

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Wednesday, December 3, 2008

Present: Ald. Linsky (Chair), Ciccone, Swiston, Harney, Coletti, Danberg, Vance and Fischman
City Staff: Officers Paul Bianchi and Jo Gourdeau (Newton Police Department) and Chief LaCroix (Newton Fire Department)

Officer Bianchi introduced Jo Gourdeau, Traffic Officer to the Committee indicating he has been training Officer Gourdeau on the process of taxi and public auto renewals in advance of Officer Bianchi's pending retirement.

(Note: Assistant City Solicitor Marie Lawlor prepared a memorandum for the Committee regarding the Ordinance requirements for Taxi Stand designations and assignments indicating that in the current Ordinance it does not state it is a current requirement of the Board separately and affirmatively to approve taxi stand assignments each year in conjunction with the annual taxi license renewals. Ms. Lawlor's memorandum is attached to report.)

VAN/TAXI/PUBLIC AUTO RENEWALS:

#295-08 MOHD NIDAL, 101 Blue Jay Court, Wilmington, MA 01887, requesting the renewal of **one (1) van license** to operate King's Shuttle & Limousine Service between Logan Airport and the Sheraton and Marriott hotels in Newton. [08-05-08 @ 12:44 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: Officer Bianchi joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Mr. Nidal did not attend this evening's meeting. Ald. Danberg made the motion to hold this item until the December 17 meeting when the Petitioner would once again be invited to appear before the Committee.

#454-08 MEDHI HOULANI, 72 Beaver Street, Waltham, MA 02453, requesting renewal of **three (3) taxi licenses** for NEWTON CAB. [09-30-08 @ 2:43 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

#455-08 AHCENE TOURI, 31 Irving Street, #A-8, Watertown, MA 02472, requesting renewal of **one (1) taxi license** for NEWTON METRO CAB. [09-31-08 @ 8:42 am]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

#443-08 MOHAMED SAIDI, 4 Cedar Street, Suite 405, Wellesley, MA 02481, requesting renewal of **one (1) taxi license** for NEWTON LUXURY CAB. [11-19-08 @ 3:09 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

#442-08 ANIS LAHIANI, 4 Cedar Street, Suite 405, Wellesley, MA 02481, requesting renewal of **one (1) taxi license** to operate in Newton as NEWTON TOWN TAXI. [11-20-08 @ 8:53 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

#446-08 JOSEPH F. DRAGONE, 121 Fessenden Street, Newtonville, MA 02460-1131, requesting renewal of **one (1) public auto license** for J&J SEDAN SERVICE. [09-30-08 @ 8:40 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

#445-08 DOROTHY W. DUNDAS, 15 Moreland Avenue, Newton Centre, MA 02459 requesting renewal of **one (1) public auto license** for CRYSTAL LAKE EXPRESS. [09-24-08 @ 10:43 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

#441-08 JERRY ROBBINS, 253 Riverview Avenue, Newton, MA 02466, requesting renewal of **four (4) public auto licenses** for WELDON EXECUTIVE COACH. [11-19-08 @ 3:53 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

#447-08 WILLIAM R. TURNER, 25 Curve Street, West Newton, MA 02465, requesting renewal of **one (1) public auto license** for BILL'S NICE RIDE, INC. [9-29-08 @ 11:09 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

#448-08 MARK BELENKII, 73 Charlesbank Road #202, Newton Corner, MA 02458, requesting renewal of **one (1) public auto license** for BEANTOWN CARRIAGE, LLC. [11-17-08 @ 12:34 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

#444-08 NEAL L. PARKER, 11 Chapel Street, Newton, MA, PO BOX 95055, Newton, MA 02495-0055, requesting issuance of **one (1) public auto license** to operate NEW ENGLAND CAR SERVICE. [11-17-08 @ 11:23 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Officers Paul Bianchi and Jo Gourdeau joined the Committee for the discussion of these items.

Officer Bianchi provided members of the Committee with a copy of the attached inspection report. Officer Bianchi reported that all of the above listed vehicles have passed inspection and recommends approval of the requested renewals for these public autos and taxi medallions.

Ald. Ciccone moved to approve these items.

#450-08 ROBERT J. KELLY, 175 High Street, Waltham, MA 02453, requesting renewal of **four (4) public auto licenses, forty-eight (48) taxi licenses, and twelve (12) designated taxi stands** for VETERANS TAXI of NEWTON, LLC. [09-26-08 @ 11:01 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0 AS AMENDED**

NOTE: Robert Kelly, Executive Vice President of Veterans Taxi amended his letter dated December 5, 2008, attached to report, reflecting Veterans Taxi operates forty-nine (49) taxi licenses. Mr. Kelly's original letter, dated September 23, 2008, indicated he was requesting forty-eight (48) renewals, which was a typographical error.

Officer Bianchi stated that all fifty-three (53) vehicles passed the inspection. Officer Bianchi indicated vehicle with public auto medallion #12 needs to be replaced on January 1, 2009. If the vehicle is not replaced by that time, the medallion will be issued to the next person who desires it.

At the time of vehicle replacement Officer Bianchi will provide the Committee clerk with an updated inspection report.

Officer Bianchi recommends approval of the requested renewals for these public autos and taxi medallions.

Ald. Ciccone moved to approve this item for forty-nine taxi licenses.

#449-08 RICHARD E. JOHNSTON, 25 Border Street, West Newton, MA 02465 requesting renewal of **twenty (20) taxi licenses and two (2) designated taxi stands** for NEWTON YELLOW CAB, INC. [09-30-08 @ 2:55 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Officer Bianchi stated that all twenty (20) vehicles passed the inspection. Officer Bianchi indicated vehicle with medallion #48 needs to be replaced on January 1, 2009. If the vehicle is not replaced by that time, the medallion will be offered to the next applicant on the list maintained by Officer Bianchi.

At the time of vehicle replacement Officer Bianchi will provide the Committee with an updated inspection report. Officer Bianchi recommends approval of the requested renewals for these taxi medallions.

Ald. Ciccone moved to approve this item.

#452-08 GEORGE MARRY, 50 Union Street, Newton Centre, MA 02459, requesting renewal of **three (3) taxi licenses** for HOLDEN'S TAXI, INC. [10-17-08 @ 4:24 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Holden's Taxi, Inc. also has eight (8) designated taxi stands.

#451-08 GEORGE MARRY, 50 Union Street, Newton Centre, MA 02459, requesting renewal of **three (3) taxi licenses** for NEWTON TAXI CO. [10-17-08 @ 4:24 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0

NOTE: Newton Taxi Co. has four (4) designated taxi stands.

Officer Bianchi stated that three (3) vehicles passed the inspection. He indicated vehicle with medallion #56 needs to be replaced on January 1, 2009. If the vehicle is not replaced by that time, the medallion will be offered to the next applicant on the list maintained by Officer Bianchi. At the time of vehicle replacement, Officer Bianchi will provide the Committee with an updated inspection report.

#453-08 GEORGE MARRY, 50 Union Street, Newton Centre, MA 02459, requesting renewal of **two (2) taxi licenses** for NEWTONVILLE CAB CO, INC. [10-17-08 @ 4:24 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0

NOTE: Newtonville Cab Co., Inc. also has two (2) designated taxi stands.

Officer Bianchi recommends approval of the requested renewals for these taxi medallions.

Ald. Ciccone moved to approve these items. The Committee voted 8-0 to approve.

#79-08 ALD. SWISTON, HARNEY AND FISCHMAN requesting review of the process by which taxi medallions are transferred, including a review of practices in other communities with regard to renewals and license transfers (including the use of waiting lists, if applicable). [02-13-08 @ 7:02 PM]

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 8-0

NOTE: Officer Paul Bianchi once again joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Officer Bianchi explained the process relating to the transfer of medallions. A list of interested companies is kept by the Police Dept. and when a medallion becomes available it is transferred on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Ald. Danberg suggested sending companies a letter informing them of the 'first come, first served' policy.

Officer Bianchi informed the Committee the only time a taxi medallion is removed from a company is when a vehicle is out of service or when the company does not have a vehicle. Medallions are not taken away because a company transfers ownership or someone is waiting to have a medallion. He explained the process when companies transfer ownership the medallions transfer with the company so there is never a reason to take medallions away if the Board has

approved the transfer. Medallions are otherwise issued when the vehicle passes inspection and are approved by the Board.

The Police Department processes CORI checks prior to issuing a license to ensure the safety of passengers. All passenger complaints are referred to Officer Bianchi.

Officer Bianchi stated he is not aware of how other communities issue renewals and license transfers.

Ald. Swiston reported on the research she did relative to other surrounding communities. She believes the system currently used seems to be working and that the purpose of docketing the item was to assist the Board's education in this area. Ald. Swiston moved No Action Necessary.

REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY & TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#466-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to appropriate One hundred twenty seven thousand five hundred seventy seven dollars (\$127,577) from Free Cash to the Fire Department for the purpose of purchasing six new support vehicles. [11-25-08 @ 4:54 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Chief LaCroix joined the Committee for discussion on this item. Chief LaCroix provided the Committee with a vehicle inventory list dated December 1, 2008 and a list of cars the Fire Department would like to purchase. Both are attached to the report.

Chief LaCroix indicated his original request was for \$228,000 to cover the cost of purchasing eight vehicles and two light trucks. The Executive Department reduced the Chief's request to six vehicles and no light trucks. The Executive Department indicated to Chief LaCroix, possibly in the spring, he could request additional money to purchase additional vehicles.

Chief LaCroix reviewed with the Committee the vehicle inventory list. Nine vehicles are off the road and are no longer in service. Three vehicles are still on the road but should not be due to safety reasons, high mileage and age. Chief LaCroix indicated the Deputy Chief's vehicle (Expedition) is ten years old and has approximately 175,000 miles. The Deputy Chief's vehicle responds to all calls in the City. The maintenance costs on this vehicle are very high. The vehicle has had an accident, and he indicated the Fire Department could not afford to take this vehicle off the road.

Chief LaCroix reviewed with the Committee the list of vehicles the Fire Department would like to purchase indicating that Hybrids would not be considered due to the fact they are too small and too slow of a vehicle and they can not carry necessary equipment,.

Chief LaCroix indicated he would like to purchase the following vehicles, which will include the necessary equipment including the emblems, bars, lettering, and lights.

- One Expedition at the cost of \$34,300.
- Three Ford Focus costing each \$15,154.00 to be used in the Fire Department Fire Prevention Training Division Department.

- Two Ford Taurus costing each \$24,585.00.

The Deputy Chiefs Expedition now will be turned over for Jeff Knight's use and Chief LaCroix Taurus will be turned over to Joe Lunbottom in the Wires Department, who are short a vehicle.

Committee members suggested to Chief LaCroix perhaps having a car-wash contract to avoid the erosion of the vehicles. Chief LaCroix stated the vehicles are out in the elements 24 hours per day indicating the liquid calcium used on the roads is what causes the vehicles to rust and corrode.

Ald. Danberg moved to approve this item.

#456-08 ALD. DANBERG, LINSKY, ALBRIGHT, PARKER CICCONE, HARNEY AND HESS-MAHAN requesting a discussion of impacts resulting from the proposed Mass Turnpike Toll increases, including reinstatement of tolls at interchanges located within the City of Newton, and appropriate response from State and Local officials. [11-14-08 @ 11:58 AM]

ACTION: **HELD 7-0 (Ald. Coletti not present)**

NOTE: Ald. Danberg asked the Committee to hold this item until the appropriate State and local officials can attend a meeting with the Board of Aldermen to provide new information.

Ald. Danberg stated she recently has spoken with Representative Kay Khan and is awaiting a date when Secretary Cohen will be able to attend a meeting to speak with the Board of Aldermen.

Committee members agreed if the tolls were to be increased, that they would like tolls to be located in West Newton and Newton Corner.

Ald. Harney indicated the Board of Aldermen's opinions were clearly stated in a letter dated November 24, 2008, which was sent to Governor Deval Patrick, Speaker of the House Salvatore DiMasi and Senate President Therese Murray.

Ald. Danberg made the motion to hold.

At approximately, 9:19 pm Ald. Ciccone moved for adjournment, which was approved 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen M. Linsky, Chairman