

Below is the administrative report for the week ending today, December 20th, 2024. This will be the final report for 2024.

Items for Newsletters:

- 1. Leaf Collection:** Next week (week of December 23rd) will be the final leaf collection. Leaves should be out by Monday morning to guarantee pickup. We are collecting the entire City next week. Collections after Dec 27 will only be in yard waste carts that are scheduled in advance with PWWR. 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.
- 2. Bulk Refuse Collection Changes – January 1** PWWR staff has begun programming the bulk refuse changes requested by Council through the budget process. The major change will be charging for bulk collections in excess of two collections per year per address. Anyone requesting a bulk item collection that has had more than 2 will be notified that a fee will be charged for the collection. Information about this change will be sent to residents through direct contact and website updates. More information will be pushed out early in 2025.
- 3. 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. The letter contains information about lead in water, however, we have not identified any lead service lines in our system. The letter is only requesting 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.
- 4. Photo of the Year Contest:** Our final category winner for Nature & Parks will be announced on Friday, 12/20 and voting closes for the Residents' Choice Award at 11:59 on Monday, 12/23. Vote on the City's Facebook page now!
- 5. City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Public Works and Water Resources

- 1. Various Sewer and Stormwater Repairs:**
 - a. **Sanitary Sewer Improvements (Grantham Lane):** Reybold is making a repair to the sewer lateral on Grantham Place. This work should be completed by the end this week.
 - b. **Cool Run Sanitary Sewer Cleaning and Inspection** (STAR and South Campus/Field House area): Reybold will begin cleaning and inspecting the lines on the East side of Route 896 within the next few weeks. Coordination with UD is ongoing.

- c. **Shull Drive Drainage Improvements:** Our contractor continues work at Shull Drive/Devon Park to install storm sewer and appurtenances to help with drainage concerns in the area.
- 2. **Water Main Breaks:** We experienced several more main breaks over the last week. We are up to **15** for this season already versus 16 in each of the last 2 years. Any outages or notices will be given directly to affected residents and we do our best to make sure everyone is kept informed while the repair is made safely and efficiently. Residents are encouraged to report any water coming out of the ground or running in the street that is out of the ordinary.
- 3. **Water Main Replacement and Pavement Restoration:** Paving restoration at Dallam, Tanglewood, and Briar Lanes has been postponed until after the new year if weather conditions improve to where the temperatures are suitable for paving. Crews are making good progress on Ridge Ave outside City limits, but within our service territory. Notices have been issued to all customers that will be impacted by the planned improvements.

Planning and Development

- 1. **Meetings** (Attended by Land Use, Code Enforcement, and Parking)
 - a. Staff attended the Subdivision Advisory Committee meeting
 - b. Deputy Director, Planner Solge and Fire Protection Specialist Haynes meet with the team for 47 West Delaware to discuss Fire Access.
- 2. **Land Use**
 - a. Building Permit Reviews: 5
 - b. Deed Transfer Affidavits: 5
 - c. The Planning review for 162 South Chapel was completed.
 - d. Planning is still waiting for the agreement with Ingerman for the uses of ARPA funds to be signed
 - e. Planner Dykes received an application for an HIP loan looking to repair/replace insulation in a home, the application is currently under review.
 - f. Senior Planner Fortner reviewed the RFPs for the Planning Consultant this week
 - g. EPL Updates – Two patches have been installed successfully into the system to repair issues with Cashiering and with Bluebeam. The Bluebeam issue has outstanding since implementation with closing session at the end of the review by staff. Staff continue to work out bugs and walk Customers through the portal as needed.
- 3. **Code Enforcement**
 - a. **Projects**
 - i. Building X/McKinley lab replacement building – Final inspections performed. Finishes are nearly complete throughout the building. Equipment commissioning and training in progress. Site improvements are progressing, west side plaza grading and landscaping in

progress. Inspections of fume hoods and chemical storage cabinets completed.

- ii. Chemours Discovery Lab fire inspection passed.
- iii. 65 South Chapel Footings are ongoing. Underground plumbing installation has begun.
- iv. 1365 Marrows Rd. Footing inspection.
- v. WSFS Bank at The Grove close in inspection.
- vi. 6 High Pond Final failed for smoke alarms inspection.

b. Items of Interest

- i. Lead Code Enforcement Officer Tim Poole passed the ICC Commercial Building Inspector exam, the ICC Plans Reviewer exam and received his certifications in both.
- ii. Code Enforcement Officer Marty LaRue passed the ICC Residential Building Inspector exam and received his certification.

c. Property Maintenance

- i. Notices: 0
- ii. Complaints: 10
- iii. Interior Rental Inspections: 0
- iv. Violations: 1
- v. Citations: 4
- vi. Inspections: 37
- vii. Written Warnings: 0
- viii. Summons: 0

Parks and Recreation

1. Capital Projects:

- a. Dickey Park improvement: The pre-construction meeting was held, construction has begun, and we are moving forward with the redesign of the trail remaining on City parkland near the ballfield. The contractor has agreed to the change and there will be no additional cost to the City using the new layout.
- b. George Read Park improvements: Construction is delayed until February/March 2025
- c. Old Papermill Road Park: The purchase order has been issued to the contractor for the project, Grassbusters. The pre-construction meeting will be held in early January.

