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March 31, 2008

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance convened on March 31, 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 Sean O'Donovan, Thomas Taylor, Robert Trane and William White as well as School Committeewoman MaryJo Rossetti, School Committeeman Paul Bockleman, Water Superintendent Carol Antonelli and Stephanie Hirsch from Somerstat.

184469 - water and sewer rates for seniors:

Ms. Antonelli told the members that she has examined this proposal and presented several examples of programs in other communities. Ms. Antonelli stated that she would work with the Assessor's Office to determine who would be eligible, but noted that any discount in the water and sewer rates given to seniors would have to be absorbed by other users. Alderman White told the members that the water and sewer are enterprise funds and must be dealt with accordingly. Alderman Trane discussed pending state legislation regarding a water rate stabilization fund and Chairman Heuston made a motion on his behalf, which was approved, **that Somerville's State Delegation look into the Governor's funding the Water Rate Stabilization Fund, that would ease the water rates in the city.** Chairman Heuston requested that Ms. Antonelli report back to the committee on this matter in one month.

185029 – hearings to allow residents to present their budget priorities

Ms. Hirsch discussed the FY-09 plans for ResiStat and told the members that several meetings have already been held to get feedback and input from residents on various issues, with the residents' concerns then being passed on to the appropriate department. Ms. Hirsch asked the members to provide their input on important issues in the wards and neighborhoods, as well. She also told the members that Board specific reports of Constituent Services (311) issues would be provided soon. Alderman Connolly discussed the budget process and cautioned against giving residents false expectations because of their involvement at ResiStat meetings. Chairman Heuston's motion, made of behalf of Alderman Trane, **that the Board of Aldermen endorse and adopt the use of ResiStat to secure resident participation in the city's budget process,** was approved. School Committeewoman Rossetti discussed getting the Superintendent of Schools to post the School Department's budget on the city's website to allow for more citizen access and input.

No papers were acted on.

Alderman Maryann Heuston, Chairman
Committee on Finance

COMMITTEE REPORT

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31, 2008

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk