



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

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

Also Present: Councilor Greenberg

City Staff: Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture; Carol Moore, City Clerk/Clerk of the Council; Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Director of Community Engagement and Inclusion; Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer; Perry Rosenfield, Manager Financial Planning & Analysis; Lisa Daya, Director of Historic Newton; Shubee Sikka, Urban Designer; 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 and Services Committee - February 21, 2024 - YouTube](#)

#95-24 Appointment of Daniel Green to the Newton Commonwealth Foundation
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Daniel Green, 46 Glen Avenue, Newton as a member of the Newton Commonwealth Foundation for a term of office set to expire on June 30, 2025. (60 Days: 04/05/2024)

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

Note: Daniel Green joined the Committee and noted that he has been a member of the Conservation Commission. This appointment would have him serve as the liaison from the Conservation Commission on the Newton Commonwealth Foundation. He described his interest in golf and his previous work on the Yarmouth golf course which is managed by the same company as the Commonwealth Golf Course. Councilors noted support for this appointment and voted 8-0 on a motion to approve from Councilor Baker.

#121-24 Request for Amendments to Council Rules and Ordinance Regarding Start Time of City Council Meetings

CITY CLERK requesting amendments to City Council Rules and Sec. 4-1 of the Newton Revised Ordinances to change "7:45 p.m." to "7:30 p.m."

Action: **Programs & Services Motion to Approve Failed 3-5 (Councilors Malakie, Micley, Lobovits, Baker, and Farrell Opposing)**

Note: The Chair noted that the Council discussed changing the start time of the City Council meetings and agreed upon 7:30 pm as a compromise between the options of 7:00 pm

and 7:45 pm that were presented at the Chair's meeting. Carol Moore, City Clerk/Clerk of the Council, described that a draft order was provided in advance of the meeting as backup material and outlined how notification of the time change would be communicated with the public. Multiple Councilors noted how they preferred the later start time due to family and work obligations. A Councilor asked why the Council meetings were scheduled for 7:45 while the Committee meetings begin at 7:00 pm. A different Councilor noted that this was to allow for brief Committee meetings if necessary, before the Council meeting.

Committee members voted 4-4 (Councilors Malakie, Micley, Lobovits, and Baker Opposing) on a motion to approve from Councilor Oliver. The Committee immediately voted unanimously on a motion of reconsideration from Councilor Farrell. Councilors voted 3-5 (Councilors Malakie, Micley, Lobovits, Baker, and Farrell Opposing) on a subsequent motion to approve from Councilor Oliver.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#106-24 Request for creation of NPS Stabilization Fund

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to establish a NPS Educational Stabilization Fund.

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

Note: Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer, described that in August 2023 the Board of Assessors declared this money as overlay surplus. These extra funds were due to Eversource withdrawing a case they had against the City. In December 2023 the Mayor, Superintendent Nolin, and the School Committee President-Elect met to develop a plan for these funds. This would be a 5 year plan that in FY25 would add \$3.5 million to the school budget. Ms. Lemieux also noted that any interest accrued on these funds would go back into the account. The current Mayor will be able to allocate funds from this account in the School Department's budget through FY26 unless elected to another term.

A stabilization fund is being created for these funds to prevent them from automatically becoming part of the general fund at the end of each fiscal year. Funds from this account would be used for faculty, staff, initiatives, programs, services curriculum, and anything that relates to the administration of educational services by Newton Public Schools.

A Councilor asked if the allocation to Newton Public Schools from this fund would be handled during the budget process or as a separate item. Ms. Lemieux responded that these funds would be allocated completely within the budget process. Councilors also asked if the fund could exist with a zero balance and what the process is for dissolving the fund. The fund can exist with a zero balance and a two-thirds vote is needed for the creation, dissolving, or changing the purpose of a stabilization fund. A simple majority is needed to deposit or withdraw money from the stabilization fund.

Councilors voted 8-0 on a motion to approve item #106-24 from Councilor Lobovits. This was subsequently followed by a vote of 8-0 on a motion to approve item #107-23 from Councilor Malakie.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#107-24

NPS Educational Stabilization Fund Appropriation

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate from Overlay Surplus (\$18,200,000), interest income that has accumulated as part of the \$18.2 million Overlay Surplus (\$800,000) which can be allocated from Free Cash, and June 30, 2023 Certified Free Cash (\$3,000,000) to the NPS Educational Stabilization Fund, for a total of \$22 million.

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

Note: This item was discussed concurrently with item #106-24. A written report can be found with item #106-24.

#55-24

Requesting Update Regarding City Seal Redesign

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to provide the Programs & Services Committee with an update regarding the City Seal redesign.

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

Note: Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Director of Community Engagement and Inclusion, joined the Committee and noted that in April 2023 the City Council approved moving forward with a request for proposals (RFP). Three bids were submitted in response to the RFP and the selection committee decided on Sebastian Ellington with SEED. He has experience in designing a city seal for both Boston and Natick along with a focus on setting up a calendar of community meetings. A Councilor who serves on the working group noted that Mr. Ellington will conduct a respectful process and described that Natick just underwent a similar city seal redesign effort.

A couple of Councilors asked questions regarding the work that will be done before the first community meeting and if the creative brief is open to comments. Ms. Kerwin Derrick noted that Mr. Ellington is looking to receive community input before beginning work on a new design and that comments are welcome on the creative brief. Regarding the timeline for this endeavor, Ms. Kerwin Derrick added that they expect this to take 9-12 months but are more focused on this being a thoughtful process.

Committee members voted 8-0 on a motion to approve from Councilor Oliver.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Josh Krintzman, Chair