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From the Manager

Hope you all had a restful holiday break and are ready to take on all of the big projects that await us in 2023! We will be immersing ourselves in the work of fiscal stability, zoning, community engagement, equity, sustainability, housing, street repair, code enforcement, parking, and much more.

Spotted around

Town: It's always fun to travel around Eau Claire and to see City crews working hard. Passing by Demmler Park, I spotted Justin Kunferman (on the hose), Pete Bowman, and Jana Oldenberg. Not pictured, but also part of this team, is Bryan Myers.

According to Steve Plaza, they are part of our flooding crew that goes out to sweep and flood the rinks every morning, if possible. During snow events they get pulled off of that project to clear sidewalks, crosswalks, and streets. The City has a total of nine locations for outdoor general skating and three of those locations have a hockey rink (see below).



Rink Location	Hockey	General Skating	Sledding/Skiing
Pinehurst Park	Yes	Yes	Both
Putnam Heights	Yes	Yes	Neither
Roosevelt	Yes	Yes	Neither
Boyd Park	No	Yes	Neither
Sam Davey	No	Yes	Neither
Demmler	No	Yes	Neither
Oakwood Hills	No	Yes	Sledding
Mitscher	No	Yes	Neither
Newell (Shawtown)	No	Yes	Neither

Steve said: “We hope to flood all rinks three time a week, however, if we have snow events this will reduce the frequency of our flooding schedule. The flood crew goes out in the cold to work with water so residents and visitors can have a place to skate and enjoy Eau Claire’s winter opportunities. Our outdoor rinks get well used when the temperatures are above zero. This crew is the unsung heroes of winter fun.”

Community-Driven Plan for ARPA Spending: With Dr. Ka Vang now on board as our EDI Coordinator, and as she transitions to full time early in February, we are circling back to considering designs for a community-driven decision-making process to determine how to spend the remaining \$4 million in ARPA funding. Note that before we take any formal steps, we will seek feedback from the City Council.

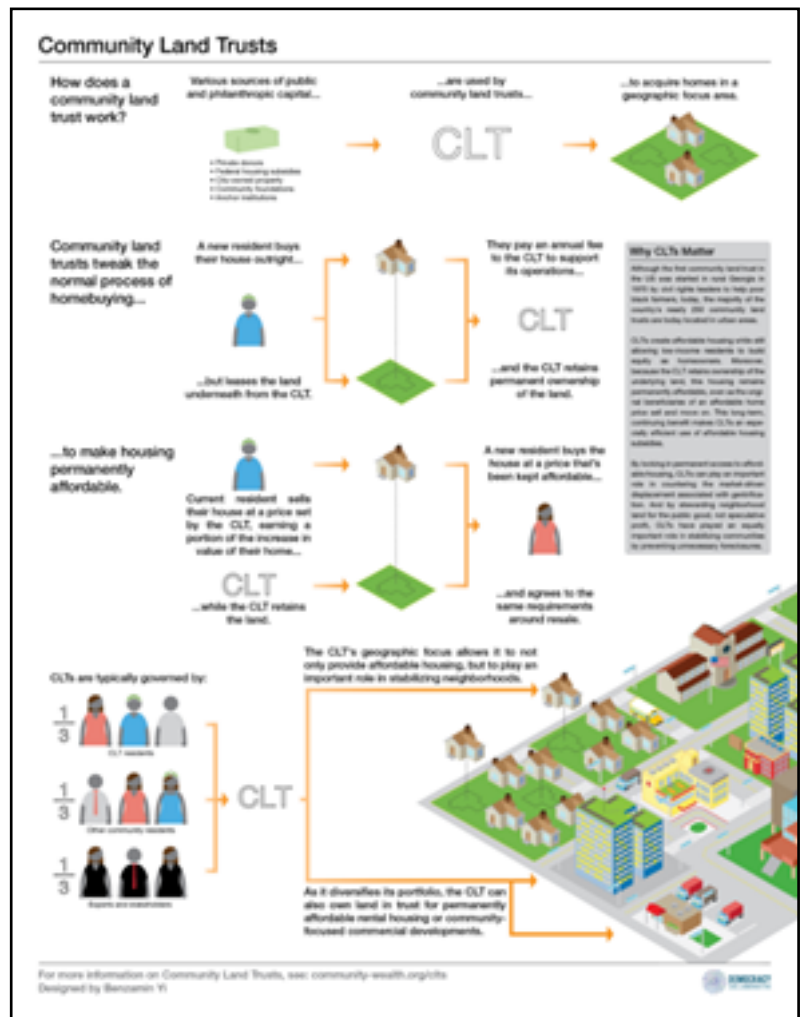
To formulate a plan, we expect to take a multi-step process to collect feedback.

- **Step 1 – January and February:** At present, we are focusing on community engagement with historically underrepresented communities and continuing to build relationships. Dr. Vang and I are currently meeting BIPOC and other groups to understand areas of focus and to collect ideas, including the following groups: HMAA, Power of Perception, El Centro, Black and Brown Womyn Power Coalition, Chippewa Valley LGBTQ+, UWEC, CVTC, Disability Services, Eau Claire School District, Chippewa Valley Justice Action, Hmong Women Summit, C.C. WE ADAPT, and others.
- **Step 2 – February and March:** After gathering data/responses from BIPOC groups, we plan to try to formulate a draft plan, which we will review with the Council. For instance, we may create different categories for funding (education, housing, services, community building, etc.). We need to flesh out other components, including:
 - Application process/criteria;
 - Teams to decide on projects to fund based on submitted applications;
 - Ongoing reporting requirements, including: timelines and accountability/coordination requirements.

- Additional Steps: We expect that the process will include these steps...
 - *Contract with BIPOC organizations to undertake planning steps*: We've heard time and time again that marginalized groups' voices are not heard or they are not being invited to the table. Funding structured planning work provides a venue/process for marginalized groups to voice their thoughts, opinions, and ideas... We expect to set aside a portion of the funding to pay different organizations to host focus groups and/or to facilitate other planning steps. Ideas generated through these steps will feed back to the plan development process.
 - *Review projects proposed earlier and refine projects*: We expect to revisit ideas proposed in the initial review of ARPA this past spring, including funding for housing initiatives and for Neighborhood Associations to create engaging events in their area.

- How other communities use ARPA funding: Here are two examples of how other communities are using ARPA funding (from this article: [7 Bold Ideas for How to Use ARPA Funds - Civilytics](#))

- *Land Bank or Land Trust*: "Land banks and trusts convert private or underdeveloped land to uses that benefit the community and help ensure housing affordability especially in cases where residents might otherwise be priced out of the neighborhood. Land banks and trusts acquire vacant, abandoned, or tax-delinquent property, or receive grants of land purchased by the government or nonprofits. This land is then resold or held in 'trust' for specific community-oriented purposes. For instance, the land trust model often involves the trust owning land and 'leasing the ground' to individuals who can then own the

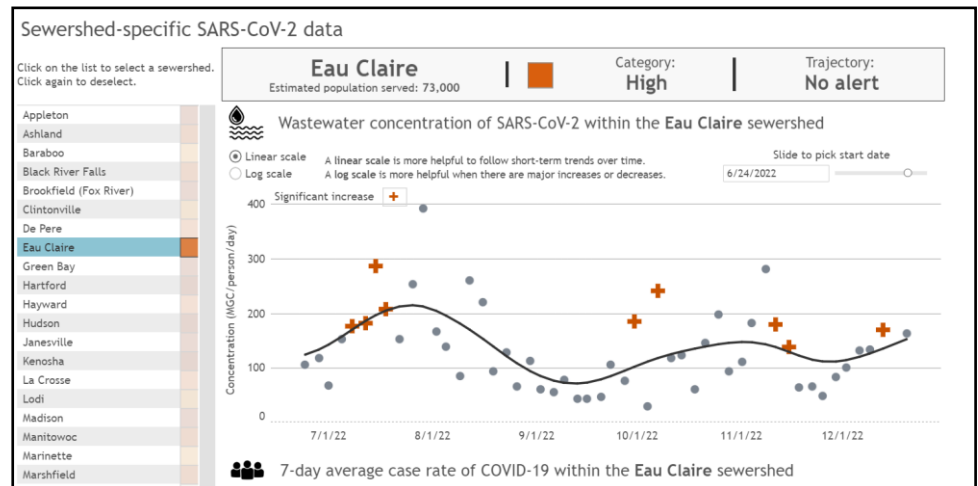


houses/apartments on that ground for below-market rates and with restrictions on reselling to maintain affordability over time.”

