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**From the City Manager:** Here are a few updates from this week...

**Continued Budget Planning:** A few 2023 budget-related updates...

- **Referendum:** With the ballot language approved that solidifies the amount and purpose of the referendum, we are shifting into a new phase. City staff are not able to advocate for the referendum's passage, but Council or community groups may choose to. City staff will be working on educational materials that help the public understand City finances and service delivery. The City is getting quotes for public relations services that would help the City explain the need.
- **Operating Budget & CIP:** Because there are many moving pieces with budget preparation this year, we have decided to hold off on finalizing the CIP so that the Council approves it in conjunction with the Operating Budget. As mentioned in recent meetings, there are constraints that shape our spending options, and we are awaiting numbers that determine the parameters of those constraints, including our Expenditure Restraint Program (ERP) allowable percent increase, our 2022 estimated New Net Construction that determines our levy limit, and the average Consumer Price Index. We believe that we will need the flexibility to make changes, cuts, or additions in order to stay within the allowable ERP percent increase, if at all possible. Thus, you will see that in the proposed Council calendar below, the CIP Public Hearing and CIP Council Action have been moved to be concurrent with the Operating Budget Hearing and Council Action.
- **ARPA:** Note that we are still working to finalize the contract for the Warming Center, so this will not appear on the August 9th Council agenda. Partners have emphasized that, even with funding, there are challenges with rapidly increasing capacity to serve.

**Save the Date for the Bus Tour:** We are inviting all Council members to join in on the New Employee Bus Tour! We have not been able to hold the tour since 2019 due to the pandemic. Therefore, all employees hired since October 2019 and all Council members are invited and encouraged to attend. This tour is an opportunity to learn more about the services that the City provides to the community

and the divisions that provide those services. A City bus will transport employees and Council members to various City locations, and lunch will be provided. There will be three dates for the tour: September 22nd, October 6th, and October 20th, from approximately 8AM to 5PM each day and with the tour starting in the City Council Chambers. If you are able to attend, please sign up for one of the tours by August 12th. To sign up, contact Alia Johnson in HR: [Alia.Johnson@EauClaireWI.Gov](mailto:Alia.Johnson@EauClaireWI.Gov)

**New Community Services Director:** We are excited to announce that Lane Berg will become the new Community Services Director. Lane joined the Utilities Team in 1996, and he has been working for the City ever since in positions of progressively greater responsibility. Lane is known for his calm and kind personality, his intelligence, his passion for learning, and his incredible diligence. He is an advocate for his employees, division, and department and he is a great problem solver. All these traits were on display while Lane served as Interim Community Services Director, such as through his handling the public discussion about the Niagara bottling plant and his approach to the continuing complex challenges related to PFAS. One of Lane’s references said this about him: “Lane is reliable, smart, and kind -- all those adjectives. He is just a really good person. He has taken on every new challenge in his life with determination, commitment, and enthusiasm, and I’m certain he will shine as he takes on this new role.” And Lane also recently received a shout-out from a coworker who said, “Lane is everyone's biggest cheerleader. He trusts everyone to do the job they were hired to do, and is always so appreciative of all of his employees’ hard work and makes sure everyone knows how much they are valued. Utilities and now all of Community Services is so lucky to have Lane leading them. He leads by example on how to treat people with respect and shows dedication to his job.” Thanks to the truly awesome candidates who applied for the position, and thank you to all the fantastic Community Services staff. We look forward to working together to tackle all that’s ahead!

**Thank you to Vicki Seltun:** We bid farewell to Vicki as she wraps up her time working for the City. Risk Manager Colleen Schian will serve as Interim HR Director. We completed a first round of interviews of an outstanding group of HR Director candidates last week, and we hope to wrap up decision making next week. Many people stopped by Vicki’s office last Friday to say thank you, including Chief Rokus, pictured here, who gave her an honorary ECPD pin and patch. Like her other guests, I’m grateful for how much Vicki has helped me and how much she has helped the City as a whole. On the one hand, Vicki is a rational thinker with an excellent mind for systems and managing each detail of how they work. At the same time, Vicki has a big heart and cares for the wellbeing of the City as a whole



and every employee who works here. Thank you, Vicki! We wish you a wonderful journey on this next chapter ahead.

**Three Shout-outs to Forestry Crews:** The City received these three, unsolicited shout-outs from residents for our hard-working Forestry crew...

Tree Trimming on a Busy Road: “I just wanted to say thank you!! I put in a request for trees to be trimmed where it was somewhat hazardous for cars not seeing other cars on a busy street corner of 11th and Vine, and it was taken care of so quickly! You guys rock! Thank you for making our city safe and well maintained!”

The Story of the Four-Tree Ballet: A resident on Golf Road wrote this wonderful letter to the City Council:

“Yesterday morning, the City Forestry truck parked at the front of my house, intent on taking down the four ash trees we had planted 20 years ago on the boulevard. I was expecting them sometime this summer, although I dreaded it. I love trees, and Eau Claire looks sad to me where we have lost the 700+ Ashes which the Leader Telegram has reported as being removed. Yesterday was IT for my four trees. I went out to meet the ‘Grim Reapers’.

