

Appropriations Committee

Chairman Brodeur, Tramontozzi,
Buonopane, Conn, Forbes, Heavey,
Infurna, Seaboyer, Mortimer
Absent: Boisselle, Wright
In attendance: Mayor Dolan,
Attorney Walter Foster; City
Auditor/CFO Patrick Dello Russo;
Superintendent Joe Casey; Nick
Gove, Superintendent of Mount
Hood and Parks; Building
Commissioner John Luther; Health
Director Ruth Clay; City Engineer
Bob Beshara

Appropriations called to order by Chairman Brodeur at 7:41 p.m. President Mortimer motions to open Public Participation, 2nd by Alderman Infurna. All in favor. No one comes forward. President Mortimer motions to close Public Participation, 2nd by Alderman Infurna. All in favor.

Order No. 07-189, GENERAL COURT PETITION Be it ordered by the Melrose Board of Aldermen that the General Court is hereby petitioned to pass a Special Act of the General Court to award fire fighter Neil Sullivan those special retirement benefits as are reflected in the attached Proposed Special Act.

Mayor Dolan introduces Attorney Walter Foster, a specialist in these types of cases. The City has arrived at an agreement with Neil Sullivan and his family and the firefighter's union. He says this is an act everyone should be proud of. It is the result of a tragedy in which firefighter Sullivan lost his leg while fighting a fire. This will ensure that he and his family are protected for the rest of his life.

Attorney Foster says this is a piece of special legislation to enable the City to retire firefighter Neil Sullivan with his regular rate of pay versus 72% as usual. Under Section 1 he is retired by the Melrose Retirement Board as totally and permanently incapacitated from continuing to work as a firefighter and will receive benefits that will be funded by the Melrose Retirement System, consistent with the dictates of Chapter 32. Section 2 deals with additional sums of money he will receive on a pre-tax basis that together with the benefits under Chapter 32 equals his regular rate of compensation he would have received had he continued in service on the day of his injury. Under this section he will also receive a lump sum equal to the amount of his credited annuity savings fund in the retirement system of the City. Section 3 defines the conditions if he predeceases his wife. Section 4 establishes indemnification for medical expenses related to the injury. This document has the stamp of approval by Mr. Sullivan, the firefighter's union and the retirement board.

Alderman Forbes asks if Mr. Sullivan's children are covered under the City's medical insurance. Attorney Foster says yes, until the age of 18.

Alderman Tramontozzi asks if compensation is provided on a yearly basis. Attorney Foster says it will be disbursed by the retirement board as if he were on the payroll. Alderman Tramontozzi asks if any worker's compensation claim has been closed out.

Attorney Foster says that funding through the retirement system closes out the worker's compensation claim. Alderman Tramontozzi asks if medical expenses will remain open. Attorney Foster says yes, medical bills will be covered if his health suffers due to the injuries he sustained in the accident.

President Mortimer moves to recommend, 2nd by Alderman Forbes. All in favor.

Order No. 07-167, Reauthorization of Revolving Funds Requesting the annual approval and reauthorization of the revolving funds the City currently has established for FY 2008 as set forth herein.

Alderman Conn asks if there are any increases to the limits on any of these accounts. Mr. Dello Russo says no, not to his understanding. The amounts requested are in the order. Alderman Conn says the past limits are not included and asks that he verify that no amounts have been increased before the next full board meeting. Mr. Dello Russo says the Waste Recycling has decreased from \$150,000 to \$120,000. The others have not increased. Alderman Conn says his concern with revolving accounts is that the money is off budget.

Chairman Brodeur says there is necessary statutory language limiting use and setting caps for each revolving fund.

Alderman Infurna asks if there are any other accounts that the caps could decrease. Mr. Dello Russo says he does not see that. The Fire Chief has asked for reauthorization for \$30,000. He is creating a new initiative this year to bring money in.

Alderman Conn moves to recommend, 2nd by President Mortimer.

Chairman Brodeur says the cap for the Health Department is \$25,000 and FY07 expenditure is \$29,000. He says that it is a little over the cap.

Mr. Dello Russo says a lot of it is timing and he will provide that information to the Board.

On the motion to recommend, All in favor.

Order No. 07-181, APPROPRIATION \$68,484.00 From: Certified Free Cash
To: Mt. Hood Enterprise Reserve Fund in accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 53F 1/2.

Mr. Dello Russo says that every year the City's enterprise funds are certified for free cash. Mount Hood has \$68,484.00 to appropriate to its reserve fund, which has to be expended on lawful purposes.

President Mortimer moves to recommend, 2nd by Alderman Seaboyer. All in favor.

Order No. 07-182, APPROPRIATION Amount: \$1,183,924.00 From: Available Free Cash To: Various Accounts as set forth herein.

Mayor Dolan says Free Cash is the equivalent of a tax return for the City. The Free Cash number shows the strength and vitality of the City. It is a supplemental budget of

one-time dollars appropriated to make adjustments to the annual budget and to pay off debt. He says this year it will pay the entire snow and ice deficit in the year that it was incurred; that has never happened before. The City will be starting the next fiscal year in a very nice position. The \$45,000 appropriated to unemployment reflects layoffs in the School Department. The \$25,000 for Worker's Compensation Medical is for a medical device that Mr. Sullivan needs. The \$120,000 for Legal Counsel will fund a proposal that the Mayor intends to make at the 30 April full Board of Aldermen meeting. \$27,500 will be used for a consultant in the hiring of a new police chief. The \$22,500 for the Auditor GASB 45 study is state mandated. \$9,386 for Retirement Salaries is money being returned to the Commonwealth. \$10,800 to the Health Department is a combination of two items: to erect a fence around contaminated conservation land and to pay for substitute nurses, constable services and dog boarding. Memorial Hall has run on a March to March budget over the years but that will change with the next budget. This appropriation of \$7,700 will cover the costs associated with the additional use of the building. \$22,000 to Fire Motor Vehicles will not be seen again with the arrival of the new equipment. \$65,000 to Fire Overtime is the lowest amount of overtime the City has spent in years. Inspectional Services is receiving \$4,285.00. Mayor Dolan publicly recognizes Mr. Luther who has had a number of issues with employees in his department and has held it together and has done a very good job. \$7,959 for pension assessment is due to a transfer of a firefighter who served in the military. \$7,000 will be appropriated to Veterans Benefits. Public Works Trees is receiving \$24,000 for the tree replacement program. The City wants to be green and clean and \$25,770 is being appropriated to Parks Benches and Barrels. Melrose businesses are sponsoring 25 benches and new high quality barrels will be placed throughout the parks to keep them cleaner. \$30,000 is being designated for Traffic Line Painting. \$50,000 will be spent on Sidewalk Repair between now and the end of the fiscal year. \$4,000 for Engineering Tools and Equipment is for a new plotter and office equipment. \$3,000 is for the new flagpole being installed in front of Fire Headquarters which will be dedicated to the City's employees who have served our country. \$20,000 will be spent to make citywide repairs to parks, and also to the basketball court at Gooch Park, one of the primary parks in the City. There are a lot of new traffic signals in the City, all of which are ADA compliant. \$15,000 is appropriated for maintenance. \$7,500 for Cemetery part-time salaries will be used to hire early summer help to get the cemetery in shape for Mother's Day and Memorial Day. \$15,000 is designated for a new roof on the City Yard automotive building.

Alderman Seaboyer asks if all of the \$22,000 for the Auditor's study will be spent on the study itself. Mr. Dello Russo says yes, and it will probably have to be done every two years. Alderman Seaboyer asks if the Fire Department's parts and repairs is for the older equipment. Mayor Dolan says this appropriation shouldn't appear in next year's Free Cash supplemental budget. Alderman Seaboyer asks if an appropriation for Police overtime will be coming at a later date. Mayor Dolan says no, the department is coming in on budget. Alderman Seaboyer asks if the DPW will be servicing the new park barrels on weekends. Mayor Dolan says the scheduled pick up is Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Alderman Seaboyer asks if the line painting includes the parking spaces behind Shaw's. Mayor Dolan says no, that it includes Tbar markings on Main Street, and main cross walks throughout the City.

Alderman Conn asks if all Free Cash is being spent. Mr. Dello Russo says that is correct. Alderman Conn asks if any thought had been given to appropriating any Free

Cash dollars to water and sewer rate relief. Mr. Dello Russo says the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds did not have any available funds. Alderman Conn asks if there is any way to put funds from certified Free Cash to provide relief. Mr. Dello Russo says that the enterprise funds statute does not allow that. Alderman Conn asks how many school layoffs there are. Mayor Dolan says he can't speak to that. Superintendent Casey says it will encompass eight positions. Alderman Conn asks if the \$45,000 figure is based on that estimate; Superintendent Casey says yes. Alderman Conn asks if \$250,000 has already been spent on Legal Counsel; Mayor Dolan says yes, that the City spends a tremendous amount on labor issues. Alderman Conn asks if \$215,000 has been spent on Fire overtime thus far. Mayor Dolan says that is correct. Alderman Conn asks if \$65,000 will get the department to the end of the year. Mayor Dolan says that is his understanding. Chief O'Brien says he doesn't think so, but he'll give it his best shot. March was a big month with new firefighters in the academy and several guys were hurt. Last week another firefighter was burned and he'll be out for a few weeks. Alderman Conn asks if the FY08 budget is \$150,000 again. Chief O'Brien says yes. Alderman Conn asks if anything can be done. Chief O'Brien says looking back at FY03, \$450,000 was spent on overtime with 55 firefighters running two engines and a ladder. The savings this year have been tremendous. Mayor Dolan says the overtime spending at this rate is a great disgrace to the City. He has worked very closely with the department as the Chief has and has made it clear that it is unacceptable not to show up to work. Abuse of sick time to go to another job or another priority is not tolerated. The employees who do so are fired. Mr. Dello Russo says he has worked with the Chief on the overtime budget and they expect to pay more than \$150,000. The intent is to look at \$3,000 per week as a target. The Chief has been very gracious in trying to work with that number. He has exhausted the regular salary budget before coming to ask for more. Alderman Conn says he recognizes that the number is coming down but it is difficult to convey why the City is spending \$250,000 to \$300,000 annually in overtime. Chief O'Brien says that Wakefield is coming in at \$250,000 to \$275,000. Mayor Dolan says there have been a couple of firefighters that have cost the City over \$100,000. The ladder agreement is recognition by the firefighters that they want to work with the administration. Chief O'Brien says it's tight but they do the best they can. Mayor Dolan says it is not appropriate to over budget the overtime line-item.

Chairman Brodeur asks if there is any incentive to not abuse sick time in the firefighter's contract. Chief O'Brien says the sick time incentive is minor in the contract but abusing sick time is not the problem; sick time is the lowest it's been in years. The problem is the unforeseen.

Alderman Conn says the appropriation to Public Works funds an ambitious list of projects to be done in the spring and asks if the work will be done in-house or by contract. Mayor Dolan says \$165,000 is discretionary dollars; the rest is for bills to be paid. The tree project is ready to go and will be done by contract. Benches will be done in-house, traffic line painting by contract. Alderman Conn asks if there is anything left of the funds already appropriated. Mr. Beshara says no. Alderman Conn asks if he is confident that \$50,000 in sidewalk repairs can be done by the end of the year; Mr. Beshara says yes as he already has a contract. Alderman Conn asks if this is all new work in the City. Mr. Beshara says it is work that has been on a waiting list for a couple of years.

