

## City Manager's Weekly Report

### Department:

Administration - City Manager

### Notable Notes:

City Manager:

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and wish each of you a happy new year. The last two weeks were heavily impacted by the holidays, with many people taking off to spend time with their families. I spent much of the time in the office completing all of my 2019 personnel evaluations and beginning delivery to the respective directors and direct reports.

The City Solicitor, Parking, and I finalized the lease for the old Simon Eye parking lot. Parking, Communications, and I then met with Josh Shannon from the Newark Post for an interview on the new parking lot. We plan to have this lot available as early as next week which will be a welcome addition of downtown parking in our central business district. Communications and Parking will be performing an advertising blitz to get the word out about the new parking.

Director Del Grande, DC Farrall, and I attended another Local Service Function Task Force meeting where the task force finalized the legislation that will restore Newark's local service tax credit for volunteer fire in time for the County's 2021 tax year this coming June. We will continue meeting, likely through April, while we work on the larger effort to reform the full local service tax credit program as it hasn't been updated since the 60's and is in desperate need of an update.

Director Gray, Chief Communications Officer Gravell and I met to discuss beginning livestreaming of Planning Commission meetings, in addition to Council meetings. We will begin livestreaming all PC meetings, starting with their January 9th meeting.

The municipal gym upgrade project is now underway. I visited the new location at the maintenance yard where the old equipment will be relocated with members of the wellness committee. We also visited Johnson Fitness to see the new equipment and discuss logistics of the purchase, delivery, and install.

We held a regular staff meeting in preparation for the January 13th Council meeting.

The remainder of the weeks were spent on general administrative and personnel related tasks.

#### Communications:

- Completed the FEMA IS-700 course: National Incident Management System
- Worked with RecycleCoach re scheduling, other app challenges
- Continue to promote Main Street social media contest, selected winners for first two weeks
- Wrote copy for the new International Residents page
- Working with the Safety Committee to add content to the OptiSigns TV at the maintenance yard
- Assumed control of the employee intranet, identifying content and necessary updates/revisions
- Completed two PRSA webinars

City of Newark in the news:

Newark's bizarre stories of 2019: <https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/newark-s-bizarre->

stories-of-party-bros-trebe-k-s-blunder/article\_6fc6905c-0e67-5f14-89d5-cfaaeb5ceb71.html

Downtown social media contest offers chance to win a gift card:

[https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/downtown-newark-social-media-contest-offers-chance-to-win-a/article\\_29904e85-260f-54c2-8008-d0ec302ff12b.html](https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/downtown-newark-social-media-contest-offers-chance-to-win-a/article_29904e85-260f-54c2-8008-d0ec302ff12b.html)

How to recycle your Christmas tree in Newark: [https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/how-to-recycle-your-christmas-tree-in-newark/article\\_b4cd911f-689d-5e18-88f3-0af5fa1e4a6d.html](https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/how-to-recycle-your-christmas-tree-in-newark/article_b4cd911f-689d-5e18-88f3-0af5fa1e4a6d.html)

Newark leases Haines Street lots, will add 75 city-managed parking spaces to downtown:

[https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/newark-leases-haines-street-lots-will-add-city-managed-parking/article\\_158b4eb9-35d9-5306-8dbd-b321b24a4183.html](https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/newark-leases-haines-street-lots-will-add-city-managed-parking/article_158b4eb9-35d9-5306-8dbd-b321b24a4183.html)

Christmas tree collection underway, what you need to know:

<http://firststateupdate.com/2019/12/christmas-tree-collection-underway-what-you-need-to-know/>

From the serious to the silly: 19 stories that made a mark in Delaware in 2019:

<https://www.delawareonline.com/story/life/2019/12/27/2019-look-back-stories-made-mark-delaware/2748263001/>

Newark places recycling program at residents' fingertips with new app:

<https://www.delawarepublic.org/post/newark-places-recycling-program-residents-fingertips-new-app>

The 2010's in Newark: a decade of division and development:

