

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2004

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chair), Albright, Salvucci, Stewart, Yates, Mansfield and Lappin

Absent: Ald. Gerst

City personnel present: Robert Rooney (Commissioner of Public Works), John Daghlian (Acting City Engineer) and Danielle Bailey (Planning Department)

#15-04 ALD. BAKER requesting discussion and planning of upcoming committee agendas, process, future work, and how to streamline committee work on minor or routine approvals in order to allow time to focus on more major or non-routine matters.

ACTION: **HELD 7-0**

NOTES: The Committee began the discussion with a review of the pending agenda items. The Committee worked on scheduling several of the items for discussion at upcoming meetings. Ald. Salvucci felt that there were too many items on hold waiting for information. However, many of the items will need input from the Storm Water Management and Sewer Taskforce, which still needs to be formed.

The Committee then reviewed Commissioner Rooney's January 2, 2004 memo suggesting ways to streamline the grants of location process. Many members of the Committee felt that the current practice was appropriate. It allowed them the opportunity to review and be aware of any issues concerning the grants. The grants do not take up much of the Committee's time unless there is a problem and it is important that the Committee has the opportunity to discover a problem. Therefore, the Committee is not in favor of altering the process for grants of location. The Commissioner also suggested providing further information to department heads before docketing items, as it will give the department head more time to gather the appropriate information. The Committee agreed to make an effort to contact the Commissioner regarding upcoming docket items.

Ald. Stewart informed the Committee that a memo with his suggestions on improving the budget process and controlling spending within the City government would be in the packets Friday. He would like a more in depth review of the budget, with more public input. The Committee opted to hold this item to review the memo and for future discussion.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#39-04 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$548,480 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the Department of Public Works control of snow and ice budget.

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTES: Commissioner Rooney joined the Committee for the discussion on the appropriation of funds to supplement the snow and ice account. The Commissioner reviewed the cost breakdowns of the expenditures to date, which were attached to the agenda. The October expenditure was for the winterization of the City's equipment. Snow and de-icing events began in early December. The average snowfall for this area is 48" a year; currently 27" of snow has fallen. Both plowable snow events in December occurred on weekends increasing the costs due to overtime and special compensation. Ald. Lappin asked for an explanation of special compensation. The Commissioner explained that special compensation is a \$3 per hour add-on for plow drivers during snow and sanding operations. The amount rises to \$4 per hour after 8 hours of continual service. The Commissioner stated that it is his hope that the appropriation will cover snow and ice costs until the end of January, when he will be better able to assess the amount needed for the rest of the season.

Ald. Salvucci asked the Commissioner if the salt and supplies were sufficient for de-icing operations. The Commissioner stated that they have had no problem obtaining salt from the two main suppliers. The City is no longer using sand for de-icing. It is Ald. Salvucci belief that there is an old Board Order requiring a sand/salt mixture. There is a resolution, which was passed in the 70's and reaffirmed in the late 80's, requiring a 3:1 salt/sand. Several Aldermen pointed out that the streets were covered with salt the previous night. There was concern that the salt damages trees and contaminates water supplies. The Commissioner has spoken to the Environmental Protection Agency regarding the use of salt. Sand can cause adverse reactions in people who have allergies and can be very slippery causing accidents. There have been many journal articles pertaining to the use of salt versus sand. The Commissioner will provide the Committee with information on this topic. The Committee felt that if the sand/salt mixture was obsolete there should be a review of the current policy.

Ald. Salvucci asked about the use of liquids to melt ice. The City has tried the liquid but it tracked into homes and vehicles. Ald. Salvucci questioned whether there was anything that controlled the spread of salt when it is released from the trucks. The Commissioner responded that it is controlled by computer and you program the computer to disburse the salt by the width of the lane or street. He also stated that the spreader on the truck determines the width.

The Committee had no further questions regarding the snow and ice appropriation; therefore, Ald. Yates moved approval, which carried unanimously.

Ald. Yates asked what the status of the Storm Water Management Committee was. Ald. Stewart said that he has sent a memo to the Commissioner, Mayor, President Baker and the Director of Utilities requesting appointment of members. Commissioner Rooney stated that there is a mission statement for the committee currently being reviewed by the Mayor.

#34-04 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting approval of design of reconstruction of WEST STREET.

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTES: Acting City Engineer, John Daghlian, and Commissioner Rooney presented the design of the full depth reconstruction of West Street. Ald. Lennon and Danielle Bailey also joined the Committee for the presentation. It is the hope that the reconstruction can start in early spring. It is a reconstruction of the full width and length of the roadway to be funded with a combination of a CDBG grant, Water Accounts and Chapter 90 Funds.

The largest change to the street is the addition of berms and trees. There will be 18 Thornless Hawthorn trees and 18 Ivory Silk Lilac trees planted. The water service will be replaced, as some of the existing piping is 2" and needs to be updated to 4" piping. The curb line on both sides of the street will be moved out 1' creating a 24' width street, which meets current city standards. Parking will be on the even side of the street, where it is currently allowed.

The Commissioner stated that CDBG has had several meetings with the residents and the Nonantum Advisory Committee. Ald. Lennon spoke in favor of the reconstruction of West Street. He informed the Committee that the plan is a product of many years of planning. It is his hope that it can be completed in one construction season.

Ald. Stewart asked if there were any communities that used street reconstruction as an opportunity to place utility lines underground and if the City should think about doing this. Commissioner Rooney explained that it is very expensive and NStar does not really want to get involved. However, the City is in the early stages of investigating placing utilities underground. It would also be very expensive to the residents included in the project. The City would need to pay for the street portion but residents would have to pay from their property line to the building, which costs about \$500 per foot. It is Ald. Stewart's opinion that the City should have a 25 to 50 year street plan, which includes placing utilities underground.

Ald. Salvucci asked if the street lighting would be adequate on the street. The Commissioner assured the Committee that there would be enough lighting. With that, Ald. Yates moved approval of the reconstruction and the Committee voted unanimously.

#393-03 ALD. LINSKY, SCHNIPPER AND SALVUCCI requesting a discussion regarding progress in the renovation of Newton South High School.

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0**

NOTES: After review and discussion of pending agenda items, the Committee felt that as discussion on this item had taken place and there had been no recent issues the item could be voted no action necessary.

REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEES
REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#135-01 ALD. M. LIPOF offering a resolution urging His Honor the Mayor to hire an independent auditor to oversee and report monthly through the Mayor to the Board of Aldermen for the duration of the construction and renovations to the high schools.

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0**

NOTES: It was the Committee's opinion that Richard Amsted, the project manager from Turner Construction, filled the role of an auditor on the high school construction and renovation projects. Therefore, the Committee voted the item no action necessary.

All other items were held without discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman