



# Programs & Services Committee Budget Report

## City of Newton In City Council

**Wednesday, May 17, 2023**

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Noel, Albright, Greenberg, Wright, Humphrey, and Baker

Absent: Councilor Ryan

Also Present: Councilors Oliver, Malakie, Downs, and Bowman

City staff present: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer; Linda Walsh, Commissioner of Health and Human Services; Joseph Mulvey, Chief Information Officer; Seth Bai, Director of Veterans Services; Gregory Ansaldi, Deputy Director of Information Technology; Perry Rosenfield FP&A Manager; Connor Roach, Senior Financial Analyst; Mignonne Murray, Director of Senior Services; Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture; Shin-Yi Lao, Public Health Manager; Ruth Hoshino, Director of School Health Services; Norine Silton, Executive Administrator; Alissa Giuliani, City Solicitor; Meghan Murtagh, Assistant Director of Youth Services; and Jaclyn Norton, Committee Clerk

*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:**

**Information Technology**

**Veterans Services**

**Health & Human Services**

**Senior Services**

**City Solicitor**

**#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 05/15/23**

**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.

**Information Technology**

**Note:** Joseph Mulvey, Chief Operating Officer, joined the Committee and stated that the Department has completed multiple projects in the previous fiscal year. The Department has facilitated the upgrades and consolidation of MUNIS and is taking over responsibility for NewGov and Netbook subscriptions. Mr. Mulvey also detailed that the Department has worked with the City Clerk to develop a docket tracking system, with HHS to allow them to share files across with municipalities they are working with and working with the Senior Services Department to update systems. Regarding the Police Department, the IT Department had assisted the Police Department when the IT person for the Department left the City and subsequently required rebuilding systems. This work also entailed creating phone lines for officers to receive messages which streamlined processes and reduced dispatch calls.

Mr. Mulvey described that the City is committed to protecting the privacy and security of all individuals by taking a comprehensive approach. The Department has developed policies to limit weaknesses and is looking to eventually get a risk assessment done. The proposed budget for the Department is \$2,498,262 which is a 11.53% increase from FY23.

**Q&A**

Q: What role was eliminated in the Department and how is that money being allocated?

A: The IT Department eliminated one Network Administrator role. This was done as a result of the stellar performance of the current Network Administrators and Mr. Mulvey seeing that three high performing Network Administrators will allow the Department to continue to operate efficiently. Mr. Mulvey also stated he intends to use the salary savings to compensate the three Network Administrators more adequately.

Q: What contributed to the increase in the Systems Program line item?

A: Mr. Mulvey explained that MUNIS which is the system used for payroll is a significant portion of that line item with Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer, adding that \$140,000 is for NewGov. The administration cost for Outlook has also increased due to getting feature parity across police department staff along with other subscriptions increasing in price.

Q: How are recordings of meetings stored?

A: All meets recorded on Zoom are recorded and stored in the cloud in perpetuity. This storage was added when the City worked with Zoom in March 2023 to ensure the needs of the City were met according to Mr. Mulvey. He also stated that he would be willing to locate a recording of a meeting for Councilors if they are unable to find one posted publicly.

Q: What City applications will be migrating to Amazon Web Services (AWS)?

A: Mr. Mulvey described that this migration will focus on applications that do not store sensitive data such as rat reporting and coyote reports. Doing so will help the City reduce costs incurred with them currently being hosted in house.

The Committee took a straw vote to accept the Information Technology Department's proposed Budget of \$2,498,262, as well as the Supplemental CIP and the CIP, which passed unanimously.

## Veterans Services

**Note:** Seth Bai, Veterans Services Officer, joined the Committee and immediately opened up to questions from Councilors. The Department's proposed budget is \$202,604. This is a 5.37% decrease from FY23. Mr. Bai in his budget outlined the outcomes of providing quality support services; support ceremonies, observances, and events for veterans; providing monuments and flag presence; and participating in Newton civic engagement events.

## Q&A

Q: How will the Department work to meet the outcome of doing greater outreach when that line item has been reduced?

A: Mr. Bai stated that this line item is modest in FY24 due to the budget override not passing. He will continue outreach at similar levels to FY23.

Q: What is your Department's relationship with the Newton Cemetery and Arboretum?

A: The Department works with the Cemetery for burial of veterans as Mr. Bai is the City's burial officer for veterans. He described it as a pleasant working relationship where he also works with the grounds staff on designated lots.

Q: How is the Veterans Reimbursement affected by the budget override not passing?

A: The Veterans Reimbursement was not affected by the budget override not passing and Mr. Yeo stated that the City will find a way to fund the program if an influx of recipients takes place.

Q: What is the Department doing to increase diversity?

A: Mr. Bai stated that he is ensuring all groups he works with abide by the same policies as the Department of Defense. This work has included him preparing these groups such as the American Legion to be welcoming to LGBTQIA+ veterans.

The Committee took a straw vote to accept the Information Technology Department's proposed Budget of \$202,604, as well as the Supplemental CIP and the CIP, which passed unanimously.

## Health and Human Services

**Note:** Linda Walsh, Commissioner of Health and Human Services, described that the Health and Human Services Department is a diverse department with three divisions; School Health Services, Public Health Services, and Social Services. The proposed budget is \$5,192,418 and represents a 0.98% decrease from FY23.

The Public Health Services Division oversees the inspecting of restaurants, homes, and businesses; enforcing state and local laws; investigating reportable diseases; COVID-19 response; and robust community health programming. Commissioner Walsh stated that the Department has been increasing the amount of community health programming. The Department has also expanded its use of NewGov for permit/license applications, streamlining workflows, and improving inter-departmental coordination. The attached presentation details the number of permits/licenses issued by type in 2022.

For School Health Services the Department is looking to return to routine services post-COVID-19 and address the mental health needs of students. Regarding staff, the Department will reestablish in-person professional development for school physicians and create an orientation and mentoring program to improve retention. Strong Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERT) will also be established along with CPR training being provided to all members. When asked about the school-to-nurse ratio Ruth Hoshino, Director of School Health Services, stated that it is currently 1 to 1.

The Social Services Division engages in numerous projects across the City such as the Economic Stability/Mobility Initiative, contracts with Riverside Community Care, and the Newton Coalition for Community Wellness. These are in conjunction with the mental health education series, INTERFACE referral services, and the numerous youth services facilitated by the Department. Commissioner Walsh provided in the attached presentation a breakdown of demographic data for residents served and a breakdown of direct service interventions provided by the Department.

## Q&A

Q: Where was the staff reduction within the Department?

A: The staff reduction was a result of a reorganization once Commissioner Walsh was appointed Commissioner of Health and Human Services. She removed the Deputy Commissioner position and

instead has division directors. A part-time Environmental Health Specialist position was also eliminated.

Q: What are regional public health services the Department is engaged in?

A: This work is funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health where the City is working with Brookline, Belmont, and Arlington. This work will be used for primarily meeting mandated public health services and enhancing them.

Q: How will the funds from the opioid settlement be allocated?

A: Commissioner Walsh stated that the amount is currently \$500,000 and by 2039 will be \$3.8 million. Meghan Murtagh, Assistant Director of Youth Services, further noted that the City is looking at harm reduction efforts and is collaborating with other municipalities to determine how to best spend the settlement.

Q: Does the lack of capacity at behavior health facilities impact the work of the Department?

A: The Department tries to provide people assistance before they reach a hospital setting. Ms. Murtagh

The Committee took a straw vote to accept the Information Technology Department's proposed Budget of \$5,192,418, as well as the Supplemental CIP and the CIP, which passed unanimously.

## Senior Services

**Note:** The most recent year has been a transitional year for the Department with the NewCAL project beginning, and Mignonne Murray replacing Jayne Colino as Director of Senior Services. Director Murray has been in the role for 4 months and commended staff on creating a smooth transition for the Department. For programming the Department is still seeing consistent attendance while programming is occurring at temporary locations. The Department is also undergoing two major projects with the first being adding technology to the Department to allow for better confidential notes and data gathering to improve future programming. The other project is a needs assessment in partnership with UMass Boston which will run from September 2023 into next year. Director Murray hopes that the results of this needs assessment will be helpful once NewCal is opened. The proposed budget for the Department is \$846,768 which is a 2.73% decrease from FY23.

## Q&A

Q: Is data gathered on NewMo ridership and how does the Department plan to increase flexibility of the program?

A: Mr. Yeo stated that NewMo has been funded by grants and that the Mayor has announced changes for non-seniors along with rebidding the contract. The Administration will also provide information on

ridership to Councilors. Director Murray is also exploring adding operation hours to the program and expanding the service area to better meet rider needs.

Q: Will the Department be able to hire additional staff for the opening of NewCal?

A: The funding for these positions was part of the recent budget override that did not pass. Director Murray affirmed that the Mayor is committed to finding funding for these positions to ensure the success of NewCal.

The Committee took a straw vote to accept the Information Technology Department's proposed Budget of \$846,768, as well as the Supplemental CIP and the CIP, which passed unanimously.

### **City Solicitor**

**Note:** Alissa Giuliani, City Solicitor, stated that the largest change in the last year for her department has been staffing due to turnover. The Department needed to adjust with the retiring of Marie Lawlor and the untimely passing of Jeffrey Honing. Attorney Giuliani used this time to restructure the Department by having only one Deputy City Solicitor with a Senior Assistant City Solicitor position being created for the Government Services, and Labor and Employment Divisions. This allows for more advancement opportunities within the Department and allows staff to gain management experience. Attorney Giuliani also stated that the City has hired outside counsel to help with staff capacity during this transition. The proposed budget for the department is \$2,164,733 which is a 6.4% increase from FY23.

### **Q&A**

Q: What is the distinction between claims/settlements and legal line items in the Department's budget?

A: Attorney Giuliani stated that the legal line item is to pay department costs and the claims/settlements line item is used to pay judgements. When asked if the FY24 number would be sufficient she described that some judgements are paid by other departments and FY22 and previous fiscal years are the actual amount paid in judgments.

Q: Does the City ensure it has adequate funding before entering into a settlement?

A: All settlements are discussed with the CFO before proceeding according to Attorney Giuliani. The \$100,000 budgeted is primarily used for smaller claims such as pothole damages or minor fender benders. Mr. Yeo followed that free cash will routinely be used to pay these settlements.

Q: How many tickets for leafblowers is the Department defending in court?

A: The Department is currently defending 30 tickets in court and the City is mostly successful in upholding them.

The Committee took a straw vote to accept the Information Technology Department's proposed Budget of \$2,164,733, as well as the Supplemental CIP and the CIP, which passed unanimously.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Josh Krintzman, Chair**



# HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES BUDGET REPORT

MAY 17, 2023

## PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

- Inspecting restaurants, homes, and businesses
- Enforcing state and local laws
- Investigating reportable diseases and foodborne illnesses
- Vaccine clinics (flu, COVID-19, and shingles)
- COVID-19 test distribution
- Providing COVID-19 guidance to residents, businesses, and community organizations
- Robust community health programming:
  - CPR, Stop the Bleed, and first aid training
  - Started regular blood drives
  - Blood pressure monitoring for seniors
  - Falls prevention



# PERMITS AND LICENSES

- Continued to expand NewGov (online permitting system) to make it easier for individuals and businesses to apply for permits/licenses, streamline the workflow, and improve inter-departmental coordination

| Permit/License Type                       | # issued<br>Jan-Dec 2022 |
|---|--------------------------|
| Food establishment                        | 471                      |
| Pools (public)                            | 48                       |
| Recreational camps for children           | 42                       |
| Body art establishment and practitioner   | 31                       |
| Tobacco                                   | 38                       |
| Keeping of animals (e.g., chickens, pigs) | 66                       |
| Alcohol licenses (restaurants)            | 92                       |
| Alcohol licenses (package goods store)    | 40                       |
| Alcohol licenses (one day temporary)      | 105                      |
| Entertainment licenses                    | 178                      |
| Common victualler                         | 208                      |

# SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

- A return to routine school health services post-COVID-19, including mandated health screenings
- Addressing mental health needs of students post-pandemic
- Reestablishing in-person professional development with the school physician
- Strengthening emergency preparedness by establishing strong Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERT)
- Reinstituting partnership with EMS provider to offer CPR training for MERT members
- Creating a new orientation mentoring program to augment the onboarding process and improve recruitment and retention

# SOCIAL SERVICES

- Mental Health Education Series:
  - Supporting our Community, Crisis Intervention Panel, Teens & Parents Supporting Each Other
- Economic Stability/Mobility Initiative with EMPATH to support 50 low-income Newton families over two years with economic mobility coaching and monthly stipends
- Newton Coalition for Community Wellness: Tackling Substance Use Disorder with Care, Compassion, and Connection
- Contracts with Riverside Community Care for mental health services (school based emergencies, mental health court, youth and family outreach, and outpatient treatment)
- William James INTERFACE Referral Services
- Youth Services: Summer Internship Program, Youth Commission, Career Pathways & Skill Building Workshops

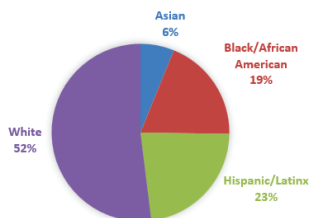
# SOCIAL SERVICES

## Newton Residents Served

408 total Social Services clients Jan-Dec 2022

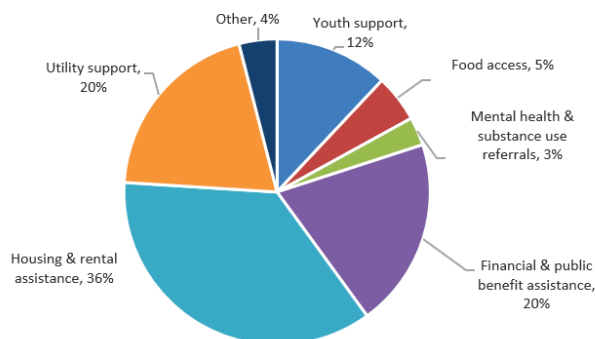
2,796 total contacts (average 6.9 per client)

Race/Ethnicity of Clients



\*Race/ethnicity are self-reported and based on census categories

## Social Services Direct Service Interventions, Jan-Dec '22 (breakdown of 2,900 total contacts)



- Case management services include supporting residents with accessing housing, food, clothing, legal services, employment assistance, financial coaching, and public benefit programs (SNAP, fuel assistance, social security disability, residential assistance for families in transition)