[https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/the-s-in-newark-a-decade-of-division-and-development/article\\_b3dfd9e7-c27b-5b6a-ab06-dbed2263171f.html](https://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/the-s-in-newark-a-decade-of-division-and-development/article_b3dfd9e7-c27b-5b6a-ab06-dbed2263171f.html)

Welcome Center:

- Answer and direct all incoming calls and visitors to the correct departments, create ID badges for guests.
- Communicating with RecycleCoach staff regarding mapping and scheduling errors
- Log Miss Utility tickets for Electric and Public Works and informing the locators of emergencies when they occur
- Add and change InformMe customer information and assist customers who need meter yokes, pay bulk pick-ups or have trash fines, sell DART cards
- Continue to develop February newsletter
- Develop, edit and post social media copy for Facebook and NextDoor
- Sold merchandise/gifts from the display case

Web/Creative Services:

- Designed a street banner for The Newark Partnership
- Designed new signage for the City's mission statement
- Created International Residents webpage on the City website

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**Activity or Project:**

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**Description:**

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**Status:**

<b>Expected Completion:</b>	
<b>Execution Status:</b>	
<b>Activity or Project:</b>	
<b>Description:</b>	
<b>Status:</b>	
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	
<b>Execution Status:</b>	
<b>Activity or Project:</b>	
<b>Description:</b>	
<b>Status:</b>	
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	
<b>Execution Status:</b>	

### City Manager's Weekly Report

**Department:**

City Secretary and City Solicitor's Office

**Notable Notes:**

Paul was in the office on December 19 for Council and December 20.

Renee and Tara attended the quarterly Delaware Municipal Clerks Association meeting in Bridgeville on December 19. This meeting included an education session on the new voting machines for Delaware, which will be used by Newark for the first time in the April 14 Council elections.

Paul and Tara staffed the December 19 special Council meeting.

Staff finalized and posted the agenda and packet for the January 6 Council meeting on December 30.

Renee drafted the January 6 and January 13 Council agendas.

Renee spent time drafting and meeting with staff for 2019 employee evaluations for the department.

Renee worked with special counsel on ongoing legal cases.

Renee worked to schedule agenda items for upcoming Council meetings. Council meetings are now being booked into April of 2020.

Nichol spent time reviewing Council meeting data for the new Council meetings so staff can report to Council on the 2019 data at their January 27 meeting.

Tara completed several permit reviews.

Danielle processed several items for the Recorder of Deeds.

Renee, Tara and Danielle spent time researching several items for staff and Council.

Staff spent time on FOIA-related items this week. The following actions were taken on FOIA requests:

- \* Closed due to non-response to the City's request for additional clarification a November 6 FOIA request for CO's/violations/complaints/site plans/permits pertaining to 20 Duke Street from Envalliance
- \* Denied and closed a December 3 FOIA request for information in an investigatory file from Nationwide Insurance
- \* Denied and closed December 3 and December 4 FOIA requests for documents pertaining to 19 Amstel Avenue from Kappa Alpha Educational Foundation, Inc c/o Abbot Law Firm
- \* Provided a response and closed a December 5 FOIA request for COs/USTs/ASTs/spills/fines/outstanding violations pertaining to 120 Wilbur Street from Best Inspections
- \* Provided a response and closed a December 5 FOIA request for a list of properties with water shut off for 30 or more days from Jasmine Jackson
- \* Closed due to non-response to the City's request for additional clarification a December 6 FOIA request regarding parks funding from Esther Cho and May Clark
- \* Provided a response and closed a December 9 FOIA request for a list of properties with water shut off between November 1st through December 8th from Alexander Gil
- \* Circulated to staff a December 25 FOIA request for a list of properties with water shut off from January 1, 2019 through current from Joshua Long
- \* Circulated to staff a December 27 FOIA request for open code violations/permits/vacant building registration violations/current utility billing/balances/liens from Proplogix

Regarding minutes, staff time was spent on the October 17 Board of Adjustment (Nichol drafted), December 10 Conservation Advisory Commission (Nichol drafted) and December 19 Council (Nichol drafted) minutes. Several sets of Council Executive Session minutes are currently in the queue.

