

Below is the weekly report for the two weeks ending today, January 10, 2025.

Items for Newsletters:

- 1. Charging and Fueling Grant:** On Friday, 1/10, staff was informed that the City was awarded a \$590,949 competitive grant from the Federal Highway Administration's Charging and Fueling Infrastructure grant program. This grant will allow the City to add 11, 2-port EV chargers (22 total vehicle spaces) and E-bike charging stations in various locations across Newark. Of the three tranches of grant funding (1A, 1B, and 2), Newark is now the only agency from Delaware to receive funding. Currently, the City has 5 public charging stations and no E-bike stations, so this will account for a significant jump in both categories.
- 2. Leaf/Christmas Tree Collection:**
 - a. Leaf collection is complete for the season. Any remaining leaves can be put in yard waste carts and scheduled for pickup by calling Public Works.
 - b. Christmas Tree collection is underway until the end of January. Trees should be near the curb by Monday at 7am for collection during the week. Some tree collection will be completed using the knuckleboom grapppler arm to train new employees on the equipment. This collection method is not as efficient but is a good training opportunity for use in storm cleanup and heavy bulk item collection.
- 3. Pothole Season:** The recent precipitation mixed with freezing and thawing of the pavement has caused potholes to begin to form over the past few weeks. Crews are dispatched daily to make temporary repairs while we plan permanent repairs or repaving of the street for spring/summer. Please report any potholes you observe to Public Works, and we will evaluate and repair according to weather conditions.
- 4. City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Public Works and Water Resources

- 1. Winter Weather Jan 6:** While the snow accumulation fell short of expectations, we did have a plowable event on Monday and crews did an excellent job of keeping the roads cleared and cleaning up after the event. The brine application ahead of the storm helped keep the snow from sticking early on. There is a chance of a dusting on Saturday and crews will be available as needed.
- 2. New Sidewalk Sweeper:** Our new sidewalk sweeper began work this week. The primary focus for this program is the commercial areas downtown and the surrounding streets. Keeping them free of litter makes our City look better and satisfies a requirement to keep the litter from our storm system and waterways.

3. **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 out to residents through direct contact and website updates. More information will be pushed out early in 2025.
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Parks and Recreation

1. Capital Projects:

- c. Dickey Park improvement – construction is on-going
- d. George Read Park improvements – construction delayed until February/March 2025
- e. Old Papermill Road Park – pre-construction meeting will be held in early January.

2. Maintenance/Operations:

- f. Snow prep and removal has been the main focus Jan. 6-8
- g. Continue completing work orders
- h. Bids for tree invitation to bid are due by January 14
- i. Working on dog park design for Folk Park, setting up meeting in January with Dash In representatives to discuss
- j. Working on clearing island in front of City Municipal Building with the relocation of the flag poles
- k. Working on end of year report

3. Events:

- l. 2025 Event Dates have been set

4. Recreation Programming:

- m. 2025 Winter Spring activities registration has begun and is going well. Nearly all are registering online and opting to pay the convenience fee. As expected, Rittenhouse Camp has been the big draw, and we expect it to fill soon with over 280 spots taken and less than 80 remaining for the eight weeks of camp scheduled.
- n. Garden plot registrations are continuing to come in for the 2025 season
 - i. Dickey: 5 of 20 filled
 - ii. Fairfield: 30 of 57 filled

- o. George Wilson Center
 - i. No programs or rentals took place on the main floor between 12/23-1/5 due to the kitchen floor project. The project is nearly complete. Limited activities were held in the dance room.
 - ii. The Friends of School Hill Association Room downstairs is scheduled to have new flooring put in the week of Jan. 13.
- p. Youth Basketball Leagues resumed this week with practices for all divisions. Practices on Monday were canceled because of the snow day.
- q. Before/After School Care programs resumed on Tuesday, 1/7 after schools closed due to snow on 1/6
- r. Staff are working on annual report and program statistics

Electric

1. Capital Improvement Projects:

- a. CIP E2306 – Transformer 76 Replacement: The new 35 kV circuit breaker installation at the West Main Substation for Unit 76 has been completed. Currently, our team is installing conduits that will link the existing 12 kV switchgear to the newly installed circuit breaker and transformer.

2. Other Items:

- a. All the necessary materials for the Sandy Brae Substation have been delivered. Our team has begun terminating the cables, which involves securely connecting and fastening the ends of the cables to integrate them with the existing grid. This phase is crucial for preparing the Sandy Brae Substation for commissioning and future operational activities.
- b. All holiday lights and banners have been removed, and we have installed 60 new Veteran Banners and new welcome banners throughout the town.

Finance and Information Technology

- 1. **2025 Reassessment:** We have been referring all calls regarding the reassessment 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. 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. As of now, appeal meetings are only scheduled in person. Phone interviews have all been taken.

2. **Insurance Renewals:** Accounting staff are working on applications to renew the City's insurance policies. Current insurance coverage expires on March 31.
3. **Council Chamber AV update:** Contractor (Lerro) completed the final punchlist items for the Council Chamber's AV system. A UPS was installed, tv added for the back wall, cable was run for Channel 22 broadcast, wireless mics were added for public comment, and assistive listening devices for the hearing impaired were added.
4. **State Revolving Loan Audit:** We were notified by the State this week that the EPA selected our South Well Field Water Treatment Plant project to participate in the Annual DWSRF EPA Audit. Accounting and PWWR are working together to provide the requested documentation for this review.
5. **CSR Vacancy:** The job posting for the vacant customer service representative 1 closes 4pm on January 10th. We are expecting to have over 80 applicants by the end of the day. In the meantime, the PUB team has been operating shorthanded, so please be patient with us during this period. We do encourage all our customers to make use of the utility customer portal (SilverBlaze) to help resolve any questions you may have via this link:
<https://payments.newarkde.gov/app/login.jsp>
6. **Tax Billing:** Accounting staff mailed 357 letters to property owners this week totaling \$1.6M in taxes and penalties. Tax bills can be paid using this link:
<https://cityofnewarkde.tylerportico.com/css/citizen-selfservice/real-estate/home>

Purchasing/Facilities Maintenance/Records:

1. **City Hall Flagpoles:** The old building signs and flagpoles at the Municipal Complex have been removed. New signs and flagpoles will be installed on Monday, 1/13. The atrium will be closed Monday as a safety precaution and all employees and visitors will be rerouted to the South Main Street entrance. ADA-accessible entry will be accommodated still.