

CITY OF NEWTON  
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT  
BUDGET

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2013

Present: Ald. Sangiolo, Rice, Blazar, Linsky, Hess-Mahan and Fischman

Absent: Ald. Baker; One vacancy

Also Present: Ald. Kalis

Others Present: Robert Rooney (Chief Operating Officer), Bob DeRubeis (Commissioner, Parks & Recreation), Marc Welch (Director, Urban Forestry), Carol Stapleton (Recreation Manager), Judy Dore (Recreation Manager), Carol Schein (Open Space Manager), Robin McLaughlin (Administrative Assistant), Ken Delgizzi (Parks & Recreation), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

**REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES**

#322-12(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter the FY14 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$331,073,197 passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY14-FY18 Capital Improvement Program (#322-12). [04-08-13 @ 6:03 PM]  
EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION: 04/16/13; LAST DATE TO PASS THE BUDGET 05/31/12

**REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES**

#322-12 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY14-FY18 Capital Improvement Program pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter. [10/09/12 @ 2:38 PM]

**BUDGET**

**PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

The proposed FY14 Parks & Recreation Department budget is \$3,940,926. There will be 31 FTEs and 4 part-time employees. The full-time employee count reflects four employees moved to revolving funds as explained below.

Outdoor Swimming, Seasonal Wages have been reduced by \$100K. That expense will be picked up within the Revolving Funds (Swim Lessons income) and does not result in any decrease in guards or programming at Gath Pool or Crystal Lake. Last year, Parks & Rec took over 54 DPW sites for grass cutting. They have been contracted out and \$50K was added for that. Recreation Vehicle Maintenance, Autos and Light Trucks has been funded with \$60K. No new vehicles have been added since the '90s and the fleet needed some upgrades. Larger vehicles are in the CIP but these are vehicles that fall under the \$75K limit for inclusion in the CIP. Commissioner DeRubeis noted that FY13 had a supplement of about \$400K in emergency money to deal with tree damage due to Hurricane Sandy.

Bob DeRubeis, Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, addressed the Committee. He began by praising his staff and thanking them for their wonderful and dedicated work. **His presentation is attached to this report.**

### **FY13 Accomplishments**

#### *Programs and Therapeutic Recreation*

- Development of new camps and programs including a horseback riding camp which has been very popular.
- Added additional space in camps and expanded age limits in select camps with special attention to middle-school aged children.
- New special needs athletic programs that benefit over 300 special athletes.
- New over 55 programs including a 6-week pilot program at the Oak Hill Park Community Center to meet desired needs; a healthy eating workshop; and an adventure program. They are working with the Senior Center on some programs as well.

#### *Maintenance and Beautification*

- A 13-person maintenance crew and 4 contractors worked on Maintenance and beautification: completed contractual mowing of 161 sites; completed 80% of work orders within 5 days or less; and completed over 600 work orders in 2012. The Court Restitution program is extremely helpful and constitutes the work of a 4-man crew on projects as well.
- *Newton Serves* is an event for which his department does a tremendous amount of work
- More work on turf surfaces is underway and they are becoming more expert in that area.

#### *Parks & Playground Development*

Updated tennis courts and Upper Falls Playground

- Made improvements to Carlton & Charlesbank Parks
- Made improvements to Gath Pool including mechanical and electrical work and cosmetic work as well in the shower rooms.
- Made improvements at Lower Falls Community Center

#### *Urban Forestry*

- Moved from contract work on trees to an in-house three-man crew. The economics made sense because the contractor prices were too high. A contractor would cost \$2800 and a 3-man crew would cost \$280.
- Purchased 5 pieces of equipment using tree ordinance funds including a bucket truck, a loader, a multi-purpose chip truck, one large capacity chipper and one stump grinder.
- Refurbished a medium chipper and a 20-year old stump grinder
- Cut down a backlog of 550 hazardous trees between October and February. During the last storm there was minimal damage to trees due to this work being done. They are working on grinding the 550 stumps that have been left.
- Evaluated and prioritized 1200 pruning locations.

