



Public Facilities Committee Budget Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Present: Councilors Leary (Chair), Kelley, Crossley, Norton, Laredo, Danberg, Kalis and Gentile

Also Present: Councilor Downs, Albright, Krintzman, Humphrey and Bowman

City Staff Present: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle, Chief of Staff for the Department of Public Works Shawna Sullivan, City Engineer Lou Taverna, Financial Director for the Department of Public Works Jack Cowell, Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux, Director of Environmental Affairs for the Department of Public Works Waneta Trabert, Director of Utilities Ted Jerdee, Deputy Director of Utilities Douglas Valovcin, Customer Service Manager Garret Ross, Commissioner of Public Buildings Josh Morse, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Deputy Director of Public Buildings Alex Valcarce, Superintendent of Newton Public Schools David Fleishman, Assistant Superintendent Liam Hurley and Principal of Oak Hill Middle School John Harutunuan

Public Works Department

Note: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle provided an overview of the FY21 Budget for the Department of Public Works. Commissioner McGonagle's presentation is attached to this report.

Fleet Management

Commissioner McGonagle explained that this is the first full year the department has funded their fully electric sedan fleet. This was estimated to take two years and the department was able to accomplish this in less time. There are currently 30 fully electric vehicles. Additionally, Commissioner McGonagle explained they are continuing the Vehicle Replacement Program and the aggressive vehicle maintenance practices to ensure a safe, efficient, and operational fleet. The department has completed the implementation of the Fleet Management Software Program.

Sustainable Materials Management

Commissioner McGonagle explained that the department has seen a significant increase in waste and recycling costs due to the issue in China with recycling and the large increase to labor costs. There will be an expansion of the food waste collection to include a drop-off pilot program at Rumford Avenue and school cafeteria programs. Commissioner McGonagle explained that there will now be facilities at Rumford Ave for the Director of Environmental Affairs, Waneta Trabert and her staff.

Streets and Sidewalks

Commissioner McGonagle explained that there is \$550,000 in the operating budget for streets to continue with sidewalk repairs and curbing installation. Additionally, Commissioner McGonagle explained that they will continue to work on installing ADA ramps.

Engineering

Commissioner McGonagle explained that they have started the large scale scanning project to get all the department's documents and plans stored electronically. Additionally, Commissioner McGonagle explained that they will continue to oversee the West Newton and Newtonville projects. The department has been able to stay ahead of schedule on these projects, due to less traffic on the streets. Commissioner McGonagle noted that the department will continue to plan, manage, and implement the \$7 million Transportation Network Improvement Program.

Transportation Network Improvement Program Funding Areas

Commissioner McGonagle explained that the department will be performing more milling and paving due to Walnut Street and Washington Street. The milling and paving on Walnut Street would be from Homer Street to Lincoln Street. The winter storms have had an impact on the condition of Walnut Street. These updates will also include curbing, sidewalks, and some traffic calming.

Transportation

Commissioner McGonagle explained that the department has asked for an additional full time employee which would be the Assistant Superintendent. The department is also looking to do payment markings in-house which allows them to address crosswalks. There is \$225,000 for pavement markings in the budget and \$175,000 towards Traffic Calming Projects outside of the Roads program budget. Additionally, Commissioner McGonagle explained that the department will be working towards the full implementation of the Parking Meter Replacement Program, which should be completed this summer.

Utilities

Commissioner McGonagle explained the Water, Sewer and Stormwater programs in the attached presentation. Regarding sewer, the 10-year plan may be pushed back due to an increase cost to one of the final projects.

The Committee asked the following questions:

Q: How many ADA ramps have been installed?

A: Commissioner McGonagle explained that there are approximately 8,000 ADA ramps. The department installs approximately 200-300 a year.

Q: Regarding the parking meters, has the decision been made to not have kiosks?

A: Commissioner McGonagle explained that they will be coming back to the Committee to discuss this issue.

Q: How much has the City improved on water loss?

A: Commissioner McGonagle explained that the City is at approximately 24%. Additionally, Commissioner McGonagle explained that 9% is the goal for a perfect system.

Q: How much do the educational institutions and non-profits in Newton contribute to the water-loss?

A: Commissioner McGonagle explained that they will be addressing the issues at the Mount Ida Campus of UMASS Amherst as part of the larger project that was presented in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Q: Is the DPW budget increasing by 8%?

A: Commissioner McGonagle explained that 8% is correct when only looking at the figures. The real percentage is 2.77%. There is usually only \$1.5 million in the department's operating budget for snow and ice removal. The rest of the funding was held by the Comptroller. Commissioner McGonagle explained to avoid coming back to the Council multiple times the department is requesting to put \$3 million in the operating budget. This would account for approximately 6% of the 8% increase. Commissioner McGonagle explained that the remaining increase accounts for the new full time employee and for contractual step increases for union employees. Jack Cowell, Financial Director explained the major impact to the increase to administrative costs is the department's electricity. Mr. Cowell explained that this includes the solar panels at Rumford Ave. The department pays Ameresco, who runs the City's solar panel projects, for the energy that they generate and in return the City receives credits back as revenue to the general fund. This is a net positive to the City, but it is a larger expense within the DPW budget. Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer explained that \$750,000 was added to Sustainable Materials for the new contract that was primarily driven by recycling costs. Ms. Lemieux explained that in the DPW budget every increase that needed was balanced by a decrease. Additionally, Ms. Lemieux explained that part of the changes is also moving money to different accounts. The operating budget still has money invested in the roads program.

Q: Why is the street cleaning budget increasing?

A: Commissioner McGonagle explained that now that the streets are being swept year round there is an increase in costs. That is one of the Stormwater Pollution Reduction Strategies and the City receives credits from the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) for the additional street sweeping.

Q: Why is the engineering budget increasing?

A: Mr. Cowell explained that this looks like an increase, but this is due to moving funds to different accounts. Additionally, Mr. Cowell can provide an explanation of this to the City Council.

Q: Have there been any projects delayed due to the new budget challenges?

A: Commissioner McGonagle explained that the street and sidewalk supplies budget was reduced. Additionally, Commissioner McGonagle explained that the street light repair budget has been decreased by \$60,000. The signal repairs and knock down budget has also been decreased. The pavement markings have also been reduced by \$50,000.

Q: Why is there a decrease in the budget under the street division?

A: Mr. Cowell explained that this is a reduction in accelerated roads spending in the street maintenance budget.

Q: Why is there a reduction in personnel services and expenses?

A: Mr. Cowell explained in personnel services there is one position that is being held for a year. There was also a part-time position that was taken out. Additionally, Mr. Cowell explained that there was a reduction in line-painting and traffic calming over last year. This is the result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q: Is the department losing an employee in the street division?

A: Ms. Lemieux explained that they eliminated four positions in the street division. One position has been eliminated in the garage and other positions have been put on hold. The department has also eliminated five positions in Water, Sewer and Stormwater. Additionally, Ms. Lemieux explained that the positions that have been eliminated have historically been vacant. This should not affect the operations of the department. There has been the addition of a payroll clerk and the Assistant Superintendent.

Q: Can the budget for the Roads Program be explained?

A: Ms. Lemieux explained that the \$9 million that the City has been spending over the past few years comes from a variety of sources. This year the City Council has already approved moving \$3 million from Free Cash and setting it aside for the Roads Program for next year. The overall budget is now \$7 million.

Q: Can the changes to the road painting program budget be explained?

A: Commissioner McGonagle explained that there is a decrease in this budget from last year, but this is the money that is being used outside of the overall Roads Program. Additionally, Commissioner McGonagle explained that they will be looking at the crosswalks near schools, village centers and public transportation first. The department did not want to cut anywhere but they had to look closely at the budget to see where they could trim. Commissioner McGonagle explained that there will be impacts compared to what the department could do last year. Additionally, Commissioner McGonagle explained that some of the pavement markings will be done in-house.

Q: Is there a timeline for when DPW's larger equipment will be converted to all electric?

A: Commissioner McGonagle explained that the technology is not there yet to convert the larger equipment.

Q: Is there a way to be more effective on street sweeping on the denser streets?

