

September 6, 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 – The City launched the new “My Monroe on the Go” application that is now being used to track citizen requests, and will now automatically generate work orders for service. During the month of August, a total of 65 service requests were entered. The largest category, as in most months, was Forestry with 43 requests, followed by 8 garbage complaints, 7 pothole issues, 3 street light outages, and 1 each in the categories of road hazard, signs, dead animals, and a public nuisance.
2. Forestry Activities – Forestry Activities – in the month of August the Forestry work group completed the removal of 17 trees and trimmed 50 trees. Additional work included the removal of 5 bee nests and the grinding of 9 stumps. Finally, the work group assisted in the disposal of several cottonwood trees which were located at the wastewater treatment plant.
3. Vector Truck / Storm Cleaning – the City Council approved the purchase of a new vector truck to be used in cleaning catch basins and storm sewers at the August 6 meeting, and we are expecting delivery later this month. We will attempt to complete as much work as possible before heavy leaf drop requires the re-assignment of vector personnel.
4. Cold Patching – this continues to be a primary work activity throughout the year, even now that the weather conditions have stabilized. 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 as quickly as possible. We typically try to address any complaints within 48 hours most of the year.
5. 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 until the current group of 28-30 homes are demolished later this month, and then occur more sporadically for the foreseeable future.

6. Street Sweeping – we are presently running one sweeper for our maintenance level until October, when multiple units are used for the heavy leaf season. Again for the 2018 season, after the early season sweeping was completed, we have been focusing less on street sweeping and more on other operations. For the remainder of the season, now that a vactor purchase has been approved, we will focus on vactor operations, which are also charged to the Refuse Fund, as we feel that this change may have an overall more favorable effect on storm system maintenance and street flooding prevention.
7. Parks staffing – As with past seasons, one (1) DPS Maintenance Worker has been transferred under the Parks Maintenance Supervisor again this year. The temporary assignment began April 2 and will run through October 27 this year as per the adopted budget and approved organizational structure. Should the Parks Supervisor require additional assistance or for heavy projects, DPS staff will assist as able at their request, otherwise full responsibility for all parks items other than forestry issues, the grass cutting contract, and contracted capital projects will again fall under the Parks and Recreation Department.
8. Mowing Contract – we are in the fifth year of a five-year mowing contract, and mowing activities started in late April and will run through the end of November. The regular contract work was divided into 5 groups this contract, with US Lawns of Southgate handling mowing in Woodland Cemetery and Memorial Place, along with monthly weed trimming along more than a mile of riverbank, and Ron Noel Lawn Service of Monroe handling all other City properties. In total, the City contracts for mowing 613 gross acres (nearly 1 square mile), which is roughly 9% of the entire area of the City. The City Council has approved extending the contract with Ron Noel Lawn Service for their activities for an additional three (3) seasons through 2021, and we will be exploring options for the riverbank mowing with our own staff starting in 2019, depending on equipment purchases. We will also be looking at changes to the delivery package for the cemeteries as well starting in 2019.
9. High Grass Enforcement – US Lawns of Southgate will again be performing our ordinance mowing, also in the fifth year of a five-year contract. The annual policy statement on Noxious Weed and Grass Procedures was issued April 24 and posted on the City's web page. Lot sizes have been grouped, so that the pricing will be the same for all lots of the same size (for example, under 0.25 acres, 0.25–0.50 acres, 0.50–1.00 acres, and per acre for 1 acre or more). The authorized start date of ordinance mowing was May 1. As with 2017, the Building Department will handle review and enforcement, whereas the Public Services and Engineering clerical staff will handle billing.
10. Memorial Place Floral Display – we again have worked with Ruhlig Farms in Carleton to supply flowers that have been placed in the traditional “MONROE” display by our staff as in past years. This work was completed in time for the Memorial Day parade, and staff will continue to maintain the display through the end of this month.
11. Fire Station Ground-Breaking – DPS staff also assisted with the ground-breaking for the new Fire Station #1 on September 5, including erection of the project signs and ground disturbance, along with some other minor coordination items.
12. Banners – the downtown summer seasonal jazz banners will be replaced with the fall banners sometime this month.

13. Leaf Bag Distribution – the City is tentatively planning to begin distributing leaf bags on Saturday, October 6 at the Department of Public Services facility at 222 Jones Avenue. Details will be provided shortly in a separate press release.
14. Special Events – the month of August typically brings a fair amount of staff effort toward special events, highlighted by the River Raisin Jazz Festival and Downtown Art Fair August 11-13, and the majority of our staff typically takes the opportunity to spend the two weeks leading up to the festival performing some “once a year” tasks in addressing aesthetic deficiencies in downtown parking lots, the Riverwalk, and downtown Monroe in general. All told, staff efforts are substantial in this regard, as is the City’s overtime contribution during the event, which can be as high as \$10,000 from the Public Services Department alone, depending on which work items are considered. The Labor Day Bar-B-Q and Parade also occurred on September 1 and involved roadway barricading, use of the DPS yard for staging, and electrical connection assistance. The Battlefield Foundation’s Rally by the River (September 15), SMCC Homecoming Parade (September 21), and the DMBN Craft Beer festival will also be occurring this month, requiring varying degrees of staff involvement. While the smaller events serve an important cultural and recreational purpose for our residents and visitors, nevertheless our activities can displace other potential projects and proactive maintenance activities in other areas, and are often the source of significant overtime costs.
15. Fountains – staff will be turning off the Lotus Fountain in Loranger Square for the season sometime this month, as leaf drop frequently clogs the pumps. The decorative fountain in Munson Park will also be removed toward the end of the month as well.

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