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May 9, 2006

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance convened on May 9, 2006, with Chairman William White presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Maryann Heuston, Denise Provost, Dennis Sullivan and Robert Trane also present and voting. Also present were Alderman Rebekah Gewirtz, Mike Lambert from the Mayor's Office, Personnel Director Richard Tranfaglia, Finance Director Edward Bean, Energy Task Force members Andrea Ranger, Ian Finlayson and Laurie Segal and Stephen Mackey from the Chamber of Commerce.

The committee discussed the matter of funding the position of Environmental Programs Manager and was told that the utility costs for the city could increase by as much as 50%. The Administration believes that it is imperative to establish this position in order to develop policies that would lessen the city costs for utilities, as it relates to the environment. Mr. Lambert compared the responsibilities of the current environmental position and the proposed new position and noted that the new position would encompass oversight of the development of solid waste and recycling programs as well as the implementation of an internal citywide strategy for energy conservation. Mr. Lambert also said that a progressive solid waste position is responsible for setting policy for the city. Mr. Tranfaglia informed the members that the position would pay a salary of \$60,000, of which \$40,000 would be paid from a grant from Waste Management.

Alderman Heuston said that it is the duty of the DPW Commissioner to manage costs associated with trash removal and asked why this new position is necessary. She also said that the current and new positions overlap in several areas, creating redundancy. Alderman Heuston also stated that she did believe that a position concentrating on energy use and savings did make sense. Chairman White stated that, since the position hasn't been funded, it was unusual that neither the Finance Committee nor the Board of Aldermen was involved in the development process and yet a job offer was sent to an individual. Many members expressed concerns that the new position did not concentrate on energy use and savings and was divided between recycling, trash issues and other environmental issues already covered by existing employees. Alderman White read the provision from the Waste Management Contract that provided funding and suggested that the provision looked like it was designed to cover recycling and that the City already had an employee whose position concentrated on recycling efforts and trash issues.

The Committee approved Chairman White's motion **that the Administration's request be placed on file and that it was the sense of the Finance Committee that in submitting the FY-07 budget the Administration use the \$40,000 grant from Waste Management to fund the current Environmental Coordinator's position and that the Environmental Programs Manager position concentrate on energy useage and emissions control**

The Committee approved Alderman Trane's motion that the Director of Finance provide the committee with a breakdown of the city's year to date utility costs and the actual amount of therms, btu's and kilowatt hours used and whether there had been any cost savings from the previous fiscal year.

The Committee approved Alderman Provost's motion that the Commissioner of Public Works report to the Finance Committee on the process that he utilizes for purchasing electricity through bulk rates and if he had utilized or considered using a reverse auction through state contract.

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

180815: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval of the transfer of \$10,385 from the Unemployment Compensation Insurance Account to the Environmental Protection Salaries Account, for the position of Environmental Programs Manager.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be placed on file

VOTE: Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

181003: Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to appear before the Board on May 11, 2006, to provide an update on recent improvements to water billing procedures.

RECOMMENDATION: Discharged to Board of Aldermen

VOTE: Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

181005: Communication from Mayor - Requesting an appropriation of \$39,600 from Unreserved Fund Balance (Free Cash) to the Police OM Supplies for Men/Women Acct. to purchase bulletproof vests, for which 50% of the cost will be reimbursed by the State.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved

VOTE: Unanimous, 5 - 0 in favor

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

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Finance, May 9,
2006

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk