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## CITY MANAGER UPDATE TO THE CITY COUNCIL

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### From the City Manager:

**Big Choices:** Whew. It has been quite a spring. Annexation, Niagara, and ARPA... these are very big decisions that will shape our community for decades to come, and I know we all are feeling the weight of these choices. We heard the Council's request to share information and to listen on both issues, and are working on that goal through these steps:

- **Niagara Deliberation:** Next week, there will be a community meeting on Tuesday, June 7th, from 6 to 8PM. In attendance will be members of Jonah's Environmental Task Force, the Chamber of Commerce, and the City's Sustainability Advisory Committee, and we are working on a format. It will likely be speakers of different perspectives giving short presentations, followed by collated questions submitted by attendees that can be answered by the panel, and then Q&A at different tables afterwards. Then, on Saturday, June 11th, the Water Utilities Division will give interested residents a tour of the City's Water Plant. [Please spread the word – more information is linked here](#). We can add additional meetings and events as well.
- **Annexation:** As Deputy City Manager/City Engineer Dave Solberg mentions below, there will also be a community meeting on Tuesday related to the Annexation, with the Developer and Engineering staff meeting with Lowes Creek/Town of Washington neighbors to discuss street re-engineering steps we will take, if the annexation is approved, to promote pedestrian, bicycle, and car safety. We will notice for this meeting so that Council members may join in as they wish.
- **ARPA:** We still have on our schedule for June 13th a public discussion of the proposed ARPA budget and then a work session for June 14th. Though we don't need a final plan at this meeting, we will need at least preliminary guidance on whether or not to allocate ARPA funding to capital projects (e.g. Transfer Station gap) in order to complete the Manager's Proposed CIP budget, which we plan to send by June 29th. Note that

President Weld and I spoke and we plan to push off the June 28th Strategic Planning discussion so as to finish ARPA and the Referendum first.

**Juneteenth Table:** At this week's Advisory Committee on Appointments meeting, Council Members discussed recruiting for Boards and Commissions (see [Boards, Commissions & Committees | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin \(eauclairewi.gov\)](#)) It was agreed that the City Council would reserve a table for Juneteenth, which will be held on Saturday, June 18, from 1 to 4PM at the Pablo Center ([City of Eau Claire Juneteenth Celebration, Pablo Center at the Confluence, Eau Claire, 18 June 2022 \(stayhappening.com\)](#)) Please let me know if you plan to attend Juneteenth and if you'd be available to help staff the table for a shift.

**Trash Collection:** Health and Code Enforcement staff continue to note challenges with the student move-out season with the collection of large piles of trash. Evidence suggests that the challenges this year are due to some organizational changes and staffing challenges with trash haulers. The City will continue to problem solve on this issue.

Now, because everything else on our plate is quite heavy, here are a number of causes for joy to share.

### **Sojourner's House Ground**

**Breaking:** President Weld threw some dirt at the recent ribbon cutting for the expanded Sojourner's House. This will be a huge benefit to quality of life and stability for some of our community's most vulnerable residents.

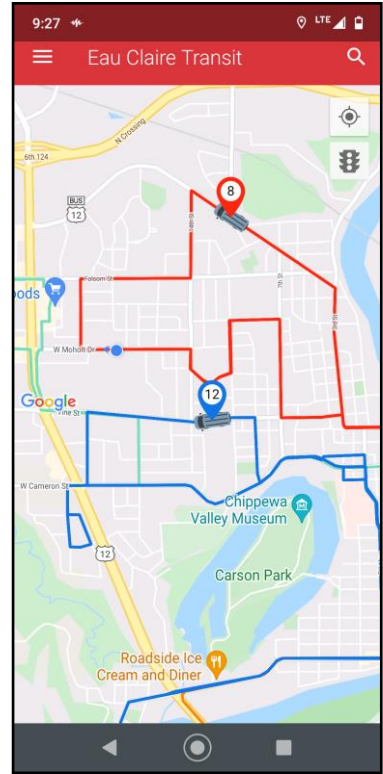


### **The best way to get around Eau Claire:**

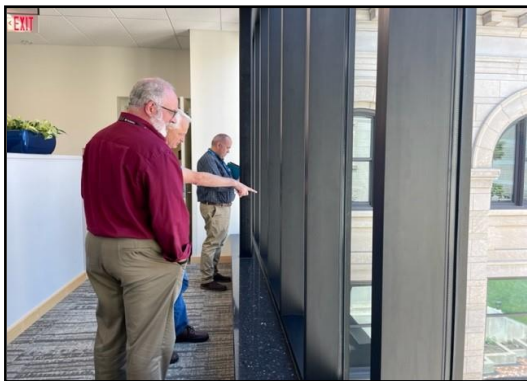
While Council Member Gragert prefers his bicycle and Planner Billie Hufford prefers her moped, another awesome way to get around is by using Eau Claire Transit. I had the good fortune to ride home from DeLong Middle School's graduation this week on the #8 bus from Moholt Drive and DeLong Driveway. I rode with Driver David Dunn, who has been driving with Eau Claire Transit since 2013 and is another proud DeLong Knight Alumni parent. A



great thing about taking Eau Claire Transit, in addition to the very friendly and helpful drivers, the relaxing ride, and the clean, hybrid buses, is that riders can track the real-time location of buses so that you'll never miss a bus. Unlike in larger cities with more traffic, where routes get delayed often, Eau Claire buses are on time and you can time your arrival at the bus stop to the second. Download the app ([DoubleMap - Eau Claire Transit](#)), and take a ride this weekend! Thank you, David for the ride, and thank you Eau Claire Transit for giving so many people rides.



