

MAYOR'S UPDATE
June 12, 2023
Mayor Sean R. Reardon

Fireman's Sunday:

We had a great Fireman's Sunday yesterday at the Page Fire Headquarters. Fireman's Sunday is always the second Sunday in June and it is set aside to honor all fallen firefighters. Chief Bradbury did a great job and after a march to Oak Hill Cemetery, we returned to the firehouse and Clerk Jones officially swore in Chief Bradbury as our next fire chief. I think the highlight was seeing Chief Bradbury's 91 year old father, who was also a firefighter under my grandfather, pin the new badge on his son's coat. We also swore in five firefighters who had never been officially sworn in. Congratulations to Chief Bradbury, and Firefighters Casey David, James Johnson, Brian Padelarro, Max Bayko and Conor Clancy. I want to thank Clerk Jones and Councillors Cameron, McCauley and Shand for taking time out of their Sundays to take part in the event.

Flash Vote:

We are excited to announce that we have a new tool that we are looking forward to using to get resident input on City decisions. The City is testing a civic engagement tool called FlashVote that uses scientific surveys to gauge resident support for different policies and ideas. FlashVote will send survey questions that have been designed by the City no more than once a month that will help City officials decide how best to use resources and address priorities. We believe it's important to listen to as many residents as possible, and not everyone knows what public meetings to attend or how to get involved in local government. This tool allows more residents to have a voice and have their thoughts on important issues heard.

For residents, sign-up takes less than one minute and your input is always kept anonymous. Personal or demographic information collected by FlashVote is never shared with the City or anyone else. When residents sign up, they can determine how surveys are received – whether by email, text or phone call. They will receive a notification whenever there is a new survey, and they will have 48 hours to participate before voting closes. Once a survey is closed, everyone who participated will automatically receive a summary of the overall results and be able to see how their responses compare to the group.

We encourage residents to sign up now at www.flashvote.com/newburyport or call 775-235-2240 to participate by phone or text only. You can participate using your computer or smartphone, and you can also answer surveys over the phone if you prefer. You may also receive a text from FlashVote in the coming weeks reminding you of the program if you haven't signed up, which you can ignore if you are not interested. There are lots of ways to participate in this program, if you choose to do so.

Schools:

The last day of school for the summer is Wednesday and it is a half day. I want to thank all our public school personnel for a great year and I hope you enjoy this longer than usually summer,

since we had no snow days this year and we'll have a post-Labor Day start for the 2023-24 school year. The district will hold its annual Molin Awards on Wednesday recognizing teachers nominated by their peers.

FY24 Budget:

The last two budget hearings are this week on Tuesday and Thursday at 6pm. DPS Water and Sewer Divisions will be discussed on Tuesday. I want to thank all the councillors and department heads for all the time put into these budget hearings. It such an important process to go through. I encourage all residents to tune in to the budget hearing on Thursday when the Council will start deliberations. Come have your voice be heard and help us move Newburyport forward.

Market Landing Park:

In your packet tonight, you will see a late file funds transfer for Market Landing Park Phase 1. We received the bid packages and they came back a little higher than we would like. We are asking you to consider two things. First, we are asking you to reallocate the already approved money for the culvert and reassign it to the project. The culvert will not be in Phase 1. We are also asking for a transfer from the Waterfront Parking Fund for the rest of the funds needed to move this Phase 1 forward. I know this is a difficult ask and I struggled with asking for it. We have put a lot of time and resources into this project already and we risk losing \$800K in grants if the contract is not activated by June 30th. We are also continuing to work with the contractor and we believe the price may come down from this new amount. We are managing this closely and looking for ways to achieve cost savings while delivering they high quality park that we envision for the waterfront.

Streets and Sidewalks Update:

DPS continues to work with D&R Paving and Allied for our sidewalks. So far this year we have completed Peters Road, Fair Street, Fruit Street, Hoyts Lane, Longfellow Drive (Number 28 to Turkey Hill Rd.), and Curzon Mill Road (Intersection of Hoyts heading west to the dead end). Plummer Ave and Christopher Street will be completed in the coming weeks and we continue to work on getting Noble Street ready. Last week we were working with National Grid on Noble Street to move some utility poles away from the road.

DPS Director Amaral and team continue to work on tweaking the 5 Year Rolling Plan to include our list of traffic safety and sidewalk projects. We hope to share this with you in the coming weeks.

Juneteenth:

This Friday at 5pm, the City will have our Juneteenth Flag Raising Celebration at City Hall. We are doing it a little later in the day in hopes to get even more people this year. I want to thank Tina Los and the DEI Alliance for all their hard work putting this event together.

Mayor Sean Reardon