



Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

POLICE DEPARTMENT **BUDGET REPORT**

Thursday, May 28, 2020

Present: Councilor Auchincloss (Chair), Markiewicz, Downs, Lipof, Malakie, Grossman and Ciccone

Absent: Councilor Bowman

Also Present: Councilor Baker, Humphrey, Albright and Norton

City Staff: Chief David MacDonald and Lt. George McMains, Newton Police Department; Chief Gino Lucchetti and Acting Assistant Chief Gregory Gentile, Newton Fire Department; Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer and Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer

Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees

- #8-20(2) Submittal of the FY 2021 Municipal/School Operating Budget**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter the FY21 Municipal/School Operating Budget, passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY21-FY25 Capital Improvement Program (#8-20).
EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION 05/11/20; LAST DATE TO PASS THE BUDGET 06/25/2020

Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees

- #8-20 Submittal of the FY 2021 to FY 2025 Capital Improvement Plan (#8-20)**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the Fiscal Years 2021 to 2025 Capital Improvement Plan pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter.

Referred to Finance and Appropriate Committees

- #8-20(3) Submittal of the FY 2021 – FY 2025 Supplemental Capital Improvement Plan**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY 2021 – FY 2025 Supplemental Capital Improvement Plan.

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

Note: Chief MacDonald, Lt. McMains and Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer joined the Committee for discussion on these items and discussed their FY21 Budget Summary and opening remarks.

POLICE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL & STAFFING:

The Police Department is broken into the following eight sub-divisions:

1. Patrol Bureau
2. Detective Bureau
3. Traffic Bureau
4. Community Services
5. Information Technology
6. Dispatch Center/Communications
7. Support Services
8. Special Operations

The Police Department employs 192 full time employees and 54 part time employees.

Chief MacDonald stated that vehicle crashes, arrests, overdoses and mental health cases have all decreased. Domestic violence and directed patrols have increased.

Chief MacDonald stated that the FY21 budget was revised and what the department had hoped for was changed due to the pandemic. He addressed budget items including consultation fees which was reduced from \$25,000 to \$10,000, office supplies decreased by \$5,000, postage fees decreased by \$2,000 and meals decreased by \$1,500. He then stated that the vehicle fleet is in good shape because funding for the fleet decreased.

Chief MacDonald stated that calls for service have decreased from 32,734 to 32,296. Vehicle crashes have declined from 1,429 to 1,330.

Ms. Lemieux stated that the Police Department does not have a contract at this time. Money is in arrears. She then said that she is diligent to how much money is given to each union.

POLICE DEPARTMENT FY20 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Chief MacDonald addressed the departments accomplishments as follows:

Outcome 1 - Continued to build relationships with the community.

Outcome 2 - Held office hours at City Hall, the departments first sub-station. There has been a longtime desire to have a sub-station in the south side of the City. The sub-station is open to residents twice per week and one evening per week which is staffed by police personnel.

Outcome 3 - Expanded training to create better trained officers who can react professionally and efficiently. This is necessary to continue to better train officers in racial, traffic and health issues. The department training is funded through the City and through the \$2.00 per vehicle rental surcharge imposed on vehicle renters.

Outcome 4 - Reduced traffic crashes throughout the city.

Outcome 5 - Improved the quality of life for victims of sexual servitude/human trafficking.

POLICE DEPARTMENT FY21 GOALS

Chief MacDonald addressed the departments goals as follows:

Outcome 1 – Deepen partnership throughout Newton. The department hopes to co-host police officer recruitment events throughout the City. The goal is to generate interest in the profession in an increasingly diverse population. Schools, religious institutions and village centers will be a focus of uniformed patrol. Directed patrols and park and walks are two methods that will be utilized.

Outcome 2 – Equip officers for the protection of the public. The department will continue the task of researching what tools the department can deploy in the future to keep residents and officers safe. In the process of looking at traditional options as well as those that may be available in the future.

Outcome 3 – Continue expansion of training to develop professional and executive officers. The department will research the acquisition of a new firearms simulation machine. The department hopes to be able to plan and implement another active shooter training session. The department will be increasing the amount of training that can be accomplished on a shift and in roll call.

Outcome 4 – Reduce traffic crashes throughout Newton. Officers have begun to focus on ten high accident areas within the City. The department received a grant from STEP (sustained traffic enforcement program) which enables the department to write citations at these locations to mitigate traffic accidents. The department will provide this enforcement in conjunction with other methods of traffic enforcement such as random patrols, directed patrols and electronic message board/speed monitoring devices.