A: Commissioner McGonagle explained that the department is investigating ways to solve this issue.

Q: Can the increase to the Waste Management budget be explained?

A: Ms. Lemieux explained that the increase has a lot to do the prevailing wage rate which is based on two large trucking contracts. The recycling issue was also a part of the increase.

Q: Will there still be checks on recycling and outreach to residents on how important recycling is? Will the City be receiving another grant from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to perform an audit on the green bins?

A: Ms. Trabert explained that the State is now prioritizing communities that have not run that program. The City did apply for the grant last year but did not receive the funding. There are other grants funds that will be used for outreach and reinforcement. Ms. Trabert explained that there is a plan to do a smaller version of that program.

Q: Has there been a discussion on the contract with the Waste Energy Facility in Millbury?

A: Ms. Trabert explained that this has been discussed in this year's budget meeting with the Mayor.

The Committee made the following comments:

The \$7 million for the Transportation Network Improvement Program is critical to improve the condition of the City's roads.

There should be an update given to the Committee on how much water is being lost at the Mount. Ida campus.

There is a concern with the DPW budget increasing when other department's budgets are decreasing.

There should be a system to better rate and prioritize where sidewalks need to be added and develop a list of criteria on how these areas will be prioritized.

The painting of crosswalks is important for pedestrian safety.

Ms. Lemieux explained that they would be able to send the Council a document that explains the increases and decreases to this budget.

The Committee thanked Commissioner McGonagle and his staff for the work they have done for the City.

Attached to this report is a memo from the Department of Public Works regarding the outstanding questions.

The Committee took a straw vote to accept the Department of Public Work's proposed Budget, the Supplemental CIP and the CIP which passed unanimously. The Committee adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Leary, Chair

Department of Public Works

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller

Chief of Staff – Shawna Sullivan

Utilities – Ted Jerdee

Streets – Shane Mark

Customer Service – Garret Ross

Sustainable Materials Management
– Waneta Trabert



Engineering – Lou Taverna

Fleet Management –
Travis Mosca

Transportation – Jason Sobel

Finance – Jack Cowell

May 27, 2020

Commissioner Jim McGonagle

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Fleet Management

- \$178,000 in funding for Electric/Hybrid Passenger Vehicle Lease Program
- Continuation of the Vehicle Replacement Program and aggressive vehicle maintenance practices to ensure a safe, efficient and operational fleet.
- Complete implementation of Fleet Management Software Program



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Sustainable Materials Management

- \$836,000 increase in waste and recycling removal and processing
- Expansion of food waste collection to include drop-off pilot at the Resource Recovery Center and additional school cafeteria programs
- Implement site and facilities improvements at Rumford



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Streets and Sidewalks

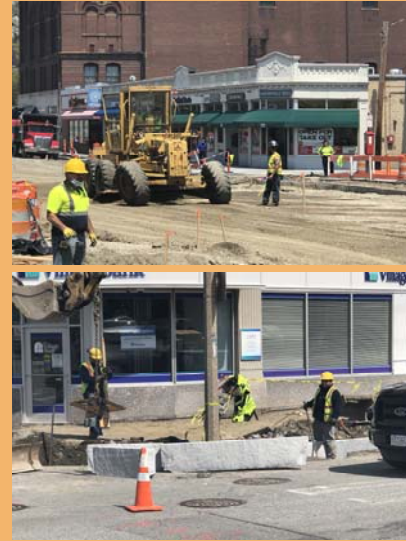
- \$550,000 for Sidewalk and Road Maintenance
 - Concrete Sidewalks: 2.0 Miles
 - Asphalt Sidewalks: 0.2 Miles
 - Granite Curbing: 3.0 Miles
 - Sidewalk Maintenance: 1.0 Miles
 - Cut Outs: 0.6 Miles
 - ADA Ramps: 237 New Ramps



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Engineering

- Will undergo a large scale scanning project for all maps, blueprints, and related engineering documents
- Oversee West Newton and Newtonville ongoing projects
- Continued planning, management, and implementation of \$7 million Transportation Network Improvement Program



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Transportation Network Improvement Program Funding Areas

Milling and Paving	48%
Pavement Maintenance	24%
Engineering services	10%
Sidewalk Installation and Maintenance	12%
Pavement Markings	3%
Traffic Calming	3%



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Transportation

- 1 FTE for an Assistant Superintendent
- \$225,000 towards Pavement Markings
- \$175,000 towards Traffic Calming projects
- Full implementation of Parking Meter Replacement Program



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Utilities

- **Water** – Year 9 of 20-year plan to investigate, replace, clean and line Water System
- **Sewer** – Year 8 of 10-year plan to investigate, repair, seal, re-line Sewer Collection System
- **Stormwater** – Continued investment into NPDES Program and begin repairs to Bullough's Pond Dam



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DISCUSSION?

City of Newton

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

Ruthanne Fuller

Mayor

To: Newton City Council

From: James McGonagle – Commissioner DPW

Subject: Responses to Budget Questions

Date: May 29, 2020

Please see the below answers and attached information in response to questions raised during the discussions on the request for funding to pave a section of Washington Street and the Public Works Department's budget on Wednesday, May 27, 2020.

Responses to Questions Raised on the Washington Street Paving Request

- 1) Is National Grid going to address the gas leaks in this section of Washington Street before the City paves it?

National Grid has decided to replace the gas main in Washington Street from Chestnut St to Walnut Street prior to the City paving it. They have identified 9 leaks in their 12" diameter gas main. National Grid is currently evaluating whether it is necessary to increase the size of the gas main.

- 2) How does National Grid determine whether to repair or replace a gas main?

National Grid make the decision on whether to repair vs replace based on the pipe material, age, condition, and number of leaks. They also make their decision based on Newton's road paving program. The City and National Grid meet on a monthly basis on paving projects to coordinate paving projects with repair or replacement of gas infrastructure.

- 3) Did National Grid reline or replace the gas line at Washington Place?

National Grid installed 2 new gas services to the buildings now under construction at Washington Place. They did not repair or replace the existing gas mains in Washington St or Walnut St at this location.

- 4) How is National Grid addressing the ongoing gas leaks at the corner of Lowell Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue?

James McGonagle
CommissionerTelephone: (617) 796-1009 • Fax: (617) 796-1050 • jmcgonagle@newtonma.gov

National Grid is aware of the ongoing leak at Lowell Avenue at Commonwealth Avenue. Their engineer is evaluating whether to replace this section of gas main and once a decision is made National Grid will let the City know.

Responses to Budget Questions

- 1) How many ADA ramps has the city replaced and/or installed?

Number of ramps installed for the past five years:

FY 20 = 270

FY 17 = 270

FY 19 = 201

FY 16 = 176

FY 18 = 256

FY 15 = 308

- 2) Could you provide the status of the streetlight repair back log?

Please see attached memo regarding the streetlight repair back log.

- 3) Has there been a decision on whether to continue to install kiosks in municipal parking lots?

A request for a discussion on kiosks is being docketed.

- 4) Could you provide an explanation on the increases to the Engineering Division's budget and decreases in the Street Division's budget?

This year funding towards our Transportation Network Improvement Program (formally known as Accelerated Roads) was reduced as a direct result of the financial impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. In order to adequately address the needs of city streets and sidewalks within our reduced budget parameters, we shifted \$200,000 from our Streets Operating Budget to our Engineering Operating Budget. The reallocation was necessary in order to fund our engineering service contracts for the Transportation Network Improvement Program, which are managed by the Engineering Division.

Transportation Network Improvement Program Funding		
	FY2020	FY2021
Engineering Operating Budget	\$ 510,000.00	\$ 710,000.00
Streets Operating Budget	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 550,000.00
	\$ 1,260,000.00	\$ 1,260,000.00

How can the City improve street sweeping notification in dense areas of the City?

Public Works is looking at different solutions and will come back to the Public Facilities Committee with a plan.

