



# Public Facilities Committee Budget 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

**Please Note:** Budget Materials can be found on the City's website at the following link:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/comptroller/budget>

### Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees

- #8-24**      **Submittal of the FY 2025 to FY 2029 Capital Improvement Plan**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the Fiscal Years 2025 to 2029 Capital Improvement Plan pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter.
- #194-24**    **Submittal of the FY25 – FY29 Supplemental Capital Improvement Plan**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY25 – FY29 Supplemental Capital Improvement Plan.
- #195-24**    **Submittal of the FY25 Municipal/School Operating Budget**

## **Department of Public Works**

**Note:** James McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works presented the budget for the Department of Public Works, including the utility division. He presented the attached PowerPoint. The PowerPoint discussed the following topics:

- Streets and Sidewalks
- Transportation
- Sustainable Materials Management
- Transportation Network Improvement Plan
- Engineering

- Fleet Management
- Customer Service
- Utilities-Water
- Utilities-Sewer
- Utilities-Stormwater

Commissioner McGonagle thanked his team for the work they have done for the City. He noted that there have been new additions to the team including a new Director of Finance and Administration, Coleman Flaherty and new Director of Transportation, Nedd Codd. They are also actively recruiting to fill the additional open positions. He noted the budget is a little over \$104,000,000 which is a 5% increase from last year.

A councilor asked if there were any employees added in the DPW budget this year. Commissioner McGonagle stated they don't have any additional employees, and that they are focused on filling the current vacancies. If the vacancies persist into next year they may have to look at contracting some of the service out.

A councilor inquired about the number of miles of roadway without sidewalk. Commissioner McGonagle noted currently there is roughly 450 miles of sidewalk, but he would have to get back to the Committee on the amount of roadway without a sidewalk.

A councilor questioned if the organic percentage that ends up in the trash is still around 30% since the Black Earth program and drop off locations have started. Commissioner McGonagle stated that he expects this percentage to decrease as the programs increase.

A councilor inquired about the timeline for the Union Street project to improve stormwater infrastructure. Commissioner McGonagle noted that the bid should go out this summer, with work beginning in the fall or early next year.

A councilor noted support for combining the RFP for wasted services with Brookline. It was questioned about how the reduction of Black Earth's cost could happen. Commissioner McGonagle noted he would get back to the committee on what level would trigger a reduction in cost.

A councilor asked about the status of a bicycle infrastructure plan, noting the importance of this plan to the City. Commissioner McGonagle noted that the plan is currently in the works with planning.

A councilor inquired about the budget for snow removal. Commissioner McGonagle noted that the annual snow removal cost is around 5.6 million dollars. Deputy Commissioner Sullivan noted that the snow removal budget increases each year so the actual cost is reflected in the budget. Previously free cash was used to make up the difference, but the Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux is trying to fully fund snow removal in the budget.

A councilor questioned the status of installing accessible ramps. Commissioner McGonagle noted that noncompliant ramps is in the 40% area highlighting they are still working on upgrading these ramps.

A councilor inquired how illegal stormwater hookups are identified. Commissioner McGonagle noted that the whole city is being mapped out via GIS, that inspectors are out and can identify it, and reports from the 311 system helps identify illegal hookups.

A councilor inquired how many linear miles of sidewalk were cleared last year. Commissioner McGonagle noted that they have maxed out around 85 miles which is what DPW staff can handle. They have put the work out to bid but did not receive any bids.

A councilor asked what percentage of water is lost each year and is unbillable considering the work that has been done to upgrade water infrastructure and relining. Commissioner McGonagle noted they have decreased the number from 40% to the mid 20's. A perfect system would be in the 10% range.

A councilor inquired if the number of organic drop-off locations would be increased. Commissioner McGonagle noted that drop-off locations will be increased in the future.

A councilor asked where the yard compost goes, and does the city pay for it. Commissioner McGonagle stated that it goes to a composting facility that the city does pay for.

A councilor asked how to report issues with the sidewalks. Commissioner McGonagle noted that it should be reported via 311, and the city's sidewalks are all mapped out.

A councilor asked for a list showing the prioritization for traffic calming projects, which Commissioner McGonagle noted that he would provide this to the committee.

Councilors thanked DPW for all the work they do for the City.

Councilors requested additional information in the future including the City's rational about the RFP contract with trash services with Brookline.

The Committee took a straw vote to accept the Department of Public Work's Budget of \$104,092,447, the supplemental CIP, and the CIP which passed unanimously.

