

In This Update:

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

Budget: We have been very hard at work wrapping up our 2023 Proposed Operating Budget. Jason Rohloff and Kitzie Winters, with help from many other finance staff, in particular have been eating/breathing/sleeping budget. We will send you the document later today.

Take-Aways from City Hall Tour: A crew of new(ish) staff, plus Council Member Jill Christopherson, spent the day last week touring the different parts of the City’s operation. We traveled by City bus and had a chance to chat with one another along the way. It was a great day – a bit exhausting because the City does A LOT, so we covered a lot of ground. We are grateful to everyone who organized the tour, took us around and fed us, drove the bus, and hosted us at their departments. Special thanks to organizers Kelly Shea and Alia Johnson, and to guide Dave Solberg... Here are some fun facts that we had as take-aways from each stop...

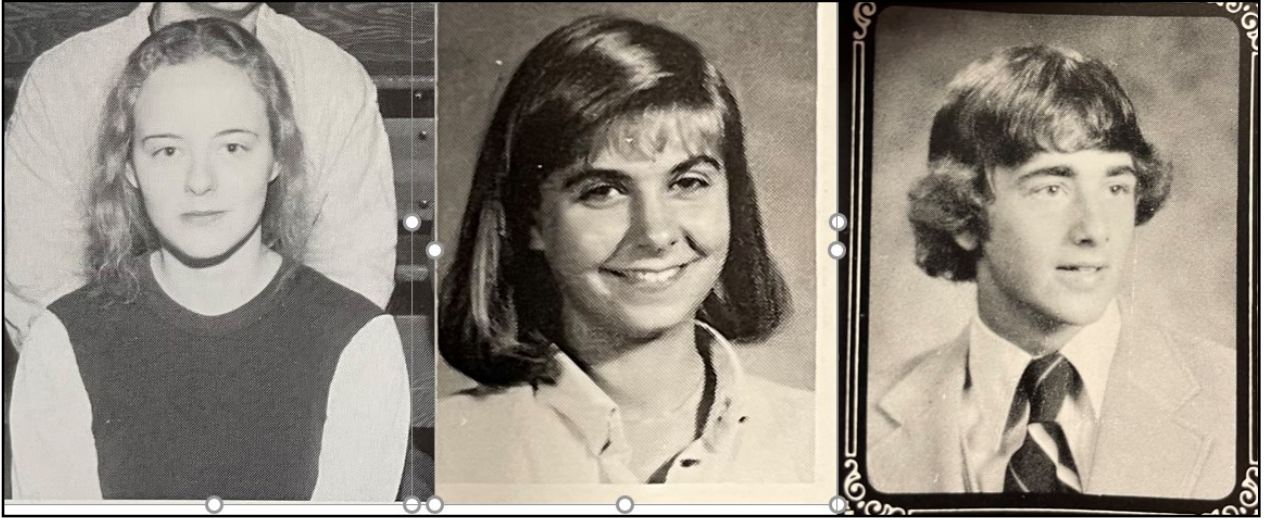
- **City Hall:**
 - The building of City Hall was modeled after the “Petit Trianon”, which was a chateau that Marie Antoinette lived in at one point.
 - The leaders of Eau Claire decided not to cover up some step prints on the back staircase of City Hall, where someone stepped in wet finish 100+ years ago. As Dave Solberg said,



“We keep these prints here to remind ourselves that City staff have been doing their best – and even making mistakes once in a while – since the City was founded.”

- Library:

- There’s a huge “Dabble box area” downstairs – and it’ll be open today!
- The library has an extensive set of yearbooks from local schools... Recognize these folks? Hint: In their glory days as high school students, they enjoyed: running cross country, performing with the improv group, and writing for the school paper.



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Fire Station #10:

- The newest stations have a “steam shower” that helps remove toxins from pores after structure fires, helping to reduce exposure to carcinogens. (According to the International Association of Firefighters, cancer caused 66 percent of the career firefighter line-of-duty deaths from 2002 to 2019).
- One of the hardest things about the job is disrupted sleep, as staff go on multiple calls throughout the night and, even when not on a call, have uneasy rest as they wait for the next call.



