

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2001

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chair), Yates and Mansfield

Absent: Ald. Gerst, Antonellis, Salvucci and M. Lipof; 1 vacancy

Officials present: Robert Rooney (Commissioner of Public Works), Steve Gartrell (Associate Director

#261-01 NSTAR requesting a grant of location to install 420'± of conduit in BEEHCROFT ROAD, northwesterly, approximately 192' northwest of Franklin Street at Manhole #4211.

ACTION: **APPROVAL RECOMMENDED 3-0**

NOTE: This item was held on August 15, 2001 because the Committee felt that there were too many unresolved issues between NStar and the residents of Beechcroft Road to approve it. Maureen Carroll, NStar Representative, was present for the discussion of the item. The petition is to provide electrical service to several residents of Beechcroft Road. A resident of Farwell Road has utility poles located on his property and would like the poles removed. NStar must remove the poles, as there is no easement for them. Unfortunately, those poles service three homes on Beechcroft Road where there are no existing utility poles. NStar must provide service to Beechcroft Road using underground conduit.

An agreement between the residents and NStar has been reached. A transformer will be located at #38 Beechcroft Road. The owner of 38 Beechcroft Road, Michael Weisman, submitted a letter that he is happy with the proposal and he has no objection to the transformer being placed on his property (attached). Mr. and Mrs. Abrahms spoke on the petition. Mr. Abrahms requested that NStar furnish him with a letter stating that the Abrahms will not incur any expense for the movement of the telephone and cable wires due to the removal of the poles. Mr. Denehy, Manager, New Customer Connections, NStar, agreed to supply the Abrahms with the letter within the next few days. They are in agreement with the amended petition and are very happy with NStar. Ald. Yates moved approval, which was voted unanimously.

REFERRED TO FINANCE, PROG & SERV. AND PUB. FAC. COMMITTEE

#309-01 ALD. PARKER requesting increase in the income eligibility level of the 30% water/sewer discount for low-income senior citizens.

ACTION: **HOLD RECOMMENDED 3-0**

NOTE: This item was held in order to allow further information to be obtained.

#509-00 ALD. YATES requesting a discussion with the Public Works Commissioner on the feasibility of converting part of the Department of Public Works fleet to compressed natural gas.

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

NOTE: Commissioner Rooney was present for discussion of this item. The Department of Public Works is currently testing a compressed natural gas truck. At this time, there is no convenient way to refuel natural gas trucks. Mr. Rooney has spoken with Keyspan, who plans to build a gas station servicing natural compressed gas vehicles on Route 128 in Newton.

The Commissioner feels that administrative vehicles should be the first vehicles converted to test the limitations of natural gas vehicles or hybrid vehicles and if all goes well, trucks and heavier equipment should be converted to natural gas. Unfortunately, hybrid and natural gas vehicles are more expensive than other vehicles. There are several Bills before the State Legislature for rebates for cities and towns who convert their vehicles.

The Department of Public Works does not have the budget to purchase new hybrid or natural gas vehicles. These vehicles are new; therefore, it is not possible to purchase them used, which is the general practice when purchasing vehicles. Although diesel trucks can be converted to natural gas, the tradeoffs are not big enough for the City to do this.

Ald. Yates moved no action necessary, as the Public Works Department does not have any funding to purchase these vehicles. The Committee voted the item No Action Necessary unanimously.

#147-99 ALD. GEORGE MANSFIELD requesting a review of and amendments to Secs. 29-71, 29-72, 29-73 & 29-74, of the Revised Ordinances, as necessary, to more equitably distribute costs of public sewer extensions.

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

NOTE: Ald. Mansfield no longer wishes to pursue this item at this time. He recommended the item be voted no action necessary. The Committee voted the item no action necessary by a unanimous vote.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV., PUB. FAC. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#113-01(6) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the FY02 DPW Operating Budget be decreased by the sum of \$150,000 and that said funds be appropriated to the FY02 School Department Operating Budget. It is anticipated that the reduction in the DPW

budget will be more than made up by increases in Chapter 90 payments from the State for road and sidewalk work.

ACTION: **HOLD RECOMMENDED 3-0**

NOTE: This item was held at the request of the President in order to gather more information.

REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV., PUB. FAC. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#113-01(8) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting that the FY02 Purchasing Department Operating Budget be increased by \$80,000 for capital outlays. The source of funding will be FY02 revenue. These funds will come from increases in fees that AT&T and RCN will pay to the City of Newton for their cable franchises. These funds are necessary to replace the 20-year-old telephone system in all municipal and school buildings.

ACTION: **APPROVAL RECOMMENDED 3-0**

NOTE: Steve Gartrell and Jeff Knight presented the item to the Committee. The request is for the initial funding for a new telephone system. The current telephone system is over twenty years old. The system is over capacity and will eventually totally fail. There is no longer any technical support for these telephones and parts are not available to repair them.

All city buildings except buildings with one telephone line will be part of the system. The middle schools received new systems a few years ago and these will be tied into the new system. The system will utilize the existing cable network. The new telephone system will include voicemail for everyone and every person will have their own extension. The City will also retain all of its 552 exchanges.

Ald. Yates moved approval of the item and the Committee voted approval unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chair