

MAYOR'S UPDATE
February 13, 2023
Mayor Sean R. Reardon

Have a Heart and Get a Heart Event:

Happy Early Valentine's Day. We have an awareness event to encourage community members to register to be organs at 10:30am on February 14th at City Hall. We are partnering with New England Donor Services. Speakers will include organ donor recipients and donor families.

DPS Director Search:

The Collins Center of UMass Boston is coordinating the search for our next DPS Director. Initial interviews with the four potential candidates started last week. The DPS Director Screening Committee worked with the Collins Center to come up with questions for the initial interviews. Finalists will be chosen from this group who will then move on the interviews with the mayor that will take place later this week.

Year 2 Street and Sidewalks Plan:

I will have this for your next packet. Last year, we were able to pave 23 streets and over 4 miles of paving. This year we are will be able to pave just under 5 miles of Newburyport streets as well as installing new sidewalks in some high need areas. We are just finalizing the work that will be done this year.

Plum Island Dredge:

The Plum Island Dredge has still not started back up. The Dredge project is still on schedule to complete in March and 90% of the sand is still to be placed on Reservation Terrace. H&L Contracting believe they need 21 days of dredging to complete the project. We had a productive Merrimack River Beach Alliance meeting on February 3rd where we heard directly from the Army Corps of Engineers and our state and federal legislators. H&L has inquired about a two-week extension of their contract which would push the work into April if they cannot finish by March 31st. The equipment is ready to go, I am told they are just waiting for sea conditions to improve.

Newburyport Parks Reorganization Plan:

I want to thank the 7 councilors who attended the Community Services meeting last Tuesday and listened to the Parks Reorganization Plan. I also want to thank everyone for the positive feedback we received from councilors. A lot of work has gone into this plan and we believe we have a plan that is ready for implementation and makes our parks better. Public hearing to take place this Wednesday at City Hall at 630pm.

City Solicitor Appointment:

Also, in your packet tonight is the reappointment of our City Solicitor KP Law. We have been looking into other options and have some conversations coming up in the coming weeks. The administration would be willing to shorten to a three-month appointment as we continue to look into other options.

Department Recognition:

I want to thank Head Librarian Sara Kelso and staff for navigating through the cleanup and repairs at the archival center due to a sump pump failure.

The DPS, Fire and Health Departments helped the community navigate through the record cold temps a few weekends ago. The Fire Department alone responded to 65 calls over the cold weekend, 37 related to burst pipes.

New Website:

The newly redesigned city website launched on Friday. I want to thank Andrew Levine and the rest of the City Hall team for working on this important project. The new website was created with input from city staff and residents and aims to provide a more modern design, an improved user experience, and easier access to useful information and functions. The City is also proud to provide residents with a new activity registration system and website, the Registration and Reservation HUB through the [MyRec.com Recreation Management platform](#). This will be the city's portal for registration for Youth Services and other recreation programs, for reserving city parks for events and programs, and to book events at the Senior/Community Center.

Schools:

This past week at our School Committee meeting we talked about the Capital Improvement Plan for Public Schools and the latest denial of our MSBA application. We talked about possible other options for the high school. Two large projects on the radar for the schools is the roofs at the High School and Middle School (over gym and auditorium).

Newburyport Youth Services:

Finally, tonight the council will vote on approving funds from the Kelley School account for the design of Newburyport Youth Services at 59 Low Street. This important vote will allow us to get to 100% design of the building and get us one step closer to building a home for our Youth Services Department. At the Budget and Finance meeting last week there was an amendment to the request that capped the design at \$2 million dollars. I strongly ask that the council remove this amendment and let us go to design and come back to the council with a building that will work for the department and the community. The administration has already sent the council three conceptual designs ranging from estimated \$3 million to over \$8 million dollars. The \$2M figure does not address the stated needs of the department or the realities of the identified site.

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