

**City Of Woodland
Council Agenda Summary Sheet**

Agenda Item: Public Works Assessment	Agenda Item #:	<u> K </u>
	For Agenda of:	<u> July 22, 2013 </u>
	Department:	<u> Public Works </u>
	Date Submitted:	<u> July 17, 2013 </u>

Cost of Item:	<u> NA </u>
Amount Budgeted:	<u> NA </u>
Unexpended Balance:	<u> NA </u>

BARS #:
Description:

Department Supervisor Approval: Public Works Department /s/ *Bart Stupp*

Agenda Item Supporting Narrative (list attachments, supporting documents): 1) July 15 th Public Works Assessment
Summary Statement: <u>Background:</u> Mayor Laseke asked that I provide him with my assessment of the Public Works Department and the issues in the department. Rather than discuss everything I addressed what I think are the top five issues. In order they are staffing, street maintenance, the water treatment plant site, park maintenance, and the public works administration building. No action is needed at this time. Some of the staffing changes I recommend in this assessment will be proposed during the 2014 budget process.



MEMORANDUM

Date: July 17, 2013
From: Bart Stepp, PE, Public Works Director
To: Mayor Grover Laseke and City Council
Cc: Department Heads
Subject: Public Works Department Assessment

Background: Mayor Laseke asked me to provide an assessment of the Public Works Department. After spending over a year as Director, reviewing every employee, and reviewing Department needs, I have come up with the following assessment of the Department and the five biggest issues the Department faces.

Overview: The Public Works Department gets done what we are supposed to get done within our budget. Budget issues have eliminated funding needed for proper operations and maintenance items for our Parks and Streets. Additional revenues to fund these areas is unlikely in the short term so the City should expect the level of service in these areas to slowly degrade although grants may allow for upgrades for specific areas of this infrastructure. The water and sewer systems also have issues but they are on a better financial footing. The annual raising of water and sewer rates will eventually allow the City to build some reserves for both of those utilities. This would help with future capital projects that are needed.

Below are the top five issues in order of priority I see the Public Works Department facing:

1. **Staffing Needs**

a. **Water and Wastewater Plants**

The water plant has one full time operator and the wastewater plant has two full time operators. On weekends Mike Peterson rotates with the Water Plant Superintendent Bob Choate to run the plant. For the wastewater plant Bob Choate rotates with the Wastewater Plant Operators to operate the wastewater plant. Mike is not certified to run the water plant if needed on a full time basis and Bob is not qualified to run the wastewater plant on a full time basis.

If Bob Choate (WTP Superintendent) or Mark Morgan (WWTP Superintendent) left for another job or was injured the City would be in dire straits. The City should hire a certified operator who could work at the water plant, wastewater plant, provide additional weekend coverage, and assist in water distribution and wastewater collection projects. Funding for this would come out of a combination of the water and wastewater funds starting in 2014. The estimated cost for this including salary and benefits would be \$70,000, split equally from the water and wastewater fund. No general fund money would be needed for this position.

Starting in September Derrek Amburgey, the wastewater operator, will start working part time up at the water plant. He is currently certified as a water treatment operator in training. Once he gets enough experience and passes the operator 2 exam he will be able to provide weekend coverage as well at the water plant.

b. Planning and Building Department

Current staffing consists of a full time Planner, three quarter time building official, and permit clerk. The Community Development Planner is very underpaid for the job description. Until that is resolved the City should expect to have a low tenure rate for that position.

Currently the clerk position is open. I will be proposing to change the clerk position to a planning assistant position as that Department needs somebody with skills beyond the job description of the clerk.

We currently have a sufficient level of work for a full time building official. This is expected to continue at least until the high school construction is complete. The current pay rate for this position is also below average and is due for an adjustment.

The Community Development Planner reports directly to the Public Works Director rather than the Mayor. While this type of arrangement is common for smaller jurisdictions, in many larger jurisdictions the Planner reports directly to the City Manager or Administrator. When the planner position was first created the mayor was part time and the planner was inexperienced so it made sense for this position to report to the Public Works Director. The City should consider having the planner report directly to the City Administrator once the Administrator position is created.

The recommended adjustments for the three positions are described below.

- The planning assistant position would have the same pay rate as the clerk but it would go to a half time position instead of full time. This would be a reduction in cost of approximately \$28,000.
- Currently the hourly cost for the building official is \$35/hour including benefits and is budgeted at 30 hours a week for an annual cost of \$54,600. A full time building official at a cost of \$52/hour, based on the AWC salary survey, would cost \$108,160 for an increase of \$53,560 a year. This would be paid through the increase in building permit fees the City is receiving. The contract with the building official would be revised to indicate that a drop in demand for services would result in the building official going back to a part time status. This will be proposed for the 2014 budget.
- The existing salary and benefits cost for the Community Development Planner is about \$6,500/month or \$78,000/year. Using AWC Salary Survey the average cost for a City our size is \$10,150/month or \$121,800/year. I would propose upgrading the Community Development Planner salary and benefits to \$9,250/month or \$111,000/year for an increase of \$33,000 a year. The increase would be paid through the increase in planning and building fees as the City grows.

c. Operations

Our operations crew currently consists of six full time members (Dennis Ripp, Mike Peterson, Mark Cook, Gary Oliver, Scott Summers, and Tyler Lee). When Bob Choate is on vacation or in training Mike Peterson runs the water plant. Most days at least 1 person is not available due to vacations, sick leave, or training. Their workload is greater than the staff can complete. We could add two additional laborers and still keep people busy. Due to budget concerns I do not anticipate requesting any additional staff for a while. Adding a water/wastewater operator as previously mentioned would help the operations crew by relieving Mike Peterson from having to run the water plant when Bob is gone. That operator could also provide assistance when the crew is working on water or wastewater projects.

