

## Memorandum

DATE: December 24, 2008  
TO: Mayor & Council Members  
FROM: Joel Walinski, Interim City Administrator  
RE: Friday Memo for the week of December 22-26, 2008

### Administrator's Office

A special Council Meeting is scheduled for Monday December 29, 2008 to address the unallotment of LGA funding for the 2008 Operating Budget. The staff report will be available this afternoon regarding the action being requested.

Initial meetings were held with all the remaining property owners that had submitted proposals for the liquor store site selection process. All owners were given direction provided by the council on re-evaluating their initial proposals and if interested, submitting an amended proposal by early January of 2009. Staff has also set an initial meeting with an architectural firm to begin developing plans and specs for the OSHA required repairs. I anticipate meeting with the council in late January to review both the items and consider the next steps to be taken.

As a final note, Public Safety and Public Works met this week and issued a statement that red sleighs being pulled by reindeer would not be ticketed nor towed for double parking or not observing the Winter Parking Ban - Have a very good holiday!! -

### **Below is information on city activities and information provided by the department directors and managers for the week of December 22-26, 2008:**

#### **Information Technology**

*Submitted by: Melissa Reeder, IT Director*

IT completed the installation of a fiber optic cable between two office buildings at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The two buildings are so far apart that the existing, older cable could not handle the distance and quantity of data we needed. Now both buildings and offices have faster, more stable phone and data service.

As we continue to move through our fiber optic feasibility study, I want to share with you an upcoming item that requires high speed internet connections. It is called **Telepresence**. What is telepresence? It refers to a set of technologies which allow a person to feel as if they are present at another location other than their true location. Meetings rooms can be equipped with video technology and high speed internet connections that allow the users the feeling of telepresence. Imagine business and college personnel in Northfield no longer spending hours traveling and burning fossil fuels to meet their clients when they can schedule a meeting in a telepresence room at their own company or somewhere in town. This in itself could be a business opportunity. I encourage you to take a look at the video clip on the following web site. In the first minute of this clip you will see what this looks like to communicate to people on the other side of the planet through telepresence: [http://www.kolabora.com/news/2007/03/28/what\\_is\\_telepresence.htm](http://www.kolabora.com/news/2007/03/28/what_is_telepresence.htm)

## **Finance Department**

*Submitted by Kathleen McBride, Finance Director*

**See attachment**

## **Economic Development**

*Submitted by Jody Gunderson, Economic Development Director*

Northfield City staff met with representatives of the Prawer-Gill properties to review preliminary concept plans for the land they are proposing to annex into the City of Northfield. The City requires the development of a concept plan for any property requesting annexation so that the Planning Commission and City Council may evaluate proposed land as a part of their consideration. The parties have met a number of times to ensure that the concept plan incorporates issues delineated in the City's comprehensive plan. The EDA Director has also been working to refine the EDA's 2009 Work Plan and complete the 2008 annual report.

## **Housing**

*Submitted by Michele Merxbauer, Housing Manager*

Staff met last week with City of Faribault Community Development Director Peter Waldoch, Rice County Economic Development and Housing staff Deanna Kuennen, Joy Watson and Gina McGuire, and Three Rivers staff Jenny Larson to discuss the Neighborhood Stabilization Program RFP for foreclosed properties. Discussion from last week and this week confirms that a joint application from Rice County, Faribault and Northfield will be submitted to MN Housing. The application is due January 28, 2009 and the awards will be announced by the end of February or beginning of March. This money will assist with acquisition, rehab and or demo of foreclosed properties. Each city is able to tailor the grant to fit their specific needs. Staff in Northfield has been assessing our foreclosure issues in depth in order to adequately apply for funds and services.

Housing staff will be out on maternity leave from December 29 through March 2, 2009. All inquiries or concerns during my absence can be either to Brian O'Connell, Community Development Director, or Jody Gunderson, Economic Development Director. Happy Holidays, and have a safe New Year!

