

2019 Budget

DPI Laborer Addition Justification Report

Submitted by: Dan Koski
Date: August 30, 2018

DPI Laborer Addition Justification Report – 2019 Budget

cemetery and parks system. Expectations on services have been slightly reduced from previous levels when staff numbered 12 FTE's in parks and five FTE's at the cemetery; however new expectations have seemed to take the place of the ones that have been reduced as will be pointed out in this document. There are also plans to expand the cemetery and parks in future years which will add to the maintenance and operations of both. While we realize that these subdivisions will probably never reach previous staffing levels again, nor will we necessarily need to, there is a definite need to add three more positions. In order to minimize impacts to the budget, we are proposing adding one additional employee per year for the next three years.

Currently we rely on seasonal employees to do the bulk of our less skilled tasks during the summer and winter. Many times they are required work on their own and use their own judgment in all operating subdivisions. There is a lack of oversight for these less skilled employees due to the volume of them compared to FT employees which at times leads to challenges in completing work effectively. A specific example may include when we have a funeral and/or a lot sale at the cemetery. Many times the two FT employees are needed to tend to customers and seasonals are left to make their own decisions on work methods and tasks.

Following is a list of operations and maintenance items of concern and supporting documents or numbers for comparison.

Evergreen Cemetery

Annual Burials:

- Over the past three years Evergreen Cemetery has averaged 173 burials annually. For these 173 graves this means many lot sales, 173 excavations and backfills, sod replacement and repairs, watering, funeral services, etc. Out of the 173 burials we add about 100 head stones per year that need to be cut and trimmed around at least once every 2 weeks. When you consider about 500 added over the past five years this adds about 20 hours of trimming annually, not to mention having to cut and rake leaves around them.

Customer Service:

- Lot sales, genealogy, updating cemetery record books, and payments are done many times by Cemetery labor staff on-site. This change six years ago has led to less staff available to complete maintenance in the cemetery. There is currently not an admin clerk on-site so all this work falls on the cemetery labor staff (two of them). Our office clerk is currently stationed at City Hall and cemetery admin is just a small part of her overall position. When customers come to City Hall she can help them, however most of them do need to visit the cemetery to look at sites, complete transactions, or talk to the on-site staff. An added labor position or PT admin person on-site would tremendously increase maintenance and customer service.

DPI Laborer Addition Justification Report -- 2019 Budget

Parks Subdivision of DPI

Major Process Areas:

- Over the past three years we have taken a look at the major process areas that the Parks Subdivision of DPI performs, including Forestry, Snow, Grass, Garbage, Special Events, and Parks maintenance. As mentioned above parks maintain a staff of five FTE's and 28 seasonals. We maintain over 35 park locations and 700+ acres of land. The FTE's have become specialized and skilled in one or two of the major processes. Seasonals are then used to work on the crews with one or two FTE's on any given day. This has proven to work well and we have been able to accomplish a lot of work and even improve at some of the things we do over the past few years. However, there remain unresolved challenges that we currently face that we have not been able to come up with real good solutions for other than adding trained staff or considerable funding for outside contracting.

Urban Forestry:

- This has been an area of continuing concern over the past few years. Now with the confirmation of Emerald Ash borer in the city this area is even more of a concern. We have a City Forester that spends about 90% of his time on forestry issues, along with an equivalent of about .75 FTE from the other labor staff when combined. During the summer months when seasonals are here from about June through August is the only time of year that we have a fully functioning forestry crew. Our goal is to spend an annual average of about 48 man-hours (three person crew -- two days per week) on tree cutting/trimming and eight man-hours on forestry admin work per week. About 95% of this time is spent reacting to concerns and about 5% actually maintaining or planning. Which amounts to 15.2 hours per week of trimming and .8 planning (maybe) for about 40,000 city owned trees.
- This year from January through August we have received over 170 tree concerns that the forester has had to inspect. We also have a list of about 100 4-D trees that need attention. These are prioritized according to our Tree Removal Policy, but some of them will never get done until they become totally dead to make them a higher priority. We have increased contractor funding to \$25,000.00 over the past few years which has helped tremendously. Tree removals have been averaging about \$800 per tree, so the added funding can take care of to 31 trees if we don't replace them. However we do try to spend a portion of this on replacements.
- Most streets in the city with trees do not comply with our city height clearance ordinance of 14 feet. From what I have gathered, the city has not performed any preventative trimming in the right of way for height clearance for at least six years or more. For the most part we are trimming on a reactionary basis after we get calls/concerns.
- All of these challenges would be able to be addressed moving forward with two trained FTE's added to the Parks Subdivision to allow for a full time forestry crew to be out cutting and to allow the Forester time to inspect citizen concerns and coordinate