Mayor Dolan says that Alderman Wright supports the Gooch Park improvements. Mr. Gove says that money appropriated for park improvement under last year's CIP included the basketball court; this appropriation extends the renovations to Gooch Park. Some work will be done by Public Works, some has already been contracted out, and some will be contracted out after this is approved. Mayor Dolan says he is not spending money just to spend it; this work is important and necessary. He would not spend these one-time dollars if the Stabilization Funds were not solid.

Chairman Brodeur asks if new equipment will be bought for the tot lot. Mr. Gove says it is possible but he will inventory the existing equipment.

Alderman Conn says he is not implying the money need not be spent. It is his view that the Aldermen's role is that any money spent is fully vetted.

Alderman Infurna asks Mr. Casey if the \$430,000 appropriation is beyond the budget passed by the School Committee or if it is included in it. Mr. Casey says it is included. Alderman Infurna commends the Mayor and his team for the work done on this supplemental budget. She says it is great to see some real neighborhood improvements being done.

Mr. Dello Russo says it means a great deal that the City is entering the new fiscal year without a deficit in any area.

Alderman Forbes asks if the second basketball court will be taken out of Gooch Park. Mayor Dolan says yes, that the neighbors want grass and landscaping. Alderman Forbes asks if the \$16,000 in landscaping includes taking down the court. Mr. Gove says no, that is specifically for the purchase of new trees; the funds in hired equipment will pay for the labor. Alderman Forbes asks if the traffic signal money is for replacement or maintenance. Mr. Beshara says it is to make pedestrian signals work at Upham and Main Streets; it cost \$15,000 to replace the controller. Alderman Forbes asks Chief O'Brien if there is a warranty on the new equipment. Chief O'Brien says there is a one year bumper-to-bumper warranty. He went with this company because it is opening a repair center on Water Street in Wakefield. He is debating whether or not to buy an extended warranty.

President Mortimer moves to recommend the order, 2nd by Alderman Infurna. All in favor.

Order No. 07-183, TRANSFER Amount \$13,240.35 From: 011451-511000 Treasurer, Salaries \$5,000.00; 011521-511000 Human Resources Salaries \$6,740.35; 011352-528600 Auditor, Auditing Services \$1,500.00 To: Various Accounts set forth herein

Mr. Dello Russo says he asked the assistant city auditor to review the salary and wages for each department. This order represents any adjustments that need to be made to the various departments. It also includes physical exams, paper for City Hall, and four new office chairs for the Auditor's department.

President Mortimer moves to recommend, 2nd by Alderman Tramontozzi. All in favor.

Order No. 07-184, TRANSFER Amount: \$1,999.00 From: 012451-511000 Inspection Services Wire/Fire Alarm Salaries To: 012452-533300 Inspection Services Fire Alarm-Wire Transfer is necessary to cover expenses for the remainder of this year.

Mr. Luther says the fire alarm inspector retired in January and the new fire alarm technician, Kevin Walsh, will start on March 23. This money will be used to purchase safety equipment for the new employee.

Alderman Seaboyer says the same account received \$2700 in the Free Cash order that was just recommended. Mr. Luther says that money was to cover the cost of hiring two outside contractors while the position was vacant.

Alderman Tramontozzi moves to recommend, 2nd by President Mortimer. All in favor.

Order No. 07-185, TRANSFER Amount \$1,500.00 From: 015112-532100 Health Medical Supplies \$1,300.00 and 015112-540700 Health Seminars \$200.00 To: 015112-529000 Health Prof Services \$1,500.00 Transfer is necessary to cover shortfalls in the areas of Substitute School Nurses, constable services and dog boarding services.

Ms. Clay says this is a transfer of funds within the Health Department. Professional Services covers constable services used by the department. She had to board a couple of dogs at a shelter and had to put one down. She makes the best estimate she can for substitute nurses at the beginning of the fiscal year.

President Mortimer moves to recommend, 2nd by Alderman Forbes. All in favor.