- Water Treatment Plant: The sand we use to filter our water comes from Eau Claire. It is also a sought-after filter sand for treatment plants around the country.
- Wastewater Plant:
 - Methane from the plant generates 70 percent of the plant's energy.
 - The plant has a huge underground network of pipes and tunnels (which results in Cole Cloutier getting 25K steps each day!).
 - The State tests how clean the water is that flows out of the Wastewater plant by putting minnows in two tanks – one with effluent (the cleaned wastewater) and one with river water. The minnows who live in the effluent consistently outlive the ones who live in river water.
- Carson Park:
 - A very small crew of staff maintain all of our parks, and one of the hardest parts of the job is maintaining bathrooms.
 - We have some excellent cornhole players!
- Health Department:
 - The smallest ticks are indistinguishable from poppy seeds to the plain eye. The Health Department does tick education among *many* other public health campaigns.
- Highway, Transit, and Fleet:
 - Snow plow operators have to sand/salt the steepest hills by backing ups, putting sand and salt down as they go.



- Police:
 - Dispatchers are trained in crisis intervention and often are the front line of saving the lives of callers.
 - Tasers require two points of entry to create an electrical current that temporarily immobilizes individuals.
 - The back seats of cruisers are washable plastic so bodily fluids can be washed away.



What an awesome day, and what an awesome city, with staff doing difficult work with pride. Here we are on two bridges that look similar, but span really different places!

ROAD-eo: Last week the Community Services Department teamed up with the Eau Claire County Highway Department to hold a “Snow Plow ROAD-eo” at Carson Park. During the event, approximately 65 City Street Division and the County Highway Department participants tested their skills through a driving course, a vehicle inspection, and a



written exam. Each aspect of the course involved a point system that will be used to rate each operator on their knowledge and abilities. In the end, the top participant from each organization will be given a plaque to display. Additionally, the organization with the best overall score as a team will receive a traveling trophy that will be displayed at the winner's facility until the next event in a couple of years. A number of us got to ride with the drivers on the course, and even take our turn at the wheel.

Welcome New Community Services

Operations Coordinator: We are pleased to announce that Cory Tietz has accepted the position of Community Services Operations Coordinator! (He is pictured here, on the right, at the ROAD-EO with volunteer judges.) Here is some information about Cory.... Cory started with the City of Eau Claire in 2010 in the Streets Division and later that year transferred to Utilities, working in the Water System. In his time in Utilities, Cory was renowned for working hard, being organized, and still making time to keep his truck immaculately clean! In 2011, Cory was promoted to Streets Supervisor and has remained in that position since. Cory is passionate about work and takes on any and all tasks with a determination to do the best work possible. He started work on a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration in May of 2020 carrying a full load of classes and still remaining fully committed to work. He is set to graduate in December and has maintained a 4.0 GPA!! In January, he will start working on his Master's Degree in Public Administration. Cory loves anything outdoors; hiking in the mountains out west, golfing, family time, riding his Harley Davidson, and more. He lives with his partner outside of Elk Mound, with their dog.



HERE Conference: A number of Council members and staff had a chance to attend the HMong American Leadership and Economic Development conference recently. A key take-away was that local change and capacity building should be community-led, including with funded, structured activities. The City team who attended discussed how we can ensure that business development involves us working towards a community with



thriving businesses from owners and operators of all backgrounds, including those who have had less access to mainstream business networks, financing, and other resources. Here we are pictured debriefing on lessons learned at the end of the day.

Health Department’s Big Book Released: Each year, the Health Department develops what they call their “Big Book” annual report to capture and share the work of the Department. While not everything that they do is represented, they try to capture key programs/services. Many are surprised with the breadth of program areas that exist when reviewing even the table of contents of the full report. Take a look at the report here: <https://www.eauclairewi.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/40259> And a summary capturing highlights/stories can be found here: [Annual Report Summary 2021 - Eau Claire City-County Health Department \(eauclairewi.gov\)](#)

Updates on Council Issues: As reviewed at our last meeting, here are a few updates on ideas that have been proposed in the past six months.

Revising remote-meeting ordinance for Boards and Commissions: In a work session in May, Council had indicated support for allowing Council, Commissions, and Boards to meet remotely and in a hybrid format without restrictions. We revisited the issue this past week to try to sort out a plan. Supporting hybrid meetings for all Committees, Commissions, Boards and the Council would be a significant challenge in terms of technology and staff time, especially to be sure that we are able to conduct effective hybrid meetings compliant with the Open Meetings Law – meaning that the experience for those remote is reasonably comparable to those in person, accessible by the public, and is secure against those who should not participate when we need to go into closed session.

➔ Discussed at our meeting was the plan to focus on Boards and Commissions and to ask each group to determine at the beginning of the calendar year (or at some other point in the year) if they want to meet fully in person, fully remote, or in a hybrid situation. Of the three set-ups, hybrid requires the most work and requires the groups to meet in an equipped room. We will poll current chairs to assess how much interest there is in holding hybrid meetings to be sure we have capacity.