DPI Laborer Addition Justification Report – 2019 Budget

Grass Cutting:

- During the summer months (June through August) when we have all 28 parks seasonals working, there is no problem keeping up with grass cutting and trimming. Spring and fall always tend to be challenging and we have not come up with a good method other than having existing FT staff working overtime. This overtime can be at a cost of about \$50/hour with benefits. If we had two more additional entry level DPI Laborers to cut and trim, this would eliminate a fair amount of overtime in spring and fall plus allow similar operators to cut from the parks subdivision rather than training people from other subdivisions on overtime.

Another area that has increased related to grass is the private grass violations. Over the past two years we have contracted the cutting services to a private contractor instead of having our labor staff cutting private property. This has proven to be a great change and has increased revenue while also getting the violation cut faster. However, it has increased inspections for us for a few reasons. The increased inspections are done by a FT employee while the cutting had been done by mostly seasonals. This, coupled with the added inspections due to the changed ordinance in 2018 have increased time significantly to where it is now a 15-20hr a week job for a FT employee to do private property inspections.

Summary

This proposal provides a snapshot of the work required by The Cemetery and Parks subdivisions of DPI in order to keep our DPI operational and provide a high level of service the citizens of the city.

An important point to make is that with the present collaborative structure of the Department, the addition of DPI Laborer positions benefits not only the Cemetery and Parks subdivisions, but also the entire Department as well. There have been numerous instances of Divisions working together in response to larger events, and we are continually looking for more areas for collaboration and cross training as well. Future plans are also in the works for the city to acquire more plowable mileage from the county in areas like Rapids Rd. in the coming three years.

As you can see, maintenance and operational work is an important part of the everyday work that needs to be done to continue to make our city a great place to live. With the efficiencies and new methods of operations we have developed in recent years, we do not believe that we would ever need to reach previous staffing levels. That being said, there is still a drastic need for more DPI Laborers than we currently have. As such, please consider accepting my proposal to hire three new full-time DPI Laborers at the rate of one additional hire for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021. This will allow us to hire the help we need, yet be mindful of the impacts to the overall city budget.

We are therefore requesting one additional FTE DPI Laborer be added to the 2019 Budget. The cost impact to the city to pay wages and benefits for this position is \$61,916.00, assuming family



City of Manitowoc Tree Commission

Manitowoc, WI



We are writing to express our unanimous support for the Parks and Forestry Division's Tree Maintenance and Removal Priority Policy. We also write to express our full support for addressing the ongoing need for increased resources for the parks division—with an emphasis on the need for tree cutting and trimming staff and resources.

Over the past several years, the Tree Commission has observed an ongoing decline in the city's ability to address the tree cutting and trimming needs/requests of residents in a timely manner while also addressing its own public-area needs. Equally concerning are the safety and liability risks that accompany this lack of resources. And compounding these issues is the inability of the over-stretched Forestry Division to do proactive planning and maintenance.

The proposed Tree maintenance and Removal Priority Policy is a step in the right direction especially given the lack of resources currently available to address the city's urban forest needs and responsibilities.

But we also ask that you strongly consider supporting increased near-term and long-term funding for sidewalk program tree removal, increased staffing (at least a full time forestry crew) and increased funding for contracting services.

It is important to note that membership of the Tree Commission approaches this ongoing problem from multiple citizen perspectives/backgrounds—and as a full commission, are uniquely qualified to make these requests.

And finally, we want to stress that this is not an issue of allowing residents to engage in the city's tree removal responsibilities or for getting current staff to work harder/put in more hours ; we unanimously support the exceptional work the Parks and Forestry Division staff have done in this era of under-funding.

Thank you for your consideration.

Todd Holschbach on behalf of the Tree Commission

Chair, Tree Commission