

# City Manager's Report

January 29, 2021

Council and Colleagues, greetings. These reports will be included in the City Council packet for regularly scheduled Council meetings, excluding Work Session meetings. The reports are intended to be informational, covering miscellaneous events and topics involving the City organization.

In no particular order...

## **Public Works**

### Quick Updates

- Athletics staff is working with the League Coordinator of the United States Tennis Association to rent tennis courts at Hal Jensen Recreation Center for matches in February and April.
- Community Events staff are working with a team to redevelop the Parks and Recreation logo to include Open Space.
- Joe C. Montoya staff is assisting Coconino County with scheduling Covid-19 vaccinations for people over age 65.
- Open Space Program staff will be applying to NAU's Civic Service Institute's (CSI) Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) program to introduce and inspire underprivileged youth in outdoor STEM fields.
- Fleet Services finished rebuilding major water valve components on Flagstaff Fire Departments Quint Ladder Truck (F2012) this week and returned it to service. FFD now has both aerial units in service.

### Snow Operations

The winter storm that ended this week on January 26, 2021 was a whopper for Public Works crews. The storm produced 33.2" at the airport and was categorized as the 15<sup>th</sup> largest storm by the National Weather Service. All of Public Works including Streets, Solid Waste, Parks and Recreation, and Facilities assisted with snow relocation efforts throughout the community, and Fleet Services kept us all up and running in fine form. A heartfelt thank you to every person that worked on this event, also including those receiving difficult phone calls, those operating machinery in the tough-to-reach locations, and of course all the hand shovelers! The teamwork demonstrated in this storm was something to behold, and we could not have done it without all of our partners. Some images to enjoy:



Heritage Square before



Heritage Square after



Amy Hagin, smiling as always!



Parks Maintenance Worker Kevin Whealy along Butler



PW Director joining the fun (on the right)



Clearing snow - parking garage canopy

Parks is partnering with Recreation staff to assist with the labor-intensive snow operation at Heritage Square due to the many tables, wine barrels, and gazebos that require more time and effort. ParkFlag is assisting as well when applicable.



The white out conditions last Monday afternoon caused snow operations to suspend operations for a short period of time (see picture on left from W. Rt. 66 and Woody Mountain road).

Thanks to the Police Department for excellent dispatch work and the patrol officer's assistance all week. On the right is a great picture of a car that was not seen during operations. No vehicle damage occurred, and the credit goes to skilled operators to provide safe passage in a unique situation. Ironically, the car did have a citation on the windshield that was issued pre-storm.



A crew of Signs and Markings staff made emergency repairs to dozens of 'sign down' locations as a result of vehicle collisions from the icy roadways. Most of these locations are being served with temporary traffic control until it is safe to make permanent repairs in the coming weeks.

Our call volume was high (this is typical) and our Administrative Specialist, Bayley Chotena, handled each call for service professionally and promptly. The latest website improvements and faster call response did reduce repeated calls for service and resulted in good feedback from residents.

The valley media covered the winter event. All major news networks were functioning, and PW Director Bertelsen and Streets Director Overton were able to message the hard work and preparations for a major winter event. This is quality outreach and is designed to get good information out to visitors with travel impacts and advisory preparations for the public. In total, we completed eight live broadcasts and interviews, four informational recorded segments, two print requests, and radio information locally.

With respect to street operations, they began on Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> and cleanup efforts continued well into the following week. The following is noteworthy:

- Snow operations have had full deployment and are on day and night shift rotations. Each Streets operator is working 12 hours-on, 12 hours-off shifts. We will start rotating a day off for everyone as soon as possible, noting that another storm is occurring on Friday the 29<sup>th</sup>.
- All 20 plow trucks and eight graders were used in operations. Thanks to Fleet Services for continued repairs both minor and major in a couple of cases. Overall, the equipment fared well and was excellent for response.
- As of Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> all areas are plowed and cindered as appropriate. Work is continuing with intersection clean up, lane widening, ice and slush removal, push back, and preparation for upcoming weather in the forecast.



### Berm Summary

A windrow or "snow berm" as they are referenced to, is simply product or material that has been mechanically processed or relocated to a roadway edge. During the Streets snow operations, we are tasked with the snow clearing of over 700 lane miles of transportation network consisting of mostly asphalt roadways. The primary equipment used is severe duty plow trucks and road graders. This mechanical method of snow clearing is well accepted and continues to be an industry best practice nationwide. In Flagstaff, our climate and weather pattern is quite unique and different than others. Many storms are warm with high moisture content snows, followed by quick warming trends. In fact, it is not uncommon to have severe storms and only days later temperatures raise to high 40's.

The calculation of windrow size is determined by the total surface area of improved road surface multiplied by the depth of snow and divided by the snow storage area available. Easier said, more road and more snow equals taller and larger windrows. Streets operators train to place the windrow as close to curbs or sidewalks without placing snow on the adjacent sidewalk (this is harder than it sounds but overall, operators do okay). If the street is wide or we have good accumulation, the windrow result is significant. In a narrow road section, the windrow will be taller to accommodate the widest travel path possible as well (Ponderosa Trails is a great example). The operators' best practice is to divide or split the street to attempt an equal windrow placement on each side of the roadway. Some exceptions to the rule will include topography challenges that prevent safe placement, shading and dangerous locations, and if possible, one side loading to open space or areas that have no sidewalks or cross driveways.

In Flagstaff we have over 27,000 driveways and we strive at being courteous and cautious about all locations. Operators have great sympathy for our fellow residents and the impacts of windrows. The safe passage and community transportation mobility that allows ingress and egress is a primary goal. In order to keep transit operational, keep education institutions open, ensure that traffic and commerce are flowing, and provide all core services and emergency vehicle access, one of the traded values is the windrow result. Messaging to the community has been to work as partners, help a neighbor, shovel shortly after plow operations if possible, and if additional assistance is needed residents may qualify for the *Berm Assistance Program* delivered by a small Parks crew that follows up with residents in the days following a storm to provide some assistance.

Our mechanical method of snow operations is functioning well in an unpredictable winter weather climate. Streets will continue to investigate and evaluate best practices, equipment advancement, and investing in operator training and improvement to deliver the highest level of service possible in a challenging urban environment.

Council had previously budgeted for the acquisition of two gates to utilize with the road graders as a pilot program in more rural neighborhoods (the gates do not function well in high density neighborhoods). Pursuant to the Recession Plan, this acquisition was not pursued.

## **Fire**

- Congratulations to Mark Del Giorgio the successful candidate for Captain's promotional process and Casey Gonzales for the Engineer's promotional process. Congratulations Mark Del Giorgio and Casey Gonzales!
- Following a recent hiring process, these new Firefighters will be joining the Flagstaff Fire Department in March, 2021 – David Ortiz, Jacob Tracy, Derek Sausman, Rilee Rhees, Max Wiedemann and Kenny Carr. Welcome!
- Fire crews rescued a person who was experiencing numbness in their legs and was stuck in the rafters 35 feet into the air. Crews called in additional assistance to reach the individual and were able to transfer the individual down to the ground via the ariel bucket (see pictures below).



### Police Department

- Flagstaff Police personnel attended Southside Community Blockwatch, NAU Alcohol and Drug Council, Family Advocacy, Coordinated Community Response Team on Domestic Violence, and Victim Witness Board meetings.
- Sgt Hernandez held a virtual STEM presentation for an FUSD class.
- On Tuesday evening, Patrol worked a call involving a severe alcohol detox situation that turned into a barricaded suicidal subject with a firearm to his head. Corporal Leyva, assumed negotiations, and worked with the family. The squad, as a whole, protected the family and the surrounding residences. Using time and de-escalation techniques, the officers did not press the issues. They ultimately backed off, giving the subject time to decompress. Ultimately Corporal Leyva established a relationship of trust, was able to talk him into walking out of the house without the firearm and was able to connect him to mental health resources. Another life saved. Great work by all, especially Leyva! (see picture on right).



## **Meetings & Updates**

- The City Manager attended the Coconino Plateau Water Advisory Council meeting on Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, and spoke to pending legislation related to Rural Management Areas (aquifer protection). Some discussion was also had related to the City's legislative priorities.
- The Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance Board meeting occurred on Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. Topics included the City's efforts related to parking structures in the downtown area (Foundation for Senior Living) and old courthouse site.
- The Management meeting with MetroPlan occurred on January 28<sup>th</sup>.
- The ICF meeting occurred on January 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Ryan Roberts will continue to serve as Interim Director for the Water Services Director for the next six months. The recent recruitment process did not result in a filling of the permanent position at this juncture. We are grateful for his continued service.
- We have had multiple meetings in preparation for the City Council Budget Retreat on February 1<sup>st</sup>. The agenda is posted, and the meeting will be facilitated by Julie Lancaster.

Enjoy the snowy weather and have a great weekend. Onward and upward ...