



Programs & Services Committee Budget Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

Present: Councilors Noel (Vice Chair), Humphrey, Krintzman (Chair), Baker, Greenberg, Albright, and Ryan

Absent: Councilor Wright

City Staff: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Alissa Ocasio Giuliani, City Solicitor; Perry Rosenfield, Senior Financial Analyst; Joe Mulvey, Chief Information Officer; Linda Walsh, Commissioner of Health & Human Services; Jayne Colino, Director of Senior Services; Ruth Hoshino, Director of School Health Services; Josh Handverger, Senior Financial Analyst; Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture; Carol Stapleton, Rec Program Manager; Greg Ansaldi, Deputy Director of Information Technology; Meghan Kennedy, Director of Social Services; Norine Stilton, Senior Services Executive Administrator; Shin-Yi Lao, Public Health Manager; Nathan Giacalone, Committee Clerk

#262-22 Appointment of Jin Zhang to the Biosafety Committee

PRESIDENT ALBRIGHT appointing Jin Zhang, 274 Auburndale Avenue, Auburndale, to the Biosafety Committee for a term of office to expire on May 16, 2025. (60 Days: 06/18/2022)

Programs & Services Approved 7-0

Note: Mr. Zhang introduced himself and described his interest in joining the Biosafety Committee. He stated that he has been a Newton resident since the 1990s and is a graduate of Brandeis. Currently employed at GSK and specializing in strategic external developments and contract research, Mr. Zhang stated that his background is in molecular biology, cell biology, and gene therapy. He is interested in serving his community and because he lives near Riverside.

Councilors stated that they were amazed at Mr. Zhang's experience and that the city is fortunate to have these volunteers with the developing biotech field in Newton.

Councilor Krintzman made a motion to approve which carried 7-0.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#244-22 Resolution on the Fair Share Amendment

COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT, RYAN, DOWNS, DANBERG, LIPOF, GREENBERG, BOWMAN, AND CROSSLEY a resolution asking the City Council to support the Fair Share Amendment which will be on the November Ballot.

Action: Finance Approved 4-0-2 (Councilors Oliver and Malakie abstaining and Councilor Gentile not voting) on 05/09/22
Programs & Services Approved 7-0

Note: Councilor Albright introduced this item as the lead docketer. She stated that in Massachusetts, everybody pays the same flat tax rate regardless of income. The Fair Share Amendment will address this and introduce an additional tax on income over \$1 million. Currently, six other cities have passed resolutions supporting this amendment. Originally meant to appear on the ballot in 2018 as a ballot question, the Supreme Judicial Court prevented this as this subject is not appropriate for a citizen petition since it is a constitutional amendment. The State Legislature has now approved the measure and it will appear before voters this fall. The Fair Share Amendment will institute an additional 4% tax on income over \$1million and the intent is to spend the projected \$2 billion a year in revenue this will raise on public education and infrastructure. An independent poll has shown that 72 percent of voters support this amendment. Councilor Albright added that the Law Department will provide guidance to the Council on what it can and cannot do to support this amendment.

City Solicitor Alissa Ocasio-Giuliani confirmed that the Law Department would ensure that Councilors are informed on what they can do under campaign finance and ethics laws.

Discussion:

Multiple Councilors supported this resolution. It was stated that this revenue will support social safety nets and promote equality, while returning more funds into Newton at the same time as Proposition 2.5 limits how the City generates revenue.

It was asked if there was a precedent for this measure in other states and if wealthy residents are projected to avoid paying this tax. Councilor Albright answered that the only comparable example is California and there is no evidence of this occurring.

The Committee made no changes to the attached draft resolution.

Councilors Bowman, Crossley, and Greenberg requested to be added as co-docketers to the item.

Councilor Albright made a motion to approve which carried 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Noel, Vice Chair

Carol Moore

From: Carol Moore
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 2:19 PM
To: City Council
Subject: New Docket Item - Finance

Councilors,

Council President Albright and Councilor Ryan have provided the Docket request below. Please let me know if you would like to sign on to the item for the Finance committee.

Resolution on the Fair Share Amendment.

Councilors Albright and Ryan, _____ requesting the following resolution asking the City Council to support the Fair Share Amendment which will be on the November Ballot.

(Please read draft resolution below)

WHEREAS, the best way to help working families and build a stronger economy for us all is to make sure that we have quality public schools for our children, affordable public higher education, and a reliable transportation system; and

WHEREAS, students need a well-rounded education, founded on a rich and varied curriculum that includes science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), music, art, and athletics; and

WHEREAS, major investments in public education are needed to help students recover academically, socially, and emotionally from the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, tuitions and fees at our public colleges are among the highest in the country, and students are forced to take on enormous debt to receive a degree; and

WHEREAS, for Massachusetts to compete against other regions around the nation and the globe, we need modern, reliable transportation: safer roads and bridges, public transportation that works, and safe ways to walk and bike around town; and

WHEREAS, we have a large backlog of neglected and structurally compromised bridges, tunnels, roads, and public transportation infrastructure in need of repair; and

WHEREAS, new state revenue is necessary to rebuild crumbling roads and bridges, improve our public schools from Pre-K through college, invest in fast and reliable public transportation, make public higher education affordable again, and expand opportunities for healthy walking and bicycling; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts needed new investments in our transportation and public education systems even before the COVID-19 pandemic, and now those investments are needed more than ever to lift our economy into an equitable and long-lasting recovery;

WHEREAS, our Commonwealth's highest-income residents, who have seen their collective net worth skyrocket in recent years, pay a lower percentage of their income in state and local taxes than do the rest of us, and clearly have the ability to pay a little more for the investments we all need;

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the Newton City Council supports the proposed Fair Share Amendment that would create an additional tax of four percentage points on annual income above one million dollars and dedicate the funds raised by this tax to quality public education, affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges, and public transportation.

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**Susan Albright, President
Newton City Council
Councilor-at-Large Ward 2**