## **FY14 Goals**

### *Programs*

- Provide quality recreation programs for all ages and interests
- Increase participation in targeted demographics (15-18 year olds and certain areas of the City with lower participation)
- Streamline program registrations

### *Therapeutic Recreation*

- Provide quality programs for seniors and people with disabilities
- Provide and promote year round programs that promote social, physical, cognitive and emotional development

### *Parks & Playground Development*

- Provide safe, accessible, high quality parks and facilities
- Improve water quality of Crystal Lake along with other improvements
- Create more off-leash areas to meet demand
- Complete capital improvements to ensure the quality of parks and playgrounds. He hopes to bring forward Farlow Park and Newton Highlands from the CIP with the help of Community Preservation funds.

### *Maintenance & Beautification*

- Maintain and improve parks and facilities that enrich the recreational experience
- Enhance maintenance management/oversite system.
- Continue to maintain and further develop public-private partnerships: soccer, Little League, etc.

### *Urban Forestry*

- Develop a fully sustainable, maintained tree population by 2020
- Perform overall risk analysis and review of City's urban forest
- Continue to strategically resolve outstanding pruning and removal requests
- Develop street tree replacement plan

## **Revolving Accounts**

The accounts represent the amount of money that can be expended in a season. It does not represent what some might be bringing in in revenue. Turf maintenance program which provides money for the golf course and some private money comes into that fund as well.

The biggest accounts are the Camp and Recreation Activities. All the major camps are involved with that so seasonal wages are involved. Landscape maintenance revolving is basically for Memorial benches. If someone wants to dedicate a bench to someone they donate the money and the City purchases the bench and installs it. There is an account for Newton South for field maintenance. Newton soccer contributes the largest single amount of money. They were able to purchase two John Deere tractors.

Ald. Sangiolo asked what the amounts were in the revolving accounts for FY13. Commissioner DeRubeis said he would get that information from the Comptroller's office. It is attached to this report.

### **CIP**

Commissioner DeRubeis explained that the FY14 CIP projects include the Lower Falls Community Center accessibility and site upgrades for \$275K; Crystal Lake water filtration system for \$100K; and the Newton Centre Playground Phase V and VI for \$45K.

### **Committee Questions and Comments**

#### **Crystal Lake**

In order to assist with the improvement of water quality, canisters will be installed in 32 of the 47 storm drains around the lake. Crystal Lake is fed by rain water and street run-off only; it is not spring-fed. The canisters act as water filters and help reduce the phosphorus and E.Coli levels before the water runs into the lake. They have proven to be very helpful in other communities. Funds of \$25K will come out of storm water receipts and there is some in-house work being done by DPW as well. Without the help of DPW, only 20 canisters would have been possible. If the program is successful, they would like to expand the program to all 47 storm drains.

Commissioner DeRubeis mentioned that they have also looked at bio-islands that would be placed in the water. They are sponge-like structures with plant life on them that feed on the water. The phosphorus goes up into the plant life and away from the water. These are fairly new and are not in widespread use and they are cost prohibitive at this point in time. A large one is about \$230K. They may put a much smaller one in the cove to see how it works but it does take a couple of years to show results.

They are also reaching out to neighbors in the watershed area for help. They can put rain gardens on their properties with the help of a volunteer who is expert in this area. The rain garden slows down the water from the property and keeps it off the street and feeds the garden. Three or four people have volunteered to do this so far.

#### **Newton Highlands Park**

Commissioner DeRubeis said this is his top priority project right now. A Master Plan and feasibility study have been done. They will be proposing construction documents to the Community Preservation Committee (CPA) and they are also trying to get some private fundraising going. Ald. Rice suggested coming up with some outside-the-box-thinking in trying to raise money in the community partnering with the City. Private donors do like to see progress though, so getting the funds from the CPC would be important. The community and neighbors have known about this project for several years now and are involved in the process but they will be doing some more neighborhood meetings once the construction documents are in the works. This is a total renovation and reclamation of the site and will be done in phases. The parking situation needs some careful consideration.

Snow Storage on Fields/Parks

Committee members asked about the re-conditioning the fields around the City that stored snow. Commissioner DeRubeis said there is nothing in the operating budget for that but there is a Revolving Fund for Landscape Maintenance and he can use that for some of those re-conditionings.

Personnel

There is a memo attached that addresses the positions that have been eliminated from the Parks & Recreation Department from 2009 to 2014. Committee members asked if the Commissioner needed more people and where he would use them. He said he would like to add two people in the Maintenance Division and would really look for turf specialists.

Dog Parks

An off-leash animal specialist has been brought in to deal with enforcement in the off-leash dog sites. Officer Torres has been doing a wonderful job but he has other duties and is not able to dedicate all his time to the dog parks. Jason Roberts is the new enforcement officer and his presence has already been noticed by dog owners. He visits the trails several times each day. The Off-Leash group would like to add more parks, but they are trying to work on better management of the current parks. Cold Spring Park and Cabot have been having some issues and the enforcement officer will be very helpful with that. He is under the direction of the Commissioner. There were about 1,000 off-leash tags registered last year and they are already up to over 900 for this year. This has also helped boost the number of registered dogs in general.

Beautification

It was suggested that each of the parks have a seasonal flower in the front. This could be something that could happen over time. Commissioner DeRubeis said the Carol Schein is the Adopt-A-Space person and they would have to work with someone to help. They have limited manpower and that sort of project requires a lot of upkeep and care to keep flower beds looking good. He would be happy to work with citizens or businesses to work on these types of projects. It would be a perfect private-public partnership.

The Committee voted to approve this budget and discharge it to the Committee of the Whole

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Mah Sangiolo, Chairman



a lifetime of fun 

parks and recreation

# BUDGET FY2014



# Core elements

**Programs**

**Therapeutic  
Recreation**

**Maintenance  
& Beautification**

**Parks &  
Playground  
Development**

**Urban  
Forestry**





# Accomplishments fy2013





# Programs



## New Camps and Programs

- ❖ Horseback Riding
- ❖ New Middle School Age Camps



## Camp Expansions

- ❖ Added additional spaces in each camp
- ❖ Expanded age limits in select camps

# Therapeutic Recreation



## Special Athletes New Programs

- ❖ Zumba & Yoga
- ❖ 1K Youth Race



## Over 55 New Programs

- ❖ Oak Hill Park Community Center
- ❖ Healthy Eating Workshop
- ❖ Club 55 Adventure Program

# Maintenance & Beautification



- ❖ Completed contractual mowing at 161 sites throughout the city.
- ❖ Completed 80% of work orders within five days or less
- ❖ Completed over 600 work orders in 2012



# Parks & Playground Development



## Playgrounds

- ❖ Updated Tennis Courts at U. Falls Playground
- ❖ Improvements to Carlton & Charlesbank Parks



## Facilities

- ❖ Gath Pool Improvements
- ❖ Lower Falls Community Center

# Urban Forestry



## Operational Improvements

- ❖ Hired Three Professional Tree Workers
- ❖ Purchased Five Critical Equipment Pieces
- ❖ Refurbished Three Old Pieces of Equipment



## Backlog Mitigation

- ❖ Cut down 550 Hazardous Trees
- ❖ Evaluated & Prioritized Pruning Locations



# Goals fy2014



# Programs

- Quality recreation programs for all ages/ interests



- ❖ Increase participation in targeted demographics
- ❖ Streamline program registrations

# Therapeutic Recreation

## - Quality programs for seniors and people with disabilities



- ❖ Provide year round programs that promote social, physical, cognitive, and emotional development
- ❖ Create new programs for people of all ages
- ❖ Increase awareness of therapeutic programs and services



# Parks & Playground Development

-Safe, accessible, high quality parks and facilities



- ❖ Improve water quality at Crystal Lake
- ❖ Create more off-leash areas to meet demand
- ❖ Complete capital improvements to ensure the quality of parks and playgrounds



# Maintenance & Beautification

## -Parks and Facilities that enrich the recreational experience



- ❖ Enhance Maintenance Management/ Oversight System
- ❖ Continue to maintain and further develop public-private partnerships

