

Below is the weekly report for the week ending today, April 19, 2024.

Items for Newsletters:

1. **Parks and Recreation Director:** Director Spadafino has announced his retirement effective at the end of May. Please join me in congratulating Paula Ennis for her promotion to Director of Parks and Recreation effective Monday, May 27!
2. **Free Water for a Year initiative:** We have selected our 3rd winner in the free water survey drawing! There is 1 more chance to win \$1000 worth of free water for anyone who completes a survey before June 2024. Newark Water customers are encouraged to complete the online survey at this link: <https://newarkde.gov/lead> to enter a sweepstakes for free water for a year, up to \$1000 value! The data we collect will help complete a required inventory of service lines and reduce operating costs for the water utility.
3. **City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Police

1. **CALEA:** Newark PD has been informed by the Commission on the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies(CALEA) that the agency has successfully completed the 2024/Year 2 Annual Assessment and NPD is in compliance with all standards with respect to our Law Enforcement and Communications Accreditation. The lead assessor had kind words to say regarding Accreditation Manager Gerald Bryda, writing *"I wish to commend your Accreditation Manager, Gerald Bryda, for the excellent work he did leading up to, and during, the reviews for both programs. He made my job very easy. Also, on Behalf of CALEA, please accept our appreciation for the cooperation from your entire staff and your commitment to accreditation."*
2. **Community Engagement:** On Sunday, April 14, Chief Farrall joined Mayor Clifton at a Boy Scout Troop 252 Eagle Scout Court of Honor. At the ceremony, Mayor Clifton presented a council proclamation to Eagle Scouts Cooper Pedicone and Edward Scott, the newest recipients of Boy Scouts highest achievement. Less than six percent of scouts achieve Eagle Scout, so it was a tremendous honor to attend and learn of the civic engagement by these young men and future leaders.
3. On Saturday, April 20th, NPD will host police promotional exams for the rank of Master Corporal and Sergeant. Thirteen Newark Police Officers will participate in the promotional testing.

Public Works

1. **CISA Cybersecurity Review:** PWWR staff along with Electric and IT personnel participated in an audit of our Cybersecurity readiness last week. Representatives from CISA (Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency) met with our teams to review our protocols and standard

procedures and offered guidance and expertise to help safeguard our systems from threats and attacks. Staff will be reviewing any recommendations and implementing new processes as needed.

2. **Water Tank Painting:** New London Water Tank painting is now complete, and the contractor has mobilized to Arbour Park to begin work to prepare for the lead paint removal on that tank. Residents within 1000-feet of the Arbour Park Water Tank, located near Dove Drive in Arbour Park, have received notices informing them of the upcoming work to remove the lead-based paint from the tank and recoat it with a lead-free coating. Notifications include our scope of work along with contact information for the department for any questions or concerns. We expect the containment and blasting to begin on or about April 30.
3. **Library Ave and Wyoming Road Intersection:** DelDOT has completed signal upgrades at this intersection to eliminate permissive left turns. The goal of this change was to address the prevalence of vehicle accidents, including the fatal accident approximately a year ago.

Parks and Recreation

1. **Parks Maintenance:** Our parks superintendent has begun his quarterly Park inspections. The mowing and grass trimming cycle has begun throughout the park system and clearing fallen trees and debris continues.
2. **Community Clean Up:** The Community Clean up last Saturday went very well with 91 Volunteers dedicating 228 hours of towards the clean-up.
3. **Recreation Programming:** The Summer Activity Guide will be delivered to our email list of over 16,000 on Monday, April 22. The Camp Guide has hundreds of activities for all ages youth through adult.
4. **Arbor Day:** On Friday, April 26 we will have several tree contractors participating in Newark's Arbor Day at Lumbrook Park. The contractors will be removing dead or dying trees and some invasive trees near the tennis court area.
5. **Devon Park Construction:** The Devon Park construction project will be remobilized next week, weather permitting. The project has been delayed due to the wet and muddy park conditions.
6. **Memorial Day:** Organization of the Newark Memorial Day Ceremony and Parade continues with the recruitment of Military veteran and active groups and organizations to participate in the Ceremony and Parade. The event will be held on Sunday, May 19 with the Ceremony scheduled for 1:00p.m. and the Parade stepping onto Main Street at 2:00p.m.

Purchasing & Facilities

1. **Council Chamber Renovations:** Electrical rough-in work is done, which will allow the contractor to begin work on most other facets of this project. The room will begin looking substantially different over the next week or so.
2. **Cornice Repair Project:** The Municipal Center cornice repairs are well under way and visible from all sides of the building now. The contractor will be working on some hard-to-reach areas near the atrium over the weekend to avoid traffic in and out of the building.
3. **Energy Saving Performance Contract – Year 1 Report:** Jeff Martindale met with the Measurement and Verification team from Seiberlich Trane last week to review the year 1 report for the work completed through the ESPC. The report will be resubmitted after comments soon. Initial findings show that Newark achieved \$6,000 worth of additional energy/maintenance savings in the first year post-construction than was guaranteed.

Planning and Development

1. Land Use

- a. Staff prepared and posted the [agenda and packet for the April 23, 2024 Planning Commission meeting](#), which had been postponed due the Council chamber renovations. It will be held in the Alderman's Court courtroom due to the continuing renovations. Two development projects are scheduled for this agenda – the Comprehensive Development Plan amendments, rezonings, and minor subdivisions with site plan approval for 55 Benny Street and 50-54 Corbit Street.
- b. Director Bensley and Deputy Director Ramos-Velazquez attended the DART Reimagined briefing on April 11. An item of note related to Newark is the continued expansion of the DART Connect microtransit program to additional areas of the state due to the success in the two current locations. DART is also looking at potential service expansion to nights and/or weekends, but a firm plan and timeline have not been announced.
- c. Director Bensley attended the 2024 National Planning Conference in Minneapolis April 12-16. The primary focus of the conference was on affordable housing and the sessions provided ideas for code and process improvements to bring back to Newark to help address this national issue locally.

2. Code Enforcement

- a. Eight properties have been issued a nuisance property citation for accumulating 8 or more points in 12 months for the nuisance property ordinance. An additional 51 properties are in warning status for having accumulated between 5 and 7 points.
- b. The Tyler Technologies Enterprise Permitting and Licensing (EPL) software is approximately 44% configured at this point in time with 51 of 116 processes created. Staff have begun testing the configured processes and submitting corrections to Tyler. Staff are also working on the configurations assigned to Newark staff as opposed to Tyler. Needs are being determined for report configuration and business practice consulting (which is the creation of all of the documentation and training materials for

the software). Once that is complete the final go-live plan will be finalized. The current estimate is September 2024.

- c. As part of the EPL project, staff is reviewing over 5000 open permits in the City's current software to determine which can be closed, if any fees are owed, and if any work was done without a permit being issued.
- d. Property maintenance staff have begun the mandatory exterior and common areas inspections for multifamily complexes. As these are completed, staff are also providing notices on individual units informing them of their rights to obtain interior inspections as well.

3. Parking

- a. Parking staff are working with the Alderman's Court to digitize payment plans that are provided by the court for parking ticket fines in order to improve information being accessed in the field and to increase efficiency for staff. This will also help Parking staff better identify which vehicles are in compliance with their payment plans in order to ensure payment is collected. Currently there is a 12% compliance rate with payment plans issued for parking fines and staff are looking to increase that number.
- b. Staff have been working with IT and T2 regarding responses to online appeals getting caught in spam filters on various email platforms. When appeals have been reported by customers as not being received and the reports are verified, staff have worked with them to prevent the escalation of ticket fines.
- c. Maurice Coleman has been promoted to full-time Parking Ambassador effective Monday, April 29. This backfills the position left vacant with the promotion of Angel Rodriguez to Parking Coordinator. Additionally, this position has been moved to the evening from the daytime shift to ensure that there is a full-time employee on duty for all hours that the Parking Division is staffed.
- d. Interviews have been scheduled for six candidates for the two vacant part-time Parking Ambassador positions on May 1.

