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Tuesday, July 19, 2022

Mayor's Update

This morning I had the honor of giving the oath of office to our 14th full-time Fire Chief. Just as important, I also had the honor of swearing in many of those who will support our Chief in his new role: one person being promoted to Deputy Chief, two as Captains, and nine as Lieutenants. We also swore in formally 13 people as firefighters, an infusion of new talent that will help ensure the continued excellence of one of the Commonwealth's and, yes, the nation's best fire departments.



These are my remarks:

Today is a great day for the Newton Fire Department and the City of Newton.

Welcome to each of you and your families, to members of the Newton Fire Department, to retired Chiefs Gino Lucchetti, Bruce Proia, and Joseph LaCroix, to Newton Fire Association Association President Marc Rizza, Police Chief John Carmichael, City Council President Susan Albright, Chair of the Public Safety and Transportation Committee Councilor Andrea Downes and City Councilors Victoria Danberg and Julia Malakie, City of Newton employees and Newton residents.

Let me begin by congratulating Greg Gentile, our new Chief.

I know he looks young, but don't let that fool you.

Chief Gentile has a proven track record of excellence. He has demonstrated throughout his career all the attributes this city seeks in its leaders—technical expertise, dedication to service, and unimpeachable integrity. His experience is broad and deep. During the worst moments of the pandemic, he exemplified effective management, helped by his excellent interpersonal skills.

He is wise. In part, his wisdom is a result of his upbringing. His father, Donnie, and his grandfather, Nick, served City of Newton as firefighters for a combined 85 years.



(Photo: Chief Gentile with his parents, Joan and Donnie Gentile.)

Chief Gentile, you learned from your granddad and dad and the outstanding chiefs you served under what it takes to be a leader. That is what has made you the *firefighter* you are. I have no doubt that your mother, Joan, also deserves just as much of the credit for the *person* you are today.

You have my complete confidence, just as I know that you have the confidence of the men and women who will now serve our city under your leadership.

The safety of our city and the ongoing excellence of the Newton Fire Department are now in your capable hands.

(Photo: With from left, Retired Chief Gino Lucchetti, Chief Greg Gentile, Retired Chief Joseph LaCroix and Retired Chief Bruce Proia.)



The Newton Fire Department is inarguably excellent. Of the 27,000 plus fire departments in the United States, only 411 are rated Class 1. Newtonians and the members of the Newton Fire Department have every reason to be proud, as should be Chiefs Lucchetti, Proia, LaCroix, and Murphy who set the standards of excellence and devotion to duty that are the hallmarks of the NFD.

It is a busy Fire Department. The 199 people in our Fire Department addressed 9,532 incidents last year ... 4,409 required a fire suppression response while the other 5,123 were medical emergencies. The men and women of NFD also performed more than 2,000 inspections and plan reviews and issued 1,500 plus permits.

Chief Gentile will also serve as our Emergency Operations Director, working out of the City's state of the art emergency operations center during those times of peril that New Englanders expect—blizzards and hurricanes—and others that we fear, but for which we prepare.

With his team, Chief Gentile will also oversee all Emergency Medical Services operations, basic and advanced life support ambulance services in the City. In fact, as Chief, he holds the sole discretion for all EMS personnel our ambulance service wants to assign to the City of Newton.

But, Chief Gentile has no intention of resting on our department's laurels.

He is committed to enhancing staff training and professional development; increasing the level of diversity in our department; ensuring an inclusive and welcoming culture for all employees; bolstering the wellness of our firefighters; continuously improving and fostering a culture of learning and self-examination. He will uphold our best traditions while being the catalyst for improvement and change that will ensure we remain an exemplar of professionalism and effectiveness.

The excellence of our Department is only possible with positive relationships with our firefighters and staff and our union leaders. Chief Gentile is by nature and upbringing an inclusive and collaborative leader. Marc Rizza, President of the Newton IAFF Local 863, will have a true partner. Did you know that the Chief's Dad served as President of the Newton Fire Department union in his day?

Turning to those who have recently joined the Newton Fire Department and are taking the oath of office formally for the first time, NFD has a long, proud history of answering the call, day and night, to suppress fires, to help the injured, and to save lives.

The H.C. Stark explosion and fire in 1993 where our own were injured, the fire on Boylston Street in 2000 where lives were lost, the four alarm fire 11 days ago on Gray Cliff Road that could have destroyed so much more – you are the ones who run towards danger.

You follow in the footsteps of Raymond McNamara who we lost this year. Ray Mac, while badly burned and blinded at the Stark fire, was cared for with love by his family and his NFD family, as he selflessly helped others until he took his final breath.



(Fire Chief Greg Gentile with Police Chief John Carmichael at today's swearing in.)

By taking this solemn oath, you are answering the highest calling of public service, and along with Newton's police officers, choosing to put your lives on the line for all of us. This is a noble calling.

And while the Newton Fire Department is a family dedicated to taking care of our families, today I ask each of you to also

make sure you take care of yourselves. Your families at home need you.

And to your families, to Chief Gentile's wife Alissa, his children Owen, Nicholas and Brooklynn, to all the partners and spouses, parents, and children of our firefighters who are here today, I am so grateful to you. For as these firefighters take care of our families, I know they miss holidays, birthdays, soccer and hockey games, and dinnertimes with you. As the sister of a former Massachusetts police officer, I also know the anxiety we feel for our loved ones as they report to duty. On behalf of the people of Newton, thank you.

In closing, congratulations Chief Gentile, welcome to this outstanding department for the new members, and for those of you taking on new leadership roles, thank you for your service, thank you for your sacrifice.

Cooling Off in Newton

This week will be hot with temperatures through Saturday expected to be in the mid to high 90s.

As the heat index rises, stop in "cool places" for relief from the heat and for health and safety.

Places in Newton to Cool Off

[Newton Free Library](#) - 300 Homer Street

- Tuesday - Thursday, 9:00 am - 9:00 pm
- Friday, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm
- Saturday, 9:00am - 5:00 pm

[Newton Senior Center](#) - 345 Walnut Street

- Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

[Gath Pool](#) - 256 Albemarle Road

- Weekdays, 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm, 6:00 pm - dusk
- Weekends, 12:00 pm - 6:00 pm
- Scholarships available

[Crystal Lake](#) - 30 Rogers Street

- Weekdays, 9:30 am - dusk
- Weekends, 1:00 pm - dusk
- Scholarships available

[Chestnut Hill Mall](#) - 199 Boylston Street

- Monday - Saturday, 11:00 am - 8:00 pm

Movie Theaters:

- [West Newton Cinema](#), 1296 Washington Street
- [Showcase SuperLux](#), 55 Boylston Street

Rides are available with [NewMo](#) on Mondays – Fridays, 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., \$2 from anywhere to anywhere in Newton. (The first five rides are free for new riders and everyone gets one free ride in July.)

Social Services

Any Newton resident who needs assistance with a cooling plan should call one of the City of Newton social service professionals at 617-796-1420, Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We are here to help.

Tips to stay cool and healthy:

- Drink cool, non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages such as water.
- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- Seek an air-conditioned environment, if possible.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.
- Remain indoors during the heat of the day.
- Do not engage in strenuous activities.

Remember also that the heat in cars rises rapidly. Never leave children or pets unattended in a vehicle.

Heat exhaustion can develop suddenly or over time for people of all ages. Signs include heavy sweating, cold/pale/clammy skin, fast/weak pulse, nausea or vomiting, muscle cramps, dizziness, headache, and fainting. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, move to a cool place, drink some water, and loosen your clothes. If possible, take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath. Seek medical attention immediately if your symptoms get worse or last longer than one hour.

Eversource reports they have crews ready to respond to any outages or issues that may arise during the heatwave.

If your power goes out, please contact Eversource at 800-592-2000 to report the outage.

Curious about how much electricity your cooling system is using? Get information at Eversource's [Cooling Calculator](#).

Tips from Eversource for keeping temperatures and energy costs down:

- Keep air conditioners set at a moderate temperature that is also comfortable. For every degree higher on the thermostat, the air conditioner will use 1-3% less electricity. Using a programmable or Wi-Fi thermostat can also help manage energy usage, especially when away from home.

- Don't block air flow. Keep air vents clear of obstructions such as furniture, curtains, and rugs. For those with central air and floor vents, consider using vent deflectors to direct and increase the reach of cooled air. Keep air conditioner filters and coils clean. Dirty filters block air flow, reducing efficiency and making it harder to deliver the cool air.
- Keep blinds closed when it's hot out to prevent unwanted heat from entering a home through windows. Using curtains, shades, and blinds can lower indoor temperatures by up to 20 degrees.
- Switch to ENERGY STAR certified LED lights. The energy-efficient bulbs run cooler and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent lights.
- Set ceiling fans to rotate counterclockwise and at a higher speed in the summer to circulate the breeze more effectively, creating a cooling, wind chill effect. Since ceiling fans cool only people and not the actual room; remember to turn the fan off when leaving the room.
- Cook dinner outside. Cooking indoors heats up the kitchen and makes cooling systems work harder, so opt for cooking outdoors instead.
- Look for the ENERGY STAR rating when purchasing new appliances. Also, be sure to choose the right size when purchasing an air conditioning unit. An oversized or undersized AC unit is less effective and uses more energy.

Good Luck!

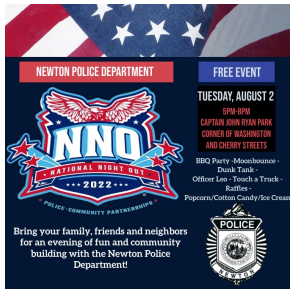
The Newton 10U Little League baseball team is heading to the State Championship game this weekend. Good luck to the team as they play Braintree in the Williamsport Tournament this Saturday, July 23, at Metacomet Field in Medfield. The first pitch is at 9:30 a.m.



Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Want a chance to “dunk” the Chief? Join Newton Police Chief John Carmichael and members of the police department for food, music and fun at National Night Out on Tuesday, August 2. Meet the women and men who patrol our neighborhoods, share a meal, play some games,



and maybe even drop one of them into the dunk tank. Stop by on Tuesday, Aug. 2 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Captain John Ryan Park next to Newton Police Headquarters at 1321 Washington Street in West Newton Square.

P.P.S. **Newton's Climate & Sustainability Team is launching a newsletter** to updates on sustainability initiatives, opportunities to get involved, and climate-related information. [Click here to subscribe.](#)

P.P.P.S. Do you have old cleaners under your sink that you'll never use? Make an appointment at an upcoming **household hazardous waste collection** event held on the first Saturday and third Thursday each month. The next date is this Thursday, July 21. Call the Customer Service desk at City Hall at 617-796-1000 to make an appointment. Click [here](#) for more information and a list of accepted materials.

P.P.P.P.S. Join the fun – and music – this weekend at the 7th Annual **Linda Plaut Festival of the Arts**. Twenty performers on 4 stages (Hyde Playground in the Highlands, Newton Centre Village Green, Allen House in West Newton, Suzuki School lawn in Waban) will play over three days, Friday, July 21 through Sunday, July 24. The kickoff is Friday night at 6:30 p.m. with the **New Phil Pops Concert followed by the movie Casablanca** at dusk in Newton Highlands (90 Lincoln Street). It's all free. Find the full schedule of performances and information on performers at NewtonCommunityPride.org.



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