

Public Works

November 4, 2021

Last Friday our city hosted a special group of visitors composed of our state Representative Ron Noble, and United States Senate field representatives, Fritz Graham from Senator Ron Wyden's office and Betsy Emery representing Senator Jeff Merkley. The visit was arranged by County Commissioner Casey Kulla who this fall has arranged a series of such visits to all of the small cities in Yamhill County, in order to better acquaint our state and federal elected representatives with the needs and challenges our small cities face in trying to repair and upgrade our failing water and sewer systems. As congress prepares to approve massive funding bills to help local governments recover from the economic fallout of the Covid economy, small cities are for the first time in many years seeing the possibility of federal dollars to help us upgrade old, worn out and failing infrastructure.

In addition to Public Works Power Point presentation (thank you Jerome Blankenship) showing the work funded by earlier grants, we were able to take our guests on a short tour of some parts of our city waste treatment system, showing the facilities and discussing the upgrading plans that will be the beneficiaries of the recent \$5.8 million earmark award our city received thanks to the efforts of Representative Noble.

We're grateful to our state and federal legislators for their interest and support, but there's another group of folks that we need to thank – and that's our Carlton Public Works department, as well as our office staff.

This year, while keeping up with all of their routine, daily projects, our staff have been supervising and coordinating the logistics surrounding the contracting and construction of the main water transmission line from the Panther Creek intake plant down to the holding tanks on Meadow Lake Road. Since last spring our city staff: Public Works, Engineering, Grant writing and Grant administration, Finance, and City Manager have been reviewing requests for proposals, evaluating responses, working with agencies including state DEQ, Yamhill County roads, and McMinnville Water and Light, all while ensuring the construction of the new water transmission line went so seamlessly that we didn't even notice the day they switched our water supply from our own source to McMinnville. And they were doing all of this while keeping up with the normal daily tasks their jobs require.

It's so easy for us to take Public Works for granted...we turn the faucet handle, and there's water....we push a handle and our toilet flushes... and when we have a water leak, we know we can call on our public works department any time, any day, and they

will be there. The parks are always mowed and raked; trees get trimmed...and it all just happens.

Because that's what all of our city staff do: they keep our city running. Public Works takes care of our water supply, they ensure the wastewater system is operating properly, they answer emergency calls 24/7, they keep our parks picked up, and they've made it all look easy – just another day's work.

Our office staff ensures the city is complying with all of the rules and regulations – from county to federal agencies – that a city has to abide by – they make sure our bills get paid, they watch for grant opportunities and write the grants – like the ones that are paying for our water system upgrades and repairs – and they do their best to ensure all of our city's residents have the services and information they require.

Take a moment to think about what it takes each of us to keep our homes and our lives in order: the bills, the home repairs, the insurances...now take what each of us does and multiply that by 1,500– approximately the number of residences and business buildings in town. Add to that 10-plus miles of paved roadway – the total number of street miles in town that require maintenance.

Those are the approximate number of facilities and services that 14 people – this includes are police department too – daily assure are operational, and keeping us all healthy and safe. And they do it with a smile...even when the citizens they're helping may not be smiling.

The last 18 months have been particularly stressful for all of us and for our city staff, it's been compounded by – as many of you who work with the public and in the service industries also have experienced – the daily frustration of dealing with Covid-related inconveniences.

So I wanted to take a few minutes this evening to say Thank you to our city staff: The 5 members of our Public works department who keep our water running, our sewers functioning, our parks and trees trimmed and tidy, streets and gutters cleared of trash, and otherwise ensure our city services are in working order; the 5 administrative/accounting/grant writing/code enforcement/planning and development/billing and public information staff that make up our administrative department, and the 4 members of our city's police department.

I hope that you all will do the same. These folks are working for all of us; and as their employers it's **our** job to ensure they know we appreciate what they do.