

# City of Willits

---

## **MEMORANDUM**

---

Date: February 5, 2010  
To: Honorable Mayor and City Council  
From: Paul Cayler, City Manager  
Subject: Administrative Progress Report

The following developments may be of interest to you and the community-at-large. Please contact me at (707) 459-4601, if you have any questions.

### **WINTER STORMS**

I have been spending much time concentrating on issues related to the series of winter storms that began in mid-January 2010. So far it appears that City drainage structures have performed well. There was one afternoon where local streams were close to spilling over their banks, and there was some localized street flooding. During the week of January 18<sup>th</sup> through January 22<sup>nd</sup>, the City did set up a self-serve sandbag station in the parking lot near the Justice Center. The sandbag station at the Justice Center has been taken down, however City residents wanting sandbags can come into the City Public Works Yard at 380 East Commercial Street during business hours and get 24 bags.

The rain has filled the City's Centennial and Morris Reservoirs. This is welcome news. The City has requested permission from the California Division of Safety of Dams to install "flashboards" in Centennial and Morris early in order to catch critical extra water capacity. Permission for early flashboard installation has not yet been granted by the State of California. Flashboards are heavy wooden planks that extend the spillways of both reservoirs approximately 32 inches. This extra spillway height "tops off" the reservoirs. This water gives the City an important reserve capacity which is often critical at the end of the dry season.

The winter water which flows into the reservoir system increases surface water turbidity. This increased turbidity can be challenging for the existing water treatment plant to handle. So far the plant has been able to keep up with demand, however there have been some sleepless nights. I want to thank the Water Plant crew for their dedication and efforts.

It is ironic that the winter months when there is a lot of turbidity in the source waters that it can be more difficult to keep up with demand, than the summer months when there is high demand but relatively stable turbidity in the reservoirs.

### **MID YEAR BUDGET REPORT**

At the City Council Meeting of January 27, 2010, Joanne Cavallari, City Finance Director, the fiscal situation is that revenues on the whole are down in the General Fund. Sales

taxes are down dramatically, however property tax is up. The property tax securitization program appears to be favorable. The City has reduced expenditures over the adopted budget in the General Fund. The retirement incentive program had higher vacation and sick leave buy out costs than anticipated. The Water and Sewer Funds are in better shape than the General Fund, but we still need to be concerned. We are anticipating increases in employee benefit costs related to health insurance and retirement in the upcoming fiscal year. The City has done reasonably well in the past year to reduce deficits, regardless more expenditure reductions are called for. The area of greatest City expenditure is employee salary and benefits.

The City Council Finance Committee is scheduled to take up the matter of setting a target for further expenditure reductions at a meeting on Tuesday, February 9, 2010, at 4:00pm in City Hall.

At 4:00pm on Wednesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, the City Manager and Finance Director conducted a voluntary employee meeting to present the same information that was presented to the City Council the previous week. The meeting was very well attended by approximately 20 City employees. The question, answer and comment period at the end of the meeting went on for quite awhile. It is my belief that all employees left the meeting with a greater understanding of the numerous financial challenges facing the City of Willits.

### **2010 STARTS FAST**

The Christmas and New Year holiday season was a good time. I worked over the holiday season and got a lot of tasks accomplished. Then, the New Year started and things got very busy with numerous unexpected projects that demanded much of my time. Not to mention the Winter Storm events that I wrote about above. Then, I came down with a bad cold, which knocked me off my feet. The result has been that I have not been able to deliver on my routine blog reports.

### **REMIF**

The City Clerk Adrienne Moore and I attended the Redwood Empire Municipal Insurance Fund (REMIF) Annual Meeting last Thursday and Friday in Rohnert Park. There was much good training on risk management issues. The most interesting news is that General Manager Jeff Davis will be retiring by the end of the year. Jeff Davis is recognized as being a very effective manager who has ably lead REMIF for many years.

### **CITY COUNCIL SEWER COMMITTEE**

The City Council Sewer Committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, February 11, 2010 at 4pm in City Hall. The purpose of the meeting is for presentation on the development of the Sanitary Sewer Management Plan (SSMP). This will then lead to a discussion of revision of the City Sewer Ordinance.

## **WEST COMMERCIAL STREET PROJECT**

We received approval from CalTrans to proceed with the bidding of the West Commercial Street Project. At the City Council Meeting of February 10<sup>th</sup>, City Staff will be requesting authorization to bid the project.

## **WATER SERVICE ORDINANCE DEVELOPMENT**

In October 2009, the City Council had a discussion of the proposed Water Service Ordinance revision. The Council focused on a number of items for modification in the draft ordinance as presented by City Staff. Staff did further research on questions raised by the City Council, and returned recommended changes to the draft ordinance to the City Council Water Resources Committee. I am hoping that a final Water Service Ordinance will be able to be introduced at the City Council Meeting of February 24, 2010.