

MEMORANDUM

Tues., June 26, 2007

To: Ald. Terry Witkowski, 13th District

From: Marianne C. Walsh, Research & Analysis Manager
Legislative Reference Bureau

Re: **Street Maintenance Budget Reductions, 1998 - 2007**

Per your request, the Legislative Reference Bureau has reviewed the City of Milwaukee's Adopted City Budgets for the ten-year period 1998 – 2007 to determine reductions in street maintenance activities in the Department of Public Works – Infrastructure Services Division.

It is not possible to provide a cumulative, linear dollar total for the reductions enumerated, due to the fact there have also been various reorganizations and shifts in personnel and funding allocations during this time period.

The **1998** Adopted City Budget included the reorganization of asphalt maintenance. Prior to 1998, nine crews repaired and maintained asphalt on the city's streets and alleys, including patch and pothole repair. The crews consisted of four staff: one Crew Leader, two Asphalt Workers, and a Driver-Loader. The budget reorganized asphalt maintenance, including a reduction of one asphalt crew, resulting in a cost reduction of \$85,941. This resulted in the elimination of some alley maintenance, such as pavement patching.

The **1999** Adopted City Budget included a reduction in street repair staffing for second shift operations, with the elimination of one Street Repair Laborer. Previously there had been two staff on the second shift at the Tracer Yard, except for weekends and holidays, when only one person was on duty. These individuals performed assignments remaining from the day shift, such as moving equipment and researching claims. They also responded to emergency calls from departments or to citizen requests. Because the workload fluctuated and since other staff were called in when significant problems arose, Infrastructure proposed reducing the staffing level for second shift from two to one.

The **2000** Adopted City Budget included the elimination of several vacant positions in Infrastructure, including an Office Assistant II, two Office Assistant IV, Duplicating Equipment Operator, Engineering Technician IV, Engineering

Drafting Technician II, Engineering Technician II, Street Repair Supervisor, Civil Engineer III, and a Traffic Control Engineer. In addition, a Management Civil Engineer-Senior, Street Repair Supervisor, and Public Works Inspector II were eliminated.

These positions performed various tasks in Infrastructure including capital planning, permit administration, street maintenance, downtown planning, and information system support. A total budget reduction of \$518,640 was made, including \$392,909 in salaries and wages and \$125,731 in fringe benefits.

Mid-year in 2003, the Mayor directed all City departments to prepare spending reduction plans in anticipation of extreme financial pressures in 2004, including an anticipated reduction in state shared revenue. The Common Council approved File Number 030085 in May 2003, which froze certain expenditures in various City departments. The file included a 5% reduction in the Infrastructure Division – Department of Public Works amounting to \$340,396 which included a reduction of 1 Mini-Concrete Crew and 1 Crackfill Crew; and elimination of 1 Street Repair Supervisor, 1 Bridge Laborer Crew Leader, 1 City laborer; 5 Electrical Services Laborer (seasonal) positions, and a Management Civil Engineer Sr. position.

In the **2004** Adopted City Budget, one Pole Crew and one Cable Paving Crew was eliminated. These changes resulted in the elimination of six positions and savings of approximately \$191,000. Elimination of these crews would result in delays in finishing projects.

In the Electrical Services Decision Unit, other reductions included two positions in the Sign Shop, nine positions on miscellaneous crews, and three positions that respond to electrical outages and problems.

The Group Lamp Replacement (street light bulb replacement) Program was eliminated. The change resulted in the elimination of a City Laborer and one Electrical Worker. Savings of \$86,000 were projected. Infrastructure had previously done lamp replacement on a regular schedule. Beginning in 2004, lamp replacement would be done on an as-needed basis.

The **2005** Adopted City Budget included the following reductions in Infrastructure:

Eliminated Crews:

1 Mini-Concrete Crew
Grinder Crew

1 Street Repair Crew Leader
Leader I
1 Cement Finisher Helper
1 City Laborer

1 Router Crew

1 Labor Crew Leader I
2 City Laborer

1 Sidewalk

1 Labor Crew
1 City Laborer

Eliminated positions: Machine Shop Supervisor, Laborer Electrical Services, Inventory Assistant II, Street Operations Supervisor, Civil Engineering IV, 2 Engineering Technician V.

Reduced Bridge Maintenance Staff: 1 Carpenter, 1 City Laborer.

Reduced the Crosswalk Maintenance program by 50%: 1 Painter.

In the **2006 Adopted City Budget**, the Common Council restored funding that was eliminated in the Proposed Budget for 30 seasonal positions associated with maintenance and repairs for streets and sidewalks, to work 24 weeks, and restored one Mini-Concrete Crew and one Sidewalk Grinder Crew.

In the Mayor's **2007 Proposed City Budget**, the number of authorized positions increases by 34 primarily due to transferring the Plant & Equipment and Stores Unit personnel of Support Services to the Streets & Bridges Decision Unit. Other proposed changes included reducing the number of weeks that seasonal personnel will work. These proposed changes involved the decrease of 12 positions and reduction in services, as follows:

Eliminate 1 position: **Street Repair District Manager, SG009** – Anticipated retirement by July 2007.

2 of 3 Crackfill Crews – The positions handles pavement crack filling and sealing operations. The department anticipates maintaining the same level of maintenance activity by increasing the current contract work.

Eliminate 8 positions: **2 Labor Crew Leaders I, SG235**
2 Special Street Repair Laborers, SG225
4 City Laborers, SG220

1 of 3 Concrete Crews – The positions perform various concrete, pavement, sidewalks and curb repair activities throughout the City. Seasonal workforce supplements the work of the regular crews and provides an increased level of response. The department expects an increased backlog of maintenance.

Eliminate 3 positions: **1 Street Repair Crew Leader, SG245**
1 Cement Finisher, SG982
1 City Laborer, SG220

Reduction In Work Weeks – Crews responsible for maintenance and repair of asphalt pavements, including removals, placement and finishing of asphalt streets, walks and excavation repairs will be reduced because 30 seasonal positions will be called back for only for 21 weeks in 2007, after being reduced to 24 weeks in 2006.

30 Positions -

Special Street Laborers
Laborer Crew Leader I
Asphalt Worker

Cement Finisher Helper
City Laborers

In its deliberations on the **2007 Proposed Budget**, the Common Council approved an amendment for the restoration of position authority, funding, FTEs, and operating expenditures for two Crack Fill Crews and one Concrete Crew, with a corresponding funding reduction in the Street Reconstruction capital program of an equivalent amount.

The Common Council also amended the 2007 Proposed Budget to restore sidewalk reconstruction to the 2006 funding level with an equal reduction to the Street Reconstruction capital program.

The 2007 Adopted City Budget eliminated one Street Repair Operations Manager and reduced the work period for 30 seasonal workers by 3 weeks, from 24 weeks in 2006 to 21 weeks in 2007.

Please contact me if I may be of further assistance to you in this matter.

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