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December 9, 2009

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**  
**MEETING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

The Committee on Finance convened on December 9, 2009, as a Committee of the Whole with Chairman Maryann Heuston presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Bruce Desmond, Walter Pero, Rebekah Gewirtz, John Connolly and Dennis Sullivan also present and voting. Also present were Administrative Assistant Matt Dias, Director of Personnel Jessie Baker, Pat Kelly from Personnel, City Solicitor John Gannon, Insurance Broker Ginger Hastings, Chief Information Officer Karthik Viswanathan, Police Chief Anthony Holloway, Chief Financial Officer Ed Bean, Transportation Director Michael Lambert and Senior Planner.

Chief Holloway and Mr. Viswanathan spoke briefly about the items pertaining to their departments.

**188479 – a request for an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$288,200 to complete Community Path improvements and design from Cedar to Central Streets:**

Mr. Lambert explained that the funds would be used for three purposes; 1) for the design and construction of the path, 2) to resolve the drainage problems and 3) for remediation of the arsenic contamination around Highland Gardens. The money would come from the Assembly Square stabilization fund by way of a bond. Alderman Gewirtz expressed her concern regarding the contamination and Mr. Lambert stated that the funds were needed to comply with DEP directives. Mr. Lambert assured the members that public meetings would continue to be held through the design phase and that he would provide the committee with sketches of the improvements.

**188409 – a request to expend a grant to renovate the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse and docks, and create a new pedestrian route to the Boathouse from Foss Park:**

Mr. Lambert told the members that the main component of the project would be a new dock that is ADA accessible. In addition, the grant would provide for creating a clear connection between the boathouse and Foss Park, mainly through new signage. The boathouse was rented by the Boys and Girls club through last summer when the property was under the control of the DCR. Now that the city has control of the property, Alderman Pero would like to see the Boys and Girls Club vacate the premises or arrive at new terms for renting the property. Alderman Pero stated that this is an important issue for the residents of Ten Hills and that it would be a good topic for a future Resi-Stat meeting. He is in favor of using the funds but would like to hold off on the project until the neighbors have an opportunity to weigh in on the matter. Mr. Lambert stated that \$3,000 is available for community outreach.

**187264 - retiree health coverage under Medicare and municipal Medicare extension plans:**

Aldermen Pero was recused from this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Baker presented information that was requested at the last Finance Committee meeting and told the members that 126 cities/towns have adopted Section 18 to date. Ms. Kelly added that some communities

have not adopted Section 18 but have complied with its mandates, informally. In those circumstances, the retiree is responsible for the penalty imposed, not the city or town. The committee asked for a breakdown of where the city's retirees reside and Ms. Baker said that she would compile the information and get it to the members prior to tomorrow's Board of Aldermen meeting. There was a discussion about how some retirees might receive assistance from the city to offset the increased cost of their health care premiums and Mr. Gannon told the members that the city could offer premium discounts through a home rule petition. The petition is currently before the state legislature and if passed, the City Administration would then set a formula to be used in applying said discounts. Mr. Bean has asked the city's outside auditors to offer suggestions for developing a formula.

Alderman Gewirtz suggested that a communication from the Board of Aldermen be sent to the city's state delegation asking that the Home Rule Petition be approved so that the city might be able to assist those retirees faced with a hardship without placing any additional financial burden on the state. The Home Rule Petition remains before the legislature until the expiration of its current session at the end of June, 2010. Section 18, if adopted, would not be implemented until July 1, 2010. Mr. Gannon added that the Home Rule Petition, if approved, would also immediately apply to those retirees currently paying increased premiums. Mr. Gannon also informed the members that, according to the statute, Section 10 needs to be adopted before Section 18 can be adopted. Therefore, he will prepare the necessary documents and submit them to the Board of Aldermen for approval. Alderman Connolly asked that a bulleted outline be made available to members of the Board of Aldermen.

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following 4 items:

**188409:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval to expend a grant of \$201,000 from the MA Environmental Trust, to renovate the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse and docks, and create a new pedestrian route to the Boathouse from Foss Park.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 6 - 0 in favor

**188478:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting approval of a lease for the Lower Broadway Police Substation for one year (9/09-8/10) at \$1,375/month.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 6 - 0 in favor

**188479:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting an appropriation of, and authorization to borrow, \$288,200, in a bond to complete Community Path improvements and design from Cedar St. to Central St.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 6 - 0 in favor

**188484:** Communication from Mayor - Requesting a transfer of \$8,000 in the

Information Technology Dept., from the Salaries Acct. to the Prof. & Tech. Svcs. Acct., for a consultant to develop an open source website for constituents and intranet for employees.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 6 - 0 in favor

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Alderman Maryann Heuston, Chairman  
Committee on Finance