

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2, 2001

Present: Ald. Parker (Chairman) Ald. Merrill, Johnson, Baker, Tattenbaum, Sangiolo, Coletti

Absent: Ald. Gentile

Also Present: Beverly Stachowicz (Director, Human Services) Dan Funk (City Solicitor) Alan Licarie, Executive Secretary (Election Commission) Elaine DeFillipis Assistant Secretary (Election Commission)

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#113-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, in accordance with Section 5-1 of the Newton City Charter, submitting the FY2002 Municipal/School Operating Budget, including Water/Sewer for a total of \$232,421,103.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION: APRIL 17, 2001

LAST DAY TO PASS BUDGET: JUNE 1, 2001

HUMAN SERVICES

Beverly Stachowicz, Director of the Human Services Department, joined the Committee and explained her budget. She said that the office of Volunteer Services has been switched from the Parks and Recreation Department to her budget. This budget consists primarily of the volunteer coordinator, Bev Droz, and her need for office supplies, etc. Her operation had been in the Parks and Rec budget, but they had no physical space over there to give her a desk, so her division was moved to the basement of City Hall to the Human Services Department.

The new position of Participant/Coordinator, which was created last year, continues. That person gets involved with clients at the Senior Center. Ald. Tattenbaum commented that the Senior Center Director does a great job. There was a question asked about why the Senior Citizen Social Worker position was funded at only \$16,000. It was explained that that position is paid for from three different sources, the city budget, CDBG, and another grant, so that the actual salary was considerably higher than \$16,000.

Ald. Merrill mentioned that he was on a committee to secure accreditation for the Senior Center, which accreditation will help it apply for grants.

The Committee then looked at revolving accounts. The senior fitness grant revolving account is being ended after six years because the City is no longer receiving that grant.

Ald. Coletti asked why the grade of a vacant position was set above the mid point and the Chief Budget Officer said they wouldn't hire someone at above the midpoint. They would go through the regular hiring process and might hire someone for less if they had less experience. Usually, these positions are budgeted at the mid-point when they are vacant.

Ald. Coletti also asked about the volunteerism position and asked why it was being changed from 19 hours a week to a full time salary and benefits. He said he wanted a job description justification for the increase and the Chair also requested information on the results generated by this position, including how many volunteers have been created and what the volunteers have worked on, as well as a value-based assessment of the position as it exists now and the projections for what it might do as a 40-hour-a-week position.

There was a brief discussion of CIP. The senior citizen transport vehicle was slated for replacement in the near future, which would have been funded as part of the CIP; however, with the consolidation of NEXUS, that is no longer probably going to be necessary. A motion was made to approve on a straw vote all of the revolving accounts, the CIP and all of the operating budget with the exception of the 511001 administrative salary accounts until the requested information is received by the Committee on the volunteerism position. The straw vote prevailed 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

LAW DEPARTMENT

The next department discussed was the Law Department, for which the Committee was joined by City Solicitor Dan Funk. Solicitor Funk began the discussion by explaining there was a mistake in his budget in the office supplies account. He had requested an additional \$1,000, whereas the budget document shows a \$2,000 cut, the error was the Chief Budget Officer's and the Chief Budget Officer said the net \$3,000 would be replenished. In other words, the \$2,000 cut made up any additional thousand that had been requested would be granted.

Ald. Baker asked about whether there were funds in this budget for workstudy or co-op. There are \$9,900 for two to three co-op law students. There were no CIP items or revolving accounts for the Law Department. There was also discussion of the Judgments and Settlements account for which there is a hope that there will be less in the way of labor counsel needed next year as many of the contracts have been or are being resolved. There was an apparent cut in that account because so much money had been added into the budget this year due to labor negotiations. The straw vote prevailed 6 in favor, 0 opposed with Ald. Coletti not voting.

ELECTION COMMISSION

The Committee was joined by the Executive Secretary of the Election Commission and the Deputy Secretary of the Election Commission. Mr. Licarie explained that this is a two-election budget. He also said that he had asked the Mayor's office for another dollar for salaries for co-workers, a \$1.00 an hour increase which would cost the city \$3,100 per election or a total of \$6,200 in this year's budget, but that request had not been granted.

Ald. Sangiolo moved to cut the salaries of the Election Commission members (to eliminate them entirely) since other committees and commissions employees' are not compensated.

Ald. Merrill suggested that we do a study of all committees and commissions to evaluate whether positions should get stipends.

Ald. Johnson said that it bothers her that Election Commissioners' are paid and other members of Boards and Commissions who work more hours and are not compensated.

Ald. Tattenbaum said that maybe now would be a good time to look at all the positions.

The Committee members felt the discussion with the Election Commission budget should take place with the Election Commissioners present and that it should be held until a time when we could have them in.

There was a brief discussion of what the salaries are currently for seasonal election workers: \$8.25 an hour for the warden (one per precinct), \$7.25 an hour for inspectors, (4 per precinct), and \$7.60 per hour for the clerk (one per precinct).

There was also a discussion of whether there might be a way of rescheduling some of the work to allow for people to work shorter shifts including having people come in at 8 in the evening to help with counting.

Ald. Johnson moved hold on the Election Commission budget and the motion to hold prevailed 4 in favor, 0 opposed with Ald. Merrill abstaining and Ald. Baker and Coletti not voting. [Scheduled for Tuesday, 5/15 at 7PM]

REFERRED TO PROG.& SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

55-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$14,600 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of adding an Assistant Executive Secretary position in the Election Commission department.

ACTION: HELD

94-00 ALD. PARKER, JOHNSON & SANGIOLO requesting discussion regarding the operation of the current voting machines and their possible replacement.

ACTION: HELD

442-00 ALD. JOHNSON & ALD. PARKER requesting a dialogue with the Election Commission & Executive Secretary of the Commission regarding election processes, procedures and practices.

ACTION: HELD

NOTE: Ald. Johnson moved hold on the above three remaining election-related items until such time as the Committee can be joined by the Election Commission members for a discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Parker, Chair