Danielle fulfilled 16 discovery requests for upcoming Alderman's Court cases. 624 discovery requests were filled in 2019. The court calendars for January 9 and 16 were received and the 37 cases were prepared for the Deputy City Solicitor. 49 court calendars with 881 associated cases were processed in 2019. One plea by mail was processed.

The office received 9 new lien certificate requests this week, which were sent to Finance for processing. 9 lien certificates were completed and sent to the requestor. 1,691 lien certificates were processed for 2019.

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**Activity or Project:**

Digital Records Project

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**Description:**

For 2019, the Records Division scanned 549,981 pages of documents. This is a 35.9% increase over 2018. While a large portion of this increase can be attributed to having an additional light duty

employee for much of the year, there would still have been a 4% increase in the number of pages processed without that additional employee. Thanks to the Records team for their hard work and thanks to all of the department staff who have worked to make this project successful.

The Records team spent extensive time working with IT regarding TCM issues.

Records Division staff worked on quality control review for documents already scanned or being directly imported into TCM. This project is critical to ensure that when public portals are opened, there is consistent titling and metadata so documents can be easily found by members of the public.

The scanned documents numbers for December 19-January 1 are below. Please note that numbers were down due to staff absences due to vacations/holiday closures and due to TCM issues.

<b>Status:</b>	In-Progress
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	
<b>Execution Status:</b>	On Track
<b>Activity or Project:</b>	
Electronic Council Packets	
<b>Description:</b>	
Renee worked with the City Solicitor and the vendor to finalize the contract for the electronic Council packet software by December 31 so a purchase order could be issued for the project.	
<b>Status:</b>	In-Progress
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	04-27-2020
<b>Execution Status:</b>	On Track
<b>Activity or Project:</b>	
<b>Description:</b>	
<b>Status:</b>	
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	
<b>Execution Status:</b>	

### City Manager's Weekly Report

<b>Department:</b>
Electric Department
<b>Notable Notes:</b>
The line crews replaced a pad mount transformer in the Stone Spring neighborhood after a hit and run. The line crews also worked on the distribution recloser project and performed multiple shutdowns for UD maintenance. The line crews set transformers and pads at Campus Walk II and the Haines Street Apartment project.
The electricians were used for flagging during the recloser installs and worked at City Hall on the distribution panels.

Engineering priced jobs for the Green Mansion existing infrastructure rearrangement and an expansion of a business on Sandy Drive. Engineering also worked on the distribution design of the College Square Shopping Center Project.

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**Activity or Project:**

**Description:**

**Status:**

**Expected Completion:**

**Execution Status:**

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**Activity or Project:**

**Description:**

**Status:**

**Expected Completion:**

**Execution Status:**

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**Activity or Project:**

**Description:**

**Status:**

**Expected Completion:**

**Execution Status:**

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**City Manager's Weekly Report**

**Department:**

Finance Department

**Notable Notes:**

Happy New Year!

Accounting and PUB staff were rotating days off for the holiday season in order to balance the work load and provide office coverage. Full staff will be back on January 6th.

Accounting staff is working on preparing the accounting system for the 2020 fiscal year.

Accounting staff has been working on the City's insurance policy renewals, which begin on April 1.

Director Del Grande attended the state local service taskforce meeting with City Manager Coleman and Deputy Chief Farrall at the County Government Center on January 2nd. The Task Force has made significant progress with recommending enhancements to the local service function process.

Payment and Utility Billing (PUB) area has been fitted with noise-cancelling panels to help improve the sound quality in their work area this week.

