



CITY OF WASHINGTON COUNCIL REPORT

February 2, 2024

CITY ADMINISTRATION – Jim Snider

- **United Contractors Midwest – Trails Edge Subdivision street maintenance project**

Our Engineering Technician Ross Fuller met with UCM yesterday to review the chip loss issues that occurred on the Trails Edge subdivision street maintenance project. There are some streaks of chips that were stripped off, as opposed to large areas, which would align with a sprayer nozzle issue and not a rock/oil issue. UCM was out today to clean up the excess chips. They will return on Monday to address any additional issues with excess chips.

- **Reports on an independent investigation by the Jackson Lewis Law Firm over potential FOIA and OMA violations**

On October 9, 2023, City Clerk Brod received the following FOIA request from Joe Arnold:

“I would like a record of every communication via phone (calls and texts) or email or post between any current or former city council member and the Pudik family (or Goat Springs LLC) between January 2018 and November 2023. There is a substantial amount of evident to suggest that there is inappropriate and subversive alliances between the Pudik family and members of city council that has caused members of council to make irrational decisions that will harm the city and its residents but benefit the Pudik family and Goat springs LLC. These records should include their personal phones and email addresses as it has been brought to my attention that there are closed door meetings happening between city council members and Pudiks/Goat Springs that have persuaded city council member to favor this one family over its own resident’s needs. Specifically, councilman Blundy has made statements that are in conflict with known facts but are consistent with erroneous statements made by the Pudiks that lead me to believe he is either being threatened or bribed by them.”

City Clerk Brod communicated with current council members to comply with the above FOIA request, and she submitted a request to our IT provider to search for related emails. In the response from our IT provider, we discovered that there were several instances where council members were communicating with members of the Pudik family via their personal email accounts.

As FOIA Officer for the City, Clerk Brod has communicated more than once with council members about her correspondence with the Illinois Attorney General’s Office regarding this matter advising them of their requirement to provide all their electronic communications with the Pudiks. Failure to do so could result in the city being fined by the Illinois Attorney General.

Due to ongoing contentious deliberations between the City Council and the Pudiks over the future location of a new trunkline sewer, I moved forward with scheduling an independent investigation (with the Jackson Lewis Law Firm) into potential FOIA and OMA violations by certain city council members in communication with the Pudik family by utilizing their personal email accounts, which are not discoverable by regular means by the City’s FOIA Officer (City Clerk Brod).

Attached is the original report provided by Jackson Lewis relating to this matter and presented to council members on December 18, 2023, as well as email correspondence with CM Stevens and CM Blundy regarding the request for a follow-up interview.

On evening of December 18, 2023, Council Member McIntyre provided the City Clerk additional emails between him and the Pudik family. Other city council members were included in those conversations by way of their personal email accounts.

On January 3, 2024, I sent an email request to both council members Blundy and Stevens requesting they meet again with Jackson Lewis Attorney Brundridge to discuss the additional emails received from Council Member McIntyre. They both declined the invitation to meet.

Attached is a follow-up report from Jackson Lewis regarding the review of the additional emails between the Pudik family and certain council members from their personal email accounts.

Also enclosed are email/text messages between the Pudiks and council members discovered between December 1, 2023, and January 25, 2024.

Attorney Michael Lowenbaum with Jackson Lewis (<https://www.jacksonlewis.com/people/r-michael-lowenbaum>) will attend next Monday's Council Meeting and will review these two reports with everyone during the City Administrator Communications portion of the City Council Meeting.