- *Education Stipends:* “Recently, we have seen lots of research and media attention on people leaving their jobs for various reasons (higher wages, follow new career, etc.) Research and advocates who worked with low-income, first generation students recognized that in addition to tuition, there are other cost (transportation, food, housing, childcare, etc.,) that hinder low-income, first generation’s completion. Santa Fe recently announced a [pilot program](#) to provide \$400 monthly stipends to community college students with children. Why not use ARPA funds to provide stipends to returning community college students – investing in their future and the longer-term future of the community?”

Summary of COVID-19 Trends: Here’s a quick COVID-19 update from the Health Department. Case numbers based on results from lab-based tests show no statistically significant trend in either direction. That said, this trend may undercount cases. With decreased testing practices/availability, we may not see the significant spikes in lab-reported cases we have observed in the past when lab testing was more widespread. Home tests are NOT counted in case numbers. Also, the holidays may be impacting testing practices.

Using another metric of COVID-19 trends, Eau Claire County [wastewater data](#) continue to show a significant increase in concentration of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater. Eau Claire remains at high disease activity level. State wastewater data continue to show a significant gap between disease activity being detected in wastewater vs cases being reported. State trends are also still showing a significant increase. Circumstances of colder weather and holiday gatherings have the potential for increased spread of COVID-19 in the coming weeks.



Going Above and Beyond: In the City Manager’s Office, we get constituent contacts, both from people sharing praise and concerns. This past week, we got a call from a constituent who was very troubled by the snow removal practices on their street. The conditions of this constituent’s street are unique and make snow removal more difficult than on other blocks. Street Supervisor Tim Anderson and the Streets crew went above and beyond making sure that the concerns of the constituent were addressed. Though it’s impossible to provide every household with this level of service, sometimes

when an issue presents a significant burden for a resident, it can be the right thing to do to go above and beyond to address the concern. Our crews take their jobs seriously and take pride in their work. I'm grateful for the high quality of service they provide to everyone in the City as well as for the times when it makes sense and is possible to go above and beyond for particular residents who may be in need.

Healthy Holiday Recipe Cookbook: The City's Wellness Committee collected healthy holiday recipes from staff in the weeks leading up to the holidays, and they made them into a cookbook for City employees to share. [Take a look and try a recipe here.](#)

Council Calendar (With Tentative Work Session Dates)

- Monday, January 9th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
 - CIP Streets Projects Work Session
- January 10 Council Meeting
 - Manager Updates: Brief overview of current configuration of Boards, Commissions, and Committees
 - Fiscal Stability Work Session #1:
 - Values Clarification Exercise
 - Overview of Fiscal Stability ideas
- Monday, January 23rd: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, January 24 Council Meeting
 - Fiscal Stability Work Session #2: Presentation of projected structural deficit, review of unfunded service mods, and guiding principles for process, overview of borrowing capacity
- Monday, February 13th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, February 14th: Council Meeting
 - Fiscal Stability Work Session #3
 - Review of ideas
 - Presentation of proposed community engagement process
 - Boards, Committees, and Commissions Work Session

Additional Dates:

- Thursday, January 5th: Police Officer Swearing-In Ceremony
- Monday, January 16th: City MLK Day Training – Council Members are invited to join in on lunch
- Wednesday, January 25th: Eau What a Night
- Wednesday, February 22nd: 29th Annual Chippewa Valley Rally

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 Chris Nyhus out of Station #10!**

- **Hire date:** "I was hired on July 20th of 2015."
- **Hometown:** "I was born and raised in the Chippewa Falls area."
- **Training:** "I received my Fire and EMS training through CVTC in Eau Claire. I spent the first nine years working for the Chippewa Fire District before being hired on with the great City of Eau Claire."
- **Best Parts of Job:** "The best part of the job is 10C, which is my station and crew assignment. Having a crew that you can count on, respect, trust and work through any and all situations with is priceless. When you work 1/3 of your life with these individuals and still enjoy seeing them outside of work makes us more than just a team, we're a family!"
- **Favorite Activities Off Duty:** "I dabble in hunting on occasion, I enjoy most things outdoors, traveling, short to medium walks on any beach, adventures with my family, trying my best to embarrass my son and annoy my wife as much as safe and prudent."

