

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2001

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

Absent: Ald. Coletti

Also Present:

Edward English (City Clerk/Clerk of the Board), David Naparstek (Health Commissioner), Kathy Glick-Weil (Director, Newton Free Library), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), Beverly Droz (Director of the Office of Volunteer Services), Fran Towle (Commissioner, Parks & Recreation), Tom Cahill, (Aquatics Director) and Arthur Cabral (Budget & Project Specialist)

#113-01 City Clerk/Clerk of the Board budget
ACTION: 7-0

NOTE: Edward English, City Clerk/Clerk of the Board was present for the discussion. There were not a lot of changes in this department's budget; Mr. English's salary was increased (as previously approved by the Board). \$3, 600 for the Inaugural reception is included in this budget. Ald. Tattenbaum asked about the \$1,000 cut in postage. Mr. English said the department probably would not get through the year with only \$3,000 (which is the amount resulting from a cut from \$4,000) since the Traffic Council is doing more mailings, but the department would do its best. Ald. Baker asked for the development of a working guide to the location of various archives. For example after how many years does something get moved to the library? How is it accessed, so that a directory could be available and the information that the City Clerk and the Archivist Mrs. Ritter have could be codified for easier reference? There was also a discussion about the implementation of Legistar. Ald. Parker asked about the timetable for implementation. The City Clerk (Mr. English) said that he had previously hoped that Legistar would be in place for the May 7th Board meeting, but now expects that it will be in the second meeting in June, hopefully. Mr. English informed the Committee that there were thirteen issues to be resolved, but the report on those issues was not yet available for the Board to review. The one issue he did mention, was the easy E-mailing of documents to members of the Board with a click of the mouse and apparently that easy E-mail function has now been integrated, but that it was not available earlier. Committee members, including the Chair requested that there be a briefing prepared for interested members of the Board on the implementation of Legistar and Mr. English agreed to schedule such a briefing in the near future. There were no Revolving Accounts or CIP items for the City Clerk/Clerk of the Board budget and therefore it was approved 7-0, on a straw vote.

#170-01 Health Commissioner seeking funding for a mosquito control program to combat West Nile Virus.

ACTION: 7-0

NOTE: David Naparstek, Health Commissioner was present for this discussion with the Committee. Commissioner Naparstek explained while there is current funding for mosquito control in Newton, it is not adequate to deal with the scope of the potential problem. Commissioner Naparstek went on to explain that there are 13,000 catch basins in the City, 12,000 of which he estimates are likely to have standing water in them, which needs to be treated. The catch basins will be treated with an environmentally friendly larvacide, about which no concerns; (no health concerns) have been raised. The mosquito larvae in the catch basins are the kind that transmit West Nile Virus from birds to humans, unlike many of the other species of mosquito that breed in wetlands and are not transmitters of West Nile Virus. The agent used is a bacterial logical one, and these bacteria only exist long as they have mosquitoes to kill and once they finish off the mosquitoes they disappear. The other expense, other than the temporary staff hiring of students to administer the bacteria to the catch basins, is for staff overtime to verify and supervise this program. This program of administering preventive measures to the catch basins is the most effective way of removing mosquitoes, short of spraying. New York City is under a court order not to spray and they will be doing this as well. In fact Brookline, Cambridge and a number of area communities are using this exact same substance in their catch basins. The Health Department will be working with a retired senior volunteer program at Boston College to help with the public education campaign. Commissioner Naparstek said that of the fifty species of mosquitoes in Newton, only one is a carrier of West Nile Virus. The City's wetlands are treated with BTI, a different substance, which is also not an environmental hazard, which is aerodropped on to certain wetland areas, but that is not effective in the catch basins, so it is not used there. Ald. Baker suggested that a mosquito-attracting device might be of interest to the Health Department in controlling the mosquito population in the City. Commissioner Naparstek said although it was interesting, the devices only cover a one-acre area and cost \$1,300 each, so they were probably not practical on a citywide basis. The devices generate carbon dioxide, which attracts mosquitoes to the device, not to the people around. Mosquitoes are attracted to the carbon dioxide that comes out of people. The Chairman gathered that people exhale and that is how the mosquitoes hunt us down. The item was approved 7-0.

