

Below is the weekly report for the week ending today, November 22, 2024.

Items for Newsletters:

1. **2025 Reassessment** – Accounting staff have been receiving numerous calls and fielding questions about the County reassessment. We have been referring all calls to New Castle County's Assessment office if they are not satisfied with the answers we have been providing, which is: The information remitted by the County indicates that the average parcel in New Castle County increased by 511%. If the amount of your increase was less than 511%, it is likely that your **County** tax bill will be less than what you are paying now. What we don't know at this moment is the average increase for Christina School District and the City of Newark. If the same holds true for all three tranches, then your tax bill for the County, School and City will all go down. If you believe your valuations for your properties are not accurate, you can call Tyler Technologies, who is managing the reassessment for New Castle County at 855-670-2658 to schedule an appeal.
2. **2025 Budget:** The 2025 budget passed on Monday evening. All budget information can be found on Budget Central: [Budget Central 2025 | Newark, DE - Official Website](#)
3. **Leaf Collection:** Leaf collection is underway and runs through December. Residents can now expect collections in their areas every 2 weeks. Collection will continue until late December to make sure all leaves are picked up. Residents are encouraged to keep their leaves on the yard by mowing or mulching them which helps feed the lawn nutrients and provide beneficial insects with winter habitat. Small piles may also be put in Yard Waste carts and placed out for collection on regular yard waste collection days.
4. **Presents with Police Program:** The Newark Police Department's Community Engagement Unit is again hosting the Presents with Police Program which will take place on December 13th. Donations of new, unwrapped gifts from newborn through 14 years of age are being accepted in the lobby of the municipal building. Newark families who may be struggling to provide for their children during the holiday can register to participate in the program at the following link: [Catalog - Newark Parks & Recreation](#)
5. **City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Public Works and Water Resources

1. **Snow Plow Road-eo:** Newark's Public Works and Water Resources crews have dominated the 2024 Snow Plow Road-eo snow plow skills competition put on by our insurance provider, PMA Companies. The competition brings together staff from member municipalities to run an obstacle course in several different vehicles ranging from lawnmowers to dump trucks and rewards both safety and efficiency. Drivers can compete in three categories: small equipment, non-CDL trucks, and CDL trucks. Newark PWWR

drivers took the top 2 spots in the Non-CDL category and swept all 3 top spots in the CDL category. We will recognize these individuals at a breakfast for the department in December.

- 2. Lead Service Line Identification Mailings:** All Newark water customers will likely receive a letter requesting the customer identify the material of their water service line. This exercise is part of the federal mandate to identify all service line materials and remove any lead service lines found within the system. While the letter contains information about lead in water, we have not identified any lead service lines in our system to date. The letter requests the residents fill out the simple survey at the QR code link, which includes taking a photo of the service line. The process should take no more than 15 minutes, and they can contact Public Works if they have any questions. Since we are required to verify the pipe material for every service in our system, the more we can accomplish via resident reporting, the fewer we will need to visit and or potentially dig up, which will save money and help contain costs that would otherwise be passed along to our ratepayers.
- 3. Water Main Replacement – Lark Drive and Tanglewood:** Lark Drive is progressing well with individual services being connected over the next week. Tanglewood Lane is moving along and the contractor will complete all restoration before moving to the next location in case the weather turns. Notices have been issued to all customers that will be impacted by the planned improvements.
- 4. Statewide Drought Watch (Newark water supply remains stable):** The state remains in a drought watch. Recent rains have alleviated some concern for statewide water supply and the weather systems seem to have broken the high pressure grip on the region. Newark's water supply remains stable, and we continue to monitor the creek and well levels.
- 5. Snow and Ice Season:** Snow and ice are starting to pop up in the long-range forecasts. Over the past few weeks crews have been preparing the equipment, calibrating salt spreaders, and reviewing plow routes in order to be prepared for the first event.

Facilities/Purchasing/Records/Communications:

- 1. Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant:** The City was awarded \$76,220 on Friday, 11/8 from the Department of Energy's EECBG. This funding will go toward bringing in a consultant for the purpose of helping Newark create a Climate Action Plan.
- 2. Train Station Restoration:** The Invitation to Bid for restoration of the historic Newark Passenger Railroad Station is now out to bid. Bids are due 12/17 and staff aims to present an award recommendation to Council in early January. This opportunity can be found at <https://newarkde.gov/bids.aspx?bidID=207>.
- 3. Warehouse Expansion:** Staff met with BSS Contractors on 11/12 to discuss the warehouse expansion construction project. The completion timeline will be 6 months from the notice

to proceed. Current estimates are mid-June completion. A Notice to Proceed was issued to BSS on 11/21.

4. **Photo of the Year Contest:** We are entering week 3 of the photo of the year contest. We have 40+ submissions as of today.
5. **Sustainability Plan Update:** Staff met with the CAC on 11/12 to discuss the draft version of the 5-year Sustainability Plan. The CAC provided feedback, which staff will incorporate into the draft and resubmit for discussion at the January CAC meeting.
6. **New Castle County Hazard Mitigation Plan:** CPPO Jeff Martindale attended a meeting at the County facility on 11/13 along with several other NCC municipalities and County officials to discuss the five-year update to the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan, which the City opts to participate in. This coordination will allow Newark to receive letters of support from NCC for emergency and mitigation-related grants.
7. **University of Vermont Tree Canopy Inventory:** Jeff Martindale and Parks Director Paula Martinson Ennis met with the University of Vermont on 11/22 as a kickoff to the 6-month LiDAR and satellite citywide tree canopy assessment. This will allow Newark to gauge its current tree coverage, inclusive of recent losses from the Emerald Ash Borer and Bacterial Leaf Scorch, to prepare for future planting opportunities. The UVM proposal for this project can be found here: <https://newarkde.gov/DocumentCenter/View/18569/UPDATED-Tree-Canopy-Funding-Request-Memo>

Police

1. On Monday, November 11, 2024, Cpl. Donte Faulk provided remarks at a veteran's memorial wall dedication ceremony at Juniper Village on Barksdale Road.
2. On Wednesday, November 13, 2024, NPD concluded the 16th Citizens Police Academy Program. This interactive weekly program took place between September 11th and November 13th and included topics such as Patrol Procedures, Evidence Detection, Criminal Investigations, Victim Services, Use of Force, DUI and Traffic Enforcement, and Community Engagement. Feedback from the participants of this program were very positive.
3. On Thursday, November 14, 2024, Cpl. John Saitis was recognized by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Delaware at their 2024 Law Enforcement Awards Ceremony. Cpl. Saitis was recognized for his outstanding contributions to DUI enforcement within the City of Newark.
4. On Friday, November 15, 2024, Chief Farrall, Deputy Chief Feeney and Lt. D'Elia attended a ceremony recognizing Rev. Dr. Lonnie E. Rector, for serving as Pastor for the Pilgrim Baptist Church for the past 20 years. Chief Farrall was asked to speak at the event, and he

presented Pastor Rector, a NPD Police Chaplain, with a plaque commemorating him on 20 years of service to the Newark community.

5. On Tuesday, November 19th, NPD Officers attended the monthly Public Safety Explorers Post meeting in partnership with Aetna Hose, Hook, and Ladder Company. This month's program was presented by Aetna where firefighters demonstrated techniques utilized to gain entry into homes in the event of a fire or medical emergency. Explorer Scouts were able to practice these techniques firsthand.
6. On Thursday, November 21st, Cpl. Donte Faulk and Cpl. Adam Mease attended the Christina High School Driver's Ed class where they presented on the topic of impaired driving.
7. The Community Engagement Unit continues to work on the upcoming Presents with Police Program which will take place on December 13th. Donations of new, unwrapped gifts from newborn through 14 years of age are being accepted in the lobby of the municipal building. Newark families who may be struggling to provide for their children during the holiday can register to participate in the program at the following link: [Catalog - Newark Parks & Recreation](#)

Finance and Information Technology

1. **2024 Master Lease:** Staff are working with PFM, Saul Ewing LLP, and Banc of America on closing our master lease agreement for vehicles/equipment purchased in 2024. Closing for the lease will be at the end of December. Council have already approved these vehicles and method of financing, so further approval is not required. Financing includes police vehicles, refuse trucks and other equipment.
2. **ARPA:** City Manager Coleman and Director Del Grande met with the management team to review and discuss our ARPA projects. A memo will be coming to Council on December 9th on these projects.
3. **Personnel:** We have been working with HR to fill our vacant positions. The IT Applications Analyst position was filled internally, and Melonie Rangel-Wanros, who has previously served in Payments and Utility Billing (PUB), will be taking on this new role. The IT Desktop Support position closed, and we are in the process of selecting candidates to interview, with our goal to fill by January. Our part time Finance Assistant position is currently advertised for candidates, and our goal is to fill this position in January. In addition, we have a vacant customer service representative position in PUB that we be advertised, likely in January.
4. **SilverBlaze:** The new utility portal, SilverBlaze, now has close to 6000 accounts registered, which is about 2/3 of our accounts that were enrolled in Customer Connect. Overall feedback on the new customer service portal has been positive. We are encouraging all

customers to sign themselves up for leak notifications. Video for SilverBlaze can be found here: [SilverBlaze Portal User Guide - YouTube](#) (1200 views so far).

Parks and Recreation

1. Capital Projects:

- a. Dickey Park improvement – notices were sent out to neighborhood surrounding the park on 11/13, construction will start the week after Thanksgiving.
- b. Devon Park – scheduled reopening event for December 10 at 2 p.m.
- c. George Read Park improvements – construction delayed until February/March 2025 due to changes of trail design.
- d. Old Papermill Road Park – memo approved by Council, waiting on ITB paperwork and contract to be returned to proceed with purchase order.

2. Maintenance/Operations:

- a. Checking holiday lights for the holiday tree on Academy Lawn, Olan Thomas Park and the floating tree at Hillside Park.
- b. Continuing to mulch leaves in parks and continuing cutbacks of ornamental grasses and liriopse.
- c. Started changing equipment from summer to winter accessories.
- d. Preparing for the Turkey Trot.
- e. Completing tree plantings, have 30 left to plant.
- f. Winterization of both pools will take place next week.
- g. Scheduling replacement of barrier gates for Rittenhouse and Folk Park with contractor.
- h. ITB for tree contract was completed and sent out, pre-bid meeting scheduled for 11/20, bids due 12/17.
- i. Met with representatives from the Wills Group at Folk Park to discuss the possibility of a dog park. Councilman Bancroft and Mayor Clifton also attended.
- j. Met with contractor for prices for hard surface improvements for upcoming projects in 2025.
- k. Met with Eagle Scout for project being completed at Rittenhouse Park.

3. Events:

- a. Planning the 2025 event schedule.
- b. Preparations are ongoing for upcoming events.
 - i. Turkey Trot – 11/23
 - 1. Currently over 400 pre-registered.
 - 2. 8 vendors are registered.
 - 3. Packet pickup is at City Hall on Friday, 11/22 from 9am-4pm and onsite at Handloff Park before the race.
 - ii. Thanksgiving Day Breakfast – 11/28
 - 1. Securing sponsors.
 - 2. Volunteers are scheduled.

- iii. Winterfest – 12/6
 - 1. Working on performance schedule.
 - 2. Secured an ice carver.
- iv. Santa's Secret Shoppe at GWC – 12/7.
- v. Registration and gift collection has begun for Presents with Police – 12/13.

4. Recreation Programming:

- a. Administrative staff met with our customer service representative from Civic Rec to discuss ACH payments and additional concerns.
- b. Recreation Supervisors continue to make plans for 2025 Winter Spring programs. The program brochure will be available at the end of December.
- c. George Wilson Center
 - i. For the week of 11/4, we had 8 long-term rentals, and 4 short term rentals.
 - ii. For the week of 11/11, we had 15 long-term rentals, 1 Neighborhood association meeting, 3 short term rentals.
 - iii. No School Day of Play was held on 11/11 with 9 enrolled. Turkey Time School's Out program is scheduled Nov. 25-26.
 - iv. Preparations are underway for the dance program recital scheduled for 12/13/24.
 - v. Ongoing classes include stay fit, yoga, ceramics, goju, dance, and theater.
 - vi. Plans have been made to replace the flooring in the kitchen and to have a projector screen installed on the main floor in late December.
- d. Preparations are ongoing for the youth basketball leagues for grades 2-8 which are scheduled to begin in November. Recruiting volunteer coaches and part-time staff and referees.
- e. Adult volleyball leagues at Newark Charter began Nov. 13 & 14.
- f. Before/After Care – we received our annual license renewal for West Park! Congratulations to Nick Minnix, our newest Recreation Supervisor for navigating through the tedious process. Downes inspection will be scheduled during March, 2025.
- g. Community Garden fall clean ups deadline is the end of November.
- h. New York City Holiday Trip has filled 98 of 112 spots for 12/7/24 and is committed to two buses. Both buses have City of Newark staff as volunteer leaders. Parking is at City Hall.

5. Volunteers

- a. Adopt a Park
 - i. Hidden Valley Park - Fruscella family spent time picking up trash on 11/4/24
 - ii. 3 volunteers devoted a total of 8.25 hours distributing event posters along Main St on 11/6/24