

Appropriations Committee

Chairman Brodeur, Tramontozzi,
Boisselle, Buonopane, Conn,
Forbes, Infurna, Seaboyer,
Mortimer
Absent: Heavey, Wright
In attendance: Human Resources
Director Marianne Long; Zoning
Board of Appeals Chairman
Steve Broadley, ZBA member
Wayne Webster; Fire Chief John
O'Brien; Acting Police Chief Mike
Lyle; City Planner Denise Gaffey;
City Engineer Bob Beshara;
Patricia Harty, Verizon Regional
Director of External Affairs; Chris
Radzik, National Grid Supervisor
of Engineering

Appropriations called to order by Chairman Brodeur at 7:35 p.m. The first two orders for the evening are 07-205 and 07-206:

Order No. 07-205, Amending Melrose Revised Ordinances, Chapter 56-2. Classification Schedule by Adding the position: "Deputy City Solicitor/Labor Counsel Grade Level "L-22"as set forth herein.

Order No. 07-206, Amending Melrose Revised Ordinances, Chapter 56-2. Classification Schedule by Adding the position: "Assistant to Deputy City Solicitor" Grade Level"L-10" as set forth herein.

President Mortimer motions to join the orders, 2nd by Alderman Infurna. All in favor.

Human Resources Director Marianne Long says the Mayor sends his apologies for not attending this evening; he is at the St. Mary's graduation. The two orders before the committee create two non-union positions. She introduces Attorney Robert Van Campen, an associate at Sheehan, Phinney, Bass and Green, the firm at which Mark Ventola is a partner. Ms. Long says that as the HR Director she works closely with the City Solicitor and that it has been a pleasure working with Attorney Van Campen since September. The Mayor has pondered having an in-house Deputy City Solicitor for the past several years as outside counsel has become cost prohibitive. The position was before the Personnel Board recently. It is a mayoral appointment and the position is being created within the ordinances to be sure the pay is in line with the non-union schedule.

Mr. Van Campen thanks the Committee members for the opportunity to appear before them.

Alderman Forbes welcomes Mr. Van Campen and asks how difficult it will be to represent both the City and the employee during arbitration. Mr. Van Campen says his position is to represent the City. He says this position holds a mutual interest as counsel to the Mayor and to the City's employees, but the law is clear about his representing the City and his relationship to the employees of the City.

Alderman Conn welcomes Mr. Van Campen and says creating this position is a wise move for the City. Having been in the position of City Solicitor several years ago he was told he would not be required to deal with labor issues but it is costly to farm out. As a non-labor specialist he had to pinch hit for all labor issues except for police, fire and the school departments. He says that Mark Ventola has done a superlative job for the past 10 years. The City has spent a lot of money on labor counsel but Mr. Ventola has billed Melrose at a far less rate than other clients. He thanks Mr. Ventola for his good work. He asks Mr. Van Campen if he will be performing day-to-day operations as well. Mr. Van Campen says yes.

Alderman Seaboyer asks what day-to-day operations entail. Mr. Van Campen says procurement matters, contract review, and answering questions that require a legal opinion. Alderman Seaboyer asks if the assistant's position will be part-time. Ms. Long says it will be 25 hours per week. Mr. Van Campen says the assistant will work Monday through Friday, six or seven hours per day. Responsibilities will be similar to the Mayor's staff, assisting with routine day-to-day tasks. Alderman Seaboyer asks if the position is a legal assistant or a secretary. Mr. Van Campen says legal assistant.

Chairman Brodeur asks Mr. Van Campen if he is an Alderman in the City of Everett. Mr. Van Campen says yes. Chairman Brodeur asks if there are any conflicts that he foresees. Mr. Van Campen says no. His board meets on the alternate Mondays, and he sees no conflict at all.

President Mortimer moves to recommend the co-joined orders, 2nd by Alderman Boisselle.

On discussion Alderman Forbes asks when the assistant's position will be advertised. Ms. Long says in the early fall.

Chairman Brodeur asks the starting date for the Deputy City Solicitor's position. Ms. Long says July 2.

On the motion to recommend, All in favor.

Order No. 07-207, Amending Melrose Revised Ordinances, Chapter 56-2. Classification Schedule by Adding the position: "Substance Abuse Prevention Administrator" Grade Level "L-10" as set forth herein.

Ms. Long says she is here in Health Director Ruth Clay's absence. This is a support position for the Substance Abuse Coalition and the Substance Abuse Coordinator. Melrose is fortunate to have this program which is very active in the schools. The position was originally created as a temporary grant position. Melrose was rewarded a 5-year grant and the decision was made to put this position in the non-union ordinances. It is paid 100% through grant money.

Alderman Conn asks if the position carries any benefits. Ms. Long says no, it is a 15 to 19 hour work week. Alderman Conn asks if there are no health benefits or participation in the retirement system, and Ms. Long says no.

Alderman Seaboyer asks what happens to the position if the City doesn't receive another 5-year grant. Ms. Long says the decision will have to be made to take it on or do without.

Alderman Forbes asks if the schedule before them is full-time. Ms. Long says yes, but it will be prorated to part-time hours.

Alderman Buonopane moves to recommend, 2nd by Alderman Boisselle. All in favor.

Order No. 07-208, Amending Melrose Revised Ordinances, Chapter 56-2. Classification Schedule – List of General Group Positions; namely, Board of Appeals Secretary by Deleting: \$10,000.00 and Inserting in place thereof: \$14,000.00 effective July 1, 2007 as set forth herein.

ZBA Chairman Steve Broadley says this is a long overdue recognition for compensation for a position that is not simply a clerk. She keeps the Board on deadline, provides proper documentation, pays attention to details and has to make decisions on behalf of the Board. There is absolute total reliance on her. It has been a long time since this salary was increased. About a year ago fees were increased to make the Board's budget revenue neutral. He is glad that the Mayor and the Personnel Board have recommended this.

Mr. Webster says the work of the ZBA has changed over the years. It takes a lot of time for a new employee to get caught up to speed, roughly 2 to 3 years. An experienced person needs to be in this position to effectively handle the public and support the Board.

Ms. Long says that originally the ZBA had intended to increase the salary to even more than \$14,000 but the Personnel Board did not approve the proposed increase to \$18,000 for the following July. It isn't that they didn't understand the ZBA's rationale but that amount would bump up against wage and hour laws by changing it from a stipend position to an hourly one. The Personnel Board has to

look at the larger picture. The members are in line with the ZBA's goal and will take it up again in September.

Alderman Boisselle asks if the increase of \$4,000 is in the FY08 budget. Ms. Long says no, but that the funds are available and that Mr. Dello Russo has committed to making the transfer at the July meeting.

Alderman Infurna says she agrees with Mr. Broadley and Mr. Webster. The Aldermen have seen the agendas and how things have changed. The clerk has always been in touch with the Aldermen and is always at their beck and call. The increase is deserving of the position.

Chairman Brodeur asks if the clerk has a role in transporting the case wherever it goes. Mr. Broadley says she prepares information for the City Solicitor when needed.

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

Order No. 07-218 TRANSFER Amount: \$25,000.00 To: City Solicitor, Labor Counsel A/C #011512-528900 From: various accounts set forth herein. This transfer is necessary to fund Labor Counsel expenses for the remainder of FY07.

Ms. Long says these are funds to pay Sheehan, Phinney, Bass + Green, specifically Attorney Ventola, for the month of May and anticipated costs through June, as he is involved in the upcoming Joint Labor Management Commission hearings.

Alderman Conn asks if this is not the final bill for the fiscal year. Ms. Long says this is the final request for FY07. Attorney Ventola will continue in FY08 as the City's counsel on very limited matters but there are at least two.

Alderman Infurna asks if suits and claims are down a bit, and Ms. Long says yes.

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

Order No. 07-216, APPROPRIATION Amount: \$30,000.00 From: Overlay-A/C #01-322000 \$30,000.00 To: Police, Building Repair A/C #012112-527700 \$5,000.00; Fire, Overtime A/C #012211-513000 \$25,000.00.

Fire Chief O'Brien says Engine 2 will be in service in two weeks and the ladder truck is due in the City next week. He thanks the Aldermen for their support. The \$25,000 in overtime is to get the department through the end of the year. He says it will be tight and the department will come in at \$250,000 but that will keep two stations open.

Police Chief Lyle says the \$5,000 for repairs on the police maintenance garage is the insurance deductible amount.

Alderman Seaboyer says the work at the garage really needs to be done.

Alderman Conn says he does not understand why the need for overtime money was not addressed out of the Free Cash appropriated last month. He would be more comfortable spending Free Cash than going into the Overlay account which is used to pay claims.

Alderman Wright asks where the new pieces of equipment will be located. Chief O'Brien says the engine will stay on Tremont Street and the ladder will be located at headquarters. His goal for FY09 is to get an identical one for the East side.

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

Order 07-171, PRESENTATION To allow the Office of Planning and Community Development to present the latest recommendations of the Capital Improvement Program Committee.

City Planner Denise Gaffey says this is an annual process and that this is the 12th year. The committee members are herself, City Auditor/CFO Patrick Dello Russo, City Treasurer Art Flavin, Alderman Gail Infurna, School Committee member Donald Lehman, School Business Manager Greg Zammuto, School Facilities Director Bob Ciampi, Citizen Representative Marybeth McAteer-Margolis, and Assistant Planner Matt Hennigan. The committee requests projects from the department heads city-wide. Two years ago a very comprehensive study of 5-year projections was done and last year ten projects were funded. Every year completed projects are taken off the list and department heads are asked to either re-prioritize or submit new projects. The committee received nine new projects this year. The committee interviews the department heads and then begins a ranking process from Group A, which are urgent projects, to Group E, very low priority and/or not desirable projects. The committee also ranks each project numerically, from highest to lowest priority. The overall ranking is computed using the average ranks of the committee members and further discussion determines a final ranking and list of recommended projects. The committee strongly recommends that if funding is available that the projects on the A and B lists be funded. The A list includes a new emergency generator for City Hall, which is a fairly modest commitment of funds; school roof replacement for five school buildings; and a new public safety facility to accommodate the police and fire operations. The committee recommends that some funds go toward an updated feasibility study. The Report details all of the fifteen recommended projects for FY08.

Chairman Brodeur asks Ms. Gaffey how capital projects are defined. Ms. Gaffey says they typically cost \$25,000 or more and are major, non-recurring expenditures. The life expectancy of the project is five years or more. Projects may include construction of new buildings, include feasibility studies, and the acquisition of land.

Alderman Boisselle asks if City Hall currently has a back-up generator. Ms. Gaffey says yes, but it is cumbersome. Alderman Boisselle asks if it is mobile. Ms. Gaffey says yes, but the replacement would be permanent. Alderman Boisselle asks if roof replacement was included in the Middle School project. Ms. Gaffey it was done over the open space; this project would be done over the Marcoux gymnasium. Alderman Boisselle asks if a location for a public safety facility has been identified. Ms. Gaffey says the city will want to revisit the feasibility study which selected the Melrose Bowl site 12 years ago. The Tremont Street fire station was considered but that would need to be reevaluated. The armory site was also considered. Alderman Boisselle says the Hoover school was recently rehabbed and asks if there are similar plans for any other school. Ms. Gaffey says the next school for funding is the Winthrop School. Alderman Boisselle asks if she has any idea when that will take place. Ms. Gaffey says she plans to put it on the state's radar screen in July 2007.

Alderman Seaboyer says the CIP is a great tool. He asks if projects can be taken out of the order in which they were ranked by the committee. Ms. Gaffey says the process is very objective. The committee gives its recommendations to the Mayor and the Aldermen, but the City may not have any funds to appropriate this year. Grant money may also be used for specific projects.

Alderman Conn says that like everything else the City does, these projects are driven by dollars and seeing them happen will depend on getting \$4 million dropped in its lap. This is a good thing to have but it's also good to have the money to fund it.

Ms. Gaffey says that the CIP Stabilization Fund is a good idea to give the community an idea of what funds are available for these types of projects.

Alderman Brodeur asks if the CIP committee is full or if there are vacancies. Ms. Gaffey says the work is completed for this year but that it will reconvene in February.

President Mortimer motions to place the matter on file, 2nd by Alderman Boisselle. All in favor.

Order No. 07-211, Requesting representatives from Verizon and National Grid appear before the Board of Aldermen to comment on recent problems regarding poles in the City of Melrose. (AL-I)

Chairman Brodeur says that Bob Beshara is present to offer the City's view of the status of the situation.

Mr. Beshara says the purpose of the request to have Verizon and National Grid appear before the Board of Aldermen is to help the City understand what processes are in place when they come into the City. The National Grid project is a major improvement to the City as a result to the Mayor's request and the Board of Aldermen's request for National Grid to address the brownouts. The upgrade has taken care of that problem, five years ahead of schedule. They have tied in a section of the City and the Middle School is up and running for its opening. National Grid came into the community and installed quite a number of underground conduits along Howard Street and Hesseltine Street. Its work is complete and now restoration of the area is being looked at. Nelson Road and Lincoln Street will be reconstructed after the City installs new water lines on Lincoln Street. Water services on Howard Street began on Monday between Green Street and Nelson Road. Sidewalks on Nelson Road will begin over the next two weeks and the work will move fairly quickly with funds being transferred to the City from National Grid. The double pole issue is a thorn in the City's side. Most clean up work has happened and he is working with the company to remove piles of dirt where new poles have been installed. Communication has improved and the process seems to be going in the right direction. However there are still 150 to 200 double poles in the City. Verizon has also done a lot of wire transfers to upgrade its system. Apparently Verizon has installed a couple of poles on Swains Pond Road that this Board denied because of its proximity to a hazardous site. The DEP is working with the developer to clean it up, but the developer has not moved forward with the work. He does not know why the poles were put in but Verizon has begun to hang wires from them. The double poles and the wire issues are under the jurisdiction of the Building Commissioner and the Wire Inspector. The City has hired a new Fire Alarm technician and is moving forward with removing its wires so as not to hold up Verizon.

Chairman Brodeur introduces Ms. Pat Harty from Verizon and Mr. Chris Radzik from National Grid.

Alderman Forbes says there was an order before this Board of Aldermen to install two poles on Swains Pond Avenue. The order was denied when it was learned there was hazardous material at the site, and the developer withdrew his request. The poles were installed any way. He asks why they were installed and if the fill left on the sidewalk was properly disposed of at a hazmat site. Ms. Harty says it was a pole placement accident – the installation landed in someone's work order. She is not sure of the disposal of the fill but will contact him tomorrow with the answer. Alderman Forbes says another concern he has is that a resident in his ward has a pole in her yard and despite many calls she is not getting any responses. Ms. Harty says she will check into it.

Alderman Infurna says she had placed a request with Ms. Harty and received great communication and a positive result; however there is a double pole at the site. All services are off the old pole and onto the new, but the old pole is still there. She has noticed other poles in the City with no wires on them and asks what can be done to expedite their removal. Ms. Harty says she will check on the Ashmont pole. The process used by Verizon is a database but it is not always 100% accurate. Normally it works very well. There is a big Verizon upgrade in the works and since April 1, 60 double poles have been removed. At the same time 60 double poles have been removed with National Grid. Currently there are 137 double poles that need to be worked on. The large electrical project will involve about 600 poles. Communication has improved and Verizon is working cooperatively with the municipality, and hopefully the process will work more smoothly.

Alderman Buonopane says 120 poles were removed and asks how many were added. Ms. Harty says about the same number. Mr. Radzik says National Grid is about two-thirds of the way through the project. Alderman Buonopane asks if they are looking at another 300 poles; Mr. Radzik says that's a possibility.

Alderman Seaboyer asks if Verizon notifies the DPW when placing a pole. Ms. Harty says they have been requested to do that and Verizon is doing that. He asks if Digsafe is informed, and she says she does not know for sure. Mr. Beshara says before National Grid authorizes a pole they Digsafe it. They also have to call DPW because the city marks its own drains, sewer and water services.

President Mortimer asks who the contact person is in DPW. Ms. Harty says she contacts Rick Cantone. President Mortimer says there have been mistakes made, and pipes were hit. He asks who paid to remediate the damage. Ms. Harty says that Verizon worked directly with the residents and the storm drain damage is still being looked at.

Chairman Brodeur says he is under the impression that the sinking of a pole and the maintenance of a pole is Verizon's responsibility. Mr. Radzik says for a jointly owned pole, Verizon is responsible. Chairman Brodeur asks if that is true even for this electrical project; Mr. Radzik says yes. Chairman Brodeur asks about the taller poles being used. Mr. Radzik says they provide increased clearance and meet new standards. Chairman Brodeur says he would like National Grid to take from this meeting that due to its relationship with Verizon as co-owner of the poles, and all the work being done in the City, that this issue is their problem, too.

Alderman Infurna asks if there is an order in committee regarding representatives from Verizon meet with the DPW and other representatives of the City. Chairman Brodeur says there is no order, but that it is his understanding the parties were supposed to meet. Mr. Beshara says that meetings are held as needed and are coordinated through Mike Lindstrom in the Mayor's office.

Alderman Forbes says regarding the mishap at Swains Pond, communication has to be much better.

Alderman Buonopane asks if the dirt has been cleaned up at Swains Pond. Ms. Harty says she does not know.

Chairman Brodeur says that with the Verizon FIOS rollout there are a substantial number of large spools of wire on the poles. Ms. Harty says Verizon is very aggressively building FIOS in Melrose, and it is a very small fiber attached to the existing copper wire. Chairman Brodeur says he does not understand why these rolls of wire are all around the City. Ms. Harty says she doesn't think they are related to FIOS.

Alderman Infurna motions to place the order on file, 2nd by Alderman Boisselle. All in favor.

President Mortimer motions to adjourn, 2nd by Alderman Boisselle. All in favor.

Appropriations adjourns at 9:00 p.m.

Maribeth Harrington
Clerk of Committees