There are two existing staff issues that need to be corrected. One issue is there is no official backup position to Dennis Ripp. When Dennis is gone most of the time Mike is the one that handles supervisor duties but he is at the same Utility Service Worker II position as Mark and Scott. A backup leadman position needs to be created that identifies who is in charge if the leadman is gone. This position would have the same pay scale as the mechanic Gary Oliver. I would propose this starting in 2014. This would cost an additional \$6,000/year in pay and benefits spread out over street, water, and sewer funds.

The other issue is Tyler Lee, who is currently a laborer, now has the necessary certifications and experience to be upgrade to a Utility Service Worker. He should be upgraded in 2014. This would be an additional \$9,000/year in pay and benefits spread out over street, water, sewer, and park funds.

d. Administration

Administration currently consists of the Public Works Director, Engineering Technician Jody Bartkowski, Engineering Aide Tonya Ingle, and half time Code Enforcement Officer Mary Parsons. The technician, aide, and code enforcement officer report directly to the Public Works Director. The current Engineering Technician and Code Enforcement officers are appropriate for the duties I am requiring of them. 20 hours a week appears to be sufficient for the Code Enforcement Officer to complete the duties that are currently expected of her.

The biggest issue here is the Engineering Aide position. Based on her current duties and the needs of the Department this position should be changed to an Engineering Technician. The cost to upgrade the Aide to a Technician would be about \$1,600/month or \$19,200/year. This would be spread out among the street, water, and sewer funds. This will be proposed for the 2014 budget.

Since I started working for the City I have averaged about 45 hours a week. Most of that work over 40 hours consists of evening meetings. But some of it is working through lunch and on Saturdays on occasion as needed to meet deadlines. The City has several large capital projects scheduled over the next couple of years that a staff engineer could manage and give me more time for management duties. But once these projects are done I don't know if there would be enough work for an engineer. For now we will manage with the existing staff.

e. Parks

In 2014 we will have two park laborers, Paul and Cliff, work 900 hours each this year. Paul works from April through August, Cliff May through September. That is what the budget could afford. In the past the City hired up to 3 school kids for the summer to help with maintenance, painting, etc. Until Park Revenues increase I don't see the City being able to hire additional laborers for several years and I may need to cut hours from Paul and Cliff for 2014.

2. Street Maintenance

Existing revenues do not provide enough funds for adequate maintenance of the street system. I estimate the City could spend \$500,000 a year for the foreseeable future on overlays, chip seals, and crack sealing and still not meet all of the City's maintenance needs. In 2013 that budget is \$140,000, in 2012 it was \$253,000, and in 2011 it was \$62,127. The City is receiving \$250,000 in grant funds to help with an overlay in 2013 and there are some grant funds available in the future. But overall the City needs more dedicated funding for street maintenance.

Options include formation of a Transportation Utility District or a Stormwater Utility. The Stormwater Utility could be used to pay for things like catch basin cleaning, street sweeping, and stormwater pond maintenance that currently comes out of the street fund. This would free more money to be used on overlays and chip seals. To upgrade the street maintenance program to a level that overall street condition would improve in the City would cost an estimated minimum of \$300,000 a year over existing expenditures.

3. **Water Treatment Plant Site**

We have had several equipment issues at the Water Treatment Plant site in 2013, as well as a leak in the small reservoir. The Ranney Well project in 2014 should correct our source of supply deficiencies but the Treatment Plant has a large issue with corrosion of equipment due to off-gassing of chlorine from the water filters. This needs to be corrected in the next couple of years. Costs and funding have not been identified for this project yet. The estimated cost for this project is \$200,000.

4. **Park Maintenance**

In 2014 the city budgeted not to water parks this year due to funding issues. There have been discussions about finding funds to water the parks this year but most of that discussion has been about one time funds for this year. But funding will be worse next year. At the end of 2012 the park fund had an ending fund balance of \$22,000. In 2013 I am projecting an ending fund balance of \$9,000. To maintain a minimum fund balance of \$5,000 for emergencies will mean cutting another \$9,000 from this year's budget in 2014 and cutting another \$2,000 beyond that in 2015. This will mean no watering in the near future plus cutting some hours from the two park laborers and additional deferring of maintenance. Possible funding options include going out for a Park Levy for maintenance through the City or the Park and Recreation District but the survey completed by the City this year did not indicate general support for a levy. To provide operations and maintenance similar to what was provided in 2009 and before, additional revenues on the order of \$150,000 a year are needed.

5. **Public Works Administration Office**

The current Public Works Office works well for our current staffing levels. If staff is added in the future or the fire station is built at 300 E. Scott, however, a new office location would be needed. The preferred site is up at the water treatment plant site where there is sufficient land and it is a good spot for an emergency building. Since this would need to be timed with the Fire Station there needs to be funding available for the move when the City does decide to build the fire station. A new public works office of 2,500 square feet at a cost of \$250/foot which would include utilities and parking would cost \$625,000.

Another option would be to move Public Works Administration in with the Planning and Clerk/Treasurer Departments if the new city hall has sufficient room. The Centennial Building should have enough space for the Public Works Department for 5 – 10 years. The other options discussed probably would not have enough space for Public Works Administration though.

Sincerely,



Bart Stepp, PE
Woodland Public Works Director