

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION REPORT  
**FY07 BUDGET REVIEW**

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2006

Present: Ald. Linsky (Chair), Lennon, Hess-Mahan, Sangiolo, Yates, Parker, Vance and Lappin

Also Present: David Wilkinson (Comptroller), Rob Ricchi (CPA Admin., Planning Dept.), Mike Kruse (Director of Planning and Development),

**REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES**

#165-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter, submitting the FY07 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$295,437,277, passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY07-FY11 Capital Improvement Program.

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION: 4/18/06**

**ACTION: CPA ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET APPROVED**

**NOTE:** The Committee was joined this evening by Rob Ricchi from the Planning and Development Department, as well as David Wilkinson, Comptroller.

Mr. Wilkinson provided the attached documents which give expenditure status of the CPA fund. Mr. Ricchi provided the attached status report for all CPA projects

Mr. Kruse explained that, while this is the first year that the bound budget book gives a full list of CPA projects (which is helpful to understand this portion of the budget), and Mr. Wilkinson had provided a concise summary of these projects, he also provided the attached comparison which details the differences for this budget between FY06 and the proposed FY07 budget. This lists the administrative positions that receive funding from the CPA, the legal assistance costs for projects, a new line item for an intern for FY07 (possibly for this summer, as Jennifer Goldson is on maternity leave). He pointed out that the consultant costs line item is reduced by \$10,000 for FY07, and the \$4,000 previously included in the budget for signs has been eliminated (as it has been determined that these funds would be better spent on the projects themselves, rather on signs to be posted at project sites.

Mr. Kruse went over the fact that the state (CPA) law requires that the City set aside a minimum of 10% of the CPA fund for open space, inside resources, and community housing. The information contained in this budget document, along with the summary provided by David Wilkinson, shows that the requirements for 10% in each of these areas

are met in this budget. He explained that this proposed budget is based upon an estimated overall CPA fund of \$3,975,000 (combination of 1% tax surcharge and estimated 48% state matching during FY07). The proposed budget for administration of the CPA is well within the state requirement (under 5% of the overall budget). He pointed out that the figures contained in the information compiled by David Wilkinson are considered to be the most up-to-date and also the most accurate, in terms of what the budget projections are.

David Wilkinson explained that the state matching funds for the FY07 budget are actually based upon the City's FY06 expenditures; this figure represents 50% of the FY06 funds, which translates to be only 48% of the funds for the projected FY07 budget. He also pointed out that the fund liability for CPA project debt is \$5.2 million (\$1.2 million for Angino farm and \$4 million for Kessler Woods).

In terms of legal costs associated with this budget, Dan Funk explained that the \$30,000 listed in the appropriation is what his Department uses for all associated legal costs before projects are approved by the Board of Aldermen; any subsequent costs (i.e. for recording of legal documents at the Registry of Deeds, etc.) are built into the cost of each project prior to final Board approval. He indicated that FY06 was the first year that this was done, and that the new process has seemed to work well thusfar. He estimated that the proposed \$30,000, along with subsequent appropriation for legal fees would just about cover his Department costs.

Ald. Lappin questioned whether there was funding for additional staff members who spend significant amounts of time administering to CPA projects (i.e. Martha Horn, who spends a great deal of time administering to the Angino Farm Commission when her primary function in the Department is to work with the Conservation Commission).

Mr. Kruse explained that, while the Angino Farm project was a CPA project, the administration for the Commission (which was created by ordinance) is not a CPA cost. He indicated that, at the time that the Commission was formed, Mayor Cohen had asked him if there was a member of the Planning and Development staff who would be able to assist with administration of the Commission. At that time, Mr. Kruse had agreed to dedicate staff for this purpose, and Martha Horn was chosen to do so. The fact that she spends a significant amount of time working with the Farm Commission simply means that she spends less of her time on Conservation Commission matters; this fact does not impact the CPA fund.

Mr. Kruse explained that, when instructed by the Mayor to cut the department budget by 5% and then to describe the impact of such a cut, it was determined (according to the explanation that he had provided to the Mayor) that the Planning Dept. budget would not be cut by 5%. He indicated that he was grateful that this was the outcome, as he would

like to be able to have his staff take care of projects of this nature to the best of the ability of the Department.

Most Committee members were in support of seeking out a mechanism through which City Departments would not need to take on significant budgetary burden to staff such projects and/or Commissions. Committee members made it clear that the CPA is not generally seen as a burden, and these types of projects are desired, there was simply a concern as to how the City can dedicate the appropriate finances to this cause.

Ald. Yates moved approval of this budget as presented. That motion carried by a vote of 8-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen M. Linsky, Chair