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January 9, 2008

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance convened on January 9, 2008, with Chairman Maryann Heuston presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Bruce Desmond, Walter Pero and Dennis Sullivan also present and voting. Also present were Alderman Robert Trane, Chief of Staff Michael Lambert, Personnel Director Richard Tranfaglia, DPW Commissioner Stan Koty, Water Superintendent Carol Antonelli, Environmental Programs Manager Peter Mills, Environmental Coordinator Vithal Deshpande, Assistant City Solicitor Bob Collins and Finance Director Ed Bean.

184661: appropriation for capital items in the Water Dept.

Ms. Antonelli addressed the committee regarding a request to appropriate funds for capital items in the Water Department that were approved by the Board of Aldermen in the last fiscal year and explained how these items would help the city to better control its resources by cutting down on maintenance and overtime costs and by helping to find water leaks. Ms. Antonelli spoke of her concerns about unaccounted for water resulting from the Somerville Ave. reconstruction project and also discussed comments received from residents concerning improvements to the water quality.

184662: environmental remediation related to underground storage tanks

Mr. Deshpande discussed the work done at the Brown School, the High School and the DPW and also spoke about the excess water and contaminated soil remediation. (Alderman Trane recused himself from the discussion of this item.) This appropriation will fund all remediation for the 3 locations.

184664: vehicle for the use of the Police Chief

Mr. Collins responded to questions from the members and informed them that outgoing Police Chief Bradley used his personal vehicle in the performance of his duties and also stated that he knows of no restriction against using the vehicle for personal business in the new Chief's contract, since the Chief is on call for emergency purposes. Out of state use would, however, require approval from the Mayor. Alderman Pero inquired as to whether, or not, the Chief Fire Engineer has a city vehicle at his disposal and asked that this information be provided to the committee. Alderman Trane suggested that the city consider purchasing a Chevrolet Tahoe hybrid rather than the requested Crown Victoria. The item will remain in committee until further information is obtained.

184713: renovation of Central Hill Memorial Park

184723: renovation of Central Hill Memorial Park

The members were informed that Central Hill Memorial Park was the first park in the city and that efforts are being made to improve the playground and to find permanent locations for memorials. The grant received by the city must be used by the end of the current fiscal year. Alderman Pero's motion that a Central Hill Commission be established to plan the park, was approved.

184726: extension of the recycling contract with Casella Waste

Mr. Koty told the members that this item is for an extension of the contract with Russell Disposal and that the old contract expired on December 31, 2007. Chairman Heuston pointed out that the item was submitted as a 1-year extension and expressed concern over the item's last minute submission. Mr. Bean informed the members that Russell Disposal cannot be paid unless this item is approved. Chairman Heuston stated that the item would remain in committee until the wording is corrected. The item will be resubmitted.

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following 4 items:

184661: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval of a \$1,910,000 appropriation for capital items in the Water Dept., including vehicles, water mains, water main services, lead services and gate valves, and authorization to borrow \$1,910,000 with a bond.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184662: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to appropriate \$243,129.86 from Unreserved Fund Balance ("Free Cash") to DPW Administration Prof. & Tech. Svcs. Acct. for environmental remediation related to underground storage tanks at several locations in city buildings.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184713: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval of a \$500,000 appropriation for the renovation of Central Hill Memorial Park, and authorization to borrow \$500,000 with a bond.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

184723: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to expend a \$494,942 grant from the MA Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to renovate Central Hill Memorial Park.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Finance,
January 9, 2008

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk