



110 N. Poplar Street • PO Box 218 • West Branch, Iowa 52358
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City Administrator's Weekly Update

Matt Muckler, City Administrator

January 15, 2017

- **MLK Event at Town Hall – Monday, January 16th, 5:30-8:30 p.m.:** A Martin Luther King, Jr. event will take place in Town Hall on Monday, January 16th in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Community members are invited to participate in a potluck and public reading from the works of Martin Luther King. Potluck begins at 5:30.
- **Legislative Report from the Iowa League of Cities:** Legislators returned to Des Moines on Monday to begin the first session of the 87th General Assembly. This session is off to a rapid start, with more than 100 bills introduced in the first four days. As a result of the November elections, Republicans control the governorship and both chambers of the legislature. With more than 20 new legislators, and Governor Branstad expected to be confirmed as Ambassador to China at some point during the legislative session, there is a great deal of uncertainty in the building. The first week has been unusual because, due to a budget shortfall of more than \$100 million reported by the revenue estimating conference, the legislature has started this session by focusing on a “de-appropriation” bill to de-appropriate a portion of the funding that was previously allocated for Fiscal Year 2017.

There is widespread speculation throughout the Capitol that a portion of the commercial and industrial property tax replacement claim dollars that were appropriated in the 2016 session, known as the backfill, could be included in the de-appropriation bill. Many discussions have led us to believe that the House is considering de-appropriating \$24 million of the approximately \$152 million appropriated to the backfill for FY 2017, and potentially from each year moving forward. The \$152 million appropriation includes backfill payments to cities, counties, schools and other local taxing authorities. At this time, no legislation has been released; but as soon as it is we will distribute it to you. We expect legislation to be released next week.

In his Condition of the State address on Tuesday, the Governor outlined his [proposed budget](#) and de-appropriation plan, which DOES NOT include any cuts to the backfill. We continue to thank the Governor for his support of the backfill and would encourage you to do so as well. We strongly urge you to reach out to your legislators as soon as possible to urge them to protect the backfill and funding for essential services such as public safety and the infrastructure that city governments provide.

- **Last Call for Christmas Tree Pick-Up:** Public Works staff will pick up Christmas trees that are placed at the curb with plastic, ornamentation and stands removed until Friday, January 20, 2017.



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● **Options for Bidding Park Project in Pedersen Valley:** There are two options being offered to the City Council on bidding the park project at Pedersen Valley. Fehr-Graham has provided the information below concerning the pros and cons of each approach, which will be further discussed at the Tuesday, January 17th City Council Meeting.

Option 1 – Single letting (mid summer): Pros – single contract, prime contractor manages schedule for all work; Cons – later start date, prime contractor may not have expertise in more detailed work

Option 2 – Two lettings (mass grading, utilities, and parking lot paving bid late spring; park amenities bid mid summer): Pros – contractors priming each contract likely have more experience in work types, can start sooner/make visible progress sooner, allows more contractors to bid work/additional opportunity for local contractors with smaller bonding capacity; Cons – multiple contracts, requires more oversight due to concurrent contracts

Fehr-Graham does not expect a noticeable cost difference with a second letting, such as from additional mobilizations or items like that. There would be small ancillary costs like publication fees for the extra public notice, etc., but it could be argued that there might be a savings since a large contractor with bonding capacity for a \$3M project would not have to have a superintendent committed to the project longer than necessary. Their opinion is it is likely a wash, and is very difficult to accurately measure anyway.

● **2017 Pet Tags Now Available:** All cats and dogs over four months of age residing within the city limits must be registered annually with the City of West Branch. Please [CLICK HERE](#) for the Annual Pet Registration form. Registrations and tags for 2017 are also available at City Offices located at 110 North Poplar Street. When registering your pets, please provide current rabies vaccination papers at the time of registration. The fee for registering pets is \$5.

● **Upcoming City Meetings & Events:** Please see the Calendar of Events on the City Website <http://westbranchiowa.org/home> for a complete list of upcoming events. There are several meetings and other community events currently scheduled in the next few weeks:

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| ▪ Monday January 16 th – MLK Day | City Offices, Library, Park & Rec – Closed |
| ▪ Monday January 16 th , 5:30-8:30 p.m. | Martin Luther King Jr. Event at Town Hall |
| ▪ Tuesday January 17 th at 7:00 p.m. | Regular City Council Meeting |
| ▪ Tuesday January 17 th (after Council) | City Council Work Session |
| ▪ Thursday January 19 th at 6:30 p.m. | Park & Recreation Commission Meeting |
| ▪ Tuesday January 24 th at 7:00 p.m. | Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting |
| ▪ Tuesday January 31 st at 7:00 p.m. | City Council Work Session |

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

Mayor: Roger Laughlin • **Council Members:** Jordan Ellyson, Colton Miller, Brian Pierce, Tim Shields, Mary Beth Stevenson

City Administrator/Clerk: Matt Muckler • **Fire Chief:** Kevin Stoolman • **Library Director:** Nick Shimmin

Parks & Rec Director: Melissa Russell • **Police Chief:** Mike Horihan • **Public Works Director:** Matt Goodale