

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2011

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Lennon, Albright, Salvucci, Gentile, Crossley, Danberg, and Lappin

Also present: Ald. Fuller

City officials present: David Turocy (Acting Commissioner of Public Works), Fred Russell (Director of Utilities; Public Works Department), Donnalyn Khan (City Solicitor), Elaine Gentile (Director of Environmental Affairs; Department of Public Works), Courtney Forrester (Environmental Affairs; Department of Public Works), Donnalyn Khan (City Solicitor), and Robert Rooney (Chief Operating Officer),

**REFERRED PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#129-11(3) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR recommending that Section 29-67A of the City of Newton Revised Ordinances 2007 be amended to increase the fee for sewer clean-outs to more accurately reflect the City's cost of providing such a service.  
[04/11/11 @5:59 PM]

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 6-1-1 (Salvucci opposed, Lappin abstaining)**

**NOTE:** The Department of Public Works provided the attached letter with the proposed increase for lateral connection (private) sewer clean-outs. The attachment also includes an analysis of the cost of providing the service. Utilities Director Fred Russell reviewed the estimated cost of the City providing this service between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and the cost of responding to emergency calls during off hours. The Mayor is proposing an increase to \$150 per appointment during straight time and \$200 per response during overtime hours. The current cost of the service is \$25 for an appointment during straight time hours and \$75 per response during overtime hours. The current fees for this service do not come close to covering the cost of the program.

Mr. Russell stated that he expects that requests for appointments during regular hours will decrease due to the increase in cost; therefore, the Utilities Division would only offer the service on Mondays and Tuesdays. The regular time appointments are generally for preventative maintenance and residents are unlikely to pay the \$150 for that service. It is unlikely that there would be a decrease in the overtime calls as they are related to emergencies. The Utilities Division responded to 139 calls for a sewer line emergency during off hours this year.

Ald. Albright inquired how many people utilize the preventative maintenance option. Mr. Russell responded that the Utilities Division has received approximately 265 requests for preventative maintenance service this year. Ald. Albright feels that if the City is going to continue to offer the service, it should inform all citizens of the program.

Several Committee members questioned the need for the City to provide the service at all. Mr. Russell was asked if the City discontinued the service, would there be any repercussions. Mr. Russell felt that there were no repercussions to eliminating the preventative maintenance portion of the service; however, he suggested that the City might want to give property owners some notice that the service would no longer be available. Mr. Russell added that the emergency response does not result in a delay of work and there is always an on-call person, which would still be required if the service were eliminated to respond to all types of emergencies in the Utilities Division. Some Committee members felt that it was important that the City continue with the emergency response, as it is very traumatic for citizens to deal with a sewer backup in their basements, sewer backups can pose a health risk, and sometimes the emergency is a result of an issue with the City's sewer system. Ald. Fuller suggested that the Public Works Department survey for profit companies to see what they charge for preventative maintenance service in order to determine what the cost of such a program should be if the City decides to keep it.

Chief Operating Officer Robert Rooney stated that the Executive Office concluded that the service should be kept. The City is facing tough economic times and is proposing a water and sewer rate increase. At this time, the Mayor is not in favor of eliminating City services. The service also provides the City with a sense of what is going on with the 200 miles of private lateral sewer connections. Ald. Crossley pointed out that if the City does not offer the service the two employees that would be dedicated to the service on Monday and Tuesday could be utilized for City projects. The City's sewer infrastructure is in terrible shape; therefore, it is important that the City dedicate all of its resources to repairing and maintaining it.

The Committee discussed the proposed fees. The fees do not actually include the full cost recovery, as fringe benefits, administration, and management of the program are not included in the proposed fees. Ald. Salvucci stated that he is not in favor of increasing the fees for the service at all. Ald. Gentile stated that the Mayor's proposed fee is a substantial increase and the City has provided the service for years. He believes it makes sense to continue to provide for a short time in order to wean people off the program.

The question of whether the Board of Aldermen has the authority to eliminate the service arose. City Solicitor Donnalyn Khan joined the Committee and gave her opinion that the Board does not have the authority to eliminate the service. She also pointed out that a municipal fee is paid to compensate the City for its costs, which must be reasonable and documented. The Committee requested that the Department of Public Works provide a full cost recovery summary for the program, which includes fringe benefit, administration, and management costs to the Board of Aldermen. Acting Commissioner Turocy stated that he would provide the information for the upcoming Aldermanic packet.

Ald. Gentile moved approval of the item stating that if the proposed fees are not adopted the current fees will remain in place and he is not sure that the Board has the authority to amend the Mayor's proposal. Many Committee members asked for an opinion from the Law Department regarding amending the item. Ald. Gentile offered to consult the Law Department before the Finance Committee's discussion. If the Law Department is of the opinion that the

proposal can be amended by the Board, an amendment could be offered and discussed by the Finance Committee. Ald. Gentile added that Aldermen could also speak with the Mayor to convince him to amend his proposal before the next Board of Aldermen meeting. The Committee voted to approve the motion by a vote of six in favor, one opposed, and one abstention.

**REFERRED PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#129-11(4) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** recommending the City of Newton Revised Ordinances 2007 be amended to establish a fee for the collection of “white goods,” such as washing machines, dryers, water heaters, refrigerators, air conditions, computers, monitors, televisions, and printers and to further assign responsibility for pick-up and disposal of said white goods and collection of such fees to a third- party administrator. [04/11/11 @5:59 PM]

**ACTION:** **APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:** The Department of Public Works Director of Environmental Affairs, Elaine Gentile, presented the proposed “white goods” collection fee. Ms. Gentile has negotiated a deal with a third-party contractor to collect “white goods” for a fee of \$12 per stop for the collection of one television or computer monitor and all other white goods. If there is more than one television and/or monitor at a stop, there will be an additional \$12 fee for each monitor and/or television. The contractor would handle scheduling of appointments for collection and payments for the service to the contractor. The contractor is also willing to pick-up white goods at commercial properties. In addition, if a resident does not wish to do curbside pick-up, they can drop the white goods off at the Rumford Depot for a charge of \$12 per TV or monitor, the contractor will pick it up there. The attached memorandum from the Acting Commissioner of Public Works and the proposed Appliance and Electronics Protocol provides detailed information on the proposed program.

The Committee members were very pleased with the proposed White Good Collection Program. Ald. Gentile moved approval, which carried unanimously.

#55-11 **ALD. FULLER, CROSSLEY, ALBRIGHT, DANBERG, FREEDMAN, HESS-MAHAN** recommending that Section 29-67A of the City of Newton Revised Ordinances 2007 regarding sewer clean-out fees be updated either to increase the fee from \$25 during normal hours (\$75 during overtime hours) to a fee more closely representing the full cost of service of cleaning a privately-owned building sewer lateral or, alternatively, eliminating the service. [02/14/11 @ 5:25 PM]

**ACTION:** **HELD 8-0**

**NOTE:** The Committee decided to hold the item until the Mayor’s item related to sewer clean out fees has been discussed in the Finance Committee and the Board has acted on it. The docketors may wish to have further discussion regarding the sewer clean-out fees; therefore, the Committee voted unanimously in support of a motion to hold the item.

#40-11      ALD. ALBRIGHT AND CROSSLEY requesting discussion regarding the possibility of changes to Newton's trash program to charge for the removal of white and bulky goods. [01/21/11 @ 1:42 PM]

**ACTION:**      **NO ACTION NECESSARY 8-0**

**NOTE:**      The Committee voted the item no action necessary as Docket Item #129-11(4) addresses the request to modify the "white goods" collection program.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#145-11      HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer the sum of three hundred seventy-three thousand dollars (\$373,000) from the Snow and Ice Regular Overtime Account to the Sand and Salt Account and to transfer the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) from the Snow and Ice Regular Overtime Schools Account to the Sand and Salt Account. [04-25-11 @ 5:55 PM]

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED 8-0**

**NOTE:**      Acting Commissioner David Turocy explained that this is a request to transfer funds within the department's budget and requires no additional money. The transfer of funds between salary accounts to general expense accounts requires Board of Aldermen approval. The Public Works Department has paid all of its personnel expenses. However, there are still some outstanding bills that need to be paid. Once the transfer has been made to the Sand and Salt Account it can be transferred to other expense accounts without Board of Aldermen approval.

Ald. Gentile stated that he would like the Acting Commissioner to look at why other communities appear to be spending a lot less on snow and ice operations. The Acting Commissioner responded that he had seen the article but questioned the reported figures. Often times, a Public Works Commissioner does not provide the entire cost of the snow and ice operations. He added that Newton might have a more stringent policy in terms of clearing the roadways, which would result in a higher cost. Acting Commissioner Turocy is also looking at the City's policy on paying plow contractors by the inch. Ald. Gentile may docket item requesting further information on the costs of snow and ice operations. Ald. Lappin moved approval, which carried unanimously.

#385-07      ALD. SCHNIPPER AND GENTILE updating the Public Facilities Committee on the progress of the Newton North High School Project. [11/21/07 @ 10:23 AM]

**ACTION:**      **HELD 7-0 (Salvucci not voting)**

**NOTE:**      At the previous Public Facilities Ald. Schnipper and Gentile shared with the Committee that the construction team is looking at moving the baseball field 20' down Lowell Avenue towards Elm Road. Committee members asked that a plan of the changes to the field location and proposed slope be made available to them. Ald. Gentile and Schnipper supplied the Committee with a plan showing the change in the location of the baseball field and the replacement of the retaining wall with a grass slope along Hull Street. The slope will have benches to replace the bleachers that were to be placed in front of the retaining wall. The same number of seats will be available to accommodate people attending the game. Neighbors along

Lowell Avenue raised concerns regarding the siting of the bleachers on Lowell Avenue. The construction team is looking at either additional landscaping or changing the bleachers to benches.

Ald. Schnipper stated that she was informed that the irrigation system for the fields was included in the original plan; therefore, it is already funded. Ald. Gentile added that he supports recreating an on-site well for irrigation. There should be enough cost savings on the project to fund the well. The use of well water would generate significant saving in future years, as the City would not be using MWRA water to irrigate the fields. It is expected that the construction team will continue discussing the well on Friday and Ald. Gentile will keep the Committee informed of any developments.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman

City of Newton



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton Centre, MA 02459-1449

**RECEIVED**

*By City Clerk at 5:05 pm, Apr 29, 2011*

April 29, 2011

To: Honorable Mayor Setti D. Warren

Via: Robert R. Rooney, Chief Operating Officer  
Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer

From: David F. Turocy, Interim Commissioner of Public Works

Subject: **Private Sanitary Sewer Cleaning – revised fees**

The Utilities Division of the DPW provides a service to Newton residents for cleaning/flushing their private sanitary sewer service lines, for both scheduled preventative maintenance and emergency response. Currently, the Utilities Division charges a fee of \$25.00/appointment for both scheduled preventative maintenance as well as emergency response during normal business hours and \$75.00/appointment for emergency response during non-business hours.

I am proposing to increase the fee for these services to be in line with actual costs borne by the Utilities Division. The attached "fact sheet" gives a detailed breakdown of costs. Based on this information, I am proposing the following revised fee structure:

- Normal Business hours (Monday-Friday; 7:00AM to 3:00PM)  
Scheduled preventative maintenance & emergency calls: \$150.00/appt
- Non-business hours (Overtime-all other times, including holidays)  
Emergency calls that require immediate response only: \$200.00/appt.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Turocy", is written over the printed name and title.

David F. Turocy  
Interim DPW Commissioner

CC: Fred Russell, Utilities Director  
Ryan Ferrara, DPW Chief of Budget and Finance

**Sewer Service Cleaning-Revised Policy****Current fee structure:**

Monday through Friday (7:00AM to 3:00PM):	\$25.00
All other times:	\$75.00

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**Proposed fee structures:****Scheduled appointments:**

Preventative Maintenance scheduled Monday through Friday (7:00AM to 3:00PM):

- Foreman (\$25.52/hour) @ 2.5 hours= \$63.80
  - HME0 (\$22.03/hour) @ 2.5 hours= \$55.08
  - Utility van & equipment (\$12.50/hour) @ 2.5 hours= \$31.25
- \$150.13

- **Fee for scheduled preventative maintenance: \$150.00/appt.**

(Note: administrative costs associated with time spent by Clerk to record information for request and time spent by Asst. Supt. to schedule personnel and complete invoicing to be absorbed by City)

**Emergency Response:**

Unexpected stoppages that require immediate response:

Requests during normal business hours (Monday through Friday (7:00AM to 3:00PM)): **\$150.00**

Requests during non-business (overtime) hours

(Note: As per Union contract, one on-call employee guaranteed straight time and minimum 4 hour charge/employee for appointments that are required on overtime.)

