

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2007

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Albright, Salvucci, Gentile, Yates, Mansfield and Lappin  
Absent: Ald. Weisbuch

Also present: Ald. Baker, Coletti, Lennon, Linsky, Merrill, Parker, Sangiolo and Vance  
City staff present: David Turocy (Commissioner of Public Works), Elaine Gentile (Director of Environmental Affairs, Public Works Department), Nunzio Piselli (Public Works Department) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#291-07 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting authorization to enter into a multi-year contract for collection of municipal solid waste. [09-25-07 @ 3:57 PM]

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 4-2-1 (Gentile, Mansfield opposed; Salvucci abstaining)**

**NOTE:** This item was previously discussed jointly with the Finance Committee and a public hearing was held on November 7, 2007. David Queenan, Dede Vittori and Ann Dorfman of the Solid Waste Commission joined the Committee for discussion of this item. The Chairman reiterated that the purpose of the docket item is to authorize the Mayor to enter into a contract for trash collection. As Chair of the Solid Waste Commission, Ald. Schnipper stated that the Commission is recommending that the City of Newton switch to an automated trash collection system. The Commission is recommending the change as it reduces waste and increases recycling.

Ald. Schnipper explained that the City would buy one cart for each household; however, if a second cart is required there will be a charge of about \$120 per year. The second cart will be between 32 and 35 gallons. During previous discussions, one of the causes for concern was the issue of additional paper bags for a charge of \$3 per bag. It has been decided that there will be no option to purchase bags for additional trash. Residents will be able to have bulk items picked-up at no cost by calling the Department of Public Works and making an appointment. All of the trash will have to go into the barrels. Waste Management has agreed to pick-up old garbage barrels that have been converted into recycling barrels with a City issued sticker. On collection, routes that are very dense or the streets are very narrow it will be necessary to use a semi-automated truck. Approximately 1/7 of the City will require the semi-automated collection.

Ald. Baker felt that residents should be given the choice between two 32-gallon barrels or one 64-gallon barrel. If residents are given the choice, it will make the change easier to accept. The size of the barrel has been the most common complaint regarding the change to automated collection. Ald. Schnipper pointed out that the proposed contract only covers the collection of one barrel; therefore, there would be a charge for the collection of the second barrel. It would

need to be determined if the cost would be passed to the resident or the City would pay the additional cost. Jim Mancela of Waste Management stated that he would recommend that the City not offer the choice of two barrels. In his experience, the 64-gallon barrel is the most maneuverable and easiest for people to handle. He suggested limiting the option of two barrels to only people who have a hardship. Mr. Mancela has experience with automated trash collection and has observed that the 64-gallon barrels work extremely well. Ald. Mansfield pointed out that the biggest concern of the residents at the public hearing regarding the size of the barrels. Mr. Mancela felt it was right to have an option for the two smaller barrels but it should be by request not a readily available option.

Ald. Salvucci asked if there was any further information on of how other communities provide automated service to the elderly or disabled. Elaine Gentile provided a memo with a synopsis of services to the elderly and disabled in other communities (attached.) He would like to know that there is a plan in place to address the issues that the elderly or disable may have with the large barrels. Ald. Lennon and Linsky also stated that the calls that they have received regarding the trash collection have all been regarding the size of the barrel and placement of the barrel for pick-up. Residents will need to shovel a small area by their driveways in the winter to place the barrels for collection. Waste Management does automated collection in Wisconsin, which has very severe winters and it works well. Ald. Salvucci inquired whether the barrels would break in extreme cold. Mr. Mancela responded that the barrels are manufactured to handle the weather.

Ald. Gentile has some reservations regarding the automated collection. He has not heard anything that addresses the concern regarding the elderly. Ald. Schnipper stated that she will guarantee that the issues surrounding the elderly and disabled will be addressed. The current collection system is working well and it may be better to wait for renewal of the recycling contract in order to get the contracts in sync. People perceive the change as a reduction in service and many residents feel that trash collection is the one service that they get for taxes. He is also not sure why Waste Management is advocating the change to the automated collection system. He is also concerned that the City did not go out to bid on this contract and it may be missing out on a better price. Ald. Parker stated that he agreed with Ald. Gentile's points. He provided a chart of the collection options and the savings that are generated by each method, which is attached. Ald. Mansfield also had some of the same concerns as Ald. Gentile and Parker. Mr. Mancela is floored that ½ million dollars in savings is not considered to be significant by many Aldermen. The change would improve recycling and generate savings for the City.

Ald. Schnipper explained that the City is not required to go out to bid on the trash contract. The Solid Waste Commission spent a significant amount of time comparing costs of collection in all of the surrounding communities. Waste Management provided the City with the lowest cost. Most communities' costs are significantly higher than Newton's costs. Ald. Coletti stated that he was initially leery of the switch to automatic collection but after speaking with the Mayor, the Commissioner of Public Works and Elaine Gentile he has become convinced that it is the correct choice.

Ald. Albright moved approval of the item with the understanding that the issues surrounding the elderly and disabled will be addressed by the Solid Waste Commission and the Department of Public Works. The Committee voted approval of the motion by a vote of four in favor, two opposed and one abstention.

All other items were held without discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman