

Email from Ken Parker to Mayor Cohen about capital improvements.

From: Ken Parker <ken@kenparker.org>
To: David Cohen <dcohen@newtonma.gov>
Cc: Pooler Sanford <spooler@newtonma.gov>; david olson <dolson@newtonma.gov>;
Comptroller City of Newton Wilkinson David <dwilkinson@newtonma.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2009 7:41:45 PM
Subject: Fwd: Bonding of School Capital Improvements

Dear Mayor Cohen,

We are writing as current Newton elected officials and candidates for elected office in Newton to ask that you reconsider your recent decision not to allow additional School Department bonding during Fiscal Year 2010. While we understand your desire to limit total borrowing, we counsel against pitting the need for classroom space against the need to replace aging boilers, windows, and roofs. We believe that the return on investment in energy savings alone more than justifies the replacement work and that deferring it because of pressing space needs is short-sighted. We respectfully request that you reconsider your decision and allow bonding for both the modular classrooms and the capital items on the original school Fiscal Year 2010 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) list.

The original Fiscal Year 2010 School Department CIP is detailed in a May 11 memo from School Department Chief of Operations Michael Cronin to Superintendent Jeffrey Young (attached). It contains \$1.75 million for replacement of boilers, windows, doors and roofs, as well as new seating for the Day Middle School Auditorium and an elevator for Countryside Elementary School required to meet accessibility needs.

The need for additional classroom space at Oak Hill Middle School has necessitated the purchase of four modular classrooms, which are estimated to cost \$1.2 million. Without your authorization to bond these modulares, the School Department was forced to revise its CIP, eliminating all but \$550 thousand of the other badly-needed capital projects. These reductions include work on boilers, roofs, doors, and windows that will make our school buildings more energy-efficient. The revised CIP is described in a June 22 memo from Chief of Operations Cronin to Superintendent Young, which is also attached.

We believe that it is possible to bond these projects and to fund the bond payments out of reduced energy expenditures, similar to the Energy Services Company (ESCO) model. Please have your Chief Budget Officer and other staff examine the possibility of bonding replacement of boilers, windows, roofs, and doors using net savings from reduced energy consumption to fund the interest and principal payments, thereby freeing up bonding capacity for the modulares. In this manner, it should be possible to bond all \$1.75 million in original CIP projects, as well as the \$1.2 million in modular classrooms for Oak Hill, without jeopardizing our borrowing plan.

Thank you for your consideration. Please call or email if you would like to discuss these ideas further.

Sincerely,

Ken Parker
Alderman-At-Large, Ward 6

Amy Sangiolo
Alderman-At-Large, Ward 4

Verne Vance
Alderman-At-Large, Ward 7

Greer Swiston
Alderman-At-Large, Ward 3

Vicki Danberg
Alderman-At-Large, Ward 6

George Mansfield
Ward Alderman, Ward 6

Geoff Epstein
School Committee, Ward 1

Charlie Shapiro
Candidate for Alderman-At-Large, Ward 6

Jeff Seideman
Candidate for Alderman-At-Large, Ward 7

Margaret Albright
Candidate for School Committee, Ward 2

Dan Proskauer
Candidate for School Committee, Ward 4

Olivia Mathews
Candidate for School Committee, Ward 6

Tom White
Candidate for School Committee, Ward 8

Anil Adyanthaya
Candidate for Ward Alderman, Ward 5

Lee Seidler
Candidate for School Committee, Ward 8