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## MEMORANDUM

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TO: Mayor Walker and Councilors  
FROM: M McPherson, City Administrator  
SUBJECT: **Bi-Weekly Administrator's Report**  
DATE: October 12, 2021

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I have the following observations and information to share from the last two weeks:

### **Airport**

Work is progressing on the taxiway reconstruction project. Staff is participating in the weekly project status meetings with KLJ & Knife River. The contractor has requested the ability to shut down the airport for two weeks starting October 14 to complete the paving this fall yet.

### **Budgeting**

We continue to work on budgeting. The negotiations surrounding health insurance went well with LELS and we will be meeting with AFSCME on October 14 to negotiate the same.

We are also identifying where and how much money we are spending on technology services per the Council conversation during the Study Session.

### **Development Projects**

The various residential projects are still in a holding pattern, although staff did meet with developers on two projects during the last two weeks. Staff provided fee and process information to one and received information from the other to being analyzing possible assistance with financing the infrastructure.

### **Infrastructure**

Public Works Director Gerold and I met with Dillon Hayes, Mille Lacs County Coordinator and Kevin Schultz, Maintenance Supervisor to discuss snowplowing, County Road 4, and other county roads/intersections that we forecast to need traffic control changes in the future. We offered to provide assistance with snow removal in the form of our blower but the assistance was strongly declined. We agreed to meet in December to discuss the upgrade to the utilities under County Road 4 and how we could work collaboratively to accomplish City and County goals. They have engaged WSB to provide engineering assistance until such time they hire a County Engineer.

Staff has met with WSB to define the scope of work for a Parks/Trails Development Plan, a Transportation Plan, and an Infrastructure Prioritization Plan. They will all work together as we develop and identify a means of funding infrastructure improvements. The City needs to identify where to start and how big the projects will be.

The preconstruction meeting with Douglas-Kerr Underground LLC and WSB for the 19<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Avenue project was held on September 28. It appears that the project will not start until the end of October while the contractor finishes up other projects.

### **GPS 45:93 Annual Meeting**

Stephanie and I attended the GPS 45:93 Annual Meeting on September 24 in Hinkley. Attached is their operating plan for your information.

The highlight of the meeting was a presentation from Benjamin Winchester, a researcher from the University of Minnesota's Center for Community Vitality. His presentation was on rewriting the rural narrative and that growth in rural Minnesota IS happening. My biggest takeaway from his presentation was that words have impact and we are our own worst sales people. We should not be saying things like "there is nothing to do here" or "there are no good restaurants here". There are reasons we choose to live in rural Minnesota and we should positively point those reasons out.

### **Liquor Store Operations**

Assistant Store Manager Donner is doing a good job of managing operations. Finance Director Peters and I have established a bi-weekly meeting schedule with him to check in and provide additional support as needed, including continuing to participate in interviews when needed.

We have determined that a large portion of the store's inventory is wine which comprises only 10 percent of sales. In order to clear the inventory, Assistant Store Manager Donner has started to discount bottles and will be developing plans for bottle and case sales, focusing on Black Friday and Shop Local Saturday in November. He is conducting inventory checks on all product as he has time.

Plans are underway for cleaning and resealing the floors. This will require the store to be closed in early January for a couple of days; several of the beer vendors have offered to provide assistance in moving product off the floor when the time comes. The store will also be closed in January for a short time to allow the auditors to perform their inventory checks prior to the start of sales in the new year.

### **Workforce Discussions**

Staff met with representatives from the School District, the Chamber, and several large employers to continue working on the issues around workforce supply (or lack thereof). A new marketing program is being developed: "This is Princeton" to attract commuters to consider working in the city instead of commuting for work elsewhere. There is money in the proposed 2022 EDA budget to pay for the program which is a collaboration with the School District.

### **Upcoming Meeting/Event Reminders**

- Manufacturing Month Events:
  - October 19 - Phillips Distilling Tours; 10 am, 11 am, 12 noon, limited to Chamber members and to 10 persons per tour. Register on the Chamber's website.
  - October 27 & 28 - Elemet Group/Glenn Metalcraft Tours; 9 am to 2 pm each day, open to the public
- October 30 - Pumpkin Chuckin' 1 to 4 pm, Mille Lacs County Fairgrounds; this is a fundraiser for Kinship Mentoring of Princeton, \$1.00 per person entry fee
- November 1 - Joint Meeting with the Airport Advisory Board to discuss the AWOS siting options and further discuss the CIP