



## Newton City Council

### Committee of the Whole Report

**Thursday, March 7, 2024**

Present: Councilors Albright, Baker, Bixby, Block, Downs, Danberg, Farrell, Getz Greenberg, Grossman, Humphrey, Kalis, Kelley, Laredo, Lipof, Lobovits, Lucas, Malakie, Micley, Oliver, Ryan, and Wright

Absent: Councilors Gentile, Krintzman, and Leary

**Clerk's Note: The full Committee meeting can be viewed on the following link:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l41er7oUe3Y&list=PLqJiDbsvfNjXZLoFzQuKNrpdm-qzLS3IS>**

#### Referred to a Committee of the Whole

**#100-24**      **Mayoral Listening Session: Council Priorities for the 2024-2025 Term and FY2025 Budget**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL PRESIDENT LAREDO requesting a joint discussion with the Mayor and City Council Committee of the Whole including a brief overview of the City of Newton's finances and input by the City Councilors on priorities for the 2024-2025 Term and the FY2025 Budget.

**Action:**      **Committee of the Whole Voted No Action Necessary 21-0**

**Note:**      Mayor Ruthanne Fuller presented the attached presentation which outlines the process that the administration uses in developing the budget along with the key financial principals and guidelines facilitating these decisions. Regarding revenue sources for the City 83% of the City's revenue is from property taxed with other revenue sources resulting in the additional 17%. A breakdown of these sources can be seen in the attached presentation. Most revenue sources for the City are stable and predictable, growing at 2.5%. The Mayor also noted during the presentation that the administration to use one time funds to cover one time expenditures and use recurring revenue to cover recurring expenses. In providing a breakdown of expenditures the attached presentation shows that 54% is allocated to Newton Public Schools, 30% to municipal expenses, 5% to debt service, and 11% to pensions and retiree health insurance. The administration also outlined a number of pressure points that the City will be facing.

Councilors asked the following questions:

Q: How is the City looking at dealing with increased cost due to inflation in upcoming fiscal years?

A: Mayor Fuller noted that the City might need to look at increasing fees such as stormwater mitigation along with trash and recycling fees. Regarding trash and recycling fees it was added that composting can help reduce the fees an individual would incur.

Q: What has inflation does to the cost of road repairs and traffic calming measures?

A: The City has incurred about a 30% increase in the cost of performing these services and have used ARPA funding to increase the amount of work that can be done.

Q: What is the City's timeline on renovating/rebuilding the rest of the schools within the City?

A: Currently the City does not have any extra debt service to facilitate these projects and Mayor Fuller noted that another override would be needed to take on these projects in the next 10 years.

Q: Is the City looking at renovating the Police Station?

A: The City is currently looking at renovation and addition options to the Police Station, but these would also require an override.

Q: Will the City Clerk's Office have the part time position reinstated?

A: Mayor Fuller noted that this topic would need to be discussed with the City Clerk and City Council President. Council President stated that he is well aware of the needs of the City Clerk's Office and will be strongly advocating for the Department in the upcoming budget.

Q: What is the City doing to upkeep our fields?

A: The City has made significant investments in improving athletic fields across the City and will continue with this commitment.

Q: What is the City doing to promote resiliency?

A: Mayor Fuller urged the importance of team collaboration in promoting resiliency within the City rather than hiring a Chief Resilience Officer.

The Committee voted 21-0 on a motion of No Action Necessary from Councilor Oliver.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Marc Laredo, President**

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## **Mayoral Listening Session: Council Priorities for the 2024-2025 Term and FY2025 Budget**

**Allen House  
City of Newton**

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller  
07 March 2024

### **Setting Goals and Developing Budgets: The Process**

- Inclusive and Collaborative
  - Transparent and Accountable
  - Flexible and Responsive
  - Strategic and Reflective of Needs/Values
  - Responsive to Immediate and Long-Term Goals
  - Data-Driven and Sustainable
  - Episodic (April and October) and Continuous
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## Key Financial Principles and Guidelines

- Spend every dollar thoughtfully and effectively
- Keep both short-term needs and long-term goals top of mind
- Make sure the budget balances “now” and in the “future”
- Understand constraints of Prop 2 ½
- Be fair to our employees; keep them safe; give them the tools they need to be productive; make Newton a positive place to work
- Pay attention to “revenue growers” and “budget busters”
- Forecast revenues responsibly and stay committed to fully funding expenses
- Match recurring revenue with recurring expenses, and one-time revenues with one-time expenses
- Stay financially strong
- Prioritize, Prioritize, Prioritize

## Overarching Goals

Improving streets, sidewalks, mobility and public buildings & infrastructure

Ensuring academic excellence and educational equity

Making Newton more “All Age” friendly

Addressing climate change & sustaining our environment

Preserving neighborhoods, increasing affordable housing & diversifying housing options

Protecting woods & open spaces and caring for our parks & recreation spaces



Promoting vibrant, walkable, financially robust village centers and commercial corridors

