

Memorandum

DATE: June 27, 2008
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Al Roder, City Administrator
RE: Friday Memo for the week of June 23 - 27, 2008

Here is a list of city activities for the week of June 23 - 27, 2008:

Administration

The Administration Department has received feedback through our customer service survey for the month of June. In all responses the customer service was rated excellent. Comments include:

*"The office staff in every office I've contacted has been very polite and helpful"
"Thanks for the good service"*

Thank you to the Admin Staff for outstanding customer service.

Finance

Budget Outlook - 2009: Staff attended an LGA (Local Government Aid) Forum this week. Rob Tautges, of HLB Tautges, Redpath, Ltd. - the City's audit firm, facilitated the discussion. State Representative Paul Marquart (DFL – Dilworth) and Gary Carlson, intergovernmental relations director, League of Minnesota Cities presented background information and participated in the discussion.

This year the legislature enacted temporary modifications to the system but also established a legislative study to develop recommendations for future reforms. There were about sixty people in attendance and included both elected and appointed officials from both metro and greater Minnesota cities.

More round table discussions are planned. Staff will advise Council of future meeting dates and encourages Council participation. The City's 2008 LGA allotment represents 27% of the General Fund's revenues.

Financial Software Implementation: The first week of system conversion and set-up occurred last week. The first modules to be implemented are the general ledger, accounts payable and payroll. A lot of staff time is being devoted to the set-up of the new system and this is very much the case with the payroll module. The new system is table-driven – meaning wage rates and deductions are set-up separate from individual employee files. Changes can then be made to the tables – rather than to each employee's file. This will greatly streamline global changes that are required at the start of each year. Special recognition is given to Mary Grant, accounting technician, for doing the majority of work in this area.

Another change is how changes are made. In the future, Human Resources will maintain the table with Finance verifying as payroll is processed. This builds in a much more effective system of checks and balances from what the current system / procedures offer.

We go "live" with these modules next month.

2009 Budget Development: Budget files are being distributed to departments. Updating the five-year capital improvement and capital equipment plans will be done at the same time. Given the amount of work done on the CIP over the last year, updating the plans will be much faster.

The budgets and projections for the debt service funds are being updated and staff hopes to provide Council with an update on the debt levy in several weeks.

Public Services

Planning

The Zoning Board of Appeals/Planning Commission met this week to review various approvals for the proposed Culver's restaurant at 960 Highway #3 South (existing locating of Southgate Cinema building). The City Council will review this proposal at their meeting on July 7th. Staff attended a stormwater meeting for the public to comment on the City's MS4 permit.

Community Development

Staff is working on the content of the annexation agreements between the City and the Township of Greenvale. Staff will begin to review the content of the agreements with legal counsel assisting the City in putting these agreements together.

The Community Development Director and the Public Services Director will be meeting with Township officials at the Township meeting of July 15 to outline issues that need to be included in the agreement between the City and the Township.

Economic Development

The Land Development Committee met with Frank Dunbar who is assisting the EDA in trying to secure purchase options of the property west of the Hospital that is being considered for annexation and is the location being considered for a 3rd business park.

The EDA Board met Thursday morning in closed session to discuss possible strategies of making an offer to obtain purchase options on the area being considered for a business park.

The EDA heard a report from our Intern who is assisting the EDA on a grant that is being sought to help pay the expense of identifying other land parcels that may be suitable for business and industrial development as infill and redevelopment sites. Updates were made to the available property database for potential commercial and industrial development.

Engineering

WATER STREET PARKING/FIFTH STREET ENHANCEMENTS AND RECONSTRUCTION

Heselton Construction continued with utility construction in the Fifth Street and Water Street Intersection. They finished with the water main and sanitary sewer and water main testing on Wednesday. Heselton also had their grading crew in to work on getting the Water Street parking area ready to be paved. They had their concrete subcontractor on-site Wednesday and Thursday to work on curb and gutter. Friday, Bituminous Materials was on-site to pave the Water Street parking area. After the paving operations were complete, Heselton opened the Water Street and Fifth Street intersection to traffic. The intersection will stay open until Monday July 7, 2008 when the remaining work including gas line relocation, storm sewer, crosswalks and pavement will be started. Work anticipated in the next week will be some retaining wall and the limestone steps along the river. Water Street and the intersection will be open for use during the July 4th weekend.

NPDES MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM (MS4) PERMIT

The annual meeting for the NPDES MS4 permit was held on Thursday, June 26, 2008. There were no attendees and no comments received outside of the meeting. The annual report will be submitted on June 30, 2008 to meet the permitting requirements.

Facilities

This week at the Arena has seen progress in the mechanical room as removal of existing wiring and hardware has been completed and painting has begun. Also in the arena area electrical and communications wiring was rerouted in preparation for future concrete placement.

Facility staff has wrapped up the exterior painting at the Safety Center with the railings, doors and bumper posts all sporting a new coat of paint. A conveyor belt at the Liquor Store was repaired, and at the NCRC Bernie has been working on replacing a pump and rebuilding a motor.

Johnson Controls continues their work in various city facilities.

Recreation

The pool is busy as the weather has finally turned in our favor (at least this past week!!). Wednesday was the busiest day of the year with 912 people visiting that day. We are averaging just under 500 patrons per day over the first 3 weeks of operation. The shade structure frames have been installed by the Streets and Parks Division staff. The shade material will be installed on Monday.

The ice arena refrigeration piping has all been installed. Contractors will install reinforcement on top of the piping next week and place the new concrete floor on Wed. July 9. There will be an arena open house/question and answer session on Monday, June 30 from 3:30-4:30pm to view the construction process to date and ask any questions.

Streets and Parks

The Streets crew has been busy this week with changing banners downtown and mowing. The Showmobile was out twice supporting some community events. The Downtown gardeners have been busy keeping the flowers watered and will continue doing so over the summer.

Painting of the several park shelters has continued and should be completed soon. Thus giving a fresh look to the shelters. Finally, the crew at Sechler Park has been keeping fields up to the high standards of the folks playing out there.

Wastewater

The polymer that is used in sludge processing operations at the wastewater treatment facility was creating problems this week. Apparently a small amount of water had gotten into the polymer tote, which caused lumps of partially reacted polymer to form. These lumps do not mix well with the sludge being treated and the result is a blinding of the monofilament belts that are used to drain water away from the solids in the cake-forming phase of the operation. This causes time consuming clean ups and restarts of the system. An inline "Y" strainer was installed on the poly feed line. This helped, but there were enough lumps to plug the strainer every two to three hours. The unit was shut down and the remaining polymer strained through hardware cloth to remove the lumps. The system was restarted and finished the week with no further problems.

Water

Water Tower Clean & Coat, Inc. finished cleaning, painting and applying anti graffiti film on all three storage tanks. The only work left to do is to install the two flapper valves on the over flow pipes at the St. Olaf tanks and replace a hinge on the top hatch of the north tank. This work should be completed by the end of next week.

The Water Division assisted the Engineering Division in shutting down old water mains on the 5th street infrastructure project. After old water mains and valves were replaced, staff filled, flushed and took bacteria samples on the new mains, the new mains will be in service Thursday afternoon.

Water Operator Jay Hall finished performing a radio read meter account audit to verify the accuracy of all meter and account information that was inputted in the monthly meter readings.

cc: Department Managers