

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 2008

Present: Ald. Salvucci (Acting Chairman), Albright and Lappin

Absent: Ald. Lennon, Gentile, Yates, Mansfield and Schnipper

Also present: Ald. Linsky and Danberg

City staff present: Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer), Thomas Daley (Commissioner of Public Works) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

Re-Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#182-08 KATHERINE GEKAS, 87 Adella Avenue, West Newton, re-appointed as a member of the Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy for a term to expire on April 1, 2011. (60 days: 07-18-08) [05-12-08 @ 9:36 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVAL RECOMMENDED 3-0**

NOTE: The Committee members previously reviewed Ms. Gekas' resume, which was attached to the agenda. Ms. Gekas began serving on the Citizen's Commission on Energy in 2000 and has been a member of the Green Decade Coalition since 1999. She is an expert in renewable energy and the environment. The Committee members were impressed with Ms. Gekas qualifications and Ald. Lappin recommended approval of the reappointment, which carried unanimously.

Re-appointment by Board President

#49-08 PRESIDENT BAKER recommending Howard Goldberg, P.E., 27 Theodore Road, Newton Centre be re-appointed as an Aldermanic appointee to the DESIGNER SELECTION COMMITTEE, term of office to expire 12/31/09. [01-17-08 @ 3:48 PM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY RECOMMENDED 3-0**

NOTE: Mr. Goldberg no longer wishes to serve on the Designer Selection Committee. Therefore, Ald. Albright recommended no action necessary, which carried by a vote of three in favor and none opposed.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#186-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend one hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$115,000) from Parking Meter receipts for the purpose of upgrading the parking meter collection system. [5-13-08 @ 5:01 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVAL RECOMMENDED 3-0**

NOTE: Public Works Commissioner, Thomas Daley and Traffic Engineer, Clint Schuckel, presented the item to the Committee. The attached PowerPoint presentation gave the details of the request for the funds to upgrade the parking meter collection system. The Commissioner explained that there are three objectives that the upgrade would accomplish. The first is to respond to the recommendations of the city auditor's security concerns regarding the current parking meter collection practice. Second, the city's Workers Compensation/Safety Manager has concerns about the repetitive lifting of the heavy coin containers and coin bags by city staff during collection. Third, the upgrade will maximize revenue by improving the responsiveness of meter repairs over our current practice through the replacement of a maintenance vehicle.

The auditors' report stated that the coins are unsecured from the time the meters are opened until the time the collections are delivered to the Treasury Department. The current collection method could give the public the perception that the employees have easy access to the money. The proposed changes will give protection for those employees when the money trail is audited. Currently, the keys used to open parking meters are maintained at an employee's home.

The Workers Compensation/Safety Manager is concerned that the open coin containers weigh between 65 – 70 pounds and the current coin bags weigh up to 50 pounds. The Workers Compensation/Safety Manager's memo detailed the cost of a back and shoulder injury in terms of medical costs and lost wages. The maximum recommended weight for repetitive lifting is 30 to 35 pounds. Therefore, none of the current coin storage containers falls within the recommended weight.

There are over 1,000 meter poles in the City and approximately 800 of those poles have a double-headed meter. The meters will bring estimated revenue of \$1.3 million in FY'08 to the City. The estimated cost of the meters is \$180,000, which includes 2.5 salaries, a vehicle, parts and coin processing. There was a rate change on July 1, 2006. All short-term meters were raised to \$.50 per hour. Further, 90 additional meters have been installed in the past two years. The increases in the rate and the additional meters have added significant weight to the collection canisters. Almost 90% of broken meters are fixed during weekly collection. The remaining 12% are fixed within six day. There is a loss of revenue of about \$15,600 per year due to broken meters.

The appropriation would enable the Treasury Department to purchase a new coin-counting machine and a scissor lift for the transfer of the coins from the floor to the counting machine. It would also allocate funds for the Department of Public Works to purchase 1,000 new closed coin cups for installation in parking meters, 12 locked coin boxes and three collection carts to transfer the coins from the parking meters to the Treasurer's Office, a new collection van with a rear lift gate to raise and lower the collection canisters to and from the vehicle and a new meter maintenance truck with a utility body for parts and tool storage. The appropriation would improve the parking meter collection system for both the Public Works Department and the Treasury Department.

Ald. Danberg suggested that the City look at putting parking meters in Waban Square and the two municipal lots located in Nonantum. She also thought that the City should consider

changing the short-term meters to \$.25 for 20 minutes. There was also some discussion of accepting other forms of payment in addition to coins. The Traffic Engineer explained that the newer meters are capable of taking credit cards or debit cards with the addition of a card reader. It will take a significant amount of time before this type of payment option comes to fruition and the meters will take coins for the foreseeable future. The Committee was concerned about security measures when the coins reached the Treasury. The Commissioner explained that the Treasurer plans to put the coin counting operation into the vault. Committee members felt that it would be best if there were a security camera in the vault to protect the City and the employees in the event of a problem with theft. Ald. Albright moved approval of the item with the condition that some type of security system is installed within the area that is to be used for counting in the Treasurer's Office.

#385-07 ALD. SCHNIPPER AND GENTILE updating the Public Facilities Committee on the progress of the Newton North High School Project. [11-21-07 @ 10:23 AM]

ACTION: **HELD RECOMMENDED 3-0**

NOTE: The item was held without discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony J. Salvucci, Chairman

IT'S ALL IN THE NAME!

