

I hope this finds you doing well and fully recovered from Snomaggedon. I do not know about you, but I have had enough winter and am ready for spring. Even though I am a ski instructor on the weekends, I prefer to keep my snow at the slopes and not in my driveway. I want to give a shout out to Public Works for their tremendous work in keeping our City passable throughout the two weeks of multiple snowstorms we experienced. In review, the City concentrates on main arterials then secondary roads. Once cleared, PW moves to smaller neighborhood roads. With multiple events, crews needed to go back to the arterial and secondary roads several times, leaving smaller roads untouched. I hope you understand our priorities and limitations. Trash collection was a challenge. Le May missed two straight pickups due to road conditions and when we finally got a pickup, it was limited to trash only. This is a safety issue and I understand not putting large unwieldy trucks on the roads in hazardous conditions. We previously considered moving to a Mon-Thurs pickup schedule with the City broken into four zones. I think this bears relooking to allow for more flexibility in makeup pickups. More to follow on that topic. Many of you were inconvenienced by the snow in your alleyways. Unfortunately, the alleyways are private property and the City does not have legal authority or the proper equipment to clear them. I have reached out to the NWL ROA and offered an idea to consider for future snow events. We have also reached out to the School District to establish a more permanent relationship that allows us to assist them with snow removal more rapidly. As a reminder City Ordinance requires all of us to keep our sidewalks in front of our residence clear of snow and ice. As a final thought, it has been several years since the City/region experienced a similar event. As disruptive as it was, this is not a frequent occurrence for us.

I am sad to announce that we will have a vacancy on City Council soon. CM Eric Corp announced his resignation effective 31 March. Eric and Donna are relocating to the Georgetown, Texas. Eric has been active in our City for many years serving as Chairman of the Planning Commission and then as a Council Member and Deputy Mayor. His contributions have been significant and they will both be greatly missed. The City website and FB page will have information on applying for the vacant council seat. Applications will be accepted in March and the selection process will take place in April. This seat will be filled for the remainder of CM Corp's term that expires Dec 31st 2019.

City Council and I are working on two major capital projects and I have received several questions about them.

First is a Public Works Revenue Bond for \$10 mil. This funds; a new PW facility to be built behind the Public Safety building, required major corrosion repairs to the water storage tank on Hoffman Hill along with additional water system repairs and the conversion of our water metering system from manual reading to remote reading. The water projects were planned during the previous rate study. The new facility became feasible last year when we compared the cost of saving for 20+ years to build a facility at future costs versus issuing a bond and moving forward now. Analysis showed, both reduced costs of moving now and gaining a much needed facility decades earlier, warranted taking this action. This 30-year bond **does not** involve an increase in rates or taxes and will be paid for out of a combination of the existing rates, general fund and Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET) in a proportional assignment based on guidance from the State Auditor. Funding is based on existing revenue streams (existing properties) and **does not** depend on any future development. It also **does not** compromise our reserves for unanticipated requirements in our utility systems. Because no new revenues/rates or taxes are required, this action is a decision to be made by the City Council. Council is scheduled for a second reading and vote for this at the 12 March Council meeting.

The second effort is the development of a community center on the vacant property adjacent to the Civic Center. You may recall the survey on this subject followed by subsequent focus groups. City Council approved \$150k of REET funds for a design feasibility study. There will be multiple public meetings to receive input on a potential community center. We are looking at and speaking with potential partners including Pierce County Library, YMCA and others. We will put together a package with initial design and costs, addressing; what we want, what we need, what we can afford to build and what we can afford to maintain/operate. This then goes to Council. **IF** Council approves, the proposal will be come to the public for a vote. The earliest I anticipate this coming to a public vote would be a year from now. This would represent new monies in the form of property taxes increase and will require a vote of the public. Information on public meetings will be forthcoming once a contractor is identified.



Michael P. Courts, Mayor

February/March 2019