



## **Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report**

**City of Newton**

**In City Council**

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**BUDGET REPORT**

**Thursday, May 2, 2019**

Present: Councilor Auchincloss (Acting Chair), Markiewicz, Downs, Cote, Lipof, Noel and Grossman

Absent: Councilor Ciccone (Chair)

Also Present: Councilor Schwartz

City Staff: Acting Chief Gino Lucchetti, Newton Fire Department and Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer

### **Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees**

**#542-18(2) Submittal of the FY 2020 Municipal/School Operating Budget**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter the FY20 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$430,284,381 passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY20-FY24 Capital Improvement Program (#542-18 & 542-18(2)).

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION 04/16/19; LAST DATE TO PASS THE BUDGET 05/31/19**

### **Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees**

**#542-18 Submittal of the FY 2020 to FY 2024 Capital Improvement Plan**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the Fiscal Years 2020 to 2024 Capital Improvement Plan pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter.

### **Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees**

**#542-18(3) Submittal of the FY 2020 – FY 2024 Supplemental Capital Improvement Plan**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY 2020 – FY 2024 Supplemental Capital Improvement Plan.

**Action: Public Safety & Transportation Approved 7-0, STRAW VOTE**

**Note:** Acting Chief Gino Lucchetti and Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer joined the Committee for discussion on these items.

Acting Chief Lucchetti discussed his FY20 budget summary and opening remarks.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL & STAFFING:

The Fire Department personnel is broken into the following six sub-divisions:

1. Emergency Management
2. Fire Suppression
3. Fire Prevention
4. Emergency Medical Services
5. Technical Rescue
6. Communications Division

The Fire Department employs 199 full time employees and zero part time employee.

Acting Chief Lucchetti stated that the operating budget has allowed the department to add one part-time employee working fewer than twenty hours per week to work with the Director of Operations and to assist Acting Chief Lucchetti with projects, accomplishments, goals and emergency management projects. The employee will keep the comprehensive management plan up to date and to develop a community emergency response team.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT FY19 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Acting Chief Lucchetti explained in detail the Fire Department accomplishments.

1. Maintained class 1 fire rating through extensive training and upgraded dispatch software. Newton is one out of five in the State with a class 1 fire rating. Acting Chief Lucchetti explained the difference between a Fire Inspector 1 and Fire Inspector 2. This certification is offered by the Firefighters Academy. Fire Inspector 1 is a basic inspector and Fire Inspector 2 is a more advanced certification certifying as inspectors and investigators. It is beneficial to firefighters to go through the fire prevention certification at the academy at no cost. Certifications provide valuable training and assist a firefighter with their future.
2. Completed major overhaul of radio infrastructure (antennas and cabling) at the Ober Road water tank and Newton Wellesley Hospital to prepare for simulcast system. This included the addition of a generator, transfer switch, and new building for Ober Road.
3. Installed new gear washers and dryers at fire stations to assist in the well-being of the firefighters in their living quarters to eliminate carcinogens.
4. Added new Ladder 2 to our fleet two weeks ago. This is the first time in many years that all the Newton Fire Department apparatus are within the NFPA regulations.

5. Replaced another 24 sets of bunker gear that are approaching their shelf life. 181 firefighters each receive two sets of bunker gear that have a 10-year life expectancy.
6. Installed two new fire circuits in the area of Winchester and Needham Streets to assure consistent coverage for that area. It is unfortunate the boxes deteriorate over the years.
7. Conducted an audit on all existing fire/emergency boxes throughout the city. Repaired and installed 50 fire/emergency boxes to date.
8. Completed 64 double pole changes. This number was at 100; 10 remain to be completed.
9. Replaced 65 portable radios that have reached their shelf life with new state of the art radios for each riding position within the department.
10. Completed second floor attachment on the Fire Operations and Rescue training facility with windows and theatrical smoke. The firefighters use this facility daily to train on evolutions.
11. (FORT ) prop for firefighting and tech rescue operations. This teaches firefighters fire behavior in void spaces.
12. Completed hiring and training of eight new recruits. The department is staffed with a total of 199 personnel split between suppression and staff positions. The department consists of 174 suppression personnel, five fire prevention officers, three training officers, five wires division personnel, two full time mechanics, one IT Director, and three administrative assistants. To deliver services, ten fire companies manning six Engines, three Ladder trucks and one Heavy Rescue are housed in six fire stations which are staffed with a minimum of 36 personnel from April to December and 42 personnel from January to March. The Fire Department is part of the Metro Fire Association, a group of 34 Metropolitan Boston Fire Departments that entered into mutual aid agreements to provide fire and life safety protection to an area covering 351 square miles and serving 30% of the State's population.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT FY20 GOALS

Acting Chief Lucchetti explained in detail the Fire Department goals.

Outcome 1 - Improve communication/municipal fire alarm system. This is a five-year plan to replace backup batteries and receivers.

Outcome 2 - Training. Improve training capabilities by preparing and educating firefighters.

Outcome 3 - Implement permitting software. Information Technology and Inspectional Services Departments are working together to implement a virtual software system to make easier for all a 'one stop shop'. Councilor Markiewicz explained that there are twenty departments in the

City. Residents must visit the appropriate department for one thing then go to another department for something else. By implementing this software, it will be integrated to one place with each department piece available for viewing. All departments will work together making the request that will be routed to the appropriate person at the appropriate time. An RFP is going out this week, a permitting software company has not been selected.

There is \$750,000 in the Capital Budget to help defray some of this cost. Councilor Markiewicz then stated that this is the most important application for the City to purchase. This is a state-of-the-art software program and where the City needs to be. Chief Financial Officer Lemieux added that the system allows permitting, all records, code violations and every permit for a property. Councilor Markiewicz added that Land Use permits will also be available in this system.

Outcome 4 - Create a back-up system at the Dispatch Center. There are 2 servers in the City.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

The following are significant line item changes to expenses in the budget:

Fire Administration - \$10,185. decrease.

Fire Station Maintenance - \$11,140. Increase.

Fire Vehicle Maintenance - \$17,925. decrease.

Fire Training - \$7,065. decrease.

Emergency Operations Center - \$23,000. Increase.

### CIP

Acting Chief Lucchetti stated the CIP includes the following project for FY20:

Priority #52 Replace Fire Pumper Truck (Engine 2) \$800,000. Every two years the department replaces a vehicle making the oldest truck 20 years old. This makes the department compliant with all apparatus.

### GRANTS, GIFTS AND REVOLVING FUNDS

Acting Chief Lucchetti touched on a few grants, gifts and revolving funds that have been requested for FY20:

1. Sale of Surplus Fire Equipment Revolving \$7,500. This account was created to sell surplus vehicles.
2. Federal Emergency Management Performance Grant \$35,000. The average grant money received is \$20,000, not \$35,000. This grant allows the department to purchase laptop computers for the Emergency Operation Center, digital and thermal cameras.
3. State Regional HAZMAT Response Grant Program \$40,000. This grant covers the overtime of HAZMAT technicians. Currently there is one member, Acting Chief Lucchetti is hopeful a second member will join.
4. State MDU Deployment Grant \$5,000. This grant replaces equipment in the decontamination trailer. The City is not receiving this grant. The City receives a \$2,000. grant from the Newton Wellesley Hospital (the Mass Decon Unit) to purchase heaters or replace lines).

#### QUESTIONS and ANSWERS:

- Is the personnel budget increase of \$500,000 due to vacancies? Acting Chief Lucchetti answered yes; he stated that filling vacancies is a large issue at this time. Getting slots in the training academies is the departments biggest challenge. Seven members are on a long-term illness or disability, three firefighters will be going out on a disability pension at the end of the year. Turnover and retirement also added to this. Four firefighters graduated from the academy on April 26, 2019, they will go into service beginning May 6, 2019. Eight more mandatory retirements are expected in the next 1½ years. It is constant recruiting. If the department hires people today, they cannot get into the Firefighters Academy until January 2020. The number of vacancies does not help the overtime budget. Chief Financial Officer Lemieux explained that in FY20 there are 52.4 weeks. You will see an increase in all department budgets reflecting this. In FY19 and FY18 there were 52 weeks.
- Due to the recent poles and traffic signals being knocked down does a driver have 180' vision while driving a truck? It was then asked if the department has looked into purchasing vehicles with a capability of allowing 180' vision. Acting Chief Lucchetti answered that the departments apparatus has not knocked down the poles and traffic signals. He then said that it is difficult driving these large vehicles because the driver does not have a full view of the back of the apparatus and that the apparatus does not come equipped with backup cameras.
- Are the Fire Department personnel treated after an incident such as at the recent large fire that had a death? Acting Chief Lucchetti answered yes; directly after a fire personnel are

treated with Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) from the Boston Fire Department who works with Newton Fire Department personnel immediately after a fire.

- What is the biggest challenge the department faces? Acting Chief Lucchetti answered the biggest department challenge is to get firefighters into the academies in a timely manner.

Committee members commended Acting Chief Lucchetti for his continued excellence. They then thanked the Fire Department for their excellent continued work.

Councilor Markiewicz moved approval on a straw vote to accept the Fire Department Budget, CIP and grants, totaling \$24,278,793, which is a 2.11% increase over FY18 budget. Committee members agreed 7-0.

At approximately 9:25 pm, Councilor Lipof made a motion to adjourn. Council members agreed 7-0.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Jacob D. Auchincloss, Acting Chair**