**Activity or Project:**

Customer Connect 6 Rollout

**Description:**

The City's new utility billing portal went live on Monday, December 9th. We were delayed in rolling out the updated portal since September due to some issues with our vendor. Customer Connect 6 offers the following advantages over the old portal (Customer Connect 2):

- Data security - New system meets the Payment Industry Security Standard (PCI DSS) by utilizing the third-party vendor we currently use for our 24-hour automated telephone payment system. This is why all users must register and re-enter their information into the new system (all credit card information is now being stored by Paymentus). If customer opt to pay via ACH, they only need to set their account up one time, and forget it. Those who use a credit card, will need to update the expiration date every time they are issued a new card.
- Allows customers to make a one-time payment without the need to register an account (new feature). Old system required everyone to establish an account to make a payment.
- CC6 provides a more user-friendly interface and cleaned up a log of the bugs that we experienced with the prior billing portal (Customer Connect2) that our customers experienced. Although our vendor prefers the use of Google Chrome as the browser of preference. The system was built using Chrome, and is technically not supported using IE, Safari, etc. So, if we come across an issue, and the issue was found using Safari, our vendor will not support it. This is something that we're also experiencing with our next upgrade in our Accounting software (Munis). I have asked our vendor to provide us with a couple sentences as to why this is the case.
- Creates efficiencies operationally for our Customer Service Representatives and our IT groups who support the program.
- In addition, moving to this new portal now gives us options in the future, such as using Venmo to make utility bill payments.

<b>Status:</b>	In-Progress
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	01-31-2020
<b>Execution Status:</b>	On Track

**Activity or Project:****Description:**

<b>Status:</b>	
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	
<b>Execution Status:</b>	

**Activity or Project:****Description:**

<b>Status:</b>	
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	
<b>Execution Status:</b>	

**Execution Status:****City Manager's Weekly Report****Department:**

Parks and Recreation Department

**Notable Notes:**

Director: Reviewed 90% completion plan for the Rodney Project Park area design and plantings; reviewed several personnel evaluations and completed two employee evaluations; met with Ethan and Tim about the White Clay Creek Bridge project and plan review for the project; gathering information from several precast restroom companies for the Preston's Playground/Reservoir restroom project; working on timelines for several park projects for 2020 and closing out invoices for 2019.

Deputy Director: Completed data entry forms for the winter/spring programs for input into the recreation software program for online registration; continued to update program information for Winter/Spring Activity Guide scheduled for online viewing December 27 with registration beginning January 2; completed swim certificates for the last swim class; worked with Shelby on completing the dance recital program and worked the dance rehearsal and recital; assisted with after care programming and staffing; continued to work with Wilson Center attendants on coverage for rentals December and booking 2020 reservations; continued to process special event applications; continued to process and confirm financial assistance for applications received.

Recreation Supervisor of Athletics: Finalizing winter/spring program information; a successful bus trip to NYC was held on Saturday, 12/7; youth basketball games began this week, and continues working on staff schedules for refs and gym supervisors.

Recreation Supervisor of Community Events: Finalizing 2020 classes, filling in program date gaps with instructors, added a new coding program for Spring Break and Summer; completed the 2020 Event schedule; working on financial information and analysis for 2019, completed instructor time sheets and invoices as they were completed.

Recreation Specialist: Started consolidating and entering volunteer information from Winterfest, Santa's Secret Shoppe and Snack with Santa.

Parks Superintendent: Inspected all downtown parking lot bed areas/trees and developed work orders as needed, reviewed play equipment plan for Rodney and talked with Landscape Architect whom developed plan about some questions on equipment spacing, met with Parks Director about tree species selection at Rodney site, continued gathering quotes for upcoming purchases in 2020, along with Parks Director met with representatives of Fountain View community concerning tree/shrub growth coming in from White Chapel Park, met with Parks Director concerning annual review, met with resident concerning tree issues along New London Road and continued working on planting design for lower berm at Olan Thomas Park, continued working on planting design for lower berm at Olan Thomas Park, continued gathering quotes for upcoming purchases in 2020, completed quick walk through inspections of many park areas (not formal in depth inspections) and checked on reforestation planting in Redd Park as well as several tree issues in Redd Park.

Parks Supervisor: Assigned field staff daily and assisted as needed, continued on finalizing labor

and equipment numbers for Munis tracking system.

