



# Programs & Services Committee Report

## BUDGET

### City of Newton

### In City Council

**Wednesday, April 20, 2016**

Present: Councilors Rice (Chair), Leary (Vice Chair), Auchincloss, Kalis, Hess-Mahan, Sangiolo, Schwartz and Baker

City Staff Present: Seth Bai (Veterans' Services Officer), Phil McNulty (Director, Newton Free Library), Jill Graboski (Assistant Director, Newton Free Library), Lisa Dady (Director, Historic Newton), Bob DeRubeis (Commissioner, Parks & Recreation), Carol Stapleton (Recreation Manager), Marc Welch (Director, Urban Forestry), Dori Zaleznik (Chief Administrative Officer), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

#### Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees

- #288-15(2)** **Submittal of the FY 2017 Municipal/School Operating Budget**  
HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter the FY17 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$378,969,244 passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY17-FY21 Capital Improvement Program (#288-15). [04/11/16 @ 11:31] **EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION 04/19/16; LAST DATE TO PASS THE BUDGET 06/03/16**

#### Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees

- #288-15** **Submittal of the FY17 Capital Improvement Plan**  
HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY 2017-FY 2021 Capital Improvement Plan pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter. [10/01/15 @ 1:53 PM]

#### Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees

- #288-15(3)** **Submittal of the FY 2017 – FY 2021 Supplemental Capital Improvement Plan**  
HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY 2017 – FY 2021 Supplemental Capital Improvement Plan. [04/11/16 @ 11:31 AM]

### BUDGET AND CIP DISCUSSIONS

#### **VETERANS' SERVICES**

The proposed FY17 budget for the Veterans' Services Department is \$380,177 which is a 3.8% increase over the FY16 budget. The slight change is due primarily to an increase of \$50K in the Veterans' Benefits account. Seth Bai, Veterans' Services Officer joined the Committee. He

explained that since a VSO had not been in a place for quite some time before he came on board, it was a priority to get benefits out to veterans and their families on a timely basis. It is his standard to respond to a need within 25 working days of first contact. They should either receive a letter that they are enrolled in VA health care or will be receiving state benefits for being a veteran. The Memorial Day parade planning is underway and he anticipates a successful event. The recently formed Veterans Center is robust with 81 new members in one calendar year. There will be more data a year from now, but of the 81 new clients, 10% have come into his office for benefits. A monthly breakfast will be held and there will also be another evening and afternoon offered in the summer months. The programs and speakers are engaging, word is getting out bringing in new clients and the veterans seem to be enjoying the Center very much.

He hopes to continue to increase the amount of veterans and their families that come in for benefits; the average is about 10 a year. Mr. Bai is working with Health and Human Services and the Youth Commission with the Veteran's Day ceremony, which was very helpful. He is also working hand-in-hand with the Library and Historic Commission on an oral history project for the veterans with stories from older veterans. He is also creating an internship program to assist in the history project and assist with updates in the office. Expanding spectatorship and involvement in the Memorial Day parade is something to work on and he is getting some assistance with that from the Parade Committee. The graves and burials are being funded as they should be.

#### **CIP**

Veterans' Services has no items in the CIP.

#### Committee Questions/Comments

It was asked how the breakfasts and programs are funded and Mr. Bai explained it comes out of the expenses line.

The Committee asked how Mr. Bai would define success in his outreach efforts. He explained that he likes to reach out into the community by attending events and visiting. For instance he attends programs at the hospice center and recently attended the Persian Gulf War 25-year reunion. He is working on a pamphlet to advertise for the Veterans' Center and does PSAs on NewTV. Dori Zaleznik, Chief Administrative Officer, noted that people may also indicate on the City Census that they are veterans and that puts them in a database for mailings from the Mayor for information.

It was asked how many clients he is serving but he said it's difficult to say exactly because there are difference categories of services provided. There are 600 registered at the Veterans' Center. A Councilor asked how many of the 600 were Operation Enduring Freedom (**OEF**) or Operation Iraqi Freedom (**OIF**) and Mr. Bai said there were 15, with 2 of them women. He checks in with them and usually don't see them that often unless there is a cost of living adjustment or some other logistical need.

A Councilor asked that Mr. Bai consider ways in which to educate the children in the community of the importance of veterans' service and to understand the history as well. Mr. Bai explained that there is a recently published book which targets 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades and the Mayor will be reading that in the schools. He is also doing an All American Day at the high schools starting next month which will provide a forum on these topics. Councilor Cote is also working on a program to acknowledge people before they leave for their service and follow their accomplishments while they are serving. It was also noted by a Committee member that many students might think that the military is something done if you can't get into a good college, which is not true. He would like to see more involvement in the middle schools in order to broaden those views.

Aide in attendance is the most requested service and need from the older veterans. There is also a high demand for assistance with transferring their Montgomery GI to their children or to use their VA Home Loan. He is able to get that process started within a day.

