



Programs & Services Committee

Agenda

City of Newton

In City Council

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Noel, Albright, Humphrey, Baker, Greenberg, Wright, and Ryan

Also Present: Councilors Kalis, Grossman, Malakie, Leary, Norton, and Laredo

City Staff: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Marc Welch, Deputy Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture and Superintendent of Urban Forestry; Sue Dzikowski, Comptroller; Marie Lawlor, Assistant City Solicitor; Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer; Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture; Carol Stapleton, Rec Program Manager; Deborah Youngblood, Commissioner of Health and Human Services; Linda Walsh, Deputy Commissioner of Health and Human Services; Nathan Giacalone, Committee Clerk

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#421-20 **Transfer \$400,000 to the Forestry Division of Parks, Recreation & Culture**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer the sum of four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) from Acct #0110498-579400- Reserve for Snow & Ice Removal to the Forestry Division of the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department to cover the costs of the three wind events that have occurred thus far in this fiscal year.

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 8-0**
 Finance Approved 5-0 (Councilor Norton not voting)

Notes: The Programs & Services Committee was joined on this item by members of the Finance Committee as well as Jonathan Yeo, Maureen Lemieux, Nicole Banks, and Marc Welch.

Ms. Lemieux explained that there were three major wind events this year. The original plan at the beginning of the fiscal year was to avoid supplementing this budget with Snow & Ice funds. By the third wind event, Ms. Lemieux said that the Forestry Division was unable to perform without a budget supplement. These budget supplements often come from the Snow & Ice budget. The City budgeted \$4.5 million this year for snow and ice. About \$880,000 was received last year that was set aside in the inclement weather reserve, with another \$700,000 carried over from last year's snow and ice budget. Public Works carried over about \$100,000 extra from last year as well. In total, Ms. Lemieux said that the year began with about \$6 million set aside to address weather events before touching free cash. She said that the \$400,000 in this request will come from the Comptroller's Reserve, bringing the remaining Snow & Ice budget down to about \$5.7 million. She said that \$5.7 million is the average amount budgeted for Snow & Ice every

year. Though two winters in the last several years have used the entire Snow & Ice budget, requiring the City to use Free Cash, Ms. Lemieux said that the Snow & Ice budget will still be in good shape after this transfer.

Mr. Welch said that none of the three tree events in the current fiscal year were abnormal, but in the past 20 years there have not been more than two events per calendar year and this year there have been four. This required the hiring of additional contractor services to clean up after these storms as well as additional staff overtime. Mr. Welch said that because of the return of the in-house tree crew, this request is \$500,000 less than it otherwise would have been.

Commissioner Banks said that these same storms also impacted Eversource and plans are underway to have the Newton South High School field lights on as soon as possible.

Discussion:

Q: After the carryovers, what is left over in Snow & Ice?

A: There is about \$5.7 million remaining dedicated for Snow & Ice. Free cash is held until going through the winter months. There is less Free Cash than normal due to COVID, but there is still about \$7.3 million remaining in certified Free Cash.

Q: Can you explain how the Snow & Ice budget has been built up in recent years? There has been a great positive trajectory for this.

A: About 10 years ago, Newton was budgeting about \$1 million a year for snow and ice. Now about \$5.7 million is spent every winter. About \$4 million in Free Cash had to be held in this period, anticipating it would be used for Snow & Ice. Beginning in 2011 for the FY2012 budget, the Snow & Ice appropriation has increased every year. Though COVID costs prevented this appropriation from increasing this year, the funding was held level.

Councilor Albright moved Approval for Programs & Services which carried 8-0.

Councilor Kalis moved Approval for Finance which carried 5-0 (Councilor Norton not voting).

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#49-20(2) **Requesting establishment of a fee for the registration of leaf blower contractors**
Programs and Services Committee requesting an appropriate fee be set for registration of leaf blower contractors pursuant to possible revisions in the Noise provisions of Newton Ordinances, Chapter 20, relating to leaf blowers, to provide for registration of leaf blower contractors and their certification of understanding and intention to comply with the provisions of the Noise ordinance, contained in possible revisions to Chapter 20, prepared by the Newton Law Department to improve compliance with existing standards for leaf blower operation.

Action: **Programs & Services Held 8-0**
 Finance Held 5-0 (Councilor Kalis not voting)

Notes: Final notes on this item will be released the week of November 2, 2020.

Councilor Ryan moved Hold for Programs & Services which carried 8-0.

Councilor Humphrey moved Hold for Finance which carried 5-0 (Councilor Kalis not voting).

#49-20 Request for update on leaf blower ordinance compliance
COUNCILORS BAKER, LEARY, RYAN, AND HUMPHREY requesting update from the Executive Department on compliance with Newton's leaf blower ordinance and discussion of possible revisions to the ordinance's enforcement provisions to improve compliance.

Action: **Programs and Services Held 8-0**

Notes: Councilor Ryan moved Hold which carried 8-0.

#397-20 Request for updates related to public health in the Newton Public Schools
The President of the Council, on behalf of the City Council, requesting an update on Public Health issues related to school operations and reopening at every school level to the Programs and Services Committee at the second meeting of October and November.

Action: **Programs & Services Held 8-0**

Notes: Final notes on this item will be released the week of November 2, 2020.

Councilor Albright moved Hold which carried 8-0.

#390-20 Request for discussion on athletic field rental fees
COUNCILORS LEARY, ALBRIGHT, BOWMAN, DANBERG, KALIS, KELLEY, KRINTZMAN, LAREDO, MARKIEWICZ, NOEL, WRIGHT, AND RYAN requesting a discussion with Parks and Recreation and the Mayor's Office regarding fees charged for the rental of Newton's public athletic fields. This review should include an overview of the current fee structure, revenue generated, use of funds collected, non-resident rentals and benchmarks to surrounding communities.

Action: **Programs & Services Held 6-0 (Councilors Baker and Greenberg not voting)**

Notes: Final notes on this item will be released the week of November 2, 2020.

Councilor Albright moved Hold which carried 6-0 (Councilors Baker and Greenberg not voting)

The meeting adjourned at 10:24pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh Krintzman, Chair