Parks/Horticulture Staff: Continued on work orders as assigned, did tree removal at Yorkshire Woods basin area, did trash removal throughout park system as needed, checked heaters in both pool buildings and water levels in both pools, did interior bed maintenance at City Hall, blew off several tennis and basketball court areas, ice control in parking lot areas as needed and checked on holiday tree on Main Street daily.

**Activity or Project:**

Winter/Spring Activity Guide

**Description:**

Winter/Spring Registration has begun with hundreds of programs to keep you active throughout the winter. There are also a number of Summer Camp opportunities to chose from including our ever popular Rittenhouse Day Camp and Camp G.W.C. For a complete listing of our Winter/Spring Activity guide program or for more information, please visit the Parks and Recreation web site at [www.newarkde.gov/play](http://www.newarkde.gov/play)

**Status:**

Started

**Expected Completion:**

04-24-2020

**Execution Status:**

On Track

**Activity or Project:**

**Description:**

**Status:**

**Expected Completion:**

**Execution Status:**

**Activity or Project:**

**Description:**

**Status:**

**Expected Completion:**

**Execution Status:**

**City Manager's Weekly Report**

**Department:**

Planning and Development Department

**Notable Notes:**

Code Enforcement:

Code Enforcement Officer Jim Kiesel is continuing to work overtime in support of the final inspections of the BPI facility; generator testing is scheduled for January 13. Temporary COs for South Main Street Plaza are expiring on January 6 and new certificates will have to be issued if all final work is not completed. Bloom Energy Phase 2 framing is complete, and Phase 1 partial plumbing is also complete. Code Enforcement staff has met with the Green Mansion project

manager, Mike Anderson, to discuss renovations and construction trailer placement. City approval is needed to place the construction trailer in the parking lot area. Revised plans have been received for Newark Senior Living. Plans have also been received for Warner Hall. An application was received to renovate the club house at Thorn Flats. Work on Campus Walk II on New London Road is ongoing. Building 1 framing has begun, Building 2 rough plumbing is complete and HVAC and electric are ongoing, and Building 3's first six units are drywalled and in various stages of paint, trim and flooring. Building 3's second six units are framed and the roof is going on. Most of the framing is complete at 158 North College Avenue and demolition and new construction permit applications were received for 90/92/94/96 East Cleveland Avenue.

#### Parking:

Complimentary parking was provided for the holidays on December 22-26, December 31, and January 1. Programming and signage were completed for all parking changes due to holidays and construction throughout Newark. A lease agreement was completed and signed for the parking lot on Haines Street (henceforth Lot 7) and staff met with City Manager Tom Coleman and Josh Shannon of the Newark Post to discuss Lot 7. Parking website changes were submitted to the IT Division to include information on Passport parking. End-of-year and end-of-month financials were completed. Parking staff continued employee annual reviews.

#### Planning/Land Use:

The Planning Commission is scheduled to meet on Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber. The January 9 agenda includes an amendment to Comprehensive Development Plan V to change the designation of 19 Amstel Avenue from University to Residential, Low Density.

The Planning Commission will also meet on Friday, January 10, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chamber. Items on the January 10 agenda include:

- Comprehensive Development Plan amendment and minor subdivision with site plan approval for 118, 126, and 130 New London Road;
- Ordinance to amend Comprehensive Development Plan V to add Planning Area 7 to the Future Land-Use Map;
- Comprehensive Development Plan amendment, annexation, rezoning, and major subdivision for 734 Paper Mill Road and 5 and 11 Possum Hollow Road.

City Planner Mike Fortner completed the Planning Commission report to adopt a new growth and annexation area called "Planning Area 7" to areas north and east of Possum Park Road. The report will be presented at the January 10th Planning Commission meeting. Mike also completed a report on the proposed partial tax exemption for qualifying agricultural properties in the City of Newark. The report will be presented at the January 13 Council meeting. Mike continues to work on residential and commercial growth projects for the Transportation Improvement District (TID) study and Working Group.

