

Finance Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Monday, June 12, 2023

Present: Councilors Grossman (Chair), Malakie, Humphrey, Norton, Gentile, Oliver and Noel

Absent: Councilor Kalis

City staff present: Comptroller Steve Curley, Deputy Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux, Fire Chief Greg Gentile, CPA Program Manager Lara Kritzer, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Culture Nicole Banks, Director of Parks and Open Space Luis Perez Demorizi, Commissioner of DPW Jim McGonagle, City Clerk/ Clerk of the Council Carol Moore Manager of Financial Planning and Analysis Perry Rosenfield, and Senior Financial Analyst Connor Roach

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#163-23 Appropriate \$250,000 for Election Equipment <u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) from June 30, 2022 Certified free Cash, to Acct # 0110162-585170 Clerk of the Council-Election Equipment to replace 32 current machines as well as one high-speed tabulator to address the increase in vote by mail processing. Programs & Services Approved 6-0 (Councilors Baker and Wright not voting) on 06/07/23

Action: <u>Finance Approved 6-0 (Councilor Gentile not voting)</u>

Note: Carol Moore, City Clerk/Clerk of the Council joined the Committee to discuss the request to appropriate and expend \$250,000 to replace 32 current machines as well as one high-speed tabulator to address the increase in vote-by-mail processing. Clerk Moore explained that the RFP was closed on April 27th and the City received one bid from LHS Associates, which is one of the State-approved vendors. The City has been working with LHS for years and they have been very supportive of the office. These machines will be more up to date, and they do stack which will help with storage issues. The one high-speed tabulator will help with the high-turnout elections. The plan is to receive these machines before the next election and LHS will be working with the City for the next two elections as part of the RFP. It was noted that the life of these machines are dictated by the technology that they use but should be used for at least the next ten years.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve which passed 6-0 with Councilor Gentile not voting.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#216-23 Request for salary increase for City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council

<u>COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT AND LIPOF</u> requesting an increase in the salary of the City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council to \$134,734 effective July 1, 2023 to match the percentage increase included in the FY24 budget for H-grade employees.

Programs & Services Approved 6-0 (Councilors Baker and Wright not voting) on 06/07/23

Action: <u>Finance Approved 7-0</u>

Note: It was noted that this a routine item that needs to be approved by the Council each year. The Clerk's salary matches the percentage increase included in the FY24 budget for H-grade employees.

The Chair thanked Clerk Moore on the work she has completed as the City Clerk.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approved which passed unanimously.

#191-23 Transfer \$100,000 to Snow & Ice Vehicle Contractors
 HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) from Acct #140123-513010 Snow & Ice Overtime to Acct # 0140123-529100 Snow & Ice Vehicle Contractors to "true up" the legal level of control for the cost for employee overtime versus contracted work for snow and ice removal.

 Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Please see the note for item #222-23.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

 #222-23
 Transfer \$280,000 for Snow & Ice Vehicle Rental/Contractors

 HER HONOR THE MAYOR
 requesting authorization to transfer the sum of two hundred

 and eighty thousand dollars (\$280,000) from June 30, 2022 Certified Free Cash to Acct #

 0140123-527300 Snow & Ice Vehicle Rental/Contractors to fund the anticipated

 remaining contractor invoices that the City has not yet received.

 Public Facilities Approved 4-0 on 06/12/23

Action: <u>Finance Approved 7-0</u>

Note: Jim McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works joined the Committee to discuss the transfer of \$100,000 to pay for the City's additional contractors' invoices for snow and ice removal. He noted that this is a routine request.

He also discussed the request to transfer \$280,000 to also cover contractors' costs. There are several contractors that do not invoice the city until the end of the fiscal year which is why this request is before the Council at this time.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve item #191-23 which passed unanimously.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve item #222-23 which passed unanimously.

#190-23 Appropriate \$30,000 for an IT Risk Assessment HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) from Acct 0111154-511001 Micro/Network-Full Time Salaries) for an IT Risk Assessment Action: Einance Approved 7.0

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Joe Mulvey, Chief Financial Officer joined the Committee to discuss the request to appropriate and expend \$30,000 for an IT risk assessment. Mr. Mulvey explained that the City's auditors have been requesting that the City do a risk assessment for a number of years. This could take between 6 weeks to 3 months to accomplish and this will produce comments/suggestions on how the City can improve.

Councilors noted that the School Department should also do their own risk assessment.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#215-23 Request to accept \$100,000 from a FY23 "one-stop" grant <u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting authorization to accept and expend a FY23 state "One Stop" grant for one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to continue the Council's Village Center/MBTA Communities zoning consulting work Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development joined the Committee to discuss the acceptance of \$100,000 from a FY23 "one-stop" grant to continue the Council's Village Center/MBTA Communities zoning consulting work. Mr. Heath explained that they will not know if the City will receive these funds until the end of the month. It was questioned if these funds would be used to create more 3-D models. Mr. Heath explained that they are still trying to calculate the cost of these models but should have an answer by the June 20th Zoning and Planning meeting. He also noted that he could provide the total amount that has been spent in consulting for village centers.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Safety & Transportation and Finance Committees#220-23Request authorization for \$300,000 to replace Fire Emergency Response UnitHER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend three
hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) from Certified Free Cash to Acct #0121026-58010
Automobiles & Light Trucks to replace the Fire Department's 1989 Emergency Response
Unit (ERU).Public Safety & Transportation Approved 6-0 (Councilor Grossman not voting) on
06/07/23Action:Finance Approved 7-0

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Note: Greg Gentile, Fire Chief joined the Committee to discuss the appropriation of \$300,000 to replace the Fire Emergency Response Unit. This piece of equipment is from 1989 and carries supplies/equipment to large-scale incidents. This vehicle was scheduled to be replaced in the FY21 Capital Improvement Plan but due to the pandemic the City did ask each department to find ways to tighten the budget. The equipment is now beyond its useful life.

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#153-23 Transfer \$200,000 for the Newton Free Library HVAC system <u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting authorization to transfer the sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) from Main Library- Full Time Salaries Acct # 0160110-511001 to Library Building Maintenance – Electricity Acct # 0160112-521000 to supplement the FY23 and FY24 Library Electricity budget to cover overruns due to the failing HVAC system

Action: Finance Approved as amended to \$300,000 6-0 (Councilor Gentile not voting)

Note: Please see the note for item #165-23.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#165-23 Appropriate \$750,000 for the Newton Free Library's HVAC system
 <u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum
 of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000) from June 30, 2022 Certified Free
 Cash to a Public Buildings Department Capital Account to fund the replacement of the
 Newton Free Library's HVAC system as detained in the FY-24-FY28 CIP.
 Public Facilities Approved 8-0 on 5/17/23
 Action: Finance Approved 6-0 (Councilor Gentile not voting)

Note: Josh Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings joined the Committee to discuss the request to transfer funds to supplement the FY23 and FY24 Library Electricity budget to cover costs due to the failing HVAC system. The Mayor's Office requested the Committee amend the amount to \$300,000. The Library has seen a 36% increase in electricity usage due to the failing HVAC system. The savings from attrition comes from opening positions at the Library.

Commissioner Morse also presented the request to appropriate and expend the sum of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000) from June 30, 2022 Certified Free Cash to a Public Buildings Department Capital Account to fund the replacement of the Newton Free Library's HVAC system as detailed in the FY24-FY28 CIP. He noted that he is coming to the Committee now for these funds so that they are eligible for a number of grants and rebates.

Councilor Humphrey made a motion to amend item 153-23 to \$300,000 which passed 6-0 with Councilor Gentile not voting.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve item #153-23 as amended which passed 6-0 with Councilor Gentile not voting.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve item #165-23 which passed unanimously 6-0 with Councilor Gentile not voting.

#182-23 Acceptance of grant funding for the Marty Sender Greenway Phase 2 Restoration Project

<u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of three hundred forty thousand two hundred and ninety-eight dollars (\$340,298) from the Fy23 State MassTrails and accept and expend twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) in donations from the Newton Conservators and the Solomon Foundation for the Marty Sender Greenway Phase 2 Restoration project

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Culture and Director of Parks and Open Space Luis Perez Demorizi presented the request to accept grant funding and donations for the Marty Sender Greenway Phase 2 Restoration project. Mr. Perez Demorizi showed the attached slides explaining the project. The trail has been moved to fix the issue of the private property that is involved.

Councilor Gentile motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#183-23 Acceptance of \$75,000 from the Massachusetts State Budget

<u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of seventy-five-thousand-dollar (\$75,000) earmarked in the Massachusetts State Budget to assist the City on funding the construction of a new community garden at Spears Park on the north side.

Action: <u>Finance Approved 7-0</u>

Note: Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Culture and Director of Parks and Open Space Luis Perez Demorizi presented the request accept \$75,000 earmarked in the Massachusetts State Budget to assist the City on funding the construction of a new community garden at Spears Park on the north side. Mr. Perez Demorizi showed the attached slides explaining the project. It was questioned if there are any traffic concerns with the new Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School or if there are any security concerns. Mr. Perez Demorizi explained that traffic is not a concern and that the Friends of Spears Park group will be the City's eyes and ears on the ground. The community garden will also be enclosed with a fence so there is some protection.

It was questioned if the neighbors have been contacted regarding this project and are they supportive. Councilors explained that they have discussed this with neighbors, and they are in support of the project.

Councilor Oliver motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#185-23 Acceptance of \$400,000 from the Massachusetts State Budget

<u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) in a state budget earmark to assist the City in

funding the improvements project at Gath Pool, including two pools and a splash pad. Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Culture and Director of Parks and Open Space Luis Perez Demorizi presented the request to accept and expend the sum of four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) in a state budget earmark to assist the City in funding the improvements project at Gath Pool, including two pools and a splash pad.

Councilor Noel motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#186-23 Acceptance of a donation from the Friends of Coletti-Magni Park <u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars (\$125,000) in donations from the Friends of Coletti-Magni Park to beautify the park and improve electrical infrastructure Action: Finance Approved as amended to \$200,000 7-0

Note: Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Culture presented the request to accept a donation from the Friends of Coletti-Magni Park to beautify the park and improve electrical infrastructure. She noted that she would like the Committee to amend the item to \$200,000.

Councilor Oliver motioned to amend to \$200,000 which passed unanimously.

Councilor Oliver motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#159-23 Appropriate funds for the Athletic Fields CIP Construction Phase III project <u>COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE</u> requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of nine million ninety-nine thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven dollars (\$9,099,787) to the control of the Planning & Development Department from the Community Preservation Act Funds with four million ninety-nine thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven dollars (\$4,099,787) from the CPA's Unrestricted Prior Year Fund and five million dollars (\$5,000,000) authorize a general obligation borrowing of an equal amount for the Athletic Fields CIP Construction Phase III project and authorization to apply any premium received upon the sale of the bonds or notes, less the cost of preparing, issuing, and marketing them, and any accrued interest received upon the delivery of the bonds or notes to the costs of the project and to reduce the amount authorized to be borrowed for the project by like amount. Programs & Services Approved 7-0 (Councilor Baker not voting) on 06/07/23

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Lara Kritzer, CPA Program Manager and Jennifer Molinsky, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee presented the above request to fund the Athletic Fields CIP Construction Phase III project. Ms. Molinsky presented the attached presentation on the project.

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A Councilor asked for an overview of the current financial standing of our CPA funds. Ms. Kritzer explained that they have just over \$4 million in unspent funds that will rollover to next year's budget. For the bonding piece of this request, she explained that the CPA has bonded the Gath Pool, Webster Woods and if approved, the Athletic Fields project. Ms. Kritzer also provided the attached chart regarding the future debt service as percentage of total revenue.

A Councilor noted that as part of the CPC's recommendation, they asked for the City Council to do a study on concerns raised regarding artificial turf fields and this should be done before the City Council approves any new construction of these fields. Ms. Molinsky explained that it was her understanding that this request would be made to the City Council. Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer explained that the Conservation and Parks & Rec Commissions are the two organizations that have input in this process. The ARPA projects will not be put before the City Council. The issue with artificial turf fields will be discussed with the City Council this summer.

It was questioned what the current condition of the lights at the Albemarle field are. Director of Parks and Open Space Luis Perez Demorizi explained that there is structural damage to the lights at Albemarle and the contractors that were contacted would not fix the lights because the of the structural damage. This request does include the cost of replacing all of the lights which are the ones that have been installed at both high schools.

Councilor Oliver motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#219-23 Request to increase the spending limits for three revolving accounts <u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting to increase the spending limits of the (1) Senior Citizen Programs, (2) Environmental Science, (3) Off-Leash Dog Administration revolving funds. This is due to a post-COVID return to higher spending amounts for these revolving funds to previous levels as well as some changes in where costs are charged. Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Steve Curley, Comptroller joined the Committee to discuss the request to increase the spending limits of the (1) Senior Citizen Programs, (2) Environmental Science, and (3) Off-Leash Dog Administration revolving funds. This is due to a post-COVID return to higher spending amounts for these revolving funds to previous levels as well as some changes in where costs are charged. The amounts that are being increased are shown in the attached docket request.

Mr. Curley explained that last year during the budget process he tightened the spending limits on revolving accounts and this year has realized that these need to be increased for the above-mentioned programs. There is a boost in these programs in the last few years and some have increased even above pre-covid figures. It was questioned why the spending limit for the off-leash dog permit was lowered to only \$1,000. Mr. Curley explained that this is only the admin portion of the off-leash dog permit program which is run through the Clerk's Office. This is used for the dog tags and the licensing itself. The Clerk's Office has also decided to use these funds for printing and postage. The actual spending will probably be closer to \$6,000.

Councilor Gentile motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#223-23 Transfer fifty dollars to Purchasing-Full Time Salaries HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer fifty dollars (\$50) from 0110538-542000 Purchasing- Office Supplies to 0110538-511001 Purchasing- Full Time Salaries, to cover an anticipated shortage in the department's payroll budget Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Action: <u>Finance Approved 7-0</u>

Note: Perry Rosenfield, Manager of Financial Planning and Analysists represented the request to transfer fifty dollars to cover an anticipated shortage in the department's payroll budget. He noted that this was an accounting issue when putting the budget together.

Councilor Gentile motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#213-23 Appropriate \$136,020 from the Water Fund Undesignated Fund Balance <u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of one hundred thirty-six thousand and twenty dollars (\$136,020) from the Water Fund Undesignated Fund Balance to cover an outstanding debt service.

Action: <u>Finance Approved 7-0</u>

Note: Steve Curley, Comptroller presented the request to appropriate \$136,020 from the Water Fund Undesignated Fund Balance to cover an outstanding debt service. He explained that this was an accounting issue when putting together the FY23 budget.

Councilor Gentile motioned approve which passed unanimously.

#214-23 Transfer any unexpended General Fund Municipal health insurance funds to the Health Insurance Trust Fund

> <u>HER HONOR THE MAYOR</u> requesting authorization to transfer any unexpected unexpended General Fund municipal health insurance funds (57HLTH), remaining as of June 30, 2023 into the Health Insurance Trust Fund (fund 6600).

Action: <u>Finance Approved 7-0</u>

Note: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer presented the request to transfer any unexpended General Fund municipal health insurance funds to the Health Insurance Trust Fund. Ms. Lemieux explained that because the City is self-insured they develop working rates for the rest of the year. The Health Trust Fund had grown to be around \$18 million at the end of FY21 which is higher than the City usually sees. The average is 6 weeks' worth of claims which would be approximately \$1.5 million per week. The expectation was that post-Covid, these claims would increase. The City will spend about \$8 million more than the City will be bringing in. These calculations are difficult to figure out due to the ongoing issue with Harvard Pilgrim. The City has not received a bill from them in 2 months and this request is to move any unexpended General Fund municipal health insurance funds (57HLTH), remaining as of June 30, 2023 into the Health Insurance Trust Fund (fund 6600). It was noted

that the City is moving all healthcare plans to Blue Cross Blue Shield.

A Councilor noted that the City should be looking further into the GIC healthcare system that is used by the State.

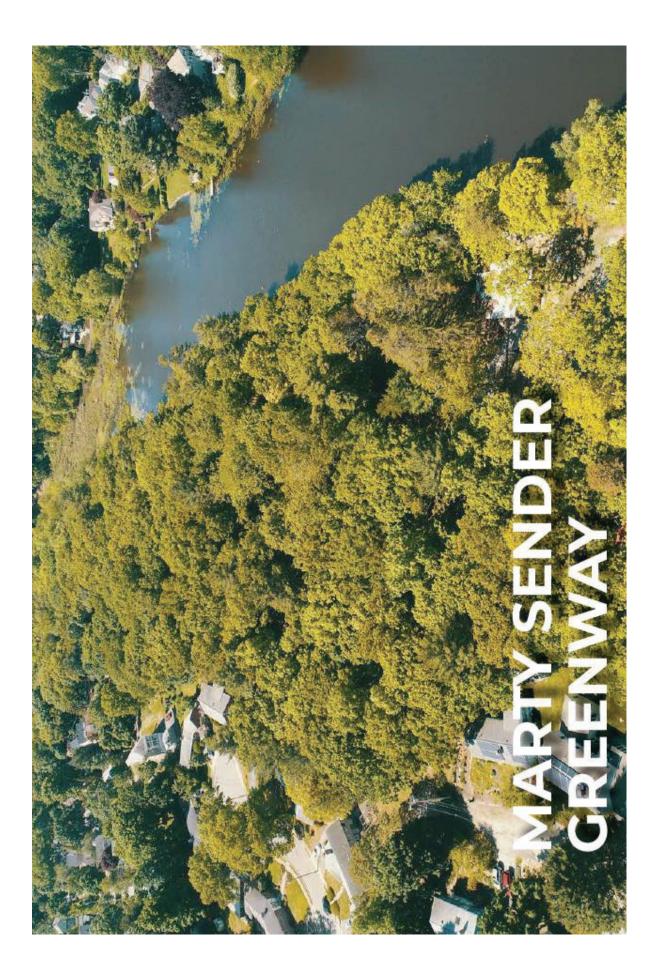
Maureen Lemieux explained that did take an exclusive look at the difference between the GIC program and Blue Cross Blue Shield. They also met with the Insurance Advisory Committee, which is made up of the presidents of all the unions and they voted unanimously to go with Blue Cross Blue Shield.

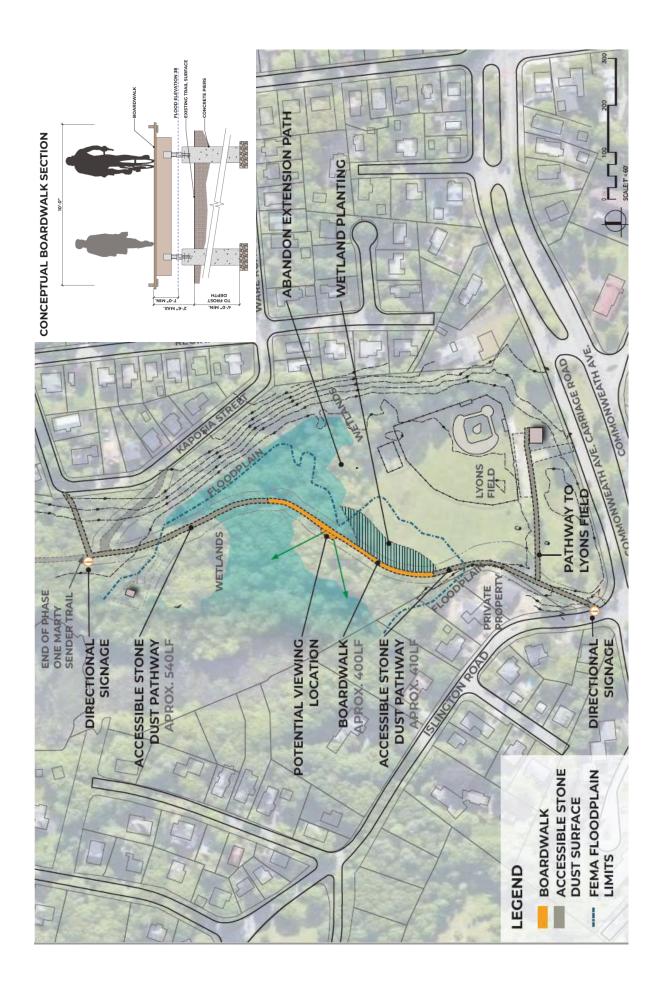
Councilor Gentile motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

The committee adjourned at 9:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Walker Grossman, Chair





Community Gardens @ Spears Park







GARDEN BEDS



1" FABRIC BLACK VINYL CHAIN LINK FENCE

COMPOST BIN







Athletic Fields CIP Funding Recommendation **Community Preservation Committee** Construction Phase FY23-FY25 -Presentation to Finance Committee

159-23

June 12, 2023

Project Overview

- In FY22, CPA funding was used to hire two consultants
 Weston and Sampson and CDM Smith - to assess the existing conditions at the Albemarle McGrath, and Burr School Fields
- Consultants drew from this assessment and extensive community engagement process to develop conceptual plans for all three sites.
- Next step is to complete the construction designs and bidding process for construction in Fall 2024



Current Funding Request

CPA funding is requested to complete the final phase of design Park Phase I, McGrath Park, and Burr School Fields including: and construction of recreation improvements for Albemarle

- Completion of final designs, plans and bidding documents
- Construction of new and rehabilitation of existing multiuse and other playing fields
 - Installation of new paths and walkways
- Installation of new lighting fixtures
- Construction and installation of new recreation features including lacrosse practice wall, tennis court resurfacing, benches, and other amenities

							159-23
	Amount	\$1,701,003	\$2,398,784	\$4,099,787	\$5,000,000	\$9,099,787	tion
Recommended CPA Project Funding	CPA Funding Accounts	FY23 Budget Reserve (Undesignated Funds)	Unrestricted Prior Year Funding	Total of Existing CPA Funding:	Debt Authorization for 15 Year Bond (Future Payments to be taken from CPA Current Year Undesignated Funds)	Total CPA Project Funding:	CPA Funding is recommended to be Recreation category funding.

										159	.23
	Amount	\$9,099,787	\$3,699,115	\$92,000	\$200,000	\$60,000	\$200,000	\$21,875	\$473,340	\$13,846,117	
Phase III Project Funding Sources	Funding Sources	CPA Funds (Current Funds and Bonding)	City of Newton Budget and ARPA Funds	CDBG Funds (McGrath Accessible Pathways)	Little League Fundraising (Murphy Field Lighting)	Newton Youth Lacrosse Fundraising (McGrath Lacrosse Practice Wall)	Developer Mitigation Funds for Forte Park Lighting	Athletic Lighting Structural Assessment (Various Sites)	City Staff Time for Oversight and Management of Phase III Construction	TOTAL PROJECT COST:	

Timeline

Final Design of Albemarle Park Phase I, McGrath Summer 2023 through Spring 2024 - Complete and Burr School Field sites and all necessary permitting processes Summer 2024 - Complete Bidding Process for all three sites and award construction contract(s)

anticipated completion in Spring/Summer 2025 Fall 2024 - Construction at all three sites with



Questions & Discussion

Thank you!



219-23



City of Newton, Massachusetts Office of the Mayor

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June 1, 2023

RUTHANNE FULLER MAYOR

> Honorable City Council Newton City Hall 1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton Centre, MA 02459

Dear Councilors:

I respectfully submit this docket item to increase the spending limits of the (1) Senior Citizen Programs, (2) Environmental Science, and (3) Off-Leash Dog Administration revolving funds. This is due to a post-COVID return to higher spending amounts for these revolving funds to previous levels as well as some changes in where costs are charged.

- Senior Citizen Programs Revolving: Increase spending limit from \$80,000 to \$125,000. .
- Environmental Science Revolving: Increase spending limit from \$60,000 to \$125,000.
- Off-Leash Dog Administration: Increase spending limit from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

Please see the included memo from Comptroller Steve Curley which details his process for determining the necessary spending threshold for these revolving funds.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Fuller

Ruthanne Fuller



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS CITY HALL 1000 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE NEWTON CENTRE, MA 02459 TELEPHONE (617) 796-1301 FACSIMILE (617) 796-1196

scurley@newtonma.gov

COMPTROLLER STEPHEN CURLEY

To:	Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer					
From:	Steve Curley, Comptroller					

Subject: Increase Spending Limits on Revolving Funds

Date: May 30, 2023

Dear Maureen and Jonathan:

I respectfully request that the Mayor docket a request to increase spending limits on the following Revolving Funds:

- Senior Citizen Programs Revolving: Increase spending limit from \$80,000 to \$125,000.
- Environmental Science Revolving: Increase spending limit from \$60,000 to \$125,000.
- Off-leash Dog Administration: Increase spending limit from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

With the impact of the Covid pandemic, many programs either stopped temporarily or were much smaller than had been 4-5+ years ago. When building out the spending limits in the Grants, Gifts, Revolving exhibit, I used actuals from the more recent years for these and now the programs are flourishing again.

In regards to the Off-leash administration, the costs for mailings, printings and other administration costs had been charged to the General Fund the last few years, but they are moving those expenses to the revolving account.

When creating the GGR exhibit for the FY24 budget, I reverted back to older history to on spending limits to safeguard them from being over-expended in future years.

Respectfully,

Steve Curley Comptroller