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**From the Manager**

**Farewell for Scott Allen and Interim Community Development**

**Director:** We are sad to say farewell but excited for what's ahead as Scott heads across the river to the Regional Planning Commission! Please come by the Community Development Office around noon or most any time on Friday, 5/12, to say farewell to Scott. Also, please thank Aaron White for stepping up to serve as Interim Community Development Director. Aaron has been the City Economic Development Manager/RDA Executive Director/DECI Executive Director since December of 2018, and it's not an exaggeration to say he's responsible for much of our City's record-setting growth. Aaron has done many things in his life, having been a farmer, a Marine, a salesman for Cargill, and more – and he knows pretty much everything about any topic, and makes his work look easy. One can regularly find Aaron around City Hall with a cup of extra-robust coffee in his hand nearly any time of the day!



**Parks Updates:** Here's some news from our Parks Division...

- **Brush Site Updates:** The Jeffers Road Green Waste Facility operations are going well, with over \$37,000 in revenues since opening on April 15th. This is the first year of compost sales, and the feedback has been really positive so far.
- **Halfmoon Boardwalk:** The Halfmoon Boardwalk trail construction is underway, with the concrete section expected to be completed within the next four weeks.

**Recreation Updates:** And some news from Recreation...

- Summer Programming: Summer Registration opened on Tuesday, May 2nd. Nearly 4,000 activity registrations were processed on the first day alone, bringing in over \$100,000 in revenue.
- Pool Upgrades: The Fairfax Pool concession stand remodel is inching closer to completion. Punchlist items are being completed, and grass seeding should take place within the next week.
- Shout-out to Patrick: Interim Recreation Patrick Newkirk was named president of the Wisconsin Ice Arena Management Association at their May meeting. Congratulations Patrick!

**Streets and Fleet Updates and Special Guests:** Emily Berge, Travis Davis, and I got to learn first-hand about filling potholes last week. The roads are really rough, so patching is a bit like stitching together a sweater with many holes. However, the crew worked diligently and quickly, and they will be covering the entire city. Pictured here on the pothole filling crew is: Justin Meinen, Jeff Wilczek, Carter Hesselman, Cole Steinhorst, Rich Bauer, Travis Davis, and Emily Berge. And pictured here running the seal coater is Zach Merritt.



Here are some additional updates...

- Street Sweeping: Two full rounds of street sweeping have been finished and the third round is in progress. Night shift operations for sweeping are complete.
- Spring Activities: Streets crews are working on various spring activities such as liter pickup, curb-combination, and island cleaning, sculpture tour setup, and summer truck prep.
- Road Repair: Streets crews have also been out filling potholes and spray patching areas that were damaged due to the constant fluctuation in temperatures and moisture throughout the winter. We are making progress but have a way to go.
- Fleet: The Fleet crew is working on preventative maintenance services and employee write-ups. Due to supply chain issues, we are still unable to order the three squad cars and seven pickup trucks that are due for replacement this year, but hopefully soon.

**Utilities Updates:** And last but not least, here are some updates from the Utilities Division...

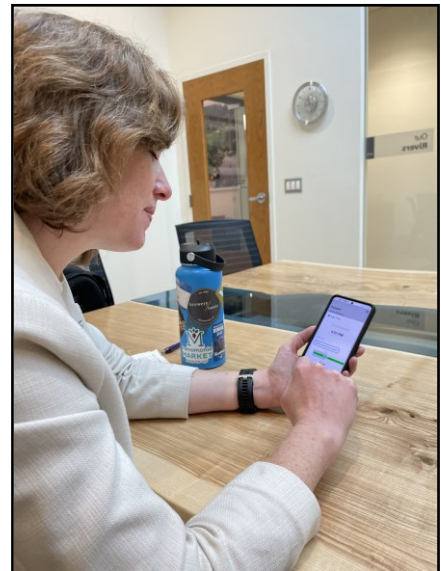
- Water Treatment Plant: The Water Treatment Plant is operating smoothly. Well 21 has been rehabilitated and is back online. After the rehab, pumping increased from 500-gpm (gallons per minute) to almost 2,000-gpm, which is important as warmer weather approaches and water pumping increases. Additional wells will go through rehabilitation this fall. Another set of samples from the PFAS pilot tests were taken, and we hope to have another set of results next week.
- Wastewater Plant: The Waste Water Treatment Plant continues to operate smoothly. The WWTP treatment remained strong through the increased flow caused by the river flooding. Crews are slowly re-starting to haul bio-solids and spreading on farm fields as the weather permits. Rehabilitation of the Mall Drive and Marston lift stations are expected to start in June.
- Distribution/Customer Service: Crews continue with hydrant flushing. Big meter testing is underway. With the hiring of two Sewer Collection employees, the Utilities Division is currently fully staffed. Utility Billing employees have been spending time with Customer Service employees learning about water meter testing and installation to get a better understanding of what happens out in the field.

**Parking Planning Underway:** Our staff continue to work hard at rolling out the new License Plate Reader parking technology. They have also been meeting with the downtown-area BIDs to talk about paid on-street parking. We are working to figure out questions like:

- What days and hours will we use for paid parking?
- Should any streets be exempted?
- What should be the final fee structure?

We will prepare recommendations to make to the Council, if possible, for a first reading on May 22nd, with action item on June 12-13th.

Pictured here is Emily Berge adding time to her parking app as her meeting ran over!



**Health and Library Healthy Beginnings Event:** On March 20th, The Eau Claire City-County Health Department partnered with the Library to hold an event called: “Bite into the Good Stuff when Snacking”. Participation was limited to 15 and it was full with a waiting list. Parents were encouraged to bring their children grades 2-5 and learn about healthy snacking. They did not only learn about healthy snacking, but they also prepared and ate a variety of healthy snacks including homemade whole wheat tortilla chips and dip, carrot fries, and fruit pizza. March is National Nutrition Month and this fit right into this year’s theme “Fuel for the Future”. Dieticians Ruth Kilness and Beth Draeger provided the class in the Innovation Lab at the Library.

**Environmental Health Hazard:** Environmental Health staff from R&L and Environmental Sciences worked together with Curtis Hedman, Ph.D. Research Scientist-Toxicologist with the Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health (BEOH) Division of Public Health, to respond to a potential health hazard and test for mercury contamination from a broken compact fluorescent light bulb. Elevated mercury levels were found at the time of the investigation. Education was provided to the resident for proper methods of cleaning and disposal. Trained staff have access to specialized equipment such as the unit used for this project to identify and assess human health hazards through the state environmental assessment loan program. Pictured here are Tristin Faust and Curtiss Hedman packaging up a lamp and light bulb.



**Garbage and Refuse Update:** In March, we started planning our annual Pack It Up, Pass It On event in collaboration with UW-Eau Claire's Student Senate, Office of Sustainability, and community partners. This event allows students to drop off unused furniture, non-perishable food items, cleaning supplies, and other items they don't want to move to be repurposed by volunteer organizations or other students. It also helps corral items to a single place instead of being strewn about in neighborhoods when students move out. This year's event will take place May 18-19 in the Water Street parking lot.

We will continue to work with neighborhood associations, UWEC, and others to get the word out on the City Refuse requirements. A reminder that we have a resource you can share with your constituents when they have questions or if you are connecting at a neighborhood meeting. [Refuse Program Printable Pamphlet - City of Eau Claire, WI \(eauclairewi.gov\)](#). While some of the complaints received by staff and Council are related to individual behavior, it is often because people do not realize the requirements. We find if we share this information and remind them, many situations resolve which is always our goal.

**United Way Spirit Awards:** Each year the United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley acknowledges community members and businesses that go above and beyond in exemplifying the mission of United Way. This year, our very own Becky Knutson, Nurse-Family Partnership Supervisor, is the recipient of the United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley's Community Impact Education Award! Becky received her award on Thursday, March 30 at the Chippewa Valley Spirit Awards Ceremony, held at the Florian Gardens. [2023 Chippewa Valley Spirit Awards: Community Impact Education Award - YouTube](#)



**Referendum Hiring Updates:** We have received questions about how we are doing with filling the referendum-funded positions. Below is an update from the Police and Fire Departments.

## Police:

The Public Safety Referendum authorized the Police Department to hire the additional positions:

- Five Police Officers
- One Police Sergeant
- Two full-time Community Service Officers (CSO)
- One full-time Law Enforcement Associate (LEA) to be assigned to the Communications Center

Since the Referendum's passage the Police Department has hired the following:

- Four Police Officers
- Promoted the referendum Sergeant
- LEA assigned to the Communications Center

Additionally, the recruitment process for the referendum's two CSO's is nearly complete with offers of employment expected by the end of April. Also, the first full Police Officer recruitment process since the referendum will be completed soon with additional offers of employment for Police Officers expected by the end of April.

Since the referendum's passage, Police Officers have left the Department through natural attrition, such as retirement and pursuing private sector employment. It is very common for Police Officers to retire at the end of a calendar year. The end of 2022, following the passing of the referendum, was no different. A 2022 end-of-year recruitment process was conducted. We just did not come up with that many qualified candidates to hire to keep up with that natural attrition.

In total, we currently have 94 Police Officers employed, with a total authorized sworn staff allotted at 105 Police Officers. These numbers are fluid and will be changing significantly in the coming weeks with the expected hiring of additional Police Officers.

Per Wisconsin State Statute, Police Officer hiring is overseen by our Police and Fire Commission (PFC). Through the dedicated service of our volunteer PFC Commissioners, we have recently expanded from two Police Officer recruitment processes to three recruitment processes annually. We are nearing completion of 2023's first process and have already begun 2023's second recruitment process. The third process in 2023 will begin later this summer.

The PFC's guidelines outline the steps required for Police Officer hiring to ensure we select quality candidates as Police Officers. It takes about six months for one process to be completed. PFC guidelines outline the following steps for each process:

- Written test
- Physical agility test
- PFC interview
- Department staff interview
- Extensive background investigation (takes 4-6 weeks)
- Polygraph examination

- Psychological testing
- Physical examination
- Chemical screening (drug testing)

In summary, our hiring efforts are ongoing and extensive. We are undertaking these efforts in a very difficult Police Officer hiring climate. A recent nationwide survey conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum found police agencies are losing officers faster than they can hire new ones. While Police Officer hiring has increased nation-wide, there has been a 50 percent increase in resignations between 2019 and 2022. During that same time frame, there has been a 20 percent increase in retirements. Balanced against hiring, overall, this has resulted in a five percent reduction in Police Officer staffing amongst survey respondents. Thankfully, we are doing better than these survey results.

Fire: Currently, the fire department hiring status is as follows in sequential order:

Reason for Opening	Date Available	Status
Retirement	Dec. 2022	Position filled
Retirement	Jan. 2023	Position filled
Referendum	Jan. 2023	Position filled
Referendum	Jan. 2023	Position filled
Referendum	Jan. 2023	Position filled - starts June 2023
Referendum	Jan. 2023	Position filled - starts June 2023
Referendum	Jan. 2023	Position filled - starts June 2023
Referendum	Jan. 2023	Position filled - starts June 2023
Separation	Spring 2023	Vacant
Separation	Spring 2023	Vacant
Retirement	Spring 2023	Vacant
Retirement	Spring 2023	Vacant

We are conducting chief officer interviews on May 9th for additional candidates, and we hope to make at least two more offers with a June 2023 start.

The new fire chief process will be conducted on May 10th. Depending on the candidate chosen, this may fill another vacant position.

Our intent is to begin a recruit academy with the new hires on June 5th and have the new firefighters on line by the end of June. We typically have a four-week training academy for our new personnel.

**Home for Everyone Conference:** Registration will open soon for Wisconsin's premier affordable housing event. And Council members may wish to consider attending. Our own Billie Hufford will be presenting! The conference is: A Home for Everyone Conference, July 19th & 20th, 2023, in Oshkosh. Please let me know if you'd be interested in attending. See [- A Home For Everyone A Home For Everyone](#).

