
MEMORANDUM



TO: Mayor Walker and Councilors
FROM: M McPherson, City Administrator
SUBJECT: **Bi-Weekly Administrator's Report**
DATE: April 11, 2023

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

Airport

The Joint Planning Board was able to meet and hold the public hearing regarding the amendment to the Airport Zoning Ordinance on April 10, 2023. It was a very short meeting. One neighbor, Mr. Pat Thielen attended in person and one written comment in support of the change was received. The JPB moved approval of the ordinance as amended. The next step is to compile all of the supporting documentation (resolutions, affidavits of publication, notices) and send them to MNDOT for final review and issuance of the order. Once that is received, the formal ordinance will be placed on the City Council agenda for adoption and recording.

There is a vacancy on the Airport Advisory Board, so any assistance in recruitment would be fantastic.

Development

Staff is working with Glen Metalcraft/Elemet Group regarding their proposed project. Last week we finally received their application for City financial assistance (TIF) and are now working with Northland Securities to develop a schedule and push the project across the finish line in a very short timeframe. The Council will soon see a number of items related to the TIF request on upcoming meeting agendas. We have yet to receive the building permit application for review.

Betzler Builders is looking at the 40-acre Pontious property adjacent to New Life Church. They have requested information on the process and fees.

Finance

Staff continues to work with Abdo and Smith Schafer on compiling information for completion of the audit.

Infrastructure

Bids for the Princeton Business Park infrastructure will be opened April 18. A request to award bids will be on the April 27 Council agenda with construction to start soon thereafter.

Public Works Director Gerold and I attended a webinar regarding the Federal EDA grant programs. This webinar was prompted by disaster declarations issued for several neighboring counties in the East Central Regional Development Region. Mille Lacs County was not included in the declaration, but Public Works Director Gerold identified projects that could be funded through the EDA's regular grant programs, and we have reached out to Jordan Zeller to facilitate a meeting.

Community Development Planner Marquardt applied for a Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) grant to fund a combination bottle filling/bike repair station to be installed at Riverside Park.

Personnel

Work continues on the Personnel Manual. The work is progressing nicely.

The Classification-Compensation Study is nearing a conclusion. Flaherty & Hood has identified April 27 as a closed meeting session for them to present information to the City Council on the results. Other than the Administrator and Council, no other Department Heads/Managers will be present for this session.

Applicant interviews for the Police Officer opening are scheduled for the morning of April 12. Councilor Gerold and I are participating in the interview panel.

USDA Visit

On March 23, representatives from USDA visited regarding the City's compliance with federal accessibility requirements. This stems from the Federal loans received from USDA to fund the wastewater treatment plant expansion. Several items were corrected by the posting of required information. There are minor corrections that need to occur: wrapping of the pipes on the sinks in the two public bathrooms, changing the handle on the conference room door to a lever handle, and looking at the aisle width to the public bathrooms.

Chamber Leadership Series

Staff participated in the Local Government Session of the Chamber Leadership Series on April 6. I provided a "Municipal Budgeting 101" primer to attendees. Councilor Edmonds and Park Board Chair Papesh participated in a panel on volunteer board participation. In the afternoon, Chiefs Frederick and Lawrence provided an overview of their departments, a tour of the Public Safety Building and a session on Active Shooter safety.

Technology Recycling

The City was able to recycle two pallets of outdated and replaced technology items with PCs for people:



Legislative Monitoring

I am monitoring, with help from CGMC and LMC various legislative topics. Of interest:

- *Bill to Address Public Safety PTSD (House File 1234, Senate File 1959)*; requires treatment for a mental injury prior to filing for a duty disability, keeps employees on payroll while receiving treatment, financial support to backfill positions, fully reimburses employers for health insurance provide the employer has implemented mental health injury prevention measures, requires preservice training to prepare staff for stressful events and to teach coping mechanisms. There has been no change in status since the March 21 update.
- *Earned Sick and Safe Time (House File 19, Senate File 34)*; requires employers to provide on hour of paid sick and safe time for every 30 hours worked. This covers all employees including part-time and seasonal, working 80 hours in a year for the employer. In the Senate, it has had its second reading. It was passed in the House on February 16. CGMC anticipates that there will be multiple amendments in the future for this bill.
- *Competing Bonding Bills*; two bills have been unveiled, a General Obligation bonding bill totaling \$1.5 billion and a "cash only" bill of \$392 million. The House passed the bonding bill, but the Senate has not. Per the April 10 CGMC Legislative Update, it is likely that there will be an all-cash bonding bill this session as that will not require any Republican votes; this does not bode well for out-state projects that lie in predominantly Republican districts.
- *Local Government Aid Increase (House File 1377, Senate File 1828)*; increases the appropriation for local government aid and modifies the calculation for distribution. The House referred it to the Taxes Committee and the Chair referred it to the Property Tax Division. The Senate has referred it to the Taxes Committee. There has been no additional action since the February 21 update. There are differences between the House, Senate and Governor on this topic, so the solution will likely come in conference committee. CGMC noted in their update that the House and Senate have significantly more dollars dedicated to LGA than the Governor.
- *Indigenous Peoples Day (House File 211, Senate File 104)*; eliminates and replaces Columbus Day, requires observance where no public business could be conducted on the second Monday in October. If passed, it would become effective for 2023. The House held the bill's second reading on February 27, but there has been no action in the Senate since January 17.

CGMC continues to monitor a number of environmental bills that could pose issues as currently drafted for wastewater and air permitting. They are lobbying against the broad nature of the bills as drafted as that will have unintended consequences for outstate Minnesota.

Upcoming Meeting/Event Reminders

- April 27 – LMC Safety & Loss Control Workshop, St. Cloud. Public Works Director Gerold, Chief of Police Frederick, Technology Services Manager Yost and I are attending. This is a very inexpensive offering from the League and they have excellent topics and speakers.
- May 9 – State of the City Address. I will be presenting the State of the City to Chamber members at their May Lunch and Learn. Superintendent Barton will be present for the State of the School District.