

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2001

Present: Ald. Coletti (Chairman), Ald. Bryson, Bullwinkle, Ciccone, Gerst, Parker, and Schnipper

Absent: Ald. R. Lipof

City officials present: Kathy Glick-Weil (Library Director), Dolores Hamilton (Human Resources Director), Edward Murphy (Fire Chief), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer) Michael Rourke (Chief Administrative Officer), David Wilkinson (Comptroller),

#536-00 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR appointing EDWARD SPELLMAN as
TREASURER/COLLECTOR of the City of Newton, effective January 17, 2001,
pursuant to Section 3-3(b) of the City Charter.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Mayor Cohen was present. The Mayor's letter of December 14, 2000 constituted the appointment of Mr. Spellman as Treasurer/Collector under Sec. 3-3(b) of the City Charter. The Mayor introduced Mr. Spellman to the committee and members proceeded to interview him, asking specifically about his related experience and long tenure as both town accountant and treasurer in other cities and towns in Massachusetts. Mr. Spellman brings to the position over sixteen years of direct experience in dealing with municipal finance. He was formerly treasurer in the town of Dedham from 1989-1993; Treasurer/Collector in the town of East Bridgewater from 1993-1994; and Town Accountant in the town of Milton from 1994 to present. Mr. Spellman was the successful candidate in a search process that included on the search committee the Chairman of the Finance Committee, representatives from the Mayor's office, and three other appointees. This committee interviewed a substantial number of candidates, ultimately recommending five candidates to the Mayor. The Mayor after interviewing the five candidates chose Mr. Spellman. The committee discussed issues such as investment of funds and reconciliation of cash and the process of working with the current auditors and consultants, who are establishing a policies and procedures manual, as well as updating the city's software to the MUNIS program and enhancing billing and collection procedures. Mr. Spellman indicated his interest in the position and in stepping up and performing the treasurer/collector functions for the City of Newton. Many committee members indicated their interest in assisting him in getting acclimated to his new surroundings. A motion was made to approve his appointment, which motion carried 7-0.

#534-00 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend a Library Service Technology Act – Business Career Services grant of \$20,000 from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners which will fund the purchase of materials and staffing of a career center in the Main Library.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Library Director Kathy Glick-Weil was present and explained the grant and what it is expected to accomplish. There is a projected budget, with a total expenditure of \$29,068. Approximately \$9,000 of that is for salaries, library materials and books (with some additional costs anticipated) and the balance for equipment. Most of the equipment will be Compaq computers and monitors, a laser jet printer, a workstation, and chairs. The contractual services will involve the design of an attractive brochure for the Newton Free Library Career Center. Ultimately, the main goals are to develop the career center with an expanded collection of paper, non-print, and electronic materials, to offer a career services web site, and to provide various classes in career selection and job searching endeavors. The staff will work with people from Mt. Ida as well as the Jewish Vocational Services in carrying out this grant. The committee was excited that Ms. Glick-Weil continues to get this type of funding to enhance the interactive and the e-net program at the library. A motion was made to approve the acceptance of this grant, which motion carried 7-0.

9-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting the acceptance and expenditure of a gift of \$3,000 to the Newton Fire Department from Jackson's Omni Foods to partially fund the purchase of a thermal imaging camera.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Chief Murphy was present and presented a letter dated December 21, 2000 indicating that Omni Foods has made a generous donation of \$3,000 to assist in the purchase of a thermal imaging camera. This equipment allows firefighters to see through dense smoke and locate persons in burning buildings. The most standard thermal imaging equipment that is commonly available on the market costs between \$10,000-\$12,000. With this money the Chief intends to supplement the funds he has within his existing budget to buy the city's first camera. The city will make additional appropriations when necessary to continue to purchase the equipment and attachments that are required to assist and complement this important piece of equipment. The committee thanked Omni Foods for its donation and complimented Chief Murphy on the work his department is doing. With that, a motion was made to approve the acceptance of this gift, which motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

10-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting a transfer of funds in the amount to \$2,227.50 in order to pay a professional placement agency for the temporary filling of a position in the Human Services Department, as follows:

From: 01-50201-511001	\$2,227.50
To: 0150201-5313	\$2,227.50

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Backup information was presented indicating that the head clerk was transferred to the Police Department effective November 28, 2000. The Human Services Department was required to hire a temporary replacement from a professional placement agency while they were attempting to fill the position on a permanent basis. The temporary help was necessary because the clerk is essential to the operation of the department. In addition, the Holiday season put further demands on the staff. The committee was told by Messrs. Wilkinson and Rourke that the position has now been filled and the funds will be transferred from Personal Services Account into the Temporary Staff Account so the employment agency can be paid. Upon a motion, the committee voted 7-0 to approve the transfer of funds.

