



Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Present: Councilors Ciccone (Chair), Downs, Auchincloss, Lipof, Cote and Markiewicz

Absent: Councilors Noel and Grossman

City Staff: Chief David MacDonald, Newton Police Department; Isaac Prizant, Traffic Engineer; Nicole Freedman, Director Transportation, Planning Department and Barney Heath, Director, Planning and Development Department

Referred to Public Safety & Transportation and Finance Committees

#420-19 Transfer \$1,900,000 and \$600,000 for the retroactive pay of Newton Police

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer the sum of one million and nine hundred thousand (\$1,900,000) from Prior Year Carry Forward for Wage Reserve and six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) from Current Year Wage Reserve to pay for the retroactive salaries and stipends due to the members of Newton Police Superior Officers' for the period covering July 1, 2014 through FY2020.

Action: Public Safety Approved 5-0, Councilor Downs not voting

Note: Chief MacDonald, Newton Police Department joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Chair Ciccone stated that it has been five years since a contract has been granted and it has been a very long negotiating process.

Chief MacDonald stated that he became involved in 2014 as the Executive Officer in the negotiation process with the Superior Officers Union. In the summer of 2015, both labor and management believed that the department was close to an agreement but were unable to close the loop due to the fact that there was going to be an Executive Board election in December. The President and Vice-President of the Union opted to step down. In September, a decision was made to wait until after the New Year when a new Executive Board would commence negotiating. The new Executive Board began in January but were not able to get the next bargaining session for eleven months, basically 2016 was wasted pushing the contract. The department went through the process of mediation and this past fall ended with the joint labor management counsel to solve issues on the contract. This contract is now pending. The department will be meeting with them to commence FY20-FY21 to catch up.

A Councilor asked if this contract would make the department current? Chief MacDonald answered that the department will still be a year short. The contract will bring the department up to FY19. The department is hopeful to commence bargaining soon.

A Councilor asked if this would be regular payroll? Chief MacDonald answered yes; general cost of living adjustments, administrative stipends, longevity, detail raise rate and base wages.

Without further discussion, Councilor Cote made a motion to approve this request. Council members agreed 5-0, Councilor Downs not voting.

#330-19 Request for a discussion regarding the Commuter Rail Communities Coalition
COUNCILORS NORTON, AUCHINCLOSS AND CICCONE, requesting a discussion regarding the Commuter Rail Communities Coalition and the City of Newton's participation goals.

Action: Public Safety No Action Necessary 5-0, Councilor Downs not voting

Note: Nicole Freedman, Director Transportation Planning Department joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Ms. Freedman provided an update and stated that the Commuter Rail Communities Coalition (CCRC) mission is to coordinate advocacy for all commuter rail communities and to support the planning for the rail network. The goal is to ensure the rail becomes a critical part of a modernized transportation network. The group was formed in June 2018 and the City joined in March 2019. The membership is constructed of town managers and Mayors staffed by MACC Transportation For America for ninety-five mass partnerships MBTA Advisory Board and Transit Matters. There have been several presentations to date. Kiolis attended and explained their operations and plan. Commuter Rail Director walked through the capital plan and the rail vision. Achievements to date since October 2019 support the most ambitious commuter rail vision options. Subsequent to this date, the chairs sent a letter to the fiscal control management board supporting that most ambitious option.

The MBTA Planning Division is reviewing long-term what the commuter rail should be. Six different options have been discussed and put forth. Almost all are supporting the most ambitious plan with an incredible cost for option six. Option six would provide 15-minute headways during peak and non-peak times at all stations, inbound and outbound. This option would be fully electrified. All platforms are at high level including major expansions. Many mayors support any and all ideas.

In November 2018, a document was provided supporting revenue options. Revenue is necessary to make this come to fruition. The group supports any and all options provided.

Ms. Freedman stated that the cost in 2020 is approximately 29 billion dollars. A low figure is 18 billion dollars bonding bill.

A Councilor asked who represents the City of Newton at these meetings? Ms. Freedman answered that she attends the meetings, not the mayor.

A Councilor asked what will be the focus in 2020 and 2021? Ms. Freedman answered that this is to be determined. Cities and towns will continue pushing for revenue. Individual votes were not taken. The end desire was that everyone supported option six.

Councilors agreed and stated that they support the CRCC mission.

Without further discussion, Councilor Auchincloss made a motion for no action necessary. Council members agreed 5-0, Councilor Downs not voting.

#489-18 **Traffic study and discussion of Angier School parking and traffic**
COUNCILORS DOWNS, CROSSLEY & RICE requesting a traffic study and discussion of parking and traffic at the arrival and dismissal times at the Angier Elementary School.