**Public Facilities
Committee
June 4, 2008**



DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS

Parking Meter WHY ARE WE HERE? Maintenance/Collection



Our Request (capital)



1. Collection (DPW)

- ~ 1,000 New meter canisters: \$20K
- ~ 12 New collection canisters + 3 carts: \$12k
- Collection van with rear truck lift: \$40k
- Meter maintenance truck: \$25k
- SUBT: \$97,000

2. Counting (Treasurer)

- New coin counting machine (ex. =1992): \$12k
- New power lift/hopper/table: \$3k
- Allowance for contingencies: \$3k
- SUBT: \$18,000

TOTAL: \$115,000 (< one month's revenue)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Implement City Auditor recommendations
2. Implement Human Resources recommendations
a.k.a. reduce worker's comp claims
3. Maximize revenue via meter repair
responsiveness

What's Changed in Last 2 Years?

- Rate change July 1, 2006: all short term meters= 50 cents/hr
 - Rate doubled for 500+ short-term meters in lots
 - Added weight (\$250k) of coin for processing
 - Estimated 55,000 pounds of coin per year (total)
- ~ 90 new meters added in last 2 years:
 - Lower Falls: 27 (2 HR: Washington St) (JUNE 2008)
 - Newtonville: 22 (12HR: Washington St near Marty's)
 - West Newton: 5 (12HR: Washington St near Crowley's)
 - Waban: 24 (2HR: Washington St @ N-W Hospital)
 - Misc. locations: 12

Summary of Fall 2006 Audit

1. Collections (coins) are unsecured from the time the meter is opened until the time the collections are delivered to the Treasurer/Collector's office



2. A set of keys (used to open the parking meters) are maintained at an employee's home



“Perception & Protection”

1. Perception of open canister system, i.e., our employees have “easy” access to the money as seen by the general public
2. Protection for collection/counting employees when money trail is audited



DPW Safety Committee Concerns

2/1/07

1. Summary of HR's concurrence:

- Existing "open" coin containers weigh 65-70 lbs
- Existing coin bags weigh up to 50 lbs
- Locked collection canisters will weigh more when full (up to 150-195 pounds, depending on size)
- Repetitive handling of money

2. Cost of back/shoulder injury (\$35k med. / \$36k wages)

3. Maximum weight for repetitive lifting= 30-35 lbs



Current Collection Process



1



Coins drop into open cup

Total meters in City: 1,764

Collection points ~ 1,000 due to double meters

When filled with coins,
weighs 65-70 pounds

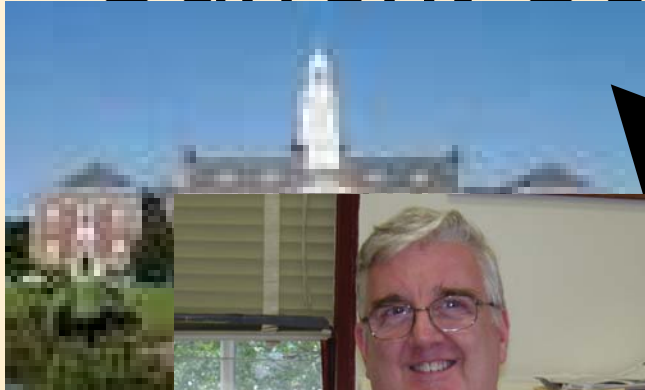




65-70 pounds

Employees pick up
cans and put in van

Current Collection Process



1



2



3



Treasurer's Current Counting Process

- Mixed coin counted & separated
- Coin bags tie wrapped
- 4,000 Quarters weigh 50 pounds
- 10,000 Dimes weigh 50 pounds
- 4,000 Nickels weigh 44.1 pounds
- Subtotaled by lot, village



Treasury Counting Machine



Current Collection Process



Parking Meter Revenue

- Estimated FY 08 Revenue: \$1.3 million
 - Average ~ \$108,000/month
- Estimated FY 08 Cost: \$180,000
 - 2.5 Salaries, vehicle, parts, coin processing
- % of Revenue to Expenses: ~15%*
 - * Does not include parking ticket revenue
- Revenue increase from FY 06: \$250,000 (29%)

Neighbor Comparison

Brookline, Cambridge, Somerville, Waltham

- Meter inventory from double to half our size
- Avg. # meters per full-time staff ~ 780
- Newton - 735
- Brookline uses a lift system
- Newton is only community not using locked canisters



Brookline

Calendar 2007 Parking Meter Maintenance Stats

Meter Repairs: 4,236 (~17 per day)

- New batteries: 1,788 (6-12 month life)
- Meter Jams: 1,940 (coins, food, paper)
- Mechanisms Replaced: 112
- Meters Replaced: 6
- 88% of meters are fixed as they are identified during weekly collection
- Remaining 12% fixed within 6 days
- Lost revenue = \$15,600 / yr.

Why have Parking Meters?



Why have Parking Meters?

- Encourage “turnover” where needed
- Creates revenue source to maintain infrastructure
 - General fund (\$1 million each fiscal year)
 - Electricity, parts, vehicles, maintenance contracts for streetlights & signals (\$650k)
 - Salaries & expenses for 5.5 FTE City employees (\$350k)
 - Special appropriations (capital, new meters, signals, etc.)

Summary

1. Parking meters are a \$1.3 million dollar operation annually
2. One month's revenue is needed to address:

Safety= prevent injuries

- Manual lifting of coin canisters (70 lbs) and bags (50 lbs) by Public Works and Treasury personnel

Security= public perception, accountability

- Locked coin collection canisters
- Clear/sealed plastic coin bags to bank

Efficiency= how to improve?

- Repairing broken meters quicker (inc. rev. \$10k/yr)

Meters OK in 100-Year Storm

...and to answer Ald. Salvucci's question???



THANK YOU

