



Finance Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Present: Councilors Grossman (Chair), Gentile, Kalis, Malakie, Oliver, Norton, Noel and Humphrey

City staff present: Comptroller Steve Curley, Josh Morse Commissioner of Public Buildings, Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux and Fire Chief Greg Gentile

#470-22 Acceptance of \$67,272.72 for Newton Fire Department Training

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of sixty-seven thousand two hundred seventy-two dollars and seventy-two cents (\$67,272.72) from an Assistance to Firefighter Grant through the Department of Homeland Security. The grant funding awarded is going to be used by the Newton Fire Department to conduct training on structural collapse props and to purchase a structural collapse prop structure.

Action: Finance Approved 8-0

Note: Greg Gentile, Fire Chief, presented the request to accept and expend \$67,272.72 from an Assistance to Firefighter Grant through the Department of Homeland Security. Chief Gentile explained that this is for a collapse prop which is one of the elements for technical rescue training. He further explained that they are working with the City of Waltham on this program. This also includes one session of training for the collapse prop which stimulates different types of structural collapses.

Councilor Oliver motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#471-22 Acceptance of \$131,952.38 from a Fire Prevention & Safety grant

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of one hundred thirty-one thousand nine hundred fifty-two dollars and thirty-eight cents (\$131,952.3800) from a Fire Prevention & Safety grant through the Department of Homeland Security. The grant funding awarded is going to be used by the Newton Fire Department to conduct training for 30 members on Arson/Fire Investigation and to purchase fire investigation kits which include tools and PPE.

Action: Finance Approved 8-0

Note: Greg Gentile, Fire Chief, presented the request to accept and expend \$131,952.38 from a Fire Prevention & Safety grant through the Department of Homeland Security. Chief Gentile explained that this is a training program to find causes and origins of fires. It was asked if this grant is for one year. Chief Gentile explained that this grant is for this one class for the 30 members. These members will be able to help with the investigation of every fire.

Councilor Kalis motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#472-22 Request to transfer \$100,000 from the Energy Stabilization Fund

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer the sum of hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) from the City's Energy Stabilization Fund for the design of a new HVAC system to replace the aging 30+ year old systems at the Newton Free Library. The project will replace the existing chiller, cooling towers and boilers with a heat pump chiller to convert the building to be fully electric.

Action: **Finance Approved 8-0**

Note: Josh Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings presented the request to transfer \$100,000 from the Energy Stabilization fund. Commissioner Morse explained that the HVAC systems at the Newton Free Library are coming to the end of their useful life. This has been in the Capital Improvement Plan for a number of years and this is also an opportunity to convert this building to fully electric. The funds will be used for the design of the project.

The following questions were raised before the start of the meeting and the answers to these questions are attached.

- When was the Energy stabilization fund set up, what is the current balance and what are recent transactions in and out of the fund?
- Will both projects on tonight's agenda use the same contractor?

It was also asked how money is added to this account. Commissioner Morse explained that these are rebate funds.

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#473-22 Request to transfer \$65,000 from the Energy Stabilization Fund

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer the sum of sixty-five thousand dollars (\$65,000) from the City's Energy Stabilization Fund for the design of a new HVAC system that will convert the existing fuel system at Peirce Elementary School to a fossil free fuel HVAC system.

Action: **Finance Approved 8-0**

Note: Josh Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings presented the request to transfer \$65,000 from the Energy Stabilization fund for the Peirce Elementary School for the design of a fossil free fuel HVAC System. Commissioner Morse explained that they will use these funds to figure out the options to convert this type of building to electric systems.

Commissioner Oliver motioned to approve which passed unanimously.
The Committee adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Walker Grossman, Chair

Question 1: The Energy Stabilization was created as a sub-fund category of the Capital Stabilization fund back in May 2013. I have attached this Council Order #165-13 (Susan Albright was looking for it back in April when Angino Farm was an item). In my earlier research on the creation of this, I learned that Councilor Crossley was one of the leads in getting this created back then. As mentioned in the Council Order, this sub-fund would be funded through energy rebates, which are typically received by the Public Buildings dept.

As far as the balance goes, it currently has a fund balance (prior year revenues minus expenses) of \$344,066.03 and \$12,662.76 in revenues so far in FY23 totaling \$356,728.79 before these two items come up for discussion tonight. Enel X North America is the main vendor that we get energy rebates from. Public Buildings may be able to talk more about their relationships with these vendors and exactly what the rebates are for.

All Energy Stabilization uses must come through Council for appropriation. For recent transactions out of the account, In FY22 we had Angino Farm Solar for \$20,000 (#252-22) and LED lighting at NECP and NSHS Cutler Wing (#386-21) for \$29,807, which is the City's portion to go with the Green Communities Grant. In FY21, there were various Energy Efficiency projects under #381-20 for \$23,195 that included NSHS LED lighting, 60 Eliot St, and Auburndale Library. In FY20, there was an appropriation (#346-19) to supplement the Green Communities grant again totaling \$24,406 for energy improvements to lighting at NSHS tennis court and field house.

Question 2: As for your second question, both the Pierce and Main Library HVAC projects will be designed by a mechanical engineer. It could be one firm doing both, or two different firms. We have yet to select a firm for either project. The Designer Selection Committee interviews and ranks on-call engineering and architectural firms for projects like this in accordance with the state designer selection law and the City of Newton ordinances. We therefore have several engineering firms already under contract that may be used for these projects. Once the designs are complete, each project will be advertised for bid. The bids will be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, which may or may not be the same contractor for both projects.