



City of Homer

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MANAGER'S REPORT

January 13, 2014

TO: MAYOR WYTHE / HOMER CITY COUNCIL

FROM: WALT WREDE

UPDATES / FOLLOW-UP

NOTE: Some of these items appeared in the last report. I have updated them and brought them back in case the Council wanted to discuss.

1. Natural Gas Conversions: City Hall is now heated with natural gas. The conversion was completed and the gas started flowing on January 8th. We are now paying less for energy and we have lowered greenhouse gas emissions by 30%. PW expect the library, animal shelter, sewer treatment plant, and the airport terminal to be converted and burning gas within the next 10 days.
2. 2014 Budget: The Finance Department is working hard to incorporate all of the budget amendments and produce the new and approved budget for 2014. We expect that hard copies will be available and the new budget posted online within the next few days. Fortunately, the budget still balanced after all of the amendments were made! The Finance Department is also preparing for the 2013 Audit which is coming up quickly.
3. Recodified City Code: You will recall that the 2013 Budget included money to recodify the code and improve its online presence. The project is now complete and it took almost a year. Thanks to Jo and to Tom Klinkner for all of their work on this project. The Code was reorganized and consolidated, inconsistencies and redundancies were addressed to the extent possible, and the code is now on a website actively managed by an outside company. The paper code is now half the size because it is double sided. All ordinances will be codified within 3 to 5 days of passage and placed online. There are new and much improved search functions that will make it easier for the public to access the Code and find what they want. This is a real upgrade and I hope Jo gets an opportunity to talk about it a little.
4. Wastewater Agreement with Kachemak City: This agenda contains a resolution approving a new wastewater agreement between the City of Homer and Kachemak City. This agreement has not been updated since it was originally signed in 1988. The new version is mostly an update and removes much of the language that is no longer relevant; especially all of language having to do with construction of the new sewer treatment plant and the sewer lines in Kachemak City. One thing of particular note is that the draft agreement

says the baseline average for gallons put into the system is 2,500 instead of 3,500. You will recall that this was a big issue for Kachemak City when the new water and sewer rate fee schedule was approved. Since the fee schedule was approved, we have spent more time talking to Kachemak City about this and we are pretty certain that the average monthly number of gallons placed into the collection system is significantly less than 3,500. There are many reasons for this including the fact that everyone either hauls water or has it delivered. People who do that tend to be much more conservation minded. Also, the demographics there are changing. Kids are grown up and moving out, the population is aging, and many residences have only two occupants. The new rate model was based primarily upon consumption. Keeping that in mind, it seems inconsistent with the intent of the model to charge people for more than they are actually using. Installing meters is problematic for a variety of reasons and measuring how much water people use is complicated because it is delivered, hauled, collected by roof cistern systems, and obtained via wells. 2,500 gallons seems like a reasonable number. The available evidence seems to suggest that the average is probably less than that. Another reason for dropping the number to 2,500 is that Kachemak City residents do not have the ability to shut off their meters and pay less during the months that they are away and are not putting anything into the system. They pay the full amount whether they are home or not. We recommend changing the amount to 2,500. If Council agrees, we will have to amend the fee schedule. The estimated fiscal impact is about \$27,000.

5. Emergency Services Agreement with Kachemak City: This agenda contains a resolution approving a new emergency services agreement with Kachemak City. The new agreement is not much different from the old one but it renews and updates this long standing relationship. The basics are the same. Homer provides Fire and EMS services to Kachemak. Kachemak contributes a fire truck that Homer can use, a place to house and station the truck, and payment equal to 1 Mil based upon total property values in Kachemak. This relationship has worked well over the years, benefits both parties, and we recommend renewal.
6. Virtualization: The IT staff is working to install the newly budgeted virtualization equipment. They are presently evaluating vendors and models and the merits of leasing rather than purchasing. The equipment will be purchased to be compatible with what already exists which under the procurement policies, is a justification for going sole source. This will be a large upgrade to the City's IT infrastructure and we appreciate the Council's support.
7. Recreation Service Area: Right before the Christmas break I participated in a teleconference with Mike Illg, Kate Crowley from ReCreate Rec, the Borough Attorney, and a staff member from Mayor Navarre's office. A lot of good information was exchanged. I would be happy to talk about this a little at the meeting if there is interest. Council could also invite Kate to give an update and progress report at a future meeting.
8. Camp Fee Station: The camp fee building has continued to take a pounding from some of the storms we have experienced this year. One of the storms over the holidays damaged the electrical box and exposed the sewer line. In order to prevent further damage, PW is hiring a contractor to lift the building and move it back to a safe place in the parking lot. Utilities will be capped or shut off and the pilings will be removed. The building will stay in

that location until a final destination is determined. You will recall that there has been discussion about moving that building over to the “Pier One Lot”. The parks staff suggests that Mariner Park would also be a good location.

9. Vehicle in Lake: Right before Christmas a vehicle broke through the ice and was partially submerged on Beluga Lake. Chief Robl worked to get the owner to take responsibility and have it hauled out. His efforts were unsuccessful. DOT/PF was contacted for assistance but they were reluctant or unable to provide assistance. DEC was in touch but was not in a position to provide assistance beyond advice. To make a long story short, we decided to hire a contractor to extract the vehicle from the lake. We will send the owner the bill and take other necessary steps to reimburse the City. The estimated cost was \$2,000.
10. Scheduling: One item that appeared in the last report but did not get discussed due to the big agenda was scheduling. The Council has said that it wants to do a citizen academy and some strategic planning, all this winter. Time will slip away fast if we don't start mapping this out. Attached is a memo from Katie regarding the Citizen's Academy which talks about preparation time and all of the steps that might be involved.

ATTACHMENTS

1. January Employee Anniversaries
2. Memorandum on Citizen Academy