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April 14, 2009

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance convened on April 14, 2009, with Chairman Maryann Heuston presiding and Committee Members Aldermen John Connolly, Walter Pero and William White also present and voting. Also present were Aldermen Robert Trane and Rebekah Gewirtz, Administrative Assistant Jessie Baker, DPW Commissioner Stan Koty, School Committeemen Adam Sweeting and Mark Niedergang, City Solicitor John Gannon, City Engineer Charlie O'Brien, Consultant Charles Lombardi, Environmental Program Manager David Lutes and Finance Director Ed Bean.

186852 - Funds for soil mitigation:

Mr. Koty and Mr. Lombardi explained that, based on the samples taken, there was no evidence of hazardous material at the site. As additional work is performed in city, more extensive testing will be done. The city worked closely with the contractor involved to lower the cost associated with replacing the soil.

186853 - Somerville Avenue water works:

Mr. O'Brien explained the need for the transfer.

186960 - Outside legal services:

Mr. Gannon explained that these funds would be used pay for the services of Robinson and Cole associated with the case of reducing noise from increased air traffic over Somerville. Alderman Pero asked that members of the community call 311 with any air traffic noise complaints, to assist the city in building its case. Alderman White requested copies of the bills in question.

187035 - FY-09 reversions:

Mr. Bean informed the members that the House of Representatives would be releasing its version of the budget on April 15th, so it's not now known whether or not there might be additional cuts to the city's FY-10 budget. Thirty four percent of the city's budget is comprised of state aid. Mr. Niedergang told the members that the School Committee, in coordination with the Mayor's Office, would hold a series of public hearings to inform the public of impending cuts to the FY-10 budget. Chairman Heuston asked that the Mayor's Office make a concerted effort to publicize these meetings.

187140 - Contract for recyclables:

Mr. Lutes informed the members that the city negotiated a lower price with Casella, Inc., predicated on entering into a five year contract. Alderman Pero requested a copy of the contract to examine for specific clauses, similar to those in the contract with Russell Disposal, e.g., hours of pick up. Chairman Heuston inquired as to the urgency of approving this item and Alderman White stated that vendors working off of expired contracts is happening too frequently. Alderman Connolly requested time to review contract.

Commissioner Koty informed the members that he would explain to vendor that committee wants time to perform its due diligence.

187141 - Brown School:

Commissioner Koty explained that in August of 2008, a crack was reported in a wall of the Brown School. A structural engineer was hired to examine the crack and provide an opinion. The city was informed that the crack did not present an immediate danger, however, the city feels obligated to further explore the crack to be sure that it doesn't develop into something bigger later.

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following 8 items:

186852: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to appropriate \$260,574 from the Sewer Enterprise Fund Balance Surplus Account to the DPW's Land Improvements Account, for soil mitigation at Joesephine and Pearson Aves.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

186853: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to appropriate \$75,000 from the Water Enterprise Fund Balance Surplus Account to the DPW's Water Reconstruction and Repair Account, for Somerville Ave. water works improvements.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

186961: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to expend \$22,500 from the MA Cultural Council for the Arts Council to administer its ArtsUnion

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

186962: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to expend \$3,000 from the MA Dept. of Public Health for the Fire Dept.'s Mass Decontamination Unit.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

187035: Communication from Mayor - Requesting a reduction in FY09 appropriations of \$2,935,217, which is needed to balance the municipal budget following a reduction in state aid of \$2,935,217.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

187036: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to declare surplus 9 vehicles no longer useful to the Police Dept.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

187141: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to use \$20,681 in available

funds in two DPW B&G OM Accts. (\$14,385 in Building Improvements and \$6,296 in Capital Equipment) for engineering tests on the brick walls at the Brown School.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

187142: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to declare as surplus property a dry heat sterilizer that is no longer useful to the Health Dept.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 4 - 0 in favor

Alderman Maryann Heuston, Chairman
Committee on Finance

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Finance, April
14, 2009

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk