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**From the City Manager:**

**Conferences:** This past week was a busy week, with many Council Members and staff attending the League of Wisconsin Municipalities Annual Conference. Council Members Berge, Anderson, Gragert, Werthmann, and Weld attended. (We are pictured here, minus Emily Anderson and Terry). Emily Berge is the League of Wisconsin Municipalities' Vice President, and we are proud and appreciative of the work she is doing. Among staff, Finance Director Kitzie Winters and I attended. Also, the entire

Assessing Department attended the State Wisconsin Association of Assessing Officers conference, held in La Crosse at the same time. We will review some take-aways from the conference at Tuesday's Council meeting. I also attended a Kettering Foundation/ICMA/National League of City sponsored Leadership Institute on Race, Equity, and Inclusion in Dayton, Ohio. At that conference, a keynote presenter was Benoy Jacob, from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, who discussed this publication with attendees: [Governing for Equity: Implementing an Equity Lens in Local Government | icma.org](#) Thank you to the staff back at the City who helped cover the workload while we were away!



**Firefighter Memorial:** This past week, the Fire Department held a tribute to fallen firefighters, with a focus on those who had passed away since the last memorial, which was held before the pandemic. The honor guard read the names of 351 firefighters from around the country who had lost their lives in the line of duty. Staff noted that there was a disproportionate number of command staff who likely

had passed from Covid which disproportionately affected front-line providers and impacted those who were over age 40. They also pointed out the large number of helicopter operators who had passed. This was likely due to the huge response to forest fires in the west. Data from this site, [Firefighter Fatalities in the United States \(fema.gov\)](https://www.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities), demonstrates the trends that the staff noticed. Almost half of the deaths from March 2020 through the end of 2021 were due to on-duty exposure to Covid. Thank you to Council Members Larry Mboga and Jill Christopherson who joined in the memorial.

Firefighter Deaths from March 2020 through December 2021		
Cause of Death	Count	Avg Age
Exposure	98	53.3
Stress/Overexertion	68	52.9
Vehicle Collision - Includes Aircraft	23	44.6
Struck By	9	51.2
Caught or Trapped	6	48.7
Other	6	32.0
Fall	5	44.4
Collapse	4	37.3
Lost	3	31.7
Contact With	1	42.0
Suicide	1	45.0
Assault	1	36.0

**Examples of Initial summary from US Fire Administration**

- “Lieutenant Pasold was exposed to COVID-19 during on-duty activities. He became ill and his health worsened. He died on Nov. 27, 2021, as a result of COVID-19 complications.”
- “Captain Bone was exposed to COVID-19 during on-duty activities on an EMS incident on Oct. 5, 2021. He became ill and his health worsened. He died on Oct. 31, 2021, as a result of COVID-19 complications.”
- “Pilot Olson was operating an Air Tractor AT-802A Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) to help fight the Kruger Rock Fire near Estes Park, Colorado. As the aircraft approached to make a water drop, witnesses on the ground saw the aircraft roll inverted and then disappear from their sight. Information from the CO Aviation company indicates that the aircraft was caught in a sudden wind gust and crashed, killing Pilot Olson.”



**Budget planning:** We are in the final stages of the 2023 budget preparation. Please let me know by the end of today if you have any proposed budget amendments so that we can plan for Tuesday’s work session. As a reminder, after we learn about the outcome of the referendum, we will get back to you with a revised budget for your consideration. The Council will take action on the budget at a special meeting on November 15th or at the regular Council meeting on November 22nd.

**Absentee Voting:** A reminder that absentee drive-through voting starts on Tuesday, October 25th and ends on Friday, November 4th. The location is City Hall parking lot and the hours are Monday through Thursday, 9AM to 6PM and Friday, 9AM to 4PM.

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

Today we highlight **Engineer Dave Pekol**, who works out of Station #10! More about Dave...