Finance and IT

- 1. **AETNA Building Permit Fee:** The first check coming from the Volunteer Fire Assistance Fund, approved by Council in September 2023, raised \$100,745 for Aetna HHL. Funds are being distributed to Aetna next week. Next allocation will be in October.
- 2. **Senior Property Tax Exemption Deadline:** The deadline for eligible seniors to apply for property tax exemptions is April 30th. Please click on this link for more information. New Castle County manages the exemption programs, which the City of Newark mirrors: [Tax Exemptions | New Castle County, DE - Official Website \(newcastlede.gov\)](https://www.newcastlede.gov/tax-exemptions)
- 3. **Audit Update:** Accounting staff is working diligently on the annual audit with CliftonLarsenAllen. Timeline for completion is May 31st.
- 4. **CISA Review:** Representatives from the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and Idaho National Laboratory (INL) visited last week to review our architecture, design, and the configurations of our Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) environment. This was a

group effort involving our Electric, IT, and Water teams to improve the overall cybersecurity posture and resiliency of these critical services. Final report should be available to us the end of next week.

5. **Wholesale Electric Rate Increase:** At their April 11, 2024, Board Meeting, the DEMEC Board of Directors approved a Wholesale Budget amendment to reflect the increased cost imposed upon DEMEC by FERC and PJM for the 2024/2025 Base Residual Auction costs in the DPL-South Zone (Capacity Costs). This amended mid-year wholesale rate increase is due to the market and regulatory costs being pushed to all customers in the DPL delivery zone. This means ALL Delaware rate payers are being imposed an increased charge, not just Newark. The City's wholesale rate increased 3.38%, and UD's rate increase will be 6% effective 05/01/2024. Working on determining the impact on the residential rate customers. Overall impact on the electric bills will be less than 3.38%.

Electric

1) **Development Projects:**

- a) 132 E. Main St.: On the 22nd of April, a new underground cable is scheduled to be installed for the ongoing project. During regular work hours, this cable installation process will affect the parking lot. Additionally, we are collaborating closely with Chipotle to arrange a temporary power outage to transfer the primary electric from aerial to underground.
- b) 268 E. Main St. (Super 8): Our team has completed all the necessary tasks and is ready to install the new electric meters. However, we are currently awaiting the completion of the contractor's work before we can proceed with our installation.

- 2) **Other Work:** The electricians have been dedicated to the task of rewiring the police station's offices located on the second floor. The required work is expected to conclude by the end of today. Furthermore, we have successfully installed the Gatekeeper boxes and have migrated half of them to cellular modems. The remaining Gatekeepers are scheduled to be moved within the next two days. Lastly, the VFW internet connection project has been completed with great success.

- 3) Director Patel and Distribution Engineer Beidler recently attended the American Public Power Association (APPA) Engineering and Operations conference, where they participated in various sessions.

In the first session, "**Using Distributed Energy Resources (DER) to Manage Load Growth**," we learned how propensity modeling tools could help utility model EV load and better understand the likely impact on grid assets. We also inspected various methods for leveraging distributed energy resources, such as customer devices and technologies, utility rate programs, incentives, and non-wires alternatives, to help offset load growth.

In the second session, "**How Technology is Transforming Operations**," we learned how a suite of technologies and tools, including artificial intelligence-based applications, can transform utility

operations without breaking the bank. We discovered how high-resolution satellite imagery can be used to predict tree species and vegetation growth and how drones can be deployed to conduct line inspections.

We also attended a session on "**Managing High Load Customers and Future Demand Growth**" and learned about **forecasting EV and DER impacts**.

Finally, we discussed implementing three critical distribution systems tools: Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), GIS, and system modeling tools, which are the key pillars of managing a distribution system.