

Dear Friends,

I am thrilled to announce the members of my leadership team in the Executive Office and the establishment of a new Arts and Culture Department.

The Leadership Team



Josh Morse
Chief Operating Officer



John Rice
Chief Community Services Officer



Dana Hanson
Chief of Staff

Chief Operating Officer Josh Morse. Josh Morse came to Newton nearly 18 years ago and has worked in the Public Buildings Department since his arrival. He was promoted several times before assuming the role of Public Buildings Commissioner in 2013. Prior to coming to Newton, he served in the United States Navy onboard the USS Miami, a fast attack submarine, in the nuclear engineering field. Josh has already dedicated 25 years to public service, and he has led Newton through the busiest period of municipal and school building construction in our city's history. Anyone who knows him knows that Josh is dedicated to hard work, efficiency in government, strong communications, and fostering a sense of community in everything he does. Josh has successfully completed more than \$2B in capital infrastructure projects in close collaboration with other City departments and state agencies, which will serve him well as he assumes the role of Chief Operating Officer.

Chief Community Services Officer John Rice. John Rice is a life-long Newtonian and dedicated community leader, with over 25 years of experience developing and coordinating impactful programs and services for Newton residents. His

commitment to the city is evident through his extensive volunteerism and leadership roles, including serving as an elected City Councilor for a decade, where he chaired and contributed to multiple committees focused on programs, services, and finance. John has been instrumental in founding and directing initiatives such as the Newton Highlands After-School Program and has provided executive leadership to the Hyde Community Center. His efforts have resulted in increased programming, revenue growth, and the creation of diverse community amenities, including playground renovations, concert series, and recreational facilities. John has served on numerous city commissions and nonprofit boards, including the Newton Historic Commission, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission, and NewTV. He has spearheaded projects that enrich public spaces—including a dedicated bandstand, community gardens, and the first self-contained ice-skating rink on public parkland in Newton. Through collaborations with schools, cultural organizations, and municipal departments, John has consistently demonstrated his ability to strengthen community bonds, enhance civic life, and champion programs that foster inclusivity and engagement across Newton.

Chief of Staff Dana Hanson. Dana Hanson has served as District Director for Congressman Jake Auchincloss since he took office in January 2021. In this role, she oversees the Congressman's award-winning constituent services, community outreach, and local policy initiatives across the 35 cities and towns of Massachusetts' 4th Congressional District. Before joining Representative Auchincloss's team, Dana served as Director of Community Engagement and Inclusion for Mayor Fuller. She is a founding member of the Auburndale Community Library and a former Trustee of the Newton Free Library. Her leadership roles in Newton also include serving as PTO president at both Burr Elementary School and F.A. Day Middle School, and leading youth programs at the First Unitarian Universalist Society in Newton. Dana holds a B.A. from Brown University and an M.S. from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The following five members of the Executive Office will be returning next year:



Maureen Lemieux
Chief Financial Officer



Ellen Ishkanian
Communications Director



**Hattie Kerwin
Derrick**
Director of Community
Engagement & Inclusion



Amalia Timbers
Citizens Assistance Officer



Jaclyn Norton
Executive Aide

Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux (through June 30). Maureen Lemieux joined the Executive Office of Mayor Setti Warren in April 2010 as the first ever Chief Financial Officer of the City of Newton. For the past fifteen years, Maureen has been Newton's financial architect, instrumental in strategizing, planning, directing, developing, and implementing the City's overall financial strategy including long-range financial plans, annual municipal budgets, collective bargaining agreements, long-term liabilities, and maintaining the City's Aaa bond rating.

Maureen earned her BS with a concentration in Finance from the University of Lowell in 1981 and her MBA with a concentration in Finance from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1982. She has spent more than 30 years specializing in Municipal Finance.

Communications Director Ellen Ishkanian. Ellen Ishkanian has served as the City's Director of Community Communication for the past eight years and will continue in that role keeping Newton residents informed through a variety of avenues, including the Mayor's newsletter and social media accounts. Prior to coming to work for the City of Newton, Ellen spent most of her professional career as a newspaper reporter and editor for such papers as the now-defunct Newton Graphic, the Waltham News Tribune and The Boston Globe. She and her former sports reporter/husband Rick raised two children and can often be found walking through the woods with their dog Daisy or passionately cheering for their favorite athletes. The best way to reach Ellen is to text her at 781-439-0091.

Director of Community Engagement & Inclusion Hattie Kerwin Derrick. Hattie Kerwin Derrick will continue in her role as the Director of Community Engagement and Inclusion for the City of Newton, a position within the Mayor's

Office that leads the City's efforts to provide services and interactions in a fair, just, inclusive, respectful, and equitable manner. Hattie works closely with residents, community and neighborhood groups, board and commission members, and the City Council to strengthen engagement, support programming, foster civic participation, and ensure equitable representation in decision-making. In her role, Hattie leads citywide initiatives that advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging across municipal departments and the broader community.

A proud and dedicated Newton resident and longtime advocate for human rights, Hattie is a former Chair of the Newton Human Rights Commission, where she helped address bias incidents, promote understanding, and advance equity across the city. She has also volunteered with several local organizations, including FamilyACCESS and the First Unitarian Universalist Society in Newton.

Citizens Assistance Officer Amalia Timbers. Amalia Timbers has served as the Citizen Assistance Officer in the Mayor's Office since 2022, where she acts as a key liaison between residents and city services. Since joining the City in 2015 as the Boards and Commissions Coordinator, Amalia has built a strong reputation for her commitment to public service and community engagement. Prior to her work in municipal government, Amalia worked for several years as a Legal Assistant, gaining valuable experience in legal and administrative processes. She holds a bachelor's degree in finance and accounting management from Northeastern University. A proud mother of five in a blended family, Amalia lives in Newton and remains deeply connected to the community she serves.

Executive Aide Jaclyn Norton. Jaclyn Norton will be serving as the Executive Aide to the Mayor in the incoming Laredo Administration. She has previously served the City of Newton as the Executive Aide to the Mayor during the Fuller Administration and prior to that as a Committee Clerk where she oversaw the administration of the Programs & Services and Zoning & Planning Committees of the City Council since 2022. Prior to joining the City, Jaclyn worked for the Social Law Library as an Electronic Publications Editor/Website Coordinator and multiple political campaigns. She received a bachelor's degree from Suffolk University with a major in Government focusing on Law and Public Policy.

Arts and Culture Department



I will be asking the City Council to authorize the creation of a new Arts and Culture Department, headed by Newton resident Meryl Kessler.

Arts and culture are vital to the well-being of a thriving Newton community, an important part of community building, and a vehicle for

economic growth, which is why I will be asking the City Council to authorize the creation of this new department.

Meryl is a lawyer and former Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts who has been a longtime champion of arts and culture in Newton. In 1999, she co-founded the Newton Halloween Window Painting Contest, volunteering with the City for seven years to help run the program, which engages over 400 students in public art annually. From 2003 to 2008, Meryl served on the Board of Newton Community Pride (the predecessor of Spark Newton), a nonprofit that sponsors a wide variety of arts & culture and community events. In 2020, she organized a juried competition for the 28 Austin Street Mural in Newtonville and since then has advocated for more public art in the City. After rejoining the Board of Newton Community Pride in 2020, she served as Board Chair, Treasurer, and Chair of the Public Art Committee. She currently serves on the Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission. Meryl graduated from Princeton University and Harvard Law School.

As always, I welcome your thoughts, questions, comments, and criticisms!

Thanks,

Marc

www.laredofornewton.com

Committee to Elect Marc Laredo

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