



CITY OF WASHINGTON

City Administrator Report to Mayor and Council

January 30, 2026

ADMINISTRATOR – Jeff Fiegenschuh

To: Mayor Stevens and Members of the City Council
From: Jeff Fiegenschuh, City Administrator
Date: January 27, 2026
Subject: City Administrator Weekly Update and One-Year Plan Overview

Mayor and Council Members,

As discussed, I will be providing a brief weekly memo outlining what I have been working on and where my focus will be in the coming weeks. These updates are intended to maintain transparency, alignment, and open communication as we move forward together.

Recent Activities and Initial Focus

The past few weeks have been busy and productive as I transition into the City Administrator role and work to build a strong organizational foundation:

- Spent my first week organizing and setting up my office (still a work in progress) to ensure an efficient and accessible workspace
- Met with staff across departments to begin relationship-building and gain an understanding of operations, challenges, and opportunities
- Began tours of city facilities and infrastructure to better understand current conditions and long-term needs
- Participated in staff meetings and early budget and financial discussions
- Met with several project developers to discuss current and potential development activity in Washington

One-Year Leadership & Organizational Engagement Plan

Attached for your review is my **City of Washington One-Year Leadership & Organizational Engagement Plan**, which provides a structured framework for my first year as City Administrator, including guiding principles, phased priorities, and expected outcomes

City of Washington One-Year Plan

Key points to note:

- The plan emphasizes listening first, strengthening relationships, supporting staff, and building trust
- It outlines clear phases (0–3, 3–6, 6–9, and 9–12 months) focused on learning, goal-setting, execution, and long-term positioning
- I will provide monthly updates to City Council on progress, milestones, and any recommended adjustments

Please keep in mind that some elements of the plan remain fluid, particularly as we have already made progress on key staffing priorities, including the hiring of a new Finance Director.

Goals, Budget Alignment & Strategic Planning

- Upon approval of the FY 2026/2027 budget, I will submit a set of one-year City Administrator goals aligned with Mayor & Council priorities, organizational capacity, and available resources
- As part of this process, I will be asking the Mayor, City Council, staff and community leaders to participate in an organization-wide strategic planning session, allowing us to align elected officials, staff leadership, and long-term community priorities
- Upon budget approval, we will also work on developing a quarterly progress dashboard to track key initiatives, financial performance, and organizational priorities
- The dashboard will begin in August/September and will be shared with the elected officials as part of our regular communication and accountability framework.

Near-Term Focus Areas

Over the next several weeks, my focus will include:

- Continued facility and infrastructure tours
- Implementation of updated website and community branding initiative
- Deeper budget and financial review in coordination with the Finance Director
- Ongoing meetings with department leadership to identify early improvements and longer-term priorities.
- Continued engagement with developers and key community partners

I appreciate your support and collaboration during this transition period. As always, please feel free to reach out with questions, feedback, or topics you would like included in future weekly updates.

Respectfully,

Jeff Fiegenschuh
City Administrator

ENGINEERING – Dennis Carr, Ross Fuller & Mike Genard

- Began preparing the 2026 MFT Program. Waiting for some material price change estimates before we can confirm exact areas. Currently we are targeting a few of the roads that have been

missed over the past couple years that avoided internal project conflicts, the Washington Estates area, and parts of Rolling Meadows (North or South).

- The Catherine Street Phase 3 Reconstruction has been put out for bid. The letting is tentatively scheduled for Friday February 13th.
- TWM is working to finalize the Adams Street drainage priority project plans. This will be the last of the priority projects being paid for with the Stormwater Bond. The remaining priority projects will be covered with the stormwater funds that remain after the bond payments.
- Work on finalizing a Draft traffic calming policy to be brought to a future Committee of the Whole for discussion.
- Working with Finance and Public Works on the budget.
- Working on Spring Project planning to finish out the current budgeted projects.

FINANCE – Joanie Baxter

- Preparation and distribution of 2025 W-2s, including electronic filing as required.
- Completed and filed the Annual Tax-Exempt Property Certification with Tazewell County
- Preparation for and attendance at Police Pension Board meeting on January 26, 2026 including minutes and agenda packet.
- Prepared summary of 5-year Capital Improvement Program as developed on ClearGov.
- Continued adding accounting calendar to Monday.com.
- Started personnel analysis for budget process.
- Continued reformatting and adding narrative for Digital Budget Book.
- Jill processed and I reviewed payroll for January 30, 2026.
- Discussed status of SharePoint project with Mike Genard and conducted tests with Payroll and Utility Billing.
- Utility Billing (January 17 - 30, 2026)
 - A total of 43 cutoffs were processed for December, 25 emails were sent for shared lines, and 11 payment arrangements were made
 - A total of 313 cutoff notices were processed for December billing
 - New accounts and account closings processed:
 - 24 ins
 - 14 outs
 - Leak detection through RNI and Sensus Analytics software – 39 leaks were caught and residents/businesses notified

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT – Jon Oliphant & Joe Boyer

- The February PZC meeting is cancelled due to a lack of agenda items.
- A discussion will tentatively be scheduled for the February 9 Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss and gain Council direction on a possible TIF redevelopment agreement to assist with the desired 122 N. Main interior and exterior renovation. The owner would like to begin proceeding with addressing structural issues near the northwest corner of the building around mid-February and may do that work separate of potential inclusion in an agreement in order to get it completed sooner.
- A discussion is also planned at the 2/9 COW meeting to gain direction from the Council on whether to initiate the drafting of a zoning code amendment pertaining to the allowance of

billboards. If there is a desire to amend the code, staff would schedule a discussion item at an upcoming PZC meeting before anything would be brought to the Council as part of a future ordinance.

- With assistance from other staff, the Building & Zoning Coordinator position has been posted. The goal is to have interviews in mid- to late-February and to hire someone to allow for 4-6 weeks of cross-training depending on any prior experience.
- The final building inspection has been completed and the Certificate of Occupancy will soon be issued for O'Reilly Auto Parts at the intersection of Centennial and McClugage.
- This month's PPUATS Technical meeting included a mention by IDOT that the next Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program cycle will tentatively open in August. This program has traditionally assisted with recreation trail projects and it can also provide funding for streetscape improvements. Initial info is to be released in April or May. Additionally, the group was supportive of rolling over about \$4M in surplus federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds into the eventual call for projects in FY 29 and FY 30. The City most recently received funds through the STBG Preservation program to assist with a maintenance project on S. Main between the Square and Guth Road. That project is tentatively scheduled to be completed in 2027. The current federal transportation funding bill is set to expire in September. It is unknown whether the bill will be reauthorized or if a new bill will be introduced, which causes considerable uncertainty about the level of available funding starting with FY 29 and FY 30.
- The League of American Bicyclists has announced that Washington has been renewed as a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community. This status will be in effect until 2029, when a renewal application would be required.
- Work has started on the departmental FY 26-27 budget.

PUBLIC SAFETY – *Chief Stevens*

- Third shift patrol officers investigating an ongoing criminal allegation discovered a felon in possession of several firearms. WPD executed search warrants at different locations, seizing several unlawfully possessed firearms. This event culminated in a pursuit ending in Sangamon County. This investigation is ongoing.
- Officer Amanda Krohe and Sergeant Ryan Hunsinger responded to a cardiac arrest call, performing CPR and Officer Josh Kirby used an AED on a patient prior to EMS arrival. As a result, the patient had a return of spontaneous circulation and has a good prognosis. Washington Fire Department medics continued lifesaving treatment and transported the patient for hospital care.
- Officers were notified of anti-LGBTQ picketing near a school and, separately, a person video recording pedestrians outside a business, activities consistent with “First Amendment audits” (recording/expressive conduct intended to test government compliance with constitutional rights). Officers demonstrated appropriate judgment in distinguishing protected but disruptive behavior from enforceable violations. WPD routinely trains protection of civil rights (although not necessarily in response to first amendment audits).
- Police, fire, and ambulance non-emergency dispatch for all of Tazewell County has been repeatedly affected by intermittent phone issues in a segment of the phone system associated with I3 Broadband. The issues do not affect 911 calls and appear limited to 10-digit administrative number calls. TC3 and Tazewell ETSB are pursuing solutions, including a new service provider, after I3 was unable to resolve the issue. Changing service providers in a county-wide, multi-

agency public safety dispatch center is complex because it isn't a simple carrier swap, like the public experiences with number porting. The change requires reconfiguring and retesting call routing, trunks, direct dial numbers, failover paths, recording/logging, and integrations with multiple agency and carrier phone systems. All of that occurs while coordinating number porting and cutover across several digital networks served by different companies while validating E911/NG911 routing remains correct, and all with the near-zero tolerance for downtime that has our dispatch center searching for a new solution.

- The Tazewell County Association of Chiefs of Police will have its first annual awards event on February 21. Several WPD personnel are nominated for awards.

PUBLIC WORKS – *Brian Rittenhouse*

- Staff continues with stormwater outfall inspections to determine if any maintenance is needed. These inspections are conducted yearly for the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4).
- Hoerr continues to CIPP line sewers for fiscal year FY 25-26. Once completed staff will update the CIPP lining map.
- Staff worked on going through the plow trucks, cleaning and performing any maintenance needed after the snow event.
- Staff repaired two different water leaks, one on North Main the other on Morris Street.
- Staff is working with PJ Hoerr to schedule the start of repairs on the Jefferson Street Shop. Insurance has agreed to cover the cost to bring the roof up to current building codes.
- Staff continues to work on the budget.

City of Washington, IL – One-Year Leadership & Organizational Engagement Plan

*Prepared for the Mayor & City Council
City Administrator – Year 1 Framework*

Guiding Principles

- Listen first, act thoughtfully.
- Honor the past, assess the present, plan for the future.
- Support staff, strengthen the organization, and build trust.
- Operate with transparency, accountability, and the Athenian Oath in mind: leave the city better than it was given to you.

0–3 Months: Listening, Learning & Relationship Building

I plan to build on Washington's existing communication successes by using a structured listening model to strengthen connections between the Mayor, City Council, and staff. In the early months, my focus will be on reinforcing clear, consistent communication that supports day-to-day operations, improves coordination, and ensures everyone is working from the same set of expectations.

Budget, Organization & Operations

- Engage in department tours, operational briefings, and structured conversations to learn more about the organization and its operations
- Review existing policies, personnel manuals, capital plans, and major utility or infrastructure priorities.
- Work with staff and elected officials to develop and finalize new fiscal year budget.
- Listen, Listen, Listen

Mayor & City Council Engagement

- Schedule one-on-one meetings with Mayor Stevens and each Alderperson to understand priorities, communication preferences, short-term and long-term expectations.

- Establish a regular City Administrator–Mayor & Council communication structure (weekly updates, monthly dashboard, etc.).

Community Engagement

- Begin a listening tour with key community stakeholders: Chamber of Commerce, school district, park district, service clubs, major employers, neighborhood groups/HOAs (if applicable), and nonprofit partners.

Strategic Planning Preparation

- Continue to review the City’s existing strategic plan (23/24) or vision documents, noting gaps, outdated areas, or emerging needs.

Staffing/Recruitment

- Initiate recruitment—or evaluate internal promotion opportunities—for the Finance Director and Deputy City Administrator positions. Goal is to hire new finance director first.

3–6 Months: Goal Setting & Early Improvements

As I listen and learn from staff, elected officials, and community stakeholders, I will strengthen internal leadership development and build on Washington’s proven approaches to capital and community development. A key early focus will be adopting the new FY budget and launching a goal-setting process that establishes clear priorities for the next three to five years.

Strategic Plan & Goal Setting

- Develop a framework and timeline to begin a new Strategic Plan Update along with Mayor & Council Goalsetting session by month 6.

Operational Improvements

- Begin implementation of quick-win improvements identified from early assessments (organizational communication, process efficiencies, priority project tracking, etc.) centered around the CIP and operations budget.

Community Partnerships

- Begin hosting quarterly Coffee with the City Administrator meetings for the public.

Deputy City Administrator & Finance Director Positions

- Complete the hiring of the Finance Director and Deputy City Administrator by the end of the sixth month.

6–9 Months: Execution, Culture Building & Long-Term Planning

Team culture and learning more about the organization and community will remain a central focus, replicating the leadership development, collaboration, and shared accountability that strengthened project delivery, community engagement, and long-term planning efforts in Rochelle and Rantoul.

Strategic Plan Implementation

- Begin process of updating City of Washington Strategic Plan with Mayor, Council, staff and community input. Focusing on actionable objectives and goals.

Staffing and Workforce Development

- Onboard the new Finance Director & Deputy City Administrator, integrating them into project management, economic development, or internal operations depending on strategic need.

Mayor & Council Relationships

- Revisit one-on-one council meetings to discuss progress, expectations, and opportunities for refinement in communication or project prioritization.

9–12 Months: Evaluation, Refinement & Positioning for the Future

Strategic plan adoption will include clear execution pathways, staff work plans, and leadership alignment—mirroring the structured implementation practices that advanced major capital projects and strengthened organizational culture in Rochelle.

Capital planning and budgeting will incorporate the long-term prioritization frameworks used in Rochelle, ensuring Washington's infrastructure investments are strategic, community-focused, and financially sustainable.

Budget & Capital Planning

- Begin working on the upcoming fiscal year budget while refining long-term financial priorities. I will also support the completion of the annual audit to maintain strong financial stewardship and accountability.

Strategic Plan Implementation

- Finalize and launch the new Strategic Plan by aligning priorities with staff expertise, incorporating feedback from key community stakeholders, and ensuring elected officials have clear, actionable pathways to advance shared goals.
- Embed the plan into daily operations through department work plans, performance dashboards, and regular check-ins with the City Council and community partners to ensure transparency, accountability, and measurable progress.

Long-Term Organizational Strength

- Work with staff to evaluate internal progress and launch the Year-Two Priority Initiatives, which typically include larger-scale improvements such as capital project expansions, organizational restructuring, or technology/efficiency upgrades.

Annual Review & Performance Tracking

- Conduct a Year-One City Administrator Performance Review discussion with Mayor Stevens & the City Council (formal or informal), focusing on what is working and where adjustments may be needed.
- Provide a year-end organizational update to the community and staff summarizing progress, milestones, and next-year priorities.

Summary: Year-One Outcomes

By the end of year one, the City of Washington will have:

- A strengthened, trust-based relationship between the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, community, and staff.
- An updated and implemented Strategic Plan with a strong focus on action.

- Recruitment of key positions.
- Improved internal and external communication processes, operational clarity, and organizational alignment.
- Continuing the culture that values transparency, engagement, and long-term planning.
- Continue to listen and learn

The Athenian Oath

“We will never bring disgrace to this our City by any act of dishonesty or cowardice, nor ever desert our suffering comrades in the ranks.

We will fight for the ideals and sacred things of the City both alone and with many.

We will revere and obey the City’s laws and do our best to incite a like respect and reverence in those who are prone to annul or set them at naught.

We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public’s sense of civic duty.

Thus, in all these ways, we will transmit this City not only not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.”