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TO: City Council
FROM: Sam Anselm, City Manager
DATE: December 18, 2015
RE: Weekly Update

Good afternoon, everyone. This week was fairly light on meetings that didn't involve staff, so this update will be fairly brief.

Key Meetings

- On Tuesday I met with Director Bolander and Chuck Banks from Deloitte to get an update on several CDBG-DR projects. I am waiting for additional information, but we ran into two issues at the new public park being constructed south of Cunningham Park. First, we've run into a rather large boulder that could be expensive to remove, and the second issue was the discovery of a large underground slab in the area where the ponds are being dug. Given our city's mining history, we are researching whether that slab is a mine shaft plug, or perhaps a remnant from the former hospital. Either way, we are evaluating the options and related costs associated with overcoming these obstacles. A change order will likely be coming to you for approval at some point once the facts are known. We have also been meeting with the chamber foundation on the technical training center, and with the school district on developing the sub-recipient agreement for the early childhood center as well.
 - Related to the -DR projects, I wanted to remind you that due to the risk of having to pay funds back if we miss steps along the way as we get into the implementation phase of these projects, we are proceeding carefully, which unfortunately can lengthen the amount of time it takes to complete each project. Regardless of what sub-recipient agreements are signed, the city is ultimately responsible for how these dollars are spent, and given our tight financial situation, we will continue to proceed cautiously, even if it may appear that we're moving more slowly than others (including ourselves) would like.
- On Thursday, I did an interview with KODE about plans for 2016. Some of the topics we discussed included establishing a formal city-wide volunteer program, priority-based budgeting, the continuation of our citizen's academy, and other ways that residents can get engaged/involved with the city. The council and school board elections will be the most visible way residents can get engaged with their governments next year, but I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead in 2016.
- Later that afternoon I met with staff to review the bids for solid waste services. We received three responses total, so the committee met to review their evaluations and determine next steps. References were being checked with the plan of entering into contract discussions next week.

- Earlier today was our annual employee Christmas luncheon. We had a great turnout and I would like to thank the employees and council members who volunteered to serve the meal. And I'd be remiss if I didn't include a shout out to the Big Man in Red for making an appearance as well, despite his busy schedule this time of year.
- Following the luncheon, I met with DJA Executive Director Callie Hudson. Earlier this week they announced a membership drive, so we discussed that along with plans/schedule for Third Thursday next year. Several sponsors have already been lined up and it sounds like the events will continue to be a success.

Miscellaneous

- I spoke with Jon Johnson from the Center for Priority Based Budgeting earlier this week, and we are on target for January to have a discussion with the city council about the results/priorities for next year. Staff continues to work on their program inventories, and we have given them until mid-January to complete the first phase before we roll into "costing" the programs out.

In the Pipeline

- Next week I will be participating in a conference call to discuss dates to bring the St. Bernard Project's (SBP) Pre-Disaster Resilience Training to city employees and various neighborhood associations that work with our Division of Neighborhood Services. SBP has also been working with the chamber, school district, MSSU and other entities to discuss similar opportunities for their stakeholders/customers, so once we have confirmed some dates, I will let you know.

If you have any questions about any of these items, please let me know. Otherwise, I hope you enjoy your weekend, and I will see you Monday night.