In follow up to this meeting the following information was provided by the City Comptroller Steve Curley.

- Through March 31, 2024, the City has collected \$39,050.00 in White goods payments. I used March as not all receipts for April have been processed.
- Through March 31, 2024, the City has collected \$64,285.00 in Mattress pick up payments. Again, I used March as not all receipts for April have been processed.

In follow up to the meeting Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Shawn Sullivan supplied the following information in response to questions during the budget meeting.

1) Stormwater Infrastructure Improvement Plan(SWIIP) Executive Summary and Hot Spot List attached. For detailed information on the SWIIP click [here](#)

2) We currently have 3,086, there will be a price drop for all subscribers when we reach 5,000 subscribers.

3) Organics are approximately 30% of trash.

4) Unaccounted for water for the last five years: 2022 - 23.7%

2021 - 24.7%

2020 - 24.9%

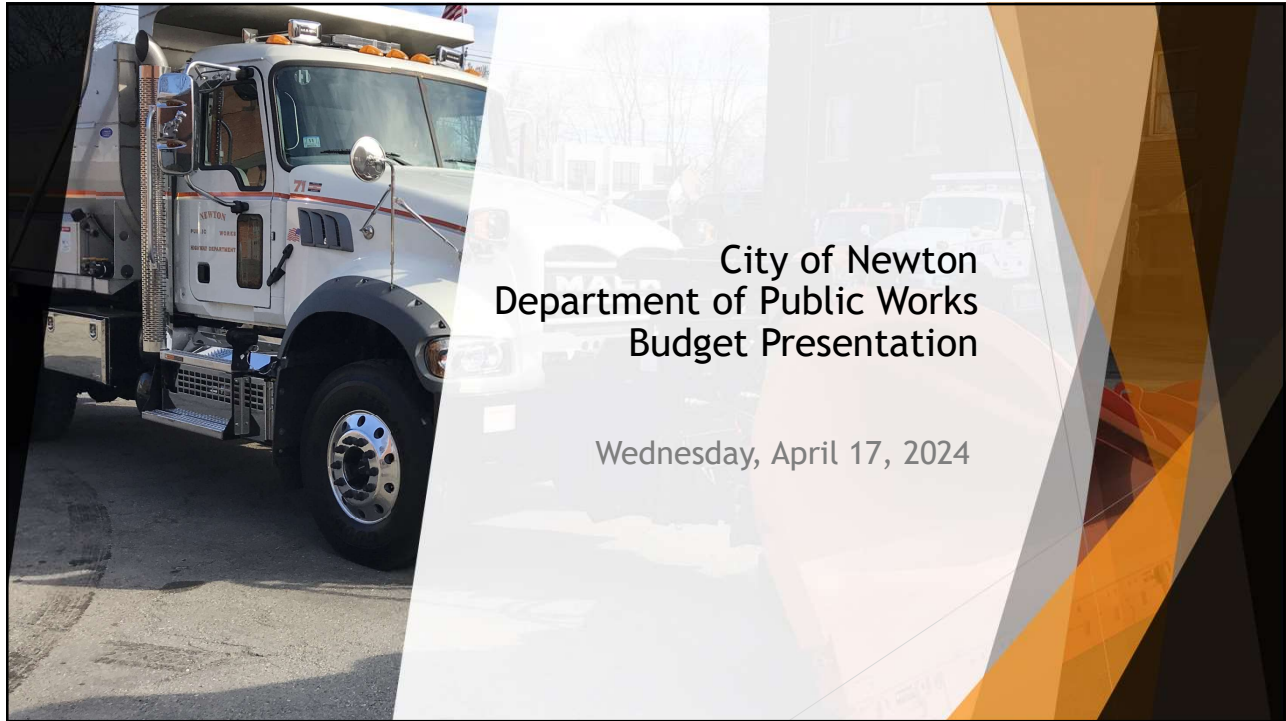
2019 - 28.2%

2018 - 26.7%

5) Traffic calming prioritization click [here](#)

**Respectfully submitted**

**Susan Albright, Chair**



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- ▶ James McGonagle, Commissioner
- ▶ Bernie McDonald, Director of Streets
- ▶ Waneta Trabert, Director of Sustainable Materials Management
- ▶ Travis Mosca, Director of Fleet
- ▶ Coleman Flaherty, Director of Finance and Administration
- ▶ Shawna Sullivan, Deputy Commissioner
- ▶ Tom Fitzgerald, Director of Utilities
- ▶ Ned Codd, Director of Transportation
- ▶ Lou Taverna, City Engineer