The following was also completed:

- 3 Deed Transfer Affidavits
- 39 Building Permit Reviews

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#### Activity or Project:

**Description:****Status:****Expected Completion:****Execution Status:****Activity or Project:****Description:****Status:****Expected Completion:****Execution Status:****Activity or Project:****Description:****Status:****Expected Completion:****Execution Status:****City Manager's Weekly Report****Department:**

Public Works and Water Resources Department

**Notable Notes:**

Water Main construction on Wilson Road and Baylor Drive areas will begin on or about January 6. Notification has been sent to residents and updates will follow as the work progresses. No outages will be planned without sufficient notice to the residents. This project will address water quality issues and increase fire flows in the area.

Construction work by UD will close Academy Street from Delaware Avenue to Lovett Avenue. Signs have been out on Delaware Avenue for at least the last week advising of the closure. Detours will be posted for the duration of the closure. One lane of Delaware Avenue in the area will also be closed.

Work to clear several drainage ditches around the City has begun. As we remove debris and overgrowth, much of what we find is discarded yard waste that washes its way down the streams. This debris traps more debris and eventually clogs the entire stream leading to emergency clearing of the ditch or culvert. PW&WR would like to remind residents that they may still call to schedule yard waste collections throughout the winter. Regular yard waste will pick back up in March.

Delmarva Power has informed us that they will be upgrading the electric service in Windy Hills and it may impact some of our residents. The info has been shared with Council and staff for our review. It is intended to be a reliability upgrade.

**Activity or Project:**

Corrugated Metal Pipe Rehabilitation

**Description:**

Our contractor, IPR, will continue to line CMP storm sewer along Capital Trail beginning on Monday, January 6. This work will be completed at night and should be complete by January 17, weather dependent.

<b>Status:</b>	In-Progress
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	01-10-2020
<b>Execution Status:</b>	On Track

**Activity or Project:**

Main Street Improvements (DelDOT)

**Description:**

Utility work will be completed in the area of 132-138 East Main Street. Parking will be unavailable in the vicinity. The other areas within the work zone will remain open on nights and weekends.

<b>Status:</b>	In-Progress
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	08-31-2020
<b>Execution Status:</b>	On Track

**Activity or Project:****Description:**

<b>Status:</b>	
<b>Expected Completion:</b>	
<b>Execution Status:</b>	

Digital Records Project New Documents Created – December 19-January 1

Name	# of Documents	# of Pages	Types
Samantha	356	4,348	Court Documents
Sandy	536	1,254	AP Warrants/Personnel Files
Fred	0	0	Vacation
Ana (PT)	60	277	Court Documents (Vacation)
Sharon (PT)	75	1,209	Miscellaneous Current Files
Total	1,027	7,088	

Monthly Year-Over-Year New Document Page Totals

Month	2018	2019	Change +/-
January	45,288	51,476	+6,188
February	20,852	23,706	+2,854
March	25,727	32,064	+6,337
April	32,595	36,965	+4,370
May	40,272	62,286	+22,014
June	17,662	69,471	+51,809
July	23,131	45,789	+22,658
August	30,880	64,117	+33,237
September	38,612	60,329	+21,717
October	48,801	52,886	+4,085
November	43,574	19,198	-24,376
December	37,262	20,589	-16,673
Totals	404,696	549,981	+145,285

Monthly Year-Over-Year Modified Document Page Totals\*

Month	2018	2019	Change +/-
January	49,088	64,516	+15,428
February	72,213	13,926	-58,287
March	52,137	42,064	-10,073
April	53,599	55,965	+2,366
May	49,087	286,052	+236,965
June	30,590	79,209	+48,619
July	30,099	48,442	+18,343
August	41,820	75,080	+33,260
September	43,957	68,636	+24,679
October	62,239	67,741	+5,502
November	46,455	55,390	+8,935
December**	39,846	1,268,569	+1,228,723
Totals	571,130	2,125,590	+1,554,460

\*Includes documents created in other departments, but sent to the Digital Records Division to be scanned as well as ongoing quality control updates.

\*\*Documents found with incorrect metadata from the Laserfiche/TCM migration as well as documents that were found not to have been properly OCR'd were reprocessed in December 2019.