

Memorandum

DATE: September 22, 2006
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Al Roder, City Administrator
RE: Friday Memo for the week of September 18-22, 2006

Here is a list of city activities for the week of September 18 - 22, 2006:

Administration

Thank you for attending the council retreat on Thursday evening. It was a productive meeting, and I hope that good things will come from it.

Human Resources

- Continuing education – As the agent of record on the City’s various insurance policies, I am required to attend 30 hours of continuing education every two years to retain my insurance agent license with the State of Minnesota. As agent of record, the City benefits two fold:
 - In house Risk Management
 - Insurance policies are written by the insurance companies at “zero” commission saving the City approximately \$25,000 in commission fees annually.
- Labor Management Meeting - cancelled and rescheduled for 10/04/06
- Reference checking for Housing Manager and Circulation Clerk
- Union Negotiation pre-meeting preparation and meetings
- Information Technology interviews – 6 candidates
- Employee Newsletter prep
- Suggestion box project
- Police Officer - Conditional job offer to Paul Haider – Accepted
- Circulation Clerk – Job offer to Keith Pflager – Accepted – started 9/22/06
- Hail damage – insurance claim work
- Brown Bag promotion-campaign
- Job Description meeting and direction
- Management training
- Recruitment for: Arena Attendants
- Sergeant evaluations due 9/22/06
- Sergeant test on 9/29/06

Finance

There was an error in last week's financial summary for the General Fund. The variance column for tax and miscellaneous revenues was not correct. A corrected version is shown below.

City of Northfield
 General Fund - Interim Financial Report
 For the eight months ended August 31, 2006

	<u>Current Mo.</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Net Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>% Rec'd or Expended</u>	<u>2005 Year-to-Date</u>
Revenues						
Taxes	-	1,838,655	3,469,161	1,630,506	53%	1,587,916
Licenses & Permits	49,922	527,694	702,600	174,906	75%	493,601
Intergovernmental Revenues	410	1,950,830	3,937,015	1,986,185	50%	1,747,281
Charges for Services	21,841	497,702	1,034,017	536,315	48%	471,210
Fines & Forfeits	4,428	67,390	96,500	29,110	70%	60,241
Miscellaneous Revenues	2,068	54,697	294,500	239,803	19%	98,075
Other Financing Sources	-	-	155,000	155,000	0%	11,600
Total Revenues & Other Financing Sources	78,669	4,936,969	9,688,793	4,751,824	51%	4,469,924
Expenditures						
Mayor & City Council	4,464	52,447	106,166	53,719	49%	41,314
Administration	41,503	323,169	641,566	318,397	50%	438,107
Elections	42	42	20,900	20,858	0%	3,613
Finance	22,802	269,997	549,107	279,110	49%	336,257
Human Resources/Risk Management	21,132	215,004	280,793	65,789	77%	-
Community Development	8,564	100,005	171,383	71,378	58%	92,216
Planning	18,012	119,057	177,843	58,786	67%	94,114
General Government Building	8,342	99,998	156,850	56,852	64%	89,367
General Government Subtotal	124,861	1,179,719	2,104,608	924,889	56%	1,094,988
Police	203,441	1,620,395	2,733,835	1,113,440	59%	1,537,338
Fire	28,940	155,543	433,439	277,896	36%	141,715
Building Inspection	17,860	170,849	316,471	145,622	54%	172,732
Public Safety Subtotal	250,242	1,946,786	3,483,745	1,536,959	56%	1,851,785
Engineering	26,705	225,332	451,192	225,860	50%	176,885
Street	88,188	519,975	874,220	354,245	59%	524,853
Street Lighting	34,899	49,008	194,000	144,992	25%	77,239
Buildings & Recreation Facilities	39,588	417,045	667,615	250,570	62%	379,300
Public Works Subtotal	189,380	1,211,361	2,187,027	975,666	55%	1,158,277
Park & Rec Administration	11,185	145,893	528,623	382,730	28%	73,724
Library	76,279	593,811	946,849	353,038	63%	514,854
Culture & Recreation Subtotal	87,465	739,704	1,475,472	735,768	50%	588,578
Other Financing Uses	84,892	164,903	437,941	273,038	38%	167,975
Total Expenditures & Other Financing Uses	736,839	5,242,472	9,688,793	4,446,321	54%	4,861,603
Excess of Revenues over(under) Expenditures:	(658,170)	(305,504)	-	305,504		(391,679)

The original report had been exported from the financial system in a text file, subsequently imported and modified in Excel. It was an exercise to see what method produced the report more quickly – cleaning up a text file or entering numbers into a formatted spreadsheet. Entering numbers into an existing spreadsheet works better as the formulas have been established and provide less of a chance for error.

Reviewing the numbers for August, please note that the target % for expenditures is between 60 and 67%. The majority of departments are well below this amount. Human Resources has had higher than expected recruiting costs this year. A budget amendment transferring funds from the contingency will likely have to be made to cover a portion of these costs. An alternative may be to reduce the budgets of departments where spending will remain

below the net budget total (Finance). Staff will be presenting a budget amendment for the General Fund, Water Fund and Mayor's Youth Council Fund in late October or early November.

Tax revenues are on target with the first half received in July. Licenses and permits will be one category to monitor as increased permit activity for the storm-related repair work continues. Building Inspections will need an increase in their budget to cover the cost of additional outside inspectors hired to assist with the high demand. This will be covered by additional permit revenue.

Intergovernmental revenues are also on target through August. The first half of LGA has been received. State aid for Police and Fire comes in once each year in early October. Miscellaneous revenue includes the contributions from the colleges and these payments have not been received.

Year-to-date, expenditures exceed revenue by \$305,504. This time last year, the gap was bigger - \$391,679.

Julie Nordmeier and Kathleen McBride are attending the Minnesota GFOA conference in Alexandria for the remainder of this week.

Library

- Lynne Young participated in a library directors' forum that was held in Cloquet. The directors discussed issues of concern to libraries across the state: state aid to regional library systems, regional library systems operation, emergency preparedness (NIMS training, etc), and what to do with our videocassette collections. Several libraries are eliminating VHS from their collections. As always, many great ideas were exchanged at the forum.
- The technology committee met on Tuesday. The technology committee consists of one board member and five library staff members. The main topics of discussion were the need to develop a new technology plan for the library, what should be covered in the plan and the importance of working closely with the new City IT director during the development of the plan.
- 17 spelling teams have entered. Lists of words are available for practice. The City Management Team is fielding a team of 3 with Al Roder as coach.
- Another new database available through the regional library system, SELCO, is Chilton's. Chilton's is well known for providing accurate car repair information. The database provides quick online access to repair, maintenance and service information for up to 350 cars, trucks, vans and SUVs on the road today.

Community Development

PLANNING

- Dan Olson attended a workshop at MnDOT offices in Rochester on Wednesday. The workshop was intended to update City and County planners from the southeastern MN area on recent initiatives by MnDOT, including a new manual on access management.
- The HPC met on Thursday and approved exterior improvements to the Mandarin Garden restaurant building on East 4th Street, including tuck-pointing, window repair, and a new door.
- Staff worked on setting up interviews with consultants to revise the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations. The interviews will take place in mid-October with four consulting firms, including three from out of state.

BUILDING INSPECTIONS

- The Building Inspection Division continues to deal with the storm damage. We have issued approximately 1000 roofing permit in the past three weeks. We anticipate about 4500 roofs will need to be replaced. This number could increase as more insurance adjusters visit the city to evaluate the damage.

- All other activity continues to progress at a normal levels. Plan reviews are being completed on schedule and inspections are being done in a timely fashion.
- Thanks to Corey and Sandy for their hard work in keeping the permit issuance process moving. Thanks to all other staff for the help during this difficult time.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Staff presented information to the Greenvale Township Board on Wednesday night regarding the participation in the State’s BioZone Program. The Board had a variety of questions, and has asked Staff to attend a special meeting on October 4, 2006 – at which time the Board will be prepared to take action.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- EDA Representatives and Staff conducted a meeting with property owners to discuss the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan, and the potential for a third business/industrial center in Northfield. This meeting was primarily about communication, and is the first step in implementing “Opportunity #1” in the plan.
- Staff is continuing to assist in the preparation of the necessary information required for the possible participation in the State’s BioZone Program – and will be forwarding a recommendation to City Council for action on October 2, 2006. The recommendation will be to designate specific parcels for inclusion in a multi-jurisdictional application with other Dakota and Goodhue County communities.

