



City Council Agenda Memo

Crest Hill, IL

Meeting Date:	1/9/22
Submitter:	Mark Siefert, Director of Public Works
Department:	Public Works
Agenda Item:	Request to hire to additional public works laborers in lieu of a Project Manager and Wastewater Lead Operator

Summary:

During FY 22 budget discussion's the City Council approved the hiring of a Wastewater Lead Operator as well as Project Manager for the Public Work's Department. Even though these positions are very much needed as part of the public works department, Public Works Administration has noticed a more glaring need in the department. Public Works Administration feels as though more boots on the ground rather than administration. A wastewater lead operator will be needed within the next few years as the only other class one operator in the city, besides the Public Works Director, is nearing retirement age. The current issue is that the proposed salary for the wastewater lead operator is not within the current salary range of the local area's class one wastewater operators.

After doing a survey of many local municipalities it is shown that the City of Crest Hill has some of the highest employee ratios compared to the amount of infrastructure we have. Staff reached out to 7 surrounding communities (Minooka, Shorewood, Lemont, Channahon, Romeoville, Mokena, and Lockport). We asked them to give us their employee count along with the amount of infrastructure each community has. Staff then took the amount of employee's compared to the amount of lane miles, water produced, wastewater treated, and vehicles maintained. A final comparison was done to show the number of employees per population. This shows us with the third highest of the communities.

It can be seen on the attached chart that shows Minooka contracts out snow plowing and vehicles. In terms of street employee's vs miles of streets-maintained Crest Hill is second highest (excluding Minooka). When looking at water produced, we have by far the smallest water department. With wastewater treated we have the second highest besides Romeoville. Romeoville also has Robinson Engineers on staff full time to help with wastewater treatment. Those engineers were not put into this comparison. While looking at vehicles We are near the middle of the number of vehicles per mechanic. Many of the surrounding communities will also contract to outside mechanics to supplement the work of the internal staff.

In the Utilities Division, we have the highest MGD treated per employee compared to the other communities in the water and wastewater sections. With more regulations, a switch to Lake Michigan water, and two state of the art treatment plants the Utility Division needs more employees as well.

With the amount of infrastructure that the Public Works department takes care of employees are seeing an increased amount of overtime. With a low staff count this can lead to burn out or being overworked with the potential of seeking new employment.

Since the mid 90's the size of the Crest Hill Public Works department staff has not grown while every other department in the city has grown with the population growth in the city. From 1990 to 2010 not only did the population of the city increased in size but every neighborhood north of Caton Farm Rd, Whispering Meadows, Fox Meadows, and the Waterford Area were constructed. The city went from 32.9 to 59.9 center lane miles to maintain. This is a 79% increase in area that needed to be maintained.

Year	Amount of Public Works Employees	Amount of Police Employees (Below Deputy Chiefs)
2000	17	22
2010	17	24
2022	17	31 (33 by end of FY23)

The above graph shows that even through the largest growth times of the City of Crest Hill, the Police Department has grown by 50% while the Public Works Department has not grown since the year 2000.

Public Works is providing this 4-year plan for hiring while also asking that we change the budgeted positions in this year's budget to two or three full time Street/Utility Laborers.

Current Budget (with insurance and IMRF)

Project Manager- \$103,604

Wastewater Lead Operator- \$135,194

Total Budgeted Amount- \$ 238,798

Projected Change

Street Laborer (1) \$84,314

Street Laborers (2) \$168,628

Street Laborers (3) \$252,942

Proposed Hiring Outlay

FY-22: Hire 2 or 3 Street Laborers

FY-23: Hire Mechanic/ Wastewater Lead Operator

FY-24: Hire 1 Utility Laborer (Water)

FY-25: Hire 1 Utility Laborer (Wastewater)

If Council wishes, an alternative option would be to conduct a staffing survey through Gov HR. They have indicated that this would be able to take place between 4-6 weeks for a cost of between \$10-15K. They would come in and interview staff members to see where the pinch points are and collaborate with surrounding municipalities on their staffing levels.

Recommended Council Action:

Direct staff to hire two or three additional street garage employees off the current hiring list.

Financial Impact:

Funding Source: General Fund/Water and Sewer

Budgeted Amount: \$238,798

Cost: \$168,628 or \$252,942

Attachments:

