

Mayor and Council,

Below is the weekly report for the two weeks ending today, July 14th, 2023. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Have a great weekend!

City Manager's Highlights

1. This year's Liberty Day celebration and fireworks went well. Thank you to all the staff members who worked to put on the event and to UD for once again allowing us to use their facilities.
2. Bond Bill and Community Reinvestment Fund Update: Newark received a total of \$3 million through this year's Bond Bill and the Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF). I would like to thank our local legislators for their commitment to Newark and their help funding these critical projects!
3. **Items for Newsletters**
 - a. **Free Water for a Year initiative:** 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 collected will help complete a required inventory of service lines and reduce operating costs for the water utility. Please share with your newsletters and mailing lists.
 - b. **Academy Street Delmarva Gas Work (Road Closure):** Delmarva Gas will be mobilizing to Academy Street and East Park intersection **Monday, August 17th** to complete gas improvement on the north leg of the East Park and Academy Street intersection. This work will require the closure of Academy Street from Courtney Street to East Park Place from 7am to 5pm each day. Delmarva anticipates this work will take 4-5 days to complete, including road restoration.
 - c. **Library Ave and Route 273 Intersection:** Work is progressing well, and the project is expected to move to Phase 2 of construction starting on Friday July 14th. The project team is still striving to be complete all the major work in the intersection by July 24 (weather permitting). Detours will be adjusted accordingly.

Electric

1. The electric department's engineering staff began work with Public Work's engineering firm to develop a plan to install a permanent backup generator at the South Well Field Water Treatment plant. We currently have a mobile generator that can be used for South Well Field but it is difficult to use and requires many hours to get in place and wired up before we can restart the plant.

2. Field staff performed emergency repairs at a breaker at the Kershaw substation and completed more storm damage repair work.
3. Engineering is preparing schematic drawings for new sub transmission line from the proposed substation at the Farm to STAR Campus which will be used to develop easement plans and agreements that will need to be executed ahead of construction work.
4. Delmarva Power is installing new poles on Cleveland Avenue and City staff are working with them to move our equipment over to the new poles.
5. Engineering staff met with our consultant that is preparing the EV penetration study that was part of the Energize Delaware grant we received earlier this year. They have finished the draft model up to each substation, after which they will begin to analyze at the individual feeder/transformer level.
6. All transformers and meters have now been installed at the Green Mansion apartments.

Public Works

1. Benny Street will be closed starting July 13th for two to three weeks to allow for sewer improvements associated with the development plan at 16 Benny Street.
2. The register transmitter batteries in our larger water meters have hit their expected lifespan and have begun to fail requiring replacement. Staff have begun to replace these where they fail and are developing a replacement plan for wholesale replacement to include with the 2024 budget.
3. As of this week, we are down to two full time mechanics because two are out on medical leave. Council approved a temporary additional mechanic for our Fleet Maintenance Division on Monday the 10th. Staff met with the fleet maintenance team to review strategies for how we will handle the period between now and when the temporary additional employee is on board and up to speed.

Police

1. On Tuesday, July 11th, the Christina School Board approved the 2023-2024 SRO contract for our two SRO's assigned to the district.
2. Also on July 11th, Lt. Truman Bolden attended a meeting with stakeholders from the University of Delaware regarding the upcoming August move-in weekend. Lt. Bolden outlined a number of concerns resulting from changes made to last year's move in weekend model which caused significant traffic issues throughout the city. The University recognized those concerns and

agreed to make changes to their move in process including spreading out move in over three days from August 25-27th.

3. Brian Cannon, 911 Center Manager, and Human Resources are finalizing the hiring process for two new dispatchers tentatively scheduled to start employment on July 17th and July 24th. These two hires are the result of an addition to the 911 center staffing approved in the FY 2023 budget. Following the hire of these two dispatchers the 911 center will be at full staffing levels.
4. One new police recruit started on July 10th and a second new police recruit will begin employment on July 24th. These recruits will attend the police academy in the fall. The department currently has 11 vacancies and continues recruiting efforts through social media www.joinnewarkpd.com and job fairs.

Parks and Recreation

1. Staff held their first meeting with JMT, the engineering firm that will prepare plans for Dickey Park, to discuss initial desired design elements and the path forward for community engagement in the design process. We have received considerable interest from the community in the design process and are committed to resident involvement, similar to what was done for Old Paper Mill Park. JMT is our consultant for Old Paper Mill Park and was our consultant for Hillside Park also which turned out very well.
2. Staff are working to replace the Little Free Library in Dickey Park
3. Staff have selected a date for the dedication ceremony for the community garden in Dickey Park. We are currently planning for Friday the 28th and an invitation will go out soon.
4. Parks has been responding to reports of many dangerous trees due to recent severe weather.
5. Field staff completed maintenance work to the open space area behind houses on Swarthmore Drive.

Planning and Development

1. Planning staff held our bi-annual meeting with UD's planning staff this week to discuss UD's plans for campus.
2. We are 14 days into the CDBG calendar year and we have already allocated the full amount of Home Improvement Program funding for the year. Staff have prepared an emergency allocation of additional program funding for Council's consideration at the July 17th Council meeting.

3. Planning staff have the kickoff meeting with Energov project manager next week where they will plan out the strategy for engaging all affected departments as the project moves forward.

Finance

1. Some of the vehicles we have ordered over the last year have begun to arrive which will be financed under the master lease agreement. Director Del Grande is working to bundle as many vehicles as possible together into one draw to help reduce overhead expenses.
2. Tax bills are staged and we have begun printing them out. As a reminder, every parcel receives a bill regardless of whether they pay directly or via escrow from their mortgage holder. If you have a mortgage that pays this bill on your behalf, you can ignore this bill.
3. Finance staff are continuing to work on preliminary items for the budget. Following the council meeting we are looking at ways to streamline presentations to make them more succinct, but we will likely have budget discussions on the same number of nights as last fall. The goal is to reduce the time spent in total by having.
4. Staff are moving forward with the implementation of Tyler Payments following Council's approval of the transition on Monday the 10th. This transition will allow us to accept Apple Pay and tap to pay functionality.