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**From the Manager**

**Welcome Dr. Ka Vang:** We are very happy to share that Dr. Ka Vang will join us as the City’s new Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator. Ka has had a full career of advocating for and supporting students who are low-income, first generation, and/or underrepresented. She has worked tirelessly to help them achieve success and to find their strategy to thrive within UW-EC and CVTC. To achieve this mission, she has taught, coordinated supportive services, led experiential learning trips, investigated equal opportunity issues, and much more. Most recently, Ka has served as the Associate Director of the Ronald McNair Program at the UW-EC. The program provides support to low-income students interested in pursuing graduate school with intention of PhD. Prior to that role, Ka worked in Student Support Services coordinating academic and other supports to help participants transition to the university. These experiences have helped Ka develop a vision for both the micro and the macro, and she is excited to help our community grow towards being one that welcomes all and helps each person thrive. Ka has academic degrees from UW-EC, UW – Stout, and University of St. Thomas. Ka’s reference said about her: “Ka is a consummate professional. She is an observer of people and body language, and she’s always taking in information. When she’s ready to act, she does so with a lot of insight. She’s always trying to bridge the gaps in disparity. She sees the big picture, but she has that ability to map out the details and the systems to achieve the big changes, and she has the determination to put that plan in action.”



Ka is excited for this new journey and is looking forward to building community and connecting with everyone! Ka will join the City manager’s Office team, and we expect for the work of EDI to be tackled by the whole team, as well as by other City staff and community leaders. Ka starts today, December 5th, and she will work part-time as she transitions her UW-EC work. She will join us full-time on February 6th. We are excited for Ka’s arrival!

**Housing Conference:** A number of Council Members, including Council Members Christopherson, Weld, Gragert, Miller, and Berge, joined other attendees at the first annual Housing Opportunities Conference held last week. Jeremy led a very interesting session on the intersection of housing and transit. From the many take-aways, here's a sample of points I noted:

- There's a tension between the goal of having housing prices go down and people wanting their housing assets to increase in value, and policy makers have to figure out how to navigate this dynamic.
- Eau Claire is at 1.24 "Jobs to Housing Balance", which means many people who work here need to live elsewhere. Eau Claire would need to build 4,600 new housing units to get back to what's considered to be a desirable ratio.
- Since the end of 2019, housing prices have risen 33.9 percent in WI and 47 percent in Eau Claire (or \$90,100).
- Construction costs are going up, and there's a shortage of construction employees in the trades.
- The percent of residents in owner-occupied households who are extremely cost burdened (spending more than 50% on housing) has gone up. These could be seniors on fixed incomes.
- The H+T tool helps communities understand the combined cost of transportation and housing. See: [Welcome to The H+T Affordability Index \(cnt.org\)](#)
- An area of Missoula, Montana took a neighborhood close to its downtown through a redevelopment and master planning process that resulted in high-density housing and frequent, free transit. Approaches included use of form-based code and pursuit of a 20-minute neighborhood. Some more information is here: [Mullan — Dover, Kohl & Partners \(doverkohl.com\)](#)



Slides will be available next week. Thank you to Billie Hufford, Scott Allen, and the HOC team for putting this together!

**Halfmoon Dam Maintenance:** Beginning the week of December 5th, a contractor will be removing vegetation from the earth dam on the south end of Half Moon Lake, behind the John and Fay Menard Tennis Center. This work is part of the Department of Natural Resources permitting process for the dam. DNR staff have requested that the City provide some whole, removed trees to be dropped into Half Moon Lake as fish habitat. The City and DNR have collaborated on a similar effort in the past, which has worked well.

**Beards for a Cause:** Just a reminder, please consider buying an Eau Claire PD ornament to support the Police Department's No-Shave November fundraiser. (Read more [here.](#)) Please let me know at any point if you'd like an ornament, and I'll deliver one to you at our next Council meeting. They cost \$10 each. And here is an important update! The No-Shave contest winners were Sgt. Gullickson and a two-way tie for second between Officer Palmer and Officer Perkins. Take a look to judge the beards for yourselves!

- Top row L to R: CSO Andy Bohl, Officer Michael Cullen, Officer Greg Erickson, and Sgt. Jake Gullickson
- Second Row: Sgt. Mitch Hunsley, Officer Ben Knopp, Detective Ryan Lambeseder, Sgt. Mike Major
- Third Row: Detective Nate Ollmann, Officer Abram Palmer, Officer Joe Perkins, Lt. Jesse Henning
- Fourth Row: Officer Derek Jack, Officer Nathan Kelly, Lt. Ben Frederick