2. Maintenance/Operations:

- a. Working on distributing wood chips at Lewis, Lumbrook and Rahway
- b. Checking on holiday light displays daily to ensure working properly
- c. Completing work orders
- d. Bids for tree contract due by January 14
- e. Working on dog park design for Folk Park, setting up meeting In January with Dash In representatives to discuss

- f. Scheduling and completing contracted work for purchase orders for 2024 and submitting invoices
- g. Working on end of year report
- h. Finalizing details to renew our portable toilet contract for 2025 with the same vendor and rates as 2024

3. Events:

- a. Planning the 2025 event schedule
- b. Staff team building training and holiday lunch held on December 13
- c. Staff assisted with 3rd Annual Presents with Police Event on Friday, 12/13
- d. 2024 events have concluded

4. Recreation Programming:

- a. Recreation Supervisors continue to make plans for 2025 Winter Spring programs. The program brochure will be available at the end of December and information is being submitted and reviewed in our registration system. Registration begins January 2 for residents and January 6 for non-residents.
- b. George Wilson Center
 - i. For the week of 12/2, we had 11 long-term rentals and 5 short term rentals
 - ii. Fall dance classes concluded with the recital at GWC on Friday, 12/13. About 45 people attended
 - iii. Plans have been made to replace the flooring in the kitchen and to have a projector screen installed on the main floor beginning 12/23 and we are finalizing plans to have an electronic sign installed along New London Road in 2025
 - iv. Interviews are scheduled on Thursday, 12/19 for our part-time Community Center Attendant opening.
- c. School-Age Care programs continue through 12/20, then are off until 1/6. Staff interviews, new hires and January schedules are being completed.
- d. Community Gardens – contacting gardeners who still need to clean out their plots
- e. Our full-time Recreation Supervisor of Events job opening is posted, and applications are being accepted until 12/20. Retirement party for the outgoing Recreation Supervisor was held 12/17

Finance and Information Technology

- 1. 2025 Reassessment** – Accounting staff have been receiving numerous calls and fielding questions about the County reassessment. We are referring all calls to New Castle County's Assessment office if they are not satisfied with the answers we have provided, which is: The information remitted by the County indicates that the average parcel in New Castle County increased by 511%, before adjustments which could lower this percentage. Pending changes to this figure, 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. **Personnel** – We are working with HR to fill our vacant positions. The IT Desktop Support position interviews were held this week with an offer being made to a candidate on December 20. Staff are reviewing the applications for the part time Finance Assistant, and our goal is to fill this position in January. In addition, we have a vacant customer service representative position was posted internally without any success, so it will be posted externally in the next week or so.
3. **2024 Master Lease** - Staff are working on Round 2 of the Master Lease Agreement with Banc of America. There are 15 pieces of equipment included in this round. Three of the vehicles are refuse trucks, which were over \$285,000 each. The anticipated closing date is December 27th. All the items included in this financing have been previously approved by Council. Interest rates for the leases will be 3.96% for the equipment amortized over six or seven years. There will be a budgetary savings in 2024 since it was expected we would have one debt service payment to make for this equipment, which is not the case.
4. **SilverBlaze/Autopay** – We now have 7,700 (up 500 this month) customers who have signed up for an account in SilverBlaze, with 3400 customers electing to use the autopay option. Before we moved customer service platforms, we had just under 4000 customers signed up for autopay. We are confident that this number will keep growing as we push this service. Attached is the letter that was emailed to our customers.

Electric

1. **Capital Improvement Projects**
 - a. **CIP E2306 - Transformer 76 Replacement:** The installation of the new 35 kV circuit breaker has been completed. The engineering team is currently programming the RTAC and developing a new SCADA interface for this substation. Additionally, we are in the process of replacing the obsolete relays.
 - b. **CIP E1807 - Relay Replacement at Kershaw Substation:** The relay commissioning process for transformer T4 has been completed. Testing for the transformer and the two breakers is scheduled for December 30th.
2. **Other Items:** Two new primary metering points have been installed at the Courtyard Apartments for the University.

Facilities Maintenance/Purchasing/Records/Communications:

1. **Historic Train Station Repairs:** The Purchasing Division received bids for the long-discussed repairs of the historic Newark Passenger Railroad Station on Tuesday. The low-bidder, BSS Contractors, recently completed Council Chamber renovations for us and are

currently completing the warehouse expansion at the Field Operations Complex. The pricing was very favorable. This is on the 1/13 Council agenda for approval and will begin in late January/early February if approved.

2. **Warehouse Expansion:** Work is officially underway for the warehouse expansion at the Field Operations Complex. The project is currently expected to finish in mid-May, weather depending.