## Public Works Department's Team

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## Streets and Sidewalks

- ▶ Paved 13.4 miles of roadway
- ▶ Added/repared 879 feet of granite or asphalt curbing
- ▶ Improved/installed over 4 miles of concrete sidewalk and installed 1,830 linear feet of new granite curbing
- ▶ Improved/installed over 90 ADA ramps
- ▶ Met target of streets cleared within 8 hours of end of each storm
- ▶ Contracted concrete crushing for reuse
- ▶ Initiated an environmentally friendly asphalt recycling program
- ▶ Over 20,000 potholes patched
- ▶ Completed construction of several ADA intersection improvements



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## Transportation

- ▶ Completed major traffic calming projects on Lowell Avenue and Waltham Street
- ▶ Designed raised table intersection @ Brookline St/Hartman Rd and Waverley Ave and Franklin St
- ▶ Oversaw construction of sidewalk bump outs and pedestrian improvements on Langley Rd
- ▶ Installed Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at seventeen locations throughout the City.
- ▶ Added 1 mile of bike accommodations on Albemarle Road
- ▶ Coordinated with consultant to complete conceptual designs for the Newton Highlands Village Improvement Project



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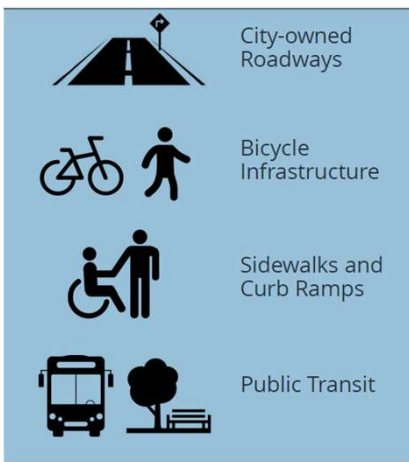
### Sustainable Materials Management

- ▶ Made 99.89% of solid waste pickups and 99.96% of recycling pickups on time
- ▶ Performed a curbside cart education program and added educational decal to 4,000 carts
- ▶ Maintained a 9% contamination rate in curbside recycling program
- ▶ Added three locations to drop-off food waste collection program and collected over 20 tons of food waste
- ▶ Increased subscriptions with curbside organic composting preferred vendor to over 3,000 households
- ▶ Ran 18 household hazardous waste collection events by appointment



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### Transportation Network Improvement Program Funding



\$9.5 million in FY 24 funding for:

- ▶ Paving & rehabilitation
- ▶ Pavement maintenance
- ▶ Sidewalks
- ▶ Pavement markings
- ▶ Traffic calming
- ▶ Intersection improvements
- ▶ Parking lots
- ▶ Engineering services

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## Engineering

- ▶ Completed construction of the Pearl Street Parking Lot
- ▶ Continued with design of the Bullough's Pond Dam rehabilitation project
- ▶ Managed the police parking lot pavement project and developed the design of parking lot improvements at Cypress St parking lot
- ▶ Monitored the construction of the Needham Street corridor improvements
- ▶ Completed design of Phase 2 of the Ward Street water main replacement project
- ▶ Continued to implement the NewGov application and permitting software
- ▶ Completed design of nine intersection improvement projects



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## Fleet Management



Grew electric and hybrid vehicle fleet to 68 vehicles city-wide



Increased preventative repairs and maintenance program



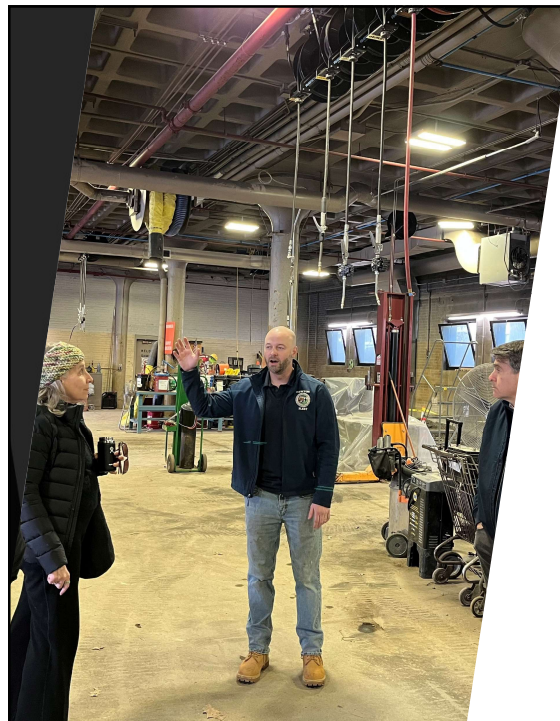
Using green diesel biofuel year-round



Continued refinement of the city's vehicle replacement program



Bid new refueling system for city vehicles and equipment



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## Customer Services

- ▶ Customer Service is currently working with a new software vendor, Information Technology and Parks, Recreation, & Culture to replace the City's 311 system to allow mobile requests
- ▶ Customer Service received 56,696 calls this year which is an increase of 5.6% over last year and was able to respond within 15 seconds
- ▶ 22,814 311 requests have been entered into 311 so far, this fiscal year.
- ▶ Customer Service continued providing enhanced customer service training to other front facing divisions




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## DPW - Water

- ▶ Installed 14,000 water meters and transponders
- ▶ Water meter customer portal available to customers
- ▶ Continued the water line replacement, lining, and cleaning project, replaced 5,230 linear feet of water main
- ▶ Installed 114 new water services and replaced 93 water services, repaired 138 water leaks
- ▶ Enhanced hydrant flushing program
- ▶ Completed rehabilitation of Waban Hill Covered Reservoir
- ▶ Maintaining compliance with revised EPA Lead and Copper Rule



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## DPW - Sewer

Continue with the Inflow and Infiltration Program

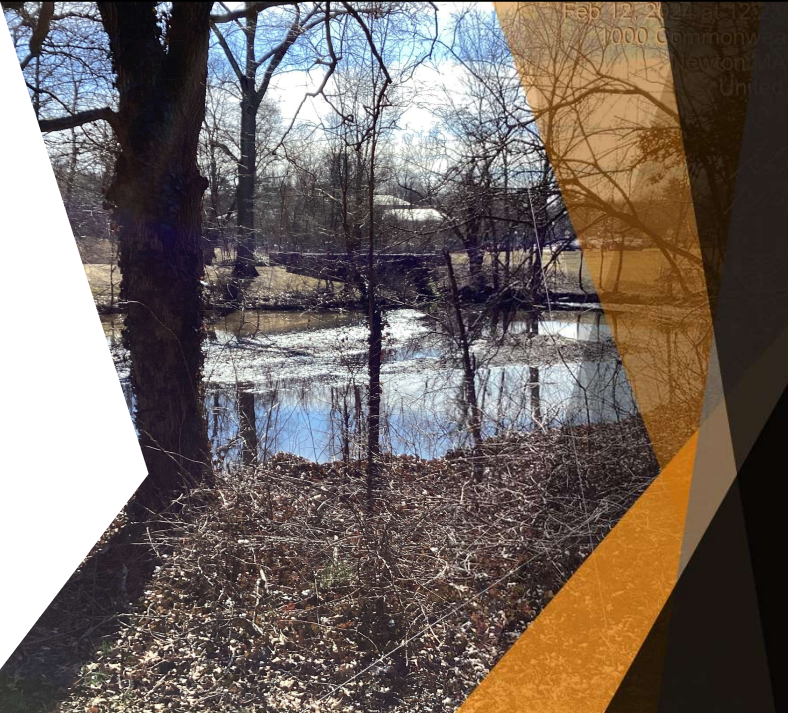
- ▶ Area 8 construction - Upper Falls, Highlands, Thompsonville, and Oak Hill completed 38 repairs, installed 127,354 linear feet of liner, 854 manhole rehabilitations
- ▶ Area 9 construction started in Waban, Upper Falls, and Oak Hill
- ▶ Area 10 design - Waban, Newton Highlands, Newton Centre and Newton Corner

Continue pump station rehabilitation

- ▶ Replacing heating and ventilation equipment in 11 pump stations
- ▶ Replace gate valves at 2 pump stations
- ▶ Replace the Oldham Road pump station

Continue with Sewer Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Program

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## DPW - Stormwater

- ▶ Dredging City Hall Ponds
- ▶ Continuing to monitor water quality conditions at Crystal Lake
- ▶ Evaluating Border Street drainage
- ▶ Began reprioritization of the Stormwater Infrastructure Improvement Plan
- ▶ Completed Phase 1 and continuing with Phase 2 of the Phosphorus Control Plan
- ▶ Cleaned 4,500 catch basins, cleaning to continue in the spring
- ▶ Repaired 93 manholes/catch basins

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