James McGonagle
Commissioner

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City of Newton

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

Transportation Division

110 Crafts Street
Newton, MA 02460

Ruthanne Fuller

Mayor

To: Public Facilities Committee

From: Jason S. Sobel, P.E., PTOE, Director of Transportation Operations

Subject: Street light repair backlog – status update

Date: May 28, 2020

At the May 27, 2020 Public Facilities meeting, during the DPW operating budget discussion, a City Councilor asked for a status update regarding the street light repair backlog (both street light knockdowns and underground electrical issues) with funds that City Council had previously approved.

The initial focus of addressing the backlog has been replacing street light knockdown locations. In the past 18 months, the following is a list of street light knockdowns that have been replaced:

1. BEAC/839 – 845 Beacon Street
2. LANG/35 – 34 Langley Road
3. COMM/537 – 537 Commonwealth Avenue
4. COMM/1743 – 1750 Commonwealth Avenue
5. WASH/1496 – 1496 Washington Street
6. WASH/1180 – 1180 Washington Street
7. CENT/419 – Washington Street / Center Street (Newton Corner, south of hotel)
8. CENT/425 – Washington Street / Center Street (Newton Corner, south of hotel)
9. COMM/1200 – 1193 Commonwealth Avenue
10. COMM/140 – 140 Commonwealth Avenue
11. WALN/15 – Walnut Street at Crafts Street
12. WASH/1410 – Washington Street, just west of Putnam Street
13. COMM/1223 – Commonwealth Avenue at Wauwinet Road
14. COMM/193 – 194 Commonwealth Avenue
15. PUTN/39 – 39 Putnam Street
16. COMM/1063 – 1063 Commonwealth Avenue
17. HMR/371 – 1000 Commonwealth Avenue
18. Pole #7/12 – 101 ALBAN ROAD
19. WALN/472 – 472 Walnut Street
20. COMM/1700 – 1684 Commonwealth Avenue
21. COMM/1418 – 1418 Commonwealth Avenue
22. WASH/270 – 320 Washington Street
23. WASH/304 – 300 Washington Street
24. WASH/xxx – 337 Washington Street
25. WASH/xxx – 317 Washington Street
26. CENT/1230 – 1221 Centre Street
27. CENT/533 – 543 Centre Street
28. WALN/1138 – Walnut Street at Lake Street

29. WASH/550 – 550 Washington Street
30. CENT/xxx – 288 Centre Street
31. LEWI/10 – 20 Lewis Terrace
32. WASH/1236 – 1236 Washington Street
33. WASH/610 – 612 Washington Street
34. CENT/1200 – 1201-1217 Centre Street
35. LOWELL/367 – 367 Lowell Street

The backlog of street light knockdowns has been completed, and the only remaining street light knockdowns are recent and are currently in the process of being replaced. These current knockdowns include the following locations:

1. GAS/31 – 11 Kenwood (gas lamp knockdown)
2. COMM/1743 – 1750 Commonwealth Avenue
3. COMM/127 – 127 Commonwealth Avenue
4. WASH/680 – 680 Washington Street
5. COMM/1817 – 1807 Commonwealth Avenue
6. COMM/1860 – 1870 Commonwealth Avenue
7. Pole #F35 – Newton Corner, Centre Street SB merge onto Washington Street
8. WASH/533 – Washington Street at Jackson Road
9. WASH/370 – Washington Street, across from Honda Village
10. WASH/1339 – 1339 Washington St (being replaced as part of West Newton Sq project)
11. WASH/1309 – 1309 Washington St (being replaced as part of West Newton Sq project)

In the past year, the following underground electrical issues have also been repaired:

1. LANG/38 – 38 Langley Rd
2. COUN/150 – 130 Countryside Rd
3. BEAC/341 – Beacon St @ Hammond St
4. Pole 746/2 – 7 Hereward Rd
5. CHUR/201 – 200 Church St
6. Pole 681/1 – 59 Allerton Rd
7. WELLS/2 – 2 Wells Ave

The backlog of underground electrical issues has not yet been completed. The remaining backlog of underground electrical issues includes street lights at 41 different locations.

Please let me know if City Council would like any additional details regarding the street light repair work that has been completed or is being planned for the future.

Sincerely,

Jason S. Sobel, P.E., PTOE
Director of Transportation Operations

cc: James McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works
Shawna Sullivan, DPW Chief of Staff