ENGINEERING – Dennis Carr/Ross Fuller

- We received 4 proposals for construction inspections assistance in 2024. Staff selected Millennia Professional Services and has begun negotiating a contract for the construction Observation for our 2024 projects.
- The Catherine design is continuing. We are reviewing the preliminary plans for the first section of Catherine Street. This is tentatively going out for bid in March/April.
- The survey for the Eagle Street Sidewalk Extension is nearly complete. We should be able to begin design efforts in the next couple weeks.
- We have submitted all of our 2023 MFT paperwork and are waiting for IDOT to approve the closeout before we can get the 2024 program started.
- We had a prebid meeting for the Chlorination upgrade project. We were asked by one of the local firms to postpone our bid opening by a few days due to another project being bid at the same time. The few days won't affect our schedule so we are including a bid opening change in the addendum.
- Design work is continuing on the evidence building as well as the Protea Place development. We are doing some draft site review and drainage calc review for both projects.
- Ty Slonneger reached out to discuss a potential path forward for removing the wooden pull in front of the old KoC building. We will be reaching out to the developer to discuss. This may be possible now that all of the buildings are being fed electricity from the alley.

FINANCE – Joanie Baxter

Out of Office

HUMAN RESOURCES – Maureen Chambers

- Created and distributed February edition of The City News.
- Hosted first Lunch & Learn of 2024. Hannah Ramlo, from Soulside Healing Arts, addressed a PACKED HOUSE of 40 employees and discussed benefits of meditation. Big shout-out to Lisa Anderson, Val Brod, Ross Fuller, Cara Hanson, and Jeanette Glueck for bringing in soups and chili for a chili tasting.
- Assisted in a few plans related to the Strategy session on January 29 (think food and coffee). Thank you to Lisa Anderson for picking up coffee and helping with the food delivery and set-up.
- Our first Leadership Roundtable, facilitated by Dean Hefta, took place on January 1. Highly valuable discussions involving leadership staff at the City, focusing on communication, leadership skill development, employee engagement, personnel issues, conflict management, etc. Provided an HR Update to the team, as well, focusing on Intentional HR strategy and looking forward to 2024-2025-2026.
- Part of the Intentional HR involves quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. To assess our HR program (quantitatively), we partnered with AAIM Employers' Association to host an HR Audit that was held on January 16 and 17. In order to properly identify areas of improvement and utilize resources appropriately, we need a thorough assessment of "what's happening now." The audit report should be delivered THIS WEEK and I am very excited to see

and share the findings with interested folks. I believe the report will be structured in a “strengths/opportunities” format or a “red/yellow/green” initiatives.

- Qualitative assessment of HR and determining job satisfaction is a bit tricky to analyze, but working on an employee survey and trying to build momentum around “Employee Check-ins.”
- 2024 Step Challenge “Movin’ & Groovin’” kicks off on February 5. Employees have the option to track steps for a couple of weeks in order to be entered in a prize drawing on February 29.
- Updated 2024 Handbook. Out on our ESS Dashboard for all employees to download and view. I’m contemplating whether or not to create a Canva Slide presentation as a way to communicate handbook info to new and current employees.
- Will begin actively recruiting for Wastewater Laborer week of February 5.
- Communicated newly added benefits from approved December resolution, including the Gym Membership reimbursement. Currently have “corporate rates” at Titan Fitness and Five Points. I will very likely have a meeting with new Five Points Fitness Manager, Megan West, to discuss ideas for “Workplace Wellness” and how Five Points can work with area organizations.
- Partnering with Rock Valley Wellness to host Health Coaching Calls, available to all employees, throughout the month of February. In order to view results from the biometric and blood screen at our Health Fair in October, employees have to complete a Health Risk Assessment. From that data, nearly 100% of people that completed the assessment, were interested in learning more about improving their diet and fitness and ways to get more exercise. Offering these coaching consultations is an opportunity for employees to discuss a wide-range of health-related topics with a certified health coach. I’m interested to see how many employees will take advantage of this opportunity.
- Working on adding new benefit features to our Onboarding Packets for new employees.
- Assisted with planning of Public Works Safety Lunch. Topic was Confined Spaces and Plow Safety Review. Looking to host at least four more safety lunches in order to hit the OSHA Top 5 topics on a yearly basis.
- Met with Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau rep, Ashley Hildebrandt, to review Q4 results.
- Compiled and posted OSHA 300a data.
- Assisted Concentric Integration with new router for Wastewater department.
- Processed handful of termination/retirement/personnel/benefit items.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT – Jon Oliphant/Joe Boyer

