

## Mayor's Update



### Ward 6 Recount

Results of the Saturday recount of the Ward 6 City Councilors-at-Large race echo the results of the official election tally: Vicki Danberg retained her seat with 7,504 votes and Alicia Bowman defeated Greg Schwartz by 29 votes - 6,778 to 6,749.

The recount, requested by Schwartz, added one vote to his total while Bowman's tally remained the same – leaving him 29 votes short of retaining his seat. Nine votes were added to incumbent Danberg's total. The slight change in the final tally (just 10 of the approximately 15,500 votes cast across the city) is a result of the Election Commission determining a small number of ballots previously marked as blank were actually a vote for

one of the three candidates. (For example, a few voters had not filled in the circle next to a candidate's name but instead had used a check mark.)

My thanks to City Clerk David Olson, Assistant Clerk for Elections Patricia Schiavoni, employees in the Clerk's office, poll workers and volunteers from both campaigns who spent more than 12 hours hand counting every vote cast in the Nov. 5 municipal election from Ward 6. The scene at the Cabot Elementary School cafeteria during the recount truly was democracy in action; the fact that the final vote count was so close to that recorded of the official election results is reassuring.

### Teachers' Contract – Some Details

As announced last week, the School Committee negotiating team, in collaboration with Maureen Lemieux (our CFO) from the Mayor's Office, reached a tentative agreement with the Newton Teachers Association.

Our agreement reflects how much we value every educator in Newton and their contribution to making Newton Public Schools such a wonderful place for all our children.

On Monday, December 16, the union is meeting to vote on the contract. If ratified, the School Committee will also vote at our regularly scheduled meeting later that evening. Once the contracts are ratified, copies may be found on the NPS website.

Given that we are well into the 2019/2020 school year, the tentative agreement reflects a one-year retroactive contract for the current year, followed by a three-year contract from September 1, 2020 - August 31, 2023.

Here are some highlights:

- Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA):

For the one year contract:

- Current year top step: 2.75%  
- Current year non-top step: 2.50%

For the 3-year contract (in total):

-Top step: 9.0%

-Non-top step: 7.75%

(Teachers receive automatic increases in their wages, known as “steps,” until they reach a specific year of service, called “top step.” These “steps” are in addition to the negotiated COLA.)

- Starting salary increases for new teachers and educational support staff (approximate increase of 4%)
- New stipends for middle school content leaders and cultural exploration coordinators and assistant coordinators
- Slight increase of \$5 in health insurance co-pay for primary care and specialist visits. Significant decrease in co-pays for more convenient care options like “minute clinic” and “urgent care”
- Changes to parental leave policy that treats parents of all genders equally
- Hour, wage, and protection increases for educational support professionals
- Longevity payment increase of 10% for faculty with more than ten years in Newton
- Injury protection benefits for the rare occasion that educators sustain serious injury while on the job

Our goal with this contract is to continue to attract, inspire and retain terrific educators.

## Newton Power Choice Savings

Do you remember that we started Newton Power Choice in March 2019? We were pleased to provide all of the City’s electricity customers with power that matches 60% of their electricity use with local, renewable sources such as solar and wind.



Newton  
**POWERCHOICE**  
Clean electricity for Newton

Newton Power Choice significantly reduces the City’s carbon footprint. This program also makes Newton the community with the highest percentage of additional local, renewable electricity of any of the approximately 140 cities and towns in Massachusetts with municipal aggregation programs.

I had hoped, but could not promise, that the cost of electricity from Newton Power Choice would also save us money. So far, so good.

The State just approved the new six-month Eversource Basic Service electricity price for January – July 2020. Once again, participating in Newton Power Choice will cost Newton households *less* than had they remained on Eversource Basic Service. Good news: even if you opt up to 100% renewable power, you will still save money.

The price Newton Power Choice customers pay compared to the Eversource Basic Service rate fluctuates depending on the season. Our Newton Power Choice rate stays the same from the time it was signed last November for 22 months through September 2020; Eversource's rate, however, fluctuates every six months, typically with lower rates in the summer and higher in the winter.

When Newton Power Choice went into effect in March 2019, a "typical" Newton electricity customer (who uses 710 kwh/month) saved \$16.48 per month on Newton Power Choice. When the Eversource Basic Service Rate went down from July through the end of December 2019, that same Newton electricity customer paid \$4 more on Newton Power Choice. For the next six months starting on January 1, 2020, the typical Newton electricity customer will save \$7 per month.

More specifically, as of January 1, 2020, you can expect:

- Eversource Winter 2020 (January – July) Basic Service price for residential (16% green): \$12.42 cents/kwh
- The Newton Power Choice prices: Standard (60% renewable) \$11.34 cents/kwh: 100% green option = \$11.75

This means that starting on January 1, the typical Newton resident using 710 kwh/month will pay the following amounts for the electricity (i.e., commodity) portion of her electricity bill:

- Eversource Basic Service = \$88/month
- Newton Power Choice Standard = \$81/month

Please remember, customers can leave Newton Power Choice without a cancellation fee at any time. Also, at any time, they can also join the program, opt up to 100%, or opt down. Please consider opting up to 100% green. The Newton Power Choice 100% green costs \$83/month.

Want more information or want to opt up to 100%? Click [here](#).



*(With Celina Nestle, Layla Bhattacharya, Siobhan, Maebe and Darragh French before last night's City Council meeting.)*

### **Quick Update on Webster Woods**

Last night, the City Council's "Committee of the Whole" voted in favor of saving Webster Woods.

They voted on seven different aspects of using Community

Preservation Act funds to acquire the 17+ acres of woods from Boston College. None of the Councilors voted "no" on any of the votes. In a couple of instances, one or two

abstained.

On Monday, Dec. 2, the City Council will take the final votes.

Want more information on why and how we are saving the woods? Click [here](#).



### Bring a Bag or Pay 10 Cents

Starting next year, there is more incentive to bring a reusable bag when shopping. Bring a bag to the thirty largest stores in Newton or pay 10 cents for one of theirs.

To be more specific, starting on January 1, 2020, you can either bring your own bag when shopping at Star Market and CVS (among other large stores) or pay 10 cents per bag for recyclable paper or reusable bags provided by the retailer.

The measure, passed by the City Council to encourage the use of reusable bags, will affect approximately 500 retail establishments in Newton six months later. All stores in Newton will begin charging customers for bags on July 1, 2020. (The 10 cents will be kept by the retailer to help pay for the recyclable/reusable bags.)

Questions? Find more information [here](#).

### Come Sing with Us

Martin Luther King Day isn't until January, but...

Do you love to sing? Join the MLK Day 2020 Community Chorus and raise your voice together with friends and neighbors at the City's Martin Luther King Day Celebration on Monday, Jan. 20.

The Newton MLK Celebration Committee and the Newton Family Singers is inviting "any and all" who want to sing and can attend at least one Sunday practice on January 5 and/or January 12, 4:00-6:00 p.m. at Temple Shalom, 175 Temple Street, West Newton. There's a third optional rehearsal on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. on the stage at the First Baptist Church of Newton where the MLK Day celebration occurs. Singing well is *not* a requirement!

Participants must RSVP [here](#). Questions? Click [here](#).

## MLK DAY 2020 COMMUNITY CHORUS

### CALL FOR SINGERS - MLK DAY EVENT, JANUARY 20TH

We will raise our voices together at our 52nd annual citywide celebration in honor of Dr. King on **Monday, January 20th, 9:30 am**, at the First Baptist Church of Newton.

In conjunction with **Newton Family Singers**, we seek any and all who wish to join us in song as part of a Community Chorus.

#### PROGRAM DETAILS

- All ages welcome
- No choral experience necessary—just a willingness to sing!
- **Participants must RSVP** to join the chorus (link below) and attend **at least one Sunday rehearsal**

#### REHEARSALS - TEMPLE SHALOM OF NEWTON

- Sunday, January 5th, 4-6pm
- Sunday, January 12th, 4-6pm
- Join us for an additional optional rehearsal on Wednesday, Jan. 15th, 3:30 – 5 pm at the First Baptist Church of Newton

#### RSVP:

<http://bit.ly/MLKchorus2020>

#### Questions?

[www.newtonma.gov/mlk2020](http://www.newtonma.gov/mlk2020)

## Shop Local on Saturday

Did you know that 67 cents of every dollar you spend in a small, Newton-owned business stays in Newton?

Please go shopping in one of our villages or commercial corridors on Saturday, Nov. 30 on **Small Business Saturday**.

The following day support Newton artists at **Meet the Makers** at the Jackson Homestead, 527 Washington St., and Durant-Kenrick House, 286 Waverly St., on Sunday, Dec. 1. The museum stores will also be open and the merchandise discounted. More information is [here](#).



A week later join strolling musicians and carolers and the Newton Cultural Alliance for a day of local shopping at the **West Newton Arts Stroll and Shop**. The fun on Saturday, Dec. 7 will include best dressed dog and ugly sweater contests. You can also bring a donated toy and help Santa stuff a Newton Police Cruiser for the Holiday Toy Drive. More information is [here](#).

Happy Thanksgiving,

Ruthanne

P.S. Looking for a high-dose flu vaccine? Both high-dose vaccines (for people age 65 and older) and regular dose (age 6 months and up) are available at the Health and Human Services Department **free flu clinic** on Tuesday, Dec. 10, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in Room 107B at City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave. Find forms and more information [here](#).



P.P.S Two days and two craft fairs: Start with the **Holiday Craft Fair** at City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave., on Saturday, Dec. 7, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for original fine art and handmade crafts created by New England artists. On Sunday, Dec. 8 head over to Newton South High School, 140 Brandeis Road, for the **Celebrate Newton Holiday Craft Fair**, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., for Newton Community Education's annual craft fair. Admission is \$3 (kids under 12 are free).

