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January 23, 2008

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance convened on January 23, 2008, with Chairman Maryann Heuston presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Bruce Desmond, Walter Pero, Dennis Sullivan and John Connolly also present and voting. Also present were Alderman Rebekah Gewirtz, Chief of Staff Michael Lambert, DPW Commissioner Stan Koty, Assistant City Solicitor David Shapiro, Stephanie Hirsch from Somerstat, Purchasing Director Rositha Durham, Arn Franzen, Marc Freidman, Dana LeWinter, Rob May, Anne Thomas and Phil Ercolini from SPCD, Health Director Noreen Burke, Alex Pirie from Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health, and interested members of the public, (sign in sheet attached).

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

Mr. Koty distributed a comparison of other cities' trash removal and disposal costs and noted that Somerville's rate of \$44/ton is lower than all of them. The city's rate would remain at \$44/ton for the duration of the contract extension. Assistant City Solicitor David Shapiro updated the members on the issue before the Attorney General informing them that allegations have been made against the contractor. The city, upon learning of the allegations, contacted the Attorney General's Office, who in turn initiated an investigation into the matter. No date has been given for a finding. Mr. Shapiro noted that the disposal contract contains a termination clause, so if the allegations are found to be true, the city could re-evaluate the contract. Chairman Heuston stated that the responsible course of action would be to approve the contract extension and to let the investigation run its course.

184299 – “Big Belly” barrel cordless compaction system

Mr. Koty informed the members that these barrels would not need to be emptied as often as the barrels in use now since the trash is automatically compacted by solar power. The units are totally enclosed and are equipped with wireless technology that will send a signal to the DPW indicating that it is full. These barrels are currently in use at Statue Park and Foss Park, and have been well received by the public. The approximate of each barrel is \$4,000 and the city hopes to see a return of its investment in 3 years.

184780 - Substance abuse grant

Ms. Burke told the members that this grant is part of a nationwide settlement involving the drug OxyContin and that the funds would be used to promote the prevention of drug use. The Health Department plans on utilizing the internet's MySpace and YouTube sites in an effort to get information on drug use prevention to the public.

184667 - Emergency Preparedness Grant

Ms. Burke told the members that this grant is part of the annual local allocation to the city and would be used to continue training for emergency situations.

184721 - ResiSTAT

Ms. Hirsch told the members that the requested funds would be used to pay for the full-time analyst through this fiscal year

184670 – Harris Park

Ms. Thomas told the members that this parcel is 24,000 square feet in size. A neighborhood meeting was held and the proposal was enthusiastically received. The plan involves generating an RFP for development of the parcel in exchange for replacement parkland in the neighborhood, of greater or equal value, and other considerations.

184674 – 1-year action plan

184675 – 5-year action plan

Mr. Ercolini reviewed the plans and noted that the data was compiled based on figures from the 2000 census. Community meetings have been held to receive public comment and extensive outreach was performed to involve various agencies. The public comment period will close on February 3rd and the HUD submission deadline for the plans is February 15th. The plans encompass several areas, including:

- Housing,
- Economic and Community Development,
- Transportation and Infrastructure,
- Parks and Open Space,
- Historic Preservation,
- Public Services and
- East Somerville and Union Square Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSA)

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following 7 items:

184299: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to appropriate \$135,825 from the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund to the Public Works Building & Grounds Capital Equipment Acct. to purchase 35 “Big Belly” Barrel Cordless Compaction Systems.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

184667: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to expend a \$16,193.65 grant from Emergency Preparedness Region 4B, for a part-time Emergency Preparedness Assistant Coordinator.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

184670: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to declare Harris Park at 0

Cross St. East, as well as the section of Cross St. East adjacent to Harris Park, available for disposition pursuant to MGL c30B s16, and approve a draft RFP for the redevelopment of the site in exchange for replacement parkland in the neighborhood and other considerations.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

184673: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to declare as surplus a 1989 Pierce Lance Ladder Truck in the Fire Dept.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

184721: Communication from Mayor - Requesting the use of available funds of \$8,840 in the SomerSTAT Salaries Acct. for the full-time ResiSTAT Analyst.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

184780: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to expend a grant of \$89,775 from the Attorney's General's Office for the Health Dept's 3-City Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

184818: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval of an extension of the solid waste/recycling/yard waste contract with Langton and Douglas Inc./F.W. Russell and Sons Inc.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: 4 - 1 in favor (Alderman Sullivan voted against approval)

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Finance,
January 23, 2008

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk