



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Humphrey, Oliver, Micley, Malakie, Lobovits, Baker, and Farrell

Also Present: Councilor Downs

City Staff: John Doyle, Election Supervisor; Anna Nolin, Newton Public Schools Superintendent; Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; and Jaclyn Norton, Committee Clerk

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link: [Programs & Services Committee - January 17, 2024 - YouTube](#)

#58-24 Discussion concerning Programs & Services Committee workplan for the new term

COUNCILORS KRINTZMAN AND HUMPHREY requesting a discussion with the Programs & Services Committee concerning the work plan of the Programs & Services Committee for the new 2024-2025 term.

Action: Programs & Services Voted No Action Necessary 8-0

Note: Committee members went around, and each spoke about what they would like the Committee to take up in this term. The following items were brought up: refinements to the tree ordinance, updates on compliance with the leaf-blower ordinance, recycling, artificial turf, making sure the City Clerk has adequate resources, revisions to the City Council Rules, creating either an ethics committee or ethics code for the City Council, conducting a broader review of the noise ordinance as it relates to pest deterrent devices, the vibration ordinance as it relates to jackhammers, examining the relationship between the City Council and the School Committee, reviewing the ordinance covering dog licenses and off-leash dog parks, and oversight of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

The Chair also asked Committee members if they would like to begin meeting hybrid. Committee members voted 7-0 on beginning to meet hybrid starting with the February 21st meeting.

Councilors voted 8-0 on a motion of No Action Necessary from Councilor Humphrey.

#75-24 Request to set Early Voting Hours for the March 5th Primary Election

THE CITY CLERK requesting to set early voting hours for the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary on the following dates, location, and times recommended by the Election Commission: A total of seven days; Saturday February 24th: 11am-5pm, Sunday February 25th: 11am-5pm, Monday February 26th: 8:30am-5pm, Tuesday February 27th: 8:30am-5pm, Wednesday February 28th: 8:30am-8pm, Thursday February 29th: 8:30am-5pm, Friday March 1st: 8:30am-5pm at Newton City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459.

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 8-0**

Note: John Doyle, Elections Supervisor, joined the Committee and described that for State elections the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office sets a framework for the early voting dates and times. The City can build upon these hours. Mr. Doyle noted that there is one weekday where the office will be open in the evening until 8 pm on Wednesday, February 28th. Early voting will take place in City Hall and will occur from Saturday, February 24th until Friday, March 1st. He also presented data on the percentage of voters in each election who have voted early in person in the attached presentation.

A Councilor asked if early voting could be expanded to other locations in the City. Mr. Doyle explained that he would need to get back to the Councilor regarding if that can be done. Councilors also asked if there have been any complaints with early voting hours previously and if the Clerk's office has sufficient staff for this election. The Clerk's office has received no complaints regarding early voting hours and Mr. Doyle noted that the Department utilizes poll workers to help manage the workload.

Councilors voted 8-0 on a motion to approve from Councilor Humphrey.

#48-24 **Resolution on avoiding PFAS in Newton purchasing**
 COUNCILORS DOWNS, LEARY, MALAKIE, LOBOVITS, FARRELL, KALIS, HUMPHREY, MICLEY, DANBERG, BIXBY, AND WRIGHT requesting a resolution urging the City to avoid the purchase or use of products containing PFAS.

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 8-0**

Note: Councilor Malakie presented as a docketing Councilor. She noted that the Council has had multiple discussions regarding PFAS in artificial turf and that it is also present in many other products. The primary areas of concern for the presence of PFAS are products that contain food in schools and other materials in schools and libraries. Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer, noted that the Public Buildings and Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments are working to source PFAS-free materials. Regarding the schools, the cleaning supplies currently have no PFAS, and the lunch trays are certified PFAS-free. A Councilor asked if there are any products in which a non-PFAS alternative exists. The only known products would be certain medical supplies and the resolution allows the City to purchase materials with PFAS if no alternative exists.

Councilors voted 8-0 on a motion to approve from Councilor Malakie.

Referred to Programs & 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: **Programs & Services Approved 8-0**

Note: Anna Nolin, Newton Public Schools Superintendent joined the Committee and described that her entry plan documented some needs in STEM areas. A memo provided in advance of the meeting outlines that these needs would focus on curriculum resources, professional development, and other teacher training opportunities. This would enable teachers to better support a wider array of students. A Councilor sought clarification if this request was the beginning of implementing the recommendations from Superintendent Nolan's entry plan. Councilors voted 8-0 on a motion to approve from Councilor Oliver.

#57-24 Reappointment of Jane Brown to the Human Rights Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing Jane Brown, 104 Atwood Avenue, Newtonville as a member of the Human Rights Commission for a term of office set to expire on January 1, 2027. (60 Days: 03/17/24)

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 8-0**

Note: The Chair noted that the current process for appointments and reappointments is that appointments usually come before the Committee to testify while reappointments are not required. Councilors noted that Committee members could be given advance notice of reappointments coming up and can let the Clerk know if they would like the individual to come to the meeting. A Councilor also proposed setting up regular check-ins with the various boards and commissions that the Committee oversees. Councilors seeing no reservation with the reappointment before them voted 8-0 on a motion to approve from Councilor Malakie.

The meeting adjourned at 8:11pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Josh Krintzman, Chair