The two ‘Grim Reapers’ were two men, Dan (who is pictured below watering trees with children at one of our Arbor Day Celebration) and Luke, who were gracious and commiserated with my loss over the trees and assured me that they would be replaced by the City. I went into the house, and they got about their work. I watched from my office window and couldn’t believe what I was watching. These two guys and their two trucks put



on a show for me. It looked like every move they made had been choreographed. They discussed (gestured) how each tree would be removed, by segments. One guy put traffic cones at one end of the work area. The other guy did same at other end of the traffic lane. Man 1 got the saw started, and the other guy climbed up onto the dump truck with a crane on the back of it. Man 1 took his chainsaw into the cherry-picker truck and raised himself and the saw in the basket up to the tree-top and began taking off branches in large segments. Man 2 used the crane to scrape fallen branches into a pile, then put them into the dump truck, very carefully mashing the bulk down before returning for more.

This continued until only the long trunk of the tree was left. Man 1 lowered his basket and, with saw, approached the trunk. Man 2 used the crane jaws on the slide to grasp the top of the trunk and hold it steady while the saw man cut the tree trunk down. It never fell, but was carefully lowered to an angle to be cut yet again into segments, which Man 2 put in the trunk onto the bed of brush already there. He saved one section of the trunk, which he grasped on its side and used it to sweep the traffic lane of fallen debris from the tree, got it into a pile, and picked it up to add to the truck. The other man used a rake to clean the sidewalk and edge of the boulevard and then leaf blower to finish up. This whole ballet took 10 minutes. I was amazed at the skill of these two men to work with such thoroughness, efficiency, and fluid motion.

Obviously, they had worked as a team before – not their first rodeo either, and the equipment they were using was NOT shoddy or in poor shape. They knew what they were doing and had the proper equipment to get it done in top form. I watched them take all four trees. I couldn't stop watching!! Each tree was a little differently done, as needed. After tree four, I answered an email, looked back up, and the two trucks and two men were gone. Quietly. They never mulched, they took ALL of four trees with them and left four stumps and barely any sawdust. Fantastic.

It made me really pleased with the City of Eau Claire to witness the caliber of work ethic, planning, and skill level of at least two of the people who work for the City and to see that there are top-grade machinery and equipment for them. Way to go, Eau Claire!

You just need to know. We live in a world of so much negative activities/stories/people. You need to know the Story of Four-Tree Ballet. It was uplifting to watch. Thanks for reading and serving!"



**Happy Camper:** A resident recently called with thanks for our Forestry team. She said that she spoke to the crew who came out this morning to clear the canopy so she could move her camper, and she wanted to say how kind and personable everyone was. She said they all went above and beyond, and she was really impressed.



**Employee and Retiree Picnic:** This past Thursday, the City held a summer picnic for employees and retirees at the North Riverfront Park on Forest Street. The weather was perfect, and, based on the number of hamburgers and hotdogs consumed, we estimate that about 300 to 350 people attended. Many stories were exchanged, with retirees filling us current employees in on the characters that played roles in City Hall, Central Maintenance Facility, and other City buildings, plus the highs and lows of the City from decades past. Ideas and laughs were also exchanged, which strengthens the bonds that makes work more fun and helps us problem solve together.



**Rush to the Library:** My family joined many others this weekend to check out lots of books before the Library closes its door at its temporary location for the last time at 6PM on August 6th. After the 6th, staff will be busy preparing the Library's renovated home for the public. On a TBA date in September, there will be a soft opening, with grand re-opening events to be announced for later in September. My son pictured here got enough books to tide us by... I hope?



**City Hall Tour:** More than 30 Leadership Eau Claire alumni visited City Hall this past week for a review of current topics, challenges, and opportunities with the City. After that discussion, Rodney Bonesteel gave them a tour of City Hall. Rod told stories I had never heard related to the renovation and about the

long past of the two buildings that make up City Hall. It was a great tour.

**Employee Spotlight:** Here's our next Employee Spotlight (Feel free to highlight someone using this form: [Spotlight Form](#)).

This week's spotlight is for **Alyssa Schultz!** One of Alyssa's co-workers said this about Alyssa: *"I don't often get the pleasure of reaching out to the Assessor's Office, but when I do Alyssa is awesome (like that meme of the dog pointing and winking saying 'you da best' awesome). She quickly answers questions and provides any data needs. She can sprint upstairs to help at speeds that make me believe she has a superhero alter ego, and I greatly appreciate her eagerness to help. Alyssa makes working with assessing data entertaining. You might not think talking property values can turn around a bad day, but talking property data with Alyssa will brighten your day! She displays the kind of positive, collaborative work relationship that makes coming to work a pleasure. Thank you for being 'da best' Alyssa (and the 'worrying squirrels' info)!"*



Here's a little bit more about Alyssa:

- **Position:** "I am the Deputy City Assessor and have worked with the City for eight years this October. I am responsible for placing the assessment values of all existing and new commercial properties. I also defend those appeals at our annual Board of Review."
- **What people may not know:** "I was in a bad accident when I was 13 years old. I was not supposed to walk again. When I started to regain feeling in my feet, I spent a lot of time in physical therapy to relearn how to move on my own. It has really changed how I view a lot of things in life."
- **Favorite Activity:** "Spending time with my husband and children, they make my life go 'round. We like to kayak, fish, hike, and visit new places in nature. Our largest summer activity is baseball, my husband and kids all play, and I enjoy watching them do something they love."
- **Best part about working for the City:** "I have always held pride in working for the City and serving the citizens that live and own businesses in our community. I have made a lot of professional connections and worked hard to gain the trust of everyone I meet since that isn't something immediately awarded to government employees."
- **Life philosophy:** "To leave things better than how you found them."

## Council Calendar

- Monday, August 8: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night (unless no items)
- Tuesday, August 9: Regular Council Meeting
  - Monday, August 15th: DOR releases 2021 certified equalized, TID, and net new construction values
- Monday, August 22: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night (unless no items)
- Tuesday, August 23: Regular Council Meeting
  - Wednesday, August 31st: Final deadline for ballot question
  - Tuesday, September 20th, DOR certifies percent change in Consumer Price Index
- Monday, September 12: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night (unless no items)
- Tuesday, September 13: Regular Council Meeting
- Monday, September 25: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night (unless no items)
- Tuesday, September 26: Regular Council Meeting
  - 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 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Planning Budget
  - First Public Hearing on the Proposed 2023 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 8th: General Election, with referendum ballot question
- TBD in November:
  - Budget amendments due
  - Second Public Hearing on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
  - City Council action on 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Planning Budget
  - City Council action on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
  - City Council action on levy

## **Additional Dates**

- National Night Out, Tuesday, 8/2
- City Services Bus Tour Dates: 9/11, 10/6, and 10/20 (Sign up by August 12th.)

## Legal Update:

**Landfill Siting Committee:** The Landfill Siting Committee met this past Thursday to continue its negotiations with the owner / operator GFL. Substantial progress was made over the last few sessions and even since the last meeting toward a mutual agreement. There is now an agreement in concept acceptable to the Committee and GFL that would mitigate impact of the landfill in a number of ways operationally, but significantly would voluntarily reduce the DNR approved vertical expansion of the landfill by about half to increase by about 30 feet instead of the approved increase of over 60 feet. The proposal would also add for the first time a property value protection plan for homeowners in the area that bought their property before this current expansion, add an impact payment or “sociological”

payment for residential property owners in a tiered manner out to as far as one mile, with those closer to the landfill receiving higher annual payments. It would also slightly increase the per ton tipping fee payable to the Town, County, and City for street, infrastructure, and other service cost impacts. Attorneys for both the local Siting Committee and GFL will work to put the verbal agreement into final form in the next couple weeks. We hope to hold a final meeting of the Siting Committee sometime in August. All three local governments, along with members on the Committee, need to approve the agreement, and we'd start that review and approval process with the Town of Seymour. Upon Town approval, the City and County would schedule review and resolutions to also approve. If you have any questions please contact the City Attorney, who is serving as Chair of the Siting Committee. Lane Berg also serves on the Committee.

### **Recreation Updates:**

**McDonough Park Gear Share:** Starting August 1st, the McDonough Park Gear Share Shed will be open on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11AM-1PM, through August 24th. Bring your friends, neighbors and relatives! Games available are: basketball, bocce ball, cornhole, exercise machines, kubb, lawn checkers, table tennis, and shuffleboard. McDonough Park Gear Share is free to the public.

**Fall-Winter Prime Times:** The Fall-Winter Prime Times will be released mid-August and registration will open to the public mid-September.

### **Health Department Updates:**

**New County Email Addresses:** Email addresses recently changed for Eau Claire County, which also affected the Health Department. Previously, emails were formatted as [firstname.lastname@co.eau-claire.wi.us](mailto:firstname.lastname@co.eau-claire.wi.us). They are now [firstname.lastname@eau Claire County.gov](mailto:firstname.lastname@eau Claire County.gov). This change took effect at the end of June, as it was needed due to new state and federal requirements. Emails you receive from Health Department employees will now be reflected in the new format. All Health Department employees can still **receive** emails sent to either format, however, you may want to update your contact information to reflect the change.

**Vaping Education:** An educational video developed locally in partnership with the Alliance for Substance Misuse Prevention on the harms of vaping will be re-airing on WEAU and WQOW for the next three months. [Vaping Basic Education](#). More information on the work that the Alliance does related to youth and alcohol, tobacco, and other substances in Eau Claire can be found at: [Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin \(eau Claire wi.gov\)](#)

**Family Planning Clinic:** The Health Department has a Family Planning Clinic that provides information, resources, and birth control services (pills, condoms, depo, IUDs, emergency contraception, more). Call us at 715-839-6988 with questions or to make an appointment. ([fpc.ehealthdepartment.org](http://fpc.ehealthdepartment.org))