Order No. 07-186, GRANT Amount: \$3,251.70 To: Fund #2452, Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition These funds are part of the \$82,000 federal funds for the Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition.

Ms. Clay says this is roughly the same amount of money received for the several years and it's the last round of this grant.

President Mortimer moves to recommend, 2nd by Alderman Heavey. All in favor.

Order No. 07-187, Establishment of: Substance Abuse Prevention Donation Account #2858; and acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$800.00 through Account #2858 – Substance Abuse Prevention Donation Account.

Ms. Clay says the Department has received a five year SAMSA grant. She has to plan for sustainability through fundraising and therefore has to set up a donation account to be used for substance abuse prevention. This \$800 was collected by the Huggins Center at the Victorian Fair and there is another \$100 from a local women's group.

Alderman Conn asks how to make a donation. Ms. Clay says a check may be made out to the City of Melrose and sent to her or Kara Showers.

President Mortimer moves to recommend, 2nd by Alderman Infurna. All in favor.

Chairman Brodeur steps down from the chair. Vice-Chairman Tramontozzi takes the chair.

Order No. 07-188, Amending Melrose Revised Ordinances, Chapter 56-2, Classification Schedule by: Adding the positions: "Assistant Construction Inspector" Grade Level: "L-14" and "Assistant to the Inspections Director" Grade Level: "L-13" and by deleting "Animal Control Officer" and inserting "Canine Control Officer"

Ms. Clay says she spoke with the Personnel Board about the fact that the Animal Control Officer's job description is focused on dogs. By having the title "Animal Control Officer" people had the wrong impression and called in about wild animals on their properties. This is a part-time position and there are 200 dogs in the City. She feels it is better to call it "Canine Control Officer".

Alderman Brodeur motions to divide the order making the Animal Control Officer the A order.

Alderman Brodeur asks what the job description is. Ms. Clay says she can fax it to him. Alderman Brodeur asks if it entails anything other than dogs. He says he doesn't want to create a problem by trying to fix this problem. Ms. Clay says the position has limited hours and there is only so much that can be done and be focused on. She herself is an Animal Control officer for the state and she may respond to situations involving other animals.

Alderman Forbes asks if she picks and chooses where to board animals. Ms. Clay says the North Shore Animal Hospital in Lynn is the boarding kennel for the entire area.

Alderman Buonopane asks if she has stepped up enforcement of the dog waste problem at Hesseltine Park or adjusted the Control Officer's hours to be there when the owners are there. Ms. Clay says she spent a week there last summer and thought the situation had gotten better. There is talk about building a dog park into the renovation of the Park. Alderman Buonopane says that's fine but people have to pick up after their dogs. Ms. Clay says a mass mailing will be sent to dog owners in the neighborhood asking for their help.

Alderman Conn says he doesn't think the title of the position matters if the job description doesn't change.

President Mortimer moves to recommend 07-188A, 2nd by Alderman Infurna. All in favor.

Order No. 07-188, Amending Melrose Revised Ordinances, Chapter 56-2, Classification Schedule by: Adding the position: "Assistant Construction Inspector" Grade Level: "L-14" and "Assistant to the Inspections Director" Grade Level: "L-13"

Mr. Luther says the clerk's position is being changed to the Assistant to the Inspections Director. He has been reorganizing the office including hiring a new wire maintenance technician and rearranging the Wire Inspector's duties. Changing the clerk's position to the Assistant will allow her to answer zoning questions and receive and approve permits for more simple projects once she is trained, tested and certified by Code Council. She'll

be in charge of the daily operations of a part-time staff scheduling inspections and being sure they are completed and processed properly, upgrading the computer system, implementing the PDA system for the inspectors and keeping it updated while maintaining her current duties. The office will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Alderman Conn asks how long the training period is. Mr. Luther says it is no longer than six months. Alderman Conn asks if there will be a salary increase; Mr. Luther says yes. Alderman Conn asks if this has been before the Personnel Board. Mr. Luther says the Personnel Board, the Mayor, the City Auditor and Human Resources have all reviewed it. Alderman Conn asks if the clerk's position will be filled; Mr. Luther says no, it will be left unfunded. Alderman Conn asks if the new position will be non-union. Mr. Luther says it is non-union, 35 hours per week.

