

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

January 14, 2019 ó 12:00 p.m.

Wahpeton City Hall

(This meeting was voice recorded.)

Members Present: Mayor Dale, Bertsch, Bohn, Bajumpaa, Lambrecht, Miller, McCann, and Wateland.

Members Absent: McNary

Staff Present: Huwe, Miranowski, Broadland, Lies, Hatting, DeVries, Thorsteinson, Bakken, Johnson, Rogahn, Amos, Fehr, Berndt, Finnie, Schadler, Kub, Wald, Lovgren, and Hendrickson.

Also Present: Frank Stanko with Daily News and Justin Nepl of SVEDA.

Mayor Dale called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Street Dept. Position Vacancy ó Miranowski said at the last City Council meeting Mayor Dale had referred this item to the Committee of Whole, which Dale corrected that he had referred it to Public Works, but it then went to Committee of the Whole. Lies was then referred to and explained how Committee of the Whole meetings need to be held as Special City Council meetings in order to take action on an agenda item or make a recommendation, however the Council wants to treat it. Miranowski explained in an effort to make an informed decision today regarding the position vacancy, he worked with staff and put together some useful information. Below is a PowerPoint presentation supporting the need to fill the Street Department position vacancy.

1976 or 1977 – 8 total FTEs
2019 – 9 total FTEs



1987



Growing and Growing More



2000



Service Demand

A City of Infrastructure

- Wahpeton has 51 miles of streets to maintain with a replacement cost of more than \$64 million
- In addition to the streets, there are:
 - 6 miles of alleys
 - 4 miles of shared-use/recreation paths
 - 31 miles of storm sewer
 - 3.6 miles of levee
 - 33.6 miles of sanitary sewer main
 - 44.6 miles of water main
- This adds an additional \$45 million of replacement costs. Taking these and other pieces into consideration, the City of Wahpeton has more than \$169 million of infrastructure value to maintain

Employees Are Our Resources

- The Street Department currently has seven full-time employees
- One of these is a mechanic that spends 70% of his time on equipment repair and preventive maintenance
- There are two full-time employees in the Water and Sewer Department. These two departments share employee when needed to support the task
- Together they have a total accrued vacation time of 1,033 hours, or nearly 130 hours on average
- The average length of service for PW employees is 20 years
- Two employees have been part of the team for 40 or more years, which is a testament to their skill level and loyalty to the city

What it Takes

- The numbers in the previous slide regarding service demand detail a lot of infrastructure to maintain, demanding work hours to complete. Below is a list of some of the labor-intensive activities on which the Public Works Department performs, and the hours each takes to accomplish. These tasks are completed by using crews(teams) of employees:

Activity	Work hours	Min Crew Size
Snow removal	10-12 events/year, eight+ hours to complete each	9
Asphalt patching	6 weeks/year	6
Traffic safety marking		
Paint - 3 weeks		3
Inlay - 4 weeks		4
Crack sealing - 4 weeks		6
Water/sewer main breaks - Varies		9
Flood protection system during flood	3 to 5 weeks 24/7	9+
Storm sewer maintenance manhole repair and cleaning - ongoing		6
Spring catch basin steaming		4
City Christmas decorations	2 weeks up 1 week down	5
Mowing levee, etc. before seasonal start		4

What it Takes

Other operations where service delivery will be diminished

Activity	Min Crew Size
Ice control - 12 to 15 events beyond plow events	5
Sanitary sewer cleaning - 4 weeks (1 Street Person to assist Sewer Department)	2
• Street sweeping - 26 weeks	1
• Street Sweeping spring and fall - truck tender 6 weeks	2
• Flood Protection System preventative maintenance - 4 weeks	2
• Gravel streets blading - 2 weeks	1
• Alley blading - 6 weeks	1
• Tree disposal/compost site - 5 weeks	1
• Catch Basin cleaning after rain events - 3 weeks	4
• Sign installation and maintenance - 6 weeks	2
• Tree trimming - 6 weeks	5
• Weed Control - 4 weeks	1
• Big Flag - 7 events	5
• Flags/Flowers/Banners - 26 events	2
• Traffic signal maintenance 1 week	1
• Pot hole repairs 3 weeks	3

What it Takes

- In addition to these there are many other tasks that happen throughout the year
- Helping the mechanic with large repair jobs
- Repair and annual preventative maintenance on the sweeper
- Changing cutting edges on plows, and the list can go on
- This does not include the times we need to assist Sewer and Water Department
- Assisting the Water Treatment Plant staff clean the clarifier
- Special Projects
- Over one month of changing all the Membranes at pond #1
- In addition we did not replace the custodian position in an effort to help reduce the mill rate. This position plowed all the pathways and sidewalks at City owned buildings. This is now being done by the Street Department
- Also if this position is not replaced we would not have a person to drive our tandem for Dakota Ave snow hauling, therefore we would need to add another Comstock truck and driver.
- Most recently, the east side sanitary sewer and 3rd Avenue reconstruction are examples of projects that affect large areas of the city. The city put a lot of time and effort into rebuilding these, along with Dakota Avenue (the "gateway"). These will (and already do) require service to protect the city's investment

Closing Comments

Questions

Council members conducted a round table discussion of their thoughts/concerns and to ask staff questions regarding the vacant position. The street crew employees present were also heard from. **Motion by Lambrecht, seconded by Miller, to approve moving forward with filling the vacant Public Works Street Department Position with interviews to begin as soon as possible.** Discussion held regarding the job description for the position being filled. Dale expressed concern in making a decision today and felt time should be taken to review the information provided as this will be a perpetual burden on the taxpayers. Miller felt this was addressed during the budget process and that would have been the time to hold any discussions, and Wateland agreed. Dale felt there are efficiencies that can be made in the Street Dept. through the management of the employees. Further discussion held. Dale then stated there is a motion on floor. **Motion carried with all voting 'aye'.** McCann commented the Council will continue to review every vacant position moving forward.

Motion by Lambrecht, seconded by Bertsch and carried, to adjourn at 12:44 p.m.

Respectively Submitted by Lynelle Amos