



# Public Facilities Committee Report

## City of Newton In City Council

**Wednesday, April 17, 2024**

Present: Councilors Albright (Chair), Getz, Laredo, Kalis, Kelley, Leary, Gentile, and Danberg

Also Present: Councilors Bixby, Humphrey, and Malakie

City Staff: Commissioner of Public Works James McGonagle, Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Shawna Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Manager of Financial Planning & Analysis Perry Rosenfield, and Senior Financial Analyst Connor Roach, and Finance Director of Public Works Coleman Flaherty

All Public Facilities agendas and reports, both past and present, can be found at the following link: <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/city-clerk/city-council/council-standing-committees/public-facilities-committee>

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link: [Public Facilities Committee- April 17, 2023](#)

### Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

**#187-24**      **Authorization to appropriate and expend \$1 million for the DPW Vehicle Replacement Program**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend a total of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) from June 30, 2023, Certified Free Cash as part of the Vehicle Replacement Plan for the purpose of replacing one 2008 and two 2007 6-wheel dump trucks with two 6-wheel dump trucks and one 10-wheel swap loader truck for the Streets Division operations.

**Action:**      **Public Facilities Approved 8-0**

**Note:**      James McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works, noted that this vehicle is part of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) replacement program. Mr. McGonagle noted the replacement for the vehicles is usually every 12 years, but the department is playing catch up after falling behind during COVID. The 6-wheel dump truck is used for snow removal, and 10 wheel swap loader is used for a variety of purposes, as the attachment on the loader can be changed. The funding for this comes from certified free cash.

A councilor asked what it would take for DPW to catch up and be in the standard replacement cycle timeline for vehicles, and if the replacement program is sufficient in maintaining an adequate fleet. Commissioner McGonagle noted it would take about two million dollars to be

back in line with the normal replacement plan, and he feels this is a good plan to maintain the fleet.

A Councilor asked if there is a replacement plan that DPW put together. Commissioner McGonagle noted that they have an official replacement plan that the department follows.

A councilor asked about when the vehicle would be delivered, and when the heavy equipment vehicles might be electrified. Commissioner McGonagle stated it would be delivered at the beginning of 2025, and there is progress being made in the development of electric heavy equipment vehicles. He noted that it will require class 3 fast chargers and highlighted they are working with Eversource for a grant for those fast chargers.

A councilor inquired if DPW trades in the vehicles during the purchase of new ones. Commissioner McGonagle stated they have switched from trading in to auctioning the vehicles off, as they get greater value using this method.

A Councilor inquired about the savings in terms of fuel from the switch to electric from gas vehicles. Commissioner McGonagle noted there would be a savings and it would vary among vehicles.

Councilor Leary motioned to approve, which passed unanimously.

### **Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees**

**#196-24 Authorization to appropriate and expend \$615,000 for hydro vacuum excavator trailer**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend a total of six hundred and fifteen thousand dollars (\$615,000) from Water Fund Surplus Acct# 6000-3599 three hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$315,000) and from Sewer Fund Surplus Acct # 6100-3599 for three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) for the purchase of a hydro vacuum excavator trailer to enhance digging safety measures.

**Action:** **Public Facilities Approved as Amended to truck 8-0**

**Note:** Commissioner McGonagle noted that this item is for a truck not a trailer, and this truck would vacuum dirt out of an area instead of using a backhoe or an excavator. The Department of Labor and Safety recommended this vehicle be added to their fleet. This will help reduce both trench cave ins and the chance for damage to surrounding infrastructure. It will be used by the Sewer and Water Division for excavations of water pipes, gate valves, and sewer lines.

A Councilor inquired if it takes less time that digging a trench, which Commissioner McGonagle noted that it would both take less time and would be more safe.

A Councilor asked if this could be used to help maintain and clean out stormwater infrastructure,

which Commissioner McGonagle stated that it could be.

Councilor Laredo motioned to approve as amended replacing trailer with truck, which passed unanimously.

**Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees**

**#199-24 Authorization to appropriate and expend \$500,000 for the water hydrant flushing program**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend a total of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) from the Water Fund Surplus -- Available for Appropriation, Account # 6000-3599 to Account # 60A40106-530203 Water Hydrant Inspections, Engineering Services to fund a water hydrant flushing program to ensure proper water circulation and water quality within the water main system.

**Action:** **Public Facilities approved 8-0**

**Note:** Commissioner McGonagle stated this is part of the annual flushing of water hydrants, and he anticipated the requested amount will be less in the future. This work will be an inspection of every fire hydrant with a detailed report on the work that needs to be done.

A councilor inquired if this work has previously been done, if the \$500,000 is funding the whole program, and what anticipated future cost would be Commissioner McGonagle stated this work has been done previously. He noted the Utilities Division has some of the largest job vacancies, resulting in the need to contract this work out. He stated \$500,000 is funding the program, and he anticipated that it would be around \$300,000, which they will look to include in the budget next year.

A councilor questioned how many hydrants are out of order and where the funding comes from for repairing hydrants. Commissioner McGonagle noted while he does not have the number in front of him, it is all recorded in the asset management software, and that the funding to repair them comes from the water budget.

A councilor asked if this would help with water quality issues on dead end roads, which Commissioner McGonagle noted it would.

Councilor Leary motioned to approve, which passed unanimously.

**Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees**

**#198-24 Authorization to expend grant and city funding for the Stormwater Asset Management Plan**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend the State's Revolving Fund Grant of one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to update the Stormwater Asset Management Plan, and to appropriate and expend

the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) from the Stormwater Management Operating Reserve - 2024 Budget to provide the City share of matching funds for this program. The grant also includes a twenty-five thousand dollar (\$25,000) additional match of in-kind services from city- staff.

**Action:** **Public Facilities Approved 8-0**

**Note:** Commissioner McGonagle stated this is to update the stormwater improvement plan, by identifying and prioritizing areas of improvement.

A Councilor inquired how the plan works. Commissioner McGonagle noted that there would be a mapping out of the hydraulic flow of water throughout the City, noting the areas most in need for improvement.

A Councilor asked if there is an existing list, which Commissioner McGonagle noted there is and this would update that listing.

Councilor Danberg motioned to approve, which passed unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Susan Albright, Chair**