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January 15, 2008

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance convened on January 15, 2008, with Chairman Maryann Heuston presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Bruce Desmond, Walter Pero and Dennis Sullivan also present and voting. Also present were Aldermen Robert Trane, Thomas Taylor, Sean O'Donovan, William White and Rebekah Gewirtz, Mayor Joe Curtatone, Chief Assessor Richard Brescia, Finance Director Ed Bean, DPW Commissioner Stan Koty, City Solicitor John Gannon, Director of Housing Phil Ercolini, Police Chief Anthony Holloway, Anne Thomas from SPCD, Chief of Staff Michael Lambert and Director of SPCD Monica Lamboy.

184664 – Vehicle for Police Chief

Mayor Curtatone asked that this item be placed on file, as the funding will be provided from other accounts. The Mayor told the members that the Administration did consider hybrids when selecting the vehicle and noted that the initial cost would have been an additional \$20,000 above the price of a Crown Victoria. The Mayor also stated that including the vehicle was an executive function of contract negotiations with the Chief.

184818 – Extension of the solid waste/recycling/yard waste contract

Mr. Koty explained that this is the 4th year option renewal of the contract and said that the solid waste and recycling rates would remain the same, and that the yard waste rate would increase about \$12,000. At the present time, Somerville is paying \$44/ton compared to Medford's \$68/ton. Mr. Koty noted that Russell Disposal has been working without a contract – and not being paid – since January 1st. Alderman Gewirtz spoke of the dispute between Russell Disposal and the Teamsters Union and stated that she was concerned that Russell Disposal does not pay the prevailing wage as claimed by a competitor. Mr. Lambert informed the members that the city contacted the Attorney General's office to investigate these allegations and that Assistant City Solicitor David Shapiro was present to represent the city at the meeting. Alderman Sullivan requested that Mr. Shapiro address the committee regarding this matter. Alderman White requested that a comparison of other cities' rates vs. Somerville's be compiled and he further requested that the committee be provided with a copy of the original 3-year contract. Chairman Heuston requested that Mr. Lambert direct Mr. Shapiro to contact Alderman Sullivan in order to ascertain what information the committee is seeking and asked Mr. Koty to compile the requested comparative data.

184714 and 184724 – Purchase of bullet proof vests

Mr. Bean explained that the city would be reimbursed for this expenditure through a matching grant.

184717, 184718, 184719, 184720, 184722 – Job reclassifications

Mr. Brescia, Ms. Lamboy and Mr. Bean explained that these positions are being reclassified to better represent their associated duties and responsibilities and that the requested funding is to adjust the salaries accordingly.

184672 – Butler Drive

Attorney Thomas told the members that the closing date for the St. Polycarp Affordable Housing Project is approaching and the title company wants Butler Drive to be discontinued, rather than abandoned, because abandonment has no effect on title. Since Butler Drive was secured through an easement, the owners on either side of Butler Drive at the time of discontinuance will automatically own to the center line of Butler Drive. The Somerville Community Corporation, through a special purpose entity created by SCC, owns both sides of Butler Drive, so the discontinuance will result in the SCC entity owning Butler Drive.

184715 – Option to purchase the property at 161 Broadway

Attorney Thomas told the members that this parcel, which is being considered as a location for a potential police sub-station, is a key site and that the Mayor would like more time to negotiate with the seller.

184676 – Contract extension with Murphy, Hesse, Tooney & Lehane LLP

Alderman Sullivan's motion that this item be amended to extend to 5/31/08 was approved.

184716 – Accrued leave for retiring Police Chief Bradley

Mr. Bean explained that this expenditure was not anticipated at the time the budget was approved.

184670 – Harris Park

Ms. Lamboy informed the members that Harris Park's location exposes it to noise and fumes from the highway, so the city is looking to redevelop this site and secure another parcel to develop as parkland. Approval is being sought for a draft RFP. Chairman Heuston asked Ms. Lamboy to forward electronic copies of the pertinent information on this matter to all members of the Board of Aldermen.

184669 – Davis Square

Ms. Lamboy gave a brief summary of the RFP and stated that any feedback the Board of Aldermen could provide would be appreciated. Chairman Heuston asked Ms. Lamboy to forward electronic copies of the pertinent information on this matter to all members of the Board of Aldermen.

184671 – West Somerville Police Sub-station

Ms. Lamboy gave a brief summary of the RFP.

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following 12 items:

184664: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to appropriate \$27,011 from the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund to the Police Capital Outlay Vehicles Acct. for a 2008 Ford Crown Victoria for the use of the Police Chief in the performance of his duties.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be placed on file

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184672: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to discontinue Butler Dr. in connection with the St. Polycarp Affordable Housing Project, this time pursuant to MGL c82 s21.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184676: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to extend a contract with Murphy, Hesse, Tooney & Lehane LLP to 3/30/08.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved as amended (extended to 5/31/08)

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184714: Communication from Mayor - Requesting an appropriation of \$36,210 from Unreserved Fund Balance (Free Cash) to the Police Supplies for Men/Women Acct. to purchase 42 bullet proof vests.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184715: Communication from Mayor - Requesting an appropriation of \$24,999 from Unreserved Fund Balance (Free Cash) to the Capital Projects Fund Police Substation-East Somerville, for an option to buy 161 Broadway for a potential police substation.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184716: Communication from Mayor - Requesting a transfer of \$61,601 from the Salary Contingency Acct. to the Police Salaries Acct. to fund accrued leave for retiring Chief Robert Bradley.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184717: Communication from Mayor - Requesting a transfer of \$3,107 from the Salary Contingency Acct. to the Police Salaries Acct. to fund a new salary and reclassification to Professional I for the Financial Analyst effective Jan. 1,

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184718: Communication from Mayor - Requesting a transfer of \$2,317 from the Salary Contingency Acct. to the Board of Assessors Salaries Acct. to fund a new salary and reclassification to Managerial for the Director of Revaluation effective Jan. 1, 2008.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184719: Communication from Mayor - Requesting a transfer of \$2,283 from the Salary Contingency Acct. to the Board of Assessors Salaries Acct. to fund a new salary and reclassification to Professional I for the Commercial Appraiser effective Jan. 1, 2008.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184720: Communication from Mayor - Requesting a transfer of \$726 from the SPCD Salaries Acct. to the Conservation Commission Salaries Acct. to fund a new salary and reclassification to Professional I for the Project Manager/Senior Planner effective Jan. 1, 2008.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184722: Communication from Mayor - Requesting the use of available funds of \$5,000 in the IT Salaries Acct. and reclassification to Professional I for the Internet Coordinator effective Jan. 1, 2008.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184724: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to expend a \$18,105 grant from the Federal Office of Justice Programs, for the purchase of 42 bullet proof vests.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

Alderman Maryann Heuston, Chairman
Committee on Finance

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Finance,
January 15, 2008

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk