



Public Facilities Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, January 20, 2016

Present: Councilors Crossley (Chair), Lennon, Albright, Brousal-Glaser, Danberg, Laredo, and Lappin

Absent: Councilor Gentile

Also present: Councilors Fuller, Hess-Mahan and Leary

City staff present: John Daghljan (Associate City Engineer), James McGonagle (Commissioner of Public Works), Shane Mark (Director of Operations, Public Works Department), and Ted Jerdee (Director of Utilities)

#11-16 **National Grid petition for a grant of location for a gas main in Cherry Street**
NATIONAL GRID petitioning for a grant of location to install and maintain 1,250' ± of 8" gas main in CHERRY STREET from the existing 8" gas main at River Street, southerly to the existing 3" gas main at Washington Street. [12/09/15 @6:56 PM]

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 6-0 (Lennon not voting)**

Note: National Grid Permit Representative Dennis Regan presented the petition for a grant of location to install approximately 1,250' of 8" gas main in Cherry Street from Washington Street to River Street. The new gas main will replace an existing 3" cast iron gas main to increase capacity in the area and reduce the risk of leaks. National Grid representatives will meet with the Department of Public Works and Police Department before the project starts to discuss street opening permit conditions, police details, project hours and other details related to the project.

The Chair opened the public hearing and no one spoke for or against the project. The public hearing was closed. A committee member raised a question regarding whether Cherry Street was recently paved. Associate City Engineer John Daghljan stated that Cherry Street has not been paved in the last five years. With that, Ald. Brousal-Glaser moved approval, which carried unanimously.

#12-16 **Discussion with the DPW regarding the City's recycling and solid waste programs**
COUNCILOR LEARY, NORTON, KALIS, HESS-MAHAN, ALBRIGHT, AND CROSSLEY requesting an update from and discussion with the Department of Public Works and the Solid Waste Commission on the current status of Newton's solid waste management and recycling program operations and performance objectives, future goals and objectives, staffing, program challenges, and survey data due to be submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection. [12/28/15 @ 8:44 AM]

Action: **Public Facilities Held 6-0 (Lennon not voting)**

Note: The Chair explained that the docketors of the item have concerns related to the City's solid waste and recycling programs. It would be helpful for Public Works Commissioner Jim

McGonagle to provide his assessment on where the Environmental Affairs Division stands with regard to staffing and what is working and what needs to be improved within the division. The Chair would also like the Councilors to have an opportunity to express concern and ask questions. She made it clear that Councilors do not expect Commissioner McGonagle to provide immediate responses to questions raised during the discussion, as the item will be discussed again in the near future.

Commissioner McGonagle stated that the Department currently has an open position for the Recycling Coordinator. The Commissioner has conducted interviews, offered the position to one of the candidates and is waiting to hear back. With that said, there is much work to be done in Environmental Affairs. It is likely that there will be changes out at the Rumford Avenue Landfill, as the city is looking at canvassing more of that site with solar panels, which would result in changes on how the landfill operates in terms of recycling yard waste. The City may not continue with its compost operation if the Administration finds it is beneficial to have solar panels covering the majority of the landfill. The Public Works Department would store the yard waste there and truck it out and dispose of it as is being done this year to make room for more material.

The Commissioner realizes that are improvements that need to be made in the recycling and solid waste programs. The City's recycling rate is steady at 38 to 41%.

Comments and Questions

Recycling and Solid Waste

1. What were the recycling rates a year ago and two years ago? Has the City seen a decrease in the recycling rates?
2. Concern that the Recycling and Solid Waste Programs have not been a priority for at least a year. Would like to see regular communication with the City Council on what is going on and how the City Council could get more involved.
3. What is the recycling rate goal for the City? The Public Works Department should look at different sources of information to determine what recycling rate the City should strive for.
4. If you look at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) numbers for recycling the City is in the 30s but Wellesley and Needham are 65% and Nantucket is 90%. There is huge room for improvement. The City should probably have a goal closer to 50%.
5. How can we maximize the City's recycling and save the City some money? How can the City start some innovative programs related to recycling and solid waste?

6. The City's recycling data that was due in June still has not been provided to the DEP. What is the status of the recycling and waste survey data and when will it be submitted to the DEP?
7. Get the State's data on Newton's recycling rate, as they have better numbers.
8. Has there been any evaluation of the Solid Waste and Recycling Programs, since automated single stream went into effect?
9. How does the City or Waste Management handle non-recyclable plastics entering the recycling bins and how much of a problem is this?
10. Has there been a reduction in plastic bags going into recycling containers and jamming sorting equipment since the ban on thin plastic bags was instituted?
11. Provide a strategy, review and goal setting around solid waste and recycling. Provide some historic numbers around recycling and solid waste including tonnage and costs. What are the City's goals going forward, as the City should be progressive in this area?
12. Provide a list of priorities related to solid waste and recycling?
13. What is being done on condominium trash and recycling pick-up?
14. If the City wants to increase recycling in the City, there will need to be a communication plan. Funding for the communication plan should be in the department's budget.
15. Provide recycling and solid waste data for a number of years. It is important to understand where the City has come from. It would be nice to compare data over a long period of time. For decades, there has been an ongoing, very strong citizenry who cares about this and has been advocating for the City to be more environmentally sensitive.

Composting Program

16. Has there been any cost benefit analysis related to installing solar at Rumford Avenue versus continuing some composting on site and not having to truck it elsewhere?

The Commissioner responded that the City is currently doing a cost benefit analysis with Ameresco, who is doing the first phase of solar panel installation at the Rumford Avenue site. The City has asked Ameresco to canvas the entire landfill and let the City know what the cost benefit analysis would be and what the offset would be.

17. If you put the solar panels up, what is the income from the panels going to be?

Costing should be available in the next week or two.

18. Has the Administration considered an organic composting program for food waste from the school cafeterias?
19. What is needed to establish an organic composting program that the City does not have?
20. Do we have a plan for looking at a citywide organic composting program?
21. Cambridge has a program to divert organics, which is taking almost 35% out of the solid waste stream. They did a pilot for a year before implementing the program citywide. This type of program could generate significant cost savings for the City.
22. There is concern that the Administration is removing composting from Rumford Avenue. Solar can be put almost anywhere and you cannot put composting anywhere.
23. Consider a pilot curbside organic composting program and provide what steps are needed to get there.
24. Cost benefit analysis of the current compost operation including how much area the operation uses in the landfill, how much material is generated, and how much has the City been able to sell?
25. Look into different companies that pick-up organic compost.
26. Talk with Needham regarding how they maximize their compost program.

Staffing

27. How long was the Recycling Coordinator position vacant and why?
28. Provide more information on what proactive steps are being used going forward to fill positions quicker.
29. Why does the Solid Waste Manager position, which is a critical position, remain open?
30. Provide a copy of the Recycling Coordinator's job description and the responsibilities.
31. The status of the Solid Waste Manager position and the job description and responsibilities. Provide a clear picture of how the job responsibilities for both positions meet the City's future solid waste and recycling goals.

Solid Waste and Recycling Commissions

32. Put the Solid Waste Commission to work by asking them to help plan and research.
33. The Solid Waste Commission has not met in months, which is concerning. What is the status of the Commission?
34. Look at utilizing the Recycling Committee for citizen input.

Commissioner McGonagle informed the Committee that the Administration is planning to combine the Recycling Coordinator position and Solid Waste Manager position into one position. The beautification function and street sweeping functions have been moved from the division and the one position should be enough to focus on recycling and waste reduction unless there are changes to the division's responsibilities. The Commissioner added that the data for the DEP is almost complete and should be submitted in the very near future.

Ald. Danberg moved hold on the item for further discussion in next few months, which carried unanimously.

#313-15 Request for an update on the Second Water Meter Program

ALD. LAPPIN requesting an update from the Department of Public Works on the second water meter program including: the progress of the inspection and programming of the approximately 900 new outdoor irrigation meters provided by the City to property owners that have yet to be inspected and/or programmed by the City; the process going forward for the issuance, inspection, programming and tracking of second meters; and the notification of residents who already had second meters regarding the process for registering their meters. 10/26/15 @ 7:15 PM]

Action: **Public Facilities Held 5-0 (Lappin and Laredo not voting)**

Note: Utilities Director Ted Jerdee provided the Committee with an update on the status of the second water meter program. When the outdoor irrigation meter program began, the City provided meter transponders to property owners without receiving payment or having a clear process in place for getting the second meters inspected by the Inspectional Services Department and/or the Utilities Division. Until the Utilities Division activates the transponder the water use is not captured by the City's utility billing system; however, the meter captures the amount of water flowing through it and the property owner would eventually be billed for that water use. Mr. Jerdee informed the Committee that there are 642 transponders that fall into this category (not 900 transponders, as originally believed). The Utility Division has identified all of the property owners that have a transponder. There are 914 residents that have registered for an irrigation meter but have not obtained a plumbing permit or a transponder.

Mr. Jerdee provided the attached memo on the status of the second water meter program and the actions the Utilities Division is and will be taking to ensure that the transponders are paid

for and that the property owner establishes an irrigation meter account with the City. The Utilities Division has sent letters to 24 property owners that have completed the plumbing for the second meter and had an inspection by the City's plumbing inspector but have not scheduled an inspection by the Utilities Division. Once these property owners have the last inspection a second meter account will be established on MUNIS, the City's utility billing software. The second step is to send a letter to 483 residents with transponders who have obtained a plumbing permit but have not established a second meter account and have not had the plumbing work inspected by the City. Mr. Jerdee's memo also included a draft letter for the Committee to review, which is attached. The 483 letters will be sent out in phases to avoid flooding the Utilities Department with call. Thirdly, letters will be sent to 135 property owners who have not obtained a plumbing permit. All property owners with a transponder that have not registered an irrigation meter have been flagged in the City's software program. This is to ensure that the City will receive payment for both the transponder and for any water that flowed through an irrigation meter prior to point of sale.

In addition, Mr. Jerdee provided information on second water meter program process moving forward. In 2016 registration for the program will remain open unlike last year, which had a cutoff date of April 1, 2015. The estimated cost for the installation of a second meter has been removed from the website. In 2016, when a plumber applies for a permit to install a second meter all fees associated with the permit, transponder, and activation must be paid in advance. When the meter is installed, the plumber must contact the Inspectional Services Department for a final inspection and the Inspectional Services Department will contact the Utilities Division to schedule inspection and activation of the second meter. The City will also revise the website to highlight the instructions for property owners who already have a second meter and will include a notification in the utility bills. Unfortunately, the City's software does not have a search function capable of identifying properties with an existing second meter but approximately 90 second meters have been activated of the 190 existing second meters. Going forward the second meter accounts will contain code to easily identify them as irrigation accounts. The Public Works Department is still discussing how to track requests for irrigation meters.

Committee members suggested that the letter should include a statement to the effect that if there is no response within the stated 30 days, the person will be billed for the cost of the transponder. The stuffer to be included with the utility bills should have a more specific web address beyond the generic City of Newton address and information on registering for the second water meter should be included in the "How Do I" section of the City's website. There should also be some type of communication plan to inform residents of the registration for the second water meter program. The Department of Public Works may want to consider using sandwich board to provide notification to residents.

Councilors requested additional information regarding the second meter program including:

- An audit of how much water went through second meters since program implementation to compare actual volume to what was predicted.
- How many new requests are coming in for this year?

- Track complaints that the City receives from property owners who felt that they did not save the money predicted
- Information on how costs shifted for the different types of water users.

It was suggested that a post audit item be docketed to the Finance Committee to discuss the financial aspects of the program including any cash flow issues resulting from water flowing through meters that are not yet part of the utility billing system. With that, Ald. Albright moved hold, which carried unanimously.

#237-15 Update on mitigation funds from Special Permits in Newton Centre

ALD. CROSSLEY, LAREDO, and SCHWARTZ requesting an update on funds accrued from voluntary contributions from Special Permits in Newton Centre, which can be made available to complete a safe pedestrian crossing at 714-724 Beacon Street via Special Permit Board Order #1-15 and conditions noted therein. 09/14/15 @ 10:40 AM]

Action: **Public Facilities Held 6-0 (Laredo not voting)**

Note: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle provided an update on the mitigation funds for the relocation of a pedestrian crossing currently located on Beacon Street at Dalton Road to the western side of the driveway for 714-724 Beacon Street. The special permit for the property at 714-724 Beacon Street includes a condition that the petitioner provide \$10,000 to the City for the relocation of the crossing any on-street parking meters displaced as a result of the relocation of the crosswalk or complete the relocation at their expense. The City received the \$10,000 from the petitioner.

Commissioner McGonagle informed the Committee that the Department of Public Works will relocate the crosswalk and add curb extensions to shorten the pedestrian crossing and improve pedestrian safety. The survey for the construction will take place in the early spring, the design should be complete by late spring, and the construction of the crosswalk and removal of the existing crosswalk would occur in the summer. The Commissioner believes that the \$10,000 provided by the petitioner is enough to fund the project but will have firmer costs for the project after the survey. The Chair pointed out that the docket item includes an update on all mitigation funds that are available for general pedestrian and traffic improvements in Newton Centre. The Commissioner stated that he will consult with the Planning Department and Comptroller to determine if there are other mitigation funds, not yet assigned, which could be available for traffic improvements. Councilor Albright moved hold on the item for updates on the mitigation funds and the construction project, which carried unanimously. After the meeting, Comptroller David Wilkinson provided the attached summary of available fund, which includes available mitigation funds.

Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees

#257-12 Review of Fees, Civil Fines/Non-criminal Disposition in Chapter 17 of the ordinances
RECODIFICATION COMMITTEE recommending (1) review of the Fees, Civil Fines/Non-Criminal Disposition contained in Chapter 17 LICENSING AND PERMITS GENERALLY

and Chapter 20 CIVIL FINES/NON-CRIMINAL DISPOSITION CIVIL FINES to ensure they are in accordance with what is being charged and (2) review of the acceptance of G.L. c. 40 §22F, accepted on July 9, 2001, which allows certain municipal boards and officers to fix reasonable fees for the issuance of certain licenses, permits, or certificates.

Finance Voted No Action Necessary 7-0 on 12/14/15

Action: Public Facilities Held 6-0 (Laredo not voting)

Note: The item was held for a discussion with City Clerk/Clerk of the Council David Olson regarding where the City is in terms of reviewing the fees and fines to make sure that they reflect what is being charged. The Council also needs to determine whether it wants to rescind acceptance of a law, which allows certain departments and municipal boards to set their own fees for licenses, permits, or certificates.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

#30-16 Transfer from budget reserve to DPW for snow removal

HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, requesting authorization to transfer the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) from Budget Reserve – Snow and Ice Removal Account to the following accounts:

Personnel Costs – Overtime
(0140110-513001)..... \$ 300,000
Rental Vehicles
(0140110-5273-5273)\$700,000
[01/19/16 @ 11:41 AM]

Action: Public Facilities Approved 6-0 (Laredo not voting)

Note: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle presented the request for a transfer of \$1 million from budget reserve for snow and ice removal to the Department of Public Works Overtime Account and the Rental Vehicles Account. It is a proactive request to ensure that the Department does not deficit spend for snow and ice removal, as there is snow in the forecast for the upcoming weekend. The Public Works Department starts the fiscal year with \$1 million in its budget for snow and ice removal but the department has spent over \$600,000 for snow removal this season, which includes deferred maintenance on vehicles and filling the salt sheds. (Please note: After reviewing the snow and ice expenditures for the Finance Committee meeting, the Commissioner determined the Department has actually spent \$709,000.) Councilor Albright moved approval of the transfer, which carried by a vote of six in favor and none opposed.

All other items before the Committee were held without discussion and the Committee adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah J. Crossley, Chair

City of Newton

Setti D. Warren
Mayor**Department of Public Works
Utilities Division**Theodore J. Jerdee, Utilities Director
60 Elliot Street
Newton, Ma. 02461
Telephone (617) 796-1650 Fax (617) 796-1653
tjerdee@newtonma.gov**Memorandum**

TO: Public Facilities Committee
FROM: Theodore J. Jerdee, Utilities Director
DATE: January 20, 2016
RE: Status of Second Meter Program

Of the 3012 requests for a Second Water Meter in 2015 there are 642 transponders that were issued by the Utilities Division without an inspection by the Utilities Division in order to establish a Second Meter account with the water billing office. Listed below are the existing conditions with those 642 transponders and the course of action being taken by the Utilities Division to correct the issue.

- 1.) Letters were sent to 24 residents with transponders where plumbing was completed for the Second Meter, but no scheduled inspection by the Utilities Division was performed in order to establish a Second Meter account with the water billing office.
- 2.) Letters to be sent (*see attached*) to 483 residents with transponders beginning February 1, 2016 who have obtained a plumbing permit but no Second Meter account has been established with the water billing office.
- 3.) Letters will be sent to 135 residents with transponders who have NOT obtained a plumbing permit starting March 1, 2016

As of January 20, 2016 there are 914 residents that have registered for a Second Meter in 2015, but have not obtained a plumbing permit or a transponder.

I have summarized below problems that occurred with the roll out of the program in 2015 and (**DRAFT**) of corrective actions that will take place in 2016. The final procedures for registration of Second Water Meters will be complete by the end of February and made available to residents beginning in March 2016.

2015-Included an estimated cost for the installation of a Second Meter of the web site.
2016-Remove estimated cost from the web site.

2015-Closed registration as of April 1, 2015
2016-Open registration to all qualified residents with no closing date.

2015-Homeowner would register, contract with a plumber and assumed that once the plumber had installed the meter and connected the transponder, the installation of the second meter was complete, not knowing that the plumber/homeowner needed to contact the Utilities Division to activate the second meter.

2016-At the time the plumber applies for the plumbing permit he will need to pay for all costs associated with the permit, transponder and activation charge. When the work is completed he will be instructed to call Inspectional Services Department (ISD) for a final inspection, ISD will contact the Utilities Division to assist in the inspection, activate the meter and set up a Second Meter account with the billing office.

2015-Residents with existing Second Meters not properly made aware that an inspection by the Utilities Division was needed in order to activate a Second Meter account.
2016-Revise web site to highlight this need and include notification in the Bill Stuffer (attached).

City of Newton



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORK

Utilities Division

1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459-1449
Theodore J. Jerdee, Utilities Director
Telephone (617) 796-1650 Fax (617) 796-1653
tjerdee@newtonma.gov

Proposed letter to 483 residents under item #2

Mr. John Doe
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

January 20, 2016

RE: Registering for a Second Water Meter

Dr. Mr. Doe,

Our records indicate that you registered for a Second Water Meter in 2015, obtained a plumbing permit and received a transponder from the Utilities Division. To date you have not contacted Inspectional Services Department (617-796-1640) in order to close out your permit and have not contacted the Utilities Division (617-796-1640) to schedule an appointment to activate an Outdoor Water Meter account.

If you have decided **NOT** to install a Second Water Meter, please call the Utilities Division between 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM (M-F) to cancel your registration and schedule a time for the transponder to be picked up and an inspection of the domestic water meter to be performed.

You will need to comply with this notice within (30) calendar days of this letter to avoid further action.

Your prompt attention in the matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Theodore J. Jerdee

Cc; Inspectional Services Department

SAMPLE OF BILL STUFFER



**SECOND WATER METER PROGRAM
(Outdoor use only)**

The Second Water Meter Program is now open for enrollment for all residential properties with less than 5 units, please visit www.newtonma.gov or call the Utilities Division AT 617-796-1640 to register.

NO WORK SHALL COMMENCE WITHOUT A PLUMBING PERMIT ON SITE.

IF YOU HAVE AN EXISTING SECOND WATER METER THAT IS FOR OUTDOOR WATER USE ONLY YOU WILL NEED TO CONTACT THE UTILITIES DIVISION AT 617-796-1640 TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT FOR AN INSPECTION IN ORDER TO ACTIVATE A SECOND WATER METER ACCOUNT.

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS
SUMMARY OF AVAILABLE FUNDS

#237-15

	July 1, 2015		December 31, 2015		
	Available Balance	Additions	Appropriations/ Uses	Pending Appropriations	Available Balance
Development Mitigation:					
Riverside - Auburndale improvements	136,569	141	-	-	136,710
Riverside - Lower Falls improvements	372	-	-	-	372
Riverside - Other improvements	15,657	16	-	-	15,673
N-W Hospital drainage mitigation	19,191	20	-	-	19,211
Woodland Station I&J mitigation	85,380	-	-	-	85,380
Kessler Way I&J mitigation	73,750	-	-	-	73,750
Marriott - Commonwealth Ave. Landscape maintenance	20,900	-	-	-	20,900
Cherry St traffic signalization improvements	2,000	-	-	-	2,000
Newton Centre maintenance (St Petersburg Café)	4,000	-	-	-	4,000
O'Hara's Highlands pedestrian improvements	2,500	-	-	-	2,500
Café Santiago parking	2,500	-	-	-	2,500
Terry O'Reilly's Pub LLC	1,000	-	-	-	1,000
275 Washington St. Streetscape	2,500	-	-	-	2,500
258 Nevada St Linwood/Nevada St Handicapped Ramps	1,500	-	-	-	1,500
719 Washington St. - Village Café	2,500	-	-	-	2,500
335 Walnut St. Rox Diner Traffic/Parking Mitigation	2,500	-	-	-	2,500
CH Square I&J Mitigation	10,000	-	-	-	10,000
714-724 Beacon Crosswalk Relocation	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
22 Union Street Parking Improvements	-	2,500	-	-	2,500
Kessler Woods Development I&J	-	286,473	-	-	286,473
Community Preservation Fund:					
Open space purposes	-	357,251	-	(357,251)	-
Historic preservation purposes	4,420	357,251	(281,043)	-	80,628
Community housing purposes	-	357,251	-	(357,251)	-
All CPA purposes	8,219,044	2,080,905	-	(2,256,615)	8,043,334
Water and Sewer Funds:					
Stormwater Management Fund Surplus - Available for Appropriation	41,146	-	-	-	41,146
Stormwater Management Fund Operating Reserve - 2016 Budget	-	150,000	-	-	150,000
Sewer Fund Surplus - Budget Stabilization	-	-	-	-	-
Sewer Fund Surplus - Available for Appropriation	7,515,508	-	-	-	7,515,508
Sewer Operating Reserve - 2016 budget	-	1,627,374	-	-	1,627,374
Sewer Capital Reserve - 2016 budget	-	-	-	-	-