

**City of West  
Branch  
Office of the  
City  
Administrator**

To: Mayor and Council

From: Matt Muckler, City Administrator

Date: January 6, 2012

Weekly Council Update

- **Wapsi View Trailer Court:** The City took possession of the former Wapsi View Trailer Court this week. Public Works Director Matt Goodale has arranged for a contractor to have trailers removed from the site. The site has been secured and workers are expected to spend the next several weeks clearing the future park space.
- **Cable Access Channel Update:** The West Branch Cable Access Channel, after being inoperable in varying degrees, is functioning properly again. Several items still need to be addressed in order to achieve optimal operation. The problems did not come from one specific machine involved in the operation, rather from a total of eight pieces of equipment that were concurrently broken in some manner or not correctly functioning. Extended time in diagnosing the problem resulted from the fact that several components were involved. Repair efforts began with the PC used to access the main controller of the Channel. The program used to access the controller was not functioning and the system battery was old, causing the computer to revert to the date 1/1/1980 after losing power. The computer had not had any software or operating system updates in several years, and it was found that the program used to access the channel controller had not been supported by its developer for 3-4 years. After processes to update all software and a new system battery were installed, this device is now functioning properly. The controller device of the channel had never been updated and some time was required to move it from 1.0 version to a 4.0 version in software. As mentioned, several devices were frequently losing power as well. These devices were all plugged into a battery backup so that they would not turn off in a power outage. The batteries within these devices have been determined to have lost their functionality at some point and all devices that were plugged into it are now plugged into a normal surge protector. The most recent problem, that the DVD players were not playing discs, caused the City Council meetings, School Board meetings, and Methodist Church services not to play as scheduled. At some point, the cart on which these devices sit was moved in such a way that the electrical plugs of the DVD players had become severely bent. After having made repairs to the above-mentioned items, the Channel is now functioning properly. City staff will continue to troubleshoot the system, make repairs as necessary and upgrade devices in the future. Thanks to Library Director Nick Shimmin for taking on this project and getting our Cable Access Channel operable once again.

- **News from the Iowa League of Cities:** The Iowa Legislature will gavel back into session on Monday, January 9, 2012. The League's annual Legislative Day event is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Des Moines' East Village. Governor Terry Branstad and Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds have just confirmed that they will speak at the event. Attendees will also hear from key legislators and League legislative staff on legislative issues relevant to city officials. The event will run from 2:00-5:00 p.m. with a reception open to all legislators and League members from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Please contact Administrative Assistant Ashley Borland-Kaalberg in the City Office if you are interested in attending this event.

- **Budget Update:** City Administrator Matt Muckler and Deputy City Clerk Dawn Brandt continue preparations for the fiscal year 2013 annual budget. Line item budget requests from department directors will be presented to Council at the January 17, 2012 Council Meeting. Initial revenue estimates, general fund salary alternatives and general fund departmental non-salary expenditure requests will also be presented to Council at this meeting. Several factors have been considered in terms of new rates and new rules in the development of the budget, including:

- 1) Employer contribution rates for IPERS (Iowa Public Employees' Retirement System) have increased from 8.07% to 8.67% for regular class members and from 9.97% to 10.27% for protection class members (public safety employees).
- 2) The Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF) is accumulated through motor vehicle registration fees, motor vehicle fuel taxes, an excise tax imposed on the rental of automobiles and a use tax on trailers. The Road Use Tax Fund Per Capita Forecast for fiscal year 2013 is \$94. However, cities are reminded that the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) issues per capita forecasts only. Cities are only entitled to receive their share of the amount actually collected. The estimates are subject to dramatic changes and cities are advised to use a conservative estimate. After six months of the current fiscal year (2012), the city has already collected \$116,029, 11.2% higher than expected at this point in the year.
- 3) The U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the changes in retail prices of a fixed market grouping of consumer goods and services. The CPI for all urban consumers (not seasonally adjusted) (CPI-U) for September 2011 was 226.889, which is 3.9 percent higher than September 2010.

- **Council Work Session:** A City Council Work Session has been scheduled for Tuesday, January 17, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. City Engineer Dave Schechinger, P.E. will be on hand to present three sidewalk project alternatives.

- **Software Upgrade Schedule Reminder:** As a reminder, City office staff will be converting to new payroll, financial and utility billing software from Monday January 9<sup>th</sup> – Friday February 3<sup>rd</sup>. This will be a time-consuming process that will require the full attention of all three administration employees forty hours per week for this four-week period.

**The information provided is one-way communication and should not be discussed among you as this would be a violation of the open meeting law.**