A Committee member wondered if students attending college in Newton are considered residents and eligible for benefits from the City. Mr. Bai said he gone to Boston College several times and has recruited guest speakers from there for the Veteran's Center. The relationship is strong and they come in more and more. The night students tend to be seen more often than the day students. Ms. Zaleznik said anyone is welcome to come to the Veteran's Center and it doesn't matter where someone lives.

Mr. Bai works with the social worker in Health and Human Services and there is coordination within the departments. He works with the Veteran's Administration as well and coordinates with the VA Hospital. It depends on the need.

The Memorial Day parade will be held on Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup> and the route has not changed.

#### Revolving Funds

There are no revolving funds.

Councilor Rice took a straw vote of the Committee to approve the Veterans' Services FY17 budget and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

#### **HISTORIC NEWTON**

The proposed FY17 budget for Historic Newton is \$283,519 which is a 7.2% increase over the FY16 budget. This change is attributed mostly to an increase in personnel benefits. Lisa Dady, Director of Historic Newton, joined the Committee and explained she has just completed her first full year with the City. The partnership between the City budgeted side of the organization and the non-profit side has worked remarkably well.

Ms. Dady said Newton History goes beyond the buildings of the museums. Walking tours are conducted on streets all over the City; an historic house program which makes homeowners

curators of the rich architectural heritage is successful; stewardship of the burying grounds makes them very visible in the community; experiential learning which includes concerts, Jazz in the Park, house tours, etc. keeps the community vital and includes everyone in a fun way.

Two full-time and two part-time staff are paid by the City budget. The rest of the positions are paid either in whole or in part by the Newton Historical Society. There are five paid part-time staff, hourly workers and volunteers who deliver programming. The staff is the greatest strength and will allow programming and visitation to be increased.

### **CIP**

The fire suppression, accessibility and archives project which has been nine years in the making will be completed by the end of the fiscal year. The archival storage systems will be coming in June and the archives will be back onsite in the summer in time for a ribbon-cutting.

Conservation work on the tombs and gravestones at the East Parish Burying Ground was put off last year in part because of the possibility of a grant to match CPA funds. That grant was received and the work has begun and should be done shortly. The CPA funds and matching grant funds will not be depleted on the East Parish work so they could move onto other projects as well.

The other two CIP items are in the 200s on the CIP list.

### Revolving Funds

Museum admissions are within the revolving funds.

### Committee Comments/Questions

When asked about attendance, Ms. Dady replied that between the Jackson Homestead, Durant Kendrick and off-site programs there have been about 6,700 visitors. The numbers do not include special events like concerts. They had to close the Jackson Homestead for about 9 weeks during the fire suppression project. The archives have been closed and hundreds more will come in to use those resources as well when they are open. People are calling from all over the country, scholars and amateur historians, so she expects wide use of the archives.

An American Revolution program will tie into 5<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum and other grades come as well. They have been piloting that program the last few months and the teachers do intensive interviews with them to help them improve the program. The students are also saying they are having fun and it is a goal to teach them multiple perspectives on the revolution. All schools within walking distance visit the museum every year. Ms. Dady is looking at ways to subsidize the costs of transporting students who are not within walking distance so that all may attend and take advantage of the resources.

It was asked what other partners the museum might be able to work with. Ms. Dady explained that they worked with the Water Works Museum and the Frederick Law Olmstead Historical Society and there will be future work with the Chinese Historical Society of New England soon. Ms. Dady

commented that marketing is the key to getting people involved in programming so having a partner can really be helpful with that as well. Newton Talks is interested in doing some oral history projects as well which would involve the Senior Center, Veteran's Services office and the Myrtle Baptist Church. A Councilor suggested the Newton Cultural Alliance as a possible partner.

It was asked how technology might help to connect with the community. Ms. Dady said memorabilia, pictures and histories can be posted online by using Digital Commonwealth. Boston does the high quality scan and put the metadata online for any interested parties. The expense of being part of Digital Commonwealth is not significant but it takes staff time.

Boston Summer Fun Program is a group which provides enrichment opportunities for at-risk children in Boston, Cambridge, Dorchester and some other communities. The program brings these students to other communities for programs and Newton is involved with that.

A Councilor asked if the museum was involved with the rehabilitation of the Nathaniel Allen House. Ms. Dady noted that the museum is storing the papers from the house and they could put some of that information online.

When asked what resources would best serve the museum, Ms. Dady said it would be wonderful to have a full-time archivist and a full-time museum assistant.

A Committee member asked if people looking to form historic districts were in touch with the museum and Ms. Dady said they were. The West Newton Hill organizing group came to her for guidance and they could be trained to do the appropriate research.

