

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET
AND C.I.P. REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2003

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Gerst, Linsky, Salvucci, Stewart and Yates

Absent: Ald. Mansfield and Lappin

Also present: Ald. Lipsitt

City personnel present: Ted Jerdee (Utilities Department), Lou Taverna (Director of Utilities), Angela Clark (Department of Public Works), Elaine Gentile (Department of Public Works), Brian Connolly (Department of Public Works), Ron Mahan (Department of Public Works), Steve Tocci (Public Works Department), Robert Rooney (Commissioner of Public Works) and Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer)

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#168-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City (#124-02(11)) of Newton Charter, submitting the FY04 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$256,208,165, passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY04-FY08 Capital Improvement Program, submitted in October, 2002. EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION 4/22/03.

PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0**

NOTE: Commissioner Rooney and several members of the Public Works Department staff were present for the discussion of the budget. The Commissioner reviewed the Public Works budget highlights (attached) with the Committee. There is a restructuring of several positions within the Public Works budget (attached). There are three new positions, which include a solid waste manager, an assistant traffic engineer and a stockroom attendant. The Committee and Ald. Lipsitt had a brief discussion surrounding the assistant traffic engineer. The new position is currently unfunded; it is the Commissioner's hope that surplus salary can be used to fund the position. Ald. Lipsitt strongly urged the Commissioner to fill this position, as she is very concerned that we do not have enough experts on staff to deal with traffic issues. The traffic engineer's position should be filled by mid-June, as an offer will be made next week to one of the two viable candidates.

The Committee then reviewed the revolving funds portion of the budget and voted unanimously to approve them.

The Committee reviewed the Enterprise Budget (water/sewer). There will be additional positions added for a second shift operating between 3 PM and 11:00 PM. There is an increase in the operations budget due to a rise in security costs and commercial meter testing. Some vehicle replacement is also included as part of the budget. MWRA water charges have increased by \$376,643 and sewer charges have decreased by \$431,997 due to the I/I program.

Ald. Yates moved approval of the Public Works budget, which was approved unanimously.

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#124-02(11) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** submitting the **FY04-FY08 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**, pursuant to Section 5-3 of the **NEWTON CITY CHARTER**, which requires Board of Aldermen approval of a plan to finance new local capital projects totaling \$160,847,242 over the next several years:

SUMMARY

PUBLIC WORKS (GRANT/FEE FUNDED)	\$ 58,022,114
PUBLIC WORKS (CITY FUNDED).....	\$5,820,000
PUBLIC SAFETY	\$3,349,000
PUBLIC BUILDINGS.....	\$3,941,400
PUBLIC EDUCATION	\$80,156,728
PARKS & RECREATION	\$7,479,000
OTHER	\$2,079,000
TOTAL.....	\$160,847,242

ACTION: **PUBLIC WORKS PORTION APPROVED AS AMENDED 6-0**

NOTE: The Committee had a brief discussion with the Commissioner regarding the Capital Improvement Program (C.I.P.). The Committee asked if any of the projects listed were definite. The Commissioner stated that the traffic signals at Park and Tremont Streets would be done, as part of the funding is from Massport. Fifteen streets are scheduled for maintenance that will occur. The City Hall lagoons may be done in-house instead of contracting out to save money.

Ald. Salvucci asked if repairs to Cheesecake Brook are part of the C.I.P., as it is in terrible shape. The Commissioner stated that it is not currently part of the C.I.P. Ald. Yates moved to amend the C.I.P. to include repairs to Cheesecake Brook in FY'06 under storm drains. Ald. Gerst asked if the Public Works had a long-term plan to deal with street maintenance, as not enough streets were being reconstructed. The City will probably need to bond for the streets after the high schools are done. Until then the Public Works will maintain the streets as best they can. The motion was approved unanimously. Ald. Salvucci moved approval of the C.I.P. as amended, which was voted unanimously.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#220-03 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR recommending that Department of Public Works fees be increased to more accurately reflect the City's cost of providing services. The increased revenue from these fees is to be part of the FY04 revenue estimates prepared by the Chief Budget Officer.

ACTION: **APPROVED 6-0**

#220-03(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR recommending that Department of Public Works fees for sewer back-ups be increased to more accurately reflect the City's cost of providing services. The increased revenue from these fees is to be part of the FY04 revenue estimates prepared by the Chief Budget Officer.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-1 (Salvucci Opposed)**

NOTE: Commissioner Rooney reviewed the proposed increased fees (attached) with the Committee. The fees have not been increased in the past ten years; therefore, the increase on average is about %75. However, the fees are still somewhat lower than what it costs the City to provide these services or permits. The Committee requested that the Commissioner provide a breakdown of the cost to the City compared to the fee in the next packet. The Committee had no problem with most of the increases but there was a discussion regarding the sewer back-up fees. Ald. Stewart and Linsky felt that those fees should be raised even further. It is their belief that the charge for this service should be the same as a private company's charge. Ald. Salvucci felt that the proposed fee was excessive as people pay taxes for these types of services. Ald. Schnipper pointed out that if the Committee voted approval of the increased fees there is always the opportunity to revisit the fees.

Ald. Salvucci requested that the sewer back-up fees be taken as a separate item. The Committee had no problem with this and Ald. Yates moved approval of both items.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman