



# City of Homer

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## Office of the City Manager

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### Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council  
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager  
DATE: March 23, 2023  
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for March 28, 2023 Council Meeting

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#### Budget

Since the last meeting, the majority of my time has been spent attempting to wrap up a first draft of the operating and capital budgets. Council will receive a draft of the FY24/25 Operating Budget in the supplemental packet on Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>. Finance Director Elizabeth Walton and I have spent many hours together, and apart, preparing the draft document for Council with the help of our department heads and division managers. The actual ordinance will come before Council in April and we'll schedule some work session time to go through the proposal in more detail.

#### Parks Update

In March, we started the implementation of a strategy to split up Parks Division functions in a way that will hopefully improve service to the public and make our operations more sustainable. In the past the Parks Division was charged with parks maintenance, campground management, public restroom management, airport parking enforcement, and numerous planning, promotion, relationship, volunteer, etc. duties all of which was to be administered by one year-round full-time employee and a small team of temporary employees. That set up was not practical nor sustainable. To attempt to better manage these public facing functions, the labor has been redistributed: Port and Harbor is taking on Spit Camping and airport parking enforcement (as discussed in my last report, expect to see some legislation at the first meeting in April that supports that move); the Janitorial team is taking on all public restrooms (we experimented with a contract solution last year, but the contract was not renewed and that expense removed from the draft FY24/25 budget); park maintenance will remain in Public Works; and planning, promotion, public engagement, volunteer coordination, etc. will move to Economic Development. This first season will obviously have some challenges as we sort out how to operationalize these moves, but the desired outcome is a more positive visitor experience in our parks, campgrounds, and restrooms. In the FY24/25 budget, you will see some related changes. The Parks Division will be looking to convert a portion of temporary employee wages into a full-time maintenance coordinator and the Parks Superintendent will move under Economic Development with a different title. The Harbor will sponsor one new janitor position, and there will be a proposed expansion of the summer temporary employee team for field and admin staff.

#### FY22 Audit

The auditors have been on site this week wrapping up audit activities to include interviews of key personnel like myself, the Finance Director, the Chief Technology Officer, and the Mayor. The FY22 audit should be

complete relatively soon. I expect that the audit will be brought before Council in April for review and acceptance.

### **Council/Commissions Joint Session Plan – To Be Reconfigured**

In my last report, there was a memo from the City Clerk which indicated we would be attempting to put together a joint session with Council and all the commissions to do some training and communicate about roles. We set a target of April 3<sup>rd</sup>, but it is not looking like we will get the level of participation we need to maintain a quorum of all bodies. Staff, working with Councilmembers Lord and Erickson, will reconfigure the plan. The most likely outcome will be a series of work sessions where Council meets with one commission at a time.

### **HPD Movie Night**

The Police Department recently hosted two mental health themed movie nights where they screened a film called PTSD911 for police and fire staff and spouses. I was able to join in on one evening, and it was very encouraging to see our first responders actively acknowledge the impacts their jobs can have on mental health and look for opportunities to support each other.

### **FEMA BRIC Grant**

In late 2022 we submitted a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC) grant application to adopt and implement a building code here in Homer. We are still waiting on a decision from FEMA regarding our submittal, but we are seeing promising signs that they like the project we proposed. On Thursday, March 16, Ryan Foster, Special Projects Coordinator, was invited to meet with officials of the City of St. Paul, AK, and the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management to discuss FEMA BRIC grant application process. St. Paul is considering applying for the 2023 FEMA BRIC grant for building code adoption and implementation and asked questions regarding the City of Homer's experience in submitting a 2022 application for building code adoption and implementation.

### **Coast Guard City Update**

In my last report I wrote that we were waiting on Congress, turns out that was not entirely correct. A representative from the Coast Guard City program reached out to let us know our package was routed to the Commandant's office this month and once she signs it, *then* it will go to Congress for an approval process that takes about 30 days. We're still on track, just a month behind where we thought we were in the process.

### **Ladder Truck Update**

Early reports from the recent ladder testing are good. We're expecting an official report soon. If all signs continue to point towards this being a good deal for the City, expect an ordinance in April to capitalize on this opportunity.

### **Goodbye to Christine Draais, Assistant to the City Manager**

Christine joined our team as Assistant to the City Manager back in 2021. She has done a phenomenal job of keeping the City Manager's office organized and moving forward in the time she's spent with us in Homer. Christine brought great energy and a new level of hospitality to the office, and the various state and federal officials who visit us here in Homer. She has been my lead on publishing a very informative and useful City newsletter every month. She also provides a lot of behind the scenes services to me, the special projects team, and Human Resources. Bella Vaz will be moving upstairs from planning to take on the Assistant to the City Manager role shortly with remote support from Christine as we manage the transition.