Councilor Rice took a straw vote of the Committee to approve Historic Newton's FY17 budget and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

### **NEWTON FREE LIBRARY**

The proposed FY17 budget for the Newton Free Library is \$5,726,495 which is a 6% increase over the FY16 budget. Phil McNulty, Director of the Newton Free Library addressed the Committee. The increase can be attributed primarily to scheduled step increases; the minimum wage increase; utility costs; and a \$20K addition to the collections budget. He provided a summary of his FY16 outcomes, FY17 goals and FY17 budget changes along with information on the proposed Library renovation and space goals. The Newton Free Library 2016 Report card was also provided and both of these documents are attached to this report.

### **CIP**

Please refer to the Library Renovation project page and Committee questions under Building Grant.

### Revolving Funds

One fund is made up of fees which come from leasing the four branch libraries and there is a line that represents the state library aid. Book fines are not in a revolving fund but instead go into the general fund.

### Committee Comments/Questions

#### *“Vacant” Positions*

There was some confusion with part-time positions and vacancies represented in the budget book. Mr. McNulty explained that the positions marked as vacant are actually filled positions. About 30 people are associated with those vacant positions. Several staff are employed part-time to make up each full-time equivalent. The turnover rate on some of those positions makes it difficult to keep up-to-date with names to put in the budget book. The Senior Library Assistant positions are in the same situation as well. Vacant is the term that has traditionally been used, although it is not an accurate description of what is happening in each of those positions. Committee members found this confusing and asked that the terminology change to more accurately represent the fact that there are people in those positions.

It was asked if the Personnel Detail of the budget could somehow be made clearer as to whether the budgeted money was spent on a position or if the position was empty. Dori Zaleznik, Chief Administrative Officer, said she would pass those requests on to Maureen Lemieux.

#### *3D Printing*

It was asked what kind of demand the Library is seeing for 3D printing, what the maintenance costs might be and why is this an appropriate and desirable option to have in Newton’s library. Mr. McNulty said Newton is not leading edge in this area and has taken a measured approach in order to see the level of response from the community. There are certainly less expensive ways to get a 3D object produced, so the focus is not on production but on the educational experience. This provides hands-on opportunities and the computer-driven aspect is the most creative side of this process. The room was packed with retired engineers at the first meeting on 3D printing so this is a great way to get to the older population who might be missing this experience through the schools. The library has the local expertise on staff. This is a workshop model that is geared towards giving an introduction and then people can take their interests further through continuing education or other means.

#### *E-books*

It was asked if many e-books are being purchased and utilized. Mr. McNulty explained that many e-book purchases are done through the Minuteman Library Network. The Network purchases items that all libraries in the Network may use, and that has cost Newton about \$30K. They have also spent an additional \$10K on purchases that are used just by Newton residents: best sellers and other titles that are popular. In the past year, they have instituted a service called Hoopla which gives members access to movies, TV shows, music and audio books. Audio books have gotten much more popular and that popularity is rising. Approximately \$20K is spent on Hoopla per year and the cost varies based on usage. There are certain restrictions on the service so the demand

does not get too expensive. The bulk of the funds for books are still spent on paper books. E-books are costing about \$100K a year.

### *Building Grant*

It was noted that last year there was quite a bit of discussion in the Committee of the Whole about the Library renovation project because it was not within the CIP or at least near the top of the CIP. Now it seems to be moving forward and there has been no communication about it in the interim and the deadline is coming up in several months. Mr. McNulty explained that they had a general thought last year that the grant would be due in January of 2017 but they just got the official notification of that on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and workshops are starting right away. Ms. Zaleznik said this project has not been fast-tracked. If the grant application is unsuccessful, the City is not going to push it ahead of other projects. However, they would like to take advantage of this grant round especially considering that Mr. McNulty has served on the grant committee in the past and he has also submitted grants for other communities. This is no guarantee of a commitment from the administration to move forward with the project without a successful grant award.

Mr. McNulty said there are three possible outcomes for a grant application. Each application will be scored and there will likely be approximately 40 applications. If an applicant does not meet a minimum score, it will be rejected with perhaps a chance to re-work and re-submit. Another possibility is that the score is very high and a provisional grant is awarded and 6 months are given for the community to come up with local funding. He would expect about 20% of the grant applications to fall into that category. The rest would go onto a waiting list in order of score. One of the 2010 round awardees just got their local matching funding last fall and they had been given several extensions of time to get that in place. Getting on to the waiting list would probably be the optimum outcome for Newton since there is no appetite to bring anything forward for a debt exclusion earlier than necessary.

Mr. McNulty believes the architect costs would be approximately \$100K and that would be funded by money that the trustees have set aside from annual state aid funds.

The schematic design process will set a cost estimate of the renovation project. The percentage of reimbursement will be based on the elements of that estimate, so once it is set, it is a fixed number. One of the important decisions, therefore, is to determine how far out to escalate the project budget in terms of time. In Woburn, for example, the process took five years and the costs went higher and higher but the cost estimate did not move. When the money is available, the Grant program will look at how much money they have received from the state and which projects can fit within that amount. They will then give a provisional award and start the 6-month calendar for local funds. Those funds could be private and/or public. Extensions can be awarded under certain circumstances such as elections for debt exclusions.

It was asked if work should be done in the near term to keep the building maintained. Mr. McNulty explained that there are some interim projects in the current CIP. Ms. Zaleznik said the Library

would like to reconfigure the building based on more modern uses and spaces and that would be difficult to accomplish within the current walls. Conceptually it is a great idea, but most people think of the library as being fairly new and there needs to be a robust discussion about how to prioritize things. There is outside money to do the architectural work and then everyone can look at the work to see how it fits into the priority list of other buildings in the City which are older. A Committee member felt that regardless of the funding source, it would be important to discuss the need for updating or renovating the library as it is such a great resource in the City.

#### *Solar Carports*

It was asked if Mr. McNulty was disappointed that the solar carports were denied. He responded that the energy output would have been relatively small compared with the library's usage so perhaps a better solution will come in the future.

It was suggested that the Waban Library Center and the Auburndale Library Center might have a meeting with Mr. McNulty to see if there might be some cooperative partnership with the Main Library. They are excited about their collections and activities.

Councilor Rice took a straw vote of the Committee to approve the Newton Free Library's FY17 budget and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

### **PARKS & RECREATION**

The proposed FY17 budget for the Parks & Recreation Department is \$6,311,399 which is a 4.78% increase over the FY16 budget. Most of the increase consists of a \$200K addition to the Forestry Division. Commissioner Bob DeRubeis addressed the Committee and provided a handout which summarized the department's FY16 accomplishments and FY17 goals. It is attached to this report for reference.

#### Staff

The Commissioner noted that his staff is made up of many long-term department employees and he expressed his gratitude for their commitment and wonderful work. Marc Welch has made it possible to bring the tree crews back in-house under his excellent leadership and rapport with the outside contractors as well. Commissioner DeRubeis has 43 staff in the department and currently has two vacancies in the Environmental division and hopes to fill those very soon.

#### Programs

The staff found that there was a need to add camps for school vacations and those have been extremely popular and successful. They have also added a Picnic N Play option that has drawn big crowds and is in inter-departmental effort. The plan is to host the next picnic at the Cove. Intergenerational events are becoming more popular as well such as seniors having lunch at Newton North and a prom for seniors and students.



### Maintenance and Beautification

The BoxArt around the City has been getting a very positive response. They hope to develop a booklet which describes the photos on the boxes and develop either guided or self-guided tours.

### Big Belly Units

These have been placed around the City and there has been some feedback. There will need to be an educational process to make sure people bring home their trash. There has been some trial and error on placement but they will be able to make some changes if necessary. The units are all on GPS so the department knows when they are filled or partially filled so vehicles do not have to go and physically check each unit and this saves time and resources. Emptying the units does take a little longer but the benefits outweigh any inconveniences. The overflowing, unsightly barrels that have been around the City will be mostly eliminated.

### Park and Playground Development

They will be doing some digging at Farlow Park to see what the basin might be like. There was some concern that it might be compromised and if it is, the plan for the project will have to be changed.

### Tennis Courts

The Tennis courts scheduled for reclamation in the upcoming year are at the Warren House and next year the courts at Burr Park will get some addressed. They have been using a new surfacing repair technique that works much better than the older method of filling cracks with silicone. These repairs definitely will eventually start to heave in cold weather but it is a method they will use for those courts which are not at the point of reclamation as an intermediary solution. This method works well for 3-4 years. The Cove courts will be next for this type of repair.

It was noted that there seem to be some private lessons going on at a number of public tennis courts, which is not allowed. Commissioner DeRubeis agreed and said people have gotten fairly clever about it and do not transact any money on the court itself. But it is obvious when there is a ball hopper on the court with 50 balls and one other person. It is difficult to catch them because they so they are just helping a friend and not charging money. It is taking money away from the City's Tennis program.

### Newton Highlands Playground

The project at the Newton Highland Playground is being discussed with the administration and they are looking at phasing the project. The Community Preservation Committee just approved \$2.5M and the project cost is about \$3.3M. The Commissioner feels only half of the CPC money will be ready for use and that is why phasing may be necessary. It needs to be determined exactly what will be done first and he will keep the City Council apprised of any decisions and progress. He hoped that the remaining \$800K could come from some private funding, however, there were too many stipulations particularly from Little League that he was not comfortable with. When discussions continued, the League came up with design money but when it came time to get the

construction money they attached too many demands such as prime-time slots on the field and an “ownership” of the field. When he did not agree to their stipulations, the League declined to deliver the funding. He then had to report to the CPC that the private funds were not forthcoming

It was suggested that the merchants on Needham Street might be willing to invest in this project and could raise a significant amount of money.

#### Waban Hill Reservoir

The ornamental fence has been removed at Waban Hill Reservoir and a new fence has been erected. A designer has been chosen for the major part of the project and Weston and Sampson was the best choice. They have done other work in the City so they are a known entity.

#### Woodcock Meadow

Commissioner DeRubeis and Marc Welch have been cited as environmentalists of the year from the Conservation Commission for the work they have done at Nahanton Park Woodcock Meadow.

#### Greenway

The Greenway has been nicely surfaced and benches and kiosks are in place. The Commissioner would like a little more work down on the overlook to make sure it is safe, but otherwise the area is open and ready for the public.

#### NNHS Backstop

The Newton North backstop at the baseball field had to be retrofitted with poles and netting to keep the balls on the property. They had an issue with balls hitting neighboring houses. The neighbors now seem very pleased with how it looks and how it is functioning. The backstop was too heavy to incorporate into the netting design and would have required guide wires which would not have been safe. The backstop cannot be re-used but the poles will be kept for re-use somewhere.

#### Therapeutic Recreation

Last year a part-time person was hired to help with these programs. Half of the position was funded by Athletes Unlimited which is the funding arm of Newton Special Athletes and the other half was funded through revolving funds. The person in that role is the former director so there was no learning curve there. There was a 17% increase in the number of special athletes in the last year and they just received an award for outreach through the MRPA and there will be a ceremony with the Mayor soon.

#### Forestry

In addition to the 600 high risk trees that have been cut down and the 650 high risk trees which have been pruned, 240 trees have been planted with hopefully more than that next year. The tree planting will be spaced out so trees are not maturing at the same rate and dying off at the same time. From a purely management perspective and proper best practices, it is desirable to have a

medium to young population of trees instead of all older, mature trees. Most of the current trees were planted in the 60s and 70s and cyclical planting was not ongoing.

A Committee member asked how the City can get to a sustainable and maintained tree population by 2020 if more trees are coming down than are planted. The Commissioner said it is a struggle and they are optimistic about that date. Marc Welch, Director of Urban Forestry, explained that the goal date was set 2-3 years ago and it seemed possible. He is still optimistic as well that the City is going in the right direction. Sustainable does not mean simply replacing what has been lost but also implies caring for the trees already in place. The City only started funding tree planting in the last 2 years. That had not been funded since the 1980s so they are making significant progress.

#### IPM

The Integrated Pest Management Plan is in discussions and there should be progress by next year.

#### Shade Structure

The shade structure in Pellegrine Park should be going up very shortly. There was a problem with the bids on the wall so that is going out to bid again.

#### Crystal Lake

The City received \$88K from the state for Crystal Lake which will be utilized for the terracing at Levingston Cove and putting some plantings there. This will help significantly with the run off and erosion. Lake Terrace is the greatest outfall at the lake and has been the most problematic in the past so DPW will be working on that problem which will be extremely helpful. Some work will also be done at Cronin's Cove. They have also identified the watershed and informed and educated the residents within the watershed about ways to help improve and maintain the health of the lake. This included signage and leafletting as well as the Crystal Lake Working Group's efforts in outreach. They have gotten some very positive responses and once residents see the City taking some steps they will be more likely to take steps as well. Crystal Lake is a kettle pond which means it is filled by run off and rain water. There are no natural springs there.

A Committee member asked about Swim At Your Own Risk at Crystal Lake. The Commissioner explained that this activity, particularly with one group, has been going on for years. When the group first approached Parks & Recreation, they really did not have a good plan to make this concept work and be safe for others. While they were a group of experienced swimmers, triathlete competitors, etc. a young student walking home from school may not be. Right now, those children know they are not allowed to be in the water, but if the regulations were relaxed they might go in the water and something terrible could happen. Crystal Lake is so easily accessible. The group then put together some ideas to form a "club" that follows regulations and has parameters and restrictions. This was based on a model at a lake in another community. There was a legal issue that came up, so it has been on hold, but it is still an ongoing discussion. It needs to have some parameters and cannot just be an open Swim At Your Own Risk policy endorsed by the City.

Police do patrol the lake and can give tickets, but the cost is so low that most people do not see that as a deterrent.

The Lake should be open until the third week in August, as usual. The lifeguards generally need to be back to high school or college around that time for athletic programs.

It was noted that most complaints come from people using the lake and changing their clothes in public. Maybe there is a way to make the bathhouse more accessible if a policy comes into play. The Highland Area Council is working with other groups to get the bathhouse project going again.

### Playground Structures

The administration has been putting \$150K into the Playground Equipment account the past two years and that has been a tremendous help. A policy and plan has been put in place and the next in the 6-8 months Horace-Mann, Auburndale Cove and probably Underwood will all be addressed. The process is working well and the community is coming out to help, private contractors are helping with excavation as well as DPW. The residents are very happy with the progress. All the new structures will be ADA compliant. The staff person that inspects the parks and structures stays up-to-date on the latest recommendations for the best types of equipment. Most of the playground surfaces are covered with 12 inches of Fibar. Some groups want to use rubber surfacing but that is expensive and private fundraising would be necessary. The City provides several models that could be used for playground design and the groups decide which works for their community. It is desirable to have different designs throughout the City.

### Farmers Markets

It was asked how the farmers markets are doing. The Commissioner noted that West Newton is going very well now that they have worked out a few details with neighbors in the area. It should be a very successful year at West Newton and Cold Spring Park. The winter market has been more difficult, but they wanted to keep a year-long presence. The farmers need to have the volume or it is not worth the trouble for them to come out.

### Turf

The Commissioner noted that they are not looking to use turf at the Newton Highlands project and will use natural turf. At this point, there are no plans to move forward with any other turf surfaces at this point. They are looking at in-fills and will be looking at Fessenden and other properties using various products.

### Beautification

It was noted that many street trees have been taken down in West Newton Square and replaced with asphalt. The Commissioner explained that they have been working with the Complete Streets team and looked at the possibility of using the pods that were in front of Gath Pool. There is a definite plan in progress for West Newton. Ms. Zaleznik said there is an opportunity to apply for Complete Streets funding and a Planning staff person and DPW staff person have been going to the

trainings and following the appropriate steps. No planting will be done before the streets are reconfigured.

Councilor Hess-Mahan asked that the Ward 3 Councilors be kept informed. He was also concerned about the safety around the Sweet Tomatoes site. Ms. Zaleznik said the restaurant will be re-opening and the City is allowing them to operate their food truck on site during the time of their reconstruction in order to be operational in West Newton. It was only said to them that the whole area is being designed with safety in mind. Whatever will be put there in the near-term is not a permanent fix.

The demonstration for reconfiguring the Washington and Walnut streets intersection will take place on May 13 and 14. The City has also spoken to the petitioner of the Orr Building project about investing in the area in terms of accessibility to the commuter rail station. He could not fund the entire project but would be willing to contribute along with other improvements in the area. The City has spoken to Mass DOT about the bridge as well to help connect the two sides of Newtonville. They are willing to accept some proposals.

#### Revolving Funds

Camps and classes are the most significant revolving fund at \$1.2M for expenditures but they take in over \$3M. All camps and classes are self-sufficient.

Councilor Rice took a straw vote of the Committee to approve the Parks & Recreation Department's FY17 budget and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**John R. Rice, Chair**



# Newton Free Library

The door to your imagination

Library Director  
Philip E. McNulty



Mayor  
Setti D. Warren

April 15, 2016

## City of Newton Programs & Services Committee of the Newton City Council Budget Highlights, FY2017

### **FY 2016 Outcomes of note:**

- Automated checkin/sorter procured and expected installed and active by June 20.
- All Audio Visual collections have been moved from the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor to the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- All English Language Learning collections and study spaces have been moved to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, along with foreign language collections to form a Language & Literacy Center.
- Both Children's programming & outreach visits will surpass 700, well above goal.
- CodeNewton: a \$16,709 grant funded our CodeNewton series of programs focused on coding and robotics. Programs have been very well attended and continue into the fall..
- Long-Range Plan completed & approved by Library Trustees in September 2015.
- By the end of the fiscal year we will develop and adopt a Library Building Program plan, and hire an Owners Project Manager and Architect.

### **FY 2017 Goals of note:**

- Expand and relocate our Teen Center to a dedicated first floor location.
- Complete RFID tagging of the collection and begin using RFID readers at checkout.
- Create a first-generation Maker Space at the library.
- Create a new service point to handle the 25% of our inquires that come in online & by telephone.
- Develop a library schematic design for renovation.
- Apply for a state Library Construction Grant by the January 27, 2017 deadline.

### **FY 2017 Budget Changes of note:**

- Personnel: Workforce levels to remain the same;
  - Library Pages receive the next Minimum Wage increase in January, to \$11.00.
  - Non-contract employees receive a 2.5% increase in January.
  - Contractual employees receive step increases as scheduled.
  - We are avoiding the use of a salary attrition line this year.
- Utilities: Electrical rate changes this past summer made the 2016 budget overly optimistic. Natural Gas costs are also increased over last year. The increase in water costs may be lessened if ongoing repairs to our cooling towers are effective.
- The new Departmental Equipment line contains annual maintenance costs for the sorter.
- We have added \$20,000 to our collections budget. We will set a goal of \$770,000 in collection spending: \$620,000 from the City, \$50,000 from the Friends of the Library; and \$100,000 from Trustee fundraising.
- State Certification is assured with this anticipated collection spending, hours of operation and overall budget level.

## Library Renovation & Space Goals

A key element of our FY 2017 planning hinges on our 2015 Long-Range Plan recommendation to enhance the library facility through application to the state's Library Construction Grant program. A building enhancement feasibility study done by the Trustees in 2014 clearly showed that even the minimal upgrades needed to keep the library fresh after 24 years of intense operation would bear very significant costs, and that it could be less expensive in terms of Newton expenditures to also extend and modernize library services, which would allow us to successfully participate in the state grant round.

Action on library improvements at this time also allows us to incorporate the goals of the City Archives Strategic Plan for creating a comprehensive archival space for all city departments at the library.

The State's Library Construction Grant process and requirements are clearly outlined in 605 CMR 6, but the highlights of what we would have to achieve this year are as follows:

1. Develop a Building Program document that clearly and in detail describes the need and the desired functional capacities of a renovated library, with estimated space needs.
2. Engage an Owners Project Manager
3. Only after 1 & 2 are complete, bring on a project Architect.
4. Develop a Schematic Design with cost estimate and full floorplans/elevations/site plan.
5. Submit the grant application by **January 27, 2017**. This is the first opportunity to submit grants since 2010, with the next anticipated opportunity being 5-7 years in the future.
6. Get approval from the City Council to submit a grant based upon the Schematic Design by June 17, 2017 (a month before the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners votes on awards, timed to consider the infrequency which Town Governments hold town meetings)
7. Grant results will be announced in July 2017. Results could be, (a) turned down – re-apply with a better plan within a year; (b) placement on a waiting list in order of scores; (c) provisional award, requiring local matching funds to be committed within six months. Some extensions are allowed to meet voting schedules. The last projects from the 2010 round waiting list commenced in late 2015.

The Library Administration, staff and Trustees have engaged in an extensive array of usage analysis, comparative library explorations and planning over the last four years, culminating in our 2015 Long Range Plan and the Building Program now in development. To summarize some of the key improvements that we wish to make, we have developed a ***Library Report Card***. We hope that this report card can give you a good introduction into what we think is very positive in the library, and what we think can be improved.



Where is service strong? Where could it be better?

## A

### **Collections & Borrowing**

- At 546,800 items, Newton has the 4<sup>th</sup> largest collection in Massachusetts
- 1.66 million loans annually, the largest borrowing levels at any single library building in Massachusetts
- 679,000 visits in the last year.
- An average of 19 items are borrowed by each resident annually. 46,019 residents have library cards.

## A

### **Adult Cultural & Educational Program Activity**

- 547 programs and workshops in our 340 open days, attended by 12,928 people

## C

### **Community Meeting Space**

The Good: The Library booked 2360 meetings in FY15, a 35% increase in two years.  
 Could be better: Druker Auditorium's 125-seat capacity is frequently reached. More mid-sized conference room space would allow us to accommodate the public meeting space requests we now turn down on a daily basis due to lack of availability.

## A

### **Youth Programming & Outreach Activity**

- 620 children's storytimes & programs, 155 teen programs and 806 outreach visits to Newton classrooms and pre-schools reached 34,563 kids, teens and their families. (FY2015)

## F

### **Youth Program Space**

- The 405 sq ft combined Story & Crafts Room would be sub-standard in even the smallest communities. We run two story hours each morning, but must turn families away daily for lack of room, and the experience of crowding into a tiny space for those who do attend leaves much to be desired.
- There is no Teen Activity Space, so Teen programs are often held in open study areas, diminishing our ability to provide focused study space to other people using the library.

## A

### **Children's Room Activity & Borrowing**

- Our Children's room lends more books than most libraries in the state, only 14 *libraries* do more.
- Analysis of Children's collection use shows that almost every item goes out several times a year.

## D

### **Children's Room Space**

- There is no activity space to engage families with young kids, no computer lab sized for children, and too little homework study space.
- Much of the collection is shelved out of reach of children on shelving that is too high.

The Models: The new Children's Rooms at the Cambridge Public Library and the Boston Public Library.

## C

### **Teen Service**

The Good: Teen collection use grew 3.5% in FY15, and Teen programming far exceeds FY15.

Could be better: A larger, more distinct teen space is needed, with its own activity space

The Model: The Boston Public Library's new Teen Space at Copley Square.



# Library Report Card, 2016

Where is service strong? Where could it be better?

**B**

## Library Computing & Technology

- The Good: We provide 45 public computers, access to 3D Printing and an array of technology classes and individual tech help appointments.
- Could be better: 12 of our drop-in computers are in our computer teaching lab, which is now often booked for classes. (228 times in FY15, compared to 52 two years ago)  
Public computer seating is uncomfortable and cramped.

**Incomplete**

## Library Maker Space

- The Goal: To create a space for hands-on interaction with technology, from the latest computer-driven 3D Printers and laser cutters to more traditional techniques, all building upon the huge success and popularity of our STEAM programming.
- The Models: Maker Spaces at Westport, CT; Peabody, Easton and Watertown, MA; Chattanooga, TN; and many others across the country.

