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**From the Manager**

**Challenging Weather:** Like many of you, we have received questions and concerns about the conditions of the roads that have arisen due to an unusual weather pattern. Pictured here are the ruts that formed.

Streets Division Manager Aaron Nicholson shared this update:

“As most know, this winter has not dealt us a great hand. Every year, we anticipate snow pack on the roads. This year, mother nature had other plans. After there was a bit of snow pack on the roads, it rained, and then rained some more. Due to the amount of rain, the snowpack literally could not absorb any more moisture. This caused pooling of water on the roads and eventually freezing of hard ice pack. Due to the weather, we decided to do a full residential plow even though we did not hit the three-inch threshold. This definitely helped our situation, but it did not fix it. A few days later after the rain and very heavy snow, everything froze and left roads in less than desirable conditions. We sanded the entire city on Friday to leave the roads in the best condition we could for the weekend.



Looking into this week, temperatures for today through Wednesday are supposed to be in the mid-30's with overnight lows in the mid-20's. I am also hoping that mother nature grants us some hours of sunlight. If we can get this favorable weather, we are looking to do another full residential plow during the day on Wednesday to attempt to get some of the snow and ice pack off of the roadways. If the weather doesn't work in our favor, we will not plow as the plows on the trucks simply won't cut into the ice pack. Ice route conditions on all routes are down to dry pavement. Secondary routes are in

much more favorable conditions than the typical residential streets, but they still need work. We have had our grader out every day last week and will continue that again today to scrape off the ice and snow pack and also to try to address life safety issues in other areas. Today we also have five sand trucks out sanding secondary routes as well as the critical sand list, which is typically hills, churches, schools, and some of the areas surrounding those locations.

After Wednesday, the weather takes another turn below freezing. We will continue to monitor road conditions and sand where necessary. Again, we will keep the grader out working to try and scrape off what it is able, but with the hard ice, it still struggles.

Lastly, next week does not have a real hopeful look to it with more freezing rain, rain, and snow forecast for Monday along with snow chances Monday night through Wednesday.

I would like to thank everybody for their patience throughout this winter. This really is one for the books. We have had so much rain and long-duration snow events that they have been very difficult to deal with. I assure you that we are attempting to get creative in our approach to fix what mother nature has given us, but our options are somewhat limited. As always, feel free to reach out, as I love chatting with people about our operations and the work the group does.”

If you'd like to better understand the tools and approaches of the Streets division (such as: What's the three-inch threshold? What's a grader? Or What are secondary routes?) contact Aaron at [Aaron Nicholson, Aaron.Nicholson@EauClaireWi.Gov](mailto:Aaron.Nicholson@EauClaireWi.Gov), 715-839-4963

**Martin Luther King Remembrance Event:** On Monday, January 16th, Pablo Center in partnership with Uniting Bridges, UW-Eau Claire Department of History, and Converge Radio presents a day of celebration, guest speakers, live music, and community to commemorate the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. This is a hybrid event featuring guest speakers including BJ Hollars and Selika Ducksworth-Lawton, music performances from Frank Watkins and Irie Sol, as well as community organization tables. More information is here: [Pablo Center for the Confluence | Event | Martin Luther King Remembrance](#)

**Shawtown Neighborhood Plan:** The Shawtown Neighborhood will wrap up their neighborhood survey on January 16th. These results, along with other public input gathered from in-person meetings, will help form the issues and recommendations in the plan. Planning staff will meet with the neighborhood steering committee again on January 26th to obtain more direction. A draft should be ready in April with neighborhood and City approvals wrapping up in May through June.



**Participatory Budgeting Project Implementation:** To date, several of the five voter-approved projects have been purchased and are in use. This includes the SEPPI Mulcher that the Community Services Department is using to grub out invasive species and other overgrowth. The Boyd Park ADA Orbital and Pour-in-play surface was completed before snowfall and has been enjoyed by park users. Feed My People has purchased most emergency hunger relief equipment items approved such as racking, a weigh scale, and a pallet wrapper. New LED lighting in Phoenix Park will be a 2023 project, and solar is being installed at Sojourners House. This rooftop project should wrap up soon.

**Board of Health Officers:** The Board of Health elected new officers in December. Dr. Don Bodeau has been elected as President and Mark Kaeding was elected as Vice President.

**No Mow May:** First reading for Now Mow May will appear on this week’s agenda. There will be a public discussion on the proposed ordinance change on Monday, January 23rd, followed by a second reading and vote the next day.

**Pollinator Planting:** Complementing the goals of No Mow May, a proposed pollinator planting project is gaining momentum.

JD Armstrong from Xcel shared this summary of the plans of Xcel and the City to create a pollinator garden on Forest Street:

“The plan is to convert the .6 acre Xcel Energy-owned field on Madison Street from sod grass to a diverse mix of perennial pollinator-beneficial flowers and grasses. This will provide an increase in aesthetic values and diversity to the area. It will also provide habitat and nectar source for pollinator insects including the federally endangered rusty-patched bumble bee, of which this site is within the habitat range.

