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December 12, 2006

### **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

The Committee on Finance convened on December 12, 2006, with Chairman William White presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Bruce Desmond, Maryann Heuston and Dennis Sullivan also present and voting. Also present were Alderman Sean O'Donovan, DPW Commissioner Stan Koty, Health Director Noreen Burke, Terry Smith from Traffic and Parking, Treasurer William Fowler, Finance Director Edward Bean, Michael Lambert from the Mayor's Office, Election Commissioner Nicholas Salerno, Communication Director Tom Champion, Steve Winslow from SPCD, Peter Mills and Stephen Mackey from the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Brescia informed the members that the city's proposition 21/2 tax levy limit has increased approximately by \$3.2 million due to new growth and that condominiums have contributed \$84 million in new growth. During 2005, 309 units have been converted to condos with the overall increase in condos being 609. Mr. Brescia said that he estimates that \$1.6 billion will be spent for brick and mortar for buildouts over the next 19 years bringing close to \$23 million in tax dollars to the city by the year 2023.

Mr. Winslow informed the members that the city needs to acquire parcels of land from the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) and from the MBTA for the Community Path Extension and Park Project. The terms of the land acquisition with the CHA are subject to an easement for 30 parking spaces. Chairman White, concerned about liability, said that he would like the CHA to indemnify the city and suggested that Mr. Winslow discuss the matter with Counsel Anne Thomas.

Mr. Champion addressed the committee regarding reverse 311 and reported that Somerville is the only city in the country that has Connect CTY and 311. Mr. Champion stated that the feedback from the community regarding 311 was positive. As for Connect CTY, the completion rate of phone calls made is 72.5%. Mr. Champion believes that the city needs to do more outreach to obtain information that can be entered into the database.

Mr. Bean spoke about the budget and the expenditures to date, saying that he is hopeful that the tax rate will decrease. He also noted that the revenues from the meters in Buena Vista parking garage are approximately \$72,800.

Chairman White requested that Mr. Bean total the amount of funding the city will be seeking for a supplemental budget and have the information available for the Board of Aldermen's meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman White requested a report on the status of underground oil storage tanks on any City property, including the location of such tanks, whether any such tanks are currently leaking or have leaked, the anticipated removal date of such tanks and the projected costs for removing such tanks. Mr. Koty stated that the cost for removal, replacement and remediation of the oil tank at 19 Walnut Street is \$122,945.48.

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following 6 items:

**182230:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to expend a grant of \$192,104 from the MA Office of Environmental Affairs for the Community Path Extension and Park Project.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

**182317:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to appropriate \$500,000 from Receipts Reserved for Appropriation – Parking Meter Receipts to reduce the FY07 tax levy.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

**182318:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to appropriate \$500,000 from the Overlay Surplus declared by Board of Assessors on Nov. 20 to reduce the FY07 tax levy.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

**182319:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval of a supplemental appropriation of \$119,100 to the Election Dept. Special Election Acct. to fund the Special Elections for Alderman-at-Large.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

**182320:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to transfer \$75,000 in Traffic and Parking, from the Meter Receipts Acct. to the OM Repairs to Highway Acct. to continue line painting citywide.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

**182322:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to expend a grant of \$50,000 from the Cambridge Health Alliance to the Health Dept. to create an Asst. Director for Community Health position.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

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Alderman William A. White, Jr., Chairman  
Committee on Finance

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

Report of the Committee on Finance,  
December 12, 2006

In Board of Aldermen

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Clerk