## **Public Works Operations**

### **Recreation**

*Submitted by Jason Eisold, Recreation Manager*

The ice arena held it's Skate with Santa event this past Sunday. Over 120 skaters took part in the event. One hundred pounds of non-perishable food and \$170.00 was raised and donated to the CAC in Northfield. A special thank you to the Northfield Hockey Association, the Northfield Skating School, ISD 659 and PJ's Fabric & Crafts for making this event a success.

Stop by the arena over the holidays for an open skate session. Times are listed on the cities web site or call the arena for more information 645-6556.

### **Streets and Parks**

*TJ Heinricy, Streets & Parks Supervisor*

The Street and Parks department main focus this week was snow, snow and more snow. The City streets have been plowed curb-to-curb twice this week. The Downtown saw snow removal twice also. The outbound walk and streets have been the battle this week, because of the drifting snow. Ice rinks also saw a little maintenance this week. Happy Holidays.

**Transit**

*Brian Erickson, Public Works Operations Engineer*

The Transit hours over the next two weeks will be adjusted slightly for the holidays. On Dec 24 (Today), service will stop at noon. Christmas Day and New Year's Day there will be no service, otherwise Transit will be running as normal. This information has been posted on all the buses as well.

<p><b>Transit Hours</b>  Wed Dec 24<sup>th</sup>- Service until noon  Thursday Dec 25<sup>th</sup>. No Service  Thursday Jan 1<sup>st</sup>. No Service</p>
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**Water**

*Doug Lien, Water Superintendent*

Last Friday, B & B Excavating repaired a water leak at the corner of North Avenue and Bluestem Court. There was about 3' of frost under the street and a gas line ran about 2' west of the valve. After they exposed the valve they found that the valve was attached to a flange off of the 12" watermain in North Avenue that was leaking. A few of the bolts connecting the 2 flanges were loose and all were disintegrating to the point that normal sockets and wrenches would not fit on them. All 8 of the bolts and nuts on the flange assembly were removed and replaced with new bolts and nuts (stainless and zinc coated). The water was turned back on and the leak was repaired.

Water Operators Jay Hall and Scott Murphy assisted Heselton Construction on an emergency watermain repair in front of 304 North Water Street which was discovered on Friday morning. The Fire Chief and the assistant chief were notified because of the low water pressures. The shutdown and repair was also scheduled for repair on Saturday morning to help prevent disrupting Northfield Foundry and Bilken Industrial daily operations

**Wastewater**

*Submitted by: Glen Lindroos*

Flows are very low this Holiday season at the wastewater treatment facility. In addition to the normal reduction in flow from the colleges and schools that are not in session, both major industries (Malt-O-Meal and Multek) have shut down for an extended period this year. The 500,000 gallon per day reduction in flow means some short term process modifications. With less load the biological systems will start to slough off mass (less food means less biomass is required) so suspended solids in the effluent will increase slightly as this occurs. This is a normal response for the facility during these kind of events and effluent total suspended solids, although higher, is expected to remain well within MPCA standards. Merry Christmas!!!!

**Library**

*Submitted by: Lynne Young, Library Director*

The Library Board met last week with several members of the Friends of the Library Executive Committee to discuss fundraising and opportunities for advocacy for the library.

The bookmobile has been out of service for two weeks due to the leave of its operator. Service is also suspended during the weeks of December 22 or 28 because of the holidays.

Children's programs are on hiatus until the week of January 5.

Lynne Young attended her first meeting as the newly-elected secretary of the Minnesota Library Association on Friday, December 19.

The library will be closed on Wednesday, December 24 and Thursday December 25 for the Christmas holiday. The library will close early on New Year's Eve – 5:00 and will be closed all day January 1. The library catalog will be available online as usual, 24/7, to search for books, place requests or renew items. Go to [www.northfieldmn.info](http://www.northfieldmn.info) and look for "Find Books and Materials" or "My Account." In addition, all of the library's electronic resources will be available as well.

cc: Department Managers