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TO: City Council
FROM: Sam Anselm, City Manager
DATE: 1/9/2015
RE: Weekly Report

Good morning, everyone, and again, Happy New Year! I'm excited to see what 2015 has to offer us, and I'm looking forward to working with each of you again this year as we continue to serve our residents. Let's get started...

Key Meetings

- On Monday several city employees and I toured the new Mercy Hospital. While I'm not a big fan of hospitals and I plan to avoid visiting them at all costs in the future, it is an impressive facility, and I expect it will make quite a splash with the public when it opens in March. In speaking with Gary Pulsipher, he indicated that they would be happy to give a tour to members of council as well. If you are interested, I can send you some dates for your consideration. Please let me know if you'd like to attend the tour and we'll proceed accordingly.
- At our staff meeting on Tuesday I announced that I will no longer be requiring department heads to attend every council meeting, unless they have an item on the agenda. I surveyed about 30 cities in Missouri and it was roughly 50/50 in terms of which cities required department heads to attend and those that did not.
- As a follow up to Wednesday's ground breaking event for the training tower, Chief Furgerson has indicated that materials have begun to arrive for the construction, and dirt should start being moved next week if not the week after.
- On Wednesday afternoon I met with PW staff to discuss the city's presence at the Chamber Expo event. The first day of the Expo will coincide with our council meeting on the 20th, but I plan to attend a portion of the event on Tuesday or Wednesday in an attempt to answer questions from businesses or the public regarding what's going on at the city.
- Late this afternoon staff met with representatives of the Finance committee to continue discussions surrounding the golf course. The Joplin Globe was in attendance, but the committee seems to be zeroing in on some options for you to consider. Over the next month, finance staff will be working with parks officials to run some numbers on the options being considered, to bring back to you for consideration.

Miscellaneous

- Ridership numbers for MAPS and the Trolley Service are provided below:

- Overall, ridership was up 13.5% comparing December of 2014 with the same month in the previous year, with the most significant increase occurring on the Blue Route, which saw a 21% increase in the number of riders.
 - All routes saw an increase in ridership, so hopefully this is a positive sign of things to come.
- To give you an update on conditions at Memorial Hall as they relate to the sewer breakage, staff from Parks and PW have been over at the building this week looking at options to fix the issue to allow us to reopen the bathrooms and continue to utilize the building. We have identified a break in the line right where it runs under the ramp on the east side, but due to line depth, soil conditions, the weight of the ramp itself, and some other issues, it is unsafe to dig in that area. As we identify options, it may require the use of some of the funds set aside for the ramp replacement to fix the sewer line. I will bring this to you when more information is available.
- Earlier this week KODE ran a Facebook post that said the police department was issuing tickets to citizens who participate in a local buy and exchange program called Joplin Give & Take. Their post received over 300 comments from the public, but upon further review, the PD has not issued a single ticket to anyone for participating. KODE since posted a retraction with an apology to the Police Department. We did point out that if a business complains about this type of activity taking place on their lot, the PD will respond accordingly to investigate.

In the Pipeline

- Over the next several months, staff will be working on developing a “citizens government academy,” similar to what our police department offers, but focusing on broader city issues and topics as well as the work that other departments do. In conjunction with this idea, we are examining ways to better utilize social media to inform and educate our citizens on how and why we do what we do. Examples could include short videos on these topics that we post on YouTube and share via Facebook and Twitter, etc.

I believe the importance of reaching out to the public using various social media outlets is highlighted by the case I just described. The trend of people getting their news from social media or the internet only seems to be growing, and I believe it’s important for us as a community to meet our residents where they’re at in an attempt to correct misinformation, or answer common questions they may be asking.

Just a reminder that we will have a special meeting on Monday; I look forward to seeing everyone.

Have a great weekend.