



Programs & Service Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Malakie (Vice Chair), Oliver, Bixby, Micley, Charm, Baker, and Farrell

City Staff: Miles Starkey, Committee Clerk

All agendas and reports, both past and present can be found at the following link: [City of Newton - Programs & Services Committee](#)

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link: [Wednesday, February 4, 2026 Programs & Services Committee \(YouTube\)](#)

Chair's Note: *This meeting was changed from a hybrid model to remote only due to repair work at City Hall.*

#66-26 Transfer of \$82,000 to provide funding for Arts and Culture Director
HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer sixty-six thousand dollars (\$66,000) from Acct# 0160251-511001, Parks and Recreation Full-Time Salaries, and sixteen thousand dollars (\$16,000) from Acct# 0160251-57HLTH, Parks and Recreation Health Insurance, to Acct# 0160480-511001, Arts and Culture Full-Time Salaries and 0160480-57HLTH, Arts and Culture Health Insurance, respectively to provide funding for Arts and Culture Director Meryl Kessler through Fiscal Year 2026.

Action: Zoning & Planning Approved 8-0

Note: #66-26 was a docket item submitted by the Mayor to fund Meryl Kessler's position, newly appointed Director of the Arts & Culture Department, through the City's FY26 (July 1 – June 30).

During the Programs & Services meeting on Jan 7, 2026, items #32-26 and #25-26 were discussed, which created the Arts & Culture Department and appointed Ms. Kessler respectively. Ms. Kessler and John Rice, Chief Community Service Officer, spoke to the Programs & Services Committee about the reorganization proposal for Parks, Rec, & Culture that would create a new City department, Arts & Culture. Both Ms. Kessler and Mr. Rice maintained that cultural programming and promotion of Newton's artistic community would receive more focused support with a new department. #32-26 and #25-26 passed unanimously in committee on Jan 7, 2026, and passed the full City Council on January 20, 2026.

The Chair provided opportunity for members of the committee to ask questions about the transfer of funds from Parks & Recreation to Arts & Culture that would fund Ms. Kessler's role. There were no questions or comments from councilors on this agenda item.

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve, which passed unanimously 8-0.

The committee adjourned at 7:03 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Josh Krintzman, Chair