#113-01 Library Department Budget
ACTION: 7-0

NOTE: Library Director, Kathy Glick-Weil joined the Committee for this discussion. Ms. Glick-Weil informed the Committee that there was a new section in the budget, which listed accomplishments, goals and objectives. There was a budget planning process in which she worked with other City officials, including Chief Budget Officer, Sandy Pooler and the Library Trustees, to develop these goals and objectives. Ms. Glick-Weil went on to explain that they report a great deal of data to the Board of Library Commissioners and they were able to integrate that data into the goals and objectives section. There are additional 1.6 positions in the department which are not fully reflected in the budget, in other words they are reflected in some areas, but not in others, because they were added at the last minute. There was some discussion, as to exactly how many positions that leaves the budget with. Chief Budget Officer Pooler said that he would review the numbers and get the Committee corrected pages. The Revolving Accounts were then reviewed. The first was for State Library aid, which is expected to go up \$10,000 this year from a \$125,000 to \$135,000 approximately. The authorization to expend is going up \$10,000 and the grant may go up as much as \$10,000. The reason for the increase in the grant is the increase usage of the Newton Public Library by non-Newton residents. The State Library ate the cash it said. The second was a grant for \$2,000 for which the Library has applied and the third is a revolving account for use of libraries by other outside institutions and the anticipated expenditure level there rose as well. The library also expects to raise more money through fines, which goes into the General Fund, but some of, which is being re-appropriated to the Library Department. The increase in fine revenue is due not to an increase in fund levels, but an increase in the maximum fine for books and library materials, which have been out for a long time. The increase will not affect videos, which already have a maximum fine of \$10.00, but the maximum fine for books in the adult section of the library is being raised, (the Chairman believes) from \$4.00 to \$6.00 and for children's material from \$2.00 to \$3.00. Ald. Johnson requested that as in other departments, that updates during the course of the year perhaps at a six-month interval, (not during budget time), the departments work in meeting goals and objectives would be useful. Ald. Baker asked about the revenue from printing at the library. Ms. Glick-Weil informed the Committee she had discussed getting print manager cards for the print system. with the Trustees. The Library could then charge people for the pages that they actually print. Right now she thinks the donations (voluntary payments) of ten cents a page for black and white and twenty-five cents for color, are dropping off. Ms. Glick-Weil also stated that there wasn't full compliance with those standards and that revenue will pick up and more than pay for the print manager system, if implemented. The Committee then discussed the Library's CIP. The Committee was joined for this discussion by Library Trustee Anita Capeless and former Chair of the Library Board of Trustees, Florence Rubin. Ms. Capeless said that she thought the carpeting on the stairs in the Main Library, was a safety issue, it was so badly frayed and people could trip. This had been listed in this year's Fiscal Year 2001 Supplemental Budget as something that would be dealt with, but there was not money available to deal with it.

There was also a \$100,000 listed in the Fiscal Year 2001 Operating Budget for books, for the Supplemental Budget, which was also never appropriated. There was also an appropriation for re-upholstering of chairs at the Library; all three of which Mr. Pooler informed the Committee would not be appropriated this year. However, there is a \$50,000 increase from \$440,000 to \$490,000 in the Library Operating Budget for acquisitions and materials and future increases will be put there, rather than in the CIP. Ald. Parker moved to shift the carpeting of the stairs and the re-upholstering of chairs to the Fiscal Year 2002 general area (page 38 of the CIP), since Chief Budget Officer Pooler said they would not be funded in Fiscal Year 2001. In other words, those items are \$15,000 carpeting circular stairs and atrium and \$14,500 for re-upholstering chairs, both of which should now appear on a revised CIP in Fiscal Year 2002, under the Other Projects category. The Committee will work with the Chief Budget Officer to see that this transference occurs. With that amendment to the Library Department budget in the CIP area, Ald. Tattenbaum moved approval as amended on a straw vote and the Library department budget was then unanimously approved 7-0.

