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March 25, 2008

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

The Committee on Finance convened on March 25, 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 Aldermen William Roche and William White, Commissioner Stan Koty and Ginger Barrett from the DPW, Chief Assessor Richard Brescia, Project Manager Gerry Boyle, City Solicitor John Gannon, Monica Lamboy and Mark Friedman from SPCD, Finance Director Edward Bean, Nancy Radveich from Mass Development and Mark Racicott from MACP.

Commissioner Koty gave an overview of the collection expenses provided the committee with the figures for Russell Disposal and Waste Management.

Mr. Bean addressed the committee regarding an expense from the prior fiscal year and told the members that the vendor submitted the expense late.

Mr. Brescia spoke about taxing utility poles and distributed a summary on the matter, telling the members that utility companies have dug up many city streets and have been able to avoid paying taxes on their poles by making use of a loophole that dates back to 1915. Governor Patrick is attempting to close that loophole so that cities and towns might be able to collect taxes from the utility companies.

Chairman Heuston directed that a communication be sent to the DPW requesting that an inventory of utility poles and lines in the city be forwarded to the Finance Committee along with an explanation of how the list is maintained.

Mr. Friedman addressed the committee regarding a vacant staff accountant's position in SPCD and said that none of the 12 candidates interviewed to date were qualified. SPCD has, however, identified a candidate with the qualifications of a CPA, who will not accept the position at the current salary of \$50,000, therefore SPCD is requesting that the salary be increased to \$60,000. Mr. Friedman said that the funding for the position is comprised of 80% grant funds and 20% from the city. Chairman Heuston asked for the reasoning behind elevating the position to a Professional 1 level and Mr. Friedman justified the reclassification by stating that the projects being worked on by SPCD are more financially complex and

require a higher skill level. Mr. Friedman noted that the position was actually under-classified and said that it would not be re-advertised at the higher salary. Chairman Heuston requested that the Finance Committee be provided a list of positions that have been reclassified or changed in FY-07. (Document received 3-26-08 and attached)

Chairman Heuston's motion *that the Director of Strategic Planning and Community Development provide the Finance Committee with the job descriptions of the following positions within SPCD: Finance Director, Staff Accountant and Assistant Finance Director*, was approved. (Document received 3-26-08 and attached)

Mr. Boyle addressed the committee regarding the punch list at the Argenziano School and told the members that the city has asked for a re-design of the field. He also said that the city is one million dollars under the contract price for the school in the bond. Mr. Boyle told the members that over \$200,000 would be used for the field, \$12,000 for groundwork Somerville design and about \$50,000 for extended construction administrative services. Chairman Heuston told Mr. Boyle that there is a severe graffiti/tagging problem at the rear of the school and she would like to see cameras installed as a deterrent. Chairman Heuston requested that Mr. Boyle direct the architect to send a communication to the Board of Aldermen addressing the drainage problem and providing a budget update for the project.

The committee discussed MGL c.43D which deals with expedited permitting. Chapter 43D guarantees local permitting decisions on PDS within 180 days and makes cities eligible for a grant up to \$100,000 for such things as professional staffing assistance, local government reorganization and consulting services. Additionally, cities would receive priority consideration for PWED, CDAG, brownfield remediation assistance, MORE infrastructure funds and other financing through quasi-public organizations. The city is proposing two Priority Development Sites (PDS) in Union Square: 1) the Public Safety building and 2) the Kiley Barrel site. Acceptance of MGL c.43D would allow the city to apply for the grant.

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following 3 items:

**184968:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to extend Contract #03-025, Symmes Maini & McKee Assoc., for architectural services for the Argenziano School project.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

**185142:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting the acceptance of MGL c.43D-Expediting Permitting, and the designation as a Priority Development Site of 2 sites in Union Sq., the Public Safety Building and the Kiley Barrel site, as well as authorization for an implementation grant of up to \$100,000.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

**185143:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval for SPCD to increase the pay of the vacant Staff Accountant from \$50,000/year to \$60,000/year.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

Report of the Committee on Finance, March  
25, 2008

In Board of Aldermen

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Clerk