**Duck Family Rescue:** We shared in a prior newsletter about our duck family – and you may have become one of the adoring fans if you came into the Farwell entrance of City hall. All of us here have been following closely the adventures of our duck family that took up residence in a planter box in front of City Hall. Vicki Seltun, who watched the situation closely, shared this update this week with all City staff, and we are passing it along to you: “The ducklings hatched yesterday morning. By this afternoon, the little ones were impatient and ready to fly the coop! Incident



command was set up, led by Colleen Schian, and I am happy to report that a very capable team led by Rod Bonesteel, Dan Steffen and Eric Jorgensen relocated the duck family to Half Moon Lake. A photo of the logistical duck relocation operation is attached. Rod is holding ‘Mama Duck’ in the photo; the babies are already safely in a relocation capsule. Mother and babies went directly to water and are doing great according to the duckling relocation team! We will miss their adventures here at City Hall! 😊” Thank you to the rescue team, and of





course good job to the resilient and determined mother duck!

**No Mow May:** I happened upon Council Member Gragert in his front lawn, and we took a picture of how grass looks by the end of May if it hasn't been mowed, for your review for next year's consideration of a "No Mow May."



**Deputy City Clerk:** I stopped in this week on the basement office of Nick Koerner, our Deputy City Clerk/Elections Specialist, to see Nick in action. Nick is the person behind the scenes making our elections successful. One of the things he does almost daily is check local death notices/obituaries to deactivate City of Eau Claire voters who have passed away. He is seen in the attached photo filing deactivated voter registration forms. Thanks so much to Nick for doing the careful and detail-oriented work that gives integrity to our election system.



**Memorial Day:**

We hope you all had a good Memorial Day weekend, and a special thank you to City Staff and others who had to work this weekend while many of us were off. Also, thank you to those of you who have served in the Armed Services, who continue to serve in the National Guard or reserves, or who have family members serving. Reading daily headlines gives us a glimpse of how much stress must come along with the possibility of a deployment. Thank you for your service! It was great to see so many people out observing Memorial Day by attending the parade. Here are a few pictures of who I spotted watching or working at the parade.



**Employee Spotlight:** We are starting a new feature of spotlighting one of our employees from one corner of the City or another to celebrate all of the contributions that, together, make the City of Eau Claire run so well for its residents. (If you'd like to thank a City Employee, [feel free to submit spotlight here](#))

Our first spotlight is for **John Lofgren**.

One of John's co-workers said this about his contributions to the City: *"John is a supervisor in the Parks division of the Community Services Department. In the past few years of working with him, he has demonstrated both an amazing and in-depth knowledge of his Division and a genuine desire to serve the community to the best of his ability. He is always willing to help his coworkers, his staff, and management without complaint."*



And here's a bit more about John:

- **Position:** "I am a Community Services Supervisor working with parks maintenance and building services. I will complete my 15th year with the city on June 11th."

- Favorite activities: “My favorite activities are gardening and fishing.”
- Best part about working for the City: “My favorite part about working for the city, besides the great crew I get to work with, is seeing people using the facilities we maintain. Playgrounds, athletic events, special events, etc. We impact thousands of people’s lives every day in a positive way. That is very heady stuff when you reflect on it.”
- Life philosophy: “I am a simple person with a simple philosophy. Do the best you can with what you’ve got. That’s all you can ask for!”

### **Council Calendar**

- Tuesday, June 7th: Community Meeting on Niagara Plant
- Tuesday, June 7th: Lowes Creek/Town of Washington Neighborhood Meeting on proposed Annexation.
- Saturday, June 11th: Tour of Water Plant
- Monday, June 13th Council Meeting
  - Public Hearing ARPA
  - Public Comment on Niagara and Annexation (another official Public Discussion – separate from the Public Comment period - for both has been requested, but may not be feasible due to parliamentary procedure, but I am gathering more information.)
- Tuesday, June 14th Council Meeting
  - Potential Action on Niagara Bottling Plant
  - Potential Action on Annexation
  - Work session: Continued ARPA planning
- Monday, June 27th: City Council electronically receives 2023-2027 Proposed CIP
- Tuesday, June 28th Council Meeting
  - Work session: Continued ARPA planning (if needed)
  - Work session: Referendum planning
- Tuesday, July 12th: City Council operating priorities and parameters work session
- Tuesday, July 19th: City Council CIP Budget work session #2
- Tuesday, July 26th: City Council CIP Budget work session #3
- Monday, August 8th: Public discussion for 2023-2027 Proposed CIP
- Tuesday, August 9th: City Council adopts 2023-2027 Proposed CIP
- Tuesday, August 23rd: Need approval for referendum ballot question language, if referendum moves forward
- Saturday, October 1st: City Council receives 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, October 4th: Operating Budget work session #1
- Monday, October 10th: Public Hearing on the Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, October 11th: Operating Budget work session #2
- Tuesday, October 18th: Operating Budget work session #3
- Tuesday, October 25th: Operating Budget work session – amendment discussion