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

- Monday, May 8th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
  - ARPA Phase II, Allocation II Public Discussion
  - Fireworks Public Discussion
- Tuesday, May 9th: Council Meeting
  - Possible Action on ARPA Phase II
  - Fireworks Agenda Item
  - 2024-2028 CIP Budget Work Session #1
- ❖ *Thursday, May 18th: Transit Commission reviews and recommends Transit's CIP*
- Monday, May 22nd: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, May 23rd: Council Meeting
- ❖ *May 25th - Waterways & Parks Commission reviews and recommends Parks CIP*
- ❖ *June 6th: Plan Commission reviews and recommends CIP*
- ❖ *To be added - Special meeting for 2024-2028 CIP Budget Work Session #2*
- Monday, June 12th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
  - Public Discussion of 2024-2028 CIP Budget
- Tuesday, June 13th: Council Meeting
  - Council action on 2024-2028 CIP Budget
- Monday, June 19th: Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting for Zoning Overhaul Kickoff (4-5:30PM)
- Monday, June 26th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, June 27th: Council Meeting
  - 2024 Operating Budget Work Session 1: Priorities and Parameters
- Monday, July 10th: Regular Council public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, July 11th: Council Meeting
- Monday, July 24th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, July 25th: Council Meeting
- Monday, August 14th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, August 15th: Council Meeting
- Monday, August 28th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, August 29th: Council Meeting
- Tuesday, September 5th: Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting for Zoning Overhaul Discussion
- Monday, September 11th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, September 12th: Council Meeting
- Monday, September 25th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, September 26th: Council Meeting
- ❖ *September 29th – City Council receives 2024 Proposed Operating Budget*
- Monday, October 9th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
  - Public Hearing #1 on 2024 Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, October 10th: Council Meeting
  - City Council Operating Budget Work Session #2 (Department Directors)
- Monday, October 23rd: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night

- Tuesday, October 24th: Council Meeting
  - City Council Operating Budget Work Session #3 – Amendment Discussion
- ❖ *November 3rd – City Council Budget Amendments Due*
- Monday, November 6th: Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting for Zoning Overhaul
- Monday, November 13th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
  - Public Hearing #2 on 2024 Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, November 14th: Council Meeting
  - City Council action on 2024 Proposed Operating Budget and levy
- Monday, December 18th: Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting for Zoning Overhaul Discussion
- June 19<sup>th</sup>, Monday 4 pm to 5:20 pm, Library Riverview Rm (306)
- September 5<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 4 pm to 6 pm, Library Riverview Room (306)
- November 6<sup>th</sup>, Monday, 4 pm to 6 pm, Library Riverview Room (306)
- December 18<sup>th</sup>, Monday, 4 pm to 6 pm, Banbury Place, Eau Claire Room (3<sup>rd</sup> flr.)

**Additional Dates:**

- Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup>: Juneteenth Celebration (5:30PM)
- Friday, July 28th: LWM Local Government 101

**Employee Spotlight:**

Here’s our next spotlight, and it’s perfect for watermelon season!! (Give a shout-out to a City employee [using this form](#):).

Today, we highlight **Corey Lee!**

A co-worker said this about “Corey has transitioned into a new role as a budget analyst. He is positive in all interactions with City staff and truly goes above and beyond to assist with all tasks and learn new things.”

Here’s some more information about Chris ...

- Your position: “Currently a Budget Analyst as of November 2022, but started in Financial Operations in 2019 as a Fiscal Associate I.”
- What people may not know: “I’m a produce expert! Worked in the Produce department at Festival Foods from 2012 to 2021.” (See below for produce tips...)
- Favorite activities: “Avid mountain biker (only have crashed a handful of times), and I also love to bass fish.”
- Best part about working for City: “It’s the people at the organization that makes it worth it, so if it wasn’t for you, I wouldn’t be here!”





- Life philosophy: “Probably anyone one of Winston Churchill’s quotes, maybe a Vince Lombardi one or two.”
- Anything else? “Typically go camping 8 to 10 times a year! See you in a State Park! Not actually John Guettinger’s son.”
- Produce tips: “If you knock on your watermelon, there is for sure someone in the backroom laughing at you!” Actual watermelon tips from Corey are...
  - Pick a watermelon that is heavy for its size – this indicates that it has high water content and lowers the possibly of buying a watermelon with hollow rot.
  - Make sure the color is deep green with a yellow side – this lets you know how long it was in the field, most premature picked melons won’t have the yellow spot.
  - To ensure ripeness, if you can easily peel the skin with a nail, you should be good to go!
  - These steps don’t 100 percent provide the perfect melon, no refund will be given by Corey.

Circa 2013 “Watermelon expert falls into bin of watermelon; probably because guests were knocking on watermelons”