HOUSING

- Staff attended a 2-day “income verification” training, offered by the Minnesota Housing Partnership. Information from the training will be incorporated into all income verification processes conducted for applicants of the various housing programs.

Police

Patrol Information:

- Patrol officers investigated a number of loud party/noise complaints issuing subsequent citations for ordinance violations
- We’ve seen an increasing demand for our officers to conduct breath testing on person on probation from many other counties throughout the state. This has been prompted by the number of contract roofers working in the area. Our officers administer a PBT (portable breath test) to the person once or twice a day. We do charge a fee for the time and materials used. We appreciate the patience of our staff, especially our office staff in coordinating the scheduling for these calls.
- We are starting to receive calls of over parked vehicles (several weeks overparked) on city streets with window damage from the August hailstorm. Officers are contacting the owners of the vehicles to make sure they are aware that vehicles are to be moved every 48 hours according to the city parking ordinance unless the area is posted for a more restrictive time frame.
- We had some initial problems with demonstrators parking in private lots along Highway 3. Officers met with the demonstrators and worked on a solution to avoid the congestion in business parking lots. Regular checking of demonstration areas show no violations and remain civil and professional.

Investigations Information:

- Probably the most significant report came this week when the individual responsible for planning the bombing of a number of government buildings in Rice County pleaded guilty in Federal Court to those charges. The plea was the culmination of some exceptional investigative work between federal, state, and the local agencies of Northfield, Faribault and Rice County.

- Our first report of a potential contractor fraud case surfaced this week. It would appear that an individual from the southwest part of the United States hired some individuals to open up a local office to solicit insurance repair jobs. Fortunately some alert residents tipped us off and we were able to stop the process before it got started. These folks apparently were able to frequently obtain another contractor's building permit to try to obtain work. Working with our building inspectors, we've been able to effectively shut down these folks. I would remind you to be very careful who you contract with. Just having a local Northfield address doesn't make the contractor local. We've discovered many of the address listed by contractors are often motel rooms or post office boxes at office stores. Be sure you check out anyone wanting to perform any type of contracting work for you.
- Sergeant Roger Schroeder completed a background investigation on a recent liquor license application. Our department works with our building officials to review the building location, meet with the individual making the license application; provide them and review all relevant ordinances and statutes, and conducts a criminal history background check.

Emergency Management

- Public Works Director Heidi Hamilton, Fire Chief Gerry Franek, Emergency Management Director Tim Isom, Northfield Hospital Ambulance Director Andy Yurek and Chief Smith met to review homeland security issues and discuss upcoming training and preparedness issues.
- Working toward completion of the training for employees on the National Incident Management System (NIMS for short) is progressing. All government employees are expected to reach a certain level of training, depending on their responsibilities. Other institutions such as hospitals, educational organizations: public schools, colleges and universities, as well as private industry and major employers are expected to complete training as well. Training coordinators for the city are Emergency Director Tim Isom and Chief Gary Smith.
- We have received our first inquiry to start a Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) in Northfield. Emergency Management Director Tim Isom and Chief Smith will coordinate the training and implementation of the team. CERT teams are comprised of residents or businesses who train with members of their neighborhoods or workgroups to respond in the event of a disaster to account for their neighbors or coworkers, thus freeing up search and rescue teams to focus more efficiently on those areas where people are missing or injured. The 2.5-day training sessions usually are scheduled during a weekend for neighborhoods or during business hours as needed for local businesses and manufacturing firms. Anyone interested in starting his or her own CERT Team can call Tim Isom or Chief Smith at the Police Department – 507-645-4477.

Additional Information:

- Officer Jesse Cordova and Chief Smith attended a presentation on gangs hosted at the Northfield Community Resource Center. Those presenting were from the Rice County Gang Suppression Unit.
- Chief Smith met with the city administrator and human resources director on a number of organizational issues.
- Chief Smith participated with other management team members in the "Effective Management Program."
- Chief Smith met with Cultural Diversity Coordinator Marj Evans-de-Carpio to discuss recruiting and training of interpreters for the police department. Minnesota state law requires us to provide an interpreter to any non-English speaker person who is the subject of the investigation even if the investigating officer speaks the language other than English.

- ZAP, the program I mentioned last week to combat loud parties and underage alcohol consumption has completed the training for the officers who will be involved. Agencies in Rice County participating are: Northfield, Faribault, Rice County Sheriff, Lonsdale, Dundas and Morristown. Sergeant Bill Olsen and Chief Smith are working with this group.
- An approach to uniform enforcement of liquor law violations and education of vendors throughout Rice County is moving forward with the training of individuals to provide training to license holders on a regular basis. The Minnesota Department of Gaming and Alcohol will be training the trainers in October. Chief Smith represents our department on this committee.
- The Rice County SMART Team is working on developing uniform protocols for victims of sexual assault. The disciplines involved are: law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, social services, probation and medical services. The two-year program is moving forward. Officer Monte Nelson is our representative on this task force.
- Officer Jody Spinner has accepted a position with the State of Minnesota. Officer Spinner most recently has assisted as our accreditation manager and coordinator of crime prevention and statistical analysis. We will miss Officer Spinner's expertise but wish her well with her new endeavors.
- Our newest police officer, Josh Malecha was introduced to the Council last Monday evening where he was administered his oath of office with friends and family in attendance.

Remarkable Calls:

- Officers were summoned to a Northfield Residence recently to assist with a fire call of a fire and lots of smoke. Officers cancelled the fire department. The disposition read: "There was no fire, just burnt food."
- Officers were dispatched to the area of Cub Foods after our dispatchers received a call of an accident that involved a truck and a lawn mower. The disposition indicates there was minor damage; no injuries and the individuals exchanged information.

Public Works

Highway 3

MnDOT reported this week that the project is still on schedule for completion at the end of October. . . mostly. The rumors about a delayed completion date are assumed to stem from railroad employees who have said that the railroad signals will be moving after the first of the year. There appears to be some validity to this, though MnDOT has not received final confirmation. The detour will NOT be kept on through the winter. If the UP does not move their equipment, MnDOT will likely have to open TH 19 as a 2 lane until the RR work is complete. We should have an official updated schedule from the contractor soon.

Library Corner

The contractor plans to begin construction of the crosswalk across Division Street by the Library Corner on Monday, October 2. Division Street will be closed between 2nd and 3rd Street for a maximum of 10 days for this work to be completed. Access to Division between 3rd and 4th Street will be via 3rd Street. Notice will be provided next week to the NDDC and businesses in the area.

Arena

Staff began making ice at the arena this week in preparation for opening day October 9, 2006. The process involves rolling out the plastic mats which the coolant runs through and slowly adding water until the mats are frozen down, at that point water can be added in larger amounts until the ice is built up to approximately 2 inches. At that thickness the ice is painted with the typically hockey marking and city insignia and then another 2 -3 inches of ice are made to make up the skating surface. Using the current equipment this process takes 16-18 consecutive days.

Arenas with more modern condensing units and cooling equipment, and coolant lines contained within the cement floor shorten this process to 3 - 5 days.

In the 2007-2011 CIP, Public Works has requested funds for these mechanical equipment improvements. Funds would be provided through City funding, saving in operational costs, and fee increases. The anticipated savings from those improvements in operational costs would include estimated labor savings of 35% and 15% energy savings. Fee increases, which are scheduled for the 2006-2007 season, will include a \$5.00 per hour increase for all user groups reserving ice except for the Northfield Hockey Association, which will see there rates increase by \$10.00 per hour. The new hourly rates will still be lower than rates charged at other arenas and are the first increases since 2002-2003. Staff has met with the representatives of all user groups to inform them of the rate increase and project plans, all were very supportive of the planned improvements. Also new this year staff has scheduled additional open skating times, a \$1.00 per period fee will be charged, and scheduled more consistent access to the arena for a skating school. Both the arena improvement and fee increases will be part of the upcoming Council budget discussions.

