Parker said in many cities and towns, the clerk's office is responsible for the web site for all the city departments. He further asked if Mr. Olson would take on the responsibility for the entire city web site. Mr. Olson responded that he would need to be familiar with the job first and understand all the different aspects and if it became appropriate, he would.

Ald. Albright asked what Mr. Olson felt would be his biggest challenges. He responded that although he has a good working relationship with all of the staff that is in the office, he does know there is a bit of tension because there was another internal candidate that applied for this position and Mr. Olson stressed that he would like to see things work out as amicably as possible.

Ald. Yates has worked with Mr. Olson and said he has done a fantastic job of putting together CPA applications and supervising that project. Ald. Yates felt that losing Mr. Olson as a museum director would be difficult. He questioned if Mr. Olson would feel the challenge was as attractive if the salary of the open position were the same as his current position. Mr. Olson responded that he does a broad range of work that is more than a 37 ½ hour job and looks forward to working with a larger staff as well as the aldermen and the public. He focused on this being a new challenge and a new opportunity.

Ald. Fischman questioned Mr. Olson's present work schedule. Mr. Olson said he usually gets in early and also works on the weekend. He also indicated that he had been able to take the present museum staff and give them projects that would make them successful.

Ald. Hess-Mahan noted he was glad that Mr. Olson had acknowledged the challenge of taking a position which another well-qualified staff member had applied for. He complimented the search committee on their selection and evaluation process.

Ald. Gerst questioned what were the qualifications for this position. Ms. Hamilton said they were looking for someone with a Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree preferred who would ultimately do the appropriate course work to be certified as a City Clerk. Ms. Hamilton said the Law Department would be helpful in this transition.

Ald. Johnson explained that her own background was Human Resources and Organizational Development. She noted that this is a public process and wanted to be sure it could stand up to public scrutiny for fair labor practices, etc. The approach taken is a competency based approach. She indicated that she would be available to further discuss the competencies selected. In summarizing, Ald. Johnson stated that a rigorous process had taken place that could stand up to strong public scrutiny. Ald. Johnson said she really felt that all the strengths of the candidates were very carefully looked at. She said the differentiating factor was the management and

leadership experience and that is where Mr. Olson's skills were at the top. The list of qualifications asked for five years of experience in business and people management. She stressed that Mr. Olson will have a strong support system; he has 24 aldermen that will help him. He has the business management and people management expertise that is a critical piece needed. Mr. Olson will have people in the Clerk's office, Law Department, and Mayor's office to help educate him. He is a smart individual and he will have a strong support system. She further stressed that the 24 people will be happy to help him and share their experience.

Ald. Mansfield said there might have been someone with more relevant experience in the subject matter of the job who also had the competencies, but he or she was not an applicant. He felt we may be confusing personality with competency.

It was observed by Ald. Danberg that David Olson is very competent; shows great leadership and that this is the kind of skill set we are looking for in a Clerk of the Board.

Both Ald. Coletti and Ald. Parker wondered if City Clerk and Clerk of the Board should be separate positions and not be handled by one person. Ald. Coletti stressed that the position serves at the pleasure of the board. Ald. Coletti suggested that Linda Finucane deal with the board side and David Olson the Clerk's side. Ald. Parker agreed with Ald. Coletti and sees potential for splitting the job.

Ald. Schnipper would be very concerned about hiring someone who doesn't have any of the technical background. She wasn't saying you couldn't learn that but also thinks an awkward at best situation is being created to expect the entire staff to be teaching a person the skills when you are saying that there is no chance for advancement for the people who already have the skills. She feels this will be an enormous hurdle and is very concerned. Ald. Gentile shared Ald. Schnipper's reservations. He also noted there was an inside candidate that has many years of experience of doing the job and stressed that he does not have a real answer as to why that person was passed over. In Ald. Gerst's opinion there were other candidates that could fill this job more effectively.

President Baker indicated that the position advertised by the Search Committee was a combined role of Clerk of the Board/City Clerk, and stated the recommendation of Mr. Olson's candidacy be recommended to the full board for recommendation to the new Board as indicated in the language of 369-05(2) above (along with an allocation of resources for the transition.) That motion passed 7-0. It was then agreed to vote on the following item adjusting the ordinance setting the salary for the office when Mr. English formally retires.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#376-05 PRES. BAKER, ALD. COLETTI AND JOHNSON requesting an amendment to Section 4-21 of the City of Newton Ordinances, 2001, to set the salary for the new City Clerk/Clerk of the Board.

NOTE: President Baker stated that the salary for Mr. Olson will have to be set. The position was advertised in the low to mid 80's. The salary recommendation is \$82,500. This will be a recommendation to the new board.

Chairman Johnson stated that she felt that no one would disagree that Linda Finucane's contribution be recognized. Ald. Parker suggested that the item to reduce the City Clerk/Clerk of the Board's salary in the ordinance be approved, create a (2) to request the Mayor set aside adequate funds to (Ms. Finucane has been doing the responsibility of City Clerk/Clerk of the Board for a long time and running the department without additional compensation) give Ms. Finucane a new title and a bump up in salary on an on-going basis.

Ald. Coletti asked if the Clerk's salary would be left at the same level and then the difference paid as additional comp to Linda Finucane during the period of time that she will be assisting Mr. Olson. In doing that, he said, we would recognize that Ms. Finucane would be doing a tremendous amount of work to help get Mr. Olson up to speed. President Baker was very supportive of compensating Ms. Finucane. Money must be transferred to make this happen. He felt this was important to provide these resources.

President Baker then moved the following item which would be docketed to go to Finance as well.

#376-05(2) PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE recommending that the difference in the current and proposed salary be made available to the new City Clerk/Clerk of the Board to compensate current staff to assist in the transition.

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0 (Parker, Sangiolo not voting)**

Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#331-05 JOANNE KAZARIAN, 23 Sunset Road, 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: **APPROVED 7-0 (Sangiolo not voting)**

NOTE: Ms. Kazarian was present and told the Committee she was a life long resident of Newton. She has two children in school and has always been involved with youth. She was the President of the PTO at the Bowen School and also on the Board of the PTO Council. She has been involved with raising funds to allow more opportunities for youth.

Ald. Johnson said that there have been past discussions regarding the City doing a better job with the youth in the City and asked that Ms. Kazarian look into how the Health and Human Services Department is going to maintain a focus on the youth in the city. Ms. Kazarian responded that, in her view, networking is very important as well as combining both best practices and resources. She has been involved with a group called ACTIVATE which is affiliated with the Department of Health.. She has enjoyed discussion with all the other PTO presidents.

Ald. Fischman asked if there were different hot spots in various parts of the city. Ms. Kazarian said there were some areas that need more support than others.

Ald. Hess-Mahan asked about the incident that had occurred at the Bowen School. Ms. Kazarian said that in response to that issue, there have been many more informational seminars that hopefully will positively address these problems.

Ald. Parker moved approval of the appointment and the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

#242-05 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting the Executive Department and IT Departments post all city board and commission meeting agendas and minutes on to the City Website.

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

#191-03 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting a discussion with the Information Technology and Clerk of the Board Departments re increasing efforts to source reduce the amount of paper to be duplicated and to disseminate more information via the Internet.

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

#28-04 ALD. BAKER proposing amendments to the Rules of the Board of Aldermen by consolidating Post Audit and Oversight into other committees.

Rules Subcommittee Approved 2-0-1 as amended (Baker, Hess-Mahan in favor; Johnson abstaining) on 1/28/04.

ACTION: **NAN 6-0 (Sangiolo and Parker not voting)**

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Johnson, Chair