

Weekly Report – 2/25-3/3

Mayor and Council,

Below is this week's weekly report. There are a handful of updates on DeIDOT projects that are likely of interest outlined in the public works section. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Have a great weekend!

General

1. HB 58: This bill will amend our charter to allow SRL borrowing without referendum and is scheduled to be heard in committee on March 8th.
2. We have posted to fill 21 vacancies so far this year (counting all of the police positions as one) so it is shaping up to be another busy year for recruitment.
3. As of today we received 465 applications for our police dispatcher job opening. This is up from 42 during our last hiring process held last May. We can't confirm yet, but it appears that the only difference between this hiring process and the most recent process, aside from being 9 months later, is Epic Recruiting who is actively working to promote our police department.

Public Works

1. Our application for State Revolving Loan (SRL) funding for the South Well Field (SWF) PFAS removal project was approved by the Water Infrastructure Advisory Council (WIAC) water subcommittee on March 1st. The next step is the full WIAC meeting in mid-March.
2. Engineering staff from Public Works, Electric, and the city manager attended the DeIDOT Utility Summit this week. The summit is intended to improve the coordination process between DeIDOT and utilities in the State on both DeIDOT and developer led projects. The training also counts toward the continuing education requirements of professional engineering licenses.
3. I-95 will be closed at Chapman Road overnight from March 2nd through March 7th. Traffic will be detoured down 273 west to Rt. 4, eventually to 896 south and back to I-95 south. While overnight, this will still impact traffic on the south side of town. The first night (Thursday the 2nd) appears to have gone smoothly.
4. DeIDOT is planning to rebuild the intersection of Main Street and Library Avenue this summer. The intersection was recently paved in asphalt, but it is not holding up well due to the large number of turning vehicles. They plan to rebuild the intersection using concrete which will be more durable but will also cause more disruption during construction due to the longer cure times needed for concrete. We will have more information on this project soon and will work with the Communications team to push the information out to the public.
5. Valley Road will be closed for approximately a month to allow for the installation of an upgraded culvert and new water and sewer mains for the Briar Creek North subdivision. Information will be provided to the public via social media.
6. We met with the engineer representing DeIDOT for the project to improve safety at the CSX rail crossing adjacent to Deer Park. There was a change of personnel at CSX which delayed the project but it is moving forward now and we anticipate the work will be completed in a more

timely manner moving forward. We don't anticipate the need for the City to complete the originally planned temporary interim solution now which is good because we have not been successful in directly getting or finding any contractors who can get the insurance required by CSX to work within their right of way.

Planning

1. Nuisance property abatement plan: Planning has provided the city manager with a final draft of the nuisance property abatement plan to review ahead of distribution to Council via the council packet.
2. Newark Connect: Staff is working with DTC on service level standards and reviewing options to provide additional subsidies for low income riders. This plan will eventually come to Council once we have a recommendation.
3. Super One: The building has been demolished and building permits have been issued for the replacement
4. The Grove: Building 2 at the grove has received its certificate of completion and they are beginning to move people into the building as individual units are completed.
5. Fairfield Apartments: Staff has met with the owner and is working to get the project restarted. They are waiting on windows that are on backorder before they can close the building envelope.

Facilities

1. Carpet Replacement: This project will begin on Monday in the police department. Facilities will begin coordinating with municipal offices next week to box up gear.
2. Police Parking Lot Fence: Facilities has a scheduled meeting with representatives from the VFW to discuss the project and potential impacts to the VFW property.

Finance/Information Technology

1. IT is kicking off a cyber security awareness training program for staff. This will be completed this month. A second security training will be held for those employees who work with credit card information. This is a new requirement of our cyber security insurance coverage policy.
2. Insurance renewal is on track to be before council for approval ahead of expiration of our current policy. We are anticipating the annual renewal will be several percentage points higher than our prior policy due to general cost increases for insurance broadly and needed building/equipment valuation changes that were identified during renewal. We assumed there would be an increase and included some additional funding in the approved 2023 budget. We will know if we included adequate funding in the next few weeks.
3. Finance is finalizing the annual update to the revenue stabilization adjustment (RSA) for the electric fund. We anticipate the RSA will increase slightly but not as much as we had originally anticipated.

Police

1. Student move out/in: NPD is working to schedule a meeting with UD to discuss ways to improve the move in/out process following a less than ideal move in this past fall.
2. St. Patrick's Day: Police are preparing for St. Patrick's Day in anticipation of a lot of parties. We will allocate additional staff on days where we anticipate increased activity

3. The Newark Partnership: Chief Farrall met with Mark Arehart, the new executive director for TNP.

City Secretary's Office

1. Work is underway on the project to redistribute filing cabinets around the building to alleviate the slab settlement issue in the City Secretary's office. The old solicitor's office will now house some of the files and the solicitor's desk has been relocated into the old file room. We have relocated other files elsewhere in the office and building.

Electric

1. The outage management system (OMS) project has been pushed to 2024 to allow staff time to focus on the SCADA conversion project to allow us to eliminate our old SCADA provider and the annual fees associated with that vendor. While we were hoping to keep the OMS project moving, staff feels it is better to focus on one project at a time to complete them more efficiently. This will also eliminate a significant annual expense when completed.

Court

1. We have received 4 applicants for the part time bailiff position. Interviews will be held in mid-March.