

**Proposal for the Creation of Working Foreman Positions
Within the Operations Division
of the Department of Public Infrastructure**

City of Manitowoc

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Introduction

Over the past several years, changes in staffing levels within the Department of Infrastructure have resulted in a dynamic situation whereby constant monitoring and changes take place in order to continue providing quality services to the Citizens of Manitowoc with diminished resources.

The idea with the redistribution of roles and responsibilities last year was an attempt to more evenly distribute the workload following the retirement of the former Operations Team Leader. An effort was made to accomplish this in such a manner so as to preserve a flatter organization chart while maintaining a chain of command whereby directives would be given, and information conveyed to those in the field by the shortest, most direct path possible. For the most part, this model has been a success. However, it became glaringly obvious fairly early on that there is still a strong need for an assistant within the division. The challenge then became how to bridge the gap between a flat organizational structure, while at the same time providing assistance to the team leaders. We believe the perfect balance can be attained through the use of working foremen. It is proposed to add three working foremen, including a Streets and Sanitation Foreman, Parks Foreman, and Fleet Foreman. These would be working supervisory positions whereby their time would be fairly evenly split between assisting Team Leaders and performing actual work in the field. The primary purpose of these positions is to free up time for the Team Leaders to be able to perform higher level administrative and longer term strategic planning.

In a sense, this model has already been beta tested. The existing Cemetery Foreman position is a working foreman position that handles the day to day activities of the cemetery and is a great assistance to the Team Leader. We are recommending that we apply this successful and efficient model to the Streets and Sanitation, Parks, and Fleet areas as well.

Historical Information

The following comparison is presented in order to give a perspective on workloads. It is important to keep in mind that while staffing levels have been reduced, services and workload for the most part have not. Therefore, it has been, and continues to be, imperative that efficiencies be achieved through working smarter and leaner. That being said, staff has operated basically in a triage mentality whereby the biggest fire is put out first, then the next, and so on. Constant re-prioritization takes place as new issues and / or special events arise. As a result, activities including maintenance efforts, long term planning and working strategically to achieve goals of the organization are virtually non - existent. In fact, what used to be normal maintenance activities can now only be performed sporadically, as time allows. We believe that through the addition of these positions, higher efficiencies can be achieved through time being able to be devoted to planning and monitoring continuous improvement methods and more effective planning.

Also important to keep in mind is that maintaining our infrastructure has more far reaching implications than simply filling potholes and fixing leaks. Well maintained and operating infrastructure also has a direct impact on the City's bond rating, as its condition is included in the calculations for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report regarding asset improvement and maintenance values. In addition, the condition of these facilities can also have direct impacts on Economic Development in regard to whether or not a particular business may wish to locate or expand within the city.

	2008	2014
Staffing Levels	<u>35 Total</u>	<u>15 Total</u>
	Sweeper Operators (2)	Sweeper Operators (2)
	Concrete Crew (4)	Concrete / Asphalt / CRAFCO Crew (4)
	Curb & Gutter Crew (2)	Sewer Repair/Excavation Crew (3)
	Asphalt Crew (4)	Sewer Maintenance (4)
	Sewer Repair Crew (4)	Paint Crew (1)
	Sewer Maintenance (4)	Traffic Control (1)
	Utility Truck (1)	<i>Seasonals (10)</i>
	Excavation Crew (3)	
	Paint Crew (2)	
	Traffic Control (2)	
	CRAFCO (6)	
	Weed Crew Leader (1)	
	<i>Seasonals (6)</i>	

	2008	2014
Concrete Slab Work	\$67,500	\$10,000
Concrete Utility Permit Repairs	\$22,000	\$18,000
Asphalt	\$25,500	\$20,000
CRAFCO	\$24,000	\$7,500

As can be seen, much of the same workload is expected to be performed by staffing levels less than half of what they were a few short years ago. In addition, activities such as those related to special events and weed issues are consuming ever increasing amounts of time.

The above presented data is but one example, the same situation applies in every area, and further data is available upon request. Similar situations are also present in Parks, Cemetery, and Fleet as well.

Lean Initiatives

As mentioned, a primary directive of all City Staff has been to gain efficiency and methods of performance through working smarter to achieve greater results with limited resources. This has proven extremely successful through both Business Process Improvement and Rapid Process Improvement Models conducted within the Department of Infrastructure.

Recent successful sessions have resulted in improvements to snow removal operations and leaf cleanup within the Cemetery, among others.

After struggling with time allocation issues department wide, we decided to conduct a process regarding the structure of department as a whole. We wanted to take a look at how we are serving our customers and are we doing it in the most efficient manner possible with the best use of our resources.

As a result of this process, the creation of these positions is our recommendation to provide maximum operational efficiency for the department by reallocating departmental resources and allowing us to work smarter with what we have.

Foreman Duties

The model would add one working foremen in each of the three remaining major areas: Streets & Sanitation, Fleet, and Parks. The foreman would have supervisory responsibilities, but would also perform the same work as the rest of the crews as needed, and directly report to the Team Leaders.

Their primary responsibilities would include:

- Assist in Day to Day Operations
- Train & Oversee crews
- Monitor safety
- Maintain Necessary Records
- Plan Daily Work Assignments for Crews
- Inspect Work Upon Completion
- Weed Commissioner Duties (Streets Only)
- Inspect Sidewalk Shoveling Complaints(Streets Only)
- Prepare Periodic Activity Reports
- Daily Crew Issues / Questions & Related Site Work Details
- Operate & Oversee the Operation of all Equipment Used
- Work Orders
- Perform any and all work duties of the Skilled Laborers

Advantages for the Department

One major component would be through efficiencies gained with continuity of service while a team leader is on PTO, which is fairly frequently due to the 115% maximum PTO threshold rule in effect. While in theory, this does have its benefits through cross training and staying aware of each area's projects, in practice it is leading to inefficient usage of time. Team Leaders are spending on average 16% of their time covering other areas (this includes extra time spent on snow removal activities). This is just the actual time spent covering, not the time spent getting up to speed on projects. Needless to say, that 16% time spent in other areas results in 16% less time spent on primary duties. The theory behind the proposed positions would be that they would cover things on a day to day basis, and would also require little to no time up front as they would already be involved in most projects. Major decisions would of course still be left up to the other Team Leaders and the Director.

Other advantages of such a model include Succession Planning / Knowledge Transfer and it would also allow for advancement opportunity incentives among Skilled Laborers. This would be achieved through awarding increasing responsibilities to those who may be considered for promotion in the future due to performance, attitude, and ambition.

By far however, the greatest advantage would be that this would free up Team Leaders to have the time to focus on more high level administrative and strategic planning activities such as:

- Policy Updates
- Safety Checks
- Coaching
- Discipline
- Performance Plans
- Seasonal Training & Documentation
- Budget Preparation & Tracking
- Planning & Maintenance Issues
- Customer Service
- Vandalism Issues
- Prioritizing Future Work Plans and Resources Acquisition
- Planning Work for Seasonal Work Changes
- Project Decisions / Details
- Special Project Investigation and Planning
- Long Range Planning and Goals
- Conducting and Monitoring Continuous Improvement Processes

An indirect benefit of this will be in helping to prevent burnout for personnel. Currently, all staff have been taking work home on a regular basis. In order to keep on top of things, emails continue between managers literally right up until midnight practically every night, including weekends. During the winter, this has even been happening on holidays. By allowing management staff time to devote to these activities during normal working hours, they will be able to enjoy off time with their families, which will greatly alleviate stress and burnout factors. These conditions contributed to the decision made by the former Operations Team Leader to retire when he did.

Finally, the sustainable management model for crews requires an adequate ration of management to labor in order to provide necessary oversight to answer critical questions and daily planning in order to ensure steady work load for maximum efficiency. An industry standard for Public Works (recently confirmed by checking comparable cities including Algoma, Combined Locks, Greenville, Kaukauna, Kimberly, Little Chute, and Menasha) suggests one supervisor for every seven to ten laborers. This model allows us to achieve that goal within the Streets and Sanitation Division as well as the others.

Conclusion

The creation of these positions will facilitate quicker decision making capabilities in the field, create a conduit for information transfer, and will free up time for the Team Leaders to provide greater administrative oversight, and allow for strategic planning. All of these items will in turn, allow us to work smarter, and thereby gain greater efficiencies with our available resources.

With this plan however, we feel that the pay grade for these foremen would need to be commensurate with their additional responsibilities. Therefore we recommend placing these positions in Step I of the Carlson Dettman Pay Plan.