**F**

## Café & Flexible Study Space

- The Models: Full service library cafés with related study space are great successes in Watertown, Worcester, Brookline and Quincy, with the best model at Northeastern's Snell Library which has a flexible "Library Commons" group study space nearby.
- The Reality: We are only able to provide our small snack area by taking a conference room and the meeting room kitchenette out of their intended service.

**C**

## Study Space & Tutor Space

- The Supply: 11 Study Rooms; 94 Carrel seats; 41 large tables, 45 Lounge chairs
- The Demand: Our survey shows that 70% of the time ALL study rooms are occupied. Carrels are the next favorite, but the large tables typically only have 10-15% of their seats occupied.
- The Goal: To increase study room capacity, to increase the comfort level of all seating and to shift from large, under-utilized tables to more individual study seating and round tables better suited to collaborative work.

**D**

## Newton City Archive Space

- Today: Newton's City Archivist has workspace at the library, but collection space is at capacity, there is no specialized cold storage and all other city departments are left to their own devices to meet state mandated storage requirements.
- The Goal: Comprehensive archival storage for all city departments in one facility integrated at the Newton Free Library, thus taking advantage of existing state exemptions to house certain materials outside of the City Hall.

**D**

## Parking

- The Supply: 185 parking spaces with additional parking on Homer and Walnut Streets.
- Could be better: The public's frequent frustration with parking space availability would improve if City Hall had better parking for staff and visitors, and if we met the standard set by the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners that stipulates a space for every 400 square feet of building ( $91,000 / 400 = 237$ ), plus additional handicapped spaces.

**NEWTON  
PARKS & RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT**

**FY 17 BUDGET PRESENTATION  
PROGRAMS & SERVICES  
APRIL 20, 2016**



# FY 16 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## ▣ Programs

### ▣ Program Development

- Created and instituted interdepartmental programs
- Created Middle School Aged programs
- Successful Picnic “N” Play in The Park

### ▣ Online registration

- 4,806 summer camp registrations in 3 hour period
- \$600,000 of revenue
- 90% of people registering online



# FY 16 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## ▣ Maintenance & Beautification

### City Beautification

- Added 15 new locations with BoxArt, citywide
- Installed 340 Big Belly Units, citywide
- Placed 84 pots & planters at various locations
- Developed Community Appearance Index

### Maintenance

- Continued implementation of Turf Management Program
- Oversight of 4 grass contracts, encompassing 210 acres
- Field marking and grooming of 30 fields
- Citywide fence replacement & repair



# FY 16 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## ▣ Park and Playground Development

### ■ Projects

- ▣ Farlow Park Bridge & Pond
- ▣ Reconstruction of NSHS tennis courts
- ▣ Newton Highlands Playground Rehabilitation
- ▣ Purchased Waban Hill Reservoir, chose designer
- ▣ Nahanton Park Woodcock Meadow Restoration



# FY 16 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## ▣ Therapeutic Recreation

- Developed new year round program for elementary age students with disabilities
- New Summer program for adults with disabilities during week nights.
- Received the Massachusetts Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) for program outreach.



# FY 16 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## ▣ Forestry

- By Fiscal Year end will have cut down over 600 high risk trees
- By Fiscal Year end will have Pruned over 650 high risk trees
- Completed over 800 tree related service requests
- Established a holding/temporary nursery



# FY 17 GOALS

- Continued development & expansion of programs
- Develop program book of major events to recognize sponsorship
- Develop Lake Management Plan for Crystal Lake
- Create Off-Leash site for small dogs
- Create online video library of special athletes and community members highlighting Athletes Unlimited Newton, Inc. programs and special events.
- Increased efficiency & cleanliness with BigBellys





# FY 17 GOALS

- ▣ Court Repair & Reclamation
  - Reclamation of McGrath West courts (4)
  - Repair & surfacing of Auburndale Cove (2)
- ▣ Replacement of Playground Structures
  - Horace Mann
  - Auburndale Cove
  - Underwood School
- ▣ Renovation of five fields in Spring & five fields in the Fall
- ▣ Installation of Senior Exercise Cluster at Auburndale Cove



# FY 17 GOALS

## ▣ Forestry

- Address All Highest Risk Trees
  - ▣ Update Street Tree Risk Analysis Report by surveying each street, comparing prior data, and issuing report.
  - ▣ Utilizing In-house and Contracted Services Remove up to 650 of highest risk trees as determined in the Risk Analysis Report
  - ▣ Utilizing In-house and Contracted Services prune up to 600 of highest risk prunes as in the Risk Analysis Report
  - ▣ Remove/prune all high priority safety work in select City Parks through in house and contracted services.
- Implementation of Citywide Tree Planting Plan
  - ▣ Plant 240 trees based on strategies presented in city-wide planting plan.
  - ▣ Grind down 700 tree stumps.

