



Public Safety & Transportation Committee Agenda

City of Newton **In City Council**

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

7:00 PM

The Public Safety & Transportation Committee will hold this meeting as a virtual meeting on Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 7:00 pm. To view this meeting using Zoom use this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89344151452> or call 1-646-558-8656 and use the following Meeting ID: **893 4415 1452**

Items Scheduled for Discussion:

- #136-22** **Requesting a discussion on facial recognition and camera technology, public safety and privacy.**
COUNCILORS DOWNS, LAREDO, MARKIEWICZ, BOWMAN, HUMPHREY, RYAN, DANBERG, LUCAS AND BAKER requesting a discussion on facial recognition and camera technology, public safety, and privacy.
- #114-22** **Request to amend Chapter 24 and Sec. 19-46 for Traffic Personnel**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting to amend Chapter 24 of the Ordinances by adding a new Sec. 24-11 Supplemental Paid Traffic Control Detail Personnel and to amend Sec. 19-46 to include the new Supplemental Paid Traffic Control Detail appointees.

Respectfully submitted,

Andreae Downs, Chair

The location of this meeting is accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: jfairley@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.

IRS facial scanning plan raises privacy fears



By Hiawatha Bray, Globe Staff

Millions of us unlock our smartphones by letting them scan our faces. Soon we'll have to do the same to review our tax records online.

Starting this summer, the Internal Revenue Service will require taxpayers to provide images of their faces to access their data on the agency's website. It's a major advance in government use of biometric security systems, which unlock data based on a person's physical features, like facial appearance or fingerprints. Biometric systems are designed to be more secure than traditional passwords, which are often easy to crack.

But privacy advocates worry that the new IRS system will normalize the use of biometric systems, compelling citizens to provide this sensitive data to a vast array of government agencies and businesses.

India McKinney, director of federal affairs for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital civil liberties group, noted that taxpayers will have no choice about using the system, because the IRS hasn't offered a non-biometric way to log in.

"You cannot opt out of paying taxes," McKinney said. "This is kind of a big deal, and it's bad."

The IRS said that contrary to some earlier press reports, taxpayers will not have to use the system to file their returns. "The IRS emphasizes taxpayers can pay or file their taxes *without* submitting a selfie or other information to a third-party identity verification company," the agency said in an e-mailed statement.

But people will need the new system for other activities, like filing for the federal child tax credit, reviewing tax records from previous years, or setting up payment plans.

The agency will rely on technology from ID.me, a Virginia company that's already used by a number of state unemployment insurance agencies to combat benefit fraud. Using the system requires a smartphone or a computer with a webcam. Users must take a picture of a photo ID, such as a driver's license or passport. Users then take photos of themselves. The ID.me system compares the live image with the photo ID, confirming that it's the same person.

Data security blogger Brian Krebs, who first reported on the new policy last week, said the IRS and other government agencies are desperate to find better ways to secure their systems. He cited the state of California, where criminals using fake IDs have stolen at least \$20 billion in unemployment benefits linked to the COVID pandemic.

Standard security systems try to confirm a person's identity through phone numbers, street addresses, or Social Security numbers. But data thieves have stolen so much of this information from corporate and government databases that it's easy for criminals to come up with the correct answers. "There are a thousand ways to find out," said Krebs.

Last year, for example, security researchers found an automated bot on the messaging service Telegram that could be used by anybody to look up millions of personal phone numbers that had been stolen from Facebook by hackers.

Biometric data is much harder to fake than a phone number. But McKinney said there's no guarantee that facial databases won't eventually be stolen just like other identifiers. She said this would create a far greater danger, because while somebody can get a new phone number or Social Security number, nobody can get a new face.

ID.me said it stores all data in encrypted form inside highly secure data centers. The company also said that it will delete personal data on request, does not sell the data to other companies, and will only share it with the government when required by law or by court order.

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#114-22

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RUTHANNE FULLER
MAYOR

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor

January 10, 2022

RECEIVED
2022 JAN 10 PM 4:55
CITY CLERK
NEWTON, MA 02459

Honorable City Council
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

Councillors:

I respectfully submit a docket item to your Honorable Council requesting approval of the following two amendments to the City Ordinances that will expand the availability of personnel to conduct traffic details.

As you know, for several years, the City has been unable to fill all requested police traffic details for construction projects and other work such as road/sidewalk improvements, utility work, tree plantings and removal, and building construction/maintenance and repairs.

The City has reached agreement with both police unions, the Newton Police Superior Officers Association (NPSOA) and the Newton Police Association (NPA) in the most recent round of contract negotiations.

The following language was agreed to by each union:

"Only sworn Patrol and/or Superior officers, approved retired special police officers (Sec 24-6 of the Newton Revised Ordinances), active duty out of town officers under mutual aid agreement with the City, and supplemental paid detail personnel approved by the Chief of Police, are authorized to direct all traffic, either in person or by means of visible or audible signals, including at construction sites in the public way. However, in the event of fire or other emergency, to expedite traffic or safeguard pedestrians, officers of the police or fire department may direct traffic as conditions may require, notwithstanding the provisions of the Section. Unpaid auxiliary police shall not direct traffic at construction sites in the public way. Call-down of personnel shall be as follows: (1) active-duty Newton Police Officers, (2) retired Newton special police officers, (3) active duty out of town officers under mutual aid agreement with the City, and then (4) Supplemental Paid Detail Personnel. The call-down for the Supplemental Paid Detail Personnel shall be as follows: (1) Retired Massachusetts Police Officers based on superannuation; (2) Retired Massachusetts State Police Officers based on superannuation; (3) Retired Massachusetts Law Enforcement Division Sheriffs based on Superannuation' (4) personnel

trained as Newton Auxiliary Officers; and (5) Prior law enforcement experience or training acceptable to the Chief of Police.”

The proposed ordinance changes are as follows:

1. Amend Chapter 24 of the Ordinances by adding a new Sec. 24-11 *Supplemental Paid Traffic Control Detail Personnel* which will enable the Chief of Police to hire part-time personnel on an as-needed basis to assist in directing traffic at construction sites in the public way when no sworn officers or police retiree detail patrol appointees are available. The proposed new section should read as follows:

Sec. 24-11 Supplemental Paid Traffic Control Detail Personnel

The chief of police may appoint, subject to the approval of the mayor, persons to be known as the Newton Supplemental Paid Traffic Control Detail Personnel to direct traffic at construction sites as needed within and about the public way, and who shall be paid when actually employed by the order of the chief of police. Such Supplemental Paid Traffic Control Detail Personnel shall obey all lawful orders of the chief of police and be subject to all the rules and regulations of the police department not inconsistent with their authority and duties. Appointment to the Supplemental Paid Traffic Control Detail under this section does not entitle that person to assignment to any detail.

2. Amend Sec 19-46 of the Ordinances to include the new Supplemental Paid Traffic Control Detail appointees as persons authorized to direct traffic on construction details within and about the public ways in Newton.

AMEND Sec 19-46. Police to direct traffic; construction sites; direction in event of fire or emergency.

It shall be the duty of officers designated by the chief of police to enforce the provisions of this chapter. Only sworn police officers, retired special police officers appointed pursuant to Sec. 24-6, and, when neither is available, supplemental paid traffic control detail personnel appointed pursuant to Sec. 24-11, are hereby authorized to direct all traffic either in person or by means of visible or audible signals in conformance with the provisions of this chapter, including at construction sites in the public way. However, in the event of a fire or other emergency, to expedite traffic or safeguard pedestrians, officers of the police or fire department may direct traffic as conditions may require, notwithstanding the provisions of this chapter.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor