



Finance Committee Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

Monday, January 8, 2024

Present: Councilors Gentile (Chair), Micley, Bixby, Malakie, Grossman, Greenberg, Lipof and Humphrey

Also Present: Councilor Block

City Staff: Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux, Senior Financial Analyst Perry Rosenfield, Senior Financial Analyst Connor Roach, Comptroller Stephen Curley, Superintendent of Newton Public Schools Anna Nolin, City Clerk Carol Moore, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Commissioner of Public Buildings Joshua Morse, Project Manager – Public Buildings William Ferguson, Commissioner of Public Works James McGonagle

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link:

[Finance Committee - January 8, 2024 - YouTube](#)

Recommended to Programs and Services & Finance Committees

#27-24

Appropriate \$925,000 Newton Public Schools Curriculum Investments

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of nine hundred twenty-five thousand (\$925,000) of June 30, 2023 Certified Free Cash for the purpose of funding curriculum materials for Newton Public Schools.

Action:

Finance Held 8-0

Notes: Superintendent of Newton Public Schools Anna Nolin joined the committee to present on the item above. She began by explaining to the committee that she has completed a draft audit curriculum audit cycle, that will span into the next decade for Newton Public Schools. Superintendent Nolin continued to explain that the Newton Public Schools have not undertaken formal curriculum review in the last 20 years. Dr. Nolin added that her initial audit of the current curriculum materials indicates that in the areas of science and math, Newton Public Schools are not necessarily articulated correctly to the standards expected by the State of Massachusetts.

Dr. Nolin continued saying that this is a great opportunity for the schools to take a deep dive into what is being taught at each level, and to work to upgrade the math, science, technology, engineering standards and experiences for students in the Newton Public Schools. Dr. Nolin added that in her memo, she gives councilors broad information regarding the types of professional development, the types of tools, the types of experiences that NPS is trying to create for the teachers to set up the students for success, because as these audit cycles happen in the next several years there will be opportunities for state and

The location of this meeting is accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: jfairley@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.

local and private funding Newton Public Schools to should take advantage of.

Dr. Nolin continued by adding that \$925,000 isn't going to solve all NPS current problems in this realm, but it will add a nice lift into the audit cycle base curriculum materials. Dr. Nolin continued to explain the State is deploying new assessment tools for the MCAS and Science, which the city of Newton has been selected for as a pilot district for this assessment. Dr. Nolin added that the results of that assessment pilot may change the course of how science is delivered in Massachusetts. Given this, she continued to explain that NPS are wise to focus on math first and to start science audits in the next year. Dr. Nolin finished by saying that in the meantime funds would be much needed to remedy some of the variants within the curriculum and would allow teachers to get the training they need to be more up to speed with their pedagogy.

Councilors asked the following questions

Q- Can you comment as to how you landed on this specific amount of money for this request?

A - Just by way of comparison, for the NPS recent English Language Arts curriculum, the purchase of the materials alone were 2 million dollars to outfit all 15 of Newton's elementary schools. The thinking it is unrealistic to ask for 3 million dollars every year for curriculum deployments, but with an audit cycle that undertakes a different subject area K to 12 each year, 1 million dollars of supplemental materials and training is a reasonable portion to request to help that process along. The plan is to use this money for base materials upon which to create reliable curriculum, scope and sequence for our students, common assessments that would allow staff to benchmark student skills across the system with the same kind of fidelity in every school, and the training for teachers to be able to use those materials and use more modern technologies to extend the reach of their pedagogy and therein personalizing instruction for students in a deeper way.

Q – Will the materials you will be purchasing with this money go towards next year's school year?

A - Yes, the intention is for next school year to be deploying these funds, and to make them last if we can over fiscal years, if possible.

Q – Can you explain why it is that Newton has not kept up to pace in STEM as compared to other communities across the state?

A - In the elementary science program, the school day is arranged in such a way that science is often an optional place where teachers put their instructional time. Some lessons are no longer articulated to the engineering and science standards of the current State expectations. Our elementary schools also do not offer classes in robotics, engineering, design, thinking and they do not have digital and media literacy courses since library teachers have been reduced. Students can only do their research and literacy instruction and have not been able to add the technology and media portion of the library technology media curriculum that exists at the state level. In terms of the middle schools, the engineering classes that are run by the technology engineering teachers and are largely still traditional

shop classes where students do some design work, but it has not been upgraded to some of the digital design work that is more in keeping with current industry. In terms of High School, one of the cuts at both high schools in recent years was the engineering electives, which I would propose that we need to re-engage. Finally, I would say to you that we do not have a dual enrollment process here of college courses which are typically stem based in Massachusetts.

Q – Is the money being requested tonight coming from the \$6.2 million being requested from free cash?

A – Yes, this will be apart of that money being requested.

Q - Could you elaborate more on the state-of-the-art tools by which the curriculum is taught that you referenced in your memo?

A – What was referred to in the memo was more adaptive technologies that extend the reach of the teacher. Digital tools that NPS can use that free up the teacher from some of the more rote and mechanical tasks, so that they can be at the desk side coaching your young people on those hard tasks, whether it's mathematics or it's writing or coaching.

Q - Is any of this funding going to technology that the students would be using themselves? Or is it all the technology side of this more from the teacher perspective?

A – NPS has contracted with Boston Colleges in Task Group, which is their technology research group at the start of this year to map what are the technologies that our schools are using in Newton. Of course, this has been delayed by the work to rule actions and haven't been able to deploy those surveys to teachers yet. There has been a lot of other competing demands, but that is in the queue, and the report will be submitted to school committee this spring. From there, NPS would be better able to tell you what is being expected to dive deeper into.

Q – It seems like in today's age, textbooks are a thing in the past. Is this by choice, or have we found better ways to put curriculum and materials together?

A - Textbooks are not a curriculum, and there is no textbook that is going to solve all the all the things that any school system wants. NPS still needs good teachers to adapt materials and to curate those materials. The change that's happened in the last 20 years is that there has been a move away from just traditional texts to more digital materials simulations, but still having a base resource of materials from which teachers can pull.

Q - How do you plan to get buy in with teachers that might resist centralization that might want independence of teaching in their own way?

A - These are content experts in our schools and they're also experts in young people in pedagogy. We need to continue to listen to them and let them put their own creative spin as to how they teach this

information to our students. My job as Superintendent is to get them the best materials from which to begin, so that they can use their skills for the students, and not running around for materials.

Councilors made the following comments

Several Councilors expressed appreciation that the schools are taking this initiative to update the curriculum for students across the city of Newton.

Some councilors expressed appreciation for focus on a technology-oriented curriculum.

Councilor Humphrey made a motion to hold the following item, which passed unanimously.

Recommended to Public Facilities & Finance Committees

#33-24

Appropriate \$11,475,000 for Newton Public Schools and Municipal Infrastructure

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend eleven million, four hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$11,475,000) of June 30, 2023 Certified Free Cash to fund the following: A. Newton North Pool- Air Handling Unit (\$425,000) B. Replace Entire Roof System - Peirce Elementary (\$1,200,000) C. Replace Entire Roof System - Mason Rice Elementary (\$1,100,000) D. Repave Parking Area - Brown Middle School (\$300,000) E. Replace Chiller - Newton South, Building H (\$350,000) F. Repair Auditorium Ceiling, Playground Improvement and Toilet Room Installation - Williams Elementary (\$325,000) G. Install PA Systems - Bigelow & Brown Middle Schools (\$300,000) H. Toilet Room Upgrades - Day Middle, Mason Rice, Bowen, Memorial Spaulding, and Peirce Elementary Schools (\$1,275,000) I. Paving, Road Improvements & Traffic Calming (\$5,250,000) J. Police Headquarters - Repave Parking Lot & Fencing (\$600,000) K. Fire Station 2- Heat Pumps for staff area HVAC (\$350,000).

Action:

Finance Held 8-0

Notes: Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux opened the presentation for the above docket item. Maureen began by explaining to the Committee that the city had declared \$27.9 million this year in free cash. She continued by saying this amount is \$15 million more than the city typically has each year. She continued to say that the city typically runs about \$12 or \$13 million dollars of free cash, which is about 2 and a half percent of the city's budget. She continued explaining that typically the idea is to save most of this money until springtime so there is an understanding about what has gone on during the year. She continued by saying that because of the surplus in free cash, the administration wanted to make sure that the city really takes a holistic look at all the different needs that are present. Maureen ended by stating if the council were to approve this docket item in its entirety, the city will still have about \$12 million dollars left in free cash for all the other potential uses that could arise in the next 6 months.

Councilors asked the following questions

Q- Could someone speak on the current safety measures regarding the air handling unit at Newton North pool referenced in the docket request?

A - The air handling unit at Newton North High School that serves the pool area has become more problematic. As of late, Newton Public Schools has authorized the building department to do several repairs, one of which was approximately \$30,000 about a month ago. It's becoming more frequent that there have had to be larger investments to keep that air handling unit functioning properly. There have been periods of time where it is not performing up to par, and the city has gone in and fixed it. As of today, this is something that the system is running as per design. Public Buildings have done air balancing and testing throughout the pandemic. This has a building management system, so we can see the actual cubic feet per minute of fresh air and ventilation rates. The air handling unit is just one part of maintaining the indoor environment conditions in the pool facility.

Q – Would Newton North consider pool covers to be utilized?

A – Public buildings have bought a pool cover for this project. There are different kinds of pool covers with different performances, and the plan is to continue working with NPS to procure these if needed going forward.

Q – What is the breakdown between the paving road improvements and traffic calming that's referenced in this item?

A – The transportation network improvement program is budgeted each year for \$9.5 million, included in this is the purchases of concrete and asphalt for work the city conducts. This includes the city's traffic calming budget which is \$350,000 a year, and it includes the paving markings city wide. So, this \$5.25 million request will bring the budget to a total of \$9.5 million this year.

Q – How did the city come up with this specific list of priorities from the very long CIP list?

A – Most of these priorities in this docket item are in the CIP and have received good scores in terms of urgency. With all the major projects going on in the city right now, there isn't enough money to do everything from the CIP list.

Q - Does the city track the amount spent on these maintenance repairs for things that are overdue, so that the city can know what's going in to keep them together in the meantime, until its time to repair them.

A - Newton public schools track the expenditures for each school individually. They must report that out to DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) each year, and this includes maintenance. Not only does Public Buildings Department, but the schools also track these

maintenance repairs and request. These are all tracked through the automated preventative maintenance program.

Q – For the rest room upgrades referenced in this docket request, does this include accessibility upgrades?

A- This will depend. In some of the schools, the restrooms are fully accessible, and they are not completely accessible in some locations. Each of those projects will be unique, and the Newton Public Schools along with the city's design teams will work on identifying the needs in these upgrades on a case-by-case basis.

Q- Communities such as Somerville and Cambridge in the last year or so have done an extensive installation of speed tables on roads across both cities. Is Newton considering this as part of the city's traffic calming efforts on stretches where it will be appropriate?

A – Yes, so the city has installed a rising speed table on Beethoven Avenue, which has been successful. The city has also installed a rising speed table on Grant Avenue, where the feedback has not been as good, including from the fire department, so the city removed it. The Department of Public Works is continuing to try different processes that work, and those are part of the traffic calming process.

Councilors made the following comments

Several Councilors expressed approval about all the requests in this docket item and are excited about the work being complete.

Some councilors expressed concerns that the city is not investing enough capital in street calming initiatives.

Councilor Malakie motioned to hold the following item, which passed unanimously.

#34-24 Acceptance of anonymous donation to Newton City Council

CITY CLERK requesting the acceptance of an anonymous donation of \$10,000 to the City of Newton in memory of former Councilor George Mansfield for the benefit of the work of the Newton City Council to be used as the Council Leadership and the Clerk of the Council may from time to time determine.

Action: **Finance Approved 8-0**

Notes: City Clerk Carol Moore presented on the item above to the committee. Ms. Moore opened by thanking the anonymous donor for their donation. She continued to explain to the committee that this donation was made in honor of George Mansfield, who passed away on December 5th, 2023, and he was a Ward Alderman for the Ward 6 area from 1984 to 2010. She continued to explain that Mr. Mansfield served as chair of the Land Use Committee. Among other roles, he lived in Newton since 1970, and he

was a founding member of the Newton Highlands Area Council.

City Clerk Carol Moore finished her presentation to the committee by adding that she will work with Council leadership on the best ways to utilize this donation for the benefit of the Newton City Council.

Councilor Lipof motion to approve the item, which passed unanimously.

#35-24 Acceptance of \$22,248 grant from MassEVIP

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of twenty-two thousand, two hundred and forty-eight dollars (\$22,248) from the WPF Grant for the purpose of installing six EV Level 2 chargers. Five chargers (\$18,540) will be installed at the DPW facility at Elliot Street and one (\$3,708) at the Directors parking lot at City Hall.

Action: **Finance Approved 8-0**

Notes: Project Manager of Public buildings Bill Ferguson presented on the item above to the committee. Mr. Ferguson opened this item up by explaining to the committee that the city has received this grant before in the past for other electric vehicle charging stations, and the city received this grant for one charger behind City Hall, and five chargers to be installed at the DPW facility at Elliot Street.

Mr. Ferguson added the city received \$129,000 from Eversource, adding that between this Grant and the Eversource program, it will cover a hundred percent of the cost of the 5 charges on Elliot Street, so there will be no city money required at all.

Mr. Ferguson continued to explain that the city received the grant for one charger, behind City Hall. Mr. Ferguson added the city does not have a pre-approval letter from Eversource, yet there are some complications to try to figure out.

Mr. Ferguson finished by adding that DPW is in the process of procuring 9 hybrid charging vehicles, and that these charging stations will be for this fleet.

Councilors asked the following questions

Q – Will these chargers only be accessible for city employees, or will these be open for public use?

A – The chargers behind Elliot Street will be behind a fence at the DPW facility, so these will only be for municipal vehicle use, and the charger behind City Hall will also be only for municipal vehicle use as there is really no way to accommodate the public in that small of a parking lot. Also, when applying for this grant, the city applied for it strictly for municipal fleet use.

Councilor Lipof motioned to approve the item, which passed unanimously.

The committee adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Gentile, Chair



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor

33-24 & 27-24

Telephone
(617) 796-1100

Fax
(617) 796-1113
TDD/TTY

(617) 796-1089
Email

rfuller@newtonma.gov

December 26, 2023

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

RECEIVED
2023 DEC 26 PM 1:34
CITY CLERK
NEWTON, MA 02459

Honorable Councilors:

I am requesting approval from the Honorable Council for the use of \$12.4 million dollars of FY2024 available Free Cash to support important needs of the Newton Public Schools, the Department of Public Works, the Newton Police Department and the Newton Fire Department.

The use of these one-time funds for one-time expenditures is part of the City's larger financial strategy for the FY2025 operating budget and the use of funds from Overlay Surplus and Free Cash. The City of Newton has benefited from significantly higher amounts of Free Cash both last year and this as well as an unusual declaration in August 2023 of a substantial amount of funds in Overlay Surplus. We have a financial strategy that uses these funds to support ongoing operations as well as one-time needs.

Last Year's FY2023 Available Free Cash

All cities and towns in Massachusetts annually have funds called Free Cash certified by the State. In layperson's terms, Free Cash is the remaining, unrestricted funds from a City's or Town's operations from the previous fiscal year. Free Cash comes from actual revenues received in excess of revenue estimates, unspent funds in operating budget line items, and/or unexpended Free Cash from the previous year. As recently shown in figures provided to the City Council, even with the two larger amounts of Free Cash in FY2023 and FY2024, the City of Newton has lower levels of Free Cash as a percentage of the annual budget compared to other communities.

While the City of Newton is not yet fully funding 100% of anticipated expenditures (e.g., removal of snow and ice, maintenance of roadways, etc.), the City depends on and pays close attention to the amount and uses of Free Cash.

Free Cash in the Fuller Administration is an important part of the financial strategy and is used in the following prioritized manner:

- First: The difference between the actual budget for snow and ice removal and the most recent current maximum spent;
- Second: The amount necessary to supplement the prior year's Interest Income from the Rainy Day Stabilization Fund and the amount of the required following year's Rainy Day appropriation;
- Third: Up to \$1.5 million is used as a general revenue source for the ensuing year's operating budget;
- Fourth: One-time, non-recurring expenditures and/or funding to replenish reserve funds depleted in the previous year, such as the Inclement Weather Stabilization Reserve.

If funds are still available, we prioritize capital expenditures, particularly those with bonding terms of 10 years, as well as unusual settlements and expenses.

Fourteen months ago, on October 5, 2022, the State Department of Revenue notified the City that we would have a Free Cash amount of \$28,860,460 for use in FY2023. The \$28.8 million in Free Cash derived primarily from FY2022 Revenues Received in Excess of Budget and FY2022 Municipal Department Unexpended Appropriations. More specifically, the FY2023 Free Cash was approximately \$15 million higher than the usual, stemming from a \$12.7 million Eversource payment and a \$2 million non-profit deferred payment.

Notably, NPS does not return any unexpended appropriations to the City. Rather, any unexpended NPS funds are carried forward within the NPS Budget to the following year.

Although Free Cash is declared each year in every City and Town, these are considered to be one-time funds, as the amount can vary, and is the result of the prior year's actuals.

Last year, the City utilized \$23.4 million of these FY2023 Free Cash funds with City Council approval and reserved \$5.4 million for projected needs that have not yet settled. Of the total amount appropriated of \$23.4 million, we appropriated approximately \$16.3 million (or 70%) to support our students and schools as follows:

➤ We strategically paid \$10 million in cash toward the Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School reconstruction project to reduce Debt Payments, which allows us to increase the NPS operating budget by \$600,000 per year,	\$10,000,000
➤ We provided a "Bridge Grant" to NPS for a one-year gap to fund State imposed increased tuition costs for out-of-district student placements,	\$ 1,400,000
➤ We paid NPS legal settlements totaling \$580,000, taking pressure off the NPS operating budget,	\$ 580,000
➤ Replaced Newton South Synthetic Turf Fields & Track,	\$ 3,240,000
➤ NPS McKinney-Vento Homeless Transportation and Foster Aid,	\$ 244,821
➤ Boosted the FY2024 NPS Operating Budget	\$ 810,000
TOTAL FY2023 FREE CASH DEDICATED TO NPS	\$16,274,821

Overlay Surplus and the Eversource Payment

This past summer, we had another unusual one-time source of funding. The Newton Board of Assessors' was able to release \$26 million in principal and interest holdings that had been held for property owners that have challenged their assessments.

With the certification of significantly higher than usual Free Cash this year, we do not need to use the Overlay Surplus for one-time needs. Instead, we have the opportunity to transform the entire *one-time* surplus amount of \$26 million from Overlay Surplus and the ATB Interest & Penalties into *ongoing* funds to support the current operations of the Newton Public Schools and the overall financial health of the City.

On August 17, 2023, I submitted a docket item to the Honorable City Council requesting authorization to establish an "Operations Booster Stabilization Fund" with an initial balance of \$26 million. Seventy percent (70%) of the Operations Booster Stabilization Fund was to be used over the next eight years to "boost" the NPS budget during the period of time that we are working to fully fund our pension system.

Unfortunately, the City Council did not support our plan for this Fund.

On November 16, 2023, I once again submitted a docket item to the City Council requesting authorization to use the Overlay Surplus to establish a Debt Service Stabilization Fund, again with an initial balance of \$26 million. It was again my intent to "boost" the annual NPS budgets each year while I serve as Mayor. However, we were not able to garner the two-thirds support from the City Council to establish that Fund.

I have been working closely with Superintendent Anna Nolin and the Newton School Committee to supplement a 3.5% increase in next year's NPS FY2025 Budget with the use of one-time funding from the Overlay Surplus. These additional Overlay Surplus funds will support ongoing NPS operations in a way that will not result in fiscal hardship when these unusual, one-time funds are used up.

More specifically, I have given my commitment to using 70% of the \$26 million in Overlay Surplus plus associated interest income to augment the NPS operating budget to address pressing needs as prioritized by the Superintendent and the School Committee. I look forward to working with the City Council during the review of the FY2025 Operating Budget to secure this funding.

This Year's FY2024 Available Free Cash

Three months ago, on September 25, 2023, the State Department of Revenue notified the City that we would have a Free Cash amount of \$27,912,423 for use in FY2024, deriving again primarily from FY2023 Revenues Received in Excess of Budget, FY2023 Municipal Department Unexpended Appropriations, and Unappropriated Free Cash from FY2022. These are also *one-time* funds.

This is the second year in a row that the City has received significantly more Free Cash than usual. There are two specific and unusual reasons for the FY2024 higher than typical amount of Free Cash. First, we held \$5.4 million from last year's Free Cash for potential liabilities and settlements that we may be facing; the \$5.4 million rolled over into this year's Free Cash. Second, interest rates have risen dramatically in the past twenty months. Consequently, our actual interest earned from investments in FY2023 was \$8.4 million more than we had budgeted; this entire amount dropped into this year's Free Cash. More specifically, when we were crafting the FY2023 Budget in March 2022, the Federal Funds Rate was 0.25% to 0.50%, which was the interest rate income that we built into our Budget. By the end of our fiscal year in June 2023, the Federal Funds Rate had dramatically increased to 5.25%.

To date, December 26, 2023, we have made only a few appropriations from this year's Free Cash, totaling approximately \$3.5 million. Of this, NPS is once again the beneficiary of the largest amount of our appropriations. The City Council has recently approved (December 18, 2023) our request of \$2.4 million of funding for the replacement of the Newton North Synthetic Turf Field and Track.

Each year the City depends on approximately \$12 million of Free Cash to supplement next year's budget, as a reserve for above average costs of snow/ice removal and cleanup from inclement weather, and to cover overtime costs, legal settlements, and contingencies. While I will continue to hold funds for these potential needs, I believe it is good for our community to put the excess Free Cash to work for us now for important capital infrastructure and curriculum improvements.

For the last few budget cycles, we have heard from residents, parents & caregivers, NPS staff, the School Committee, as well as City Councilors, about the many facility maintenance needs at NPS. Through our discussions this past fall regarding the Overlay Surplus and the need for additional operational funds for NPS, we again heard clearly from many Councilors the need to devote one-time monies to NPS to address their facility maintenance needs. Following those conversations, we asked the NPS Administration to develop a list of their highest priority uses for one-time funding and they created this list of \$6.2 million in projects in addition to the \$2.4 million to replace the turf at the stadium and track at Newton North High School – for a total of \$8.6 million in Free Cash for NPS needs. The School Committee was recently briefed on the package with members expressing support for making these investments right now.

On the municipal side, we continue to need to use Free Cash to support our complete streets paving investments and we have two pressing infrastructure needs for Police Headquarters and Fire Station 2.

Therefore, I respectfully submit a docket item to your Honorable Council requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of twelve million four hundred thousand dollars (\$12,400,000) from June 30, 2023 Certified Free Cash to be split equally (\$6,200,000 each) between the Newton Public Schools and several municipal departments for the purpose of funding the following capital infrastructure and curriculum investments.

Newton Public Schools - \$6,200,000

A. Newton North Pool Air-Handling Unit	\$ 425,000
B. Replace Entire Roof System – Peirce Elementary	\$1,200,000
C. Replace Entire Roof System – Mason Rice Elementary	\$1,100,000
D. Repave Parking Area – Brown Middle School	\$ 300,000
E. Curriculum Materials	\$ 925,000
F. Replace Chiller – Newton South, Building H	\$ 350,000
G. Repair Auditorium Ceiling, Playground Improvements and Toilet Room Installation – Williams Elementary	\$ 325,000

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| H. Install New PA Systems – Bigelow & Brown Middle Schools | \$ 300,000 |
| I. Toilet Room Upgrades – Day Middle, Mason Rice, Bowen,
Memorial Spaulding, and Peirce Elementary Schools | \$1,275,000 |

City of Newton Municipal Infrastructure - \$6,200,000

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| A. Paving, Road Improvements & Traffic Calming | \$5,250,000 |
| B. Police Headquarters – Repave Parking Lot & Install Fencing | \$ 600,000 |
| C. Fire Station 2 – Heat Pumps to improve staff area HVAC | \$ 350,000 |

Support of this docket request will help address even more facility and program needs in our schools. This additional financial support comes on the heels of my commitment of nearly \$275 million of investments in our school facilities, programs, and operations above and beyond the annual budget over the last four years.

With my commitment of Overlay Surplus, Free Cash and a 3.5% increase in the NPS FY2025 Budget, Superintendent Nolin is making a set of recommendations to the School Committee for uses of these funds – including reaching a fair and sustainable settlement contract with our educators and addressing some of the most acute needs of our school system and our 11,000 plus students.

I know how much the City Council supports our students and the Newton Public Schools, as well as the Department of Public Works' Transportation Network Improvement Plan, and improvements to Police and Fire facilities.

As Mayor, I believe that these infrastructure and curriculum investments are critical to the Newton community.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller

To: City Council Finance Team
 From: Anna Nolin, Superintendent of Schools
 Re: Curriculum/Teaching and Learning Expenses
 Date: January 8, 2024

We are grateful to Mayor Fuller for the opportunity to address long-standing needs within the NPS facilities and teaching and learning departments with the proposed dispersal of free cash monies.

Thank you, Finance Committee, for the opportunity to talk about the types of needs within the district for which we propose use of \$925,000 of these funds.

In the district, there has never been a formal curriculum audit for any curriculum area. The following [DRAFT audit cycle](#) for all subject areas will be enacted moving forward. The document also describes the various curriculum departments across which these funds will be split.

This audit cycle may be shifted (datewise) to align with monies available from state, federal and private grants or other developments in state curriculum expectations. For example, new state testing in science MCAS may dramatically shift the needs of the district and we would be wise to learn more about this before deploying certain changes and monies. The public will be notified of any changes. Most acutely needed are audits in the areas of Math, Science and Technology (STEM).

The monies made available to us through free cash will be used for the following types of expenses (revision subject to state dictates and the findings of our audits):

Address the Lack of State of the Art Tools for Teaching and Learning

Entry planning assessment of the district indicates many areas of need within the area of curriculum, instruction and assessment. The district does not utilize or possess many of the personalized, adaptive and data-informed tools for use in the daily classroom life of teaching and learning used in most other states and MA towns and cities. The district must undertake the audit process in all subject areas to review K-12 vertical internal alignment, alignment with state expectations, and for curriculum leaders to review the state of the art resources available to them to determine match for our district needs. When asked about updating materials and curriculum at a recent curriculum council meeting, a leader indicated that she “didn’t even know where to look or how to think about new ideas and tools,” since she had been told for so long that she could not and should focus on anything but what she should cut out of her department’s needs.”

Address Lack of Base Resources to Allow for K12 Vertical Alignment Across Schools

Currently, the Newton Public Schools is a system of schools, not a school system. A school system has aligned and coordinated curriculum, assessment and instructional resources upon which the district rests its program. In NPS currently, wide variance exists between schools serving the same grade levels. From a bank of core resources, the district should select key assessments by which it judges whether the district is meeting its teaching and support obligations. Currently, this level of coordination does not exist. Both high schools teach different sequences of courses, using different common assessments to determine mastery (as an example), yet grants the same diploma upon graduation. If we are to be a unified system, we need to align and enhance school practices and their current systems.

The district lacks core curriculum kits and texts. While no textbook or curriculum kit is the sum total of curriculum or instructional needs, use of such resources would create a base to Newton curriculum, from which local adaptations could grow, if needed. Currently, individual teachers are expected to grow their own materials and curriculum leading to deep variance in grade level and subject area curriculum. This puts extreme stress on teachers to be experts in assessment design, curriculum design, as well as pedagogical approach (in addition to mental health and social emotional learning support) and creates wide variance in expected outcomes. A recent audit of North High curriculum materials finds that only \$60,000 is spent on all teaching and learning materials for all subject areas, courses and materials for academic areas. Approximately only 6 science courses have textbooks and no other class does. English classes have novels purchased for their courses. This level of support is woefully insufficient to meet the varied demands of the average classroom today.

One example might illuminate needs in Newton relative to curriculum resources that are provided as par for the course in other Metrowest districts: materials exist now that allow social studies and science teachers to use supportive texts that allow staff to slide a lever within a digital textbook that delivers over 10 lexiles (reading levels) within one article topic and are responsive to one set of science or social studies standards. These types of differentiated materials are nonexistent in Newton, and, if they ever existed—it was due to pandemic teaching conditions and have again been cut due to budget constraints. These monies would allow us to expand the level of differentiation for student performance variance.

Massachusetts Tiered System of Support Implementation (MTSS) and The Professional development to meet the demands of the new state expectations in science and social studies assessments and to support our district's revamp of literacy curriculum implementation.

In recent years, the state has revised its implementation of science and social studies curriculum. Changes to MCAS assessments in science and social studies are in the offing. Indeed Newton schools were mandated by the state to participate in the new science and social studies MCAS tests but are not yet aligned to 2017 and 2020 changes in state standards in the respective subject areas. The outcome of the state work will result in revisions to STEM and social studies assessments and we would use the funding to address these changing

needs—purchasing curriculum materials and assessment development tools and funding the writing of curriculum training sessions to educate teachers on how to write and execute assessments to align with these new assessment expectations.

Since there are few (almost no) common assessments among teachers in NPS PK-22 and benchmark assessments are used only in K-8 literacy, tools to assist in writing common, reliable and scientifically sound curriculum and benchmark assessments should be purchased. In particular, there is no systematic assessment plan to determine the quality and rigor of writing skills PK-22. The monies can be used for training and implementation of sound and district aligned assessments (aligned across schools). Without these tools, the district will not be able to systemically move forward and guarantee student progress and identification of students in need of intervention. Depending on the results of such assessments, professional development and intervention design will also need funding.

Data and Assessment Literacy for Teacher Teams

Aligned with the above expenses, staff need training in how to collect and interpret assessment data and design interventions for those students identified as not making progress on agreed upon common assessments and benchmark assessments. Currently, secondary staff have common planning time to do the interpretation and design/intervention work, but do not regularly do it. Elementary staff do not have reliable coordinated common planning time. The planning time issue will be addressed by monies promised to the district by the Mayor by way of augmenting her traditional 3.5% yearly allocation. However, the need for training and resources to operationalize the work of these staff will need to be funded by this one-time tranche of funding.

Ongoing and Systematic Training and Unit / Lesson Design

While much focus has been placed on the district's work on equity and addressing the needs of all learners, a systematic district approach to making this vision a reality has not been funded. The district needs to obtain training on unit and lesson design that allows for a personalized learning approach within classes. A wide range of learning needs exists within every classroom and staff need training to be able to: vary and level instructional design, create leveled groups within a classroom, and develop personalized interventions for key skill acquisition.

In summary, the categories of expenses for these monies will include:

- State of the art tools for teaching and learning, including benchmark skill assessments for math K-12
- Expenses related to curriculum audits in all subject areas
- Base curriculum resources for readings, writing prompts, and intervention/personalization tools.
- Training for staff to understand assessment design, data collection and intervention design based on assessment data
- Design of leveled and differentiated personalized learning lessons for all subject areas across the system

We are grateful for this opportunity to explain the types of experiences, training and material acquisitions that will be obtained with these additional funds. Indeed, the district's needs are immense and deep and \$925,000 will not cover the comprehensive needs of the system, but it will lend a start to the work ahead.



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Josh Morse, Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600
Facsimile (617) 796-1601
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

January 3, 2024

Honorable City Council,

As part of the \$11,475,000 free cash docket request from Mayor Fuller, the sum of \$300,000 has been requested to install new public announcing systems at the Bigelow and Brown Schools. The existing systems are both original and well beyond their useful life, and they do not provide adequate coverage for the two facilities.

The systems were designed in the 1950's and 1960's, at a time when school security was completely different. Mass communication and notification has not only become an important feature of any 21st century school, but these systems also play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the schools.

This project will improve the communications and functionality of the facilities.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner

January 2, 2024

To Mayor Fuller and the Newton City Council,

I am writing to request your help in improving the conditions in the parking area behind Charles E. Brown Middle School off of Littlefield Road. Currently, the conditions are very poor as the area lacks proper drainage. Faculty use this area for parking because we do not have sufficient parking spaces for Brown and Oak Hill faculty in the lot at Meadowbrook and Wheeler Roads. Faculty members' cars have been engulfed by large puddles when it rains hard with no outlet for the water.

Additionally, our students who arrive by van are dropped off and picked up daily in this area. The current conditions make it difficult for our van drivers to navigate, especially when the ground is wet. Some of our vans have gotten stuck in the mud while trying to turn around, causing delays for our transportation department.

Last year Josh Morse came to Brown MS to meet with 8th grade students who were interested in helping to improve the parking area behind the school as part of their action civics project. He answered their questions and they sent letters requesting support for improvements. I have included two of the letters below.

Our staff depends on this parking area daily, and the pavement is failing in a number of places. A project to address these needs would be very impactful and would provide a morale boost to the staff here at Brown. I earnestly seek your support.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Lysaght

Principal

Charles E. Brown Middle School

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

Kimberly Lysaght

Brown Middle School

125 Meadowbrook Road

Newton, MA 02459

Dear Principal Lysaght,

We hope that you are having a wonderful day. We would like to bring your attention to the issues occurring in the back end of the school. After taking a detailed tour of the back of the school, (specifically the parking area near the modular), and doing extensive research, including meeting with Josh Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings, we realize that there are some issues in the back that need to be fixed. Problems such as hazardous potholes, street and sidewalk cracks, and hazardous parking, are dangerous and need to be fixed immediately.

The parking lot in the back of the school is in poor condition and requires a complete repair. Addressing the back parking lot is essential because it causes dangerous conditions for faculty and students. Over the last 20 years, Brown has been getting more workers that drive to work. Many students get picked up and dropped off in the back, and just a few months ago a bus was completely stuck in the mud. Similar situations have happened to staff and their cars. This disrupts the flow of teaching and may cost money. Some faculty members resort to parking off of school property to prevent their vehicles from getting damaged. The lack of safe parking supports the idea that the back of the school needs to be fixed because the current situation isn't fair to the faculty because they should be able to park at their job without the worry of auto damage.

Secondly, cracks in the pavement and sidewalk make it unsafe for pedestrians. The back ramp and the sidewalks have dangerous cracks, making it hazardous for walkers. The risky conditions could result in people getting hurt while evacuating the building or walking to cars. These issues make the exterior of Brown an unsafe place that is prone to dangers.

In summary, the back of the school is dangerous for students and faculty and needs to be taken care of so that there are no new incidents.

Best,

London E, Ava A, Ella R, Nathan N, Owen G

8th graders in Mr. McGraw's B-Block, Brown Middle School

June 14, 2023
Kimberly Lysaght, Principal
Brown Middle School

Dear Ms.Lysaght,

The back parking lot needs to be fixed because there are many problems such as unclear parking spots and insufficient drainage. The many potholes out there that can make students and teachers trip and injure themselves. Cracks in the sidewalk could also trip someone who is walking out there resulting in even moving injuries.

The back parking lot is dangerous and does not meet the needs of its users. The school can't afford a lawsuit and does not want injured teachers. We want the back parking lot issues to be fixed so students and teachers can use that space for what they want.

Fixing the back parking lot is essential because most of the teachers and a lot of the students at Brown Middle School use this space and there are a lot of safety hazards out there that could injure people.

- *Students can be tripped by the potholes out there and get injured, and since there are so many potholes out there whenever somebody is walking out there they need to constantly be watching out for them.*
- *Teachers could also unexpectedly drive over it and pop a tire or damage their car, neither of these is something that people want to happen.*

The back parking lot needs to be fixed because these issues are safety hazards that could cause a student or a teacher to get injured or have their property damaged. These issues make it even harder to use the space out there because teachers don't let the students do things that could hurt them and being out there makes it easy for a student to get injured or worse.

A second reason why the back parking lot issues are essential to fix is that the grass and parking areas can't be used after it rains because the water stays there until it

evaporates since the water drainage system is insufficient. The source of this problem is the water drains and other drainage systems not draining the water after it rains. The grass out there stays wet and/or mudding for at least 3 days after it rains and the roads out there stay wet and slippery so people can't walk out there without slipping.

In conclusion, we want the back parking lot to be repaired or remade because it is a safety hazard to be out there and there are many things that could injure a student, damage their property, injure a teacher, or damage their property. All of these issues make teachers and students not be able to use that space for what they want. The potholes, insufficient drainage, and cracked road are all safety hazards and work is needed to fix these issues so that students and teachers can use this space again.

Sincerely,

Ethan Flaherty, JC Colella, Jesse Dash, Elliot Greiner

*Brown Middle School
125 Meadowbrook Road
Newton, MA 02459
Attention: Mr. McGraw*



Jacqueline Mann
Principal

Brendan Healy
Assistant Principal

Deborah Romeo, PhD
Assistant Principal

Michael Thurm
Assistant Principal for Student Services

Jennifer Murphy
Asst. Dept. Head for Student Services

January 4, 2024

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner
Public Buildings Department
City of Newton

Dear Josh,

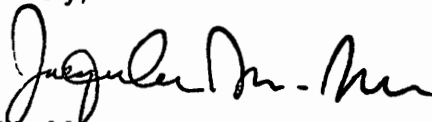
The restrooms at F.A. Day Middle school would benefit greatly from an investment in their upgrading. As you know, F.A. Day is not only utilized by over 150 staff members and over 870 students, but is consistently used by community organizations ranging from Newton Community Education, various community sports organizations, SPACE Camp and the Newton Chinese School with an enrollment of close to 1,000 families.

The high frequency and volume of community and school use of these spaces has led to a significant need for repair and upgrade that has been requested by not only our Student and Teacher Advisory Councils at Day, but our Day PTO and parent community.

I completely support funding of any project that involves the upgrade of our restroom facilities at F.A. Day Middle School, and know that all stakeholders in our community would be thrilled if this project is approved.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Jackie Mann
Principal
F.A. Day Middle School



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Josh Morse, Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600
Facsimile (617) 796-1601
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

January 3, 2024

Honorable City Council,

As part of the \$11,475,000 free cash appropriation request submitted by Mayor Fuller, \$1,100,000 has been included to replace the roof at the Mason Rice Elementary School.

The existing roof was installed in 1987. This means that it is now well past the end of its useful life. Our maintenance records indicate that the frequency of roof leaks and subsequent repairs has increased significantly over the last few years. As the rubber membrane ages it loses its elasticity, which makes it more prone to cracking and more difficult to repair.

Roof leaks are detrimental to the facility and systems below but are also distracting to the staff and students. This project will improve the teaching and learning environment.

The roof replacement will also make the Mason Rice School a viable location for the installation of rooftop photovoltaic solar panels.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner



MASON-RICE SCHOOL
149 Pleasant Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02459



January 1, 2024

Dear Newton City Council,

There have been many roof leaks at Mason-Rice School recently, so the roof replacement project will be extremely helpful in maintaining an appropriate and welcoming teaching and learning environment. The project to replace the roof here at Mason-Rice is something that I strongly support, and I know it will be a welcomed project by our staff and parent community.

The restrooms at Mason Rice are also in need of improvements. While our custodial team does their very best, the demands that an elementary school places on restrooms are great, and these spaces are definitely in need of investments. The staff, students, and parent community here at Mason Rice have all expressed a strong desire to see a project like this completed and I share this sentiment.

Sincerely,

Jake Bultema
Principal
bultemaj@newton.k12.ma.us

617-559-9570
(fax) 617-552-7315



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Josh Morse, Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600
Facsimile (617) 796-1601
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

January 3, 2024

Honorable City Council,

As part of the \$11,475,000 free cash appropriation request submitted by Mayor Fuller, \$350,000 has been included to replace the chiller that serves "H" Building at Newton South High School.

The existing chiller was installed in 2002 and failed last year, which fell within the life expectancy range for this type of equipment. To get us through the summer of 2023, a temporary portable chiller was rented and the rental cost to Newton Public Schools is roughly \$82,000 per year.

This project will improve the temperature control for the staff and students at Newton South High School, it will improve the energy efficiency of the cooling system, and it will reduce the annual costs incurred by Newton Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Josh Morse, Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600
Facsimile (617) 796-1601
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

January 3, 2024

Honorable City Council,

As part of the \$11,475,000 free cash appropriation request submitted by Mayor Fuller, \$1,200,000 has been included to replace the roof at the Peirce Elementary School.

The existing roof was installed in 2003. This means that it is now at the end of its useful life. Our maintenance records indicate that the frequency of roof leaks and subsequent repairs has increased significantly over the last few years. As the rubber membrane ages it loses its elasticity, which makes it more prone to cracking and more difficult to repair.

Roof leaks are detrimental to the facility and systems below but are also distracting to the staff and students. This project will improve the teaching and learning environment.

The roof replacement will also make the Peirce School a viable location for the installation of rooftop photovoltaic solar panels.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Josh Morse, Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600
Facsimile (617) 796-1601
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

January 3, 2024

Honorable City Council,

As part of the \$11,475,000 free cash docket request from Mayor Fuller, the sum of \$425,000 has been requested to replace the Newton North High School pool air handling unit.

This unit was installed 14 years ago, is approaching its end of useful life, and has required fairly significant repairs and parts replacements over the last year.

Unlike the rooftop air handling units found on many of our buildings, pool air handling units are exposed to chloramines which is a product of evaporation of chlorinated pool water. Chloramines cause corrosion of metal surfaces which in turn reduces the life expectancy of pool air handling units.

This project will replace the existing pool air handling unit which will improve the air quality in the pool facility. Furthermore, this project will improve the user and spectator experience.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Josh Morse, Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600
Facsimile (617) 796-1601
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

January 3, 2024

Honorable City Council,

As part of the \$11,475,000 free cash docket request from Mayor Fuller, the sum of \$1,275,000 has been requested to upgrade various restrooms at Day, Mason Rice, Bowen, Memorial Spaulding, and Peirce.

The restrooms at these schools have not had upgrades to the finishes, partitions, and fixtures in a long time. The deteriorating conditions make it difficult for the custodial team to keep these spaces as clean and presentable as they would like them to be.

Improvements to these restrooms are a high priority at these schools for the principals, staff, students, PTO's, and many of the parents.

This project will replace restroom stall partitions, install new epoxy floor systems, replace restroom fixtures, and paint the walls. This project will have a profound impact on some of the most heavily used spaces in our schools.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner

Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture Department
246 Dudley Road, Newton, MA 02459
Office: (617) 796-1500
parks@newtonma.gov
Nicole Banks, Commissioner



1/3/2024

Dear Honorable City Council,

I have managed indoor and outdoor swimming pools for over 20 years and have held the certified pool operator (CPO) credential for the majority of this time. Though outdoor pools have their own challenges, indoor pools are particularly complex. When chlorine bonds with contaminants in the pool, chloramines are produced. Unlike in an outdoor pool where chloramines dissipate in little time in direct sunlight, they must be removed from indoor swimming facilities by an air handling unit. The current system is at end of life and is not performing its task; we have received reports of discomfort from swimmers and spectators who utilize the pool. I have managed a similar project previously and can attest to the vastly improved conditions following replacement of an air handling unit in a swim facility.

I respectfully recommend that the City Council approve the requested funds for this needed equipment replacement.

Sincerely,

Nicole Banks, Commissioner
Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture
246 Dudley Rd.
Newton, MA 02459
617-796-1500
www.newtonma.gov/parks

To:

Josh Morse

From:

Tony Byers, Principal Williams Elementary School
Maura Tynes, Director of Special Education, Prek-5th

Newton Public Schools, and Williams School, prides itself on being a welcoming and inclusive school which fosters a sense of belonging for everyone. In order to foster that sense of belonging there are certain and critical components of the school environment which will help us become the school community we strive to be.

The auditorium is a critical space here at Williams. School gatherings, concerts, music classes, enrichment presentations and many other events occur in this space. Several years ago the auditorium roof was replaced, but the previous roof leaks caused damage to the acoustical ceiling. This project will replace the broken, stained, and missing ceiling tiles to make this space presentable and welcoming.

Accessibility at Williams Elementary School is important to allow all students to participate fully in the life of the school. Recess is a critical time for joy, fun and relationship building amongst students. Williams is home to the Reflections program for students with extensive support needs. Right now, students in the Reflections program, and a number of other students with disabilities, cannot join their peers in play because the playground is not designed for students with disabilities. There are few, if any, activities they can engage in at recess. Williams school requires substantial work on its playground to ensure that students with disabilities have the same level of access to recess as their peers and can play with their friends.

Additionally, and with accessibility in mind, Williams needs another accessible restroom for the high number of students who use an adapted bathroom. This project will fund these critical accessibility needs and allow all Newton students to participate in their school community for their elementary school careers.

We support these requests to help make the facility here at Williams as welcoming and wonderful as our staff are. We are proud of our students and want them to feel and experience Williams as a school where they belong and thrive every day.



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Josh Morse, Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600
Facsimile (617) 796-1601
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

January 3, 2024

Honorable City Council,

As part of the \$11,475,000 free cash docket request from Mayor Fuller, the sum of \$350,000 has been requested to replace the ceiling in the auditorium, construct an accessible restroom, and improve the playground at the Williams School.

The auditorium ceiling was damaged as a result of several roof leaks which occurred a few years ago before the subsequent roof replacement. This project will remove the existing acoustical ceiling and replace it with a new suspended acoustical ceiling system.

The Williams School has seen a recent increase in the students that have mobility challenges. As such accessibility improvements at the Williams School have risen in priority. These funds will allow us to construct a new accessible restroom and make accessibility improvements and upgrades to the playground.

This project will improve the general conditions at the Williams School and will make the facility more welcoming and inclusive.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner

Project	Design	Construction	Contingency	Total
North High Air Handling Unit	\$ 40,375	\$ 363,375	\$ 21,250	\$ 425,000
Peirce Roof Replacement	\$ 114,000	\$ 1,026,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 1,200,000
Mason Rice Roof Replacement	\$ 104,950	\$ 944,550	\$ 50,500	\$ 1,100,000
Newton South Chiller Replacement	\$ 33,250	\$ 299,250	\$ 17,500	\$ 350,000
Williams Auditorium Ceiling, Restroom, and Playground Improvements	\$ 33,250	\$ 299,250	\$ 17,500	\$ 350,000
Bigelow and Brown PA System Upgrades	\$ 28,500	\$ 256,500	\$ 15,000	\$ 300,000
Restroom Upgrades at Day, Mason Rice, Bowen, Memorial Spaulding, and Peirce	\$ 121,125	\$ 1,090,125	\$ 63,750	\$ 1,275,000
Grand Total	\$ 475,450	\$ 4,279,050	\$ 245,500	\$ 5,000,000



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Josh Morse, Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600
Facsimile (617) 796-1601
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

January 2, 2024

Honorable City Council,

As part of the \$11,475,000 free cash docket request from Mayor Fuller, I am submitting backup for the \$5,000,000 for the following projects in Newton Public Schools:

North High Air Handling Unit, \$425,000
Peirce Roof Replacement, \$1,200,000
Mason Rice Roof Replacement, \$1,100,000
Newton South Chiller Replacement, \$350,000
Williams Auditorium Ceiling, Restroom, and Playground Improvements, \$350,000
Bigelow and Brown PA System Upgrades, \$300,000
Restroom Upgrades at Day, Mason Rice, Bowen, Memorial Spaulding, and Peirce, \$1,275,000

This backup includes a total project budget as well as letters of support from myself and the school principals and other key staff.

These projects will all result in significant upgrades to the school facilities. The staff, students, and visitors will experience direct and tangible improvements as a result of these critical projects.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner



Bowen Elementary School

Josh Morse, Public Buildings Commissioner
Public Buildings Department
City of Newton

January 2, 2024

Dear Josh,

The restroom facilities at Bowen Elementary School would benefit greatly from this investment. These spaces are heavily used by hundreds of students, staff, and community members every day. Members of the Bowen community have also made requests to improve the Bowen restroom facilities. I support this important project. The Bowen community will be thrilled to with these improvements as well!

Yours truly,

Diana Guzzi

Dr. Diana Guzzi, Principal
guzzid@newton.k12.ma.us

Memorial-Spaulding School

250 Brookline Street, Newton, MA 02459 * 617-559-9600

Tom Morris, Principal * Cecile Budelmann, Special Education Team Chair * Kim Rutherford, Executive Assistant

January 2, 2024

Dear Josh Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings,

I am writing to advocate for restroom improvements at Memorial-Spaulding School. We currently have two restrooms on the lower level, adjacent to the cafeteria, that are not functional due to poor conditions and inaccessibility. Given that our 370 students have lunch in this area, it would be greatly beneficial to have working restrooms close by. Currently, students needing to use the restroom during the lunch period must walk through the building to the kindergarten hallway restrooms. This creates multiple issues, including difficulty allowing for adult supervision while away from the cafeteria.

Our entire school community would benefit greatly by the investment to reopen these restrooms. This will allow for easy access to nearby restrooms that are within visual distance of the school cafeteria - easily monitored by our adult lunch monitors. These restrooms will be heavily used during the lunch periods, as well as by our Early Morning and Extended Day Programs that also use the cafeteria space. Also, reopening these restroom spaces is something that our PTO and parent community frequently request.

I completely support this important project and the entire Memorial-Spaulding community will be thrilled to see these improvements.

Sincerely,



Tom Morris
Principal



John F. Carmichael
CHIEF OF POLICE

City of Newton *Police Department*

33-24



TELEPHONE
(617) 796-2101
FAX # (617) 796-3679

Office of the Chief of Police
HEADQUARTERS
1321 WASHINGTON STREET
NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02465

Date: January 2, 2024
To: Honorable City Council
From: Chief John Carmichael, Newton Police Department
Ref: NPD Headquarters – Rear Perimeter Security Fence

Honorable City Council,

Mayor Fuller has submitted a request for \$600,000 to repave the Police Headquarters parking lot and install new fencing around the parking lot perimeter.

Both projects have my full support, as they address longstanding safety and security needs that the entire police department welcomes. I have also communicated with the Judge Heffernan from the Newton District Court, and she is in full support of these projects as well.

The current parking lot is not functional for a first responder operations and is in poor condition. Localized puddling and flooding occur where the pavement has failed, which creates slip hazards throughout the winter months, and fall hazards throughout the year.

The parking lot is limited to Police personnel only. However, pedestrians and bicyclists often cut through the lot creating a safety risk. The fence project will secure the parking lot like the DPW and Parks and Recreation parking lots and yards. This is a site with many public safety vehicles coming and going, and as such it's important for the safety of the public that we provide better site access control. The pedestrian and bicycle pathways outside and around the Police Headquarters parking lot are more accessible, safer, and do not present any further distance to be traveled regardless of where the public is coming from or going to.

FIRST ACCREDITED CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS



I ask that you please consider and approve this request.

Respectfully,



Chief John Carmichael
Newton Police Department





CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS
PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Josh Morse, Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600
Facsimile (617) 796-1601
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

January 2, 2024

Honorable City Council,

As part of the \$11,475,000 free cash docket request from Mayor Fuller, a request of \$600,000 has been made to repave the parking lot and install new fencing at Police Headquarters.

Public Works will be presenting and discussing the \$350,000 portion of the request that will cover the cost of the paving.

The Public Buildings Department is requesting \$250,000 to install the new fencing, gates, and the electrical power needed to operate the gates. A budget breakdown and letter of support have been included in the backup.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner

1/2/2024

Police Headquarters Parking Lot Security

1 Perimeter Fencing	\$ 45,000
2 Automatic Gates	\$ 95,000
3 Electrical Power for Gates	\$ 77,500
4 Contingency	<u>\$ 32,500</u>
5 Total Project Budget	\$ 250,000



Project	Design	Construction	Contingency	Total
Fire Station #2 Heat Pumps	\$ 30,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 350,000
Grand Total	\$ 30,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 350,000



Gregory J. Gentile
Chief

1/2/2024

RE: Fire Station 2 HVAC

City Council

I am writing this letter to fully support the proposed HVAC project at Fire Station #2 located at 1750 Commonwealth Ave. The current heating system at Station 2 is 60 years old and has been difficult to maintain and keep in good working condition. This installation of electric heat pumps will be a great upgrade to the building.

Thank you for your time in considering this request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gregory J. Gentile". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "G" and a long, sweeping line extending to the right.

Gregory J. Gentile
Chief of Department

33-24



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS
PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Josh Morse, Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600
Facsimile (617) 796-1601
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

January 2, 2024

Honorable City Council,

As part of the \$11,475,000 free cash docket request from Mayor Fuller, a request of \$350,000 has been made to install heat pumps at Fire Station #2.

The existing gas-fired steam boiler is original to the 1964 firehouse and is becoming increasingly difficult to keep operational and reliable.

In an effort to decarbonize our public buildings, we are seeking approval of the funds needed to install new electric heat pumps to provide heating and cooling for the station.

The windows at Fire Station #2 were recently replaced and the heat pump project will be completed in conjunction with air sealing and weatherization upgrades.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner

Peirce Elementary School
170 Temple Street
West Newton, MA 02465
Ph: 617 559-9630
Fax: 617 552-7318



January 5, 2024

To the Newton City Council:

I understand from Public Buildings Commissioner, Joshua Morse, that funding for roof repairs and restroom upgrades are being sought for the Peirce School. Speaking on behalf of the entire Peirce community, as principal I wholeheartedly support these much-needed building projects.

We have experienced several roof leaks at Peirce in recent years, many of them disruptive to instruction. Last year, for example, I had to suddenly relocate a second grade classroom to the library for two days due to serious leaking and damage. In turn, library was taught via traveling cart. Books and other instructional supplies had to be replaced due to water damage. Even when such extreme measures are not needed, water on the ground, buckets in our hallways, and other obstructions are distracting and unsafe. The Peirce School roof replacement would solve these issues and help us uphold the high standards for learning and safety that we promise to our families.

The restrooms at Peirce would also benefit immensely from an upgrade. These are used by approximately 240 students and 80 staff members each day. To my knowledge, student bathrooms have not received many upgrades and probably appear much the same as they did when Peirce was built. They are old, challenging to clean, and far from ideal for students of varying needs. Our PTO, parents, and staff have expressed support for restroom upgrades for several years now.

I strongly support both funding requests, and I look forward to these much-needed improvements here at Peirce.

Sincerely,

Andrea Vargas, M.Ed
Principal, Peirce Elementary School

CITY OF NEWTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT

ORDERED:

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Finance Committee through its Chair Leonard Gentile authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of nine hundred twenty-five thousand (\$925,000) of June 30, 2023 Certified Free Cash for the purpose of funding curriculum materials for Newton Public Schools is hereby approved as follows:

FROM:	June 30, 2023 Certified Free Cash (0001-3240).....	\$925,000
TO:	Newton Public Schools Curriculum Materials (01C30108-542200)	\$925,000

Under Suspension of Rules
DRAFT

(SGD) CAROL MOORE
City Clerk

(SGD) RUTHANNE FULLER
Mayor

CITY OF NEWTONIN CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT

ORDERED:

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Finance Committee through its Chair Leonard Gentile authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of eleven million, four hundred seventy five thousand dollars (\$11,475,000) from June 30, 2023 Certified Free Cash Account # 0001-3240 for Newton Public Schools and Municipal Infrastructure is hereby approved as follows:

FROM:	June 30, 2023 Certified Free Cash (0001-3240).....	\$11,475,000
TO:	Newton North Pool – Air Handling Unit (01C11536-524070)	\$425,000
	Replace Entire Roof System – Peirce Elementary (01C11537-524070).....	\$1,200,000
	Replace Entire Roof System – Mason Rice Elementary (01C11538-524090).....	\$1,100,000
	Repave Parking Area – Brown Middle School (01C40131-553100).....	\$300,000
	Replace Chiller – Newton South, Building H (01C11539-524070).....	\$350,000
	Repair Auditorium Ceiling, Playground Improvements and Toilet Room Installation – Williams Elementary (01C11540-524070).....	\$325,000
	Install New PA Systems – Bigelow & Brown Middle Schools (01C11541-524070).....	\$300,000

Toilet Room Upgrades – Day Middle, Mason Rice, Bowen, Memorial
Spaulding, and Peirce Elementary Schools
(01C11542-524070).....\$1,275,000

Paving, Road Improvements & Traffic Calming
(01C40112-553100).....\$5,250,000

Police Headquarters – Repave Parking Lot & Install Fencing
(01C40132-553100).....\$600,000

Fire Station 2 – Heat Pumps to improve staff area HVAC
(01C11543-524070).....\$350,000

Under Suspension of Rules
DRAFT

(SGD) CAROL MOORE
City Clerk

(SGD) RUTHANNE FULLER
Mayor

CITY OF NEWTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT

ORDERED:

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Finance Committee through its Chair Leonard J Gentile authorization to accept and expend the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to the City of Newton in memory of former Councilor George Mansfield for the benefit of the work of the Newton City Council to be used as the Council Leadership and the Clerk of the Council is hereby approved.

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Approved
DRAFT

(SGD) CAROL MOORE
City Clerk

(SGD) RUTHANNE FULLER
Mayor