



CITY OF
LONG LAKE

City Council Agenda Report

City of Long Lake

450 Virginia Avenue, PO Box 606

Long Lake, MN 55356

MEETING DATE / February 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Establish a Public Works Lead Maintenance Worker Position; Promote Don Laakkonen to the Position of Lead Maintenance Worker and Approve a Salary Step Increase

Prepared By: Sean Diercks, Public Works Director **Report Date:** 1/31/2024

Recommended City Council Action

Staff recommends the following:

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-05 establishing the position of Public Works Lead Maintenance Worker and amending the City's 2024 Salary Plan.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-06 promoting Don Laakkonen to the position of Public Works Lead Maintenance Worker and approving a salary increase.

Overview / Background

In 2020, at the recommendation of City staff, the City Council approved the restructuring of Public Works maintenance worker staff to add an employee to the department, and to create separate Maintenance Worker I (entry level) and Maintenance Worker II positions. This change and the need for a fourth employee was recognized primarily due to the fact that work load demands for the Department were (and remain) ever-increasing, and the City was moving away from some of the prior contracted out services (City wide mowing, street sweeping) etc. and to bring those operations in-house. Additionally, the fourth Public Works full-time employee was intended to add some relief to the after hours on-call schedule, allowing employees to go from being on-call 17 times a year to 12 times a year.

The City hired two new full time Maintenance Worker I's at that time, and also saw a retirement of a 45-year veteran within the department. In June 2021, one of the newer employees quit, leaving the Department down a staff member. This position still remains unfilled. During the winter of 2022-2023, we experienced the third snowiest winter in recorded history. This was followed by three major construction projects starting at the same time and running through the end of 2023, which left a very high work demand on the remaining staff. As a Department, we have managed to continue onward and work through all the challenges. In December 2023, the second new hire of 2020 was terminated and that position remains unfilled at this time. In January 2024, City staff reposted the positions, advertised in different newspapers to target a wider candidate pool, and staff is waiting to see if we get any new qualified applicants by the application deadline of February 7.

As 2023 was coming to an end, I was reflecting upon how we as a City could reward our one remaining full time Maintenance Worker II employee for his outstanding performance, attitude, and dedication to the City in helping us to keep everything afloat; while at the same time, evaluating and looking ahead to determine how we could be prepared moving forward once the Public Works Department is (hopefully) fully staffed. The idea of a Lead Maintenance Worker position came to mind and would be a very good fit for Don "Luke" Laakkonen, who has been employed with Long Lake Public Works since May of 1985.

The new Lead position proposed will be the Maintenance Workers’ team leader, giving day to day leadership and direction to the staff. The Lead will also be accountable for making sure that the employees have all the required equipment and tools needed to perform their jobs. In addition, the Lead will be responsible for all new-hire training, teaching employees how to operate equipment and software within the department and mentoring them as they gain a more in-depth understanding of job responsibilities within the Department, while relying on experience and judgment to accomplish assigned tasks consistent with organizational goals.

Staff has reviewed Mr. Laakkonen’s current compensation and reviewed the 2024 Salary Plan for all Public Works maintenance employees, and is recommending the following salary range for the Lead Maintenance Worker position proposed:

2024	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8
Maintenance Worker I - <u>Hourly</u> <i>Non-Exempt, Accrues Overtime</i>	\$27.34	\$27.97	\$28.61	\$29.24	\$29.88	\$30.51	\$31.15	\$31.79
Maintenance Worker II - <u>Hourly</u> <i>Non-Exempt, Accrues Overtime</i>	\$31.10	\$31.83	\$32.55	\$33.27	\$34.00	\$34.72	\$35.44	\$36.17
NEW - Lead Maintenance Worker - <u>Salaried</u> <i>Exempt, No Overtime Pay</i>	\$70,520	\$72,160	\$73,800	\$75,440	\$77,080	\$78,720	\$80,360	\$82,000

Staff is recommending that Mr. Laakkonen be promoted to the position of Public Works Lead Maintenance Worker, and that due to his many years of committed and outstanding service, his vast knowledge of and experience with the City’s Public Works Department, his salary be established at Step 8 of the pay range above. With this action, Mr. Laakkonen would become a salaried employee and no longer be eligible for overtime pay; however, per the Position Description, he would accrue seven hours of vacation for each on-call shift worked.

It should be noted that this action does not necessarily represent a significant budget impact. In his current Maintenance Worker II position, Mr. Laakkonen was budgeted to earn a salary of just under \$81,000 for the year 2024.

Supporting Information

- Public Works Department Organizational Chart
- Resolution No. 2024-05
- Resolution No. 2024-06
- Personnel Action Form
- Public Works Lead Maintenance Worker Position Description