



City of Homer

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Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE: May 18, 2023
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for May 22, 2023 Council Meeting

US Army Corps Charrettes

The US Army Corps of Engineers' charrette process got underway on Wednesday, May 17th and is scheduled to run through Friday, May 19th. Working together with the Army Corps, and our owner's representative HDR, the charrette process was expanded and public engagement opportunities increased beyond what would be provided in a "standard" project study. Only one day of the charrette occurred before submittal of my report, but I have high hopes for the outcome of this early checkpoint in the study.



Todd Cook Wins AWWMA Large System Manager of the Year Award!

In addition to the City's award for the large wastewater system of the year, Todd Cook, Homer's Water/Sewer Superintendent, received the Large System Manager of the Year Award from the Alaskan Water & Wastewater Management Association (AWWMA) at its annual conference in Anchorage on May 10, 2023. This award is in "recognition of excellence in performance as a manager of a large water and/or waste water system in Alaska. "Large" refers to any system serving 2,500 or more customers, which means Todd was chosen from managers representing Anchorage, Wasilla, Juneau and other, much larger cities. Todd has served the citizens of Homer for almost 14 years. He has been instrumental in introducing upgrades to the City's water and waste water operational and maintenance protocols that have improved water quality for Homer customers and Kachemak Bay. Prior to coming to Homer, Todd worked for the water/sewer utilities of Cordova and Sitka.

He plays the Native American flute, bass guitar and drums. His eight children include multiple wrestling champions, boys and girls, who have represented Homer at state and national wrestling tournaments over a period of over 10 years. I'm planning on having Todd make a brief presentation to Council in June about our water and wastewater systems.

Information Technology Plan Update

The IT Division, under the direction of Library Director Dave Berry, developed its first comprehensive Information Technology Plan in 2021. In a time of pandemic, high demand for tech services, and low staffing levels, it was very helpful to deploy a well-structured planning framework to focus our IT efforts. Earlier this year, Bill Jirsa joined the IT team as the Chief Technology Officer. He is currently leading the team through an update to the IT Plan for FY24 and beyond. Our main priorities for the foreseeable future are cyber-security, service management, and infrastructure reliability. We're still understaffed for the size and complexity of our organization's IT assets (I would recommend building up to at least five FTE across the next few years), but with all three budgeted positions filled in IT we are seeing a lot of great work from the team.

Budget Chat on KBBI

Mayor Castner, Councilmember Lord, and I were the guests for this week's Coffee Table program. We spent the hour talking about the budget currently before Council, the process of developing the budget, and answered questions from the host and listeners about the budget.

Summer Reading Program

The Homer Public Library's summer reading program launches on June 3rd. There are numerous special events planned for June and July listed on the City's website: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library/summer-hpl-2023>

Return to Municode Meetings

After a year of working with iCompass for agenda management, the Clerk's Office is returning to Municode Meetings. Across the last year, staff worked with iCompass to transition to their platform. Ultimately the program was not a good fit for the City. We did, however, receive benefit from the process. We are quite happy with the look of the new agenda layout, we've also made improvements to internal processes inspired by things we learned in our attempt to transition platforms. We are in the process of moving back to the Municode Meetings program we were using previously. Municode doesn't have as many bells and whistles as iCompass, but it has proven to be a better fit for how we do things here in Homer.

Public Works Campus Land Purchase

I mentioned at a previous meeting that we may be close to having a parcel for Council to consider purchasing as part of a long-term plan to move parts of Public Works out of the tsunami zone and into better fitting facilities for our heavy equipment. Finding an appropriate parcel has been a priority since the Public Works Task Force completed its work in fall of 2021. We've had difficulties finding parcels that meet the City's needs, are available for sale, and have sellers willing to let them go for a price that can be supported by an appraisal. We have zeroed in on an 8+ acre parcel that checks those boxes. I anticipate that an ordinance will come to Council at the next regular meeting for introduction to move forward with a purchase of a parcel for Public Works. We don't currently have a timeline for the next phase of that project, however, if we do purchase land it will open up grant opportunities not currently available to us for relocating the campus.