Alderman Brodeur asks the current level of the clerk's position. Mr. Luther says he believes it is Level 10. Alderman Brodeur asks the dollar amount of the salary increase; Mr. Luther says he believes it is \$10,000 per year. Mr. Dello Russo says those additional dollars are not in the FY08 budget as this has not yet passed. Alderman Brodeur asks if due to the training and certification if the first opportunity to fill the position would be January 1. Mr. Luther says it will commence July 1 and she will have six months to be certified.

Alderman Seaboyer says the Inspection Services office is currently not open enough hours for access for contractors and says the extended hours are for them. Mr. Luther says the office opens at 7:30 now, but the official City Hall hours are 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. The extended hours will keep the office open until 5:00 p.m.

Alderman Forbes asks the length of the certification course. Mr. Luther says it is just a couple of weeks.

Alderman Infurna says she is a little uncomfortable with approving this at Level 13 until the clerk finishes the course. If the employee is unable to do the job until certified, she is uncomfortable paying that salary. She thinks it should be amended to have the start date upon certification. Mr. Luther says the Building Commissioner was paid at the Commissioner's rate of pay while being certified. This is not required by the state but is something the City is requesting.

Alderman Infurna motions to further divide the order making the Assistant to the Inspections Director 07-188B.

Vice-Chairman Tramontozzi says there is a letter of approval from the Personnel Board Chairman.

Alderman Seaboyer asks if the Assistant Construction Inspector will be paid from the budget or bonds. Mr. Dello Russo says he believes he will be paid from bonds already approved but will confirm that with the City Engineer.

Alderman Forbes asks Mr. Luther if he was in the process of being certified when he was hired as the Building Commissioner. Mr. Luther says yes.

Alderman Brodeur asks what the biggest difference is between the clerk's position and the Assistant to the Inspections Director. Mr. Luther says this will allow her to answer zoning questions; right now he is the only one to answer them and the answer is binding.

President Mortimer says he sees no reason to delay passage of the Assistant to the Inspections Director.

Alderman Infurna moves to recommend 07-188B, 2nd by Alderman Forbes. All in favor.

Alderman Seaboyer moves to recommend 07-188A, 2nd by Alderman Forbes. One opposed.

Alderman Conn motions to place 07-188 on hold, 2nd by Alderman Brodeur. All in favor.

Alderman Conn motions for concurrent action on 07-179 and 07-180, 2nd by Alderman Brodeur. All in favor.

Order No. 07-179, Amending Melrose Revised Ordinances, Chapter 228, Article II, Section 228-15 (Water Rates Established) by deleting: after the words Residential rate "\$4.15" and insert in place thereof "\$4.70"; delete after the words Commercial rate "\$5.20" and insert in place thereof "\$5.75"; further delete "effective July 1, 2006" respectively and insert in place thereof "effective July 1, 2007" respectively.

Order No. 07-180, Amending Melrose Revised Ordinances, Chapter 228, Article IV, Section 228-30 (Sewer Rates Established) by deleting the words "rate of \$7.10" and insert in place thereof the words "rate of \$7.80"; further delete after the words rendered as of "July 1, 2006" and insert in place thereof "July 1, 2007".

Alderman Conn motions to schedule a Public Hearing on 07-179 and 07-180 in the Appropriations Committee on 7 May 2007 beginning at 8:00 p.m., 2nd by Alderman Brodeur. All in favor.

Alderman Brodeur motions to adjourn, 2nd by Alderman Seaboyer. All in favor.

Appropriations adjourns at 9:32 p.m.

Maribeth Harrington
Clerk of Committees