Action: **Public Safety No Action Necessary 6-0**

Note: Isaac Prizant, Traffic Engineer joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

A Councilor stated that there are two new schools in the area this year.

Mr. Prizant summarized the memo provided to the Committee. He stated that the memo was created after voting a “No Turn on Red” sign at the intersection of Beacon Street and Manitoba Road. After installation of the signs, concerns were raised about the traffic circulation and possibly make some signal timing adjustments.

Mr. Prizant stated that Mr. Sobel, Director of Transportation made initial observations and tweak signal timings at Manitoba Road to increase the ‘green time’ allowing more vehicles to exit. After some time and discussions, Mr. Prizant and Mr. Sobel made additional observations both on a sunny and rainy day. Mr. Prizant conducted the observations and noted that on both days, the same number of parents and students were walking and biking. Overall, the memo states that traffic circulation went well on both days, the increase of ‘green time’ alleviated some concerns and traffic ques were not a major concern.

A Councilor noted that the “No Turn on Red” sign has been effective and stated that the observation dates are prior to the two new schools opening this year in the area. The problem is a 30-minute issue in the morning and afternoon hours with vehicles queuing up. Due to the new schools, traffic tends to back up to Chestnut Street in the morning. Drivers have the tendency to be hostile in the morning and are cutting through the school parking lots, it is a safety concern. Could the “No Turn on Red” sign include certain times of the day?

A Council member asked if children could cross at different (safer) locations?

A Council member suggested reviewing the Suzuki School driveway.

A Council member suggested reviewing the intersection of Woodward, Winchester and Beacon Streets. Mr. Prizant stated that Woodward and Beacon Streets concerns have been raised by the Complete Streets Group.

Without further discussion, Councilor Downs made a motion for no action necessary. Council members agreed 6-0.

At approximately 7:30 p.m., Councilor Auchincloss made a motion to adjourn. Committee members agreed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Allan Ciccone, Jr. Chair

City of Newton



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Transportation Division

110 Crafts Street
Newton, MA 02460

Ruthanne Fuller

Mayor

From: Isaac Prizant
Jason S. Sobel, P.E., PTOE

Subject: Angier School Traffic Circulation Evaluation

Date: November 14, 2019

The City of Newton DPW Transportation Division has completed morning school arrival observations at the Angier School on Beacon Street. The focus of the traffic observations was centered at the intersection of Beacon Street, Manitoba Road and Angier School driveway. The initial concerns were raised about congestion and traffic signal timing at the Beacon Street / Manitoba Road intersection during the discussion of a No Turn on Red restriction for the Manitoba Road and Angier School driveway approaches to Beacon Street.

Observations were done on the following mornings and weather conditions:

- Friday October 12, 2018 - clear and cool temperatures
- Tuesday March 26, 2019 - Sunny, moderate temperatures
- Wednesday April 3, 2019 - Cloudy, light rain, cold temperatures

As part of the Angier School project, a new signal installation at the intersection of Beacon Street, Manitoba Road and Angier School driveway. While Beacon Street is the primary carries significantly more traffic than Manitoba Road, DPW Transportation Division received complaints from residents of Manitoba Road regarding the signal timing at the intersection with Beacon Street. The initial observations found that only two to three vehicles from Manitoba Road could turn onto Beacon Street each traffic signal cycle.

As a result of those initial observations, DPW Transportation increased the green time allocated to Manitoba Road from 6 seconds per cycle to 9 seconds per cycle. With the longer green times for Manitoba Road in plans, the subsequent observations indicated that four to five vehicles from Manitoba Road could turn onto Beacon Street each traffic signal cycle. The morning observations between 8:00 – 8:30 AM noted typical queues on Manitoba Road reaching 2-3 vehicles, with a maximum observed queue of 6 vehicles at 8:20 AM on April 3, 2019. Typical queues, as well as a max queue observed of 5 vehicles on March 26, 2019, would clear in one cycle. A max queue of 6 vehicles observed on April 3, 2019, did not clear in one cycle, but the remaining vehicles cleared on the next signal cycle.

Generally, traffic circulation through the Beacon Street corridor abutting the Angier School operated well. Traffic flow would transition from free flowing to heavier flow at 8:10 AM and remain heavy until 8:30 AM. In all observed times, many parents and children walked to school, with little noticeable difference on the light rainy day. Pedestrians would actuate an exclusive pedestrian phase nearly every cycle during the morning school rush, causing increased but reasonable congestion along Beacon Street. Beacon Street eastbound vehicle queues from the intersection with Waban Avenue would occasionally reach the school exit driveway, but generally did not block the intersection with Manitoba Road.

In conclusion, the current revised signal timings allow for manageable vehicle queues and circulation during peak periods of school arrival. The Transportation Division does not recommend any further signal timing adjustments at this time.