- Tuesday, November 1st: Budget amendments due
- Monday, November 7th: Public Hearing on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, November 8th: City Council action on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, November 22rd: City Council action on levy

### **Engineering Update**

The Engineering Director plans to attend a neighborhood meeting held by developers of the Hauge – Stewart annexation with the Friends of Lowes Creek on **Tuesday night, June 7th, at 6:30 p.m. at the Town of Washington Town Hall on Old Town Hall Road**. In other areas, staff evaluated street segments throughout the City to see which segments may qualify for federal funding under the current Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) program. Wisconsin will receive \$1.29 billion from the federal government for this program. A study is being performed on the Dewey Street bridge to develop options and costs for rehabilitation projects on the bridge.

### **Community Services Update**

**Parks:** The Forestry team has completed Spring planting. They were able to plant 350 boulevard trees this spring and will plant more in the fall. The Forestry crew will continue on their mission to remove dead and dying ash trees from the urban forest. Over the past 10 years, the Emerald Ash Borer infestation has spread so widely throughout the area that any remaining ash trees are facing a mass die-off. Staff will continue to remove these trees, while striving to maintain the service to which the community is accustomed. Also managed by Forestry division staff, the Jeffers Road Green Waste Facility is beginning to screen compost at the facility which will be available to residents at no cost and will also be utilized by staff for soil replacement after stump removals.

**Recreation:** Fairfax Pool is officially ready for summer! Season Pass Holders will be able to get a sneak-peek on Friday, June 3rd from 4pm-7pm before the pool opens to the general public on Saturday, June 4th from 1pm-7pm. Recreation staff are also hard at work hosting summer classes and events. A brand-new event – the Chippewa Valley Active Adult Games – is being planned for July 11-22 in McDonough Park. The Games would offer team competition in 7 events, including cornhole, pickleball, shuffleboard, bocce ball, table tennis, dominoes, and cribbage. Over at Hobbs Ice Arena, summer prime-time ice reservations are nearly at capacity for the full-sized Akervik rink. The Dry Floor Space in the O’Brien Rink is scheduled at 75 percent capacity during prime-time hours.

**Streets:** At long last, the shop hoist project at the Central Maintenance Facility is nearing completion. The three mechanics that have been displaced by the project should be able to return to their assigned space by the middle of next week. In other Fleet news, a new unmarked detective car for the Police Department has been delivered. Staff will prepare it for active service and it should be ready by August 1st. The refurbishing of four plow trucks is going very well and they will be ready to enter service again this fall. The cost to refurbish each truck

is approximately \$245,000 less than purchasing a new vehicle and adds an average of eight years of useful life to the truck. The Street Maintenance crew has been assisting with the new Sculpture Tour installation, placing barricades for this weekend's air show, preparing streets for sealing, and sweeping seeds and leaves from the City's streets to prevent them entering the storm water system.

**Transit:** At the new Transfer Center location, contractors will be pouring the concrete ramp next week Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup>. Local businesses have been notified of more heavy truck traffic on the site while the pour is underway. This will be the third of eight major concrete pours at the new center. Transit Division representatives attended the first Sounds Like Summer concert this week to connect with residents and promote public transportation. The Designated Trip Pass pilot program for folks experiencing homelessness officially came to end this week, with a total of 12,222 passes redeemed out of the 15,358 that were distributed to local agencies. The program will be evaluated and a service modification request will be submitted by the division for 2023. Weekday Average Ridership is 2,085 for May. This is up 49% from May 2021 (1,404) and down 43% from May 2019 (3,642). UWEC Average Weekday Ridership is 808 for May. This is up 193% from May 2021 (276) and down 53% from May 2019 (1,734). UWEC service ended on May 20 and will resume again for the fall semester. Average Fare Box weekday revenues for May is \$285. Revenues are down 6% from May 2021 (\$304) and down 43% from May 2019 Average (\$497).



**Utilities:** The Lead Service Line Replacement program is continuing with another very successful year so far. The City of Eau Claire received grant funding from the Department of Natural Resources for up to 250 replacements and have already completed over 50 lead service lines so far this construction season.

**Upcoming Events:**

- Tuesday, June 7th: Community Meeting on Niagara Plant
- Tuesday, June 7th: Lowes Creek/Town of Washington Neighborhood Meeting on proposed Annexation.
- Thursday, June 9th: Volunteer Appreciation Picnic at Rod and Gun Park

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephanie A. Hirsch'.

Stephanie A. Hirsch  
City Manager