



Finance Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Monday, December 14, 2020

Present: Councilors Grossman (Chair), Malakie, Humphrey, Kalis, Norton and Noel; 1 vacancy

Absent: Councilor Gentile

City staff present: Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Comptroller Sue Dzikowski, CPA Program Manager Lara Kritzer, Chief Information Officer Joe Mulvey, Commissioner of Inspectional Services John Lojek and Assistant Superintendent Liam Hurley

#514-20 **CPC Recommendation to appropriate \$16,884 in CPA funding**
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending appropriation of sixteen thousand eight hundred and eighty-four dollars (\$16,884) in Community Preservation Act funding for Historic Newton to replace the east façade gutter and the restoration of six original wood windows on the Durant-Kenrick Homestead.

Action: **Finance Approved 6-0**

Note: Lara Kritzer, CPA Program Manager presented the request to appropriate \$16,884 in Community Preservation Act funding for Historic Newton to replace the east façade gutter and the restoration of six original wood windows on the Durant-Kenrick Homestead. Ms. Kritzer's presentation is attached. Members of Historic Newton were present for the discussion and thanked the Council and the CPC for their consideration on this project.

Committee members asked the following questions:

Q: Regarding the quotes received, was the highest-quality offer chosen or the lowest offer?

A: Lisa Dady, Historic Newton representative, explained that the first quote that came in was from Classic Construction who they have worked with before. Historic Newton was interested in working with the North Bennet Street School to be able to do some educational training, but the school was unable to be a part of this project. Historic Newton did receive other quotes but went with Classic Construction based on the high quality work they have done for the city before.

Q: What other repairs should the Council be prepared for in the future?

A: Ms. Dady explained that the building is in good shape. There will be a need for maintenance of the systems in a few years.

Committee members expressed their support of the project. Councilor Kalis motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#515-20 Appropriate \$500,000 for two core technology needs

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) from June 30, 2020 Certified Free Cash to fund the replacement of the City's Storage Area Network (SAN) and the replacement of the firewall.

Action: **Finance Approved 6-0**

Note: Joe Mulvey, Chief Information Officer presented the request to appropriate and expend \$500,000 for the replacement of the City's Storage Area Network and the replacement of the firewall. Mr. Mulvey explained the storage area network went online in 2013 and the equipment has been running every day since that time. The virtual servers that run on the storage area network support applications ranging from the new financial system, GIS, current permitting, all departmental data storage, most of the assessing data and all the City Council data. In 2013 they replaced 40 physical servers which were coming to the end of their useful life. This replacement included a back-up system and a redundant setup located on the other side of the City, connected by City-owned fiber. Mr. Mulvey explained that EMC has always been reliable with maintenance work on the systems. Because the initial equipment has come to the end of its standard support, the City now relies on third-party support companies who merely send replacement parts when the existing components die. The third party does not always have the same ability to monitor the City's system like EMC can.

Committee members asked the following questions:

Q: What is a typical lifespan of a storage area network?

A: Mr. Mulvey explained that the lifespan is approximately 5 to 7 years.

Q: Is the City looking at best, middle or lowest tier regarding specs?

A: Mr. Mulvey explained that EMC is the best and any other company would be a significant step below them. The City can choose different levels of EMC and the department chose a logical fit that will last for the next 7 to 10 years. The theory behind the storage area network is that they are buying a warehouse of options which include memory, disk space and processors. The City can allocate what they need for each virtual server solution.

Q: What is the budgeting process for future replacement of this equipment, given that new equipment will need to be purchased in 7 to 10 years? Additionally, what is the City's free cash position?

A: Mr. Mulvey explained that they have had the storage area network replacement on the CIP but it has been a low priority for the past few years. This year it was in the top three items in the CIP. Sue Dzikowski, Comptroller explained that Free Cash was certified at \$7.4 million and there currently hasn't been a lot allocated from Free Cash.

Q: Is there another place in the budget where these funds could be allocated from?

A: Ms. Dzikowski explained the alternative would be to borrow a general obligation bond but it doesn't make sense to bond \$500,000 for storage equipment. It also would not make sense for the funds to be in the operating budget because it does not occur each year. Chief Operating Officer, Jonathan Yeo explained that departments are also encouraged to put equipment and facilities that will need work in the future in the CIP.

Councilor Kalis motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to the Programs & Services, Zoning & Planning & Finance Committees

#487-20 Request to transfer Weights & Measures inspector position to ISD

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to transfer the Weights & Measures inspector position from the Health and Human Services Department to the Inspectional Services Department to more accurately reflect the nature of the position, to add one temporary full-time employee (to be funded by existing ISD funds available due to vacancies). Additionally, requesting that City Ordinance Section 12-18 €, which details the position of Weights & Measures Inspector, be moved to Section 5-16 which covers ISD responsibilities. To fund the last half of FY20, this request includes a transfer of forty-three thousand five hundred dollars (\$43,500) from H&HS Weights & Measures Acct #0510110-511001 to Inspectional Services Full Time Salaries.

Programs & Services Approved 8-0 on 12/09/20

Zoning & Planning Approved 7-0 (Councilor Krintzman not voting) on 12/14/20

Action: **Finance Approved 6-0**

Note: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer explained that Mitch Baker who currently holds the Weights & Measures Inspector position is retiring and the administration believes that this is the right time to move this position to the appropriate department. The Commissioner of Inspectional Services and the Health & Human Services Departments agree with the moving of the position. Mr. Yeo explained that they are also hoping that Mr. Baker will stay to train the new person holding the position. This position has been in other departments over the past 20 years.

