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**From the Manager**

**Tree Removal on South Hastings Way:** Beginning the week of January 23rd, City of Eau Claire Forestry crews will be removing trees along South Hastings Way Frontage Road, from Pine Lodge Road to 3,000 feet south. This work is necessary to facilitate the proposed reconstruction scheduled to take place during the summer of 2023. Trees need to be removed during winter months, due to the endangered, northern lone-eared bat population that may utilize trees during the warmer months. This work may require temporary lane closures and is anticipated to take approximately one week to complete.

**Street Care:** A full residential plow operation occurred on this past Thursday, starting at 8AM and wrapping up by 8PM. After 8PM, some of those crews then went and rechecked ice routes and salted any slippery spots. Going into Friday, Streets had 14 members of the team come in at 3AM to work on clean up plowing and to begin sanding. By the end of Friday, all of the city's residential streets were sanded. The other half of the crew worked on City-owned sidewalks. In between snow events, the crew is inspecting all the trucks, getting maintenance items to fleet, and making brine. The last few weeks, we have had all six pieces of our heavy equipment out trying to scrape ice pack off the roads. Conditions appear to be improving. Streets Manager Aaron Nicholson reported that: "Overall, things went very well on Thursday. We only had two or three complaints and a handful of thank-yous. Much more successful than weeks prior with all the ice and rain."

Tess Morgan, our Communications Coordinator, was happy to be able to pass along several shout-outs from the community, including this note from a constituent:

"Kudos to your crew. I was walking to work yesterday morning at about 7:30AM, and a pick-up truck with a plow was already clearing the bike path along Galloway Street. That was appreciated."

**Downtown Parking:** DECI, the Downtown Business Improvement Districts, and the City held an information and feedback gathering session last week about planned upcoming changes to parking

downtown. View this summary to read a good summary of the proposed changes to downtown parking, including the License Plate Recognition software that's getting rolled out and the possible shift to paid downtown parking: [View Summary](#)

**MCH Health Equity Grant:** Earlier this month, a group of area partners began collaborating on an 18-month competitive grant proposal focused on maternal and child health equity. Project funding amounting to \$465,000 was awarded by WI Dept of Health Services to the team, including the City of Eau Claire, City-County Health Department, Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Chippewa Valley, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley, Eau Claire County Department of Health Services, and the Eau Claire Area School District, with the Health Department as the fiscal agent. The grant period is January 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. The focus of this work is to:

- Develop an understanding of local data related to child health equity outcomes and assess data gaps;
- Develop a process to evaluate the status of MCH health equity in our community in an ongoing way;
- Develop a more thorough understanding of lived experiences of children and families experiencing health disparities;
- Choose at least one pilot system improvement based on review of data;
- Research evidence-based strategies that positively impact child health equity outcomes, particularly related to prioritized improvement needed; and
- Develop a plan for ongoing data-informed MCH equity systems change in Eau Claire.

The funding in this grant is supporting the partners to do this work, with additional funding being set aside to support individual and organizational engagement, as well as technical expertise. It is anticipated that additional partners will be brought on after some of the initial data-collection efforts.

**You Ask, We Answer:** Deputy City Attorney Doug Hoffer has been featured twice recently in WQOW's recurring "You Ask, We Answer" segments. Thanks for tackling the questions, Doug!

[You Ask, We Answer: Is the city of Eau Claire liable for vehicles damaged by its roads? | You Ask, We Answer | wqow.com](#)

[You Ask, We Answer: Are hotels allowed to turn away locals? | You Ask, We Answer | wqow.com](#)



**Transfer Center Updates:** Work continues on the Transfer Center construction. Delivery delays for steel are having some impact on the timeline. About half of the material has arrived, and more is expected by the end of January. After the material arrives, the exterior façade and ground level walls will be assembled, allowing crews to enclose these areas, heat them, and conduct the interior finish work while the temperatures are still cold. All concrete work on the bus lanes and pedestrian islands are on hold until spring. The Transfer Center itself is still expected to be complete in June of 2023, however, the full use of the Transfer Center continues to be dependent on the timeline for residential construction. We will pass along any updates we have on that project as we have them.



**Annual Meeting of West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition:** Council Members are invited to attend this meeting, which will be held on Thursday, January 26, 8:30-11:30AM, at CVTC Business Education Center on Clairemont and also virtually. Here are the two ways to register:

[Click here to register for in-person attendance](#) or [Click here to register for Zoom remote attendance](#)

Rom Scott Rogers: “Our long-time efforts to secure passenger rail service for West Central Wisconsin are coming closer than ever to reality. With the implementation of the Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has announced its program to designate corridors to become eligible for federal planning and development funding. Two serious proposals are moving forward that would bring passenger trains to our communities, including:

1. The development of a regional intercity corridor between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities through Menomonie, Baldwin, and Hudson/River Falls, and
2. Plans for through Amtrak service from Chicago and Milwaukee to the Twin Cities that would be routed via Eau Claire, Menomonie, and Hudson.

At the meeting, we'll share details on the process underway to get these routes designated as corridors by the FRA, including the work of the Chippewa-St. Croix Rail Commission, representing Dunn, Eau Claire, and St. Croix Counties and the municipalities of Altoona, Baldwin, Eau Claire, Hudson, Menomonie, and New Richmond.”

**Parks:** The Parks Department reports the following two updates...

- Trail Grant: The City received a reimbursement check for the Department of Natural Resources Trails Improvement Grant of \$45,000. The grant payment was for trail work along the Chippewa River Trail
- Outdoor Rinks: With the warm weather and recent snow fall, staff continue to work on grooming the ski trails and flooding the outdoor skating rinks. The rinks and trail were available throughout the weekend for use.



**Recreation:** The Recreation Department shared these updates...

- Winter Safety Fest: Held on January 19th at Pinehurst Park, this event focused on winter safety was hosted with the Eau Claire Fire Department and attracted over 75 attendees, despite the weather.
- Outdoor Rink Attendance: Though crews have had a challenging winter for outdoor rink maintenance, the community is still showing up to use them. Over 1,100 people visited the four staffed rinks in a one-week period from January 6th through January 12th. The same time period in 2022 saw 700 visitors.
- Activities: Year-round, the Recreation Department provides activities for people of all ages, from the Snowboarding Instruction Class (pictured here posing with their boards) to the adult Open Gym (pictured here).



### **Council Calendar** (With Tentative Work Session Dates)

- Monday, January 23rd: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
  - Public Discussion on No Mow May
- Tuesday, January 24 Council Meeting
  - Brief Study Session on Zoning Code and Housing Needs Assessment projects
- Monday, February 13th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, February 14th: Council Meeting
  - Fiscal Stability Work Session #2:
    - Refinement of Community Values

- Continued presentation of 2023 goals.
      - Boards, Committees, and Commissions Work Session
  - Monday, February 27th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
  - Tuesday, February 28th: Council Meeting
  - Monday, March 13th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
  - Tuesday, March 14th: Council Meeting
    - Closed session: Manager Annual Evaluation
  - Monday, March 27: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
  - Tuesday, March 28th: Council Meeting
  - Monday, April 10th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
  - Tuesday, April 11th: Council Meeting
    - Last meeting for President Weld

**Additional Dates:**

- Wednesday, January 25th: Eau What a Night
- Thursday, January 26th: Annual Meeting of West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition
- 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 **John Thompson!**

A coworker said this about John: “John is a great and humble guy. He always tries his hardest and keeps a positive attitude. He is polite and treats all of his co-workers with respect. He takes pride in his work and enjoys serving the people of Eau Claire. He has even been volunteering to help with elections.”

- Your Position: “Community Service Worker - Streets Department. I have been working here for just over a year.”
- What people may not know: “I was born in Eau Claire, but I currently live in Cadott.”



- Favorite activities: “I enjoy Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.”
- Best part about working for the City: “I enjoy the variety of work and the ability to serve my community.”
- Life philosophy: “According to the Stoics, a eudaimonic life (a life of human flourishing) can be achieved through the daily cultivation of the Four Virtues: Wisdom, Courage, Justice, and Temperance.”

**A Few More Pictures:** Here are a few more shots from City staff’s participation in Recreation’s Survivor challenge at MLK Day Training 2023