Possibility of a “No Mow May” initiative in May of 2023: Council members had requested implementing “No Mow May” in back in April of 2022, and we said we’d consider it for 2023. Some issues raised among staff included: the number of complaints fielded for weed growth, the difficulty of catching up for crews after not mowing, containing pests like ticks, and the administrative task of running the program. Some options developed include:

- Run an opt-in No-Mow May, and the Council could direct to not enforce Ordinance 8.28 during May via resolution for registered properties that sign up under a campaign. If funds are available, a small sign for registered properties could spread awareness and keep complaints down showing who is participating.
- Provide education only on ways public can “Bee-Smart-Prop-Up-Pollinators” but stay within the 8.28 Ordinance.

- Encourage a Low-Mow May that keep with the 7" inch grass ordinance. (Depending on weather could mean only one or two mows).
 - Place focus on longer-term results to increase biodiversity by alternative lawn education/demonstration sites/tours in partnership with Eau Claire Master Gardeners, Sierra Club and JONAH, etc. June is National Pollinators Month for example.
 - Consider policy changes as found in the City's Renewable Energy Action Plan.
- ➔ Discussed at our meeting was the plan to try to do the No Mow May opt-in plan next May, and to ask people to purchase signs. City-managed lawns will need to be discussed, and the City will continue to look for opportunities to create pollinator areas.

For further reading:

City Ordinance Chapter 8.28 Weeds, Yards, & Lawns

<https://www.eauclairewi.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/34289/637438841342830000>

Bee City USA resources

<https://beecityusa.org/no-mow-may/>

Research on No Mow May lawns that have higher pollinator richness

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7518183/>

Madison's Low-Mow May

<https://www.nbc15.com/2022/05/11/no-no-mow-may-madison-opts-low-mow-may-instead/>

Sun Prairie, WI Opt-in Pilot Program (continues in 2023)

<https://cityofsunprairie.com/DocumentCenter/View/12456/No-Mow-May-2022-1?bidId>

City's Renewable Energy Action Plan – see page 22

<https://www.eauclairewi.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/30746/637321522054730000>

REAP Executive summary – see Local biodiversity actions

<https://www.eauclairewi.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/33195/637321570692770000>

Update on City's new Scooter Ordinance: The scooter company, ROBYN, has contacted the City of Altoona as well as the City of Eau Claire for a pilot agreement to place scooters in both cities this fall. The proposal for the City of Eau Claire includes the placement of 40 scooters for approximately 45 days this fall. Because the PILOT request would be for a limited time, a PILOT agreement is being worked on that reflects a prorated fee structure based on the fees approved by the City Council with the ordinance passage in the past. ROBYN requested a prorated fee structure for the pilot this fall because most of the year has passed already. Engineering is working with Legal on the agreement and when it is finalized the City Manager can sign it. Also note, Bird Scooters recently requested a meeting with Eau Claire. Aaron White is meeting with a representative to will discuss our pilot program. Any company may participate in the same pilot that ROBYN will be using.

Conservation-based water billing rates: An idea has been floated that the City of Eau Claire change its rate structure to something similar to what is done in Madison. Madison Water Utility charges users more per unit of water if they use higher volumes of water (e.g. the first 3,000 gallons is \$3.73 per

1,000 gallons and the next 3,000 gallons is \$4.93 per 1,000 gallons).

Some concern has been expressed that some business be challenged by higher charges, so this would require discussion with those users.

Another option would be to focus on charging more for lawn watering. Community Services Director Lane Berg mentioned that the Utilities Division may be able to create a rate based on the difference between the water going to a property and the water leaving the property, with the assumption that the difference in water is used for outdoor purposes. For residential customers, sewer charges are based on a meter reading that is taken during winter months when no outside use should be occurring. In the summer months, they pay water and sewer charges based upon the winter quarter volume and then anything above that volume is charged the water rate only for the excess volume. The proposed higher rate would apply to the excess volume as described thus allowing normal use to be at our regular rate and those desiring a lush, green lawn could still do so, but pay a premium rate for that luxury. Business and industry typically have a separate meter that is used to calculate water used for lawn purposes so the premium rate would apply to all of the consumption registered on that meter.

