

Snow removal:

A couple of items in the snow removal procedure by the city that may be of interest. The city tries to keep track of the emergency room "on call" doctor. During a storm they make an effort to keep that street access open so the doctor can make it to the emergency room if need be. There is a section of the snow policy that specifies that residents are not to shovel or blow snow into the streets from their property. (Just so you are aware!) I try to shovel snow from my sidewalks onto the lawn; free water! Likewise my driveway snow provides water for the grass next spring. There are also regulations that require us to remove snow from our sidewalks within 24 hours. That is to make it safer for our neighbors to walk without slip sliding around! We have had feedback about seeing snowplows going about town with plows up and not sanding either! There are times when they are patrolling the streets to look for areas that need attention, or going to a location that has been reported to them for sanding/plowing. We are trying to keep your streets safe and at the same time use your money wisely!

National League of Cities:

Along with our membership with the National League of Cities comes access to an insurance policy that will be available to you if you desire. It deals with repair or replacement of water and sewer lines from the city connection to your home. Policies will be available to you for either or both water line or sewer line work. It will cost the city nothing to make this available to you and you pay for only the coverage you want. This might save you a lot of money if you are looking at work on either of these in the future. We will be providing further information to you and in the newspaper about this option. You will receive information from the company that has the city logo on it. Use of our logo is being allowed to help you identify the information as something legitimate when it arrives. Contact the city office for more information about this if you want to learn more now. We think it will be a good option for you, however ultimately it will be your decision.

Enterprise funds:

In my first article I talked about enterprise funds and I said I would continue. Here is some more information about our enterprise funds. Remember, they are expected to pay their own way just like a business...

The Sanitation fund (garbage pickup) is another of our enterprise funds. You probably noted my comments during the election campaign about having a "garbage" and "landfill" portion of the city bill, and you probably sensed that I wasn't pleased. You were right! However, now I know the reason we have both. (Life is simpler when you don't know the facts!) We have two separate enterprise accounts and each is expected to pay its own way. We pay for garbage pickup that transports our garbage out to the landfill for us. Labor, trucks, fuel, maintenance and garbage containers are expensive so we all have to pay to have this service. When the garbage arrives at the landfill every pound/ton of garbage deposited there must help pay for the expense of operating the landfill. The landfill is another separate enterprise fund. Equipment, maintenance, fuel, personnel and DEQ requirements get expensive! We used to have a free punch card so we could take up to 12 extra loads of refuse to the landfill each year without further cost to us. That was only partially true! The city was paying to have that "free" garbage deposited at the landfill. When we have "free" clean up days in the spring the city pays to have that garbage deposited in the landfill. The city, like us, has to pay for placing refuse in the landfill. (But it is really our money and our pocket!) So in the end it comes out of your left pocket or your right pocket!

When I choose to "save the landfill fee" by placing extra garbage in a dumpster it means I am taking fees from both of your pockets! The city has to pay for placing my garbage in the landfill and for transporting it to the landfill. I impact both of these enterprise accounts when I place my garbage in your dumpster! Plus, now I found out, there is a city ordinance that prohibits me from placing my garbage in the dumpster (oops), so I have just set myself up for a potential problem with the police department and the municipal judge! As a council member it probably isn't very wise for me to do that.....

One of the topics discussed at the WAM conference in January was the landfill issue. We are not the only community with this problem looming over us. We have been gathering information to help us make a wise decision about the future of our landfill situation. We had a work session on Feb. 18th to go over facts and figures and discuss the options. By the time you read this we will be very close to deciding, or have recently selected what we think is the best option. Check with the city if you would like more information about what we need to do and the options available. Fortunately we will be able to change our plan in the future if better options become available to us. I will update you next time on some of the information we used to make our decision. Maybe that will be a good time to give you the bad news! (Nah, there will never be a

good time!) Enough said for this time....