



Finance Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Monday, January 9, 2023

Present: Councilor Grossman (Chair), Oliver, Norton, Kalis, Malakie, Gentile, Noel, and Humphrey

Also Present: Councilors Lucas, Downs, Markiewicz, Lipof, Bowman

City Staff: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle, Comptroller Steve Curley, Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux, Senior Financial Analyst Perry Rosenfield, Senior Financial Analyst Connor Roach, Fire Chief Greg Gentile, Police Superintendent George McMains, IT Director Joe Mulvey, Planning Director Barney Heath, Former Director of Transportation Planning Nicole Freedman, Director of Parks & Open Space Luis Perez Demorizi, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Culture Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Health & Human Services Linda Walsh, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Director of Transportation Planning Josh Ostroff

Chair's Note: The Finance and Public Safety & Transportation Committees met jointly for item #20-23

Referred to Public Safety & Transportation and Finance Committees

#20-23 Appropriate \$258,524.10 from Free Cash for Four Police Cruisers

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of two hundred fifty-eight thousand, five hundred twenty-four dollars and ten cents (\$258,524.10) from June 30, 2022 Certified Free Cash to the Police Department for the purchase of four (4) Hybrid Ford Police Interceptor Cruisers.

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation approved as amended 8-0**
Finance Approved as amended 7-0-1 (Councilor Humphrey Abstaining)

Note: Police Superintendent George McMains stated that the police department seeks to purchase four hybrid police cruisers to replace some of the gas operated frontline cruisers currently in use. He added that the department will save roughly \$30,000 per year in fuel and maintenance by upgrading to these hybrid cruisers. Superintendent McMains mentioned that 60 of their 79 police cruisers are no longer under warranty, and adding new cruisers would help decrease maintenance costs and downtime for repairs.

Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux noted that the line item in the FY21 budget for the police department was significantly reduced due to Covid, which prevented them from buying cruisers that year, which impacted the department.

Councilors asked the following questions:

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Q: Is there a plan to move toward electric-powered police cruisers?

A: Superintendent McMains explained that there are challenges associated with electric police cruisers. One issue is maintaining the necessary downtime for electric police cruisers to be charged while maintaining a 24/7 presence on the street.

Q: Are these plug-in hybrids or regular hybrids?

A: Superintendent McMains answered that they are plug-in hybrids. When the batteries are drained, the gas engine will kick on to charge the batteries, and then shut off once the batteries are charged.

Q: Are these four police cruisers replacing four police cruisers that are currently on the streets right now?

A: Superintendent McMains stated that two of the hybrids will be replacing gas powered cruisers, and two hybrids will be replacing gas powered administrative vehicles. He added that the administrative vehicles are run just as often as the cruisers.

Q: What is the department doing with the four cruisers that are going offline?

A: Superintendent McMains explained that they will be evaluated and likely used to replace older, less fuel efficient cruisers, and others will be auctioned off.

Q: What is the plan to replace the cruisers that are not under warranty?

A: Superintendent McMains answered that most of the cruisers that aren't under warranty are sedans, and while the department is looking to replace them, the priority is replacing the frontline SUV cruisers, as they see the most use.

Q: Is the goal to have every police vehicle outside of those used for parking enforcement be a larger sized SUV?

A: Superintendent McMains stated that the amount of equipment required for a police cruiser is not currently compatible with a smaller SUV.

Q: Could the administrative vehicles be fully electric?

A: Superintendent McMains explained that many of the vehicles that are currently Ford Fusions, such as detective cars and community service cars, will eventually go to electric. He noted that there is an ongoing feasibility needs study at the police department seeking to find ways to get charging stations at the police station, which is a big piece of the puzzle.

Q: Why is the gas mileage in the hybrid vehicles so low?

A: Superintendent McMains stated that these vehicles essentially run 24/7 unless they're being brought to the gas station or at the police station for a booking. This is to ensure their computers and lights can function properly. In the past, the department has had issues with using their equipment while the vehicle is off, such as draining the vehicles batteries.

Q: The docket item states a total of \$258,524.10, but the Mayor's request is only for \$258,524. Can we clear up that discrepancy?

A: CFO Lemieux stated that \$258,524 is the correct amount. She explained that the Mayor typically only makes requests in whole dollar amounts. CFO Lemieux added that the additional 10 cents could come from another area of the department or that the vendor could go without the 10 cents.

Councilors made the following comments

It was noted that a Councilor would like the police department to strongly consider fully electric administrative vehicles.

It was added that a Councilor has gotten numerous complaints in their ward regarding police cars constantly running during details without their lights on.

A Councilor voiced their support for approving this item.

It was stated that that this item should be amended to state the total amount requested to be \$258,524.

Councilor Oliver motioned to amend the item in the Finance Committee, which passed unanimously.

Councilor Oliver motioned to approve the item as amended in the Finance Committee, which passed 7-0-1 with Councilor Humphrey abstaining.

Councilor Oliver motioned to amend the item in the Public Safety & Transportation Committee, which passed unanimously.

Councilor Oliver motioned to approve the item as amended in the Public Safety & Transportation Committee, which passed unanimously.

#16-23 Acceptance of \$140,000 Grant from the Massachusetts Community Compact Cabinet's Information Technology Grant Program.

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of one hundred forty thousand (\$140,000) from the Massachusetts Community Compact Cabinet's (CCC) Information Technology grant program to contract with a document

management system provider to scan, OCR (optical character recognition), and index municipal documents currently stored in paper form from multiple City departments and to establish a web-based portal to allow for public access.

Action: **Finance Approved 8-0**

Note: IT Director Joe Mulvey explained that they applied for this grant and chose to apply for a scanning project. The IT department has done a number of scanning projects over the years, and it has become apparent that many departments in the City would benefit from a scanning project. Director Mulvey added that the \$140,000 total was based off an estimate to scan everything in the Law and Treasury departments from a vendor named Duplitron, whose Laserfiche software will be used for this project. He also noted that they intend to set aside some of this money for an indexing and searching software.

Councilors asked the following questions:

Q: Do you expect that Treasury and Law will be the next two departments to begin scanning?

A: Director Mulvey was not positive. He mentioned that the Law Department would require significant upfront work, since they box all their documents. He also believes a significant amount of their contents are already digitized. Director Mulvey noted that other departments, such as the Health department, would be ready to scan today.

Q: How much employee time will it take to partner with the consultant and move forward with the actual work?

A: Director Mulvey explained that Duplitron handles the entire workload from document preparation to optical character recognition, and then provides the IT department with a deliverable once the work is completed.

Q: What documents would be available to the public?

A: Director Mulvey stated that most of the Law department's documents would be confidential. However, he believes that most of the Health department's documents would be discoverable. Director Mulvey added that the Treasury department has many documents of historical significance. Overall, determinations still need to be made by departments and the archivist as to which documents would be the most appropriate to share.

Q: Did people compare the benefit to City employees being able to access these documents digitally versus the benefit for the public?

A: Director Mulvey explained that the initial concern was focused toward improving accessibility for City employees. However, the same types of software can be leveraged to be of use to the public, creating a transparent environment.

Q: Could this be applied to docket items and constituent letters?

A: Director Mulvey stated that all docket items from the last 10-15 years are already digital. As for constituent letters, Director Mulvey was unable to answer from a legal perspective whether they are discoverable, but from a technical perspective, it would depend on whether they were scanned as images or scanned using Optical Character Recognition, which is extra work.

Councilors made the following comments:

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve, which passed unanimously.

#14-23 Acceptance of \$35,000 Grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety and the Department of Fire Services

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000) in grant funding from the Executive Office of Public Safety and the Department of Fire Services to reimburse Newton Fire Department for the purchase of mobile radios for fire vehicles and apparatus.

Action: Finance Approved 8-0

Note: Fire Chief Gentile explained that this grant money will be used to replace mobile radios inside the apparatus that have become outdated. He added that these new radios will work well with the continued communication simulcast project. Chief Gentile also noted that the manufacturer no longer supports the current radios that they seek to replace. He estimated being able to replace 8 mobile radios but was not certain due to price fluctuations.

Councilors asked the following questions:

Q: Are these radios installed in a vehicle or are they handheld radios?

A: Chief Gentile explained that mobile radios are installed in vehicles.

Councilors made the following comments:

Councilor Oliver motioned to approve, which passed unanimously.

#13-23 Request to transfer \$30,000 from Health and Human Services, Youth Services/Personnel/Other Stipends

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer the sum of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) from Acct # 0150106-514309 (Health and Human Services, Youth Services/Personnel/Other Stipends) to Acct # 0150106-530100 (Health – Awareness/Expenses/Consultants).

Action: Finance Approved 8-0

Note: Commissioner of Health & Human Services Linda Walsh stated that this item relates to a summer internship program for Newton's most at-risk teens, spanning all three high school programs. These students were initially paid a stipend, but through Youth Service Director Meghan Murtagh's work with MassHire, students are now able to be paid minimum wage, a significant increase.

Chief Financial Officer Lemieux clarified that they are not asking for additional funding, but rather seeking to move this money from the stipend account to the expense account in order to pay MassHire, who paid the students.

Councilors asked the following questions:

Q: What kind of work are these students doing?

A: Student internships are mainly offered by Newton businesses and City departments. The students also attend weekly seminars covering topics such as resumes and financial literacy.

Q: Since this money passes through MassHires, how much of the \$30,000 ends up in the hands of students?

A: Commissioner Walsh estimated that a 10% fee was charged by MassHire, and followed up to confirm this information the following day.

Councilors made the following comments:

Councilor Kalis motioned approve the item, which passed unanimously.

#571-22 Appropriate \$225,000 from Transportation Mitigation funds

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting approval for the use of two hundred twenty-five thousand (\$225,000 in transportation mitigation funds from the Trio transportation demand management plan for NewMo operations consistent with Special Permit #96-17 and the approved Consistency Ruling dated 8/31/22.

Action: Finance Approved 7-1 (Councilor Malakie opposed)

Note: Former Director of Transportation Planning Nicole Freedman stated that this item can be broken down into \$150,000 to support NewMo and BikeShare operations and \$75,000 to pay for trips to and from the Trio building for employees and residents. She added that the Planning department aims to give a presentation regarding NewMo and its finances to the full City Council in the near future.

Councilors asked the following questions:

Q: What happened to some of the original subsidies for the Trio building?

A: Ms. Freedman stated that that these subsidies were mainly for the MBTA commuter rail, however as of 12/15/22, only \$2,500 of these funds had been used despite a 98% occupancy rate in the Trio building. With these funds being largely unused, Ms. Freedman continued, it was beneficial for the developer to go for the consistency ruling. She added that Newton has one of the highest rates of working from home, which is also a contributing factor to MBTA subsidies being largely unused.

Q: How do we measure Newtonians' rate of commuting in relation to other communities?

A: Ms. Freedman referenced MassDOT and MHA statistics that compared the number of trips taken presently in comparison to pre-pandemic commuter rates. She added that the increased rate of working from home has been extremely effective in reducing emissions and congestion.

Q: How long was the original amount of \$300,000 expected to fund the MBTA passes?

A: Ms. Freedman said that it's hard to say for sure, but that the Planning department's horizon is typically around 5 years. She added that the \$2,500 spent was so far below predictions that it became pertinent to take action.

Q: When was the Trio building occupied and running?

A: Ms. Freedman was not certain, but offered to check her notes.

Q: When did occupancy of the Trio building start?

A: Ms. Freedman stated that the last Trio building was delivered on 10/4/2020.

Q: How many people are currently using the MBTA passes on an ongoing basis?

A: It was explained by Ms. Freedman that as of 12/15/22, \$2,500 in MBTA passes had been used. The number of people using these passes is not readily available, as ticket prices fluctuate based on length of trip.

Q: How will the \$150,000 going toward NewMo and BikeShare be divided?

A: Ms. Freedman answered that in all likelihood, \$100,000 would be going toward NewMo and \$50,000 would be going toward BikeShare. She added that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the \$150,000 could wind up going to NewMo.

Q: Why will the \$150,000 be divided this way?

A: Ms. Freedman explained that the City is waiting to sign a contract with BlueBikes, which has been delayed. Since the City is not currently under contract with BlueBikes, its expenses from this year are decreasing because they aren't paying for BlueBikes service. The further that contract gets delayed, the

more money would be shifted toward NewMo from BikeShare. She added that the absolute most the BlueBikes contract can cost is \$55,000, but fully expects their cost to be lower.

Q: How will the BikeShare money go to work?

A: Ms. Friedman stated that it will be going toward the monthly fee paid to Lyft, the BikeShare vendor.

Q: Is the City saving money by using funds from the Trio mitigation account rather than paying for BikeShare outright?

A: Ms. Friedman answered that yes, the City was saving money. She added that there was never discussion of the City spending money on BikeShare, it was always pertinent to find an alternate source of funding for the program. The system will not exist in Newton without funding operations.

Councilors made the following comments:

It was appreciated that while these funds aren't being used for their initial purpose, they're being re-tooled to fund programs that will still incentivize people to not use their own car. They added that the MBTA has been unreliable lately, and hopes to see improved frequency of trains in the future. Lastly, they noted they fully support this item.

A Councilor fears that it's too early to pull the plug on funding MBTA passes since we're still feeling effects of the pandemic and demand may rise in the future. They'd rather save the money now and prepare for increased demand once train frequency and service improves. They added that they are inclined to not vote for this item due to these concerns.

Ms. Freedman explained that \$75,000 in subsidies have been reserved for MBTA pass subsidies.

It was stated that we cannot wait for new MBTA platforms to be built or for service to improve. Transferring this money to NewMo benefits the program and holding \$75,000 back for the MBTA passes also reflects an anticipation of increased future demand.

While they wish that there was more interest in the MBTA pass subsidies, a Councilor agrees that it makes sense to put this money to work and help improve the viability of NewMo.

Councilor Kalis motioned to approve the item, which passed 7-1 with Councilor Malakie opposed.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#18-23

Acceptance of \$2,027,000 MassWorks Program Grant

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of two million and twenty-seven thousand dollars (\$2,027,000) in grant funding from the MassWorks Program for the Pettee Square Improvement Project (Oak Street at Chestnut Street) in order to reimburse the City for final engineering design, engineering services

during construction, resident repudiation services, and construction services of the intersection improvements at Pettee Square.

Public Facilities Approved 8-0 on 1-4-23

Action: Finance Approved 8-0

Note: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle stated that this project was initially approved by the City Council in August of 2021, adding that they expected to receive the MassWorks grant shortly after, but did not. He noted that this project is an estimated \$3,027,000, and the grant is for \$2,027,000 with City ARPA funding covering the final \$1,000,000 as required by the grant. Commissioner McGonagle added that this project has been fully vetted and approved by various departments, and they have now been awarded the grant from MassWorks.

Councilors made the following comments

It was noted that Ward 5, specifically the residents of Upper Falls and the Upper Falls Area Council, are very excited about this.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve the item, which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#19-23 Increase Curbside Mattress Recycling Fees

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an increase in the curbside mattress recycling fee from the current \$50 to \$60 in order to make the City whole to cover the cost being charged by the service provider, GGY Transport LLC dba Tough Stuff Recycling, for curbside collection service.

Public Facilities Approved 8-0 on 1-4-23

Action: Finance Approved 8-0

Note: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle explained that when the initial \$50 fee was passed, the contract for the service had not been finalized. He continued, saying that the State had failed to notify vendors prevailing wage applied to the service, resulting in a \$10 increase per item collected. Commissioner McGonagle added that this increase is only relevant to curbside collection service, not mattress disposal. He concluded by stating that the City is unable to absorb the additional \$10 per item collected.

Councilors asked the following questions:

Q: How many people on a monthly basis are recycling mattresses through the City?

A: Commissioner McGonagle estimated that 160 people per month were using this service prior to the increase. He added that some local furniture companies will pick up mattresses for free, so the amount of monthly users may drop with the fee increase.

Q: Do those furniture providers pick up just any mattress, or do they only pick up mattresses from customers that have bought a new mattress?

A: Commissioner McGonagle was unsure if furniture stores will collect just any mattress, adding that he was only certain that they would collect a mattress when a customer purchased a new one.

Councilor Gentile motioned to approve the item, which passed unanimously.

#12-23 Acceptance of \$68,000 MassDEP Recycling Dividends Grant

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend the sum of sixty-eight thousand dollars (\$68,000) in grant funding from MassDEP Recycling Dividends to be used for grant-eligible recycling services at the Resource Recovery Center, equipment to improve the City's recycling and composting infrastructure, educational materials, and outreach activities.

Action: **Finance Approved 8-0**

Note: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle began by explaining that they receive this grant every year from the Massachusetts DEP. This grant can be used toward equipment to improve City recycling, composting, educational materials, outreach activities, and also funds a part-time recycling auditor to ensure that the City is in compliance.

With no questions or concerns from the committee, Councilor Gentile motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#17-23 Appropriation of \$3,240,000 for Newton South High School Synthetic Turf Fields and Perimeter Track

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of three million, two hundred forty thousand (\$3,240,000) in FY2022 Free Cash for synthetic turf carpet and infill materials, installation, and construction oversight to replace the two (2) synthetic turf fields at Newton South High School and to resurface the perimeter track at the school's Winkler Stadium.

Programs & Services Approved 6-1-1 (Councilor Wright opposed) (Councilor Baker abstaining) on 1/4/23

Action: **Finance Approved 6-1-1 (Councilor Norton opposed) (Councilor Malakie abstaining)**

Note: Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture Nicole Banks stated that the initial research for replacement products for the athletic fields was approved by the City Council last year. After researching and working with consultants from CDM Smith, the City has investigated various Building materials in compliance with City ordinances. Commissioner Banks added that there have been numerous public meetings on this project, which are available to view on the Park Projects website.

Luis Perez Demorizi, Director of Parks & Open Space presented the plan for the turf fields at Newton South High School and the track resurfacing at Winkler Stadium. The presentation is attached to this report.

Councilors had the following questions:

Q: Did you have multiple vendors that bid on this project? If so, did price affect which vendor you chose?

A: Director Perez Demorizi explained that they only considered vendors that were part of a Sourcewell contract.

He added that cost was not the highest priority when choosing vendors. Rather, they focused on environmental and playability elements over cost.

Q: How long will the track resurfacing last? Would it be more beneficial to redo the entire track?

A: CDM Smith Consultant Glenn Howard stated that after walking the track with the initial installer, the track was determined to be in overall good shape. While the baseline rubber is in good condition, the polyurethane surface has worn down. Mr. Howard noted that the installer is confident that a simple resurfacing of the track will permit several good years of use.

Commissioner Banks followed up via email after the meeting to confirm that=

Q: Will the areas of the track that had been cut out be replaced entirely?

A: Mr. Howard confirmed that any cut out sections of the track would have a full-depth repair completed.

Q: Could the department address concerns about the environmental and human health implications of these fields, and why they were selected as opposed to grass fields or other materials?

A: Director Perez Demorizi explained that Newton's geographic region within the country and the state does not allow for the expansion into the vast land required to have enough grass fields to support the level of competition and amount of use expected. In addition, grass fields take a beating with melting frost, heavy rainfall, and heavy use, creating a dangerous situation for those using the field. As for better and cleaner materials, Director Perez Demorizi continued, they made sure to hold manufacturers accountable pre and post purchase with material testing.

Commissioner Banks followed, saying that the department has focused on improving grass field maintenance in recent budget cycles. She added that these new synthetic turf fields will have light systems, which will allow for maximum use of these facilities.

Q: What will be happening to the materials from the field the City is replacing? How will you verify proper disposal of materials?

A: Director Perez Demorizi answered that there is a Bill of Lading built into the construction contract, which requires that the contractor handling the materials will need to provide notification to the City when the materials arrive at the recycling facility. He noted that the contractor that they're planning to work with recycles the turf carpet into shock pads to be used in another turf field elsewhere. As for the fill, the City would need to coordinate with a contractor to dispose of these materials in a landfill. Director Perez Demorizi could not confirm specifically where these materials would be disposed until a contractor is selected.

Q: Is there a breakdown of how much the disposal of the old field will cost vs how much the new field will cost?

A: Mr. Howard explained that typically bidders include the disposal of the old field in their bid in order to compete to win the project. In this process, bidders have not shared specific costs associated with the disposal of the crumb rubber infill.

Q: Have you done a cost analysis of switching over to grass versus the cost of installation, operating costs, and disposal costs of synthetic turf fields?

A: Director Perez Demorizi stated that they had not done such analysis, as the land required to develop Enough grass fields is not readily available.

Q: Has there been any consideration of cleaning up an utilizing the land on Pine St. in Auburndale?

A: Director Perez Demorizi answered that the Pine St. lot is not currently being considered.

Q: Did anyone look at the cost differential between resurfacing the track versus entirely replacing it? And how much longer would a new track last than a resurfaced track?

A: Mr. Howard stated that they did not compare resurfacing versus replacing the track, since the installer was confident that a resurfacing would be sufficient. The installer indicated that a resurfaced track would last several years, which Mr. Howard estimated to be 8-10 years.

Commissioner Banks followed up via email the following day and confirmed that the track will last 2 lifecycles (16-20 years) with an intermediate resurfacing. He noted that they would likely replace the track during the next round of replacements at the school.

Q: Is there an alternative plan other than replacing turf fields to pursue?

A: Commissioner Banks explained that there is not currently an alternative plan being

considered. She referenced a letter from the high school athletic directors that expressed a need to potentially expand and create a turf field at Albemarle in order to help support demand. With this in mind, the demand for field usage is simply too high to consider grass fields at this time.

Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo joined to say that they City did discuss buying neighboring properties to use for turf fields, and it simply is not practical. He added that proximity to the schools is important, so grass fields elsewhere in the City are not sufficient for high school use.

Q: What does the phrase “substantial completion” mean?

A: Director Perez Demorizi explained that this phrase means that everything around a project is complete, save for a few minor details. He likened the phrase to 98% completion of a project. Director Perez clarified that the track and field would be fully playable in these conditions.

Q: Why are we using free cash for this project, rather than bonding it?

A: Chief Financial Officer Lemieux stated that the City is using free cash due to a significantly higher amount of free cash certified this year compared to other years. She added that this project would be a 10-year bond, and therefore a significant hit to the City’s budget.

Q: How much free cash was certified in FY22, and how much has already been authorized this year?

A: Comptroller Steve Curley stated that free cash was significantly higher than usual this year at \$28,860,460. He added that there is typically around \$12.1 million certified yearly. Comptroller Curley Then explained that there have been 3 items approved so far from free cash this year, totaling \$1,124,000. With item #20-23 from earlier in the meeting and if this item is approved, the City’s free cash balance would be \$24,097,936.

Q: Why is our free cash balance so high?

A: Comptroller Curley explained that in addition to the usual \$12 million, there was roughly \$14 million in unexpected revenues due to accrued interest on NStar and Eversource’s personal property tax appeals and a NewFalls Pilot program. He added that the City also just had a better year with revenues and expenses which accounts for the additional \$2 million.

Q: Are there other big projects coming down the line that we expect to fund with free cash that we would normally bond?

A: Chief Financial Officer Lemieux answered that the City intends to spend roughly \$7.5 million on the Horace Mann improvement project from free cash.

Q: When was free cash certified?

A: Comptroller Curley stated that free cash was certified on October 5th, 2022.

Q: When was the original turf field installed?

A: Director Perez Demorizi answered that it was installed in 2009.

Q: How long has the Parks, Recreation, and Culture department been working on the plan being proposed tonight?

A: Director Perez Demorizi stated that this project has been on the CIP since before he started in 2019, and estimated that it had been there for a couple years prior.

Q: How much of the demand for these fields is from non-resident groups?

A: Director Perez Demorizi stated that this information is not readily available but offered to have it ready for the full City Council meeting. He added that Newton based groups are prioritized for field permits over nonresident groups. Non-resident groups typically only get late-night hours and summer hours, which are low-demand timeslots.

Q: Would permitting these fields to be used by Newton residents only limit the wear and tear on the grass, should these fields be converted to grass?

A: Commissioner Banks explained that the proximity to the high schools is an essential factor for these fields. She added that these fields are used by 6 football teams, which is taxing on grass, as well as a number of soccer and lacrosse teams. Commissioner Banks concluded by saying too many teams need to be accommodated for grass fields to be sufficient.

Councilors made the following comments:

One Councilor stated that due to the adverse environmental and human health effects of these fields, they are unable to support this item.

With so much land being taken for development in recent years, a Councilor expressed frustration that nothing was done to preserve land for grass fields.

It was pointed out that a city like Newton cannot operate a successful athletic program without these turf fields, and that they are perhaps a necessary evil.

A Councilor mentioned that since this project has been openly worked on for at least five years, Councilors have had sufficient time to advocate for or come up with an alternative. They added that the proposed new turf fields will have a much lesser environmental impact than the current fields. In

addition, there is a significant shortage of open activities spaces in the City. They concluded by expressing their frustration that no concerns about environmental impacts were brought up until this late hour, and that they will be supporting this item.

Councilor Oliver motioned to approve the item which passed 6-1-1 with Councilor Norton opposed and Councilor Malakie abstaining.

The Committee adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Walker Grossman, Chair



Synthetic Turf Improvement Projects

City Council Programs and Services Committee, City of Newton

CDM Smith

Glenn Howard, PMP, RLA

Heather Lanza

City Of Newton

**Parks, Recreation &
Culture Department**

Nicole Banks,
Commissioner

Luis Perez Demorizi,
Director

Greg Mellett,
Assistant Director

January 4, 2023

**CDM
Smith**



NEWTON
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Turf Field Needs for Both High Schools

NEWTON SOUTH HS TEAMS

FALL:

- 3 GIRLS SOCCER TEAMS (9TH, JV, VARSITY)
- 3 BOYS SOCCER TEAMS (9TH, JV, VARSITY)
- 3 FOOTBALL TEAMS (JV, VARSITY)
- 3 FIELD HOCKEY TEAMS (9TH, JV, VARSITY)
- 2 CROSS COUNTRY TEAMS ON TRACK

WINTER:

- 2 GIRLS TRACK TEAMS (WEATHER PERMITTING)
- 2 BOYS TRACK TEAMS (WEATHER PERMITTING)

SPRING:

- 3 GIRLS LACROSSE TEAMS (ALL LEVELS)
- 3 BOYS LACROSSE TEAMS (ALL LEVELS)
- 2 OUTDOOR TRACK (VARSITY, JV)
- 2 MIDDLE SCHOOL TRACK TEAMS
- 1 UNIFIED TRACK TEAM
- POTENTIAL RUGBY TEAMS

UP TO 11 PRACTICES/GAMES EACH WEEKDAY TO SCHEDULE

NEWTON NORTH HS TEAMS

FALL:

- 3 GIRLS SOCCER TEAMS (9TH, JV, VARSITY)
- 3 BOYS SOCCER TEAMS (9TH, JV, VARSITY)
- 3 FOOTBALL TEAMS (9TH, JV, VARSITY)
- 3 FIELD HOCKEY TEAMS (9TH, JV, VARSITY)
- 2 CROSS COUNTRY TEAMS ON TRACK

WINTER:

- 2 TRACK TEAMS, WEATHER PERMITTING

SPRING:

- 3 GIRLS LACROSSE TEAMS (ALL LEVELS)
- 3 BOYS LACROSSE TEAMS (ALL LEVELS)
- 2 OUTDOOR TRACK (VARSITY, JV)

UP TO 12 PRACTICES/GAMES EACH WEEKDAY TO SCHEDULE

Athletics at HS Fields & Albemarle Sports Complex

Winter:

- Oxford Rd. Neighborhood soccer
- Juventus Boston
- Newton Area Flag Football League Clinic
- Newton Girls Soccer
- Newton Youth Soccer
- Boston Villa Soccer club
- BOH & Day Middle Schools
- General Park and School Field Users

Spring:

- B.A.T. Training
- Buda Youth Frisbee
- J. Lowe Soccer Camps (BC clinic)
- Newton Boys Lacrosse league
- Boston FHC (field hockey clinic)
- Newton Area Flag Football League Clinic
- Eastern Mass Women's Soccer (Suburban Thunder games)
- USA Track and Field New England – outdoor track
- Newton Special Athletes – outdoor track
- Newton Girls Soccer
- Newton Youth Soccer
- Over the Hill Soccer League
- Newton Girls Lacrosse League
- Prime – workouts
- Tanrikulu resident group
- Eastern mass Women's Soccer League
- Newton Little League
- Newton LL Seniors
- Senior Youth Baseball
- Newton Girls Softball
- F.A. Day Middle School Athletics;
- Prime Baseball League
- Babe Ruth Baseball Tryouts
- Adult Cricket
- Extra Innings Baseball Clinic
- BOH & Day Middle Schools
- General Park and School Field Users

Summer:

- Eastern Mass Women's Soccer (Suburban Thunder games)
- BUDA Youth Frisbee
- Boston FHC (field hockey clinic)
- Newton Community Ed summer sports clinics
- REV Lacrosse
- Newton Special Athletes – outdoor track
- Bertuzzi Soccer Training
- NN/NS Football Clinic
- North fall pre-season training and tryouts
- Newton Little League
- Babe Ruth Baseball
- Adult Cricket
- Newton Girls Softball
- Newton Community Ed – baseball
- Boys and Girls Club
- Extra Innings Baseball Clinic
- Mustang Youth Football
- American Legion Baseball
- Prime Baseball
- Juventas Youth Soccer
- BOH & Day Middle Schools
- General Park and School Field Users

Fall:

- Newton Mustangs (youth football)
- Endurance Youth Field Hockey
- Newton Boys Lacrosse League
- Newton Area Flag Football League Clinic
- Over the Hill Soccer league
- Eastern mass Women's Soccer League
- Newton Girls Soccer
- Newton Youth Soccer
- Newton Mustangs Football game
- Newton Little League
- Newton LL Seniors
- Adult Cricket
- Newton Girls Softball
- Mustang Youth Football
- F.A. Day Middle School Athletics
- Extra Innings Baseball Clinic
- Lasell Baseball
- NNHS Baseball captain's practice
- BUDA Youth Frisbee
- BUDA Adult Frisbee
- BOH & Day Middle Schools
- General Park and School Field Users

Synthetic Turf Replacements & Enhancement

- Synthetic turf field replacements at both NSHS Synthetic Fields
 - Winkler Stadium & Brandeis Rd Field
- Track Improvements
 - resurfacing at NSHS



Project History

- Newton South HS synthetic turf fields and track
 - constructed in 2009 (13 yrs. old)
- Synthetic turf typically needs to be replaced about 8 - 10 years after installation.
 - Repairs can be done to extend lifespan an additional 2-3 years
- Rubberized track surfacing typically needs to be resurfaced 8 - 10 years after installation
- Fields are currently at their “end of life cycle”
 - repairs to extend lifespan of carpet are no longer effective

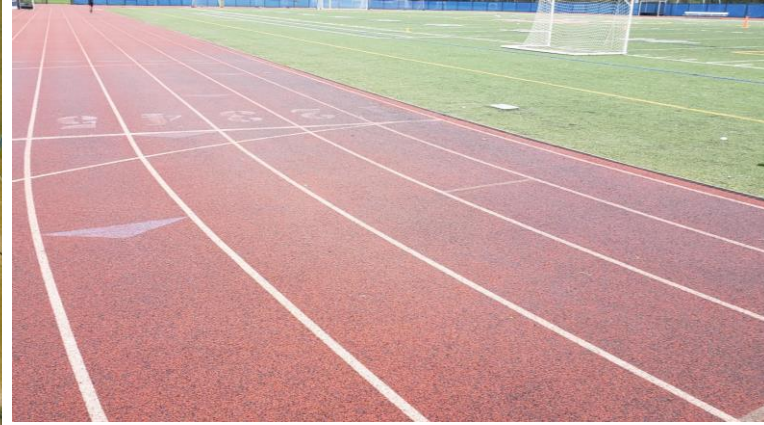
Existing Turf Photos



Existing Turf Photos



Existing Track Photos



Newton South High School Turf Replacements Project Goals

- Winkler Stadium, Brandeis Road Field and Tiger Stadium synthetic turf field replacement
 - Remove and recycle existing turf carpets
 - Remove and dispose of existing Crumb Rubber infill from recycled tires
 - Replace with better and cleaner turf carpet and infill
- Field collector drains cleaned

Synthetic Turf Field Surfaces and Materials Selection Based on a Balanced Approach



Longevity

- Life Span and Warranty
- Quality of Carpet
- Quality of Infill
- Minimal Infill Replenishing



Maintenance

- Annual Maintenance
- Minimal Infill Displacement
- Minimal Large-Scale Repairs
- Reduced field marking labor



Player Safety in Turf

- Consistency in GMAX Rating
- Heat Index
- Toxic Chemical Exposure
- Freezing Conditions
- Consistency in Head Injury Criterion (HIC) Rating



Environmental Impacts

- Minimal Infill Displacement into waterways
- Cleaner Materials
- No need for Watering
- Future End-of-Life Disposal
- PFAS Exposure



Playability

- Playability
- Shock Absorption
- Minimal Disruption to Use
- Extended Seasonal Use
- Retain Newton Athletic Competitive Edge

