TO: Mayor and City Council  
FROM: Bill Bridgeo  
RE: Administrative Report  
DATE: September 7, 2017

Meetings:

There will be a City Council Business Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers beginning at 7:00 p.m. Agendas are included in your Council Packets. There will be a pre-meeting at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room A.

A Senior Staff Meeting will take place on Friday, September 8th at the Civic Center beginning at 9:15 a.m.

Other:

Welcome to September and a full schedule of Council meetings. This Thursday’s business meeting agenda includes a somewhat expanded consent agenda, respecting some Council members desire to incorporate more routine items within it. Beyond that, the major items of business involve Council authorization of various bond issues including a $750,000 Council bond for items discussed during the spring budget process (and itemized in the enclosed CIP spreadsheet); an $870,000 bond issue for replacement Fire Department vehicles (that requires voter approval in November); and a $1,165,000 bond issue for street and sidewalk work that is fully funded with natural gas TIF proceeds (that also requires November voter approval). There is also a Council order that authorizes the enterprise funds CIP’s (which are not bond-funded and do not, therefore, require voter approval) that were discussed during the budget process. Finally, I am recommending the reallocation of $147,000 for several cash CIP items including code enforcement software, Fire Department replacement bunker gear, and several Parks Bureau items.

As I mentioned in a recent administrative report, senior staff and I continue to address the issue of winter maintenance and ensuring that we have sufficient personnel resources to meet the demands of a challenging winter. Please see the enclosed memorandum from DPW Director Lesley Jones and HR Director Barb Gabri on that topic. As I have said before, I plan to schedule a Council informational discussion on this for October.

C: Department and Bureau Directors  
Legislative Delegation
Memo to: Bill Bridgeo, City Manager

From: Lesley Jones, Director of Public Works
      Barb Gabri, Human Resources Director

RE: Update on Public Works Winter Operations

September 5, 2017

I wanted to provide a summary of what we have done in an attempt to provide better winter operations service this year. Last year, we had a couple of big blizzard-like storms and primarily due to staffing we did not get all the streets opened up in a timely manner. Jerry Dostie, Ralph St. Pierre and the three of us have had several conversations in the past weeks which have led to some changes we are going to implement in an attempt to improve operations.

A primary concern continues to be the difficulty we are having hiring for our Truck Driver and Laborer positions - we are still struggling to get to full staff. As we write this memo we are still short 2-3 drivers and still looking for seasonal winter operations drivers. Additionally, this year we will have 7-8 new employees who have never plowed snow with a big truck and two drivers that will begin their second year plowing. On the plus side, we have 12 drivers who have been with us many winters and are excellent, well-seasoned plow drivers. Also on the plus side, one of our recently retired equipment operators (also well-seasoned) is available to work this winter on a limited part-time basis to help with winter plowing. We have 21 plow runs that need to be plowed every storm, a total of 154 miles. One of our biggest challenges during long snow events or back to back storms is getting workers home for rest so they can come back and plow some more or start opening sidewalks or move onto snow removal.

We wanted to summarize where we are to date:

- We continue to recruit qualified candidates for our job openings. We have our jobs posted internally and on Jobsinme.com, we are attending job fairs, posting jobs on social media and doing a three month trial radio ad campaign with Cruising 93.5 and the Mix 107.9 along with other available opportunities.
- We continue to encourage qualified in-house employees to attend CDL truck driver school. This summer we sent two employees (a skilled laborer and rubbish loader) to the CDL training program run by Lawrence Adult Ed in Fairfield. One candidate got his CDL license in August and we anticipate the second candidate will get his CDL license in September. Both employees are being promoted to Truck Drivers once they get their CDL license.
- We are reviewing the seasonal pay for winter drivers to make those jobs more attractive.
- Last year Parks helped Public Works with plowing the streets before moving on to plow and treat the parking lots of several City buildings. We are working with Parks to make
this arrangement more effective this year and also going to contract out the plowing of City Center, Lithgow and Bunker so those employees can have more time to help Public Works plow the City streets.

- Internally we are working to address issues with employees who are using excessive sick time and working on morale in general.
- We are exploring options with employees in other departments who have CDL’s to see if they have any interest and can serve as a fill-in driver.
- During snow events we will cancel rubbish collection (we are working on a draft policy now) and some personnel from Hatch Hill will assist with plowing (they have in the past but we will use them more if needed to get through this challenging time).
- We also will be able to send employees home early at times with pay so they can get some extra rest to come back early in the morning to plow.
- We will adjust the snow removal schedule as needed to get the storm adequately cleaned up prior to sending folks home to come back for nighttime snow haul. This will be determined based on the size of the snow banks and safety concerns in general. This may delay snow removal in the Downtown District.
- This year we are bidding the winter snowhaul bulldozer with an operator. Years ago we ran the snow dump with a city bulldozer and operator, more recently we have rented a bulldozer and operated it with a city employee. This year due to staffing concerns the bid is for a contractor to provide both the bulldozer and operator.
- We are investigating GPS tracking software for our vehicles, similar to the Police Department system so we can monitor operations “real time” from our computers. This will show us areas that have or have not been plowed and we will be able to more effectively and strategically place our snow removal personnel and equipment to meet the needs of the community.

Copy: Jerry Dostie, Street Superintendent
Ralph St. Pierre, Assistant City Manager
Leif Dahlin, Community Services Director