# Urban Forestry

-A fully sustainable, maintained tree population by 2020



- ❖ Perform overall risk analysis and review of City's urban forest
- ❖ Continue to strategically resolve outstanding pruning and removal requests
- ❖ Develop street tree replacement plan







SETTI D. WARREN  
MAYOR

# NEWTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

124 Vernon St, Newton, MA 02458  
Office: (617) 796-1500/Fax: (617) 796-1512  
TDD/TTY: (617) 796-1089  
parks@newtonma.gov



**NEWTON**  
Parks & Recreation  
ROBERT J. DERUBEIS  
COMMISSIONER

Date: May 10, 2013  
To: Honorable Board of Aldermen  
From: Robert J. DeRubeis, Commissioner  
RE: Budget Follow-Up Questions

What is the difference between FY 13 and FY14 Revolving Fund Expenditure Limitation Requests?

<b>PARKS &amp; RECREATION DEPARTMENT</b>			
<b>Revolving Fund Expenditure Limitations</b>			
	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	
	<b>Request</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Park Land Maintenance Revolving	50,000.00	50,000.00	-
Senior Citizen Program Revolving	50,000.00	60,000.00	10,000.00
Arts in the Park Revolving	200,000.00	215,000.00	15,000.00
Camp Program Revolving	800,000.00	800,000.00	-
Recreation Activity/Class Revolving	1,060,000.00	1,160,000.00	100,000.00
Landscape Maintenance Revolving	20,000.00	10,000.00	(10,000.00)
Tree Ordinance Revolving	150,000.00	150,000.00	-
Off Leash Dog Park Revolving	50,000.00	75,000.00	25,000.00
Tree Planting Gift	10,000.00	10,000.00	-
Field Maintenance Gifts	130,000.00	100,000.00	(30,000.00)
Newton 2000 Gifts	10,000.00	16,200.00	6,200.00
NSHS Athletic Field Maint. Gifts	-	50,000.00	50,000.00
Off Leash Dog Park Gift	30,000.00	16,200.00	(13,800.00)
Field Renovation Gifts	-	1,700.00	1,700.00
State Arts Lottery Gifts	12,000.00	12,000.00	-



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April 24, 2013

Alderman Amy Sangiolo, Chairman  
Programs and Services Committee  
Newton Board of Aldermen  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

Dear Alderman Sangiolo:

I am writing in response to budget questions that have been posed by Alderman Fuller.

**Q.1** Please provide a detailed explanation from 2009 to 2014 of the positions that have been eliminated from the Parks & Recreation budget (both full and part time).

**A.1** In FY09 and FY10, there were no positions lost in the budget. In FY11, the following positions were eliminated, as follows:

Eliminated	Deputy Commissioner (Vacant position)
	HMEO (Retirement)
	Parks Maintenance Craftsman (Retirement)

In FY12, there is a loss of two positions:

Eliminated	Carpenter (Retirement)
	HMEO (Retirement)

In FY13, we transferred two positions to DPW. We added three positions to Forestry.

Transferred	2 HMEO's
Added	3 Tree Maintenance Specialists

In FY13, we reduced seasonal wages by \$ 48,000; budget book does not reflect any seasonal FTE decrease.

In FY14, there were no full-time cuts, we reduced seasonal wages by \$ 100,000, budget book reflects a decrease of 4 seasonal FTE's.

- Q.2 Parks & Rec moved a number of positions out of the General Fund and into the revolving fund. Have they either (1) increased their fees so they can cover these additional positions or (2) changed the policies as to what is covered by fees?
- A.2 Departmentally, we are reflecting a decrease of 4 seasonal FTE's. The monetary reduction associated with that decrease is \$ 100,000 from Account # 016020202, Outdoor Swimming, 512001, Seasonal Wages.

This decrease in seasonal wages will be covered through revolving accounts. We have not increased fees associated with the swim program. The Swim Classes revolving account will be used to cover the wages that have been removed from the operating budget. The policy change that we will institute is that camps that are utilizing the swim lesson program at both Crystal Lake and Gath Pool will be required to augment the account based on their usage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert J. DeRubeis".

Robert J. DeRubeis  
Commissioner