



Monthly Activities Report

Department of Engineering and Public Services

February 1, 2018 **Department of Public Services**

The following items are designed to present information on Public Services Department work items recently completed, those expected to occur during the upcoming month, and other items of potential interest to the public. Information is subject to change at any time due to staff availability, weather events or other emergency situations, or numerous other factors. Items are not necessarily in order of importance, and may not be repeated in their entirety from month to month unless there is a need for continued reporting.

1. Citizen Request Module items – In total, 14 requests for service (out of a total of 35 for the entire City organization – for 40%) were logged into the City's online citizen request module requiring service from the Public Services Department during the month of January, which is typically a slow month as most citizens with winter operations concerns phone the staff rather than use the Action Line. Requests included 3 each for snow removal, pothole complaints, forestry items, and garbage collection concerns, with the remaining 2 being sign requests.

As per the Department operations manual, all code enforcement items (particularly high grass) where property owners will eventually be billed are entered by staff and tracked within this system for record-keeping purposes, and other non-emergency requests for service received via phone call are logged into the system as well. Since the new web site launch on February 1, we will be using a new program, so there may be a few gaps in coverage due to the switch-over.

2. Forestry Activities – Forestry Activities – During the month of January, the Forestry work group has focused mainly on direct citizen requests and low-limbing work, with the assistance of Heavy Equipment Operators in the Operations work group. Forestry staff also assisted with snow removal operations during some of the winter events in January. Due to the present vacancy within the work crew and the short medical leave of the Job Leader, a work crew has been put together using other employees to supplement the one remaining Forestry Maintenance Worker. The work crew was able to accomplish the grinding of 60 stumps, trimming of 54 trees and removal 7 trees. Final restoration of the stump locations is being planned for the early spring.
3. Yard Waste – yard waste collection has ended for the season as of the week of December 11 and tentatively planned to resume on April 2, 2018.
4. Vactor Truck / Storm Cleaning – Due to generally freezing temperatures, our vactor operations in winter are typically limited to emergencies only, unless the weather is favorable for long periods of time. At present, the tank on our unit has collapsed and thus the equipment is presently unusable, and a decision is pending on repair of the tank or replacement of the unit, which hopefully will be made prior to spring.

5. Cold Patching – this continues to be a primary work activity throughout the year. Citizens should feel free to contact Public Services staff via the citizen request module, phone, or email to report potholes, and we will do our best to handle complaints within 48 hours. Obviously, during inclement weather, resolution of potholes tends to be more problematic but we do attempt to handle these as soon as the weather stabilizes after receiving the complaint.
6. Refuse Contract – City Council awarded a contract to Waste Management for the next 5-year curbside refuse collection at their September 18 meeting. The new contract will begin March 1 and will include unlimited refuse collection and “opt in” for 64-gallon recycling carts. However, the actual start of unlimited collection will be delayed until the first week in May to prevent excessive collection the first few weeks during potentially poor weather. Public outreach efforts and notification will begin this month, including a new service flyer and insert mailed to every home in the City. We have determined the most efficient way to distribute the new 64-gallon carts is to drop them off at homes presently recycling rather than force residents to call to request them, though they can still be returned later if residents instead choose to remain with smaller bins. This drop-off will occur the week of March 26, followed by the first collection with the new carts the week of April 2. New requests for larger carts from new homeowners or those wishing to begin recycling will go through the DPS clerical staff throughout the duration of the contract.
7. Winter Operations (specific to previous month) – the month of January was typical for our area, as there were a number of smaller events requiring after-hours call-in, and some occasions where multiple work shifts were scheduled. However, there have been no snow emergencies declared, and all events were generally single storms of 6 inches or less, though a large portion of our department’s attention this month has been focused in one way or another on snow removal activities. While DPS has had to clear a few sidewalks at the cost of the property owner where they were not done in a timely fashion, thus far we have fortunately achieved a high level of cooperation as the Engineering Department has been providing a 24-hour “courtesy” notice upon inspection of complaints.
8. Downtown curb line snow removal contract – after two (2) years with a dedicated service contract, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) chose not to enter into a contract to remove the continuous row of snow from the top of the curbs in the downtown area that results from both roadway plowing and sidewalk clearance by property owners. As such, DPS staff will be tasked fully with this work in 2017-18. With these activities generally considered to be a lower priority than street and parking lot clearance City-wide, in larger storm events this activity may be postponed 3-4 days until it can be undertaken. Thus far this season, this work has only occurred once, and this was done prior to the holiday parade for the safety of the observers.
9. Miscellaneous Winter Projects – as with every winter, the Department keeps a list of potential projects that can either be accomplished inside, or could be addressed appropriately in a year without bitterly cold temperatures and / or excessive snow. Additional low-limbing of trees is always a major priority as it is probably the single most consistent departmental activity where proactivity will yield long-term dividends in the form of fewer emergency call-outs. We typically like to also make headway on sign replacement during the winter, specifically those stop and street name signs necessary to meet Federal retro-reflectivity guidelines and that may not require new channels to be driven into the ground. In 2016, due to the extremely warm winter, we were able to replace all of the “stop” and “no parking” signs on the south side of the river, and we plan to continue with the north side this winter as conditions allow.

10. Monroe Multi-Sports Complex assistance – Public Services staff have been assisting with numerous tasks for the eventual repurposing of the Monroe Multi-Sports complex, particularly within the past few months. Staff will also be coordinating an auction for the various items designated for sale that were not already sold through sealed bids, and this will occur sometime in the next few months.
11. Property Maintenance Assistance – the City has recently been acquiring a number of residential dwellings for eventual incorporation into the River Raisin National Battlefield, and in some cases, for general blight remediation. Public Services staff has been assisting other City departments as needed on a number of tasks, including securing / boarding up, gaining entry, re-keying locks, remediating residual blight issues, and some lawn maintenance, depending on the property. It is expected that this assistance will continue for the foreseeable future.
12. Dump Truck Engine Replacement – a few weeks ago, one of our four primary salt / plow trucks, the 2001 Ford Sterling 6-cubic yard dump trucks, required extensive work. After review of options, we have decided to replace the entire engine at a cost of approximately \$15,000 in parts and \$2500 in labor (in-house). We are attempting to schedule this work around snow events, so that the shop hoist is not occupied during necessary blade changes for the other vehicles. We expect to make a number of equipment replacement decisions shortly, as both tandem axle, 10-cubic yard trucks were also taken out of service last year at 26 years of age. We are planning to replace at least those units with more versatile “swap loader” trucks with multiple attachments such as dump bed, leaf vacuum, and possibly even a vactor unit can all be mounted and interchanged easily. Given the fiscal constraints of the fund, these replacements all must be phased in over a period of years. It should be noted that other units such as end loaders and our box grader can be pressed into service for plowing operations if necessary.

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