



Public Facilities Committee Report

City of Newton

In City Council

Thursday, May 3, 2018

Present: Councilors Crossley (Chair), Leary, Kelley, Danberg, Lappin, Gentile, Laredo

Also Present: Councilors Albright, Grossman, Greenberg, Downs, Krintzman

City staff Present: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle, City Engineer Lou Taverna, DPW Director of Finance Jack Cowell

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#245-18 **Appropriate \$500,000 for the Oak and Christina Intersection Project**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) from Free Cash for the Oak and Christina Streets Intersection Project.

Action: **Public Facilities Approved as Amended 6-0 (Gentile not Voting)**

Note: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle presented the amended request for \$700,000 for the Oak and Christina Intersection Project. The Commissioner noted that after the project went out to bid, it was determined that some utilities needed to be undergrounded and the project was delayed. After the delay, the contractor notified the City that due to the delays, there would be significant change orders, even though construction had not yet started. After reaching out to other communities, it was confirmed that other communities had experienced similar situations with the contractor. The contractor asked to terminate the contract after some push back from the City. After a meeting with the Law Department, it was determined that it would be in the best interest of the City to terminate the contract “for convenience”. After putting the project back out to bid, the low bidder was selected. With an increase in contingency, DPW is requesting \$700,000 to complete the intersection improvements.

Committee members expressed concern relative to the increase in cost for the project. The Commissioner explained that the City had paid the original contractor \$125,000 and has purchased some materials. The bid came in \$100,000 higher and construction costs are inflating. The total additional funding required for construction is \$550,000 plus \$150,000 for contingency based on the increased construction amount. It was noted that the project was originally anticipated to be covered by a Mass Works grant for \$1.675 million. Committee members questioned why the contractor was selected. It was noted that when contractors are prequalified by the Department of Transportation, the lowest responsive bidder must be selected on

municipal projects. It was noted that while the City may not report the contractor to Mass DOT, because the contract was terminated for convenience; other communities have. Councilor Lappin motioned to approve the item which carried unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#246-18 **Appropriate \$175,000 for pedestrian and sidewalk improvements in Newton Corner**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend one hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$175,000) from Free Cash to a project account dedicated to additional sidewalk and pedestrian improvements in Newton Corner including landscaping and a new bus shelter.

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 6-0 (Gentile not Voting)**

Note: Commissioner McGonagle presented the request for \$175,000 from free cash for sidewalk and pedestrian improvements in Newton Corner. DPW has already done significant work in Newton Corner. Businesses requested that the sidewalk work continue. The Commissioner noted that the existing sidewalk has deteriorated since the project began and the condition is poor. He noted that the existing bus shelter is not very functional and is one of the highest volume bus stops in the City. It is the department’s intent to construct a new modern bus shelter and landscape the islands, which are overgrown and obstruct sight lines. A Committee member questioned whether the bus pull off can be reconfigured to be safer. It was noted that there is limited space and the bus pull off cannot be reconfigured. Committee members expressed no concern relative to the request. Councilor Laredo moved approval which carried unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#248-18 **Appropriate and transfer funds for DPW electricity, vehicle, and repair expenses**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) from Free Cash and authorization to transfer the sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) from DPW Admin Full-time Salaries Account to the following accounts:

DPW Admin Electricity	\$215,000
DPW Vehicle Maintenance	\$50,000
DPW Transportation	\$135,000

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 6-0 (Gentile not Voting)**

Note: DPW Director of Finance Jack Cowell presented the request for \$215,000 for the DPW electricity account. He noted that solar credits from the Rumford solar panels are being credited to the City in the form of a check, which goes into the general fund. The department is still paying the full invoice, however. Mr. Cowell noted that this discrepancy will be addressed in the FY20 budget. The Commissioner presented the request for \$50,000 for increased

maintenance for aging vehicles in the fleet as well as \$135,000 for streetlight repairs and knockdowns. Councilor Kelley moved approval of the item which carried unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Crossley