Compost site

Staff began fall clean up work at the compost site this week. The two major projects include annual screening of composted material and chipping of the brush pile collected through the summer at the site. The screening process is a several week process performed by City staff mechanically screening 2-year-old compost material. Typically this process generates several hundred yards of screened compost material, which is made available to residents. The new lawn waste material deposited at the site this year is then mixed and rolled and will be screened next fall. The other project is contracted work by Dakota Wood-Grinding chipping the brush pile. This is typically a 2-day on site operation, a drum grinder is brought on site and the brush collected through the summer is mulched into wood chips. Approximately 90% of the chips are taken to St. Paul's Waste to Energy Site to be used in the process of producing electricity. This process was initiated in 2005 to address complaints about brush burning and air quality issues. The City pays for the chipping of the brush, however the disposal of the chips is at Waste to Energy is at no charge to the City. This procedure reduces annual staff time at the compost site burning brush throughout the summer, reduces resident complaints on burning and related smoke issues, and some lower quality wood chips are available for residents use in the fall.

Water

Doug and Jay attended a one-day water school on Wednesday that was put on by the Minnesota Rural Water Association (MRWA). The one-day event was held in Northfield at the NCRC. MRWA travel around the State to put on these schools for Municipalities at no charge. Items on the training session were Water Reservoir Inspection and Cleaning, Leak Detection, Meter Reading Systems, Large Meter Calibration and Well Maintenance,

The Booster Station project is fairly close to being on schedule, the roof is complete and Magney Construction just finished laying all the flat concrete, which consists of the inside floor area and the outside generator pad site. Some of the Electrical components will not be in on time for the project to be complete at the end of October like we planned, but should only be delayed a couple of weeks.

Scott and Jay worked on retrofitting seven water meters to radio read this week, the seven meters were located at, Village Drug, two meters at Applebee's, Cub foods, two meters at Target, Mclane Minnesota truck garage. The reason these meters were retrofitted instead of being replaced was because of their age. When the meters are 5 years old or newer, we order a special Badger meter register that will work with the Neptune metering system. We hook it to the Badger meter then wire the register to the Neptune radio transmitter, from there it will transmit readings from the meter to the hand held meter reader in the truck. One draw back to retrofitting is that we can only read the meter, we cannot receive leak detection, back flow or tamper detection.

Wastewater

Received a quote for parts and labor to complete repair of the failed #1 raw wastewater lift pump.

A thorough cleaning of the interior of the biosolids thermo blender and pasteurizer unit was completed. Removal of the accumulated residue and buildup increased operational efficiency.

Bids were received and a successful winner selected in the public sale of a surplus 2000 gallon chemical storage tank. The winning bid was \$200.00

Camera inspection of a sewer line near Honeylocust Drive identified a fiber optic cable that had been installed directly through the sewer pipe. Charter Communications removed the fiber optic line and made repairs to the City wastewater piping.

The effluent UV sterilization system experienced several component failures during the week. During repairs the system remained online and continued to adequately treat the effluent prior to discharge.

Resource and Park Planning

This Week: (Staff Merriam was on vacation Monday and Tuesday of this week)

- **ArtsPlan06:** Planning Committee Chair (Jane McWilliams) and Committee Member (Sue Lloyd) met with CA Roder, CC Member Bond and Merriam to provide project overview and discuss strategy to present findings and initiatives to Council; ArtsPlan06 will be a Work Session topic when preliminary initiatives are fully developed. Full Planning Committee will meet on Monday, September 25th.
- **Greenway Corridor Action Plan:** (Greater Northfield Area Greenway Corridor System). Revised map (PDF) has been put up on the City's website; Staff will organize discussions and communication with the surrounding Townships to get additional feedback, direction and potential 'buy-in' of the concept.
- **Way Park:** Staff has organized and collated all public comments received during the past month regarding the series of Conceptual Alternatives, as prepared by Spencer Jones; see Public Works/Engineering for additional discussion and Park Board input.
- **Downtown Streetscape Projects:**
 - *Parking Lot Edge Treatments* – City Council reviewed Staff recommendation of administration program at work session on September 18th; Staff has forwarded to Maren Swanson for review and input.
 - *Signage, Identity and Wayfinding* – no work this week.
 - *5th Street and Water Street Gateway Project* – Staff met with Raymond Jacobson, ('Harvest' sculptor) to review two revised and updated plans and suitability for his artwork.
 - *Riverwalk Gateways* – Staff is negotiating install pricing, as well as working with the related building owners (Reese, Ophaug, Bazan, Butler) and City Attorney to craft easement and installation agreements.

cc: Department Managers