- The building permit for the remainder of the Grist Mill project is ready for issuance. One item remains for submittal prior to the issuance of the permit for the renovation of the 120 Walnut building that will house ground floor event space with short-term rental units on the second floor.
- The February PZC meeting will have one agenda item: A request by Dennis Riehl for a 1.5-foot distance between structures variance at 914 S. Main. He has started construction on a building addition that is a little closer to an existing garage than allowed by the zoning code and International Residential Code without having a 1-hour fire wall and entry door to be installed on the east wall of the accessory structure. A change in the staff interpretation of the IRC after the original building permit issuance in August has necessitated the need for a variance. Staff recommends approval of the request with the Certificate of Occupancy to be withheld until the fire wall and door are installed and inspected. The property owner has indicated a willingness to complete those installations.
- We received a Washington Tourism Grant application for the 2024 LedgeStone Open, which will be held from August 1-4. We have reviewed the info and approved a \$2,500 funding request. This will be the 14th annual LedgeStone event. It takes place on 15 area disc golf courses and it will once again be the largest tournament in the world. This year’s event will host 2,500 competitors from more than 11 countries and nearly every state. There are about 3,000 room nights booked during the week that the competitors are in the area and it has a significant regional economic impact.
- This month’s PPUATS Technical meeting included a Call for Projects for the 2025-50 Long-Range Transportation Plan. Staff has historically included a variety of projects in this plan, as it potentially makes them eligible for future federal funding. Staff will review the projects in the current plan and determine if any others should join the list.
- Staff continues to work with the owner of the 501 Walnut property and his broker. There has been some interest in its possible purchase. The owner and broker know that time is of the essence if a transaction is to occur, as the building’s life safety is paramount. A permit was issued last week to provide additional bracing of the north and west walls. Staff is working with the City Attorney’s office in the drafting of an initial injunction to receive court demolition action should there be any delay by the owner in addressing the safety of the building.
- Heinold Homes has begun a project to add onto its building on Constitution.
- Staff has issued the first two ground-mount solar permits. Additionally, the first three roof-mount solar permits have been issued through SolarAPP+. Staff and the area contractors are beginning to feel more comfortable using it.

- The first application for the City's \$250K budgeted ED/Tourism Funds has been submitted. An item will be scheduled for discussion at the February COW meeting to gain direction on possible financial assistance.
- Staff had our quarterly meeting with PACVB staff to go over their promotion of Washington. Attached is the quarterly review.

PUBLIC SAFETY – Chief McCoy/Deputy Chief Stevens

No Report

PUBLIC WORKS – Brian Rittenhouse

- Snow removal operations followed up with patching potholes.
- The PW storage building has completed several repairs with a few more to go. The roof will be completed this spring along with some trim painting.
- Staff will work to get a set date this month, February, for Hoerr to televise the Georgetown and West Lake trunkline. This will let us know the condition of these sewer mains.
- The Water Treatment Plant #1 PLC improvement project is completed. Over the next few week staff will monitor to make sure there aren't any issues in the programming.
- The Central SCADA/Liftstation improvements are almost completed. Once completed, staff will monitor closely for any issues in the programming.
- Generator work is still ongoing at the wastewater treatment plant. Imperium is getting closer to the changeover, switching from the old generator to the new. This will take coordination with the backup generator and during low flows.
- Commodities and assistance has been advertised. Packets have been sent to last year's bidders and vendors that requested them. We will have a bid opening on Tuesday, February 6th. Results will be presented at the February Committee of the Whole Meeting.
- Held pre-bid meeting for the WTP #1 chlorine improvements.
- Budget preparation for FY 24-25