#113-01 Human Services Budget
ACTION: 5-0

NOTE: The Committee returned to discussing the Human Services Department budget to deal with the functional element that had been left out of the earlier discussion, the Office of Volunteer Services. The Committee was joined for discussion of this section, by Chief Budget Officer Sandy Pooler and Beverly Droz, the Director of the Office of Volunteer Services. Ms. Droz explained that her office originated as an outgrowth of the Newton Serves 2000 event in Spring of 2000. Since her office was created, the past five and a half months during which time she has been working two and a half days a week she has set up a volunteer database and web page. Ms. Droz has received approximately 70 applications and matched approximately forty-five of those people with positions. She went on to say that 85% of her work is focused on non-profits and community service agencies and 15% on city agencies. The Mayor informed Ms. Droz that she should focus her work on non-profits and community service agencies. Ms. Droz will be holding a Volunteer Fair in the Fall at the Library. Also in September there will be a workshop at the Library in partnership with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program and Jewish Community Volunteer Services. In addition, she is planning on holding a Serve-a-thon in Spring of 2002, although she doesn't expect it to be as large as the one in 2000. Ms. Droz's broader goal is to get people involved in the community and help build a "sense of community". The other goal, is that as there are fewer dollars available to meet human needs, (particularly under the current administration) Ms. Droz wishes to use volunteerism to help meet some of those unmet needs that government is failing to meet in a more systematic, organized or funded ways. The Chairman felt he might be editorializing. Ald. Baker suggested that Ms. Droz work with the Law department regarding legal exposure of volunteers if they are injured in the course of their volunteering for with the City or in a project referred by the City.

Ms. Droz assured Ald. Baker that she would be working with the Law department and had been working with them to establish guidelines, waivers and other necessary documents and procedures to protect the City from liability to the extent possible. The Chairman asked Ms. Droz how many hours of volunteer work had been generated as part of the program thus far and how many hours she projected to be generated under the new program, where the position will be funded as a 80% time, as opposed to a 40% that it is now. Ms. Droz replied that she couldn't really track the number of hours that volunteers work, but that she was just getting the office started, setting up the web page and establishing relationships, so she expects there to be a significant increase in involvement. The Chairman also asked whether she saw the department more as a placement agency for people who want to volunteer and just need to find somebody to match up with or with a recruitment effort to get people to volunteer who would not otherwise volunteer. Ms. Droz said that it was more a placement agency matching. A "clearing-house", for people who were interested volunteering and to find a good match for them. The Chairman suggested that it might make sense not to be duplicative with other organization's recruiting efforts for volunteers and that in fact the City may have some real needs for volunteers in various City departments. As a result, it might make sense to put more of an emphasis, (at least a 50% emphasis) on finding volunteers who are willing to work for City departments and agencies. Ald. Johnson moved approval on a straw vote, which motion passed 5-0, Ald. Tattenbaum and Ald. Merrill not voting.

#171-01 Leakage at Gath Pool
ACTION: 5-0

NOTE: Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Fran Towle, Chief Budget Officer Sandy Pooler, Art Cabral, Budget and Project Specialist for Public Buildings and Tom Cahill, Aquatics Director/Parks & Recs. joined the Committee to discuss funding for the patching of the leaks at the Gath Pool. There are fifteen to twenty cracks in the pool. The funds would be used for patching the cracks in the pool and repair of a drainpipe. The Aquatics Director (Tom) estimated that the City loses (at current prices) \$17,000 of water from the pool per year. In addition, about half of the chemicals that are used, wouldn't need to be used without these leaks. Those chemicals cost \$3,000 a year, so that's another \$1,500 so that's \$18,500 that the City could save by expending this \$35,000. Ald. Baker moved approval. Ald. Sangiolo asked whether the work would include fixing the cracks in the pool, since the docket item merely read repairing the drainpipe. The Parks and Rec. staff present assured Ald. Sangiolo and the Committee that (in fact) repairs to the pool were included, (despite their not being mentioned in the docket item language) and that with this \$35,000 expended there would be no more leaks and the City would realize the full savings estimated at \$18,500 per year. With that the Committee voted on the item, unanimously in favor 5-0, Alderman Tattenbaum and Merrill not voting.