The proposed rate structure as described would promote conservation and discourage our biggest culprit, which is lawn watering. The new rate will allow people to still have a green lawn but may force them to consider water saving measures such as odd/even watering, less frequent watering, rain sensors that turn off an irrigation system during or after a rainfall, or even not watering at all.

Please note, any water rate must be developed based on cost recovery principles, submitted to Public Services Commission, and approved by that State regulatory body prior to implementation. We typically submitted a rate case every few years, and one was submitted and approved just last year. The PSC actually suggested higher rates and the City petitioned and then received approval for a lower rate structure.

➔ Discussed at our meeting was the plan to set up a work session with the Council to explore options followed, potentially, by a community meeting.

Review and Consideration of Commissions/Committees: Council Members and staff have suggested some revisions to the composition of Commissions and Committees. We will review these in January.

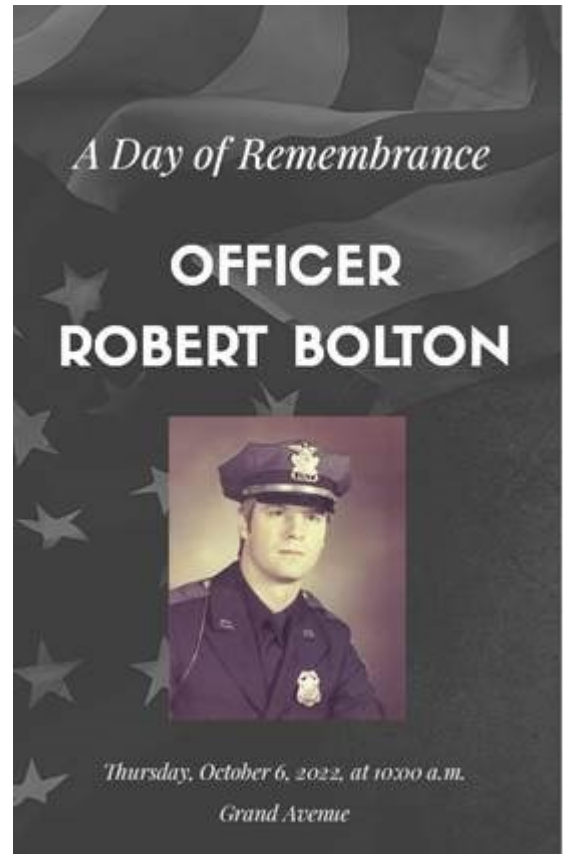
Requests/suggestions have included:

- Create some kind Youth Initiative or committee;
- Create some kind of EDI committee;
- Add a City Council member and UW-Eau Claire Student seats to Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC);
- Add of a City Council member and UW-Eau Claire Student seats to Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC); and
- Create an Association of Neighborhood Associations.

Please give the issue some thought over coming months.

Council Opportunities: Consider joining in one or all of these upcoming events...

- Memorial for Police Officer Robert Paul Bolton: On October 6th, 1982, shortly after 2AM, Police Officer Robert Paul Bolton, age 28, and a four-year veteran of the Eau Claire Police Department, was fatally wounded in the performance of his duties. Officer Bolton had responded to a call at a women's shelter after one of the residents was threatened by her boyfriend. Officer Bolton was shot and killed while struggling with the suspect. You are cordially invited to attend Officer Robert Bolton's 40th Memorial on Thursday, October 6, 2022, at 10AM on Grand Avenue, the northside of the Courthouse. In case of inclement weather, the memorial will be moved into the church across the street.
- Fire Badge Pinning Ceremony: Council Members are invited to join in on a badge pinning ceremony for our recently hired and promoted Fire Department personnel on Friday, October 7th at 3PM at Fire Station 10. It is a great chance to meet and support our newest Fire staff and to offer encouragement and appreciation for staff who have been promoted. We hope you can join us!
- Retirement Gathering: Council Members are invited to a retirement gathering for Police Officer Clay Wanta, who has served the Department for over 21 years. During Clay's tenure, he worked as a Patrol Officer, was on the Crash Reconstruction team, and was an instructor for the Landlord/Tenant Program. Most recently, Officer Wanta was assigned as Detective in the Investigations Bureau to assist with a multitude of background investigations. Over the years, Clay was honored with two Chiefs' Gold Coins, a WPPA's Certificate of Merit in 2012, a Letter of Commendation, and multiple Letters of Recognition. A Retirement Party will be held on Monday, October 24, 2022, at 2PM in room 1301/1302 at the Courthouse (Law Enforcement Lobby).
- DECI Event: DECI is planning an info and discussion session for downtown businesses focused on the unhoused population downtown to provide some information and resources to businesses experiencing issues associated with the unhoused. The format will be more of an info fair setup, with service providers, Police, and other stakeholders at stations where members of the downtown business community could meet and chat. The organizers would



like to invite City Council members to be a part of that discussion. Stay tuned for more information on the date and location.

