



Department of Employee Relations

Cavalier Johnson

Mayor

Jackie Q. Carter

Director

Molly King

Employee Benefits Director

Nicole M. Fleck

Labor Negotiator

January 15, 2026

The Honorable
Finance and Personnel Committee
Common Council
City of Milwaukee

Common Council File No. 251697 - "Communication from the Department of Employee Relations amending the Salary Ordinance to add a percentage increase for Water Repair Worker 2s assigned to operate the Hydro-Vac equipment in the Department of Public Works – Water Works."

Dear Committee Members:

The Milwaukee Water Works (MWW) has requested an assignment percentage increase to Water Repair Worker 2s when they operate hydro-vac equipment. The basic function of a Water Repair Worker 2 in Pay Range 8EN (\$54,407 – \$74,238) Wage Rate is to work as part of a repair crew; conduct routine maintenance and repairs as well as emergency repairs of the water distribution system; drive and operate a tri-axle dump truck to haul construction materials; operate a drill rig to locate leaks; operate a crew van with all the tools, equipment, and supplies needed to conduct repairs; repair water mains, hydrants, and valves; and act as a Repair Worker 3 in the absence of the Water Repair Worker 3, when assigned.

An assignment footnote currently exists on the official position title of Water Repair Worker 3. An employee assigned to operate a Hydro-Vac is paid an additional 10% biweekly. There are currently only 25 incumbents in the official position title due to previous staffing challenges from 2021 – 2023. These challenges resulted in significant attrition and the hire of more than 60 new water repair worker employees between 2023 – 2024, almost all of whom were hired in the underfill title of Water Repair Worker 1. To ensure the Utility has a sufficient number of certified hydro-vac operators, the Division is requesting the assignment footnote be added to the underfill title of Water Repair Worker 2 so that these employees can also be certified and assigned to hydro-vac duty. Of the current Water Repair Worker 3s some are on special assignments, such as being part of the Lost Water/Leak Search team, while others lack the skills or interest in becoming hydro-vac operators. At this time the Utility has four (4) hydro-vac units but only two (2) certified operators.

The Division relies heavily on this pool of employees to operate the hydro-vac, which can quickly and safely excavate water main facilities for daily maintenance activities and in emergency conditions. The use of these trucks result in more compact excavations and helps to lessen the chance of damage to nearby utilities.

Operation of the hydro-vac requires specialized training and skills plus regular assignments so that an employee can maintain the expertise and knowledge needed to operate the equipment correctly and safely to perform excavation around other underground utilities and obstacles. Employees are only assigned to hydro-vac duty after being certified by a third-party vendor. Certification training includes 12 classroom hours and three months of on-the-job training.

A 10% assignment increase to Pay Range 8EN (\$54,407 – \$74,238) Wage Rate would address challenges in finding certified operators to perform hydro-vac duties, when needed, and make water repair activities more efficient. The requested assignment percentage of 10% for Water Repair Worker 2s who are assigned to operate the hydro-vac seems reasonable and we recommend the footnote be created to the Water Repair Worker 2 title to provide a 10% hydro-vac operator assignment increase.

Action Required – Effective Pay Period 5, 2026 (February 15, 2026)

In the Salary Ordinance

Under Pay Range 8EN

- Create footnote (7) to read: An employee assigned to operator a Hydro-Vac to be paid an additional 10% biweekly.
- Apply footnote (7) to the title 'Water Repair Worker 2'

Sincerely,



Jackie Q. Carter
Employee Relations Director

JQC/aeh



City of Milwaukee Fiscal Impact Statement

A	Date	2/4/2026	File Number	251697	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute
	Subject	Communication from the Department of Employee Relations amending the Salary Ordinance to add a percentage increase for Water Repair Worker 2s assigned to operate the Hydro-Vac equipment in the Department of Public Works – Water Works.				

B	Submitted By (Name/Title/Dept./Ext.)	Sarah Wangerin/ Human Resources Representative / Employee Relations				
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C	This File	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increases or decreases previously authorized expenditures. <input type="checkbox"/> Suspends expenditure authority. <input type="checkbox"/> Increases or decreases city services. <input type="checkbox"/> Authorizes a department to administer a program affecting the city's fiscal liability. <input type="checkbox"/> Increases or decreases revenue. <input type="checkbox"/> Requests an amendment to the salary or positions ordinance. <input type="checkbox"/> Authorizes borrowing and related debt service. <input type="checkbox"/> Authorizes contingent borrowing (authority only). <input type="checkbox"/> Authorizes the expenditure of funds not authorized in adopted City Budget.
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D	Charge To	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Department Account <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Projects Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Debt Service <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Contingent Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Special Purpose Accounts <input type="checkbox"/> Grant & Aid Accounts
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E	Purpose	Specify Type/Use	Expenditure	Revenue
	Salaries/Wages		\$0.00	\$0.00
			\$0.00	\$0.00
	Supplies/Materials		\$0.00	\$0.00
			\$0.00	\$0.00
	Equipment		\$0.00	\$0.00
			\$0.00	\$0.00
	Services		\$0.00	\$0.00
			\$0.00	\$0.00
	Other		\$0.00	\$0.00
			\$0.00	\$0.00
	TOTALS		\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00

F

Assumptions used in arriving at fiscal estimate.

The total cost for 2026 is \$656. Total cost for full year is \$775. Please see attached spreadsheet for details. Cost breakdown is in attached spreadsheet.

G

For expenditures and revenues which will occur on an annual basis over several years check the appropriate box below and then list each item and dollar amount separately.

1-3 Years 3-5 Years

1-3 Years 3-5 Years

1-3 Years 3-5 Years

H

List any costs not included in Sections D and E above.

I

Additional information.

J

This Note Was requested by committee chair.

Department of Employee Relations
Fiscal Note Spreadsheet

Finance and Personnel Committee Meeting of February 4, 2026

NEW COSTS FOR 2026												
Pos.	Dept	From	PR	To	PR	Annual	Annual	EffPP	Costs	Rollup	Rollup+ Sal	% Inc
2	MWW	Water Repair Worker 2	8EN	An employee assigned to operator a Hydro-Vac to be paid an additional 10% biweekly*	8EN	\$64,322	\$70,754	5	\$544	\$111	\$656	10%
2									\$544	\$111	\$656	

Assume effective date is Pay Period 05, 2026 (February 15, 2026) unless otherwise indicated.

Note: Totals may not be to the exact dollar due to rounding.

* As the footnote has not yet been assigned, this fiscal note assumes 2 positions at 0.05 FTE at the midpoint of the range. Actual assignments will vary.

NEW COSTS FOR FULL YEAR												
Pos.	Dept	From	PR	To	PR	Annual	Annual	EffPP	Costs	Rollup	Rollup+ Sal	
2	MWW	Water Repair Worker 2	8EN	An employee assigned to operator a Hydro-Vac to be paid an additional 10% biweekly*	8EN	\$64,322	\$70,754	1	\$643	\$132	\$775	
2									\$643	\$132	\$775	

Note: Totals may not be to the exact dollar due to rounding.

* As the footnote has not yet been assigned, this fiscal note assumes 2 positions at 0.05 FTE at the midpoint of the range. Actual assignments will vary.