



Public Safety & Transportation Committee **Budget Report**

City of Newton **In City Council**

Thursday, May 18, 2023

Present: Councilors Downs (Chair), Oliver, Lucas, Malakie, Bowman and Grossman

Absent: Councilors Lipof and Markiewicz

Also present: Councilors Wright, Albright and Greenberg

City staff: Superintendent George McMains and Matthew Tocchio, IT Director, Newton Police Department; Chief Greg Gentile and Assistant Chief Mike Bianchi, Newton Fire Department; Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Perry Rosenfield, Senior Financial Analyst; Connor Roach, Senior Financial Analyst; Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer and Joshua Morse, Director Public Buildings

Others present: NewTV

Please Note: Budget materials can be found on the City's website at the following link:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/comptroller/budget>

DEPARTMENT BUDGET & CIP DISCUSSIONS:

Police Department

#1-23 **Submittal of the FY 2024 to FY 2028 Capital Improvement Plan**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the Fiscal Years 2024 to 2028 Capital Improvement Plan pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter.

Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees

#1-23(3) **Submittal of the FY24 Municipal/School Operating Budget**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter the FY24 Municipal/School Operating Budget, passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY24-FY28 Capital Improvement Program (#213-22).
EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION 05/01/23; LAST DATE TO PASS THE BUDGET 06/15/23

Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees

#1-23(4) **Submittal of the FY24 – FY28 Supplemental Capital Improvement Plan**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY24 – FY28 Supplemental Capital Improvement Plan.

Police Department

Note: Superintendent George McMains, Newton Police Department; Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Joshua Morse, Director Public Buildings and Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer joined the Committee.

Chair Downs noted that this is the fourth largest budget, after schools, DPW and fire. Newton's residents want professional, first-class first responders as well as good infrastructure and good schools.

In the bigger budget, after adding back the buildings, grounds, retiree health and other costs the city budget covers for the schools, schools are 65% of the total budget. She believes it's inappropriate to compare rates of increase across city budgets and school budgets, since a percentage point on the school side represents so much more money, in total dollars.

She noted that the marathon response docket item is scheduled for June 21. She is willing to have a deeper discussion of means & methods, such as tasers, later in the fiscal year, but would like tonight to put that aside.

Chair Downs praised the NPD's progress under Chief Carmichael. Mental health for officers and mental health responses being now more integrated into everything the department does: training, problem-oriented policing, de-escalation and more. The department was way ahead of its peers in providing statistics in conformity with state police reform laws—a model of transparency with government oversight. And the new IT director, Matt Tocchio, is a promising development in sorting out the NPD website.

Downs praised the chief's focus on community policing and 21st century policing, and welcomed the promotions of Superintendent McMains, as well as Capt. Doucette in traffic.

Superintendent McMains stated that it is unfortunate that Chief Carmichael cannot be here this evening to discuss the Newton Police Department Budget.

FY23 Accomplishments:

Positive Tickets

Chief Carmichael and the department successfully improved community engagement by issuing positive tickets to children caught doing the right thing. NPD partnered with Cabot's, Sweet Tomatoes, D&A Pizza, and Antoine's Bakery to offer coupons, which are part of the positive ticket. The department intends to continue this practice.

Officer Leo, comfort dog

Leo, our community resource dog, is our most popular officer. Leo has shown real versatility. He goes into classrooms, attends events, visits children and elders in our community. Leo has recently finished his search and rescue training and has successfully found some older resident who had wandered off.

Community Crisis Intervention

NPD has joined the Community Crisis Intervention Team and the Drug and Alcohol Coalition to work on substance abuse issues. The department has also instituted a problem oriented policing unit (POP unit) with social worker Sarah Eknaian. Newton was one of the first departments to hire a social worker. The POP unit is staffed by Ms. Eknaian and Sergeant Melanie Rooney who handle issues underlying police calls, including homelessness, substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence, etc. They match people with services and resources provided by the city or other community teams. The Chief is hoping to expand this unit.

Community Outreach

Chief Carmichael has promoted the first female department head to the Community Services Bureau Lieutenant Amanda Henrickson replaces retired Lieutenant Bruce Apotheker. Lt. Henrickson and the department has partnered with the Nonantum Boxing Club teaching kids boxing skills. Children ask questions, they want to learn about what we do. The hope is these children will see police as easy to approach, have fun, like to work out with them, etc.

Critical Incident Stress Management Team

The department is training more officers in critical incidents, and with work stressors including responding to suicide or child abuse calls. We have a regional team including Boston Police and communities' departments who are available for officers to confide in. Sometimes, officers want privacy and choose to discuss stress with officers who won't judge them.

New IT Director

The department hired a new IT Director, Matt Tocchio. Director Tocchio works closely with Mr. Mulvey, Chief Information Officer, IT Department and Alex Chadis, Director of Technical Services in the Newton Fire Department.

Purple Team

Director Chadis works with IT Director Tocchio and Mr. Mulvey and his team.

POLICE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL & STAFFING:

The Police Department employs 192 full time employees and 57 part time employees.

Outcome 1, Provide 21st Century Policing & Community Policing - In FY2024, the department will continue to embrace and employ the six pillars of 21st Century Policing, which consist of community trust & police legitimacy, policy & oversight, technology and social media, community policing & crime reduction, and officer wellness & safety.

To maintain the principles of community policing, the department seeks and welcomes community input in setting the agenda so we can tailor our policing strategies to the precise needs of our community in Newton. As part of our community policing goals, we will focus on positive organizational transformation, problem-solving oriented policing, and face-to-face community engagement.

To instill problem-oriented policing, the department will concentrate on the root causes of crime and the underlying challenges of public safety issues affecting our community. The goal in problem-oriented policing is to mediate public safety issues, provide relentless follow up on matters, provide appropriate resources, and work towards preventing recurring incidents. An example of problem-oriented policing is our response to the mental health crisis, drug overdoses and substance use disorder, and domestic violence. We seek to afford our officers decision-making autonomy, support our newly created Problem Oriented Policing (POP) Unit, and continue to partner with stakeholders across city departments, the Newton Community Crisis Intervention Team, and Newton Drug & Alcohol Prevention Coalition.

Every Police Officer is instrumental in achieving the strategic goals of 21st Century and community policing for the organization. Empowering officers to make experienced decisions and use available resources will assist the Department as we continuously improve and strive for excellence. As reinforced in Outcome 3, it is imperative that the department reach our full staffing levels so we can perform our jobs in the most effective manner. Ensuring that our patrol and community services bureaus, as well as dispatch, are staffed appropriately allows officers to follow up and concentrate on their full range of duties, an important component of our overall preparedness and success.

Another important component of 21st Century Policing is officer safety and the health and wellness of our officers. The department will be implementing an application such as CORDICO to assist in easy access to mental health and wellness, maintaining confidentiality, and enhancing our Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM) to ensure our officers and dispatchers are fully debriefed and supported following critical incidents.

Outcome 2, Support NPD Employees with Up-to-Date Facilities, Training, Equipment, & Technology - Facility: The department administration, unions, and civilian personnel will continue to partner with city departments and Kaestle Boos Associates as we work to envision, design and construct upgrades through the department facilities project. This project, which will also include a perimeter security fence for the NPD parking lot, is critical to the future needs, operations, and overall effectiveness of NPD.

Training: The department will continue our focus on providing the best training our officers can receive in modern day policing. In addition to our traditional mandated police in-service training, the department is moving closer to every officer being trained in Integrating Tactics & Communication De-escalation (ICAT), in interactive simulated exercises using the Department's TI Simulator, and in "Project ABLE" active bystander responses and duty to intervene. We will continue to coordinate upcoming training with Cox Associates to offer cultural awareness and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training.

In FY2024, the department plans to achieve the goal of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) – One Mind Campaign. We will train most officers in Crisis Intervention Training, Mental Health First Aid, strengthening mental health crisis response policies, and partnering with community stakeholders on mental health prevention and intervention.

Officers will continue receiving training from the Norfolk County Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) - Training & Technical Assistance Center. The CIT Training is a 40-hour course in which officers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement best practice responses to individuals impacted by mental health challenges, developmental disorders, and dual-diagnosis substance use issues. CIT includes de-escalation techniques, including disengagement, verbal persuasion, waiting a situation out, and creating distance. When officers graduate from this crisis intervention training course, they have an understanding of a wide and deep set of issues, including mood disorders, working with emergency services, psychosis, hearing voices exercises, substance use disorder, learn to cope, behavioral health in children and teens, case studies, hoarding and clutter, elder mental health, veterans mental health, mental trauma, working with ER – Section 12 and Section 35, Autism, cultural considerations, resource centers, CCIT, criminal justice system diversion, and officer wellness.

Equipment: The department continues to acquire state-of-the-art equipment to support our officers in doing their jobs efficiently, effectively, and safely. The Department recently equipped four motorcycles to be patrol ready, and we hope to begin a rotation schedule for them so we may offer better services in traffic enforcement.

We plan to implement Conducted Energy Devices, also known as TASERS, and 40mm sponge round launchers as new tools for less lethal force options. We will continue to bargain with our police unions on the use of these state-of-the-art options to ensure our officers are equipped to deal with any situation that arises. The department plans to implement a Body Worn Camera (BWC) pilot program with the Superior Officers Union where 12 members will use cameras for several months to gauge if BWCs are suitable for Newton. The police uniform is considered part of our equipment, and in FY2024, we will begin to transition our uniforms to models that are comfortable for officers of all genders.

Technology: The Information Technology (IT) Department infrastructure is undergoing a significant transition to make it more effective, safer and state-of-the-art. For FY2024, the department is making substantial IT upgrades to assist the department in progressing into the 21st Century and ensuring that the department can operate without interruption and avoid disruptions in service. As a public safety agency, IT is crucial to our mission. This work includes upgrades to our network servers & switches, security to achieve Criminal Justice Information Systems compliance, and cruiser tablets so officers can do their jobs effectively. In addition to IT infrastructure, the department is exploring new technology such as Dragon software, and evidence room radio frequency identification management (RFID).

Outcome 3, Focus on Recruiting, Hiring, Retention & Diversity - Consistent with state and national trends, the department continues to face challenges with recruiting new officers. We will focus on reaching our full complement of officers while also seeking to create a more diverse police department that is representative of the community. We will pursue innovative ways to attract police and dispatcher candidates and alleviate the need for forced overtime shifts and assignments. This outcome remains a top priority for the department. Six males are in the academy and will graduate on June 15. We are working with the Newton Police Association to settle contracts this year. Once the contracts are settled, we will be able to advertise Newton PD's good pay, great opportunities and benefits, strong support from the community. Those are important assets.

Outcome 4, Provide Transparency and Meet POST Standards - The department will continue to be transparent. This includes gathering data, making it readily available, providing information quickly through various outlets, such as our social media platforms, appearing before the Public Safety & Transportation Committee regularly, and providing information that is accurate and timely to the State's Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) agency.

POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET FY2024

The following are significant line-item changes to expenses in the budget.

Police Admin/Support - \$42,937 increase
Police Traffic Safety - \$116,913 increase
Police Patrol Services - \$777,261 increase
Police Investigations - \$51,292 decrease
Police Community Services - \$105,819 increase
Police Vehicle Maintenance - \$92,027 decrease
Police Information Technology - \$78,147 increase
Police Communications - \$182,939 increase
Police Special Operations - \$100,659 increase

SUPPLEMENTAL CIP

Priority #24 - #13,500,000 for comprehensive Police Headquarters Facility Renovation and Upgrade Project. HVAC, communications, training facility & space, site security, parking lot, HQ roof replacement, interior renovation and reconfiguration, accessibility improvements, emergency electrical, garage mechanical & electrical upgrades, concrete repairs and windows, doors & building envelope.

GRANT, GIFT & REVOLVING FUND

Sale of Surplus Police Equipment Revolving \$100,000
Cops & Kids Program Gifts \$25,000
Federal Bullet Proof Vest Reimbursement Grant \$25,000
Federal Byrne Equipment Grant \$25,000
State Bullet Proof Vest Reimbursement Grant \$50,000
State Municipal Police Staffing Grant \$150,000
State SETB Dispatch Grant \$100,000
State E-911 Dispatch Grant \$500,000
State Pedestrian Safety Grant \$25,000
State Traffic Safety Grant \$70,000
Police Dept Damage Recovery Revolving \$100,000

Q&A

Q: Are we at a tipping point; do we need to begin finding different ways to recruit?

A: Superintendent McMains answered that we're always trying to find new ways to find new Newton officers, including looking for officers in other MA police departments who might want to transfer here. And our officers are also being recruited away, which is detrimental to the department. The department would like to recruit more women or people of color. Any new recruits must be hired off the civil service list, which is limited to those who take the test. Last year, we were lucky to be able to hire four officers, three were black males. The department is open to recruitment ideas.

Q: Is there a large homeless population in Newton?

A: Superintendent McMains answered not really. But even one homeless person is concerning. Officers buy them coffee, lunch, and dinner. Ms. Eknaian and Sergeant Rooney have done a great job trying to connect homeless folks with resources. Some people want help, others do not.

Q: Does the department work with the Health and Human Services Department (HHS) to help with the homeless population?

A: Superintendent McMains answered yes, Ms. Eknaian talks with HHS daily.

Q: With respect to recruitment, in last year's budget discussion there was talk about leaving civil service. Has the department given that any more thought?

A: Superintendent McMains answered yes. The department has been in discussion with both police unions. We're also aware of other police departments who have a Home Rule petition on Beacon Hill to eliminate the civil service process for hiring.

Q: Does the department still have a full-time animal control officer?

A: Superintendent McMains answered yes, but she is out on injured on duty.

Q: I hear in the community concern that there has been no animal control officer for a year. What can be done to remedy the situation?

A: Superintendent McMains answered that Chief Carmichael has discussed this with HHS. There's a needed conversation on whether this position can transition to the Parks and Recreation Department or HHS. The unions will be involved. Currently, Officer Juan Garcia is our seasonal animal control officer until the fall. If he does not want to continue as a full-time animal control officer, we may post for a second full time position.

Q: Is the jail diversion clinician overworked or underworked and how is she working with HHS?

A: Superintendent McMains answered that Ms. Eknaian has received her license as a clinical social worker. This allows Ms. Eknaian to do things that she couldn't before, commit somebody to a hospital.

She's working with the Department of Mental Health to develop her career further. And she works with Sergeant Rooney on community issues like homelessness, domestic violence, etc.

Q: The budget book shows an increase in personnel from 55 part time employees to 57. What are the two additional part time positions?

A: Ms. Lemieux answered we have had vacancy issues in the Dispatch Center. Several former employees are working part time. We added their names to the book, rather than indicating seasonal wages.

Q: Relating to uniforms, what does it mean "we will begin to a transition our uniforms that are more conducive to community policing for officers of all genders"?

A: Superintendent McMains answered that women officers are working with a vendor to find the best fitting uniform. We want to ensure women officers are provided with comfortable uniforms.

Q: What's happening with the body worn camera pilot? Has it begun or are there plans to begin?

A: Superintendent McMains answered that the department has not yet begun the program. The department is looking for funding to purchase the cameras. The pilot will be conducted for 60 or 90 days. We are not sure if the program will be successful. We've negotiated and received approval for the pilot program. It is a matter of finding a vendor, funding, policies to make it a successful trial. We don't want to do a part-time trial with inaccurate results. We want to ensure the data is accurate and that we can discuss with unions the possibility of body worn cameras.

Q: Have you resolved the issues of body camera data and privacy?

A: Superintendent McMains answered a policy was created which talks about when to turn off the camera, and how data will be stored.

Q: How can the department website go live on vehicle, bike, and pedestrian crashes without leaving in private information?

A: Superintendent McMains answered that the department partnered with LexisNexis to get software and a process to get crash reports out to the public. That did not work out. Mr. Halle of TAG and Safe Routes to School will work with the department to data mine our reports to get the particulars out to the public without CORI information and protected information in those crash reports. Mr. Halle will have to be willing to go through the process of getting cleared. Bringing in one person is an issue, bringing in multiple people is a significant issue.

Q: Please explain the differences between the total budget versus the original budget.

A: Ms. Lemieux explained that two areas have increased in this budget. First, the Dispatch Center, where we have two additional part time employees. Second, in the IT Department, expenses rose by approximately \$100,000. Other increases are due to settling contracts: our parking control and crossing guards had five years' worth of contracts with raises that were not in this budget last year that now appear this year. When you have large retroactive changes, it's never what we want because we try to stay current, but it makes it difficult for people not involved with these numbers to review budgets.

Q: Please explain the police CIP changes and the consultant hired to review these.

A: Commissioner Morse has been evaluating the station project with help from ward councilors. Commissioner Morse provided an overview: in the fall 2021, Mayor Fuller began working with Chief Carmichael on the many issues with the police station, training facility and annex. Combined, these total 10s of millions of dollars. In the winter of 2022, we began working with the Designer Selection Committee to select a designer for the project. Kaestle Boos Associates (KBA), was chosen. In April 2022, Mayor Fuller authorized \$500,000 of ARPA funds for the design. Over the course of the following six months, the team worked together to better define and understand the project. In the fall of 2022, in that CIP, we introduced a \$13.5 million phased project consolidating several facility improvements in a more comprehensive, forward-thinking vision improve the facilities, not only the building systems' integrity, but thinking programmatically about 21st-century policing and training. Training was one small part of a much larger and more comprehensive approach. Since last fall, we have been working with KBA, project architect. We also brought several sub consultants, structural engineers, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, and others to do an existing conditions analysis. In the next six to eight weeks, we will update the City Council and our Design Review Committee.

Q: Regarding the host community agreement of \$10,000. Host community agreements are income from marijuana establishments. Why is it listed as an expense?

A: Mr. Yeo answered the host community agreement supports police canine dog, Leo.

Q: The city is expecting to save \$92,000 on vehicle maintenance. Are we buying enough new vehicles that we won't need to spend on maintenance?

A: Superintendent McMains answered that the city is buying extended warranties. Ms. Lemieux added that the savings of \$92,000 included gasoline. Last year, gasoline prices were high. They are significantly less now. We also have been buying hybrid vehicles which use less gas.

Q: Will the department apply for the \$25,000 traffic safety grant again this year?

A: Superintendent McMains answered yes.

The Committee took a straw vote to accept the Police Department budget of \$26,075,229, a 5.18% increase from FY23, along with the Supplemental CIP and the CIP, which passed unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andreae Downs, Chair