Recommended Synthetic Turf Field Surfaces and Materials Selection Based on a Balanced Approach

- Turf Carpet:
 - Dual Fiber Turf: Slit Film + Monofilament
 - Fiber height: 2.25"-2.5" to ensure GMAX values
 - Appropriate for: Soccer, Football, Lacrosse, Field Hockey and more!
 - Infill Flyout and Displacement Control
- Infill Mix:
 - TPE + Sand
 - No material Migration
 - Retains consistent GMAX ratings
 - Reduced heat levels compared to Crumb Rubber
 - Minimal annual replenishing required at center field and goals
 - Less susceptible to freezing

Project Budget Funding Request

- Total Estimated construction cost Including track resurfacing: **\$967,000**
- Turf materials at Winkler Stadium: **\$1,146,354**
- Turf materials at Brandeis Road: **\$1,086,553**
- Total Construction Administration: **\$40,000**
- **TOTAL PROJECT COST \$3,240,000**

Project Timeline

- Construction bid: mid to late January 2023
 - Installation of carpet and infill, track resurfacing,
- Material Order (Infill and Carpet): mid-February 2023
- Ground-breaking: After spring 2023 athletic season
- Substantial Completion: End of summer, prior to the start of 2023-2024 athletic pre-season



Thank you for attending!

For more information, please contact us at: Athleticfields@newtonma.gov Or visit us at newtonma.gov/parkprojects

Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture Department
246 Dudley Road, Newton, MA 02459
Office: (617) 796-1500
parks@newtonma.gov
Nicole Banks, Commissioner



January 13, 2023

Re: Memorandum on NSHS Synthetic Turf Field Replacement and Track Resurfacing

Dear City Councilors,

During our discussion of the NSHS turf fields replacement funding request, PRC staff and our consultants requested time to respond to some of the questions presented. I wanted to submit this information prior to your upcoming full Council meeting.

1. A question was asked to explain the rationale behind resurfacing of the running track at Winkler Stadium rather than a full replacement. We were able to review our notes for more specific information. In 2020 our Maintenance staff began inquiring with our turf/track contractor about replacement options as a few patches were needed due to deteriorating surface conditions. The contractor noted that we had installed the top-of-the-line system and that there were no signs of deterioration to the underlying asphalt base layer of the track. Problems with the asphalt layer would result in visible cracks and depressions on the track surface. When we began our replacement planning and engineering work in early 2021, our consultant (CDM Smith) and our maintenance contractor met onsite to evaluate existing conditions. All parties again confirmed that there were no signs of any underlying base layer failure which is not surprising given its 25-year life expectancy. They explained that the track was due for a resurfacing (the top layer) that will last another anticipated 10-12 years, meaning it will be due for full replacement the same time the replacement carpet will be due for the next renovation. The inspections continued to occur throughout the past year at site meetings at both NSHS and NNHS. I am happy to share in advance that the asphalt layer of the track at NNHS is in equally good condition! The resurfacing plan consists of respraying the top layer after the former layer is scraped off. The track will have the desired bounce and traction. We are fortunate to have this option to resurface as it will be approximately 1/2 the price of a full-depth track replacement. We anticipate needing a full track replacement when the new carpet needs to be replaced after approximately 12 years of additional use.
2. After a substantive discussion on PFAS, a councilor requested that our consultant provide links to information on this chemical class for further reading. The following links from government websites were provided:
<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-effects/index.html>
<https://www.epa.gov/pfas/our-current-understanding-human-health-and-environmental-risks-pfas>
[Drinking Water Health Advisories for PFAS Fact Sheet for Communities - June 2022 \(epa.gov\)](#)
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>

On this subject, I would like to reiterate that we will be reviewing the product sample chemical analysis prior to procuring the carpet and infill materials.

3. Field use data: A question was also asked about whether the grass fields (including conversion of our 3 existing turf fields to grass) would be able to meet the needs of our school and youth sport groups. We first reviewed the past year's use of our 3 turf fields and found that Tier 4 groups (those comprising less than 65% residents) and Tier 5 groups (for-profit organizations serving residents and non-residents) used the turf fields in a very limited capacity, primarily on a weekend afternoon or during the summer. As explained during the discussion, Tiers 1, 2, and 3 groups have priority. Next, we looked at Tiers 4 and 5 use of grass fields, particularly during the Monday through Friday 4-9pm peak demand times. During this window of time our fields are in the highest demand. The rectangular fields were made available to these groups during this afternoon/evening timespan 133 hours, with approximately ½ going to a low-impact volleyball program, primarily at lower quality fields. We have significantly reduced the amount of time booked to Tier 4 and 5 group and only schedule them if 1. The space is available (no Tier 1, 2, 3 use), and 2. The field is deemed to be in sufficient condition to handle the booking without excess wear and tear.

Thanks,
Luis Perez Demorizi, Director of Parks and Open Space
Parks, Recreation & Culture Department