

The following text was drawn from the Mayor's memorandum sent to the Executive Committee concerning his proposal for a departmental reorganization (black/italics). My thoughts and response at this juncture are inserted in red.

Each annual operating budget provides the opportunity to streamline and advance City programs and services. Budget deliberations offer opportunities to discuss efficiencies in the staffing and resources needed to provide these programs and services. Improvements may include merging departments, sharing and reallocating staff, and eliminating positions due to retirements, vacancies or ineffectiveness.

This year is no different and presents the added experience of how City operations have been managed during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are operating in a modified organizational structure because of the unified incident command. This arrangement has allowed for more creative problem-solving and the sharing of staff and resources. We have learned a lot about our organization during this on-going emergency.

It is with this knowledge in mind that I propose the following changes to the City's organizational structure. I have given these changes much thought and feel that full implementation of my proposal will move our organization forward and help deliver programs and services more effectively.

Here is my plan, which is effective January 1, 2021 unless otherwise noted:

1. Does this plan not require the approval of the Council?

Create a new department by combining the Parks, Recreation, Forestry & Facilities Department and the La Crosse Center with Streets, Refuse & Recycling, Utilities and Engineering. This new department is to be called Operations. The merged department offers significant opportunities to cross-train and share staff during times of high needs such as spring flooding, the fall paving and street repair push, large snow events, major events and conventions, and leaf pick-up, to name a few.

- 1. Basically we are recreating a director of public works having the same responsibilities previously held with the addition of our parks department and the La Crosse Center to be under the same umbrella.**
- 2. Are we in effect creating a de facto city administrator position answerable to the Mayor?**

Elevate the current Director of Parks, Recreation, Forestry & Facilities to the new Director of Operations. Mr. Odegaard has clearly demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic his abilities to lead these departments and bring them together during very challenging circumstances.

- 1. Although I admire Mr. Odegaard I question what qualifies him to be the Director of Operations with areas of responsibility in which he has never worked.**
- 2. I cannot imagine for a minute that any person would be able to assume these duties without having an assistant manager ultimately responsible for doing what our Directors of Engineering and the La Crosse Center are actually doing now. (An example would be our elimination of Human Resources Director with department combined into Finance but having to hire a person responsible for the Human Resources duties previously performed by the director).**
- 3. I foresee the need to add staff under an Ops director aside from above to facilitate an ability to control this all encompassing department. I question any cost savings assumed.**

Ask the Operations Director to work with the various departments, Finance and Human Resources to review and streamline the operating budgets, organizational structure, staffing needs, job descriptions, responsibilities and compensation levels for the various management positions within this new combined department as needed. This will realistically take much of 2021 to fully implement.

- 1. I agree with the necessity of this task but question having an Ops Director responsible for doing so. We would be better served by having an outside consultant review our operations and make recommendations to streamline or having a committee formed by the mayor to make the same determinations with input of current city staff.**

Eliminate the Director of City Engineering & Public Works position sometime in 2021.

- 1. I believe that having our current director remain in their position while assisting in the study I mentioned above is most desirable. The current director should be part of determining the long term solution for the city to begin upon their retirement.**

Eliminate the Director of the La Crosse Center position sometime in 2021.

- 1. I disagree with any proposed change to our current management structure. Assuming our current director is willing to remain we should and must take advantage of their expertise and experience to meet the challenge of successfully reopening the La Crosse Center on its completion and putting in place a recovery plan from the Covid impact. This is the clearest path to securing our \$42 million investment.**
- 2. Any consideration of a change in management structure should be part of the planning for the current director's future retirement. The question then should be whether we keep management an internal city operation or consider an outside management structure (Assuming operations are kept internal my opinion is that the Center should always be a freestanding department as it is inherently differentiated and unique).**

*My understanding is the current Director of City Engineering & Public Works and the La Crosse Center Director are eligible to and may be planning to retire in 2021. The Common Council should allow for the appropriate time to facilitate these changes. **I have no knowledge of that being the case for either.***

I agree with all of the following suggestions to vacate or not fill open positions. I think this should be done regardless, in these areas and any others that may be identified to help eliminate budget impacts for 2021.

Eliminate the vacant Safety Coordinator/Risk Manager and vacant Code Enforcement Technician positions within the Fire Department and Division of Community Risk Management. Hiring has been frozen in 2020 as part of the Economic Recession Plan. Duties to be absorbed within the department, to be determined by the Fire Chief. Funding support from Utilities for safety coordination to continue as is.

Eliminate the Courtesy and Customer Service Representative in the Mayor's office. Customer service duties will be absorbed by staff from various departments located on the first floor of City Hall in the new customer service lobby.

Eliminate the Sidewalk/ADA Technician position. Sidewalk construction and ADA compliance duties to be absorbed by staff within the Operations Department. The snow shoveling enforcement program to be transferred to the Division of Community Risk Management, as they are well versed in education and enforcement.

Eliminate the Environmental & Sustainability Planner position. The City must shift focus from planning to operational improvements related to clean energy, climate action and resiliency. A new position in the Operations Department to be created to address these needs. To provide budget relief in 2021, funding for this new position is recommended to begin on April 1st.

The floodplain advisory committee staffing duties will be transferred to Utilities-Storm Water. On-going daily floodplain regulatory review will be managed by staff within the Division of Community Risk Management, as they have a number of certified floodplain managers.

The Economic Development Planner position within the Planning & Development Department will be reorganized into a redevelopment administrator to staff the Redevelopment Authority and economic development programs. This position will be funded by tax increment financing. This position will review other needs to address redevelopment projects and development agreement administration.

Eliminate the vacant Assessment Technician position. Hiring has been frozen in 2020 as part of the Economic Recession Plan. Duties to be absorbed within the Assessor's Department and provided through contracted services to address large-scale commercial development and other needs.