

---

## MEMORANDUM

---



TO: Mayor Walker and Councilors  
FROM: B Gerold, Public Works Director  
M McPherson, City Administrator  
SUBJECT: **Addition of Full-time Staff Person**  
DATE: November 8, 2022

---

### Overview

In the last 20 years, the City has increased in population and physical size through annexation. In 2021, the City achieved the population goal of 5,000 residents. Recent area expansion include annexation of the Sherburne Mobile Home Park and the 40 acres for the Princeton Business Park.

### Benchmark Cities

Staff inquired of similar-sized cities as to the number of Public Works Staff. As each city has has a different composition of services (streets, sewers, parks, etc.), we looked at the aggregate number of staff absent directors or managers:

- Princeton: 8 (excluding the Public Works Director and Wastewater Treatment Plan Manager)
- Zimmerman: 11
- Litchfield: 10, includes an airport
- Cambridge: 10, includes an airport
- New Prague: 14
- Isanti: 8
- Watertown: 8
- Glencoe: 10, includes a cemetery

### Staffing Demands

Public Works staffing levels have not kept up with the increase in population nor the expansion of the city. Increases in calls for service are occurring in the following areas:

- Streets - patching, sweeping, plowing, salting and sanding. During a significant storm event the Director's regular and administrative duties are set aside to assist with cleanup operations. As additional streets come on line with the new development (Princeton Business Park, Fountain Place, un-named residential development north of the middle school), the additional mileage will require increase staff time for maintenance.
- Storm sewers – repair, maintenance, ensuring proper stormwater flow in rain events. With the increase in population to 5,000, the City will be required to obtain an MS4 stormwater permit; the requirements associated with this permit are unknown at this time. There may be additional duties for Public Works to perform.
- Parks – maintenance of nine (9) parks with increased amenities and more calls for service for grass cutting, tree and shrub planting and trimming, sweeping, building and facility maintenance.

- Campground – coordination of the Campground Host’s duties, responding to issues of loitering beyond the reservation time and other miscellaneous issues.
- Sanitary sewers - ongoing repair and maintenance of an aged system with jetting, cleaning, and regular maintenance of nine (9) lift stations and four (4) backup generators. Maintenance and repair of the streambank plantings for phosphorus reduction associated with the treatment plan operating permit.
- Non-profit and Civic Organization – provision of personnel and equipment for community events like the Rum River Festival, Light Up Princeton, the plantings on Rum River Drive, and requests for street closures by a number of organizations.
- Seasonal Staff - It is becoming increasingly difficult to hire and retain seasonal staff; the City is competing with private sector businesses that can offer a higher hourly rate. The lack of seasonal staff requires regular staff to cover those duties, i.e. watering of flowers and trees and grass cutting.
- Longevity of staff - As employees’ length of service increases so does the available time off to staff, which makes scheduling somewhat difficult at times. Leave for staff includes holidays, vacation, and earned comp time. More often than not, Public Works is running with less than a full crew with the Director filling in the gaps.

The above list does not include responsibilities related to the airport or cemetery.

As the City continues to grow and expand, the Director’s duties must return to those more administrative in nature, while not completely eliminating the need to be a working Director:

- Review of the annual road mileage for MN State Aid Street certification
- Implementation of any MS4 stormwater permitting requirements
- Implementation of the infrastructure improvement plan resulting from the 2022 planning work related to pavement management, transportation, sewer and water inventory plans.
- Identifying and implementing alternative funding sources on behalf of the City Administrator.

### **Request**

As a result of understaffing, the Public Works Department is in a reactive mode versus proactive to duties, scheduled maintenance, and upcoming events, the result of which is increased costs and stress to the City and staff. In order to reverse this trend and provide a level of service to City residents that they are accustomed to, expect and deserve, staff requests the addition of one additional full-time staff person in the Public Works Department.