Outcome 5 – Work all aspects of the Opioid Crisis. The department will continue its work on making progress on regional opioid crisis. Overdose follow ups in the coming year will include a recovery coach and a plain clothes police officer as part of Newton relationship with the Gavin Foundation. On the enforcement end, local drug task force continues to focus on area distributors. The Suburban Middlesex County Drug Task Force (SMCDTF) has had several recent successes in taking fentanyl dealers off the streets.

POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

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

Police Administrative Support - \$67,309.00 decrease.
Police Traffic Safety - \$29,867.00 increase.
Police Patrol Services - \$419,871.00 increase.
Police Investigations - \$101,948.00 increase.
Police Community Services - \$116,718.00 decrease.
Police Youth Services - \$ 6,800.00 decrease.
Police Vehicle Maintenance - \$140,000.00 decrease.
Police Information Technology - \$30,694.00 decrease.
Police Communications - \$ 71,738.00 increase.
Police Support Services - \$101,814.00 decrease.
Police Special Operations - \$14,492.00 decrease.
Police Host Comm Agree - \$25,000.00 decrease.

SUPPLEMENTAL CIP

The CIP includes the following project for FY21:

Priority #33 Police Building – Mechanical upgrades at Police Headquarters \$600,000.

GRANT, GIFT & REVOLVING FUNDS

The following have been requested for FY21; Chief MacDonald has requested the following:

1. Sale of Surplus Police Equipment Revolving Grant \$40,000.00.
2. Cops & Kids Program Gifts \$2,100.00.
3. Federal Bullet Proof Vest Reimbursement Grant \$40,500.00.
4. State Municipal Police Staffing Grant \$90,000.00.
5. State SETB Dispatch Grant \$40,000.00.
6. State E-911 Dispatch Grant \$240,000.00.
7. State Pedestrian Safety Grant \$20,000.00.
8. State Traffic Safety Grant \$50,000.00.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS and ANSWERS:

- The number of directed patrols is impressive at 26,919. Chief MacDonald stated that the officers conduct approximately 120 directed patrols per day on weekdays. He then explained the minimum manning requirements for the department as follows: 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. shift requires a minimum of ten officers. 3:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. shift requires a minimum of twelve officers. 11:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. shift requires a minimum of nine officers. Chief MacDonald stated that the police officers have not been using their vacation time being able to supplement and higher the number of shift manning requirements. Police officers focus on village centers, schools and houses of worship when conducting directed patrols.
- It appears that the speed message boards work well. Chief MacDonald stated that the electronic message boards work well for enforcing speed. If data shows that one vehicle out of twenty speed, no citation is written. If data shows that more drivers are speeding, officers will write a citation. The number of written citations has decreased.
- Is the department planning on holding virtual meetings for community engagements? Chief MacDonald answered not at this time. There is not enough manpower to determine what would work virtually.
- Regarding the ten high accident areas grant. Can the department request that the grant funding be held extending the grant to use during normal traffic circumstances? Chief MacDonald said that it would not be a wise decision to let the grant run dry. The department has spent \$22,000.00 of the \$40,000.00 grant. He agreed to ask for an extension.
- What is the department doing to decrease the domestic violence counts? Chief MacDonald answered that at this time in 2019 there were twenty-eight domestic violence cases. In 2020, there are thirty-one domestic violence cases. The domestic police officer follows up on active court cases and reaches out to the people involved in domestic cases.
- Is the department researching a recovery coach? Chief MacDonald stated that he and Commissioner Youngblood had a conversation months ago, and feel that this is not the right fit for the Newton Police Department at this time.
- Regarding AA and substance abuse meetings. Are resources available online for the public to research? Chief MacDonald stated he did not have this information available. He will retrieve any available information and provide to this Committee.
- What is the department doing to enforce the litter ordinance? Chief MacDonald answered if a person litters in front of a police officer the ordinance can be enforced. Littering only happens on a rare occasion in front of a police officer.

- What is the department doing to enforce the leaf blower ordinance? Chief MacDonald answered that the department has received eighteen calls in the past three months regarding leaf blowers. He is not sure if the number of calls is up due to people being home during the pandemic.
- A suggestion was made to docket an item as it appears the leaf blower ordinance is not working properly.
- Please explain the locations of the ten highest accident locations. Chief MacDonald answered that he did not have this data available. He then said that West Newton Square and Washington Street are several locations in the City that has been allowing the Police Department to be active in researching the ten highest accident locations.
- Is criteria available or just the number of crashes? Chief MacDonald answered that he has not reviewed the locations.
- Is the cut in court times due to courts being closed during the pandemic? Chief MacDonald answered yes.
- Because the police officers are not using their vacation time, will they lose their vacation days or will there be a rush of absences? Ms. Lemieux answered that this a global question. Each contract is different. Some contracts require vacation days to be used by December 31 or carry over five vacation days. Other contracts expire on March 31 or August 3. It totally depends on the contract. There have been conversations with the unions on how best to approach vacation days in the contracts moving forward.
- How has enforcement been going for the department? Chief MacDonald answered that traffic is down because vehicle volumes are down. People are staying at home. Some drivers have the tendency to speed.
- A goal of 2020 was to improve the quality of life for victims of sexual servitude/human trafficking did this goal come to fruition? Chief MacDonald stated that the task force officers, and the department decided not to host human trafficking for a while. The FBI and others did damage to elicit behaviors. Human trafficking has been operating out of Air B&Bs.
- Please describe the firearms simulation machine. Chief MacDonald answered that different scenarios are used but new ones are necessary. Although the machine is expensive, Chief MacDonald is hopeful to secure a new simulation machine as it will be beneficial to the department.
- Is funding for a new firearms simulation machine included in the CIP? Chief MacDonald answered no.

COVID-19

Chief MacDonald stated that the Police Department created Special Order 20-13a, dated May 6, 2020 which became effective after Governor Baker's Covid-19 Order No. 31 took effect on May 6, 2020. Governor Baker's order does not apply where a person is unable to wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition or the person is otherwise exempted by the Department of Health.

To date, the Police Department has received forty calls on people not social distancing. Masks are available in every police cruiser to be handed out to the public if desired. One non-cooperative individual was charged on a tress pass order. To date, zero citations have been issued. For the most part, people have been acting appropriate.

Chief MacDonald stated that the \$300.00 fine is steep for those out of work. People are anxious and are experiencing high levels of anxiety. The police officers use their discretion on whether to issue a citation.

Questions from Councilor Baker on the police enforcement experience so far.

1. How many citations for failure to mask have been written so far and for what situations, if that can be determined? Chief MacDonald answered that to date, zero citations have been issued.
2. Has there been warnings or have \$300 fines been imposed? Chief MacDonald answered no fines have been imposed.
3. How many warnings?
4. How many fines have been imposed? Chief MacDonald answered zero.
5. Are there other records kept that are not included in the above that would help illuminate the police enforcement response?
6. Have the officers themselves been wearing masks in public to respond to your advice to help residents feel safe, and to set a positive example for citizens (and also for some protection themselves)? Chief MacDonald answered yes, after receiving a complaint that a police officer was not wearing a mask. Police officers are required to wear face masks on details, even though face masks are not required outdoors. During details an officer has short contact space with foremen, colleagues, drivers requesting directions, etc. Police officers have been frequenting parks and Chief MacDonald is happy to report that people are in compliance but are not perfect. Since Governor Baker's order, almost everyone is wearing a facial mask which is very different than one month ago.

7 Have your officers' access to literature or other public information which they can provide safely to citizens who do not mask about the value of masks for public health? If not, would it be helpful for your officers to have it?

It was stated that that police officers should enforce Governor Baker's Special Order. Masks are designed to help other people. It is concerning if people are not wearing masks. It is necessary to educate the public. Chief MacDonald stated that prior to Governor Baker's order, the department was using the public address radio system reminding people to social distance. He then stated that the department is doing a very good job on educating people.

Chair Auchincloss stated that the Newton Police Department is appropriately reminding people of social distancing and providing a mask when necessary. Issuing citations is not a welcoming measure. Issuing citations is on the border of violating the First Amendment. Councilor Baker disagreed.

Committee members commended and thanked Chief MacDonald for his continued excellence. They then thanked the Police Department for their excellent continued work.

A motion was made to move approve on a straw vote to accept the Police Department Budget, CIP and grants totaling \$22,951,778,00 a 0.64% increase over FY20 budget. Committee members agreed 7-0.

At approximately 8:45 p.m., the Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacob D. Auchincloss, Chair