- **Hire Date:** “I started May 8th of 2000.”
- **Hometown and what brought you to the area:** “I was born here in Eau Claire. I consider myself lucky to serve the community I was raised in.”
- **Training:** “I started as an Altoona Firefighter and received my training here in Eau Claire, but my Fire Science degree is actually from Fox Valley in Appleton. It was a joint program between Chippewa Valley Technical College and Fox Valley Technical College. Fun fact, I was actually the first Eau Claire Fire Department Intern.”
- **Favorite part about job:** “I really enjoy helping those in need and making a difference in the lives of others. It can be challenging to deal with the variety of calls and emergencies we respond to from day to day. Sometimes you have to think outside of the box to get the job done. That to me is very rewarding. I enjoy my coworkers who are like a second family to me. I can count on them for anything. I also get to drive the fire truck every day, which is pretty awesome!”
- **Favorite things to do on days off:** “I enjoy spending time with my wife and kids. Together we like to go on road trips and find new places. I enjoy hanging out with friends. I like to watch Wisconsin sports, even though I feel like they let me down a lot. I also love all things tech, as well as playing video games and watching movies. What can I say, I’m a total nerd and I make no apologies.”



### **Council Calendar**

- Monday, October 24th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night

- Tuesday, October 25th: Regular Council Meeting
  - Operating Budget work session – amendment discussion
- Monday, November 7th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
  - 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
  - Present Salary Plan
  - City Council action on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
- Monday, November 21st: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, November 22nd: Regular Council Meeting
  - City Council action on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget (if not completed sooner)
  - 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
  - Presentation of Health Insurance Renewal Rates and Options
- Monday, December 26th & Tuesday, December 27th Meetings – Will be cancelled

**Additional Dates:**

- Monday, October 24th, 2PM: Retirement for Police Officer Clay Wanta (Law Enforcement Lobby at Courthouse)
- Tuesday, October 25th through Friday, November 4th: Drive through voting in City Hall parking lot.
- Thursday, October 27th, 6PM: Hmong Mutual Association (1320 West Clairmont)
- Friday, October 28th, 3-5PM: Pet Trick-or-Treating in City Hall for City employee families (and City Council member families)
- Monday, October 31st, 3-5PM: Kids Trick-or-Treating in City Hall for City employee families (and City Council member families)
- Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5:30PM: Referendum Community Information Session (L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library - Riverview Conference Room)

- Thursday, December 1st, Morning: Housing Opportunities Conference
- Friday, December 2nd, Evening: Clearwater Parade

**Engineering Updates:** Here are some updates from Engineering...

**License Plate Recognition:** The implementation of the License Plate Recognition (LPR) program is continuing. There are four main components to the process, which are: financial payment, citations, parking permit access and applications, and installation of the cameras themselves. The first two components, financial and citations, are complete and working well. The third component, parking permit access and applications, is being worked on now. When this component is complete, a permit will be able to be secured and paid for completely online. There will be no further need to come in to Engineering and Finance to get the permit and pay for it. The last component of the LPR system, the cameras, will be installed upon completion of the permit access and application and their successful deployment. It is estimated the cameras will be installed and operational in January, 2023.

**Boardwalk Trail:** The Boardwalk Trail connecting Carson Park to Rod and Gun Park is being presented to the Waterways and Parks Commission at their October 26th meeting. The majority of attendees supported the boardwalk concept connecting the existing trail near the YMCA Tennis Center to Rod and Gun Park. There were a few attendees that preferred no trail or a much shorter trail that would connect to Park Ridge Road and then to Rod and Gun Park. Everyone in attendance agreed the area that the City purchased where the boardwalk is proposed is an incredibly valuable and unique natural area full of biodiversity. The City has recommended the boardwalk approach because it allows the public to access the area in an environmentally responsible manner while allowing access to the boardwalk to all, regardless of mobility status. A boardwalk essentially is laid on supports that rest above the surface of the ground. There are very few intrusions into the actual soil. Because of this sensitivity, boardwalks have been approved in sensitive areas of National Parks, wilderness areas, and other environmentally sensitive areas. The DNR has confirmed that a boardwalk would be an appropriate feature to install and would not cause environmental harm to the area.

**Major Projects Update:** Here are some road project updates...

- Jeffers: Jeffers Road (the north section of the project currently under construction) is scheduled to be finished by October 31st. The remaining southern section is scheduled for construction next spring/summer.
- Omaha: Omaha Street (Starr Ave to McDonough Street) is complete.
- Eddy Lane: Eddy Lane and Melby Street are complete.

Additional project updates are available on our website.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6881668a558744bd92ae11748371bf24>

**Parking Lots:** Staff plans to bring forward parking agreement extensions for the use of the Four Corners Lot (Corner of Barstow and Grand) and the Christ Church Cathedral Lot (Corner of Lake Street and Farwell Street) to be public parking assets through the extent of the Transit Center construction. Construction on the Transit Center is expected to be complete by June, 2024.

**Community Services Updates**

**Recreation:** Here are some Recreation updates...

- **Hobbs:** Hobbs Ice Arena continues to have difficulty attracting applicants for open positions. Staff met with the Parks crew to collaborate on solutions. Parks and other Community Services staff will be able to sign up to help out at Hobbs for overtime opportunities This is not a long-term solution, but a stop-gap measure designed to keep the facility in good order during their busy season.
- **Fairfax:** At Fairfax Pool, the concession stand renovation work (pictured here) is progressing. Contractors have aimed for a completion date in Spring, 2023.
- **Parade:** Recreation staff have received 21 Clearwater Winter Parade entries so far, including six City of Eau Claire entries. They will continue to promote registration for the event until the deadline of November 2nd.

**Parks:** Some Parks updates include...

- **Boyd Park:** Work at Boyd Park continues. The installation of Eau Claire’s first solar tree was completed there, and staff were able to host a ribbon-cutting ceremony in celebration. The tree was designed and built by local start-up Solar Forma and is the first



installation for them. They will be installing another tree in the Cannery Park and a carport model at the NW corner of Forest and Madison Streets. The solar tree generates enough power to supply a 2,500-3,000 square foot home and is currently feeding back into the grid. The tree has lighting features with a motion detection feature to intensify the lighting. The company uses a concept called Bio Mimicry so that their structures resemble what is seen in nature. In the picture attached, Dave Solberg speaks at the ribbon cutting. The playground, skate park, and sidewalk construction projects are still underway.

- **Brush Site**: The Jeffers Road Green Waste Facility (Brush Site) announced it will close for the season after Wednesday, November 16th. The site will reopen in December for the Merry Mulch Christmas Tree Recycling program.

**Utilities:** Some utilities updates include...

- **Wastewater Treatment**: The Wastewater Treatment Plant is running smoothly. The sludge haul process continues to increase as more crops come off of fields. A rehabilitation project of the Ruby Lift Station controls was completed earlier this week.
- **Water Treatment**: The Water Treatment Plant is operating smoothly. Well #13 is down for cleaning and pump rehabilitation. Once completed the same project will begin for Well #21.
- **Meters**: In Water Distribution/Meters, City utility project construction sampling has come to an end.
- **Lead Service Lines**: The Intent to Apply (ITA) form has been submitted to the Department of Natural Resources for continued lead service line replacement funding in 2024.
- **Hiring**: In Sewer Collection, Jahn Eberhardt started as the new Sewer Collection Supervisor on Monday, October 17th. Interviews were held this week for three open positions across the Utilities Division.
- **Root Cutting**: Crews continue annual root-cutting sewer maintenance.

**Transit:** A new Bus Tracking technology has been installed on all the buses and the Transloc App is operational for the public. Transit Management are still



working with Transloc for full implementation of all the features as it relates to passenger counts. The last deck pour was successful on the New Transfer Center site and the lower level supports have been removed.

Weekday Average Ridership is 2,184 for October. This is down 1% from October 2021 (2,211) and down 31% from the pre-pandemic October 2019 (3,180). Average Fare Box weekday revenues for October is \$222.72. Revenues are down 23% from October 2021 (\$288) and down 55% from the October 2019 average (\$498).

**Streets:** The first week of fall street sweeping started Monday, October 17th. Two crews of seven are working Monday through Thursday from 7PM to 1AM and Fridays from 7AM to 3PM. Fleet mechanics are preparing equipment for winter operations. This week, all pick-up plows are being inspected and repaired if needed.

**One more picture:** Our new City Clerk, Nick Koerner, leads a Poll Worker Training class.