Employee Spotlight: Here's our next spotlight! (Give a shout-out to a City employee using this form: [Spotlight Form](#)).

This week's spotlight is for Fire **Captain Tony Biasi!**

- Hire Date: December 9th, 2002
- Where are you from and what brought you to the area? "I have lived all over the country but call Clam Lake, WI my hometown. I moved to Eau Claire once hired on the Fire Department in 2002."
- Where did you get your training? "It all started at Parkway Elementary School near Milwaukee and has yet to cease. I completed my initial firefighter training at Lake Superior College in Duluth, MN and paramedic training at Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire. I also completed my bachelor's and master's degrees through the University of WI system.
- What do you like about the job? "I love people, problem-solving, and team synergy, so this job is perfect for me. There is no better occupation than to be part of a well-trained team that responds to life-altering emergencies and works tirelessly and selflessly to positively impact those affected."
- What do you like to do off duty? "I like to have fun, always...and it takes on all sorts of forms. Sometimes it's golfing, fishing, hunting, shirtless beach volleyball (just like Top Gun), triathlons, wrenching on cars/motorcycles...Most of all, I really enjoy spending time with family and friends up north."



Council Calendar

- ❖ *Saturday, October 1st: City Council receives 2023 Proposed Operating Budget*
- **Tuesday, October 4th: Special Council Meeting - Operating Budget work session #1**

- Monday, October 10th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
 - o First Public Hearing on the Proposed 2023 Operating Budget
- Tuesday, October 11th: Regular Council Meeting
 - o Operating Budget work session #2
- Tuesday, October 18th: Special Council Meeting - Operating Budget work session #3
- ❖ *Tuesday, October 18th: Budget amendments due*
- Monday, October 24: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, October 25th: Regular Council Meeting
 - o Operating Budget work session – amendment discussion
- Monday, November 7th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
 - o Second Public Hearing on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
- ❖ *Tuesday, November 8th: General Election, with referendum ballot question*
- Tuesday, November 8th: Regular Council Meeting
- Tuesday, November 15th: Special Council Meeting
 - o City Council action on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
- Monday, November 21st: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, November 22nd: Regular Council Meeting
 - o City Council action on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget (if not completed sooner)
 - o City Council action on levy
- ❖ *Tuesday, November 22nd: Deadline for Council action on 2023 budget and Levy*
- Monday, December 12th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, December 13th: Regular Council Meeting
- ❖ *Monday, December 26th & Tuesday, December 27th Meetings – Will be cancelled*

Additional Dates:

- Tuesday, October 4th, 7PM: Referendum Community Information Session - Princeton Neighborhood Association Meeting (Princeton Valley Clubhouse, lower level)
- Wednesday, October 5th, 6PM: Referendum Community Information Session (L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library - Riverview Conference Room)
- Thursday, October 6th, 10AM: 40th Memorial for Police Officer Robert Paul Bolton (Grand Ave northside of Courthouse)

- Friday, October 7th, 3PM: Fire Badge Pinning Ceremony (Station 10)
- Monday, October 10th, 6PM: Referendum Community Information Session - Airport Neighborhood Association Meeting (Chippewa Valley Regional Airport)
- Tuesday, October 12th, 7PM: Referendum Community Information Session – Third Ward Neighborhood Association Meeting (UWEC Welcome Center, 127 Roosevelt Avenue)
- Monday, October 17th, 10-11:30AM: Chamber Referendum Forum (Pablo Center)
- Tuesday, October 18th, 10AM: Referendum Community Information Session (L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library - Riverview Conference Room)
- City Bus Tour: Dates in October. Please let me or Alia Johnson (alia.johnson@eauclairewi.gov) know if you'd like to join in on a tour, if space is available.
- Wednesday, October 19th – Friday, October 21st: Wisconsin League of Cities Annual Conference (La Crosse)
- Monday, October 24th, 2PM: Retirement for Police Officer Clay Wanta (Law Enforcement Lobby at Courthouse)
- Thursday, December 1st, Morning: Housing Opportunities Conference
- Friday, December 2nd, Evening: Clearwater Parade

One more picture...

Dave, Bad Kitty, Llama Llama, and I greet passersby at the Library!

