



City Manager Report

February 7, 2022

1. **Staffing Update**

The City Clerk position became vacant in early October of 2022. Hiring the position was purposefully delayed as both Dee (City Recorder) and myself were relatively new ourselves and daily operational needs took precedent over the hiring and training process of a new staff person. With that initial chaos now behind us, it provided us a great opportunity to evaluate our staffing needs after four months of the vacancy.

This resulted in the hiring of a part time position working from 10:00 AM-4:00 PM Monday through Thursday with tasks focused on utility billing, website posting, support for agenda and packet production and distribution and general front counter/phone customer service and support. The position is budgeted for full-time so the combination of the four month vacancy with the reduction in hours results in significant budget savings and allows us to determine if this is the right staffing levels to put forward in the proposed FY2023-24 budget to be presented in the coming months.

2. **Wastewater Treatment Plant Updates –**

A) RFP for Treatment Plant and Collections Operations/Management

The Council reviewed and approved RFP was issued on January 17, 2023 and a mandatory pre-submission conference will be held on February 1 at City Hall followed by a tour of the WWTP facility. We remain on track to receive, review and make a decision on the proposals that we receive. We will form a small committee to review applications at the March Council business meeting.

B) New Wastewater Treatment Plant Financing

A “one-stop” meeting was held at City Hall Friday morning to formally explore and review funding options for the construction of the new wastewater treatment plant. The one-stop is a process that state agencies developed to bring together all of the various state and federal agencies that providing different funding mechanisms for public infrastructure projects. The results of the one-stop will be compiled and sent to the City for review and decision making for next steps. I am hopeful that we will have the information in time to have this item be one of two agenda items (budget process discussion is the other) for the February Study Session meeting on February 15th. If not, it will be scheduled for the Council business meeting on March 7th.

3. **Water Meter Update**

Based on prior inventory work and a recent review and field verification of meters during the most recent meter reading cycle, staff has developed an accurate list of utility accounts that have water meters that are not operable (no consumption readings) or unable to be read (permanently clouded, scratched or condensation filled meter covers). This results in a loss of revenue and inequity among customers. We are developing a plan to replace meters over the next several billing cycles, with first priority on commercial accounts.

Concurrently, I continue to explore costs and financing options to replace all meters in the distribution system with new, remote read meters and will keep Council apprised as I learn more.

4. **City Operations Technology Update**

We have been working through a number of technology related issues and working towards improvement in our technology tools, while also looking for opportunities to consolidate multiple services with fewer vendors for efficiency, cost savings and continuity. Here is a quick run down:

1) The existing phone system had increasingly become erratic and would lose power at the switch box and finally failed. We replaced the phone system last week with a hosted PBX system that will allow us to eliminate our land lines and reduce our monthly phone service bills considerably. This also provides us with increased functionality and flexibility in how the community can reach City Hall.

2) The existing alarm systems are being updated to newer technology at City Hall providing us with enhanced tools and remote notification and monitoring ability. The costs will be mitigated with savings from using cellular technology rather than a land line resulting in a net savings monthly. Enhanced security tools will be evaluated and implemented at the Water Treatment Plant in the coming weeks/months.

3) We are moving the Email system from a locally hosted service to the same firm (Vision) that provides IT software, hardware and support for the City network. This will provide staff and Council with a full Office 365 enterprise license allowing remote access using Outlook rather than the current Kerio Connect system. Staff and Council will be prompted in the coming weeks to change passwords and be provided instructions on how best to set up remote access with Outlook tools for your phone and personal desktops. This should allow us to navigate away from using personal email addresses for Council business.

4) Internet Service at City Hall will be converting to a full fiber connection rather than the existing cable modem service. This will increase upload/download speeds and is directly connected to our phone system provider.

All in all, the result is improved tools to conduct our work and communicate with the community with a net reduction in monthly operating expenses.