- Foreman (\$25.52/hour) @ 2.0 hours= \$51.04<sup>(1)</sup>
  - HME0 (\$33.05/hour) @ 4.0 hours= \$132.20
  - Utility van & equipment (\$12.50/hour) @ 2.5 hours= \$31.25
- \$214.49

- **Fee for scheduled preventative maintenance: \$200.00/appt.**

<sup>(1)</sup> Difference in cost between guaranteed on-call (4 hrs @ 25.52/hr=\$102.08) and minimum 4 hour at time and a half (4 hrs @ \$38.38=\$153.12)

(Note: administrative costs associated with time spent by Clerk to record information for request and time spent by Asst. Supt. to schedule personnel and complete invoicing to be absorbed by City)

City of Newton



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton Centre, MA 02459-1449

Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

**RECEIVED**

*By City Clerk at 5:06 pm, Apr 29, 2011*

April 29, 2011

To: Honorable Mayor Setti D. Warren

Via: Robert R. Rooney, Chief Operating Officer  
Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer

From: David F. Turocy, Interim Commissioner of Public Works

Subject: **White Goods Collection Fee**

The Department of Public Works is responsible for the collection and disposal of solid waste and recyclable materials in the City of Newton. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has banned white goods and cathode ray tube (CRT) electronics from the normal solid waste collection stream and imposed separate disposal requirements for these items. As such, the DPW has contracted out separately for their collection and disposal. For FY 2012, the DPW is proposing a White Goods Fee to recover our costs for this separate collection and disposal program.

Based on research of other community programs, knowledge of solid waste practices and historical Newton statistics, my staff reviewed several options; from scheduling calls and payment collections in-house, to our vendor scheduling calls and collecting payments. We also compared this information to private collection firms and prior pricing for white goods during contract negotiations.

Based on review and discussions with our current contract, I am proposing a Fee of \$12.00 for the collection and disposal of white goods. The process would work as follows:

- Residents call the DPW vendor, CRTR, to schedule an appointment for collection and make the payment to the vendor.
- The vendor will charge \$12.00 per stop, which will include up to one TV or computer monitor. Each additional TV or computer monitor will cost an additional \$12.00, as they require additional handling.
- The \$12.00 fee will be assessed per stop, not for each individual item, other than CRT's.
- On one Saturday each month CRTR will be on hand at the Recycling Depot to collect accepted material from residents who do not wish to pay the curbside fee. However, there will still be a \$12.00 fee for any TV and/or computer monitor.
- The vendor will collect any fee at the depot on site.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "DTurocy".

David F. Turocy  
Interim DPW Commissioner

CC: Elaine Gentile, Director of Environmental Affairs  
Ryan Ferrara, DPW Chief of Budget and Finance

Telephone: (617) 796-1008 • Fax: (617) 796-1050 • dturocy@newtonma.gov



**PROPOSED APPLIANCE AND ELECTRONICS PROTOCOL**  
July 2011

**SCHEDULING:**

- City will acquire a separate telephone number to be used by Newton residents only.
- Calls will be forwarded from this number to the CRTR number.
- The message will instruct residents on how to schedule a pickup, what is accepted and how to make a payment.
- If a resident wishes to schedule on line, there will be a direct link from Newton's 311 system to an online web form with the same instructions.
- Calls made through Wednesdays at 3:30 PM will be scheduled for the Saturday of the same week.
- Calls received on Thursdays and Fridays will be scheduled for the Saturday of the following week.

**PAYMENT:**

- Resident will make a payment by contacting Paypal online where they will be able to pay by credit card, debit card or a bank transfer.
- If a resident wishes to pay by check, CRTR must receive payment before the item is scheduled for collection.
  - If a resident chooses not to pay online, CRTR drivers will be able to take the payment from the resident by check or cash on the day of collection.

**TROUBLESHOOTING:**

- If a resident is having a problem scheduling an item or items or has questions, CRTR will return the call within one business day. If there is an issue, CRTR will notify Environmental Affairs.

**EDUCATION AND OUTREACH:**

- The City will mail a postcard announcing the new appliance and electronics collection protocol prior to the start of the program.
- The website and online customer service center will also contain this information.
- Customer service staff will be educated on the new program to answer questions to assist residents.

ATTACHMENT 1

Acceptable for White Goods Collection

APPLIANCES/OTHER METAL ITEMS:

Washers  
Dryers  
Hot Water Heaters  
Dishwashers  
Stove/Ranges  
Ovens  
Microwaves  
Computers, Monitors  
Printers/Scanners  
TVs

FREON ITEMS:

Air Conditioners  
Refrigerators  
Freezers  
Dehumidifiers