



Administrator's Update 5/29/09

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■ **Dam Removal Plan** The City Manager, R. Ben Bifoss, and I are working on a plan to present to the two boards for the organization of the process for removal of Boardman, Sabin, and Brown Bridge Dams and the repair of Union Street Dam. We've been meeting with many local groups as well as parties that have experience in dam removal and are developing a process that will address the issue of governance, oversight, and program management. This past week, the County Board and the City Commission approved guidelines that set parameters for us in developing a proposal:

- 1) The City and the County should work together and with other interested parties specifically including the Grand Traverse Band to address the entire watershed in concert and all four dams should be addressed in this project.
- 2) The process should be open to the public and transparent.
- 3) The goal is the complete removal of the dams including all structures; recognizing that there may be economic and/or engineering constraints to be considered.
- 4) To simply breach the dams and leave all other structures in place is not desirable.
- 5) The Union Street Dam must remain as a barrier to invasive species.
- 6) The city and the County cost of the removal should be minimal.
- 7) The "completed" state should minimize the City and County's liability and future maintenance needs.
- 8) The entire process of dam removal and restoration of all dams must balance the economic, social, environmental and recreational interests.

We hope in the next few weeks to present a plan to the City and County commissions that will allow this project to move forward. While the organizational structure is being developed, grant applications are being submitted on behalf of the City and the County for the removal of the dams and other issues such as land ownership are being concurrently evaluated.

■ **Lutra Pool Study** We have received the pool study completed by Lutra Aquatics, which evaluated the efficiency and operation of management of our Easling Pool at the Civic Center. A number of recommendations were made by the consultant, which when collectively implemented could allow the pool to be operated at a break-even cost. There are a number of implications to the recommendations including issues with union, service to certain sectors of the public, and management, which could significantly change the operation of the pool. The County Board and the Parks and Recreation Board members have received those recommendations and they are under review at this time. The Parks Board will be holding a meeting on June 1 to take input on this process and determine the next step. A second public input session may be held at a later date. Jason Jones, Parks Director, and I are reviewing the report and would like to see implementation of the recommendations that are approved by the board as soon as feasible.

■ **Human Resources Director** We continue our search for a Human Resources Director. The position has been open since last October and we have been unsuccessful in our attempts to find an appropriate person to do the job. Another interview will be conducted this next week. This will be the third attempt to conduct interviews for the position in addition to numerous phone interviews that were conducted. Some of the issues that seem to be influencing people's reluctance to come are first and foremost, the economy - the difficulty in selling within their present location and

secondly, union issues. Grand Traverse County currently has 11 unions. If we are unsuccessful in the next week or two in selling this position, we will look at utilizing a headhunter for the purposes of recruiting an HR Director, hopefully with some governmental experience.

 **Construction Code Staffing** The permit applications continue to remain down. While there has been slight improvement in this last month, overall projection for the year is down from last year's projection, which was our lowest number in more than 10 years. We recently laid off additional 1.5 full time equivalents. We are monitoring the situation through May, and we're evaluating the need for further layoffs in June.

 **2010 Budget Process** The budget process for next year is already underway. The County Board's Strategic Plan has been distributed to departments so that they can develop their 2010 plans in conjunction with County Board goals. Capital budget requests and new personnel requests are out to departments. Regular budgets will be distributed soon and are due back in June. Once the budgets are received, administrative and finance staff will hold hearings with the departments to discuss the requests in an effort to complete a budget recommendation from County Administration to the Board. That recommendation is due in mid August. The County Board will hold public hearings and discussions with departments in September with a goal of adopting the budget at the annual Board meeting in October. Of course, much of the budget hinges on actions taken by the State. We're beginning to see a number of reductions recommended by State agencies.

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In addition, meetings are broadcast live on government channel 99. The meetings are rebroadcast the following Sunday beginning at 1:00 p.m. Meetings not held in the Commission Chambers are also included in the Sunday broadcast.

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