11-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend \$388,000 from Budget Reserve for the purpose of supplementing the Workers Compensation budget.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Human Resources Director Dolores Hamilton and Chief Budget Officer Sandy Pooler were present for this item. Ms. Hamilton explained that the city's workers compensation budget has recently seen a dramatic increase in expenditures due to three unfavorable decisions by the Department of Industrial Accidents. There has also been an increase in the number of surgical procedures as a result of work-related injuries (four in the past year). An analysis comparing the last five typical years shows that the city is about \$125,000 ahead in workers compensation expenditures this year. This analysis indicates that the school, fire and police departments are in reasonably good shape; however, on the municipal side there have been additional claims, as well as the more than \$200,000 determined by the Industrial Accident Board retroactive for injuries sustained previously by three employees. The city does have a trust fund that has over \$5 million and is self-insured for workers compensation. The city adds approximately \$1.8 to \$2 million a year into this fund in order to fund the continuing workers compensation claims. There are approximately 22 people on workers compensation (at one time there were as many as 100 people). With the assistance of the consultant hired by the city and the dedication of the personnel in Human Resources, the city has been able to get many employees back to work within three or four months after either their injury or the operation required to correct their medical problem. The consensus is that this is a temporary situation, with much of the money relating to Industrial Accident Board settlements. The city has no choice but to continue to monitor these situations and pay for appropriate surgical procedures as they become necessary. Understanding why the additional monies were needed and the appropriateness of the request, a motion was made to approve the additional appropriation of \$388,000, which will take care of claims for the balance of this year. The motion carried 7-0.

12-01 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR recommending that the sum of \$22,073 be transferred from FY01 Wage Reserve, \$1,822 from Water Surplus and \$1,291 from Sewer Surplus, in order to fund a collective bargaining agreement with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Newton Foremen's Union, Local 2443 for the period of FY01 to FY04.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Messrs. Pooler and Rourke were present for this item. A letter dated December 28, 2000 indicated that the Mayor's office has collectively bargained a new contract for a period of three years with the Foremen's Union, Local 2443. This settlement calls for a wage adjustment pattern of 3% for each of the three years. There were some other adjustments to the schedule for the payment of overtime for these foremen who also serve in the capacity of foremen during

snow emergencies. The committee reviewed the people who are within the union and indicated that it understood the contract as it related to these personnel. There is "re-opener" clause, based on the city's continued pattern bargaining with the other unions in the city. The committee agreed that the contract is in keeping with what many expected would be settled. There are sufficient funds available to fund these types of wage settlements. A motion was made to approve the transfers, which motion carried 7-0.

ITEM HELD IN COMMITTEE ON 10/2/00:

#385-00 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting approval of the following mentioned sidewalk/driveway apron and/or curb betterments; said betterments to be levied under the provisions of MGL Chapter 83, Sec. 26, authorizing the assessment of betterments for sidewalk construction:

<u>PROPERTY OWNER</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>BK/PG</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
	<u>S-B-L</u>		
II)Wise, Delaney	45 Claremont Street 13-10-10	22633-190	\$1,046.00

ACTION: APPROVED AS AMENDED 7-0

NOTE: Held from a group of betterments submitted last year, this item is for curbing installation at 45 Claremont Street. The committee last September determined there should be a reduction in the assessment because not all the curbing installed was requested by the homeowner. (This included one length of curbing and one corner block inadvertently installed by the city.) Subsequently, the item was referred to the Public Works Department and it rectified the situation to assess the homeowner for work actually requested and done -- \$988. The committee approved 7-0 the assessment of the betterment at \$988.

#533-00 GUIDO P. CETRONE, 41 West Street, Newton, Constable of the City of Newton, annual Constable Bond #58552404 in the surety amount of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000), pursuant to MGL, Chapter 41, Section 92,93.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Mr. Cetrone submitted his bond, which he must do annually to remain a constable. Mr. Cetrone has been a constable in Newton for more than thirty years. His dedication is certainly appreciated by the members of the Board. Without discussion or debate, this carried unanimously, 7-0.

All other items were held without discussion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ald. Paul E. Coletti, Chairman