

MAYOR'S UPDATE
January 9, 2023
Mayor Sean R. Reardon

Welcome Back:

Happy New Year! I'm excited for 2023. There are many things to accomplish this year and I look forward to working with Council on many exciting initiatives.

Plum Island Dredge Project:

H&L Contracting is looking to start the dredge project back up in mid-January. They paused the project in December after finishing the first phase, and before bringing in a new piece of equipment. They are on track to complete the project in time, but the recent weather has both disrupted some of their equipment and threatened buildings that the dredge is meant to protect. We will be engaging in coordinating calls with the US Army Corps of Engineers and Senator Tarr's Office and I will pass along any updates from these meetings.

Cutter West End Fire Station:

In your packet tonight, you will see an adjusted bond request for the West End Fire Station. This public safety project is important for residents and for the safety of our firefighters. Unfortunately supply chain issues and inflation have impacted the cost of the project which has increased since October 2021 when the bond order was first passed. I ask for your support to approve the additional \$3M so this project can go out for bid this March. We will have the project team available at the Budget and Finance meeting Thursday night to answer any and all questions.

Parks Reorganization Plan:

We will be submitting the updated Parks Reorganization Plan in your next packet. These past few months have been spent working with the Parks Commission on improving the plan while also incorporating feedback from residents. We have updated our strategies on the questions of adult recreation in the city as well as future volunteering and fundraising and we look forward to discussing this. We still believe there are significant efficiencies from moving the Parks Department into the Department of Public Services, and it is important to complete this reorganization as we prepare for budget season and officially move the Parks Department out of 59 Low Street.

Newburyport Youth Services:

A new home for Newburyport Youth Services is the top priority of my administration this year. At the next Council meeting, we will be asking for funding to continue the design process. The Bond Order is under consideration by the Budget and Finance Committee, and we would like to move forward with design so that the process is not delayed further. We look forward to receiving the Council's support on the Bond order, and will continue to provide you the information you need to consider the request. Furthering the design of NYS will keep us moving in the right direction and allow us to be confident in what the financial impacts will be.

DPS Director and Fire Chief Searches:

The DPS Director position was officially posted last week. We are working with the Collins Center out of UMass Boston who is coordinating this search. Once resumes are received the Collins Center will work with the screening committee to determine who will receive interviews.

In your packet tonight, you will see the 9 names I have submitted for the Fire Chief Screening Committee per Code of Ordinances Section 2-316 (a)(2). This is a very qualified group of men and women with expertise in fire and public safety. I also want to thank Councillors Preston and McCauley for agreeing to participate on the committee. After the Screening Committee gets approved we will look to begin the search February 1st.

State Street Gas Line Replacement:

National Grid began work on State Street this week replacing the 100-year-old gas line. This will disrupt parking on the left-hand side of State Street going up from Market Square for the next few months. We are working with businesses around the best way to handle deliveries at this time. Middle Street's gas line will also be replaced.

Economic Development Strategy Public Forum

Consultants Karl Seidman and Civic Moxie are continuing their work on the City's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The next step is a public forum on Wednesday, January 11th at 6pm at the Senior Community Center. This will be an excellent opportunity to give feedback and ideas about the future of economic development in the city, including how to weigh priorities like small business development, arts and culture, tourism, and workforce housing. We hope you can make it and we will look for ways to continue to collect public feedback throughout the process.

State of the City, Public and Community Service Awards

The State of the City will be held on January 25th at 7pm here at City Hall. I look forward to talking about the many accomplishments from this past year as well as setting the stage for 2023. We will also have the 1st Annual Onward Forward Public and Community Service Awards that will highlight some of the great people and work happening around the City. We have so many people giving their time and talents to making Newburyport such a special place and these awards will highlight some of those efforts.

Mayor Sean Reardon