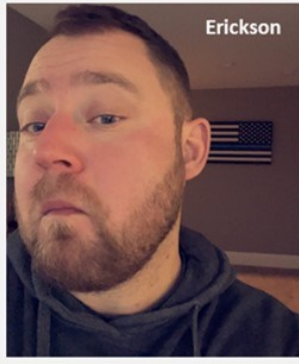




Bohl



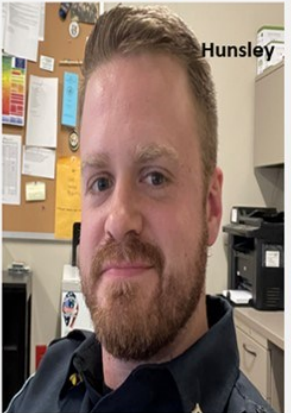
Cullen



Erickson



Gullickson



Hunsley



Knopp



Lambeseder



Major



Ollmann



Palmer



Perkins



Henning



Jack



Kelly



Frederick





**Parade Fun:** We had a great night at the Friday Clearwater Winter Parade. City departments and divisions went all out to entertain the crowds. I heard rave reviews about the fireworks, which started at 6:30PM, right before the parade. The City Council and City Manager's Office float was an adventure. It rained a bit while we waited to start, but by the end of the parade, the rain turned into snow. Joining the parade from the Council were Council Members Weld, Berge, Christopherson, Miller, and Anderson. And Joshua stole the show with his amazing outfit!

The Recreation Department, who organizes the parade, will share more updates, but here are a few sneak peeks of the fantastic work that City Departments and other groups did to put on a fun show for what looked to be thousands of people who showed up to watch.





**Council Calendar:**

- 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 – Cancelled
- Monday, January 9th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, January 10th: Regular Council Meeting
- Monday, January 23rd: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, January 24th: Regular Council Meeting

**Additional Dates:**

- Tuesday, December 13th, Council/Staff Outing



- Friday, December 16th: Eggs and Issues Holiday Legislative Breakfast

### **Employee Spotlight:**

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

Today we highlight firefighter/paramedic Brittany Lyons!

More about Brittany ...

- **Hire date:** "I was originally hired in August of 2019, left for a little while this past January, and then was rehired in May of 2022."
- **Hometown:** "I grew up in Coon Rapids, MN. My son and I moved to Eau Claire in 2013, and we have loved living in this community ever since."
- **Training and education:** "I got my EMT basic certification in 2015 while studying criminal justice. In 2017, I was in the law enforcement academy when a series of unfortunate events ultimately led to a career change and I started the FireMedic program at CVTC in June 2017, while obtaining my fire certifications at night. I graduated as a firefighter/paramedic from CVTC in January 2019 and worked shortly for Chippewa Fire District before getting hired with ECFD."
- **Best parts of the job:** "Every day is different and no two calls are the same. People call us on their worst days. They trust us to take care of them or help solve a problem. That's an enormous amount of trust that we are given by our community, and I'm honored to be able to be the one who shows up in their time of need. I also enjoy being part of the ECFD Community Charity, getting to interact with my community outside of wearing the uniform. This really is the best job in the world."
- **Favorite activities outside of work:** "Off duty, I'm a mom of two awesome kids. We love hiking and kayaking, fishing and visiting my family in the Twin Cities. When we're not finding adventure outdoors, you can find us whipping up all kinds of food or reading Harry Potter, or I'm generally getting schooled by my 10-year-old in a game of wizard chess."



### **Community Services Updates:**

**Streets & Fleet:** The Streets crew got its first real preparedness test with last week's snow. The sharp drop in temperature and high winds reduced the effectiveness of salt products, but crews were able to

use sand to improve traction, and the better temperatures at the end of the week helped return streets to good winter driving conditions. The Streets crew received some new equipment that will improve snow removal operations on sidewalks and other areas not accessible by plow, while reducing the risk of injury that accompanies shoveling those areas by hand.



*Ventrac SSV*



*Toro Grandstand mower with snow plow attachment*

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Fleet staff, all snow removal equipment is operational and only a few minor issues remain to be corrected. Fleet staff also took delivery of a new Ford F150. Once outfitted with all necessary equipment, it will enter service for the Police Department.

**Parks:** The Parks crews are preparing the outdoor rink locations for flooding. Staff will begin flooding the rinks in shallow layers once the temperature is consistently below 32°F. If weather cooperates, staff plan to have the rinks open for use by Christmas break.



**Utilities:** Operations at the Water Plant are running smoothly. With the approval to move to 12-hour shifts and hire two additional employees, management staff are finalizing a shift schedule and expect to implement the changes at the start of 2023. At the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the effluent phosphorus is higher than normal due to issues with the sludge gravity thickener. Thankfully, the issue is minor, equipment is up and running, and staff expects the issue to resolve itself with no problems. Distribution and Meters staff continue to provide some construction sampling for new subdivisions. Staff are also working closely with the Engineering Department and local businesses for the design and proposed reconstruction of Ball Street and Spring Street. Staff in Sewer Collection continue to root cut large diameter pipe and have been working with the Fire Stations to clean their garage floor drains.

**Transit:** Buses will not run on Monday, December 26th or Monday, January 2nd in observation of the Christmas Day and New Year’s Day holidays. Also in transit, the Transit Safety and Security Team has been reconstituted. It is led by Transit Supervisor Kyle Herman. Pictured below are the team: Left to Right: Brandon Lechleitner, Nate Nispel, Kyle Herman, Adam Nelson, Dan White, and Mike Steinke.



Also below are photos on the progress of the new Transfer Center. Some new concrete has been poured and the center platform is formed. Due to the cold weather, there are no more pours scheduled until Spring. City staff are working with the developer for the addition of the apartments that will top the completed Transfer Center.