Providing excellent city services efficiently and taking care of what we have

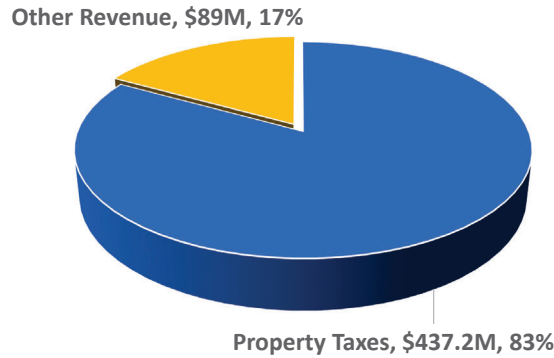
Fostering arts, culture & community life

Assuring the City’s financial health and spending wisely

Facilitating a healthy, accessible & supportive Newton

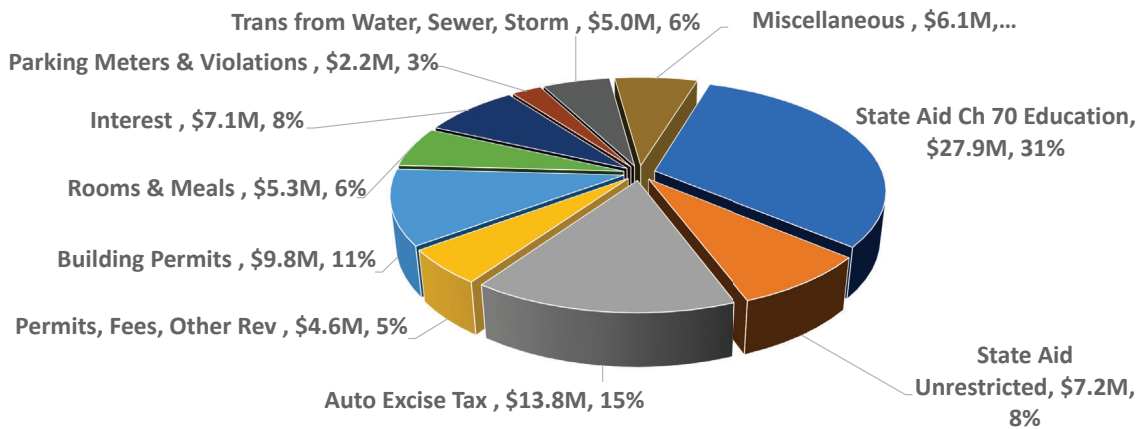
Keeping Newton Safe

## FY2025 – Total Revenue ≈ \$526 M



- Most revenues stable, predictable, growing at 2.5%

## FY2025 – Other Revenue ≈ \$89 M



- No/Low Growth : Excise, Ch 70, Parking Meters & Violations
- Variable Growth: Building Permits, Interest
- Building Permits critically important as a predictor of “New Growth”

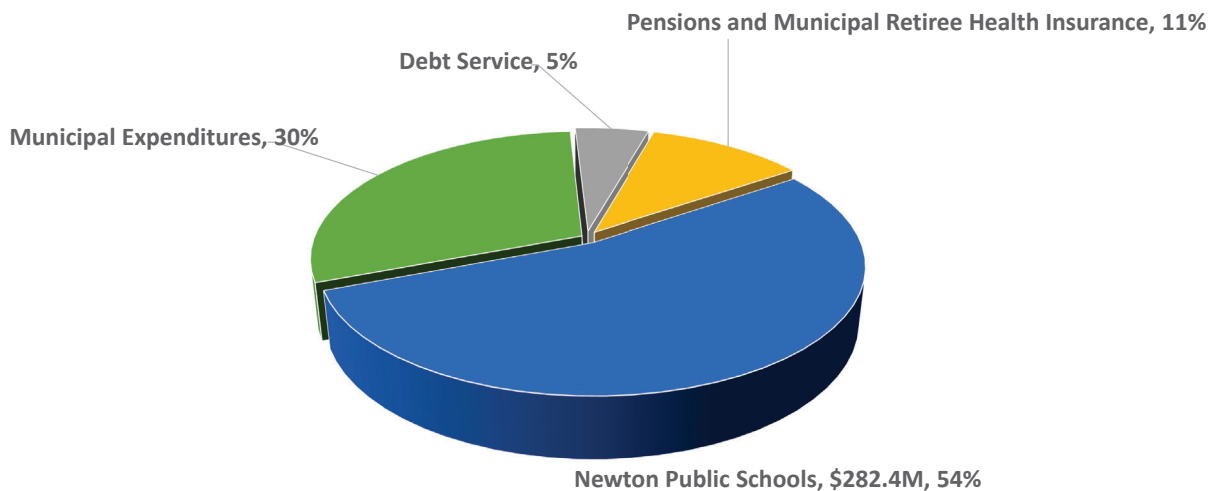
## Unusual Revenues

- ARPA: \$63.6M
- Free Cash
- Interest Income

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## FY2025 – Total Expenses ≈ \$526 M

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## Expenses: Pressure Points

- NPS
  - Capital Investments and Maintenance
  - Roads
  - Trash and Recycling
  - Fully Funding Expenses
  - Inflation
  - Stormwater
  - Union Contracts
  - Retiree Liabilities
  - ?
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## Summary

Stable, strong and sustainable  
FY2025 City of Newton Budget  
with few opportunities  
to  
add funding or FTEs

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**Let's listen to YOUR priorities**

