

QUARTERLY REPORT TO COUNCIL

Meeting Date: Wednesday, Feb 18th, 2026

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Department: Public Works

Period: January 2026

CC: City Administrator John Walsh



General Operations

January 2026 was an active operational month across Engineering, Information Technology, Public Works, and Water Quality divisions. Major accomplishments include significant progress toward funding the Reservoir Project, completion of critical infrastructure & capital upgrades, including the water Filtration Modules, ongoing compliance efforts related to TMDL requirements, and continued support of citywide technology systems amid rising cybersecurity and public records demands.

Accomplishments & Key Developments

Capital Funding & Strategic Projects:

- The city received \$1 million in federal funding for the Reservoir Project through the Omnibus Bill. This is a major accomplishment towards the cost of building the new Reservoir.
- Representative Edwards selected the Reservoir Project as one of only two sponsored projects for the legislative session (Crossing Fingers)!
- Reservoir Siting Study completed and formally adopted; property appraisal underway.
- Railroad Avenue Water Main Replacement project received 10 bids and is moving toward award.
- Transportation System Management Plan Update advancing under a \$300,000 TGM grant.

Technology & Cybersecurity:

- Citywide Windows 11 upgrades largely completed.
- Sentinel One endpoint protection deployed and stabilized across most systems.
- Increased phishing attempts detected and mitigated.
- Planning initiated for IT infrastructure at the new Police Building, including server room and CJIS compliance needs.

Operations & Infrastructure:

- Completion and support of multiple waterline projects, hydrant replacements, meter installations, and sewer maintenance activities.
- Ongoing wastewater treatment plant maintenance, pump station repairs, and chemical system operations.
- Water Filtration Modules (2nd Capital Project Installed)
- Continued stormwater monitoring at the mill site and compliance activities tied to environmental permits.

Key Challenges & Risks

Staffing & Capacity:

- Engineering Division currently lacks an in-house construction inspector, impacting project oversight capacity.
- IT staff workload increasingly strained by public records requests, cybersecurity demands, and police support.

Funding & Infrastructure Gaps:

- Estimated \$20 million funding gap for new water storage reservoirs and tank improvements.
- Firlock area septic failures require sewer conversion via a Local Improvement District (LID).
- Aging computers across nearly all departments require accelerated replacement planning.

Compliance & Regulatory Pressure:

- TMDL compliance (temperature and mercury) continues to require additional funding and staff time.
- Police Department faces near-term CJIS compliance deadlines related to MFA and VPN access changes.

Division Highlights & Staffing & Personnel

Operational capacity constraints including workforce resources, aging infrastructure and increasing regulatory and technology compliance requirements remain ongoing challenges.

Despite these challenges, our public works staff maintained essential services, advanced priority capital projects, and supported interdepartmental and external stakeholder coordination.

Promotion – Public Works Operations Manager:

Public Works is pleased to announce the promotion of Buck Tupper to Public Works Operations Manager. Buck brings over 16 years of experience in public works operations and has held several positions within the department, providing him with extensive institutional knowledge and hands-on operational expertise. He officially assumed his new role on January 16, 2026, and will oversee day-to-day operations while supporting long-term organizational and operational goals.

Engineering Division

- Team managed over 36 coordination meetings across development, utilities, grants, and capital projects.
- Advanced wastewater capacity upgrades, storm drainage planning, roadway policy development, and water infrastructure improvements.
- Led TMDL public engagement efforts and initiated planning for FY 2026–2027 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

- Coordinated legislative outreach, grant disbursements, and interagency permitting activities.

Information Technology

- Team supported 21+ active tickets while completing major system upgrades.
- Identified citywide PC refresh needs totaling approximately:
 - **Police:** 12–15 computers
 - **Public Works:** 7–10 computers
 - **City Hall:** ~10 computers
 - **Library:** 10–12 computers
 - **Court:** ~6 computers
 - **Rec Center:** ~4 computers plus laptops
- Initiated phone system replacement planning due to end-of-life risks.

Public Works Operations

- Team completed water meter replacements, service installations, hydrant repairs, and valve maintenance.
- Supported sewer cleaning, storm drainage work, gravel road maintenance, and emergency call-outs.
- Continued daily & operational checks of wells and reservoirs and responded to utility leaks and traffic signal issues.

Water Quality & Treatment

- Team performed wastewater plant maintenance including tank cleanings and aerator troubleshooting.
- Maintained water filtration facility systems, chemical handling, and membrane cleaning cycles.
- Addressed pump station alarms, vandalism, generator testing, and electrical repairs.
- Completed quarterly pretreatment sampling and inspections.
- Prepared for upcoming membrane replacement installation in February.

Upcoming Priorities (February–March 2026)

- Submit FY27 CIP funding applications for Reservoir Project.
- Begin DEQ SEP Sand Island Tree Planting Project planning.
- Install new membranes at the Water Filtration Facility.
- Advance Police MFA and VPN solutions ahead of CJIS audit.
- Continue early planning for FY 2026–2027 CIP projects.
- Ongoing IT phone system demos and replacement selection.
- Continued TMDL Task Team coordination and plan development.

Despite growing demands and constrained resources, Public Works staff continue to demonstrate strong operational performance, cross-department collaboration, and proactive planning & budget management. Strategic investments in infrastructure, staffing capacity, and technology modernization will be essential to maintain service levels and regulatory compliance moving forward.