We intend to create a wood-chipped walking trail looping through the site for ease of public viewing and future maintenance, with some signage highlighting the collaborative partnership project as well as specific plants and project benefits, as later determined to be desired....

In general, we plan to get this site planted come spring 2023. Exact timing is still flexible, but we are targeting a firm date range of April 15th-June 1st to get the seeding completed. The planned walking trail and specific plant species install can come at a later date. Glad to say we have a plan on how to move forward, and I will highlight that plan below in terms of dates and action items:



### Xcel Energy:

- Order seed to plan the .6 acre site, have seed available and resources to plant available once the site has been prepped. (winter/early spring of 2023)
- Clear permitting concerns, specifically stipulations of State Shoreland Zoning.
- Provide funding for signage for walking trail (may come at a later date).
- Provide technical guidance on site prep, planting, and site maintenance including weed mitigation measures.
- Committed to acquiring and planting up to 250 live plants at locations along the created walking trail and along the paved road surface in the future (likely fall of 2023 or at a later date).

### City of Eau Claire:

- Prep site by mechanical removal and disposal of existing sod (April-May of 2023.)
- Create and wood chip a walking trail that loops through the site from the paved surface (likely 2024 or later).
- Mow site at a height of 6-12" 2023-2024 to control undesirable weeds, if needed.
- Work with the public and gardening folks and appropriate committees to provide info educating them on the pollinator planting, highlighting benefits and mitigation measures in place (mowing if need be, with no or spot-application of herbicide) to avoid problematic weed species and seed dispersal (winter/spring of 2023)."

**Update on the Plus and Metro:** As you may recall, in May 2022 Council voted to renew the alcohol licenses for The Plus and The Metro. Prior to the renewals, the owners of the businesses had signed a contract specifying the terms of reopening and signing surrender of license forms to be used if reopening was not achieved. The Plus was able to reopen in September and is again part of our vibrant downtown. Per the contract, The Metro was required to obtain an occupancy permit and hold an event by today, January 3rd. Unfortunately, The Metro has been unable to do so, and that license will return to the City. Through their attorney, The Metro owners/operators have been encouraged to apply for any of the City's available licenses when fully ready to reopen, which may include a Reserve license, beer, wine, or regular license, if one is available at that time.

### 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 and 2023 goals
- Monday, January 23rd: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
  - Public Discussion on No Mow May
- Tuesday, January 24 Council Meeting
  - Fiscal Stability Work Session #2:
    - Refinement of Community Values
    - Continued presentation of 2023 goals.
- Monday, February 13th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, February 14th: Council Meeting
  - Fiscal Stability Work Session #3
    - Presentation of proposed community engagement process
  - Boards, Committees, and Commissions Work Session

**Additional Dates:**

- Monday, January 16th: City MLK Day Training – Council Members are invited to join in on lunch
- Monday, January 16th: MLK Day Celebration at Pablo ([Pablo Center for the Confluence | Event | Martin Luther King Remembrance](#))
- Friday, January 20th: Eggs and Issues – State of the County
- Wednesday, January 25th: Eau What a Night
- Friday, February 17th: Eggs and Issues – State of the City
- Wednesday, February 22nd: 29th Annual Chippewa Valley Rally

**Employee Spotlight:**

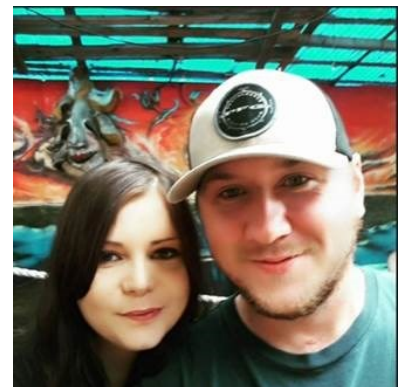
Here’s our next spotlight. (Give a shout-out to a City employee using this form: [Spotlight Form](#)).

Today we highlight **Lindsay Jerry!**

A coworker said this about Lindsay: “She is new to the job, but so passionate about her work. She goes above and beyond every day and is a genuine light in the office.”

More about Lindsay:

- **Position:** “Administrative Associate II for Parks, Forestry, Cemeteries, and Buildings & Grounds since June of this year. Previously, I was an Administrative Specialist II at Eau Claire



County Human Services.”

- **What people may not know:** “The writings of Sir Phillip Pullman live rent free in my mind. I’m waiting for Volume III of The Book of Dust like my life depends on it.”
- **Favorite activities:** “I love camping. Some of my favorite places to camp are Black Lake in the Chequamegon Forest, Copper Falls, and Madeline Island. The photo is of Rodney and me at one of our favorite hangouts, Tom’s Burned Down Café on Madeline Island.”
- **Best part about working for the City:** “I’m working with some pretty extraordinary people who put a lot of effort into maintaining a beautiful, walkable city with spaces to spend time outdoors. I love living in a tree city, and it’s absolutely an honor to contribute. “
- **Life philosophy:** “It’s helpful to think of existence as a spiral, and keep growing. When you return to a place you’ve been before, try to see it with new insight and a broader worldview.”