John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services explained that this position was originally in the Inspectional Services department. The department has no issue with this position moving because it is another inspector.

Committee members asked the following questions:

Q: What does the Weights & Measures position entail?

A: Mr. Yeo explained that there is equipment used by local businesses (for example, the scale that measures meat at a deli counter) that the City is required to ensure is measuring a variety of items correctly. The purpose of this requirement is to protect both the customer and the business. The job description is available on the City's website.

Q: What is the purpose of moving the position from Health & Human Services to Inspectional Services when other communities have the position in the Health Department?

A: Mr. Yeo explained that this position should be a part of a larger department with a supervisor. This position is in different departments in other communities. Mr. Yeo noted that this position is self-contained and should not take any time away from the focus of Inspectional Services.

Councilor Noel motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Chair's Note: *The following two items were discussed together.*

#395-20 **Request for updates on budget and possible reimbursements at Newton Public Schools**
The President of the Council, on behalf of the City Council, requesting updates to the Finance Committee from the Chief Financial Officer regarding budget expenditures and possible reimbursements related to school reopening at each meeting this fall.

Finance Held 6-0 on 11/23/20

Action: **Finance Held 6-0**

Chair's Note: *Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux will provide an update on the expenditure of funds for COVID-19 as related to item #239-20.*

Note: The Chief Financial Officer was unable to attend the meeting. Jonathon Yeo, Chief Operating Officer was present to update the Committee and bring any outstanding questions to the CFO.

Committee members asked the following questions:

Q: How much CARES Act funding is left? Do we have enough CARES funding capacity to expand the new testing procedures at the Newton Public Schools?

A: Mr. Yeo noted that currently the funds available for CARES Act reimbursement must be spent before the end of the year. The School Department is not allowed to use CARES funding at this point to buy a bunch of tests in advance to be utilized in 2021.

Q: What is the source of funds for the testing program? Also, why is Newton not pursuing twice-a-week, asymptomatic testing?

A: Mr. Hurley explained that the School Department is carrying the cost of the testing with the hope that this will be covered by CARES Act reimbursements. The testing will begin this week and has been broken down into waves. Wave 1 will be staff that is working with high-need students and should be completed before winter break. Mr. Hurley noted that they may try to test Wave 1 weekly. Wave 2 will be elementary and middle school staff that are working in person. Wave 3 will be the high school staff which will occur in January. The School Department is continuing to investigate how to test staff more frequently.

Q: Why is the testing voluntary?

A: Mr. Hurley explained that he is unsure if they can mandate staff to be tested. Additionally, Mr. Hurley noted that approximately 1100 staff members have signed up for testing.

Q: Who is advising the City on COVID-19 measures?

A: Mr. Yeo did note that they are using individuals from Newton-Wellesley Hospital and Dr. Zaleznik who is an infectious disease specialist.

Q: What is the reasoning behind the model of testing the School Department decided to use?

A: Mr. Hurley explained that they did look at the Watertown model, where they have a drive thru method. But Watertown has less staff that would need to be tested. Mr. Hurley noted that they do think it is a good idea to have a baseline of testing before the high school returns to in-person learning. This is just the beginning and the School Department will continue to investigate ways to improve the model they are using. The Health & Human Services Department can more clearly answer this question.

Q: How much does each wave of testing cost and are the 1100 staff members that signed up all in wave 1?

A: Mr. Hurley explained that 1100 is the total so far. Out of 500 staff members who are eligible for wave 1, 300 signed up to be tested. The tests cost \$47 each, which is the price the City negotiated. The financial consideration has not been the driving factor for the parameters of the testing program.

Q: If the next federal relief package does not include aid for cities and towns, what is Newton's plan for future funding?

Committee members made the following comments:

If there are enough funds leftover in the CARES Act funding available to us, the School Department should test more often.

All the staff in the schools should be tested more frequently.

When reporting on these issues to the Committee, the Committee should know if the barriers to expanding testing come from issues with finances, capacity, or the union.

Mr. Yeo noted that more information about the rollbacks are available in the Mayor's newsletter.

Councilor Norton motioned to hold item #395-20 which passed unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Walker Grossman, Chair

Durant-Kenrick Homestead Gutter and Window Repairs CPA Funding Recommendation

Community Preservation Committee
Presentation to Finance Committee
December 14, 2020

Project Overview

- ▶ The wood gutter on the east (rear) façade of the original building has failed
- ▶ Six original wood sash windows are now water damaged due to failed gutter and an interior leak in the fire suppression system
- ▶ CPA Funding to be paired with 1772 Foundation Grant to complete repairs



Existing Conditions



Funding Request

- ▶ Historic Newton has received a quote from Classic Construction to both replace the gutters and repair the original windows:
 - \$9,461 will be used to replace the existing wood gutters with new Fiberglass gutters
 - \$17,423 will be used to restore the six original wood sash windows at an off-site location
- ▶ The project has been reviewed and approved by the Newton Historical Commission, including the use of fiberglass because it can successfully replicate the original gutter's appearance, is more durable, and has a greater water capacity.

Proposed Budget

Funding Sources	Funding Amount
CPA Historic Resource Funding	\$16,884
1772 Foundation Grant	\$10,000
Total Project Costs	\$26,884

Questions & Discussion

► Thank you!