



CITY OF WASHINGTON COUNCIL REPORT

March 1, 2024

CITY ADMINISTRATION – Jim Snider

- **Governor’s Budget Proposal to Eliminate Grocery Sales Tax**

Outlined below is IML CEO Brad Cole’s correspondence regarding Governor Pritzker’s proposal to eliminate the 1% sales tax on groceries. **We have calculated an estimated annual sales tax proceeds loss of \$500,000 for the City of Washington if this reduction occurs.**

We have distributed information to all municipal officials about the [Governor's State of the State Address and State Budget Address \(available via this link\)](#).

As widely reported in multiple media outlets (see links below), the Illinois Municipal League (IML) is strongly opposed to the proposal to eliminate the 1% grocery sales tax that is dedicated for local governments. You may recall two years ago when the state enacted a suspension of the same grocery tax, but retailers were required to continue to report their sales and the state made corresponding transfers from the state’s General Revenue Fund to municipalities, so there was no lost revenue based on actual grocery sales. This latest proposal from the Governor does not include the transfer from the state to municipalities, therefore creating an estimated loss of approximately \$325 million statewide that will impact local governments. If the state wishes to transfer General Revenue Funds again to offset the loss, IML would support the proposal...but that is not what the Governor is recommending.

We are asking all local officials to contact their State Representative and State Senator to voice opposition to this massive revenue reduction that will negatively impact all municipalities. Even if your specific municipality does not receive a significant amount of grocery tax receipts, please know that a lack of coordinated opposition to this proposal will likely lead to other such proposals in the future that will reduce funding from other sources. We must make sure all legislators hear from their local officials on this critical issue.

We also ask you to inform us if you have an estimated dollar amount in which this will impact your specific municipality. For instance, if you estimate this will cost \$XX,XXX annually as reduced revenues, please respond to this message and let us know that amount, so we can also share it in our conversations with legislators and others.

Once you have spoken with your legislator, please submit feedback to us through this [online submission form \(available via this link\)](#), so we can track each legislator’s committed position. Thank you for your help in this manner.

To be blunt, I left no room for confusion or uncertainty yesterday when speaking with senior officials in the Governor’s Office about this revenue reduction. Nonetheless, IML is focused on working with the General Assembly and Administration to resolve this issue and retain funding for local governments. In addition to this particular revenue reduction, we are aware of other proposals in the Governor’s budget that may negatively impact local funding, such as related to mass transit districts and other programs and services. We will continue to review the entire budget proposal and advocate on behalf of all cities, villages and towns to protect and preserve funding sources.

ENGINEERING – Dennis Carr/Ross Fuller

- Gensini has returned to Nofsinger and has finished installing the sanitary sewer. Dirt work has started on the north side of 24. The box culvert will be delivered on Monday.
- We received the prefinal plans for the Catherine project and have begun our internal review of them.

- Been in contact with Lonewolf concrete about work that needs completed before May 1. We have a handful of residential requests that have been approved for the 70/30 sidewalk and curb replacement program. We plan to do a capital improvement project on Elm and Melvin with the remaining money that we have budgeted for this fiscal year.
- Strand reached out to us and asked if we could provide them with some data that is needed for the lagoon feasibility study. We are currently working to locate buried manholes on the Northeast portion of the trunk line. Once located, the Trimble GPS is being used to move them to the correct location on our maps and get the invert elevations that Strand is requesting.
- Hutchison Engineering Inc will begin design of the Eagle Avenue sidewalk project. Targeting construction in the summer.

FINANCE – Joanie Baxter

- Electronic filing of all 1099s
- Assistance with insurance claims
- Budget preparation – FY2025:
 - Significant time implementing Personnel budgeting in ClearGov, including multiple training sessions with implementation consultant and setup of all units, wage schedules, additional pay and benefits and employees in order to project personnel costs for FY2025.
 - Development of L/A budget, General Fund revenue projections.
 - Jill prepared and I reviewed City Hall budget.
 - Import of capital and input of revenue for Group 3 funds.
 - Preparation of fund spreadsheets and summaries for Council review.
 - Analysis of estimated actuals for Personnel for FY2024.
- Jill processed and I reviewed payroll for March 1, 2024
- Utility Billing (February 17 – March 1, 2024)
 - A total of 287 cutoff notices were processed for January billing for accounts still outstanding
 - A total of 24 accounts were cut off for January and 20 door knockers were distributed and 24 payment arrangements made
 - A total of four disconnects were sent final notices for February delinquent accounts
 - New accounts and account closings processed:
 - 24 ins
 - 24 outs
 - Leak detection through RNI and Sensus Analytics software – 28 leaks were caught and residents/businesses notified

HUMAN RESOURCES – Maureen Chambers

- Completed the 2024 Step Challenge “Movin’ & Groovin’” that kicked off on February 5. One more week of step-tracking to go. Prize winners were announced on 2/29.
- Eight employees took advantage of the Health Coaching Calls through Rock Valley. In process of developing a quick 2-3 question survey for participants.
- Created sign-up for Good Neighbor Days 5K/Walk will advertise starting in April.
- Hosted two interviews for the Wastewater Laborer position. May host one or two more next week and then make an offer.
- Working on recruitment for seasonal Grounds Maintenance staff, under the supervision of Brandon Vermillion. Two gentlemen will hopefully be returning from last year and would like to hire one more. Prepared onboarding packets for Jill Thomas in case employees start in April.
- Putting together PD onboarding packets for new officers that may hire this Spring.
- Completing Newsletters for March, April, and May.
- Attended Employment Law webinar through the Bloomington-Normal HR Council.
- Completed last of two Authorized Agent webinars for IMRF.
- Creating new Gym Membership Reimbursement Form to be distributed in March for April reimbursement.
- Processed handful of termination/retirement/personnel/benefit items.
- Last day in-office will be Thursday, March 28.
- Processed handful of termination/retirement/personnel/benefit items.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT – Jon Oliphant/Joe Boyer

- An interior demolition permit has been issued for 120 Walnut to allow that work to begin while the fire suppression plans are being finalized. That is the last item needed to issue a building permit for the renovation of the building.
- The March PZC meeting will have one case: A request by the Washington PD to rezone the fire station parcels at 200 N. Wilmor from R-1 to C-1 to comply with the permitted uses allowed for the property upon the eventual evidence building construction.
- Staff has been working with the project engineer for the evidence building project on determining any prior dedications of the adjacent right-of-way on W. Jefferson and N. Wilmor and whether an easement was previously drafted for the recreation trail on the north side of the property. We will look to have all of this addressed now should the adequate dedications not have been made previously.
- Staff is working with the owner and property manager for Cherry Tree Shopping Center to address safety concerns with the stairs leading to the upstairs units.
- Staff submitted several possible road and rec trail projects to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission for its work on the region's 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. Those particular shorter-term projects will allow for them to be considered as part of the regional prioritization process and potentially improve the ability to obtain federal and/or state funding.
- Culver's has indicated a tentative grand opening of March 25.
- The brewpub project at 140 Washington Square is awaiting Ameren to relocate a power line, which is impacting the start of the steel installation.
- The Chamber is looking at holding this year's Meet and Mingle on April 18. There has been some discussion amongst the Board about having a more traditional sit-down dinner. However, food prices would cause the registration to be around \$75 per person and there is not much desire to charge that much. The cost is expected to be slightly less than \$30 per person for a light appetizer graze table.
- Staff anticipates the submittal soon of the final plat for the Protea Place multi-family development near S. Cummings and BR 24. Initial construction figures to start in late spring or early summer based on feedback given to staff.
- Staff has been working with the owner of The Hub property on a Phase 2 development, which would tentatively consist of two four-unit buildings. Construction could begin within the first half of this year.
- Staff attended an IML legal seminar that included sessions on administrative adjudication and dealing with nuisance properties. The first reading ordinance to establish an administrative adjudication process will be on the Council's agenda for Monday.

PUBLIC SAFETY – Chief McCoy/Deputy Chief Stevens

- For awareness purposes we note the speeding citation issued with the greatest difference between the posted limit and the cited speed during this reporting period: 70 MPH on Washington at Wagner (40 MPH zone), barely beating out 73 MPH on Washington at Lakeshore (45 MPH zone).
- We scheduled replacement of sprinkler heads this year, but that was delayed several months for parts availability. On Feb 21, we discovered a leaking sprinkler head that damaged stored items but no building structure. We have since completed replacing corroded sprinkler heads throughout the building.
- Public Works completed phase one of readying our new evidence space for occupancy and we have scheduled a move (pending weather cooperation).

PUBLIC WORKS – Brian Rittenhouse

- Staff continues to assist with the Public Works Storage/Evidence Building fire investigation. Staff will update council once we have the report.
- Once staff is given the ok by the investigators, we will have the mowers and the roller looked at. The insurance representative asked staff to look into the replacement cost of the smaller equipment that was damaged by the fire.
- Staff continues to look into options for sweeping streets this spring and summer. I will update council once we have an option or two that will get us by until the new sweeper arrives in August/September.
- Staff continues to jet and televise sewer mains for routine maintenance.
- Storm inlet inspections have been completed north of the bypass. Staff will work on any maintenance that needs to be completed.
- Service requests have picked up due to the nice weather.
- Budget preparation for FY 24-25